



Teaching Strategies for Reading Comprehension in the Algerian School: The Fifth Year of Primary Education as a Model

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Abstract

The curricula for teaching the Arabic language in Algeria aim to achieve communicative competence in the language, which necessitates diversifying pedagogical methods and instructional strategies to achieve this goal. Several teaching strategies have emerged and are employed depending on the targeted objectives of the educational process. Among these are the brainstorming strategy, the cooperative learning strategy, the mind-mapping strategy, the conceptual-mapping strategy, and others. Thus, the present study is devoted to introducing the most important instructional strategies applied in teaching the domain of reading comprehension among fifth-year primary school learners. It thereby responds to the following research problem: What are the modern strategies employed in teaching reading comprehension to fifth-year primary school learners, and how are they implemented?

Keywords: Teaching strategies, Arabic language, reading comprehension, fifth year of primary education

Stratégies d'Enseignement de la Compréhension de la Lecture à l'École algérienne: La Cinquième Année du Primaire comme Modèle

Résumé :

Les programmes d'enseignement de la langue arabe en Algérie visent à atteindre la compétence communicative dans la langue, ce qui nécessite de diversifier les méthodes pédagogiques et les stratégies pédagogiques pour atteindre cet objectif. Plusieurs stratégies pédagogiques ont émergé et sont employées en fonction des objectifs ciblés du processus éducatif. Parmi ceux-ci figurent la stratégie de remue-méninges, la stratégie d'apprentissage coopératif, la stratégie de cartographie mentale, la stratégie de cartographie conceptuelle, etc. Ainsi, la présente étude est consacrée à l'introduction des stratégies pédagogiques les plus importantes appliquées à l'enseignement du domaine de la compréhension de la lecture chez les apprenants de cinquième année du primaire. Il répond ainsi au problème de recherche suivant: Quelles sont les stratégies modernes employées pour enseigner la compréhension de la lecture aux élèves de cinquième année du primaire et comment sont-elles mises en œuvre?

Mots clés: *Stratégies pédagogiques, langue arabe, compréhension de l'écrit, cinquième année de l'enseignement primaire*



Introduction :

The curricula for teaching the Arabic language in Algeria seek to achieve communicative competence in the language, which necessitates diversifying pedagogical methods and instructional strategies to achieve this aim. Several teaching strategies have emerged and are employed according to the objectives targeted by the educational process, including the brainstorming strategy, cooperative learning, mind mapping, conceptual mapping, and others.

Accordingly, this study is dedicated to introducing the most important instructional strategies applied in teaching the domain of reading comprehension to fifth-year primary learners. This is addressed by answering the following research problem: What are the modern strategies employed in teaching reading comprehension to fifth-year primary learners, and how are they implemented? This problem has given rise to a set of research questions:

- What is meant by teaching strategies? What are their types? What are the modern strategies adopted in teaching reading comprehension to fifth-year primary learners?

To answer the research problem and questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- The fifth-year Arabic language curriculum employs modern teaching strategies in reading comprehension instruction.
- Reading comprehension teaching strategies vary according to the targeted competencies.

Study Methodology:

Given the nature of this inquiry, the descriptive-analytical approach was adopted, as it is appropriate for the type of study. The stages of reading comprehension instruction are described, the strategies applied are presented and analysed, and their effectiveness is subsequently evaluated.

1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

1.1 Definition of Teaching Strategies:

There are several definitions of the term "strategy." One defines it as "a set of ideas and principles that comprehensively and integratively address a field of human knowledge with the aim of achieving specific objectives, determining the methods and means that facilitate their attainment, and establishing appropriate evaluative procedures to assess the success and achievement of the predetermined goals" (Hassan Shehata, p. 109). Teaching strategies are defined as "the totality of methods, techniques, and procedures employed by the teacher to implement the teaching process inside or outside the classroom in a way that adds enjoyment and engagement, achieving the maximum possible educational objectives with minimal effort and time. A strategy follows a planned sequence of actions aimed at achieving relatively comprehensive educational goals" (Iman Mohamed Sahtout and Zainab Abbas Jaafar, pp. 23-24).

According to Legendre in the Dictionary of Pedagogy, teaching strategies are defined as "a well-designed general plan including cleverly organised procedures to achieve a clearly outlined goal in advance. The pedagogical strategy includes both teaching and learning strategies



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simultaneously, with the former relating to the teacher's activity concerning the learning subject and the learner concurrently" (Legendre, p. 1984).

Shaheen views teaching strategies as "a set of general rules and broad guidelines concerned with the means of achieving desired objectives. They comprise the following elements: educational objectives, the teacher's actions organised to guide their teaching, classroom management and organisation, and student responses resulting from stimuli planned and arranged by the teacher" (Shaheen Abdel Hamid, p. 23).

1.2 Components of the Strategy:

A strategy consists of four fundamental components: objectives, content, activities, and evaluation.

- **Objectives:** Skills developed in the learner and competencies aimed at being achieved.
- **Content:** The knowledge that leads to the achievement of objectives, as included in the curriculum.
- **Activities:** Programmes that include exercises such as reading and writing.
- **Evaluation:** A diagnostic process through which the teacher identifies achieved and unachieved competencies to propose appropriate pedagogical interventions for areas where the learner has failed to succeed.

1.3 Types of Modern Teaching Strategies

Learning strategies vary and include discovery learning, brainstorming, mind mapping, concept mapping, and

cooperative learning. This study focuses exclusively on mind mapping and concept mapping strategies, given their application in teaching reading comprehension within the Arabic language curriculum for fifth-year primary education.

1.3.1 Mind Mapping Strategy

A. Definition:

A mind map is an ultimate tool that stimulates or triggers thinking. It is straightforward, being the easiest method to input information into the brain and retrieve it. It is a creative and effective means of notetaking. The mind mapping strategy depends on drawing a map or shape that mimics how the mind reads information, with the central idea at the centre and branches extending according to categories or specialisations (Hassan Shehata, pp. 125–126). Bashira Malu El Ain defines it as "an expressive means of personal perspective regarding the world of ideas and plans, instead of being restricted to words only. Branches, images, and colours are used to express the idea. It is employed as a memory usage method relying on visual memory through an easy-to-review and recall illustrated drawing with simple rules and guidelines" (Bashira Malu El Ain, p. 77).

B. Steps for Constructing a Mind Map

- Students are directed to read and review the lesson topic.
- The teacher introduces the topic that includes the concept.
- Conduct a brainstorming session about the concept.
- Write suggestions about the concept on the board.



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- All the ideas used to classify them into similar categories and fields are discussed.
- Arrange the ideas into the form of a mind map.
- Students are instructed to read the lesson content silently.
- The central concept is discussed again, categorising it into subconcepts within similar groups.
- These groups are represented in a postreading map similar to the previous map.
- The two maps are compared to highlight their similarities and differences.
- Guide students to develop a final map.
- The teacher assigns students to read another topic and create a mind map as homework.

1.3.2 Concept Mapping Strategy:

A. Definition of the concept mapping strategy:

Concept maps are defined as conceptual diagrams that represent a set of organised concepts within a particular subject. These are arranged hierarchically in a sequential manner, with the most general or comprehensive concept placed at the top of the map, followed progressively by less general concepts at subsequent levels. Concepts of equal generality are positioned beside each other at the same level. The related concepts are connected by lines or arrows, on which words are written to clarify the type of relationship between them. In the field of language, concept maps are a strategy used to classify information in graphic form and assist learners in developing vocabulary, reading comprehension, study skills, and prewriting activities (Hassan Shehata, pp. 141-142).

Sharbineh defines concept maps as "a sequential hierarchical structure where the most general and comprehensive concepts are placed at the top of the map, and more specific concepts at the base. Relationships between concepts are represented by words or phrases written on lines connecting any two concepts" (Sharbineh N., p. 188).

According to Naidoo, concept maps are "a graphical representation of a concept and its relationship to the foundational concepts connected to it by lines" (Abu Aqil Ibrahim, p. 120).

B. Models for Constructing Concept Maps:

Among the models for constructing concept maps are the following:

Model 1: Martorella Model (1991):

This model is based on a series of steps as follows:

- The best examples of the concept are selected and arranged in a logical sequence.
- These include the necessary questions and educational activities related to the concept to engage learners and highlight similarities and differences between appropriate and inappropriate examples.
- Guide learners to compare the examples and provide feedback.
- If the defining attributes and normative characteristics of the concept are unclear, focus learners' attention on the best examples and assist them in remembering its attributes.



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- After mastering the concept definition, learners are directed to clarify the concept so that it attains a significant meaning.
- Position the concept appropriately among related concepts connected to learners' prior knowledge and information.
- Evaluate learners' level of mastery, with the minimum criterion being the ability to distinguish between positive and negative examples.

Model 2: Novak Model (1991):

Novak follows these steps in constructing a concept map:

- Identify the type of topic or problem of the lesson.
- Concepts are divided into general and specific concepts.
- Classify concepts that are related by a particular relationship.
- Build the concept map.
- Linking words are used to connect different concepts.
- Review the concept map.
- Assign titles to the linking words between concepts.

Model 3: The Necklace Model

The steps of this model are as follows:

- A reading passage from a text is selected, ensuring that it is not too long.
- Identify the main (operational) concepts.
- Arrange the concepts from the most general to the least general.
- Organise the concepts on tables or paper cards, starting with the most general concept.

- After the concepts are completed, they are connected via lines, and a linking word on each line is written to indicate the relationship between the connected concepts (Hassan Shehata, pp. 147-148).

1.4 Definition of Reading Comprehension:

The field of reading comprehension is defined as the cognitive processes that translate symbols into readable meanings. It is a mental activity involving several components (comprehension, reconstruction, information utilisation, and text evaluation). It is considered the most important means through which learners acquire knowledge, access cultural heritage, and are encouraged to engage positively with the text and dialogue with it to expand their experiences, enrich their thinking, and develop enjoyment and curiosity. The domain includes reading, memorisation, and extensive reading activities (The accompanying document for the Arabic language curriculum – primary education stage, p. 5).

Rashid Ahmed Tuaima defines it as "one of the four most important linguistic skills, comprising two aspects: the mechanical aspect, which involves recognising letter forms and sounds and the ability to form words and sentences, and the cognitive mental aspect, which leads to understanding the text, based on a complex organisation consisting of patterns with multiple processes such as evaluation, judgement, analysis, and problem-solving" (p. 518).

Comparison between the Mind Mapping Strategy and the Concept Mapping Strategy:

According to Obeidat Zouqan and Abu Al-Samid Suhaila, the comparison is as follows:



Aspect	Mind Map (Mental Map)	Concept Map (Cognitive Map)
Definition	A schematic drawing of a topic	A schematic drawing of a topic
Who draws it	Usually, drawn by the learner	Usually, drawn by the teacher
Relation creation	Goes beyond the information; contains new relations created by the learner	Adheres to the boundaries of information in the lesson
Relation type	Creating new links and relations by the learner	Taking notes and recording as presented
Learning strategy type	A learning strategy where the learner builds links and skills	A strategy primarily used to clarify and organise material
Completeness	An incomplete map that can be continuously completed	A complete map
Individuality	Each learner has a unique mind map; no two are alike	Concept maps are similar, especially if prepared by the teacher
Usage	Can only be used by its creator	Can be understood and utilised by anyone

(Obeidat Zouqan & Abu Al-Samid Suhaila, pp. 204-205)

2. Practical Study:

2.1 Defining the Exit Profile for Fifth-Year Primary Education:

Exit profile

At the end of the academic year, the learner should be able to do the following:

- All written texts should be read fluently, appropriate to their level, while respecting textual conventions such as diacritics, punctuation marks, and expressive performance.
- Comprehend what is read and formed a personal judgement about the text.
- Understand oral discourse in a meaningful communicative context and respond appropriately.
- They express themselves orally in a correct manner, reflecting mastery of previous knowledge and being suitable for various communicative situations.
- Write different types of texts in response to situational demands and instructions. (Arabic Language Curriculum for the Fifth Year of Primary Education, p. 6)

2.2 Stages of Conducting Reading Comprehension Lessons for Fifth-Year Primary Learners

The teacher's guide for the fifth year of primary education outlines the stages of teaching the Arabic language fields, including the reading comprehension domain, as follows:



Content/ Activities	Duration	Session Type	Domain/Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silent reading of the text (quick read to gather general information), identifying the topic, characters, and temporal & spatial setting.• Oral reading with reasonable fluency and connected delivery.• Explaining words and expressions using linguistic and nonlinguistic clues.• Building meaning: identifying events, presenting information, and grasping the overall meaning.	45 min	Reading/Writing (performance, explanation, comprehension) with language enrichment	Reading comprehension and written expression

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding vocabulary related to the unit and using it in new situations. 	45 min	Reading/Writing (performance, explanation, comprehension, and syntactic phenomenon)	Grammar focus within reading and writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the text for complete information (comprehension, functional and value aspects) with expressive, fluent reading and correct punctuation. • Reconstructing and reusing text information: moving from general meaning to details; addressing values and lessons; highlighting text type and analysing its parts and structural groups. • Working with 			



the text at the syntactic (grammar) level: extracting, observing, naming, and practicing the grammatical phenomenon.

(Sentences may be adapted or extra examples added to cover all rules.)•

Guided application exercises in the activity notebook.

• Reading the text for complete information (comprehension, functional and value aspects) with expressive, fluent reading and correct punctuation.

• Reconstructing and reusing text

90 min

Reading/Writing (performance, explanation, comprehension, and morphological or spelling phenomenon)

Morphology or spelling focus within reading and writing

information:

delving into
details,
addressing
values and
lessons,
highlighting text
type through its
components.

- Working with
the text at the
morphological
or orthographic
level: extracting
morphological
patterns,
observing,
naming,
distinguishing
and comparing
transformations,
or highlighting
and applying
spelling
phenomena.

(Sentences may
be adapted or
extra examples
added to cover
all rules.)

- Guided
application



exercises in the
activity
notebook.

Source: Teacher's Guide for the Fifth Year of Primary Education, pp. 18-19

The targeted competencies at the end of the fifth year and the stages of reading comprehension lessons outlined above clearly indicate a strong emphasis on reading comprehension on the one hand and on achieving textual competence on the other hand. This approach starts from the understanding of spoken language, which develops oral expression skills, to the understanding of written texts, which enhances reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the teaching of grammar, morphology, and orthography serves the purpose of text comprehension and production, justifying the multiple reading comprehension lessons, each accompanied by a specific activity.

2.3 Model Lesson Using the Concept Mapping Strategy:

- Segment: 02/Social Life
- Lesson: Reading and Orthographic Phenomenon (from the Arabic Language textbook for the fifth year of primary education)
- Topic: Hamza on the letter Waw
- Educational tools: Arabic language textbooks and activity notebooks

Learning objectives:

- The learner writes Hamza on the letter Waw correctly, both medially and finally.

- The learner writes dictated words while observing the size of the letters, line alignment, and spacing.

Lesson procedure:

- The teacher prepares learners to engage with the lesson topic by asking the following questions:
 - Write the following words correctly: مأمور (Ma'mour), فجأة (Faj'ah), التائق (Al-Talaq), تهاياً (Tahai'a).

Activity 1: Observation and Discovery of the Orthographic Phenomenon

- The teacher asks questions to identify examples of the targeted linguistic phenomenon:
 - What question did Khalid ponder when he arrived at Tmaywin?
 - Who is responsible for the clinic?
 - a) Why should I stay away from my family? Khalid repeatedly asked this question throughout the way.
 - b) Khalid prepared himself to visit remote areas.
 - c) The director is responsible for the clinic.
- The teacher reads the sentences aloud and then has the learners repeat them.

Activity 2: Analysis of the Orthographic Phenomenon

- The teacher isolates the highlighted words from the sentences.
- Where is the Hamza on the Waw written in the word (سؤال) [su'āl]? What is its vowel, and that of the preceding letter?



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- Identify the vowel on the Hamza in the word مسؤول [mas'ūl]. What is the vowel of the preceding letter?
- The teacher guides learners to deduce how to conjugate the verb phrase with dual pronouns.

Deducing the rule and its structure via a concept map:

Hamza on Waw

- The medial Hamza is written on Waw if:
 - It is open or silent, and the preceding letter is ḍamma: for example, أوكد, بؤرة
 - It is ḍamma, and the preceding letter is not kasra: for example, تفاؤل, رؤوف, رؤوس
- The final Hamza is written on Waw if:
 - The preceding letter is ḍamma: for example, التكافؤ

Activity 3: Practice on the Orthographic Phenomenon

- Practice (1): Dictation of a paragraph chosen by the teacher, including the studied phenomenon, using the masked dictation strategy.
- Practice (2): Learners complete the exercises found on page 19 of the activity notebook.

It is evident from the above that the competencies targeted by the orthographic phenomenon lesson are achievable through the use of concept mapping. This underscores the necessity of employing modern teaching strategies and abandoning traditional methods. This was emphasised by a group of fifth-year primary education teachers interviewed regarding how they implement modern teaching strategies and their effectiveness compared with teaching, which relies solely on rote memorisation.

Kamal Abdel Hamid Zaitoun stated, "Learning by old methods requires us to reconsider the classroom, as traditional lesson delivery methods are no longer acceptable. The classroom, as it is said, has become a beehive filled with dynamism, movement, and spontaneous activity aimed at the pursuit of knowledge. The teacher's role has evolved into designing the learning environment, selecting various tools, and planning to achieve interaction among the learner, the tool, and the educational situation; his mission is to facilitate the learning process" (Kamal Abdel Hamid, p. 113).

Conclusion:

After reviewing the Arabic language curriculum for the fifth year of primary education, and on the basis of the teacher's guide and teachers' notes, we confirm the following:

- Educational documents such as the teacher's guide acknowledge the necessity of employing modern teaching strategies in various educational fields.
- Teachers implement modern teaching strategies in teaching reading comprehension, including cooperative learning, concept mapping, mind mapping, reciprocal teaching, and other strategies.
- The application of modern teaching strategies primarily depends on the teacher's knowledge of these strategies.
- The choice of teaching strategy is based on the competency targeted in the lesson, with reading comprehension lessons requiring the use of mind maps and concept maps.



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