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FACULTY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**DEVELOPING READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES
AT PRE –INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**Lasišanas prasmju un stratēģiju attīstīšana skolēniem ar vidēja
līmeņa angļu valodas zināšanām**

Diploma Paper

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Abstract

The diploma paper was written in order to state the role of teaching and mastering reading skills and strategies in developing learners' reading comprehension and to prove that the integrating and training these skills and strategies in the EFL classroom is an effective way of the teaching/ learning process at Pre - Intermediate level.

The study of the methodological literature related to reading as one of the important language skill and the theoretical sources on reading skills and strategies reveals the importance and purposes of reading comprehension, the role of motivation in developing reading, the significant role of the teacher, the criteria in selecting reading texts and the advantages of using reading skills and strategies in educational process.

The theme of the diploma paper *Developing Reading Skills and Strategies at Pre-Intermediate Level* was based not only on the theoretical literature but on the results of the research authors' research.

The research was focused on a case study as the main research method, it included designing and administration of questionnaires, the training reading skills and strategies in the classroom, and was complemented by observation of a target group of learners during school year 2007/2008. The research has shown that using reading skills and strategies in practice, the results achieved in reading comprehension have significantly improved. They have been regularly summed up and presented graphically in the paper.

Consequently, the hypothesis of the research has been proved.

Key words: reading skills and strategies; instructions; motivation; the role of the teacher; training; case study; questionnaires and pedagogical observation; progress in reading.

Anotācija

Diplomdarba mērķis bija noteikt mācīšanas prasmju un stratēģiju apgūšanas nozīmi mācību procesa norisē un pierādīt, ka šo prasmju integrācija un trenēšana klasē ir efektīvs mācību paņēmiens. /Mācīšana vidējā līmeņa angļu valodas zināšanām/.

Metodiskās literatūras un teorētisko avotu, kas attiecas uz lasīšanu kā vienu no svarīgākajām valodas prasmēm un stratēģijām, izpētīšana dod iespēju apzināties lasītā teksta izpratnes svarīgumu, lasīšanas motivācijas nozīmi, skolotāja nozīmi lomu lasīšanas tekstu un kritēriju izvēlē un lasīšanas prasmju un stratēģiju svarīgumu mācību procesā.

Diplomdarba tēma „Lasīšanas prasmju un stratēģiju attīstīšana skolēniem vidējā līmeņa angļu valodas zināšanām” tika pamatota ne tikai teorētiski, bet arī izmantojot pētījuma rezultātus. Pētnieciskā darba teorētiskā daļa tika veikta ar „case study” palīdzību kā svarīgāko pētniecisko metodi, ar anketēšanu, lasīšanas prasmju un stratēģiju pilnveidošanu mācību stundās, ar testiem, kontroldarbiem, kā arī novērojot skolēnu kontrolgrupu 2007./2008. mācību gada laikā.

Pētījumi pierādīja, ka regulāra lasīšanas uzdevumu izmantošana uzlaboja skolēnu lasīšanas meistarību un rezultātus. Iegūtie rezultāti ir apkopāti un grafiski atspoguļoti diplomdarba pielikumā. diplomdarba pētījumu hipotēze ir pierādīta.

Diploma darbs „Lasīšanas prasmju un stratēģiju attīstīšana skolēniem ar vidēja līmeņa angļu valodas zināšanām” izstrādāts LU Moderno valodu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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Komisijas sekretāre:

Introduction

Everyone would agree that English plays a major international role in the world at the beginning of the 21st century. English has become dominant in the progressive science and engineering, in the media, radio, television, magazines and newspapers. Therefore, English is necessary for every educated person, for every good specialist. People learn through reading as an important language skill and also through speaking, listening and writing. Williams (1984) considers that reading is often a struggle for understanding when language learners are concerned and therefore the part of the teacher's job is to develop within the learner strategies which are able to help him in his/ her struggle.

The author of the present diploma paper has chosen the theme "Developing Reading Skills and Strategies at Pre-Intermediate Level" for the research as she has faced difficulties in teaching and developing reading skills as well as motivating learners of the 8th form to read.

With reference to Thornbury,

Reading is a receptive skill. But the fact that it is receptive does not mean that it is passive: reading is an active, even interactive, process. Readers bring their own questions to the text, which are based on their background knowledge, and they use these to interrogate the text, modifying their questions and coming up with new ones according to the answers they get. (Thornbury, 2006:190)

In addition, Thornbury (ibid.:190) describes two important processes of reading: *bottom-up processing*, such as decoding the letters, words and grammatical structures of the individual sentences, and *top-down processing* such as drawing on discourse and schematic knowledge, as well as on immediate contextual information.

Further on, Thornbury emphasizes,

Discourse knowledge is knowing how different text-types –such as news reports, recipes or academic papers – are organized. Schematic knowledge is the reader's existing knowledge of the topic (-schema). Reading involves an interaction between these different 'levels' of knowledge, where knowledge at one 'level' can compensate for lack of knowledge at another (- comprehension). (ibid.:190)

There are different purposes for reading. For example, Wallace (1992:6-7) suggests some more personal reasons for reading: *reading for survival* (survival reading serves immediate day-to-day needs, wishes and interests, from such sources as TV, advertising, street signs, instructions on medicine, food and toys – sometimes called 'environmental print'); *reading*

for learning (reading serves for extending general knowledge of the world); *reading for pleasure* (such as reading for enjoyment).

The author of the present paper believes that the most important thing in teaching reading is the way how it is present and taught.

That's why the role of the teacher is of great importance in the process of teaching and learning.

Through questionnaires, different reading comprehension exercises, etc., the author tried to help the learners to improve their reading comprehension in English and therefore, by inviting them to use the foreign language creatively and purposefully.

The **goal** of the diploma paper is to investigate the most effective means of developing learners' reading skills and strategies at **pre-intermediate level**.

Enabling objectives

- to select, read, and analyse the theory on reading skills;
- to design and adapt reading tasks and tailor them to the needs and interests of the target group of learners;
- to carry out the necessary research activities, i.e. classroom observation, administering the relevant questionnaires, pilot teaching, assessing learners' reading skills;
- to work out principles and design a set of tasks for motivating learners for reading;
- to sum up and analyse the findings and draw relevant conclusions.

Hypothesis

A successful development of reading skills and strategies proceeds more effectively if it is properly organized on the basis of a thoroughly selected and designed material presented as a system and trained in a number of texts, which is sure to successfully develop the reading skills.

The research **methods** of the work are as follows:

- study and critical analysis of methodological literature related to the theme;
- case study as the main research method ;
- administration of 3 questionnaires and group observation (Form 8) during school year 2007/2008.

The Diploma paper consists of the abstract, the introduction, 3 Chapters, conclusions, theses, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter 1 presents the concept of reading in methodology and classification of reading skills and strategies.

Chapter 2 deals with the structure of the research, case study as the main research method and target population and environment of the research.

Chapter 3 describes the practical approaches to reading skills and strategies and focuses on summing up, analyzing and interpreting the obtained data and presenting them.

1 Theoretical Background on Developing Reading Skills and Strategies

In this chapter the concept of reading and the nature of reading comprehension including bottom - up and top –down processing are discussed. The role of the teacher in the teaching/ learning process and motivation as one of the strongest factors in successful mastering of reading is presented as well. A great attention is paid to a thorough analysis and development of reading skills and strategies.

1.1 Implications of Reading Theory for the Teaching of Reading

Reading is not a passive, but rather an active, and in fact an interactive process. Hood, Solomon and Burus (2002:2) first of all, when people read they always do it with a definite purpose. Reading is a part of the way they use language in their daily life in order to communicate with each other. Besides reading always occurs in context. This means that what learners read is a part of a broader situation or an extended *text*. The term ‘text’ is important. It is used to refer to a complete piece of language which is related to a particular situation or context. Texts can vary from extended pieces of language such as a novel or report to single words such as *watch out* or *entrance*.

As for interaction between a reader and a text, Wallace (1992:4) sees the reading process as “interpreting means reacting to a written text as a piece of communication; in other words, we assume some communicative intent on the writer’s part which the reader has some purpose in attempting to understand.”

Reading is both a receptive language process and a psycholinguistic one. Carrell, Devine, Eskey (1990:12) point out that “There is thus an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought.”

As for social theories of reading, Hood et al., (2002) underline that psycholinguistic models of reading have been challenged by research which has investigated how people’s reading practices relate to their cultural and social environments. When they read a novel or a newspaper report they are relying on their previous social knowledge or other reading about the topics or issues with which the text deals.

Focusing on interaction between the reader and the text, Hood et al. state:

Critical reading theorists point out that any one text can give rise to a whole range of different 'readings'. These differences in reading will depend on the ideologies, beliefs and viewpoints of the person reading the text. Different communities, groups or individuals will 'take meaning' from the text according to their relevant social experiences and the social contexts in which those experiences were created. (Hood et al., 1996:22)

Thus, critical theories stress readers are socialized in the reading process and practices.

Carrell et al. (1992:60) indicate that there are five models for understanding the reading process: interactive-action model, interactive-compensatory model, bilateral cooperative model, automatic-processing model and verbal efficiency model.

Moreover, Carrell et al. suggest a number of important implications for reading research. They are: reading as an interactive process is an important part of all reading models; interactive models strongly imply that many lower-level processing skills are basic to good reading; the need for an extensive receptive vocabulary that is quickly, exactly, and automatically accessed; the development of reading abilities may be regarded more profitably if seen in terms of stages of skills development. (ibid.:63-4)

Hood et al. maintain that the theoretical ideas provide a framework for a number of useful principles which can present current approaches to reading instruction. They are as follows:

- Readers need to understand the cultural and social purposes and roles of the text as well as to process and comprehend its meaning.
- Readers need to be able to read critically in order to understand the way the text 'positions' them. Different individuals will react to the meaning in the text in different ways according to their beliefs and viewpoints.
- Readers need to understand how language works as a system, including the different linguistic features of spoken and written language.
- Readers need to be able to understand that reading involves using a number of skills and strategies at the same time. These involve drawing on social and cultural knowledge, knowledge of the language of the text, and strategies for accessing meaning such as predicting, sampling or skimming for the gist of the meaning.
- Classroom tasks need to begin with a focus on whole texts in context rather than on decontextualised words, phrases or sentences. This includes giving learners an understanding of the overall structure of the text. (ibid.:23-24)

Taking everything into consideration, the author of the diploma paper refers to the statements of Harris, Sipay (1990:10) that “Reading comprehension is the result of the interaction between and among the reader’s (1) recognition and perception of the graphic symbols used to represent language, (2) linguistic information, (3) cognitive skills, and (4) knowledge about specific topics and the world in general.”

1.2 The Interaction of Top-down and Bottom-up Processing

Reading is an interactive and active process. There are two simultaneous and complementary ways of processing a text: *top-down* and *bottom-up*. To start with the description of *top-down* and *bottom-up* processing, the author of the paper agrees to the words of Nuttall (2005:16) that, “they are both used whenever we read; sometimes one predominates, sometimes the other, but both are needed. And, though normally unconscious processes, both can be adopted as conscious strategies by a reader approaching a difficult text”.

The nature of reading has been researched by cognitive and behavioral scientists (Nunan 1999; Smith 1994; Carrell et al. 1990) for many decades, and their work has contributed contrasting theories about what works best in the teaching of reading.

The main approaches explain the nature of learning to read: *bottom-up processing*, which focuses on developing the basic skill of matching sounds with the letters, syllables, and words written on a page, and *top-down processing*, which focuses on the background knowledge the reader uses to comprehend the written text.

In *top – down processing*, readers use their own knowledge, intelligence and experience to make predictions, based on the schemata and to understand the text. It is logical to suppose that readers must understand the individual parts of the text before they can comprehend the whole one; but in practice, effective readers continually use a top-down approach to predict the probable theme.

As for top – down processing Nuttall (ibid.:16) compares “this approach to an eagle’s eye view of the landscape. From a great height, the eagle can see a wide area spread out below; it understands the nature of the whole terrain, its general pattern and the relationships between various parts of it, far better than an observer on the ground.” Further on, Nuttall (ibid.:16)

adds that “a reader adopts an eagle’s eye view of the text when he considers it as a whole and relates it to his own knowledge and experience. This enables him to predict the writer’s purpose [...] and then use this framework to interpret difficult parts of the text.”

The top-down approach according to Nuttall (ibid.:17) “gives a sense of perspective and makes use of all that the reader brings to the text: prior knowledge, common sense, etc, which have sometimes been undervalued in the reading class.”

In bottom-up processing, readers rely on their knowledge of the language to recognize linguistic elements – letters, words, and sentence structure – for the construction of meaning. Comparing top – down processing to an eagle’s eye view of the landscape, Nuttall (ibid.:17) identifies bottom – up processing as “ ‘tunnel vision’(seeing things only from our own limited point of view).” In addition, she continues:

Our image of bottom- up processing might be a scientist with a magnifying glass examining the ecology of a transect – a tiny part of the landscape the eagle surveys. The scientist develops a detailed understanding of that one little area (which might represent a sentence in the text); but full understanding only comes if this is combined with knowledge of adjacent areas and the wider terrain, so that their effects on one another can be recognized. In other words, bottom- up and top – down approaches are used to complement each other.(ibid.:17)

In the process of reading, teachers should instruct learners to start their reading by using a top-down approach and later a bottom – up approach, as each kind of interpretation supports the other.

Nuttall (ibid.:17) considers, that “in practice a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict the probable meaning then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says”. She concludes this has become known as *interactive reading*. Both approaches can be mobilized by conscious choice, and both are important strategies for readers.

It is necessary to remember that relying too much on either top-down or bottom-up processing may cause problems for learners; therefore, to develop reading abilities, both approaches should be applied.

Moreover, both models develop the experience of reading and the teaching of reading and are applicable to the behavior of different groups of readers.

1.3 Motivation as the Strongest Factor in Successful Reading

It is known that motivation attention and interest are exceeding important factors in learning process and motivation is one of the strongest one in successful language learning.

Ur (1996: 274) considers that the term 'motivation' is an abstract one and that "it is easier and more useful to think in terms of a 'motivated' learner: one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress." Besides Ur adds that "learner motivation makes teaching and learning immeasurably easier and more pleasant, as well as more productive: hence the importance of the topic for teachers."(ibid.)

Motivation facilitates the efficiency of teaching and learning activities. A friendly and confidential atmosphere in the classroom promotes teaching/ learning due to creation of emotional relationship between learners and a teacher. The stronger the learners' motivation is the better their results are. And it is the teacher who should provide a positive emotional atmosphere at the lessons.

Motivation to learn may be divided into *intrinsic* motivation and *extrinsic* motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when learners want to do something based on the enjoyment or interest in the activity itself. Extrinsic motivation is when somebody else tries to make learners do something. Thus, if extrinsic motivation fulfils "a strategic role" for the whole period of learning, intrinsic one plays "a tactic role".

There is positive and negative motivation. Positive motivation is when you want to get something – motivation towards some goal. Negative motivation is away from something learners want to avoid.

According to Harmer,

Famous research carried out in the second half of the twentieth century by Gardner and Lambert suggested that students who felt most warmly about a language and who wanted to integrate into the culture of its speakers were more highly motivated (and learnt more successfully) than those who were only learning language as a means to an end (e.g. getting a better job). In other words *Integrative* motivation was more powerful than *Instrumental* motivation. But whatever kind of motivation students have, it is clear that highly motivated students do better than ones without any motivation at all.(Harmer, 2004a: 8)

Motivation is of great importance in the process of reading. Partly because most of what pupils usually read is what they want to read (books, magazines, advertisements, etc.), but

also because being motivated means that learners start reading the text when they are prepared to find a number of things in it, expecting to find answers to a number of questions and specific information or ideas they are interested in.

Hence one of the main tasks for language teachers is to provoke interest and involvement in reading even when learners are not initially interested in it. It is by their choice of topic, activity and linguistic content that they may be able to change the atmosphere in the class. Their attitude to class participation, their consciousness, their humour and their seriousness may influence their pupils. Their own behaviour and enthusiasm also may inspire their learners.

Although the author of the diploma paper has little experience of teaching at school, she uses in her work the following aspects of positive reinforcement, adopted from the Internet source (Online 1).

- Praising learners for even the smallest success or achievement. This is most important for less competent learners to stimulate the desire to learn.
- Marking or checking the correct items in any activity, not the wrong ones.
- Being generous with the awarding of points because praise and points cause a glow of self-esteem which makes learners struggle again and again for the satisfaction.
- The presentation of the activities should be clear and intelligible, not academic or “heavy”. Assessing a learner on his/ her own improvement standards, not on the class average or what the clever learners do.
- Using humor, colour and competition as additional motivators to reinforcement points and praise.
- Using all kinds of stars, stamps (happy face, etc.) and seals to put not only on the work of just younger learners, but to mark any improvement in the work of less competent pupils.
- Giving praise and awarding all points as soon as possible after the activities are completed because immediate reinforcement of work is far more powerful in its effect than is delayed reinforcement.(Online 1)

If the teacher ignores these aspects, it leads to demotivation.

In conclusion the author of the present paper considers that teachers should encourage the learners by word and deed. Real motivation comes from within each individual.

1.4 The Role of the Teacher

In the previous chapter the author of the diploma paper has described the significance of the learners' motivation in learning English. And, certainly, the role of the teacher in the successful learning process is of great importance. Harmer (2004a:3) indicates that good teachers care more about their learners' learning than they do about their own teaching. Harmer (ibid.:6) also suggests some of qualities which good teachers should possess: "an ability to give interesting classes, using the full range of their personality; the desire to empathize with learners, treating them all equally however tempting it is to do otherwise; and 'knowing all their names'."

The role of the teacher as an authority is very important in the compulsory school. It is his/her personality that is appreciated, especially such qualities as fairness, patience, calmness, honesty, respect, a good sense of humour, ability to listen to his/her learners, reliability etc. Surely, all these traits of character promote creating a positive relationship and a positive learning atmosphere, but it is not everything.

Scrivener (2005:24) emphasizes that being witty, chatty and easy-going does not necessarily lead to good teaching – some teachers are very friendly and funny, but their lessons end up in confusion. On the contrary, lessons of one of the quieter, more serious teachers are often very memorable. It is simply the significant step in teaching.

The author of the diploma paper has studied numerous theoretical sources relevant to the theme (Williams 1984; Harris 1990; Harmer 2004; Nuttall 2005; Scrivener 2005) and all the authors stress the importance of the teacher's effective role in the language acquisition process. For example, Harmer (2004a: 9) considers that learning is a partnership between teachers and learners and points out that good learners do not just wait to be taught. However, not all learners are ready for autonomous learning and some are sure that it is the teacher's duty to provide learning.

Harmer advises,

In such cases, it is much better to start very gradually with [...] some solowork in class where individual students have to investigate a grammar issue or solve a reading puzzle on their own. As students get used to working things out for themselves and/or doing work at home, so they can gradually start to take their own decisions about learning. (Harmer, ibid.)

Moreover, Harmer (2004a:5) considers that ...“one of the greatest enemies of successful teaching is student boredom. This is often caused by the deadening predictability of much classroom time.” Harmer (ibid.) alludes to John Fanselow’s monumental book *Braking Rules* where the author suggests that both for the teacher’s sanity and the students’ continuing involvement, teachers need to change their own behavior patterns. For example, if a teacher normally teaches in casual clothes, he/she should turn up one day wearing a suit. If a teacher normally sits down, he/she should stand up. Thus a mixture of surprise and curiosity is a perfect starting point for learner involvement. But Harmer (ibid.) considers that variety is not the same as anarchy. However, he is sure that good teachers find balance between predictable safety and unexpected variety.

In his book, *Learning Teaching*, Scrivener (2005:24) refers to Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, who suggests that there are three core teacher characteristics that help to create an effective learning environment. These are **respect** (a positive and non-judgmental regard for another person), **empathy** (being able to see things from the other person’s perspective) and **authenticity** (being oneself in any situation).

In other words, when a teacher has these three qualities, the relationships within the classroom are stronger and deeper, and the communication between the teacher and learners is much more open and honest.

However, Scrivener (ibid.) warns teachers that ‘respect’ or ‘empathy’ or ‘authenticity’ are not clothes which a teacher puts on entering the classroom, not temporary characteristics that he/she changes during the lesson. The author also adds that teachers cannot role-play ‘respect’ – or any of the other characteristics.

Further on, Scrivener describes some features of the teacher that may be important in creating a positive relationship. In a positive learning atmosphere the teacher...

- shows respect, inspires confidence
- is fair, honest and patient
- really listens to his/her students
- gives clear, positive feedback
- has good sense of humour
- is non-judgmental
- empathises with students’ problems
- trusts people
- does not complicate things unnecessarily
- is well organized
- is enthusiastic and inspires enthusiasm
- can be approachable and authoritative without being distant (Scrivener, 2005: 23)

In order to get learners to read successfully in class, teachers should create interest in learning. Therefore, the teacher performs different roles when asking his/her learners to read intensively.

According to Harmer (2004b :213) a teacher can be:

- *The organiser*: a teacher should tell learners accurately what their reading purpose is, and give them distinct instructions about the achievement of it.
- *The observer*: when a teacher asks learners to read on their own he/she should restrain her/himself and not interrupt their reading, although the temptation may be to add more information or instructions. A teacher is observing the learners' progress while they are reading. Thus this individual and collective reading provides a teacher with useful information.
- *The feedback organiser*: when the learners have done the task, a teacher should organize a feedback discussion to check that they have fulfilled the task successfully.
- *The prompter*: when the learners have read a text a teacher should tell them to pay attention to language features in the text. Teachers should also show them certain features of text construction, explain ambiguities and issues of text structure.

A teacher can be also a motivator, a participant, a controller, an assessor, a tutor or a performer. And all roles aim to facilitate the learners' progress in some way or other.

As a motivator a teacher can use the 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners', suggested by Dornyei:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalise the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal – orientedness.
10. Familiarise learners with the target language culture.(Dornyei, 2001:138)

The author of the present paper has used the table worked out on the basis of Scrivener (2005:387) which listed some ways how a teacher could influence the learning environment. Depending on the aspects of the learning environment, the teacher's role can be changed. (Appendix 1).

Taking everything into consideration, the author of the diploma paper would like to point out that teaching is a very specific and difficult job. The teacher is a person who is learning as well as teaching all his/her life. The teacher's work is never done and evenings are mostly spent marking exercise- books and preparing for the next lesson. It is quite a stressful job because he/she has to encourage his/her learners and keep them interested.

Teachers do not only teach their subject. They bring up the younger generation in the spirit of high moral ideals. They share their knowledge with the learners, develop their intellect, form their views and characters, their attitudes to life and to other people. Through reading teachers broaden learners' outlook. Therefore, the teacher must be a model of competence her/himself.

1.5 Reading Skills and Strategies

Everyone reads with some kind of purpose in mind: for example, to keep in touch with friends by correspondence; to keep up with the news; to obtain specific information; to find an answers to different questions, to get an overall impression of the content of the texts, or to read simply for pleasure, enjoyment and excitement.

To find a specific bit of information or the answer to a specific question, the learner uses the procedure known as *scanning*. However, *skimming* – fluent reading a text in order to get the gist, or a general idea or sense of what it is about – is another useful skill. Depending on what kind of text the learners are reading and what they want to get out of it, the learners use these skills.

Harmer (2004a: 69) affirms that “ one of the teacher's main functions when training students to read is not only to persuade them of the advantages of skimming and scanning, but also to make them see that the way they read is vitally important.”

Reading involves a great variety of skills. Grellet (1990: 4) gives the following list of reading skills:

- Recognizing the script of a language
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
- Understanding explicitly stated information
- Understanding information when not explicitly stated
- Understanding conceptual meaning

- Understanding the communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances
- Understanding relations within the sentence
- Understanding relations between the parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices
- Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
- Interpreting text by going outside it
- Recognizing indicators in discourse
- Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse
- Distinguishing the main point or important information in a piece of discourse
- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, an idea etc.)
- Selective extraction of relevant points from a text
- Basic reference skills
- Skimming
- Scanning to locate specifically required information
- Transcoding information to diagrammatic display

In order to develop these skills, Grellet (ibid.: 5) suggests several types of exercises which can be used. The following question-types can have two different functions. They are: to clarify the organization of the passage and to clarify the contents of the passage. The questions of the first function can be about:

- the function of the passage
- the general organization (e.g. argumentative)
- the rhetorical organization (e.g. contrast, comparison)
- the cohesive devices (e.g. link-words)
- the intrasentential relations (e.g. derivation, morphology, hyponymy)

The questions of the second function can be about:

- plain fact (direct reference)
- implied fact (inference)
- deduced meaning (supposition)
- evaluation

Grellet (ibid.) sums up, that “the above skills, question-types and question-functions are constantly related since a given exercise uses a certain type of question, with a certain function, to develop a particular reading skill.”

In order to develop reading skills teachers have to provide learners with special strategies and practise them extensively, as some learners think reading means starting at the beginning and going word by word, stopping to look up every unknown vocabulary item, until they reach the end of the text.

When they do this, learners are relying exclusively on their linguistic knowledge, a bottom-up strategy. One of the most important functions of the teacher, then, is to help learners move past this idea and use top- down strategies.

Language teachers show their learners how they can adjust their reading behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and reading purposes. They help the learners to develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading situation.

The National Capital Language Resource Center in Washington, suggests some strategies that can help learners to read more quickly and effectively. They are:

- Previewing: reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection
- Predicting: using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension; using knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; using knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content
- Skimming and scanning: using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions
- Guessing from context: using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up
- Paraphrasing: stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text (Online 2)

Teachers can help students to learn when and how to use reading strategies in several ways. They are:

- By modeling the strategies aloud, talking through the processes of previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, and paraphrasing. This shows students how the strategies work and how much they can know about a text before they begin to read word by word.
- By allowing time in class for group and individual previewing and predicting activities as preparation for in-class or out-of-class reading. Allocating class time to these activities indicates their importance and value.
- By using cloze (fill in the blank) exercises to review vocabulary items. This helps students learn to guess meaning from context.

- By encouraging students to talk about what strategies they think will help them approach a reading assignment, and then talking after reading about what strategies they actually used. This helps students develop flexibility in their choice of strategies.

When language learners use reading strategies, they find that they can control the reading experience, and they gain confidence in their ability to read the language.(ibid.)(Online 2)

Bamford and Day (2004:177) recommend a list of reading strategies including basic reading strategies, other cognitive reading strategies, other metacognitive reading strategies and other compensating reading strategies, which the author of the present paper has used at the lessons. (Appendix 2)

The author considers that language learning skills and strategies are a valuable addition to the challenging task of learning and teaching English. And, of course, teachers should vary their approaches from time to time to increase the learners' interest in learning English.

1.6 Reading Comprehension in the Classroom

Some theorists (Harris et al. 1990; Davis 1995; Hood et al. 2002) describe reading as an interactive process which involves what is in the text and what is in the reader's mind. The following key factors are involved in the interaction: the reader's prior knowledge and how that knowledge is organized (it includes the information about what, how and why), the coherence of the text (the manner in which parts of the text can be meaningfully related to other parts), the structure of the text (how the author organized the ideas in the text).

Regarding the issue of reading, Grellet affirms,

Reading comprehension should not be separated from the other skills. There are few cases in real life when we do not talk or write about what we have read or when we do not relate what we have read to something we might have heard. It is therefore important, to link the different skills through the reading activities chosen:

- reading and writing, e.g. summarizing, mentioning what you have read in a letter, note-making, etc.
- reading and listening, e.g. comparing an article and a news-bulletin, using recorded information to solve a written problem, matching opinions and texts, etc.
- reading and speaking, e.g. discussions, debates, appreciation, etc.(Grellet, 1990:8)

According to Harris et al. (1990:555) there are three bases for reading comprehension: cognition, language comprehension, and reading skill, which are not only interrelated but are distinguished from one another for the purpose of discussion.

It is considered that if a learner is 'good at comprehension', it means that he/she can read accurately and efficiently to get maximum information from a text with the minimum of misunderstanding. It also means that a learner is able to show his/her understanding by re-expressing the content of the text, for instance, by summarizing the text, by writing sentences or paragraphs when answering the questions.

However, agreeing with Swan (1990:1), "Language is not the only factor in successful comprehension: some students who speak and write English very well are poor at this kind of work, and of course people may be bad at comprehension even in their own mother tongue".

Moreover, Swan (ibid.) points out some of the reasons for failure in comprehension, connected with defective reading habits:

- Some learners may read slowly and carefully, paying attention to individual details, but without understanding the idea of the overall meaning of a text.
- On the contrary, other learners who read quickly do not always observe details may get a good idea of the general meaning of the text, but misunderstand particular points.
- Some learners are 'imaginative readers', so it is difficult for them to separate what the writer says from what they feel themselves.

Furthermore, Swan (ibid.) offers the following types of comprehension problem arisen directly from the text:

- Long and complicated sentences are difficult to understand in a foreign language though the words are easy.
- Sometimes the writer's style may be difficult, too.
- An important idea of some texts is expressed indirectly by a writer.
- Instead of guessing unknown words and expressions by studying the context the learners search in the dictionary.

Both for learners who are not good at reading and understanding and for even those who are effective and successful readers additional training is necessary to be able to cope with texts of different kinds.

Means for developing reading comprehension are complex. For example, Greenall and Swan (2001:1-3) propose a number of exercises grouped under headings, which refer to specific comprehension strategies:

- *Extracting main ideas* (reading for the general idea rather than for the meaning of every word).
- *Reading for specific information* (setting the learner a variety of different tasks in order to practice this type of reading.)
- *Understanding text organization* (recognising how sentences are joined together to make paragraphs and how paragraphs are combined into text.)
- *Predicting* (before reading a text learners usually subconsciously ask themselves what they know about the subject. This makes it easier to see what information is new to them and what they already know as they read the passage.)
- *Checking comprehension* (under the certain circumstances a learner may need to study a passage very carefully in order to answer a question correctly in details.
- *Inferring* (the writer may suggest something indirectly rather than state it directly. The learner should infer this information – which may be main for correct understanding.)
- *Dealing with unfamiliar words* (the exercises develop the strategies needed to make reasoned guesses about the meaning of new vocabulary.)
- *Linking ideas* (the number of different words may express an idea in any passage of some texts.)
- *Understanding complex sentences* (a learner is given practice in ‘decoding’ long and complicated sentences.)
- *Evaluating the text* (the exercises help develop the pupils’ more critical faculties.)
- *Reacting to the text* (practising the difference between what the writer says and what the reader thinks.)
- *Writing summaries* (practice of the ability to write accurate summaries.)

Obviously, the role of the teacher is paramount to activate and build schemata. The first task is to select texts that are relevant to the learners’ needs, preferences and individual differences. The second task is to help the learners to relate their existing schematic knowledge to the text they are reading.

The author of the present paper has studied numerous theoretical sources on teaching/ learning reading comprehension where Holschuh (1988); Harris et al. (1990); Wallace (1992); Kramiņa (2000); Hood et al. (2002); Nuttall (2005), etc. point out three types of activities.

For example, Wallace (1992:86) affirms, “The idea that there are three main types of reading activity, those which precede presentation of the text, those which accompany it, and those which follow it, is now a common feature of discourse about reading.”

These three stages of activities are typically used to activate and build the learners’ schemata.

Villanueva de Debat interprets these stages,

- *Pre-reading*. At this important stage the teacher should make sure that students have the relevant schema for understanding the text. This is achieved by having students think, write, and discuss everything they know about the topic, employing techniques such as *prediction, semantic mapping, and reconciled reading*.
- *During-reading*. This stage requires the teacher to guide and monitor the interaction between the reader and the text. One important skill teachers can impart at this stage is note-taking, which allows students to compile new vocabulary and important information and details, and to summarize information and record their reactions and opinions.
- *Post –reading*. The post –reading stage offers the chance to evaluate students’ adequacy of interpretation, while bearing in mind that accuracy is relative and that “readership” must be respected as long as the writer’s intentions are addressed (Tierney and Pearson 1994). Post – reading activities focus on a wide range of questions that allow for different interpretations. (Villanueva de Debat, 2006:11)

However, it is impossible to enumerate all the activities for increasing reading ability. And, of course, every teacher should choose appropriate reading activities according to the learners’ knowledge and their age.

Kramiņa emphasizes,

Reading comprehension involves not only recognition of the vocabulary and a general understanding of basic sentences and idioms but also perception of what is being communicated, which also infers understanding that which is not written (reading between the lines); the latter is usually conveyed through style and syntax.(Kramiņa, 2000:106)

To sum up this chapter, the author of the present paper would like to refer to the statement of Kramiņa (ibid.: 107) that “it is the teachers’ challenge to see that each learner gets what is needed in order to build up all of the skills that make up reading.”

2 The Structure of the Research and Population Study

In this chapter the procedure of research including a number of steps to implement the practical part of it was conducted. It was preceded by the theoretical study. Case study as the main research method to investigate the most effective means of developing the learners' reading skills and strategies at pre – intermediate level was described; target population was observed and the environment was studied and analysed.

2.1 Case Study as a Research Method

The research method used by the author of the diploma paper is the case study as the main method of research. The author's special attention was focused on the results of the learners' progress test in the 7th form (the previous school year) and the diagnostic test at the beginning of the 8th form.

The data collection and data analysis revealed the fact that reading, being one of the productive skills, seemed to cause a lot of difficulties for learners. Having been interested in this situation, the author has organized her research to solve this problem through **case studies**.

As Nunan, (1992:232) considers, research is “a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, and (3) analysis and interpretation of data.”

In order to carry out the research Nunan recommends to:

- get a result with scientific methods objectively, not subjectively.
- solve problems, verify the application of theories, and lead on to new insights.
- enlighten both researcher and any interested readers.
- prove/disprove new or existing ideas, to characterise phenomena (i.e., the language characteristics of a particular population), and to achieve personal and community aims. That is, to satisfy the individual's quest but also to improve community welfare.
- prove or disprove, demystify, carry out what is planned, to support the point of view, to uncover what is not known, satisfy inquiry. To discover the cause of problem, to find the solution to a problem, etc.(ibid.:2)

It should be noted that in “The glossary of key terms in research” by Nunan the case study is “the investigation of the language behaviour of a single individual or limited number of individuals over a period of time.”(ibid.:229) In other words, a case study offers a chance to analyse a single person, group, company or event, as an example of a general type. It allows the researcher to look at something in details, that is not typical for other research methods.

According to the Internet source (Online 3) Case studies:

- are written summaries or syntheses of real-life cases based upon data and research
- require a researcher to isolate and think through the key issues involved against both theory and the larger comparative environment
- identify appropriate strategies for the resolution of the 'case'
- weigh the pros and cons of the remedial options/strategies
- recommend and present a rationale for the best resolution (Online 3)

In contrast with other research methods, Cottrell (2003:218) suggests the following advantages of adopting case studies:

- Case studies are useful in illustrating a point.
- They allow more investigation into small details; these details can throw new light upon how something really works in practice.
- As they are drawn from 'real life', case studies may show up complexities that do not emerge under controlled conditions such as experiments.
- They can be used to test out a theory.
- The level of detail considered can be helpful in advancing the theoretical framework.
- Case studies may open up new lines of enquiry for research.
- They are useful in identifying how rules, theory or work practice should be adapted to meet the needs of special cases.
- They can draw out examples of good or bad practice in the workplace. (Cottrell, 2003:218)

Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. Triangulation is the use of different research approaches, methods and techniques in the same study. Triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories and even methodologies. It is possible to use multiple tools such as records, observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Nunan (1992) refers to Yin, who considers that validity and reliability are important for case study research and suggests that four critical tests confront the case study for the researcher.

These are:

- construct validity (establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied)
- internal validity (establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships)
- external validity (establishing the domain or population to which a study's findings can be generalized)
- reliability (demonstrating that the study can be replicated with similar results). (Nunan, 1992:80)

However, Nunan (ibid.:232) himself gives the following notion for validity pointing out that it is "The extent to which one has really observed what one set out to observe, and the extent to which one can generalise one's findings from the subjects and situations to other subjects

and situations.”

According to Nunan (ibid.:231-2) reliability is “The extent to which (a) an independent researcher, on analysing one’s data, would reach the same conclusions and (b) a replication of one’s study would yield similar results.” He also maintains, that “*internal reliability* refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research.” But “*external reliability* refers to the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study”.

To sum up, the case study is a valuable method of research. It is ideal for many types of investigations. Researchers can use it in combination with other methods.

2.2 Procedure of the Research

The theoretical study of methods, innovations, new means of teaching languages helped the author of the present paper to consider and select the most effective means of developing learners’ reading skills and strategies at pre- intermediate level.

In fact, research is a process that has the aim of improving (increasing) knowledge, resolving doubts or solving a problem. Research implies involvement that leads to understanding. An old proverb states: “Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand.” Moreover, involvement in learning means possessing skills and attitudes that let the teacher to seek resolutions to questions while teaching. Research is also important for education, because teachers should change their focus from “what we know” to an emphasis on “how we come to know”.

Therefore, the teacher’s role as a facilitator of learning in an inquiry classroom or group is important. The following list of the teacher’s activities is adopted from the Internet source and used by the author of the present paper.(Online 4)

The teacher reflects on the purpose and makes plans for inquiry learning.

- He/she plans ways for each learner to be actively engaged in the learning process.
- He/she understands the necessary skills, knowledge, and habits of mind needed for inquiry learning.
- He/she understands and plans ways to encourage and enable the learner to take increasing responsibility for his learning.
- He/she insures that classroom learning is focused on relevant and applicable outcomes.
- He/she is prepared for unexpected questions or suggestions from the learner.

- He/she prepares the classroom environment with the necessary learning tools, materials, and resources for active involvement of the learner.

The teacher facilitates classroom learning.

- The teacher's daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly facilitation plans focus on setting content learning in a conceptual framework. They also stress skill development and model and nurture the development of habits of mind.
- He/she accepts that teaching is also a learning process.
- He/she asks questions, encouraging divergent thinking that leads to more questions.
- He/she values and encourages responses and, when these responses convey misconceptions, effectively explores the causes and appropriately guides the learner.
- He/she is constantly alert to learning obstacles and guides learners when necessary.
- He/she asks many Why? How do you know? and What is the evidence? type of questions.
- He/she makes student assessment an ongoing part of the facilitation of the learning process. (Online 4)

Hence, the author of the diploma paper has summed up, analyzed and designed a number of steps to implement the practical part of the research:

- a target group was chosen;
- the group was informed of the purpose of the research;
- questionnaires for learners regarding their attitude to reading were designed and administered;
- the study of the peculiarities of the target population background and environment was conducted;
- data collecting to determine the starting level of reading comprehension in the group was completed;
- materials for successful development of reading skills and strategies were properly selected and designed;
- reading strategies instructions were adapted and implemented;
- a set of exercises in different reading skills and strategies were prepared, systematized and trained in the classroom;
- necessary research activities, i.e., classroom observation, spreading the relevant questionnaires were carried out;
- current testing and assessing the learners' reading comprehension progress were carried out during the study;
- progress testing for gaining the data on the learners' progress was administered;
- relevant conclusions of the results of the research were assessed and drawn.

At the beginning of the research process the target group was informed about the purpose of the research, the learners' interest to it was shown and their participation in it was motivated. The teacher - researcher studied individual learning behaviour and learning profiles. The population was introduced to reading skills and strategies which were integrated and trained in EFL classroom during the investigation. To meet the goal of the paper and to prove the hypothesis, the case study has been selected.

Finally, Freeman (1998:34) considers that "Inquiry is speculating about why something is as it is, why it happens or works (or doesn't happen or work) the way it does." He also adds: "Inquiry includes both the attitude that spawns this engagement and the energy and activity that put it into action."(ibid.)

2.3 Target Population and the Environment of the Research

The research was carried out at Riga Secondary school No 92. There are 92 teachers, 48 classes with 1200 learners in them. The learners of our school understand that English plays a major international role in the world nowadays – it is more widely spoken and written than any other language has ever been. It has become the first truly global language.

Therefore the learners pay much attention to learning English as it will help them in their future work and their communication with foreigners. They know if they pass the English exam well and get excellent certificates they will enter any higher education institutions in our country and abroad.

There are 10 teachers of English and 6 English studies. Most of teachers have professional experience. They know their subject well and conduct the lessons at a high scientific – theoretical level, control learners, implement differentiated approach to them when teaching and bringing them up. Teachers improve their pedagogical skills by regularly attending different language courses and taking part in different projects concerning the teachers' exchange.

The teachers of our school use not only audio and video appliances but computers, CDs, the Internet and many other achievements of modern technology. They are experienced, intelligent and hardworking. Their learners win prizes in district and republic Olympiads (competitions). Some learners were also winners of international olympiads in Sweden,

India, Russia and Germany in Mathematics, Chemistry and Information and Computer Studies. More experienced teachers render all round help to young teachers.

As for the school administration they are professional and experienced teachers and leaders trying to share their knowledge with their colleagues. The headmaster sets clear teaching aims, and deals with coaching colleagues for new tasks and procedures. She tries to be an example for other teachers, encourages them to be creative in their job.

To start the process of research, the target group of the study was chosen from the learners of the 8th forms, having approximately the same environment and background. They have 3 lessons a week, their complete set of English text-books is *New Opportunities* of the Pre-Intermediate level. The lessons were conducted in the English study. It is equipped with modern technologies: a TV set with a video recorder and a tape recorder. There are a lot of additional grammatical, lexical, audio and video materials, visual aids, handouts, books and journals on special interests. The target group was a mixed ability group, it consisted of 28 learners. There were 13 girls and 15 boys. Their proficiency of English was very different. The group was average, some learners were hardworking, intelligent, quick to learn and took their work seriously. Sometimes they were imaginative and creative. However, some learners did not like to study, they missed the lessons, sometimes were unfriendly and aggressive at the lessons and were not ready for serious studies and hard work. Though sometimes they were very sincere and emotional.

There were frequent discussions with the class teachers about their learners' attendance, behaviour at the lessons and doing homework. The collected information was useful and valuable.

The learning environment depended on the time of the day, days of the week and, of course, on the season of the year. If the learners had the first or the last lessons they were not active and interested in learning. Thus, the most productive lessons were in the middle of school-day. And if they had a test in other subjects before or after an English lesson, they were not so hardworking as usual.

The author of the present paper has been working with them since the 5th form. It has given her an opportunity to observe and analyse the learners' development, to find out almost all their strengths and weaknesses. In spite of the fact that the learners were good at speaking,

they had considerable problems in reading comprehension as they usually tried to translate each word in the text but did not try to understand the meaning of the whole text. That is why the author of the present paper has focused on solving this problem.

The author has designed and administered two questionnaires to get the data about the attitude of the learners to reading, their preferable genres for reading and learners' reasons for studying English.

The questionnaire (Appendix 3) was a part of the research stating the use of reading in language studies.

The aim of the questionnaire was to find out the learners' attitude to reading.

Nowadays learners are not interested in reading, and they even find reasons to avoid reading because of the lack of time, possibility of getting useful information from the Internet, TV, etc. They also argue that compulsory literature is boring.

However, the answers to the first question revealed that only 11% of the respondents had a negative attitude towards reading.

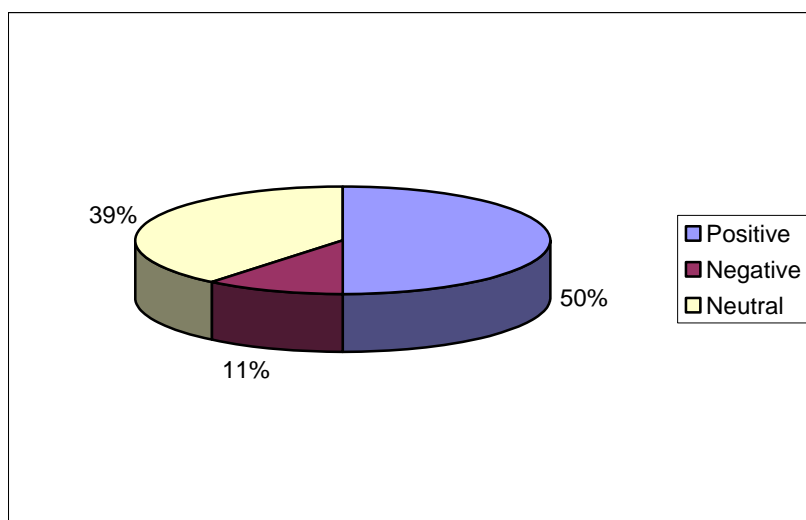


Figure 2.1 **Learners Attitude to Reading**

It can be seen from Figure 2.1 that learners' reading habits were not developed and their motivation to read was not very high.

There was another important question - "What do learners read?" The answer to this question can be seen in Figure 2.2.

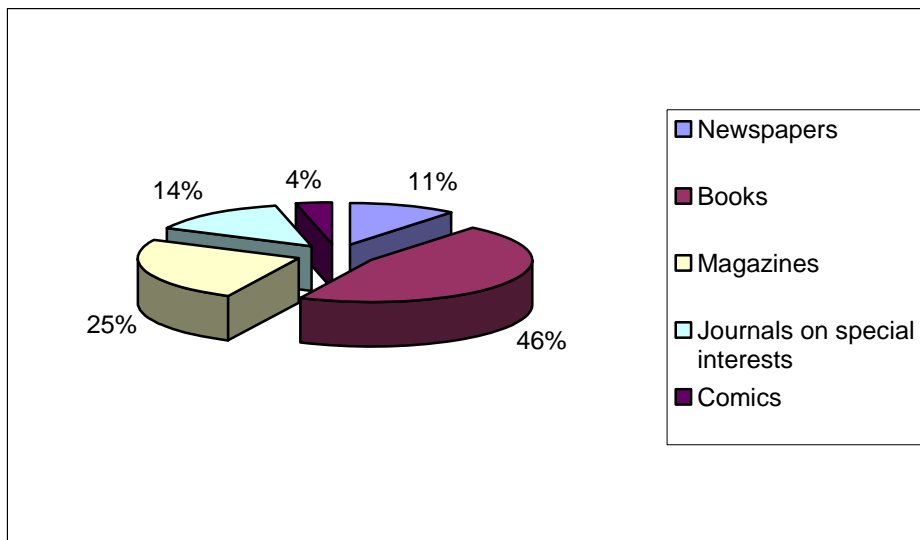


Figure 2.2 Most Frequently Read Types of Texts

Hence it was possible to make a conclusion that despite the fact that the learners used computers, the Internet, radio and TV they also read books (46%), magazines (25%), journals on special interests (14%), newspapers (11%) and even comics (4%).

It was interesting to note that most of them wanted to improve their reading skills (68%) and agreed with the point that reading was useful and necessary. Only 11% of learners did not know the answer.(Figure 2.3)

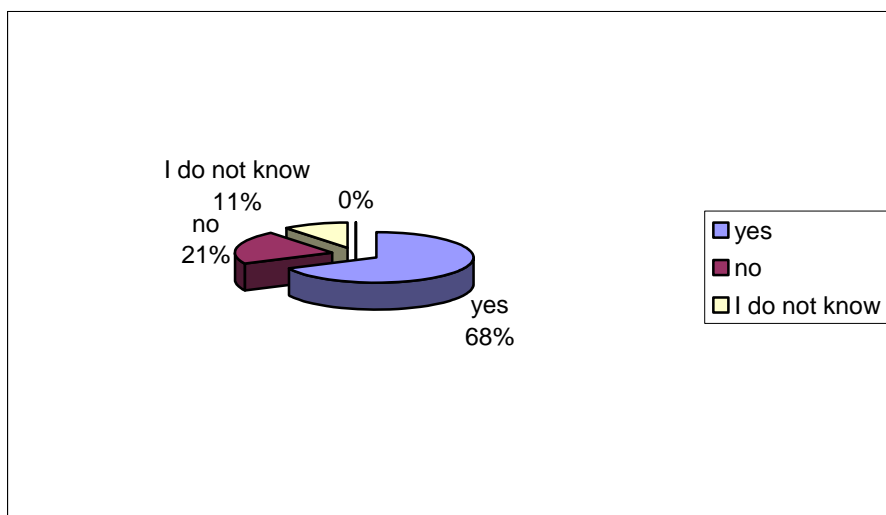


Figure 2.3 Learners' Desire to Improve Reading Skills

As for question “Why do you read?” it was pleasant to mark (Figure 2.4) that 14% of the learners were fond of reading, for 29% - it gave them pleasure and satisfaction and for 25% it

widened their outlook and knowledge, for 21% of learners it was very important to become an intelligent and highly-educated person. About 7% of learners were made to read by parents and teachers and only 4% of pupils read for specific purposes.

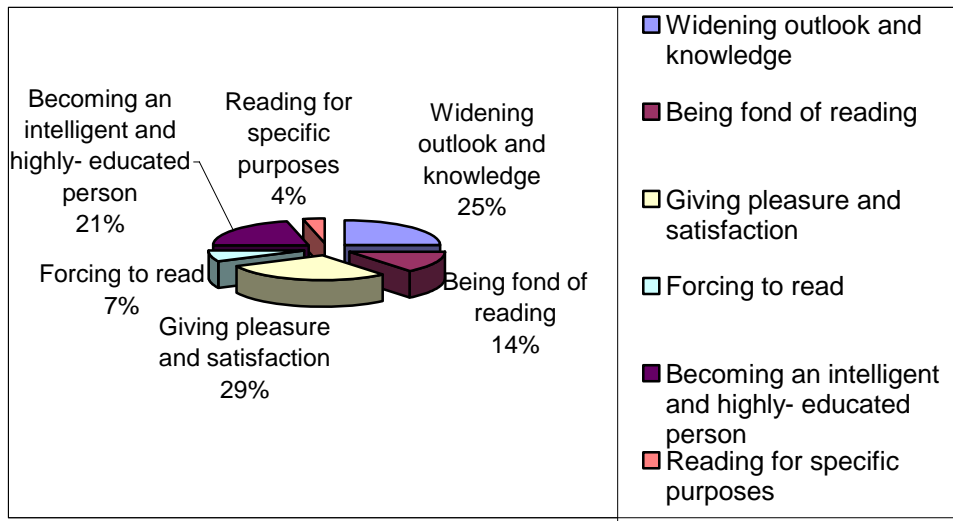


Figure 2.4 Why Learners Read

In Figure 2.5 it is shown that most of learners (57%) preferred to read in complete silence, whereas 43% – with background music, however nobody liked to read aloud, probably because of their age peculiarities and the speed of their reading.

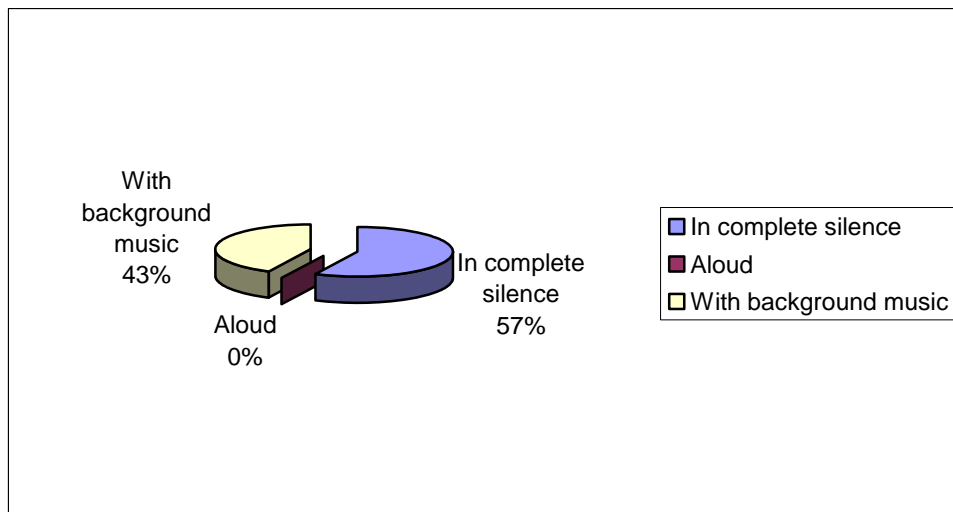


Figure 2.5 How Learners Read

Unfortunately, many learners (75%) were multitaskers who liked to do several things simultaneously. Therefore, they read inattentively and thoughtlessly and reading did not have any effect on them (7%); though it calmed some learners (54%).

57% of the learners preferred to read in the evening, before going to bed, and 32% of the learners in their spare time for pleasure.

As to their favourite genres for reading they were various. From Figure 2.6, it can be concluded that they prefer to read science fiction, horror stories, adventure stories, romances and reference books, and least of all they like plays and poetry.

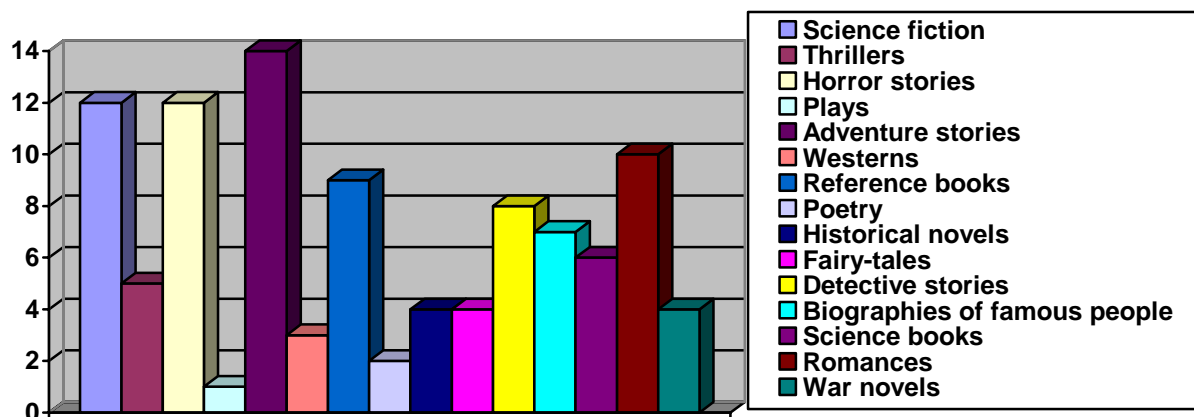


Figure 2.6 Favourite Genres

It is evident that, the learners were curious, they read footnotes to get more useful information (39%), and if they did not understand something (47%) they read glossaries, footnotes and bibliographies. Only for 14% of learners it was not so important (Figure 2.7)

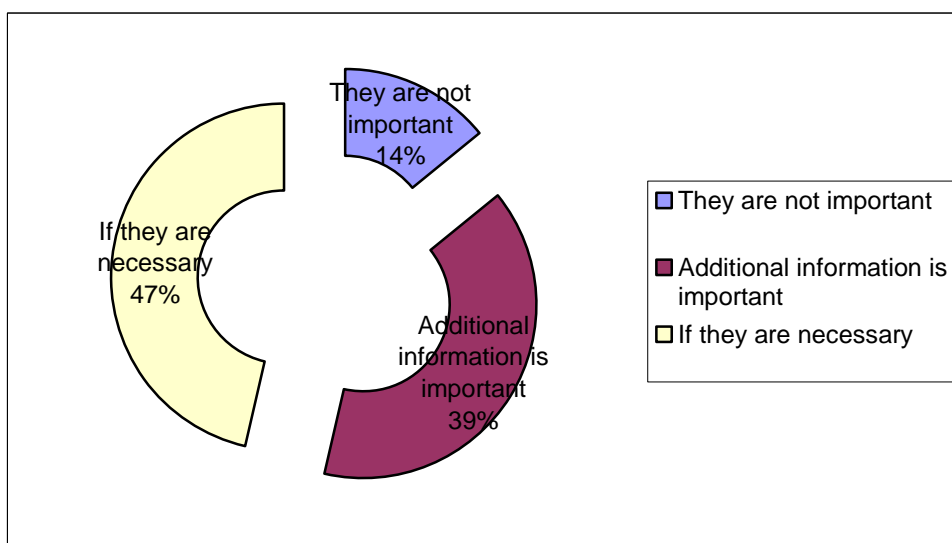


Figure 2.7 Importance of Footnotes, Bibliographies and Glossaries

Unfortunately, most of the learners (91%) preferred reading in their the native language for reading, but the teacher considers that the percentage of respondents will reduce in the upper grades.

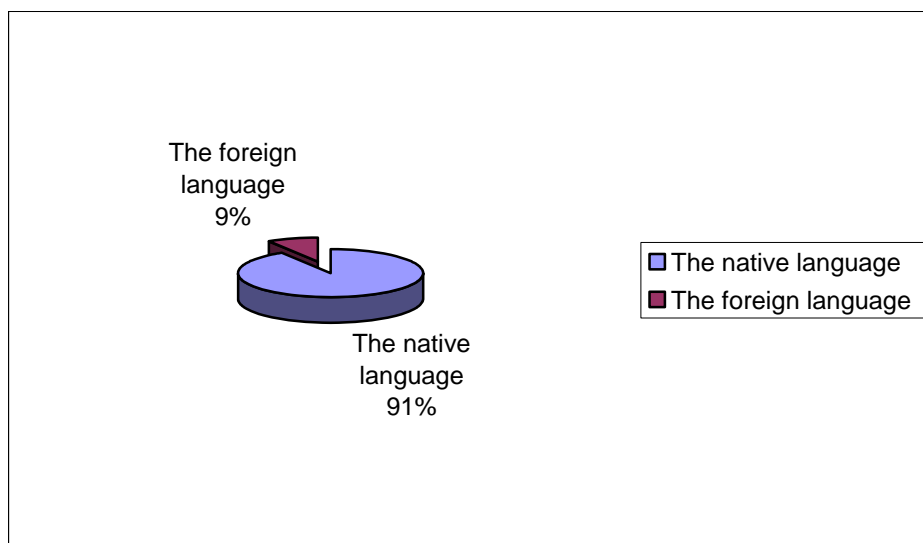


Figure 2.8 **What Language Learners Prefer for Reading**

The results of the research about the learners' motivation for studying English (Appendix 4) is reflected in Figure 2.9.

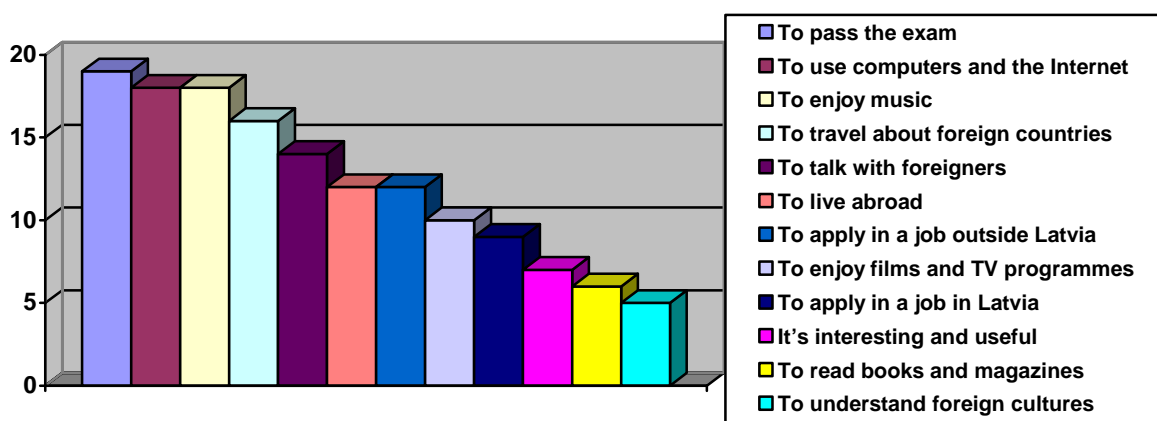


Figure 2.9 **Motivation for Studying English**

The analysis of the results showed that learners were motivated by various factors. As can be seen in Figure 2.9, learners were most motivated by the necessity to pass the exam in the 9th form. Other reasons (to use computers and the Internet, to enjoy music, to travel about foreign countries, to talk with foreigners) reflected the learners' interests and means of entertainment, and were not less important than the need to pass the English exam. Most of the learners did

not think that reading books, magazines and learning English were interesting. When they were asked to explain why, they replied that it took a lot of time, was not easy and demanded a lot of hard work.

Therefore, it was necessary for the teacher to decide how to improve the situation, to plan the future work, by making learning process more interesting for the learners.

3 Practical Approach to Reading Skills and Strategies and Interpretation of the Obtained Results

This chapter on the developing reading skills and strategies are focuses on the process of integrating and training them in the classroom. Special attention is paid to reading strategies instructions as even a simple activity cannot be done successfully without a clear and accurate instruction. Two complimentary activities: data collection and data analysis were used for carrying out the research.

3.1 Reading Strategies Instructions

Teaching reading is not an easy task owing to the complex nature of the reading process. It is an affective as well as a cognitive process. Reading is a complex activity where a lot of different sub-skills are used together to make the reading process most effective and productive.

Readers do several important things when they read. Whenever they read they apply a number of strategies, either consciously or unconsciously, therefore, using the suggested reading strategies presented in Chapter 1 will definitely help the learners to become more successful readers.

Good readers always read English texts for overall meaning. They try to understand the main ideas or purposes of each paragraph of the text. However, poor readers often read word by word to understand each small detail.

Consequently, the teacher should give their learners instructions what they are supposed to do before doing each activity.

There are two important rules for giving instructions which Harmer (2004a: 4) recommends: instructions must be as simple as possible and logical.

Many experienced English teachers think that instructions for certain activities should be given in English to create the “English” atmosphere in the classroom, though there might often be some problems with comprehension. Therefore, it is necessary to present them

clearly and accurately as even a simple activity cannot be done successfully because of that the learners did not understand what to do.

To give helpful and correct instructions, the author of the present paper follows Scrivener's (2005: 90-1) advice: to use short sentences for each key piece of information; not to give instructions beforehand; to separate instructions from the other remarks, jokes, etc; to make eye contact with as many learners as possible; to use the body language and gestures for giving instructions; to make sure that the learners have understood what they are being asked to do.

Using the above mentioned in her classrooms, the author points out that one of the important reasons why learners may not successfully follow the activity instructions is that they are not attentive and ready to listen to them. To attract their attention the author waits for silence in the classroom and checks the learners' readiness to comprehend her explanations.

Ultimately, the teacher establishes her authority and uses it appropriately, she speaks quietly, confidently and convincingly.

3.2 Developing the Reading Skills and Strategies and Integrating Them into EFL classroom

Reading is an important language skill that is nowadays in more demand than at any time in our history. With the invention of the Internet learners need to develop reading in order to understand the information the world embraces them with.

Reading is a highly effective means in teaching/learning, so it has a considerable place in the classroom where language learning is the main purpose. However, it is necessary to teach learners how to read for meaning. Teachers should use texts to convey the meaning to motivate learners and promote learning in the classroom.

It is also important to mention the main aim to develop the reading skills suggested by Nuttall (2005:31) "To enable students to enjoy (or at least feel comfortable with) reading in the foreign language, and to read without help unfamiliar authentic texts, at appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding."

There are some principles that promote teaching reading. Harmer (2004a: 70-1) proposes six useful principles:

1. *Reading is not a passive skill.* It is active. Learners should understand the meaning of words, the arguments, and work out whether they agree with them.
2. *Learners need to be engaged with what they are reading.* If learners are not engaged and interested in the reading process, they are less likely to benefit from it.
3. *Learners should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.* The meaning and the message of the text is just as important as language and teachers should give learners a chance to respond to that message in some way. Learners can express their feelings provoking personal engagement with the topic and the language.
4. *Prediction is a major factor in reading.* Book covers, photographs, headlines help learners to predict what is in the book. Teachers should give learners 'hints' to make them better and more engaged readers.
5. *Match the task to the topic.* Teachers should select exciting reading tasks- imaginative and challenging.
6. *Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.* Teachers should integrate any reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks.

Reading is improved through practice, so teachers pay much attention to developing the reading skills and strategies. To define effective reading strategies, a questionnaire was designed by the author of the present paper and administered among 11 English teachers.

The obtained results have been summed up, interpreted and presented in Appendix 5.

The teachers have chosen the following effective reading strategies for teaching learners and explained the main reasons:

- looking at titles, subtitles, pictures and other visuals before reading. (It can help to orient the reader).
- creating some questions before learners read which they think or hope the text will answer. (It could be useful as a pre-reading task; it helps to focus on the specific information).
- reading a text very quickly the first time to get the gist (main idea). (It helps to get the main idea about the text and to pass exams).
- finding the sentence that contains the main idea. (It helps to understand the text more quickly in general).

- keeping eyes moving past the unfamiliar words and thus trying to understand the main ideas. (Unfamiliar words may not be important; it helps to save time and efforts; it's effective when you don't have a lot of time).
- starting reading without panicking. (It's necessary to teach students to do it).
- using different reading strategies to read different types of texts. (It could make the task easier; it's effective for training these strategies and doing reading activities).
- thinking of other words the learners already know that are similar to the unknown word(s) they come across. (It helps learners with understanding and eliminates negative feelings).
- looking for linking words that help to explain relationship between sentences (*e.g. in contrast, for example*). (It is reasonable; it helps developing speech and understanding relations between parts of a text through the use of logical connectors).
- trying to understand the relationship between the main ideas and supporting details. (It can help to think logically and to imagine the whole picture).

The author of the present paper has analysed the results of the questionnaire and has adopted a set of strategies for training her learners.

Then at the special strategy lesson the target population was provided with the handouts . The learners read and discussed these strategies. After that they had to find examples for the tasks in their textbooks *New Opportunities Pre- Intermediate*, using Strategies boxes in them. The learners found the following strategies such as: predicting; previewing; working out meaning of words in context; doing multiple-choice questions; identifying facts and opinions; matching topics and paragraphs; sequencing; gapped sentences; using titles; guessing; using illustrations and etc.

At the next lesson the handouts of Reading Strategies for Learners (Appendix 6) were given and analysed. The learners' attention was drawn to the fact that all these pre-, while-, and post- reading strategies are activities used to help learners to increase reading abilities.

There is a lot of reading in *New Opportunities Pre-Intermediate*. Each module has a wide variety of different text types: magazine profiles; magazine articles and interviews; literature extracts; from websites; questionnaires; advertisements; letters; reports; brochures; encyclopedia extracts; reviews.

When working with reading tasks in class, the author of the present paper showed her learners the strategies that would work best for the reading purpose and the type of the text. She explained how and why learners should use the strategies. She also encouraged the learners' development of reading skills and the use of reading strategies, mentioning how a particular strategy can be used in a different type of the reading task or with another skill. The teacher used the following skills recommended by Zukowski/Faust, Johnston & Atkinson (1983: v-vi) for various exercises, too. (Appendix 7)

It is evident that reading has been improved through practice and, of course, the strategy training has helped learners to read more effectively.

Reading is the best practice for teaching to read, which involves a range of elements for developing reading skills such as: predicting, previewing, skimming, scanning, surveying, generalizing, summarizing, concluding, etc.

Many activities designed to increase reading comprehension are variations of the following two skills: *skimming* (fast reading for: general ideas, overall views of the text, main topics, structures, etc.) and *scanning* (fast reading for: specific information (e.g. facts, numbers, dates, names, addresses, etc.))

During this school year the author of the present paper gave various texts on these activities and also asked the learners to underline all the words, expressions or sentences that they could understand or guess the main idea of the passages. She used newspaper articles, advertisements and asked the learners to find what information different persons might draw from them.

Such strategies as *predicting* (guessing what is to come next) and *previewing* (using the table of contents, the preface, the appendix, the text and paragraph headings) were implemented by the teacher at the lessons, too. It was especially useful when skimming and scanning the text.

One of while-reading activities is questioning. It plays an important role in reading comprehension. Therefore, questions are helpful both for the teacher and to the learner. According to Nuttall (2005: 184-190) there are four aspects of questions:

1. Forms of question: *yes/no* questions; alternative questions; *wh-* questions (who, what, which, when, where); *how/why* questions.

2.Presentation of questions: spoken or written questions; open-ended, multiple choice or T/F questions.

3.Types of questions: What are we to ask about?

4.The questioner: a teacher or a pupil.

While training the learners for reading comprehension, the author of the present paper more often used the most popular question types such as multiple – choice, T/F and wh – questions. The teacher used multiple - choice questions both to correct learners in understanding texts and to test their comprehension. As for true/false questions she provided a useful check on the comprehension when learners identified the answers either as right or wrong. It focused on details. However, wh – questions were given preference by the teacher as they might connect questions with facts in the texts, ask the learners’ opinion and give them an opportunity to offer their own interpretation of the text.

The teacher considers that another area where it is necessary to train the learners is in recognizing the different devices used to design textual cohesion and especially the use of and link-words in the text. It is important for the learners to understand that a text is not made up of separate sentences, but that it is a net of related ideas. When skimming, the learners should be taught to recognize connectors when they come across them because those link-words will help them to understand the meaning of the passage.

Therefore some exercises were suggested by the teacher to recognize the function of the link-words, to find equivalents and complete texts with the missing connectors.

The author of the present paper also used the following reading tasks at the lessons:

- arranging the illustrations, photos, pictures of the text in the correct order;
- reading the predictions, captions and matching them with the photos or illustrations;
- matching the Key Words, vocabulary from the text with the definitions;
- arranging the cut-up paragraphs or messages in the correct order;
- reading the article and matching the titles with the sections;
- using strategies for true/ false statements, correcting the false information;
- reading emails, paragraphs, sections and putting them in order by using linking expressions;
- reading the article and matching the questions with the paragraphs;
- reading advertisements, identifying facts and opinions;
- reading and listening to the written text for identifying factual mistakes when comparing information in written and spoken texts;

- reading the whole text to get the general idea and putting the missing sentences into the appropriate places in the text;
- completing the article with the Key Words;
- completing the sentences with the endings;
- discussing interpretations of feelings about the text;
- acting out the dialogues, stories, episodes; and etc.

The sequence of one of the reading lessons is designed in Appendix 8.

The teacher considers that all these exercises made the learners more confident and efficient readers. The results of this work during the school year are shown in the final test and are presented in the next sub-chapter.

3.3 Data Collecting and Analysis

To motivate learners to read English texts, to learn and acquire the English language the author of the present paper was involved in the research process. Two complementary activities: data collection and data analysis were used for carrying out the research. According to Freeman (1998:35) “ Data collection is the process of gathering information in a disciplined and systematic way about a puzzle or a research-able question.” And also Freeman states that ...“data analysis involves taking the data apart to see what is there and then putting them together to see how they respond to the question or puzzle under investigation.” (ibid.:36)

The data were collected with the help of the questionnaires, testing and current assessment, followed by the analysis of the obtained facts and pedagogical observation.

To collect the data on the target population’ two questionnaires were designed, administered and analysed. The results of these questionnaires (Appendices 3, 4) regarding the learners’ attitude to reading, their preferable genres for reading and their motivation are presented in the previous chapter.

To develop the learners’ reading skills and to integrate the most effective reading strategies into the classroom a questionnaire was administered with 11 English teachers and shown in (Appendix 5).

Regular training the reading strategies, presented in the Strategies boxes of the *Students’ book* and using a *List of Reading Strategies for Pupils* (Appendix 6) helped the learners to read more effectively way. Using these reading strategies the teacher showed learners how they could adjust their reading behaviour to deal with different situations and reading

purposes. She helped learners to develop a set of reading strategies and match suitable strategies to each reading situation. The teacher taught them to get the maximum benefit from their reading with the minimum effort.

The achievement in mastering reading strategies was established on the basis of testing the improvement in reading comprehension of the target group at the beginning and at the end of the research. Certainly, there was current testing between the diagnostic and progress testing. The interpretation and the analysis of these tests were carried out according to the learners' four achievement levels, worked out by the methodologists of a Secondary School No.92: high (comprehension 1.0 – 0.81 %), optimum (comprehension 0.80 – 0.66 %), sufficient (comprehension 0.65 – 0.51 %) and insufficient (comprehension less than 0.50 %).

For the diagnostic and progress tests the following activities were chosen and implemented such as: matching the paragraphs with the titles; *true/ false* statements, correcting the false information; completing the sentences with the endings; answering the questions.

The diagnostic test was designed to check the practical skills, strategies and knowledge according to the requirements and contents of the pre- intermediate (the 8th form) level. The group results were not satisfactory enough to state about successful acquirement of the programme of the previous school year. (Figure 3.1).

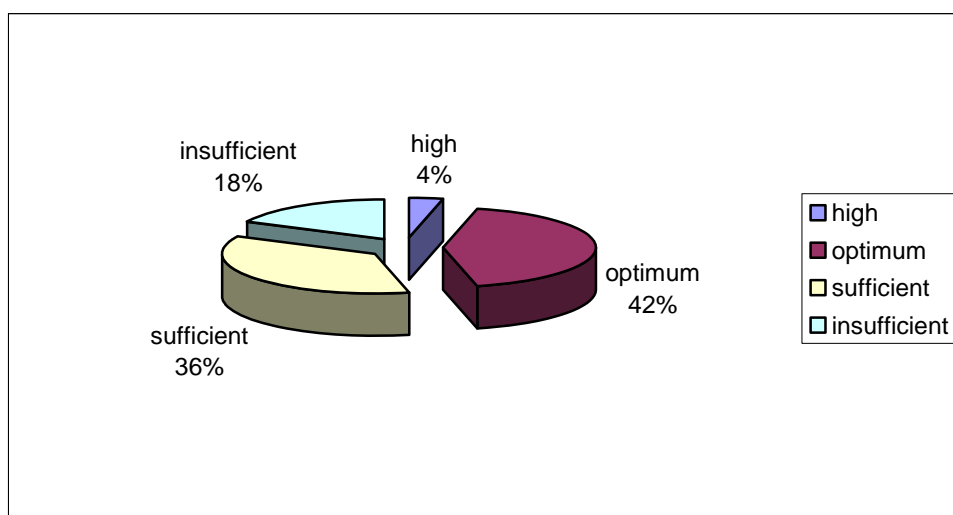


Figure 3.1 **Diagnostic Test in Reading Comprehension**

When analysing the results of the diagnostic test it is possible to state that most of the group (79%) coped with exercise No. 1 (matching the paragraphs with the titles). It turned out that

exercises No.3 (completing the sentences) and No.4 (answering the questions) were the most difficult tasks for learners. As for exercise No.2 the learners coped only with the first part of the task (true/ false statements) but they had a problem with correcting the false information. Therefore, to do well and even better the teacher should pay more attention to training different skills and strategies in performing reading tasks.

To develop reading skills and strategies during the period of the research the author of the paper constantly used and trained in the classroom various activities and strategies which are presented in Appendices 2, 6, 7. The teacher practised reading not only as a class activity but as an individual learners' homework. For example, on the basis of the same text some exercises of a different difficulty level were prepared by the teacher instead of one activity for the whole class. Thus each learner could work at home according to his/ her individual level. Of course, this work stimulated weaker learners, while the better learners were not held back.

The teacher used to thank the learners for their work after successful lessons, and often used positive short notes on their current and test papers. Additional marks for perfect work, additional points for the next tests and other rewards also were used. The teacher always tried to protect the learners' self-esteem and to increase their self-confidence.

At the end of the research the progress test was carried out. The test complied with the aim to assess the achievements of developing the reading skills and strategies.

The group results can be claimed as satisfactory as regards the successful acquirement of the programme. The results are shown in Figure 3.2.

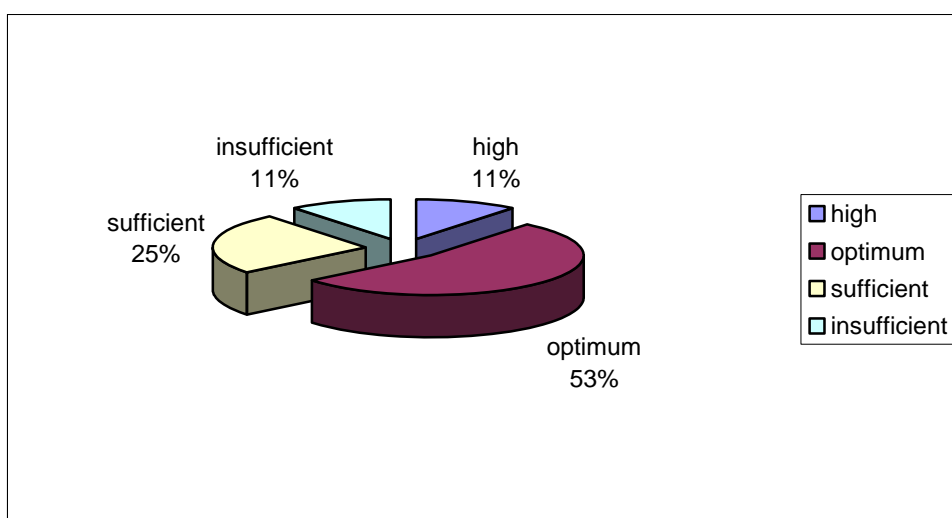


Figure 3.2 Progress Test in Reading Comprehension

It could be concluded that after training of reading skills and strategies during the research the progress is evident. When comparing the results of the diagnostic and the progress tests in Figure 3.1 - 3.2, the achievements in reading comprehension are presented: high (the comprehension has increased from 4% to 11%); optimum (from 42% to 53%); sufficient (has decreased from 36% to 25 %); insufficient (from 18% to 11 %).

Thus, the positive dynamic of these levels in reading comprehension is obvious.

To sum up, the author of the present paper considers that regular practice of using reading skills and strategies leads to positive changes in reading comprehension. The difference between the results of the diagnostic and the progress tests proves it. The research has shown that teachers can, and should teach their learners implementing these strategies.

Hence, the goal of the inquiry has been achieved and the hypothesis has been proved.

Conclusions

The diploma paper touches upon the concept of reading, the difficulties the learners experience when reading English, the learners' motivation for reading, the role of the teacher and the importance of integrating and training reading skills and strategies in the EFL classroom.

During the research the author of the present paper proved that systematically practised reading tasks using the material selected and designed to meet the learners' needs and interests might facilitate the development of their reading skills and strategies.

The investigation of the most effective means of developing learners' reading skills and strategies and integrating them into the classroom was organized and implemented through case studies which centred on the target group of the 8th form at Secondary School No. 92 during 2007/2008 school year.

Two complimentary activities: data collection and data analysis were used for carrying out the research.

Special attention was paid to reading strategies instructions as even a simple activity cannot be done successfully without a clear and accurate instruction.

Specially designed lists of the most effective reading strategies were distributed to each learner. Teaching/ learning reading process was developed by moving from simple activities to more complicated ones. Skillfully using these strategies and activities the learners were motivated to study the language, which led to improving their reading skills.

Thus, a regular practice of using reading skills and strategies as well as the pedagogical observation and testing during the inquiry resulted in positive changes concerning reading comprehension. The teacher considers that all these things made the learners more confident and efficient readers.

Furthermore, learners' progress has been noticed by not only the author herself, but also the learners themselves have evaluated their achievements in reading comprehension when discussing the results of their progress tests.

Taking into consideration the evident progress shown in the results of the progress test, it is possible to say that the hypothesis has been validated and the goal of the inquiry has been achieved. Moreover, the gained experience can be developed and enriched by further practice.

Theses

1. People learn through reading as an important language skill and also through speaking, listening and writing.
2. Reading is not a passive, but rather an active, and in fact an interactive process which involves what is in the text and what is the reader's mind.
3. Two main approaches explain the nature of learning to read: *bottom-up* processing, which focuses on developing the basic skill of matching sounds with the letters, syllables, and words written on a page, and *top-down* processing, which focuses on the background knowledge a reader uses to comprehend a written text.
4. Motivated learners are more successful in learning. A friendly and confidential atmosphere in the classroom promotes teaching/learning due to creation of emotional relationships between learners and a teacher. The stronger the learners' motivation is their better the results are.
5. The role of the teacher in the successful learning process is of great importance. Teachers do not only teach their subject. They develop their learners' intellect, form their views and characters, their attitudes to life and to other people.
6. The requirements and contents of the textbook, the syllabus and the curriculum were studied and analyzed, the role of reading skills and strategies was considered and assessed.
7. The data collection and data analysis revealed the fact that reading, being one of the productive skills, seemed to cause most difficulties for learners. Having being interested in this situation, the author has organized her research to solve this problem through case studies.
8. In order to develop reading skills the teacher provided learners with special reading strategies and their practice. When working with reading tasks in the classroom, the author of the present paper pointed out learners the strategies that would work best for

the reading purpose and the corresponding type of the text. The teacher explained how and why learners should use the strategies.

9. Consequently, the teacher gave her learners detailed instructions what they were supposed to do before, while and after doing each activity.
10. Through the pedagogical observation it was also stated that high self – esteem and self – confidence of the target population was probably caused by good mastering of reading strategies.
11. The author of the present paper considers that regular practice of using reading skills and strategies leads to significant positive changes in reading comprehension.

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Appendix 1

The table is worked out on the basis of Scrivener (2005:387)

The table lists some ways a teacher can influence the environment in which students learn

Aspects of the learning environment	The teacher's role
Classroom atmosphere	The teacher can help establish and maintain an appropriate, warm, focused working atmosphere.
Organisation	The teacher can take an active role in organising how time, space, materials, etc. are used.
Encouragement and support; promoting participation	The teacher can provide positive, realistic support and encouragement to take an active role.
Promoting guided discovery	The teacher can elicit answers, construct questions, offer partial examples, encourage hypotheses, etc. that lead the students to work out answers for themselves.
Presenting content information	The teacher can explain, lecture, answer questions, etc. on areas of the learning content.
Provision of samples of language	Instructions, comments, questions, stories, etc. in the target language provide language exposure for the learners.
Materials and tasks	The teacher can propose, suggest or select what work is done in class and the texts and other materials used.
Monitoring	The teacher can monitor what is happening in class.
Informative feedback	The teacher can offer objective information that may help the learning process; for example, information about errors made, information about how language is formed or used, information about how a task was performed, suggestions for future work, etc. The teacher can notice and help to draw attention to progress made, problems encountered, etc.
Habit of learning	As part of a regular timed lesson, the teacher can help provide a sense of form, regularity and concreteness to an otherwise more formless learning process.
Selecting, packaging and grading	The teacher can plan that new material is met and worked with in ways that students may find more manageable than if they had to deal with the entire language in one go.
Structuring and sequencing	The teacher can suggest or help select what to study and how to organise the programme of learning and the shape of individual lessons.
Authority	The teacher can use her authority where appropriate, e.g. to make decisions, to close activities or discussions, to require certain actions from individuals, etc.
Raising awareness	The teacher can ask questions, give information or do other things that help learners to notice areas they may otherwise not have been aware of. These may be do with the subject being studied or about other things, for example, about themselves and their way of learning, their relationships with other students or their behaviour.

Guidance and direction	The teacher can use her knowledge and experience where appropriate to counsel, guide and direct individuals.
Learner training	The teacher can raise learners' awareness about their own process of learning and can suggest ways they could become more efficient and effective learners.
Democracy and personal responsibility	The teacher can help ensure that all students are equally respected and their views and working styles equally valued and catered for. The teacher can make efforts to allow students to stay at the centre of their own learning and not resign ownership to the teacher or other members of the class.
Natural motivation	The teacher can work to allow natural motivation to flower – and especially take care not to get in its way or otherwise prevent it!

Appendix 2

The List of Reading Strategies is worked out on the basis of Bamford et al. (2004:177-178)

Basic Reading Strategies

1. Predicting the content of a passage or section of the text
2. Asking questions while you read and then looking for the answers
3. Looking for the main idea(s) to help you comprehend the entire text
4. Guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words or phrases
5. Linking what you know in your first language with words in English
6. Relying on what you already know to improve your comprehension
7. Picturing scenes in your mind to help you remember and understand your reading
8. Evaluating what you have learned and how well you are doing to help you focus your reading
9. Setting goals for yourself to help you improve areas that are important to you

Other Cognitive Reading Strategies

10. Concentrating on the grammar of unfamiliar constructions
11. Analyzing theme, style, and connections to improve your comprehension
12. Distinguishing between opinions and facts
13. Breaking down large phrases into small parts to help you understand difficult passages
14. Creating a map or drawing of related ideas to help you understand the relationships between words and ideas
15. Writing a short summary of what you read to help you understand the main ideas
16. Expanding your vocabulary and grammar to help you increase your reading

Other Metacognitive Reading Strategies

17. Making lists of relevant vocabulary to prepare for new reading
18. Working with classmates to help you develop your reading skills
19. Taking opportunities to practice what you already know

Other Compensating Reading Strategies

20. Taking notes to help you recall important details
21. Trying to remember what you understand from a text
22. Reviewing the purpose and tone of a text
23. Reviewing key ideas and details
24. Using physical action to help you remember information you have read
25. Classifying words into meaningful groups to help you remember them

Appendix 3

Questionnaire on Reading No.1

Dear Learners,

Would you be so kind as to do this Questionnaire on Reading.

Circle the answer you prefer:

1. What is your attitude to reading?
 - a) Positive
 - b) Negative
 - c) Neutral
2. Would you like to improve your reading skills?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I don't know
3. Why do you read?
 - a) It widens my outlook and knowledge
 - b) I am just fond of reading
 - c) It gives me pleasure and satisfaction
 - d) My teachers make me read
 - e) It is very important for me to become an intelligent and highly-educated person
 - f) I read for specific purposes (to get more information for my future profession)
 - g) Other (please, comment)_____
4. Are you a multitasker when reading a book? (Multitaskers like to do several things simultaneously)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I don't know
5. How does reading influence you?
 - a) It calms me down
 - b) It excites me
 - c) It doesn't influence on me
 - d) Other (please, comment)_____
6. How do you prefer to read?
 - a) In complete silence
 - b) Aloud
 - c) With background music
7. When do you like to read?
 - a) In my spare time
 - b) In the morning
 - c) In the afternoon
 - d) In the evening, before I go to bed
 - e) Other (please, comment)_____

8. Do you prefer to read in
 - a) the native language?
 - b) a foreign language?
9. What do you read most often?
 - a) Newspapers
 - b) Books
 - c) Magazines
 - d) Journals on special interests, e.g. computers, economies
 - e) Comics
 - f) Other (please, comments) _____
10. What genres do you prefer for reading?
 - a) Science fiction
 - b) Thrillers
 - c) Horror stories
 - d) Plays
 - e) Adventure stories
 - f) Westerns
 - g) Reference books (e.g. encyclopedias)
 - h) Poetry
 - i) Historical novels
 - j) Fairy- tales
 - k) Detective stories
 - l) Biographies of famous people
 - m) Science books
 - n) Romances
 - o) War novels
 - p) Other (please, comment) _____
11. Do you also read footnotes, bibliographies, glossaries?
 - a) No, the storyline is the most important for me
 - b) Yes, I read additional information to get more useful knowledge
 - c) I read it, if I do not understand something
12. Where do you get books and magazines?
 - a) I buy books
 - b) I borrow books them from a library (school/ local)
 - c) I borrow them from your friends or relatives
 - d) Other (please, comment) _____

Thank you for cooperation!

Appendix 4

Questionnaire No.2

Dear learners,

The following questionnaire was made in order to find out the reasons for studying English.

Will you be so kind and do the task.

What are the main reasons for studying English? (number them from the most significant reason to the less significant one).

- To pass the exam
- To travel about foreign countries
- To apply in a job outside Latvia
- To apply in a job in Latvia
- To live abroad
- To understand foreign cultures
- To enjoy music
- To use computers and the Internet
- To enjoy films and TV programmes
- To talk with foreigners
- To read books and magazines
- It's interesting and useful
- Other (please, comments)_____

Appendix 5

Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

Please, look through the reading strategies and define which strategies are effective and which are ineffective and why.

Reading strategies	Effective (E) (%)	Ineffective (I) (%)
1. using the finger to help eyes follow lines of the text	64%	36%
2. reading each word very carefully in order to understand the entire text	18%	82%
3. keeping eyes moving past the unfamiliar words and thus trying to understand the main ideas	100%	0%
4. saying words quietly to oneself	55%	45%
5. writing the meaning of new words in a native language in margin of a page	64%	36%
6. looking up unfamiliar words in a bilingual dictionary	55%	45%
7. starting reading without panicking	73%	27%
8. looking for linking words that help explain relationship between sentences (<i>e.g. in contrast, for example</i>)	73%	27%
9. asking the teacher for help whenever learners meet an unfamiliar word	45%	55%
10. using different reading strategies to read different types of texts	100%	0%
11. translating a difficult section of the text into a native language	91%	9%
12. thinking of other words the learners already know that are similar to the unknown word(s) they come across	82%	18%
13. finding the sentence that contains the main idea	91%	9%
14. reading a lot of different things in order to expand learners' vocabulary and improving their general comprehension	91%	9%
15. studying writing vocabulary lists and translations of words into a native language	55%	45%
16. trying to understand the relationship between the main ideas and supporting details	100%	0%
17. looking at titles, subtitles, pictures and other visuals before reading	100%	0%
18. reading a text very quickly the first time to get the gist (main idea)	100%	0%
19. understanding or highlighting words learners don't understand	91%	9%
20. creating some questions before pupils read which they think or hope the text will answer	100%	0%
21. limiting to looking up in the dictionary only a few unknown words	73%	27%
22. circling or highlighting key words in a bright colour	82%	18%

Appendix 6

List of Reading Strategies for Learners

Adopted from Holschuh et al. (1988:2-18)

Before You Read

- Consider what you already know about the topic. Spend some time remembering what you have already read and heard, using prior knowledge. Formulate questions about it.
- Talk about the author's background.
- Skim the material quickly. First, look at the titles and subtitles that are provided to predict content and organization on sequence of information.
- Scan the material again. This time, look for words or phrases that are highlighted, either in boldface or in *italics*.
- Review vocabulary or grammatical structures
- Scan the reading once more, this time to examine any illustrations, such as pictures, charts, figures, and their captions.
- Consider again what you know about the topic from your previous knowledge.

As You Read

- Be willing to tolerate some amount of ambiguity, especially when reading a selection for the first time.
- Be prepared to read the section more than once.
- Realize that some vocabulary is not essential to understanding the basic ideas and concepts presented.
- Notice if words and phrases you do not know are defined by the author.
- Use the context surrounding an unknown word or phrase to give you a general understanding of the word.
- Look for familiar affixes and roots in unknown vocabulary.
- Pay attention to Proper Names, the numbers, the punctuation, abbreviations, and grammar structures.
- Read paragraph by paragraph (or read groups of related paragraphs), and ask yourself what the main idea or purpose of each one is, and check your prediction.
- As you read a paragraph or section, ask yourself how the main idea or purpose relates to the previous paragraph.
- Try to determine the relationship between the main idea of a paragraph and its supporting details.
- As you read make notes.
- Use the comprehension questions as guides to the text, stopping to answer them as you read.
- As you finish one section of your reading section, take a moment to summarize it before you begin the next section. As you read the next section, try to relate new information to what you have already read.

After You Read

- After you have finished reading, summarize the main ideas and concepts. It may be helpful to write down this information if you did not take notes while reading. If you did take notes, read them over several times to make sure that you understand them.
- Think about the new information you have gained from reading. Ask yourself how it relates to what you knew about the topic previously.

Appendix 7

The table is worked out on the basis of Zukowski/ Faust (1983: v-vi)

Some Frequently Occurring General Types of Exercises That Develop Specific Reading Skills

EXERCISE TITLE	SKILL	PURPOSE
Reading for Details	skimming and scanning	to teach the students to read rapidly in search of one particular kind of fact
Vocabulary in Context	figuring out word meanings from context clues	to guide the students in learning to read more naturally; to show that sometimes (often) recognizing that a word is an adverb or a noun is enough and that word meanings grow as a person reads; to reduce dependence on the dictionary
Finding Main Ideas	extracting the main idea of a paragraph or reading	to learn to generalize, to synopsise, to read with conscious thinking
Critical Reading	inferring, judging, and applying the thoughts of the author	to learn to analyze what a writer intends and how this relates to the student's thoughts; to separate facts, opinions, and implications
Vocabulary from Context	guessing at word meanings intelligently	to reassure students that they can use their own resources instead of having to use a dictionary
Understanding Sequences (also called Sequencing or What happened next?)	understanding the logical arrangement within a reading	to alert students to sequence clues such as pronoun references and transition words and phrases; to direct students into understanding the natural progression of a chronology
Recognizing Organization	comprehending the types of organization that are available in English	to guide students into recognizing the basic rhetorical patterns of English; to sensitize them to appropriate uses of these patterns; to provide models for writing
Summary Practice	using the focus words and structures in a controlled writing situation	to lead the students into writing in a controlled way (Note: the summary practice is not a cloze exercise.)
Study Skills – Outlining	analyzing a reading to understand the structure	to direct students' analysis of an article; to teach outlining inductively

Appendix 8

The Sequence of the Reading Lesson

Theme: “Hamlet” by William Shakespeare.

Level of learners: Pre – Intermediate.

Resources: *New Opportunities Pre- Intermediate* (2007) Longman.

Objectives:

- to practice prediction and previewing;
- to scan texts for specific information;
- to read with a tape for providing efficient and fluent reading;
- to develop a variety of reading strategies;
- to help the learners to understand the plot and characters in an English literary work.

Procedure.

Before starting

1. Letting learners know the theme of the lesson.
2. Introducing to Literature Focus on the play *Hamlet*.
3. Reading about W. Shakespeare with the learners and helping them with any new vocabulary.
4. Asking learners if they have heard of any of the plays mentioned or any other Shakespeare plays (or seen films of them). Encouraging learners to give their opinions of them.
5. Asking learners to read the four kinds of genres and giving an example of each kind from literature in their own language.
6. Asking learners to look at the pictures and guessing what kind of story *Hamlet* is.

Reading and Listening

7. Playing the recording for learners to listen and read for gist understanding and to see if they guessed correctly. Telling them not to worry about remembering all the names of the characters or understanding every word.
8. Reading through the Strategies box with the class. Eliciting examples of more time words and expressions, e.g. *when, after, before*.
9. Learners read through sentences a-i and put the sentences into the correct order. (NB! If pupils disagree about the correct order of the sentences, ask them to refer back to the text and draw learners’ attention to time words and expressions that show the order of the actions.)
10. Using strategies for true/false statements, correcting the false information.
11. Asking learners to refer to the Key Words on the topic *Character and Personality* and to choose adjectives to describe each of the characters: Claudius, Hamlet, Laertes and Ophelia.

Talkback

12. Reading aloud the questions and discussing them in pairs.
13. The pairs feeding back their answers to the class.
14. Asking learners what they think present-day attitudes to ‘revenge’ are. How have attitudes to revenge changed since the time of the story of *Hamlet*?
15. Asking learners to write down some projects about W. Shakespeare, his great tragedy *Hamlet* and other famous plays and comedies.

