CHAPTER FOUR

Pilot Study: A small scale intervention programme in Gilan Province

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I elaborate on the methodology that was used to conduct a pilot study prior to conducting the intervention study in the field, and report on its results and findings. The pilot study investigated the impact of explicit instruction of comprehension strategies on, and motivation of intermediate EFL learners in Gilan province in Iran. The pilot study was carried out with the purpose of:

- assessing if the intended intervention research study was practical, workable and feasible
- testing adequacy of research instruments and modification of the materials if necessary for the field study
- identifying problems which might occur using proposed methods collecting data
- assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to identify and remove potential problems

According to the data collected from different stakeholders (guardians of the learners, learners, teachers, and administrators) during the Needs Analysis procedure, it was found that Iranian learners hardly study English for reasons such as using English language to communicate with foreigners, watch English programmes, use mobile phones, and the Internet, but to fulfill academic needs such as passing the examinations at school and preparing for university entrance exams which all are in written formats. This information reiterates the fact that reading comprehension is the most important English language skill in demand in the context of Iran.

For the pilot study, the researcher decided to include five reading comprehension strategies in the intervention programme to help the learners practice and learn to read on their own. This would enable them to have a better understanding of the texts in their private reading and secure high marks on school and National University Entrance Exams.
Due to the nature of the National University Entrance Exams which is time bound, learning skimming and scanning techniques could help the learners to read with speed and perform in the exams more efficiently. Moreover, learning the strategies of guessing meaning from the context and inference would help the learners to be prepared to answer unseen and unfamiliar texts and have a more informed chance of guessing the right answer to the questions. Learning the summarization strategy would help the learners to understand text structure better, and identify the important points in a text. By learning strategies Iranian intermediate learners would also be persuaded to explore unseen texts on their own.

4.2. Procedure

The pilot study was conducted in Goharan institute in Havigh city with twenty intermediate EFL learners of which only one group was taught reading comprehension strategies. Through a short talk with the teachers and the administrator, the researcher explained that the students would be divided into two groups: control and experimental (ten subjects in the control and ten in the experimental group), and the intervention would be done only on the experimental group.

The subjects were assigned to experimental and control groups with the toss of a coin. At first a grammar and vocabulary proficiency test, followed by the PET test (Preliminary English Test) of reading comprehension, was administered to the learners in order to make sure that no significant difference in terms of reading comprehension ability existed between the two groups. Following that, the pre-intervention questionnaire was given to the experimental group. The teacher of the experimental group was given the pre-intervention questionnaire as well. As a complementary move, all the participants in the two groups were given the reading comprehension pre-test, and after analyzing the results of the experimental group, the intervention of the experimental group was started.

4.3. The Intervention

Implementation of the intervention was spread over seven full sessions (one session on skimming, one on scanning, a third session on summarization, two sessions on guessing meaning from the context, and two sessions for inference strategy). The subjects in the
experimental group received exercises after explicit presentation of the strategies so that the researcher could track the students’ ability to use the strategies to the best possible extent. The control group received no strategy instruction, but participated in the pre and post-test exam. For the control group, the teacher was asked to continue following his own (traditional) pedagogy while teaching the lessons in their English textbook.

The teacher researcher presented the skimming strategy first and then gave a test to the participants. He repeated the procedure for the other four strategies. During the period of instruction, the students' strategy use was reviewed at regular intervals through review exercises designed from their own textbooks and extra exercises presented by the researcher from different sources. Then the experimental and control groups were given the pos-test, with a different text parallel in difficulty level to the pre-test. After the post-test the learners were administered the post-test questionnaire. In the last stage, the post-intervention questionnaire was given to the class teacher (teacher of the experimental group) to collect feedback about any changes that happened in the reading comprehension skills of the class.

4.4. Instruments

In order to gather data, the following instruments (samples of all of which are attached in the Appendix) were employed in the pilot study:

a) **Pre intervention grammar and vocabulary proficiency test.** In order to ensure that all participants were of the same level regarding general English proficiency, this test consisting of 60 multiple-choice grammar and vocabulary items was administered to both the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention.

b) **A PET reading test.** This test consisting of 35 multiple-choice items of reading comprehension was also administered to both the control and experimental groups.

c) **Pre-test questionnaire to the learners of the experimental group.** The pre-intervention questionnaire consisted of twelve questions and was intended to draw information about the learners’ reading style and strategy use.

d) **Pre-test questionnaire to the teacher of experimental group.** In order to elicit
information about the style and reading behaviour of the participants of the experimental group, a questionnaire consisting of ten questions was administered to the teacher of the experimental group at the beginning of the pilot study.

e) **Pre-test exam** (texts were chosen from topics appropriate to their level, and their course book)

f) **Post-test exam** (texts were chosen from topics appropriate to their level, and their course book)

g) **Post-test questionnaire to the learners of the experimental group.** The post-intervention questionnaire consisted of twelve questions which were designed to draw data on the efficacy of intervention on the learners, and any possible changes that occurred in their reading style.

h) **Post-test questionnaire to the teacher of experimental group.** In order to draw information on the effects of intervention on the experimental group’s reading skills, if any, a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions were administered to the teacher of the experimental group at the end of the research.

### 4.5. Materials: Passages for pre-test and post-test

The texts for pre-test and post-test were taken from the book *New English File Intermediate*. The lessons on pages 19 and 22 were used for the pre-test exam, while the lessons on pages 35 and 67 were used for the post-test exam (Copies of the texts are in the Appendix).

Due to the nature of the skimming and scanning strategies, the researcher decided to test these two strategies separately, as they required time bound responses. The pre-test thus included two sets of tests - one for skimming and scanning strategies and the other for GIS (guessing meaning from the context, inference and summarization) strategies. A comprehension test which used passages with ten comprehension questions was designed to test indices of skimming and scanning ability of the learners. In order to test the GIS strategies, the same passages with ten different questions - which tried to test indices of GIS strategies of the learners - were used in the study.
The post-test followed the same protocol and used tests for skimming and scanning and three other strategies separately from each other.

The materials that were used during the instructional practice procedure were taken and modified from different sources (the Internet and books) in the shape of handouts along with the pre-test and post-test passages and comprehension questions. The handouts also included systematic instructional guidelines to help the learners use the strategies on their own. There were two kinds of intervention questionnaires: pre and post intervention. Both the teacher and the learners of the experimental group were administered pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires. The teacher of the experimental group was given the same set of the questions (ten questions) as pre and post- intervention to draw information about the learners’ performance in the application of reading comprehension strategies and learners’ reading behaviour.

4.6. Results and discussions of the pilot study

The control group’s performance: Results of the comparison of pre and post-test Skimming (Sk)/Scanning (Sc) strategies of the control group showed that most of the subjects (50%) performed negatively (they got lower mark than pre-test); only 30% of the subjects performed better and got higher marks than the pre test, and 20% showed no changes in post-test. Comparison between pre and post-test GIS strategies scores of the control group shows that in post-test five subjects performed negatively (50%), obtaining marks lower than the pre-test, three of them (30%) performed better and got marks higher than pre-test, and two of the subjects (20%) did not show any change in their performances. The results showed that subjects of the control group performed identically in pre and post-test SK/SC and GIS strategies.

The experimental group’s performance: Comparison of scores of pre- and post-test Sk/Sc strategies of the experimental group showed that in post-test, seven subjects (70%) performed better than the pre-test; two of them performed negatively (i.e. they got lower
grades) (20%), and one of the subjects showed no change. In other words, after receiving intervention, 70% of the subjects performed positively, 20% performed negatively, and 10% showed no change. Comparison between pre and post-test GIS strategies scores of the experimental group shows that in post-test, eight subjects performed better than pre-test and two of them performed negatively (i.e. they got lower grades). In other words, after the intervention, 80% of the subjects in post-test performed positively and 20% performed negatively.

**Comparison of performance:** Comparison of the scores of post-test Sk/Sc strategies and post-test GIS strategies showed that the experimental group performed 10% better in post-test GIS strategies than post-test Sk/Sc strategies. **In other words, the intervention was around 10% more successful in experimental group for post-test GIS strategies.** Comparison of post-test Sk/Sc strategies of experimental and control group revealed that 40% of experimental group’s subjects performed better in post-test Sk/Sc strategies than control group in post-test Sk/Sc strategies. **In other words, the intervention created a 40% difference in performance of the experimental group for Sk/Sc strategies.** Comparison of post-test GIS strategies of experimental and control group revealed that 50% of experimental group’s subjects positively changed in their performance in post-test GIS strategies as compared to the control group. **In other words, the intervention created a 50% positive difference in performance of experimental group for GIS strategies.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post-test Sk/Sc strategies</th>
<th>Post-test GIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6.1. Pre-intervention questionnaire

The pre-intervention questionnaire was administered to the experimental group comprising intermediate EFL learners in Goharan institute, Astara, in the Gilan province of Iran.

The questions of the pre-intervention questionnaire were designed to draw up two sets of information. The first set of questions (Q.1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11) was used to find out about the problems that the learners face while reading, the reading style they employ, and the way that they generally read a text. The second set of questions (Q. 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12) tried to find out whether they used any kind of strategies at all. The analysis of the reading comprehension pre-intervention questionnaire was done to obtain information about the reading style and habits of the experimental group comprising ten intermediate EFL learners, before the intervention (which would include explicit teaching of five reading comprehension strategies: skimming, scanning, summarization, guessing meaning from the context and inference).

Below is the table of consolidated scores of the pre intervention questionnaire:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements (pre-intervention)</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) When I read a text, I can find the difference between the main idea and the supporting ideas</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) After I have read the text, I can summarize the information (i.e. say in short what it contains)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) After I have read the text, I can easily find the answers to the questions given at the end of the text</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I know how to use strategies such as skimming (reading for overall idea) and scanning (looking for specific information) while reading a text</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I can guess the meaning of new words from the context,</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e. the words and sentences surrounding the new word</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) As I read a text, I can explain what I have understood, and I can support my point with examples from the text</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) If there are any illustrations and charts in the text, I can use them to find out what the text is about</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) When I see a new word in a text, I look at the dictionary to understand its meaning</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) As I read a text, I make my own questions about it, so that I can understand the text better</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) While reading, I can guess what will happen next in the text</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) I translate some or all words / phrases into Persian while reading the text</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Before I start to read, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to read the text</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.1.1. Questions focusing on reading habits

1. When I read a text, I can find the difference between the main idea and the supporting ideas.

3. After I have read the text, I can easily find the answers to the questions given at the end of the text.

6. As I read a text, I can explain what I have understood, and I can support my point with examples from the text.

8. When I see a new word in a text, I look at the dictionary to understand its meaning.

10. While reading, I can guess what will happen next in the text.

11. I translate some or all words / phrases into Persian while reading the text.
4.6.1.2. Questions focusing on strategy use

2. After I have read the text, I can summarize the information.
4. I know how to use strategies such as skimming and scanning a text.
5. I can guess the meaning of new words from the context.
7. If there are any illustrations and charts in the text, I can use them to find out what the text is about.
9. As I read a text, I make my own questions about it, so that I can understand the text better.
12. Before I start to read, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to read the text.

4.6.2. Discussion of the pre-intervention questionnaire in pilot study

Statement 1: When I read a text, I can find the difference between the main idea and the supporting ideas.

Analysis of the first statement revealed that the subjects were familiar with the concepts of main and supporting ideas. The subjects reported that they can often locate them in the texts (40%). Since “Often” is very close to “Always” in the continuum, it can be considered a consolidation of a positive behaviour. The responses of the rest of the subjects show that they have not yet acquired this technique.

Statement 3: After I have read the text, I can easily find the answers to the questions given at the end of the text.

The most significant response for this statement was “sometimes” (60%). It was found that only about half of the subjects can find the answers to the questions. Around 20% had problems with finding the answers, and only a small portion (10%) of the subjects could always find answers to the questions. This finding revealed that more than half of the subjects had problems with finding the answers to questions. The researcher believes that the responses for “Always” (20%) and “Often” (10%) is to some extent encouraging. Sixty percent of the subjects reported “sometimes”, which suggests that explicit teaching of strategies (skimming, scanning) can help them to improve their reading skills and reach closer to the positive end of the continuum.
Statement 6: As I read a text, I can explain what I have understood, and I can support my point with examples from the text

The nature of responses for this statement circled mostly around “Always” (30%) and “Often” (30%), which indicates that for a total of 60% of the subjects there is a high possibility of their understanding what they read, analysing the text, and supporting their understanding with examples. Also, it seems that only for 30% (“Always”) of the subjects the technique has been consolidated and has become a permanent behaviour. The rest of the subjects need training to improve their ability, and to learn to express themselves.

Statement 8: When I see a new word in a text, I look at the dictionary to understand its meaning

The ratio showed that almost 90% of the subjects looked up new words in the dictionary which is in concordance with the result of statement 5. This suggests that there is less of a tendency among the subjects to try to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context.

Statement 10: While reading, I can guess what will happen next in the text

The responses (“Sometimes” 50%, “Never” 50%) showed that the learners had problems in activating their schema, visualizing text, and in their ability to infer. They also found it difficult to have a global understanding of the text. This can be attributed to the lack of use of skimming strategy. In addition, they did not preview the text to help them have a bird’s eye view of the text. Moreover, the inability to guess what would happen next in the text showed that the learners were stuck at word and sentence level; they relied on discrete elements of the text, and were unable to move to a macro level understanding of the text.

Statement 11: I translate some or all words / phrases into Persian while reading the text

From the responses (“Always” 30%, “Often” 30%, “Sometimes” 40%) it can be seen that all the subjects tended to translate the sentences to Persian. It is generally agreed that
this ‘mental translation’ results in decrease of reading speed and focus, and may make the reading process time consuming and uninteresting.

The following questions were analysed to draw information about the possibility of learners using the strategies before the intervention.

**Statement 2: After I have read the text, I can summarize the information**

Around 40% can either always or often summarize a text after they have read it. It seems around half of the respondents had not learned how to use it. This may be because the respondents had not received instructions or practice activities to learn how to summarize.

**Statement 4: I know how to use strategies such as skimming and scanning a text**

As we can see, the highest ratio is “sometimes” 50%. The ratio of “Never” (30%) shows that these subjects never use Sk/Sc strategies. It is believed that more than half of the subjects (“Sometimes” 50% and “Never” 30%) need to be instructed in the concepts of the strategies, be trained and given practice activities to help them make the strategies a permanent reading behaviour and style.

**Statement 5: I can guess the meaning of new words from the context**

The responses to this statement reveal that more than a quarter of the students do not use the strategy of guessing meaning of new words from the context. The most popular response to this statement was found in the “Sometimes” option, with 50% respondents citing this as their strategy. This indicates that they are using the strategy, but the behaviour has not yet consolidated.

**Statement 7: If there are any illustrations and charts in the text, I can use them to find out what the text is about**

This statement was given to the subjects to draw information about their use of the inference strategy. The ratio for this statement “Always” (10%), “Often” (40%), and “Sometimes” (50%) reveals that the subjects are already using charts and illustrations as a source to learn more about texts. However, this usage is not a permanent behaviour.

**Statement 9: As I read a text, I make my own questions about it, so that I can understand the text better**
The highest ratio was 40% for “Sometimes” and 20% for “Never”. This indicates that around a quarter of the subjects had problems with making their own questions after reading a text. Only 20% of the subjects had learned how to use and apply the technique, and the rest of the responses (20%, i.e. “Often”) and (40%, i.e. “Sometimes”) showed that the respondents had not learned to make a plan or an orientation for reading.

**Statement 12: Before I start to read, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to read the text**

The ratio “Always” (30%), “Often” (30%) shows that around 60% of the subjects planned and organized their reading. This indicates that they used their metacognitive skills to monitor and regulate their reading. The ratio of “Sometimes” (20%) shows that although these subjects had started planning their reading, the behaviour had not consolidated. The ratio of “Never” (20%) reveals that these subjects did not have any plan for their reading. In other words, they had not learnt to set goals, and become prepared to reflect on their reading process. Meta-cognitive strategies such as these are expected to help learners to regulate strategies to control the reading process, which this group of learners had not learnt yet. The researcher hoped that through explicit teaching of the strategies during the intervention, there was a chance to help these learners to acquire the permanent habit of planning their reading.

**4.6.3. Analysis of pre-intervention questionnaire in pilot study**

The analysis of the data collected through the pre-intervention questionnaire reveals that except for statements 1, 2, 6, 7, and 11, a considerable number of the subjects have reported with the “Never” option, (E.g. in statements 3 → 20%, 5 → 30%, 4 → 30%, 8 → 10%, 9 → 20%, 10 → 50%, 12 → 20 %). These scores indicate that the subjects had not learnt how to use the strategies and techniques while reading. For statement number “8,” 50% of the subjects reported that they “always” used a dictionary while reading. In terms of using reading strategies in context, this response suggests that half the population did not guess the meaning of a new word from its context.

When learners cannot easily find the answers to the questions given at the end of the text, this problem may be due to lack of proficiency, lack of confidence, or lack of practice.
Learning and applying reading comprehension strategies is expected to help the learners to organize and discipline their thoughts into a structured style of reading, and use less time for reading a text. Moreover, by applying strategies such as skimming and scanning, they may be expected to understand what information is important to look for in the text. Learning the scanning strategy can help them to read a question first, underline the key words from the question, and understand the text. At the next step, they would be able to read the text and look in it for the corresponding keywords from the question. After an amount of practice, they would learn not to spend time struggling with less important parts of the content; they would learn the habit of highlighting important words, and scanning the text to find the answer.

Learners can also learn to comprehend a text by surveying it, i.e. by looking at titles, subtitles, illustration, charts, and invoking their background knowledge. For example, if they are looking for ‘scores’, ‘number’ would be a clue. By trying to anticipate in what form the answer will appear and what clues will help them to find it, they can read the text faster and look for that answer.

4.6.4. Post-intervention questionnaire analysis

The post intervention questionnaire was administered to the experimental group after the intervention to draw information about their reaction to the explicit teaching of five reading comprehension strategies. The statements were designed to collect information about the changes in their reading comprehension style, strategy application, and motivation to read.

Statement 1: I can apply to different texts the reading strategies that I have newly learned, without the teacher’s help

The ratio for “Never” option (10%) showed that a small number of the subjects still needed assistance of the teacher to perform the activities regarding applying strategies on their own. The ratio obtained from other options “Always” (10%), “Often” (40%) and “Sometimes” (40%), shows that around 90% learned to apply the strategies on their own without the teacher’s help.
Statement 2: When I find a text difficult to understand, I do not give up; I use strategies to help me to understand it

The responses to this statement “Always” (20%), “Often” (50%), “Sometimes” (30%) reveal that all of the subjects were trying to improve their reading by making use of the strategies. Similarly, the response to this statement indicates that their orientation and motivation towards reading had changed after the intervention.

Statement 3: When the text becomes difficult, I reread it

The experimental group reacted positively to this strategy. As we can see, around 70% of the subjects ("Always" 40%, "Often" 30%) most of the time re-read the difficult part of the text. The results suggest that this while-reading strategy helped the subjects to focus and pay more attention to the text as they read.

Statement 4: I read the captions, charts, and graphs in the text carefully to infer information from them and make questions about the text

If we compare the results of pre and post questionnaire regarding this statement, we see that the ratio of “Always” option (10%) in pre test has increased to 40% in post-test, which is indicative of 30% improvement due to intervention. An interesting issue is that in the post-test questionnaire around 10% of the subjects reported with “Never” option, which, as can be seen, had recorded 0% in the pre test questionnaire. The researcher believes that this negative statement could arise either from the lack of cooperation of 10% of the subjects, disappointment in using the strategy or a change in the way that the subjects looked at application of the strategy and its concept.

Table 4.3: Responses of the Learners to Statement Four of Pre and Post Test Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-test</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement 5: After reading each paragraph of the text, I summarize it in my own words

Comparison of feedback of pre and post questionnaire shows that the subjects learned significantly from the intervention (the score for “Always” option in pre test was 20%, but 40% in the post-test). In addition, there was 10% improvement for the “Often” option. Overall, 30% improvement was recorded for the strategy use in post-test after receiving intervention.

Table 4.4: Responses of the Learners to Statement Five of Pre and Post Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement 6: I make questions about the text: before, during, and after reading

This is an important strategy to use before, during and after reading. The ratio of “Always” option (0%) reveals that the intervention has not consolidated the strategy use in the learners. The interesting thing is that 10% of the subjects stated that they never used the strategy. Around 90% (“Often” 10%, “Sometimes” 80%) seemed to have started formulating questions. Creating questions is an indicator of involvement with the text, willingness to analyze the text, and needs activation of other strategies such as inference, and skimming as well. Moreover, forming questions is expected to make the learners more aware of why they are reading the text. This is also expected to help them read selectively and review the important points in the text, which in turn will help them to clarify meaning.

Statement 7: Thinking aloud about difficult sections in the text helps me to understand the text better

Thinking aloud is a self-regulatory fix up strategy that helps the subjects to read the text better by regulating the pace of reading the text, and monitoring reading. The results of the questionnaire reveal that for almost 80% of the subjects (“Always” 20%, “Often” 20%, “Sometimes” 40%) the change in the behaviour happened, and the researcher believes this
can be consolidated with more practice. This strategy is an individualized technique that could be personalized by the subjects.

**Statement 8:** I try not to look at a dictionary to find the meaning of new words. I try to guess the meaning of new words in their context.

Comparison of pre and post-test results indicates that the subjects noticeably improved in using the strategy of guessing meaning from the context. All the learners reported that they tried to guess meaning from the context and accordingly, would need to refer to a dictionary less. The researcher believes that if the subjects are unable to guess the meaning from the context all the time, it is a normal consequence of being a learner.

**Statement 9:** I note down important points of the text. It helps me to read systematically

All the subjects reported (“Always” 10%, “Often” 20%, “Sometimes” 70%) that they have learned the strategy and are using it. As we can see, the ratio for “Sometimes” is the highest. This is an encouraging result, as the more they use the strategy the more it can help the learners as a complementary strategy to act more efficiently in summarization and scanning.

**Statement 10:** Before I start to read, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to read the text

Comparison of pre and post reveals that all of the learners used this meta-cognitive strategy. Interestingly, there is a 10% drop for “Always” option in post-test questionnaire. This drop could be either because of intervention or because of a change of point of view of the subjects, using a new method, which needs more practice and effort for consolidation, or an error on the part of the subjects while reporting reading style.

**Table 4.5: Responses of the Learners in Statement Ten of the Pre and Post Test Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Statement 11: I preview the text to see what it is about before reading it**

Previewing is helpful in getting the gist of the text as fast as possible, and becoming familiar with the theme and content of the text. There is a considerable gap between the ratios of the responses by the learners (“Always” 20%, “Often” 50%, “Sometimes” 20% and “Never” 10%). 10% of the subjects reported that they never preview the text. This suggests that they could have problems with inferring and keeping track of how the text is moving.

**Statement 12: I consciously think about the strategies that I am going to apply to understand what I read**

The results reveal that the subjects, to some extent, had acquired the skills of monitoring, regulating, and planning the process and pace of their own reading by activating cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies.

**4.6.5. Analysis of the pre and post-intervention questionnaire to the experimental group in pilot study**

The results of post-intervention questionnaire indicate that some learners may take longer to acquire the skills and strategies of reading comprehension. This may be because the time taken for a change of behaviour and the subsequent consolidation of a new pattern will differ from one individual to another. The researcher believes that this may be the reason for inconsistency across the ratios of options in the report. A comparison of the report of pre and post intervention regarding “guessing meaning from the context, inferring, and summarization” reveals that the intervention has positively changed their motivation, orientation and behaviour towards strategy use. In addition, the results points to the fact that learners' awareness of strategies and their ability to use them while reading has increased.

**4.7 Conclusion**

The results of the pilot study suggest that there is a need to teach reading in Iran by making pedagogical changes to the traditional method of teaching reading through translation, dictionary reference and vocabulary practice. Making learners explicitly use reading comprehension strategies is likely to give learners a more active role to play in their
own reading behaviour, and help change their attitude towards reading. In view of this, the researcher felt that the field study, i.e. the intervention study, could now be administered to the target group of subjects with little modification.

The pilot study helped the researcher to consolidate several of his hypotheses and assumptions. For example, a comparison of the pre-intervention questionnaire and post-intervention questionnaire to the teachers of the experimental group revealed that there is some kind of positive change in the behaviour of learners after intervention for the following reading behaviours:

- Guessing meaning from the context
- Making use of schema
- Summarization
- Inference
- Distinguishing the main idea from the supporting ideas
- Making predictions about what will happen in the text next

The result of the study revealed that explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies can effectively improve learners’ reading ability. The limitation of the study was that the results i.e. comparisons of the control group and the experimental group’s performance after explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies were not statistically significant, but the reason for this could have been the small sample size. The results of the pilot study, however, helped the researcher to plan the procedure of the field study more systematically, and build it on the experience of the pilot study.