

## Reading comprehension among students with reading difficulties: A comparative study between regular students and students with reading difficulties

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### Abstract:

This study aims to determine the reading comprehension level of fourth-grade students in the state of [State Name] during the period 2021-2022. The study utilized Raven's Progressive Matrices, a reading comprehension test, and a reading test. These tests were administered over 96 hours of operation. The mean score is calculated as follows:

-Reading comprehension level among students with reading difficulties is low.

-There are no statistically significant differences between males and females in reading comprehension.

-There are statistically significant differences between students with reading difficulties and those with reading difficulties.

**Keywords :** Reading, reading comprehension, dyslexia.

### Problematic:

Reading difficulties are the most common type of learning disability compared to writing and arithmetic difficulties. Leon observes that 80% of students with learning disabilities also have reading difficulties (Abdul Ghaffar, 2009, p. 35). Reading is a complex process, although for many it is automatic, and it is one of the most significant contemporary educational challenges.

Reading is an active process that involves the reader's contribution to formulating and evaluating meaning. It is no longer merely a process of decoding, but rather a process that relies on thinking as well. Through reading, a person's intellect develops, their emotions are refined, and they discover the world with its various modes of thought and expression, thus developing their understanding through interpretation, analysis, and critique (Al-Haddad, 2006, p. 155). In this regard, Al-Hallaq (2010) says that reading comprehension is the goal of reading and the objective that every teacher seeks to develop its various skills and levels among students at different educational stages (Nahaba, 2013, 103). In a study conducted by the researcher Abu

Daqqa, she found that the most common reading difficulties among the research sample were in the following aspects: reading comprehension, understanding and deletion.

Reading comprehension is based on the principle of interpreting the text presented to the child in light of their prior knowledge and experiences. This is confirmed by Abdul Hamid (2000), who views reading comprehension as the mental process that relies on recognizing written symbols, interpreting them, and connecting them to their meanings in light of prior learning experience (Al-Tatari, 2016, p. 40).

In later school years, this problem takes on a more profound dimension when considering the percentage of children who may suffer from reading comprehension difficulties. A study by Husni and Jamaludin (2009), conducted in Malaysia, indicated that 10% of schoolchildren have reading and reading comprehension difficulties, and that only a small number of them received appropriate remedial teaching methods, which may have led to negative psychological effects on these students (Husni & Jamaludin, 2009, p. 64). Therefore, we pose the following question: What is the level of reading comprehension among students with reading difficulties?

**Study Objectives:** - To identify the level of reading comprehension among students with reading difficulties.

- To identify the differences in reading comprehension levels between students with reading difficulties and their peers.

**Study Significance:** - The significance of this study lies in the importance of the topic under investigation, which is learning difficulties that have become a real problem in educational circles.

- The study sheds light on the modern approach to studying the cognitive processes related to reading, especially reading comprehension among students with reading difficulties.

Study Scope:

**Temporal Scope:** The study extended from February 28, 2022, to May 16, 2022.

**Geographical Scope:** The study included five (5) schools: Farhat Ben Amara, Mbareki Ibrahim, Beloum Bachir, Chahid Ali Dridi, and Ibn Sina Primary School, all located in El Oued Province.

**Personal Scope:** The study targeted fourth-grade primary school students in the aforementioned schools during the 2021/2022 academic year.

Study Terminology:

**Definition of Reading Comprehension:** Maher Shaaban Abdel-Bari defines it as: a constructive, interactive mental process that the reader engages with through reading content, aiming to extract the general meaning of the subject. This process is evidenced by the reader's possession of a set of behavioral indicators that express this understanding (Abdel-Bari, 2010, p. 31).

Operationally, it is defined as: the mental process that the student undertakes in interacting with the reading material in order to recognize vocabulary and extract ideas. The occurrence of reading comprehension is evidenced by the responses of fourth-grade students to the reading comprehension test prepared by Dr. Miloudi Hassina.

**Definition of Dyslexia:** It is a difficulty in identifying, recognizing, understanding, and reproducing written symbols in children between the ages of 5 and 8 (Borelmeeson, 1973, p. 15). Operationally, it is defined as: a difficulty in the ability to read at a normal age outside the

scope of any disability, resulting from a defect in the use of the processes necessary to acquire this skill or ability, and not resulting from a low level of intelligence among students of the same chronological age. Dyslexia is determined using the dyslexia test of Dr. Ismail Laiss.

### **Previous Studies:**

"Evaluating the Reading Comprehension Level of Undergraduate Arabic Language Students" (2018) by researcher Saeed Al-Qahtani. This study aimed to identify the reading comprehension skills required by Arabic language students at King Khalid University. The sample consisted of 245 male and female students, and the results showed a weak level of comprehension.

"Reading Comprehension Among Slow-Learning Students Enrolled in the Fourth Grade of Primary School" (2017) by researcher Zubaida Bayoud. This study aimed to determine the reading comprehension level of slow-learning students enrolled in the fourth grade of primary school. The study sample consisted of 50 male and female students, and the results showed a low level of reading comprehension among the sample.

"Dyslexia and its Relationship to Psychological Adjustment among a Sample of Fifth-Grade Primary School Students" (2017) by researcher Merbah Ahmed Taqi al-Din, aimed to determine the relationship between dyslexia and psychological adjustment among a sample of fifth-grade primary school students. A range of tools were used, including a diagnostic rating scale for reading difficulties and an intelligence test, to collect data using a descriptive-analytical approach. One of the most significant findings was that there is no relationship between dyslexia and psychological adjustment in its three dimensions.

"Learning Difficulties in Reading Among Primary School Students" (2012) by researcher Nadia Abu Daqqa. The study aimed to reveal the prevalence of reading difficulties among second, third and fourth grade primary school students. The study was applied to a sample of (1385) male and female students, and the study concluded that the most common reading difficulties among the research sample were in the following aspects: reading comprehension and understanding, answering with complete sentences, distinguishing between tanween movements, reading words that sound similar, reading a sentence consisting of two words correctly, and pronouncing words consisting of two or more letters with movements.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

#### **First: Reading Comprehension:**

Snow and Katherine define reading comprehension as the process by which a reader can extract and construct meaning through interaction with the written page.

Al-Hilwani defines it as an unobservable mental process, a thinking process. The reader understands the text through the internal construction of meaning (i.e., within the reader's cognitive framework) by interacting with the text. It is a process that requires the reader to discover the intended meaning to achieve a specific goal (Al-Masri, 2017, p. 43). Al-Jarf (1423 AH) explained that reading comprehension is a process that takes place within the reader's mind. This process includes linking word symbols to their meanings, grasping the meaning of small units of ideas from the text that collectively form a larger, unified idea, selecting the correct meaning, organizing ideas during reading, remembering and retrieving these ideas, and

using them in present or future activities. There are two theories that explain reading comprehension:

-Holistic Theory: This theory views reading comprehension as a single, indivisible process that relies on the reader's existing knowledge and information, which they utilize during reading. In other words, there is continuous interaction between the reader and the text throughout the reading process.

-Discrete Skills: This theory considers reading comprehension a complex process that can nevertheless be broken down into several sub-skills, such as the ability to identify the main idea and other supporting details within the text (Abu Ammar, 2015, pp. 35-36).

Reading comprehension skills are classified into three levels: - Basic Reading Comprehension Skills: These include identifying word meanings, identifying the main idea of the text, identifying supporting details, and reading diagrams and graphs.

-Inferential or Implicit Comprehension Skills: These include inferring implicit meanings, deducing word meanings from context, understanding the author's organizational structure, comparing similar elements, distinguishing between ideas included and omitted from the text, and identifying opening sentences.

- Critical comprehension skills: These include discovering the researcher's point of view, distinguishing between fact and opinion, expressing an opinion on what is read and judging it, identifying relationships between causes and effects, and evaluating evidence and proofs (Atwi, 2013, p. 158).

**Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension Skills:** These are divided into two types: Immediate Comprehension: This stage of immediate comprehension allows for the identification of the child's lexical and linguistic level. To assess the child's level of immediate comprehension, it must be evaluated using three strategies, according to the scheme proposed by researcher Abdelhamid Al-Khamisi.

**Lexical Strategy:** This stage allows for understanding the event by recognizing the word and placing it in relation to the context of the discourse, enabling the child to grasp the meaning of the text and be able to respond. The child acquires this strategy at the same stage as the sensorimotor stage, i.e., when they are between four and five years old.

**Morphological Strategy:** This strategy focuses on processing complex linguistic units (the sentence) from a morphological and grammatical perspective. To understand the event, the child must be able to establish the relationship between nouns and verbs, which is the minimum level in this strategy. They must also master the use of other morphological and grammatical variables that allow them to understand the event. A child between five and six years old can master this strategy. **The narrative strategy:** This strategy requires understanding the incident and the ability to sequentially process the temporal and causal structure applied in this strategy, which is specific to some texts such as short stories. This strategy can be applied to various traditional texts and stories, and it can also be applied to the more complex incident from a morphological-cognitive perspective. A seven-year-old child can master this strategy in a good way.

From a morphological-cognitive perspective, a seven-year-old child can master this strategy quite well.

**Global Comprehension:** This stage aims to identify the child's behaviors based on strategies developed by researcher Abdelhamid El-Khamisi. These strategies relate to immediate comprehension and allow for the description and evaluation of the ability to use oral comprehension strategies. They are further divided into three strategies:

**Accessibility Behavior:** This behavior is observed in younger children and corresponds to an inability to focus on the context of the conversation upon its initial presentation. This indicates uncertainty about the correct answer and, consequently, a cognitive-linguistic deficit. This strategy aims to determine whether the child has grasped the content of the conversation.

**Change of Designation Behavior:** The child acquires this type of behavior through a second analysis of the incident or the context of the conversation. It can also be acquired through social behavior from an adult. This allows for the intervention of another strategy, namely the socio-cognitive strategy, which involves the production of verbal cues and adult signals, and addresses the behavior that requires the child to change the designation in case of an incorrect answer. **Self-correction behavior:** This type of behavior requires the acquisition of social behavior that regulates the latter. This behavior allows the child to move from the morphological-grammatical strategy and thus to the narrative strategy. Disruption of this behavior necessarily leads to disruption of the immediate understanding of the incident (Gharibi, 2018, 63-64).

### **Reading Comprehension Difficulties:**

Pia identified the most significant reading comprehension difficulties as inferring main ideas, grasping details, analyzing and critiquing the text, drawing conclusions from the reading, evaluating the text, identifying the author's purpose and direction, and connecting the text to personal experience.

Reutzuel identified reading comprehension difficulties as selecting appropriate meanings for words within the context, choosing and summarizing the main idea, distinguishing between main and sub-main ideas, understanding direct sentences, observing the organizing characteristics of the text, critiquing the text in terms of ideas and purpose, identifying the author's point of view and purpose, recognizing and explaining abstract language, and connecting ideas gained from reading with existing knowledge.

Ombra identified reading comprehension difficulties as recognizing and defining vocabulary, recognizing sentences, understanding paragraph meaning, identifying main ideas, identifying supporting details, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, identifying the author's purpose and direction, and being able to predict outcomes (Tahoun et al., 2015, pp. 491-492).

Second: Dyslexia

**Definition of Dyslexia:** Ahmed Abdel Karim defined it as: "Dyslexia is one of the learning disabilities that affect individuals early in life, like other developmental disabilities. It is a deficiency or impairment in the ability to write and read, known as 'dyslexia'" (Hamza, 2008, p. 53).

The Dictionary of Psychology and Educational Sciences defines it as: "The inability to read aloud or silently, or the inability to understand what is read. This inability is not related to any speech impediment." (Jaljal, 1995, p. 17).

The World Health Organization defines dyslexia as: "A persistent difficulty in learning to read and acquiring its mechanisms in intelligent children who are usually enrolled in school and do not suffer from any pre-existing physical or psychological problems" (Dimon, 2006, p. 15).

According to the World Health Organization, dyslexia is considered a disorder and a persistent difficulty that lies in the inability to acquire reading mechanisms. The person with dyslexia has normal intelligence, attends school regularly, and does not suffer from any physical or psychological problems prior to dyslexia.

Types of Dyslexia:

**Phonological Dyslexia:** This includes children with phonological impairments, specifically a primary defect in the integration of letter sounds. These children struggle with reading and spelling words because the letter-sound conversion strategy has not yet become an automatic mechanism for combining letters with their corresponding sounds.

**Developmental-Superficial Dyslexia:** This includes children with primary defects in the ability to perceive words as wholes. They have difficulty pronouncing both familiar and unfamiliar words, as if encountering them for the first time.

**Mixed Dyslexia (Phonological-Superficial):** This type exhibits some characteristics of the first two types, involving both the phonological (grouping) and lexical (referencing or addressing) pathways. Individuals in this group struggle with connecting phonetic units to letters, i.e., their visual representation, in addition to visual confusion at the letter level. This leads to a double failure in reading due to a lack of a word store in memory, resulting in significant disability. (Dimon, 2006, p. 96) Diagnosing Dyslexia: The process of diagnosing reading difficulties relies on several objectives that contribute to developing remedial programs, accompanying exercises, and educational activities and games to address them. These objectives include:

- Identifying the aspects of reading difficulties and the problems students experience.
- Determining the factors affecting reading, such as physical, social, educational, economic, psychological, and others.
- Gathering data and information that are useful in developing and designing appropriate remedial programs for learning difficulties in reading.
- Determining the appropriate approach and treatment method for learning to read.
- Identifying students with reading difficulties and determining their reading level, abilities, and potential. (Al-Kahali, 2011, pp. 66-67)

Muhammad Munir Morsi and Ismail Abu Al-Azaim (1984) emphasize the importance of diagnosing dyslexia, stating, "A significant portion of the success of the treatment program depends on accurate diagnosis..." (Jaljal, 1995, pp. 36-37)

1. Formal Diagnosis: This uses standardized tests with established reference criteria to assess a child's reading ability and level of achievement. Examples of such tests include:

**Standardized Reading Diagnostic Test:** This measures specific verbal reading skills, including: **Auditory Vocabulary:** Word meanings, word parts, auditory discrimination and pronunciation analysis, and syntactic analysis.

**Reading Comprehension:** Word reading, reading comprehension, speed reading, scanning, summarizing

**Dorin Test:** Diagnostic reading through word recognition. This test measures word recognition skills, ending sound recognition, suffix rhythm, and spelling.

The Reading Comprehension Test (Weiderholt): This test assesses reading comprehension in general and includes: general vocabulary, homonyms, a reading passage, and five subtests: mathematical vocabulary, social vocabulary, scientific vocabulary, and reading in schoolwork contexts.

2. **Informal Diagnosis:** This method does not use standardized tests. Instead, it involves examining the child's reading level and errors using books, papers, and educational materials used in the classroom. In this case, the child's responses while reading are observed, and their reading level and proficiency at that grade level are determined. The teacher also assesses the child's reading rate and speed (Awadallah et al., 2006, p. 153).

**Applied Aspect:**

**Study Methodology:** In our study, "Reading Comprehension of Difficult and Typical Readers," we adopted the descriptive method, as it is suitable for this type of study. Shehata (2006) defines the descriptive method as a set of research procedures that integrate to describe a phenomenon or topic. This involves collecting, classifying, processing, and analyzing facts and data thoroughly and accurately to extract their significance and arrive at conclusions or generalizations about the phenomenon or topic under investigation (Shehata, 2006, p. 337).

**Hypotheses:** To answer the research questions, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

1. Reading comprehension among dyslexic individuals is low.
2. There are statistically significant differences in reading comprehension between typically developing readers and dyslexic individuals.
3. There are statistically significant differences in reading comprehension between males and females.

**Study Sample:** The main study sample was selected electively, and the study consisted of (96) male and female students from the primary schools of the valley (Taksebt - Al-Hamraya).

**Table (1): Shows the distribution of the study sample according to primary schools**

Total	Female	Male	School
15	6	9	Mubarki Ibrahim
8	5	3	Bloum Bachir
13	5	8	Farhat Ben Amara
22	10	12	Ali Dridi
38	18	20	Ibn Sina
96	44	52	Total

**Study Tools:** Raven's Progressive Matrices Test: This test was chosen because it has been standardized and adapted to the Arab context by Rahma (1998) and includes age groups from 8 to under 11.9 years, which is suitable for the current study. Developed by John Raven, it consists of 36 boards equally divided into three groups (A, B, and AB), each containing 12 boards of increasing difficulty. Each board consists of a shape from which a specific part is removed. The test-taker must choose the missing part from a set of alternatives below. The test measures a wide range of cognitive activity, from an early age when the child is able to grasp the concept of finding the missing part to complete a model, to later stages of life where the

maximum ability to make comparisons and reach the pinnacle of reasoning can be measured. The test is one of the most well-known culture-independent intelligence tests.

#### **Method of Administration and Scoring:**

The test-taker is given individual test cards and asked to select the part that completes the card from among six parts, without time constraints. After the test-taker finishes answering the questions, each correct answer is scored as (1) points, and each incorrect answer as (0) points. The correct scores are then added together to determine the total score. To calculate the IQ, a list of percentile norms is included with the booklet to determine the corresponding percentile score. It is important to consider the score within the age range of the test-taker and determine its corresponding description of mental level and IQ. (Al-Ajal, n.d., 209). The researcher ensured that the IQ of the selected study sample was in the average and above average range (110-90).

#### **Psychometric Properties of the Test:**

**Test Reliability:** The Advanced Progressive Matrices Test (APMT) possesses a good degree of reliability, as demonstrated by reliability indices derived using various methods. This has been confirmed through numerous studies conducted on the test, where coefficients were determined.

Test-retest reliability in the studies of Alian and Al-Samadi (1989), Mia Huang (1974), FitzGibbon, Ng (1974), and Lui (1992), as reported in Raven et al. (1994), ranged from 0.77 to 0.92.

Internal consistency reliability coefficients were also determined using the Kuder-Richardson equation (20) in the studies of Powell (1986), Alian and Al-Samadi (1989), Alderton and Larson (1990), Jarowiska and Schösterau (1991), Arthur Rudi (1994), and Krattermeier and Horn (1980), as reported in Raven et al. (1994), ranging from 0.81 to 0.89. These results confirm the test's high degree of reliability.

Abu Hatab (1977) and Abu Hatab et al. (1979) found that IQ scores for different age groups ranged from 0.46 to 0.86 using test-retest reliability. Reliability coefficients, calculated using the Kuder-Richardson equation No. 20 for internal consistency, ranged from 0.87 to 0.96 for the 8-30 age group. All reliability coefficients were found to be high, indicating the test's reliability within the study population.

**Test Validity:** Previous studies have demonstrated the test's high degree of validity.

**Dyslexia Test:**

**Test Description:** This test is based on the reading test developed by Dr. Ismail Laiss. It was designed to measure a student's reading ability by instructing them to read a set of words at three levels: reading common words, reading uncommon words, and reading pseudo-words.

**Common Words:** This test consists of 40 words, divided into two halves. The first half consists of 20 simple words, and the second half consists of 20 compound words. The student is presented with the set of words and asked to read them in order.

**Uncommon Words:** This test also consists of 40 words, divided into two sections: 20 compound words and 20 simple words. This section is more difficult for children than the common words. The student is presented with the set of words and asked to read them in order.

**Pseudo-Words:** These are letters combined to form a word without meaning.

- Part One: This consists of letters arranged to form a word without meaning.
- Part Two: This consists of meaningful words with jumbled letters. It is more difficult than the common and uncommon parts and includes 20 simple words and 20 compound words. The student is told, "We will present you with a set of words," and asked to read them in order.

**Application Procedures:** The tests were administered individually for each test. The word cards were presented in the aforementioned order, and the student was asked to read the suggested words in order for each card. A point was awarded for each word read correctly, and zero for each incorrect answer. The total points constituted the student's score on the test.

The scoring range for each card is from 0 to 40, and for the test as a whole, it is from 0 to 120. Response time can also be calculated.

The test developer calculated the psychometric properties of the test, and the results are as follows:

**Test Validity:** Validity was calculated using a boundary comparison method, yielding a t-value of 34.72, which is significant at 0.005. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the highest and lowest values, demonstrating the test's high ability to differentiate between students with dyslexia. This result confirms the test's validity, demonstrating that it measures what it was designed to measure (see Layes et al., 2015, p. 127).

**Test Reliability:** The researcher calculated reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.87.

**Reading Comprehension Test:**  
**Test Description:** The Reading Comprehension Test, prepared by Dr. Miloudi Hassina, is an achievement test in the Arabic language. It primarily aims to measure the student's ability to understand what they read. It consists of 20 questions that measure the three levels of reading comprehension, which are consistent with the level of the fourth grade of primary school. These levels are the literal, inferential, and appreciative levels. The twenty questions of the test were divided into eight questions for the literal level, eight for the inferential level, and four for the appreciative level. The reason the latter had a small number of questions is that the text, by its nature, does not contain many figurative expressions or aesthetic expressions. Therefore, we presented only four questions about this level. Three sub-answers were provided for each question, and the student must choose one answer from among the three suggestions by placing a mark (X) in front of the correct answer.

**Table (2): Represents the levels of reading comprehension and the skills specific to each level.**

Number of Questions	Skills Measured	Level Name
- Number of questions: 8 (questions 1, 2, 5, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19)	- Recognizing the singular or plural form of a word. - Identifying antonyms and synonyms. - Direct comprehension of a word or sentence.	Literal Level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving a new title to the text. -</li> <li>Number of questions: 8 (questions 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 20)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determining the appropriate meaning of a word within the context.</li> <li>- Connecting cause and effect.</li> <li>- Distinguishing between what is relevant and irrelevant to the text.</li> </ul>	<p>Inferential Level</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of questions: 4 (questions 4, 6, 10, 12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying and extracting phrases with beautiful words and meanings from the text.</li> <li>- Recognizing figurative language in the text.</li> </ul>	<p>Appreciative Level</p>

Psychometric Properties of the Reading Comprehension Test: The researcher administered the test to a group of 50 fourth-grade students at Haroun Slimane School in the municipality of Djebahia, Bouira Province. The test was initially administered to a pilot sample of 50 fourth-grade students. A week later, the test was administered to the same group under identical conditions, in terms of location and time. The results were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.53. The results indicated that the test, as a whole, possesses a reliability and validity level of 0.81, thus demonstrating its suitability for achieving the study's objectives.

Test Time Determination: We determined the test time using the following method: Recording the time taken by the first student to answer and the time taken by the last student, then calculating their average using the following equation:  $(\text{Time of first student} + \text{Time of last student}) / 2 = \text{Test Time}$ . The first student's time was estimated at 25 minutes, and the last student's time at 45 minutes. Therefore, the equation was:  $(25 + 45) / 2 = 35$ . Thus, the test time was estimated at 35 minutes + 10 minutes for reading the text and test instructions, resulting in an actual test time of 45 minutes.

Test Scoring Method: The test is scored by awarding one point for each correct answer and zero for incorrect, omitted, or forgotten answers, or in the case of two or more answers (Melody, 2017, p. 165).

First: Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of the Study Results:

Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of the First Hypothesis:

This hypothesis states: The level of reading comprehension among those with reading difficulties is low. Referring to the criteria for interpreting results related to reading comprehension, we obtained the following data.

**Table (3): Shows the limits of reading comprehension levels**

High Level	Medium Level	Low Level	Levels
[103- 75]	[74 -51]	50≥	Borders

Therefore, the results of the Asiri reading scores can be illustrated in the following table:

**Table (4): Shows the distribution and level of Asiri's reading scores**

Level	Repetition	Grade
Low	1	37
Low	1	38
Low	2	39
Low	3	40
Low	4	41
Low	5	42
/	<b>16</b>	Total

Table (4) shows that the reading comprehension scores of students with reading difficulties ranged between 37 and 42, all below 50, which is the low threshold. Therefore, it can be concluded that these students have a low level of reading comprehension, thus confirming the hypothesis.

The results confirmed the low level of reading comprehension among these students. As previously mentioned, reading comprehension is closely linked to reading itself. The ultimate goal of reading is not merely to read isolated words, but to understand what is read and transform it into meaning. This finding aligns with the study by Zubaida Bayoud (2017), which aimed to determine the reading comprehension level of slow-learning students enrolled in the fourth grade of primary school. The results showed that the reading comprehension level of the sample was low. It also aligns with the study by Saeed Al-Qahtani (2018), which aimed to identify the reading comprehension skills required by language students at King Khalid University. The results showed that the level of comprehension was weak. The results also aligned with Amal Mansour's study (2022), which aimed to determine the reading comprehension level of fourth-grade primary school students and sought to examine differences in reading comprehension levels. The study concluded that the overall reading comprehension level was low.

Several factors may contribute to this low reading comprehension level, including: the crucial and sensitive role of the family when their child has reading difficulties. The family bears a significant responsibility for caring for this important group by providing for their needs and understanding the academic and psychological challenges faced by students with reading difficulties. However, in some families, students are subjected to considerable pressure. The family's reaction to the student's academic failure is a contributing factor to psychological stress, along with the frustration the student experiences due to their desire for social status while simultaneously being unable to achieve academic success (Douqa, 2011, p. 58).

Another important factor is the teacher's neglect of cognitive strategies, which are considered one of the mechanisms of cognitive development. These strategies reflect aspects of an individual's abilities and the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of their cognitive structure. They involve a degree of generality and flexibility and express the level of their mental and cognitive performance in handling cognitive and academic tasks (Al-Zayyat, 2007,

p. 33). Strategies play a fundamental role in helping all students learn and perform certain reading tasks, a finding supported by Gold's study (2010).

Ahmed Saleh Nahaba's study (2013) confirmed that the self-questioning strategy influenced the development of reading comprehension skills compared to the traditional method, increasing students' motivation, attention, and engagement with the lesson. The study by Mohammed Ali Salim Al-Tatari (2016) demonstrated the positive impact of using digital stories on developing reading comprehension skills among the study sample. Similarly, Al-Muntashiri's study (2008) aimed to develop reading comprehension skills among first-year intermediate students in Saudi Arabia using a reciprocal teaching strategy. This study concluded that the reciprocal teaching strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension skills overall and in developing each sub-skill individually.

Also, the density of educational programs and their effects on students and teachers. By educational programs, we mean all the knowledge, topics, and information that must be taught during a specific academic year and which students receive with the aim of developing their cognitive, social, and linguistic abilities. The study by Boukfous and Boufrour (2019) concluded that the density of educational programs is closely related to students' academic achievement due to the psychological pressures it creates, which negatively impacts their performance.

Presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results of the second hypothesis: In order to address the first hypothesis of the study, which states that there are statistically significant differences between normal and dyslexic readers in reading comprehension, we calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for both groups and then applied the t-test to them. The following table illustrates this:

**Table (5): Value and significance of differences in reading comprehension between average and dyslexic readers**

Significance level	T-value	readers with difficulty reading			Normal			
		S	B	A	S	B	A	
0.01	12.17	1.51	40	16	14.23	84	16	Reading Comprehension

Table (5) shows that the absolute value of the Ttest for differences between means was (12.17), a statistically significant value at the significance level (sig(0.01)). This indicates a statistically significant difference between normal readers and those with reading difficulties in reading comprehension. The mean score for normal readers was (84), with a standard deviation of (14.23), while the mean score for those with reading difficulties was (40), with a standard deviation of (1.51). After comparison, the differences were found to favor the normal readers.

The results showed statistically significant differences between regular students and students with reading difficulties in their reading comprehension level, favoring the regular students. This indicates a higher level among regular readers in the reading comprehension test

compared to their peers with reading difficulties. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Sayyah (2006), which, in part, found statistically significant differences between regular students and students with reading comprehension difficulties in the three processing levels (intermediate, deep), favoring the regular students. This may be due to several reasons, most notably:

The difference in the economic and social level of the families of ordinary students and students with dyslexia, as it is known that the economic and social level positively affects many developmental aspects in children. This is what was agreed with by the study of (Makki Babiker Saeed Diwa), which aimed to study the factors behind the differences between students with learning difficulties and ordinary students in listening comprehension, reading, memory, and spoken language among students in the basic education stage. The results of this study showed that the social and economic level of the family is one of the important factors behind the differences between students with learning difficulties and ordinary students, which are attributed to the benefit of students from families with a high economic and social level.

We also cannot overlook the level of awareness among primary school teachers regarding students with learning difficulties. The teacher is the primary driver in managing and coordinating the educational process for both regular students and their peers with learning difficulties. Their role cannot be ignored; they are the cornerstone, responsible for planning lessons for all their students, whether they are regular students or students with learning difficulties. Their role hinges on their competence in implementing the curriculum plan. A teacher's knowledge of their students is fundamental to the teacher-student relationship. A teacher with a suitable background and sufficient understanding of students with learning difficulties will undoubtedly be supported in fulfilling their role in the educational process. If a teacher understands the nature, characteristics, and learning styles of these students, they will undoubtedly be a competent teacher, capable of working effectively in the educational field with a scientific methodology that allows them to overcome most of the obstacles they face while working with this group.

Aladwani and Al Shay (2012) mentioned in their study on the extent of awareness and knowledge of primary school teachers of the concept of reading difficulties (dyslexia) in the primary stage in the State of Kuwait, and the results indicated that the knowledge was insufficient at the level of awareness of reading difficulties, and also that there were no differences between male and female teachers in the knowledge of students with reading difficulties in relation to the educational level of the teachers, while differences were found between teachers in years of teaching experience attributed to teachers who had experience between (10-11) years.

Al-Naeem (2015) conducted a study on teachers' understanding of the concept and identity of students with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The study examined the clarity and comprehension of the concept of learning disabilities among Saudi teachers and the effectiveness of identifying appropriate teaching strategies for working with these students. The results showed that teachers lacked general knowledge and awareness of students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, the study revealed confusion among teachers regarding the identity of students with learning disabilities and the degree of clarity surrounding it. The

results also indicated that teachers struggled to identify the most appropriate teaching strategies for these students.

Furthermore, teachers' neglect of students with learning disabilities in the classroom, while focusing on high-achieving students, exacerbates the problem. This leads to students with reading difficulties being unable to follow the teacher's explanations, negatively impacting their academic performance and achievement compared to their peers. This is corroborated by Pavri and Ltfig (2000), who found that children with learning disabilities integrated into mainstream classrooms suffer from poor social skills, experience greater loneliness, and are often ignored and neglected by both teachers and students.

Presentation, analysis, and discussion of the third hypothesis:

To address the second hypothesis of the study, which states that there are statistically significant differences between males and females in reading comprehension, we calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for both groups and then applied the t-test. The following table illustrates this:

**Table (6): Value and significance of differences in reading comprehension between males and females**

Significance Level	T-value	Significance Level	F-value	Females			Males			
				C	B	A	C	B	A	
Not Significant	1.07	0.52	0.42	24.97	66.52	1	23.3	57.33	15	Reading Comprehension

Table (6) shows that the Levene test for homogeneity of variance was valued at (0.42) at a significance level of (0.52), which is greater than (0.05). This indicates that the difference is not statistically significant, and therefore we accept the null hypothesis, which states that there is no homogeneity, meaning that the two groups are homogeneous. Furthermore, the absolute value of the t-test for differences between means was (1.07), which is also not statistically significant at a significance level of (0.05). This means that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in reading comprehension.

This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of reading comprehension between males and females. The result showed that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of reading comprehension between males and females, and this result contradicts the hypothesis. This result can be attributed to the educational environment in which the study was conducted, as the environmental conditions and the tests used were similar for all participants in the study sample. This result can also be explained by the fact that all members of the study sample are subject to the same activities and exercises related to reading skills, and the school environment is the same and does not differ based on

the gender of the students. Therefore, they benefit from the activities and exercises in an almost balanced way. The result of the current study is consistent with the result of the study of Amr and Al-Natour (2006), whose results indicated that there is no effect of gender on the reading comprehension skills of the students.

### **Conclusion:**

The results of this study demonstrated a low level of reading comprehension among students with reading difficulties. We attributed this decline to several factors, including family pressures exerted on the child, as well as the lack of effective teaching strategies. These strategies play a crucial role in the lesson's delivery and in helping students master reading and reading comprehension skills. The absence of such strategies leads to a weakened ability to understand word meanings.

Furthermore, the scarcity of educational resources in educational institutions exacerbates the reading difficulties faced by this group of students with reading difficulties. We must also consider the density of the educational programs scheduled for the academic year. Studies mentioned earlier have shown that this density negatively impacts both students and teachers.

The results of the second hypothesis demonstrated no differences between males and females in reading comprehension levels. We explained this by noting that both receive the same instruction using the same teaching strategies.

However, the results of the third hypothesis showed differences in reading comprehension levels between students with reading difficulties and typical students, favoring the latter. This is primarily attributed to family dynamics, with the socioeconomic status of the students' families playing a significant role. Additionally, teachers often lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the general characteristics of students with learning difficulties. This group requires a specific type of teacher—one with adequate knowledge and information about their specific needs.

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