6.0. Introduction:

In this study, an investigation into the reading problems faced by EFL learners in the Department of English, College of Education, Shabwa Governorate Branch, Aden University, was carried out. This study investigated the variables that constituted reading problems for EFL learners such as inference, vocabulary, reading for detail to extract information and facts in a given text. These were, in short, set to examine the learners’ readability and comprehensibility in English through a battery of comprehension tests, cloze tests and composition tests. As a matter of fact, this investigation revealed that the learners lacked sufficient skills for efficient reading. This was clearly established through a look into their scores as presented in chapter four, data analysis, and as discussed in the preceding chapter.

In this chapter, a chapter-wise summary would be drawn for the whole study and finally some pedagogical implications are to be outlined.

6.1. Summary:

CHAPTER ONE, the introductory chapter, in which some preliminaries were discussed, gave a brief account on the Republic of Yemen, its population, area and location. The system of education in Yemen was highlighted and important aspects were looked at such as inputs, process and outputs of such a system.

It gave a brief account about the ladder and stages of education as well as the position of women at all stages of education. The higher education was also discussed which, in fact, witnessed a relatively vast and rapid improvement.
The status of English language was tackled in two perspectives: Historical and contemporary. It is really unjust what some scholars like, for instance, Al-Mekhlafi (1999) and Al-Hamzi (1999), among others, believed that English was introduced in Yemen in 1920s unsystematically and only after the 26th 1962 revolution in systematic education. This is probably true just for one part of Yemen; namely the northern part, but as a matter of fact English started much more earlier on the hands of the British Colonizers in Aden and subsequently in the whole occupied south part of Yemen. Essentially, they started establishing systematic English medium schools to attract the locals, especially the sons of the Sultans and Chiefs of the tribes.

After seventeen years of British occupation of Aden, i.e., started 1839, the inauguration of the first government school took place on the hands of Saint G.B. Badger in 1856. Its goal was to provide clerks for the Arabic section in secretariat of Bombay Government in Aden (Suleiman 1994:66).

Later on, many other schools had been established by the British. In 1879, for instance, another government primary school was opened in M'alla, Aden, a third one in 1880 in Tawahi, Aden, and a fourth was opened in Sheikh Othman, Aden, in 1882. In 1918 the British had established the Government Residency School Building in Crater, Aden, (presently, the Military Museum) that comprised both the primary and secondary schools with English as their medium of instruction (ibid: 67-8).

During the British occupation era, a number of missionaries' schools were established. The medium of instruction in those schools was English as well (Al-Ardhi 2001:136).

As far as certificates are concerned, for instance, the government secondary schools syllabus had been promoted and Senior Cambridge Certificate had been introduced.

Arabic had been a compulsory subject after being for a long time a non-compulsory one, and English remained the language of instruction in the secondary schools.
This chapter also shed light on the grade on which English is commencing as a subject in the syllabus of primary schools. It focused on the courses used in ELT in the Yemeni schools in both parts of Yemen before unification and after. It gave a brief account on the ELT methods in the Yemeni domain and revealed that GTM continues maintaining a prestigious profile at school level till the present. In addition to the teachers' familiarity with the GTM, some other reasons, for instance, the large classes and the absence of well-qualified English language teachers contributed considerably in its survival. Anyway, in search for an alternative, the Bilingual Method (BM) was suggested by Ghanim (1987) for teaching English in schools. He suggested that Arabic should be used by the teacher and only the teacher not the learners when he feels it is fatefuly a must, especially at the earlier stages of teaching English. A recommendation on using new approaches and methods for teaching English such as communicative approaches and recruiting well-qualified teachers has been made as well.

This chapter also tackled the use of English by the learners outside the classroom and the role of English in present-day Yemen, since English has been widely used in the country and it became the lingua franca among those foreign nationals doing business in Yemen. Its use in all fields of life such as in tourism, media, and internet was discussed.

This introductory chapter gave a brief note on the area of the study, Aden University, since its foundation along with its affiliated colleges; the College of Education, Shabwa, its establishment and the Department of English in particular, of which the sample of this study has been drawn. The scope of the study, the research problem and the justification for the present work has been attempted. The need for reading in an EFL context in Yemen has been discussed as well.

CHAPTER TWO, related literature and theoretical background, by and large, represented some theoretical preliminaries for the topic of reading and those related to the contribution of reading problems. However, it
discussed the importance of reading for learners and how reading extensively serves just next to living among native speakers for those EFL learners to acquire English (Nuttall :1996), and how it is linked to the academic careers of the learners in EFL situations (see Alderson 1984). It surveyed the assumptions behind defining the reading process since Plato’s definition of reading and the way scholars differently viewed reading. Some scholars believe that up till now there is no accurate definition of reading such as J.Carol cited in Harris et al (1983:264). Garbe (1991) stressed the complexity of the reading process and how simple definitions might misrepresent such a cognitive process and Frank Smith (1985) who has gone farther to challenge defining reading precisely. A selection of traditional and more recent definitions of reading was made, which revealed the decoding views of reading, the psycholinguistic view and the interactive views of reading as well.

Goodman (1970) refered to reading as a ‘psycholinguistic guessing game.’ It is psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. Smith’s views expressed in (1985:75) accord with Goodman’s above argument that the meaning does not exist in the text rather it is the reader who brings meaning into the text.

This chapter, in addition, surveyed the historical development commencing with the historical link between reading and writing since earlier stages of human development. It chronologically traced the advancement in the field of reading research, which is relatively new discipline of knowledge. Reading research in the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century was concerned mainly with eye-movement studies and with investigation of the perception of the letters and words when exposed to view very briefly. N. B. Smith (1965) did a scientific survey for the advancement of research in reading which has been summarized decade by decade. It traced these developments as earlier as the first decade of the 20th century till the 1960s. But, the issue of reading in the 1960s to the 1970s has swiftly transcended this footprint to become more universal. People started thinking of discussing and sharing
information and experiences related to reading research in a more systematic and organized way. Congresses on reading started taking place, according to Morris (1972), the First World Congress, held in Paris, in August 1966, has marked the beginning of most existing period in the history of the British reading. Furthermore, in 1990s, as Grabe (1991:375) has asserted that "five important areas of current research which should remain prominent for this decade are: schema theory, language skills and automaticity, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies training, and reading-writing relations". These areas of research, and others, remain of great interest for scholars till the 2000s.

A summary of the link between reading and linguistics and the application of linguistics into many fields, and to language teaching in particular, that has continued to the present day with more significant achievements was provided.

It also covers the concept of the nature of reading in which many related aspects have been discussed such as comprehension and reading. The effect of reading speed, rate and flexibility of the reading and the reading material, and the concepts of good and poor readers are also tackled.

A survey of the approaches of reading that are currently in effect has been sought in some detail. Certainly, over the last four decades three major reading approaches have come into existence. They are: Bottom-up reading process, top-down reading process, and interactive processing approaches. Most of what is known about reading research, including these approaches, has mainly originated in first language reading research. English as a foreign language experts and educationists should bear in mind the idea of how to relate this into the field of EFL reading.

This chapter further discussed some contemporary theories in applied linguistics and their relation to reading such as Schema Theory ST, Automaticity Theory AT, and Threshold Theory TT. Reading in both first and second/foreign language has been attempted as well. Investigating the differences between EFL and NL reading is too vast an area of ample literature. There is clear evidence from literature that schema theory and
cultural background, for instance, play a significant role in both NL and FL/SL reading.

Dichotomies such as those of extensive reading program ERP and intensive reading program IRP have been discussed, with some emphasis on implementing an extensive reading program that could effectively help in developing reading skills and strategies of the readers. Silent and oral reading, word attack and text attack skills, techniques of reading such as skimming and scanning; and how they may be effectively utilized to make reading more productive were also discussed in this chapter.

This chapter also reviewed the reading habits and reader's interest, which are of great concern and cannot be overlooked in any reading program. It also highlighted the role of reading and EFL/ESL readers' achievement.

Finally, the chapter gave some detail on the reading problems as discussed in the literature of reading research. It tackled the problems faced by the EFL readers at many levels lexically, syntactically, and semantically. Research such as that of Yorio (1971) which asserts that the main area EFL learners problematically confronted with is vocabulary.

CHAPTER THREE gave a background of the methodology and the tools employed in gathering the raw data for this research. The sample design and the objective of the study were delineated. It also gave an account of the hypothesis on which the research is based. The tools used in collecting the data and the theoretical assumption behind utilizing such tools were discussed. Cloze tests were designed to test for the readability and comprehensibility. They are designed as three types: every 5th word deleted test, every 6th word deleted test, and every 7th word deleted test. All these were set to check how far a text was complex when the frequency of deleted words did matter. Cloze tests, generally, can possibly be used to check the level of readability, as said above, of a particular text. This factor is much related to the present study of assessing difficulties faced by foreign language learners reading an English prose text. Comprehension tests were also designed to test for the three aspects in reading skills: reading for
detail test, inference test, and vocabulary test. Composition tests were also intended to check the readers' performance in both reading and writing and how closely these two skills in their proficiency of language acquisition were.

Other techniques have been administered such as questionnaires and observations of real teaching classes of reading. These aimed at eliciting information about the habits of reading and readers' interests along with investigating the methods and techniques used to teach reading in such a setting. As a data collection tool, direct observation may also make an important contribution to descriptive research. Certain types of information can best be attained all the way through direct assessment by the researcher. However, when the observation concerns aspects of material objects or specimen, the process is relatively simple, and may consist of categorizing, assessing, or counting.

CHAPTER FOUR, the analysis of the data, the cloze tests scoring in each of the three tests 40 words were deleted. Students, actually, were to retrieve the exact word or the word that can be textually fit into the gap (acceptable). As in appendices (15-20) deleted words were serially numbered and identified in these charts and they are, essentially, either content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs) or functional words (pronouns, prepositions, determiners, or conjunctions). In scoring these passages, two methods were followed; the Exact Word Method (EWM) and the Acceptable Word Method (AWM).

Every correct answer was awarded the mark (1) while every acceptable answer was awarded the mark (2), whereas wrong answers were given the mark (3). These marks were assigned to such categories so that the analysis later on would be explicit and easier in terms of statistical figures (see appendices15-20). Later on, the percentages of errors for each group in each passage were calculated. Both percentages of correct and acceptable words were taken into account in the computation of the correlations with the other variables (tests).
Comprehension tests in the present study were set to examine the ability of the test-takers on how to guess the meaning of words and their formations in one passage; to comprehend the main ideas in another passage, and further, to check the subjects' ability to infer meanings from a third one. Regarding scoring, every correct answer in these tests was awarded the mark (1), whereas every wrong answer was given the mark (0). The analyses of all these tests along with the other types of tests were done in percentages, means, standard deviations and correlations. The data was presented in tables, figures and graphs to make it more obviously and sensibly explained.

Two types of questionnaires were administered. The first was designed to obtain information about the students' reading habits, reading awareness, reading performance and reading tactics. The other was designed and distributed among the teachers of the department to elicit information about their opinions related to teaching English in the department and teaching reading in particular. These views helped in tracing, understanding, and diagnosing the reading problems of the EFL learners in this particular situation.

Percentages were done to come to an adequate interpretation for the problems faced by the students in reading an English prose text. Graphs were also utilized along with tables to present the outcomes of the data analysis. Correlation analysis was run to check the relationship between the seven tests given to the subjects of these two groups. Particularly, Pearson's coefficient of correlation has been calculated to measure the degree of the relationship between the seven tests administered for the two groups of this study as in tables (4.5) and (4.6).

CHAPTER FIVE discussed the findings of the study as represented in chapter four. The results of this research were discussed in two major perspectives: learning perspective and teaching perspective. It revealed how the learners were confronted with difficulties at the level of vocabulary. They were, really, stuck to the bottom in thinking that the meaning is linked to every single utterance.
There speed, as well, was not adequate and they were too slow in their answering of the questions in the tests administered for the study, in terms of time consumed. They also showed a very slow habit in the reading classes observed by the researcher. This chapter also discussed the problems that the learners were confronted with such as inferring, or reading for detail and these were discussed in detail.

CHAPTER SIX is the summary and conclusion of this research which gives an outline of the whole study in a chapter-wise brief discussions given in the above paragraphs. It, also proposes the following pedagogical implications.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications:

The findings of the study, which explored the reading problems of the EFL/ESL learners in the Department of English Language, College of Education Shabwa, At Ataq; Aden University, have brought into the fore some essential matters regarding the implementation of such findings in the pedagogy of EFL/ESL reading. It is, then, recommended that:

1- Balanced activities to teaching reading have the advantage of the motivation of learners with variety of activities should be presented to them. In this way we make sure of their active engagement in the learning process and foster their acquisition of English.

2- Better methods in teaching reading would ensure minimizing the reading problems learners were confronted with in reading an English prose text. Teachers, then, should be equipped with updated methods and techniques, which would not be in effect without the continuing education or in-service training of the teachers to promote the quality of teaching English and reading in particular.

3- An extensive reading program should be seriously thought of and implemented if the quality of reading is to be improved. Learners should be guided from learning to read to reading to learn and this alone will be achieved through an exposure to variety of English
texts. As discussed in this study, in chapters 2, 4, and 5, ERP is, in short, a must to booster the learners' language acquisition.

4- As a prerequisite to the ERP, library of the college or probably the library of the department should be updated and new books, novels, stories, abridged classical novels; magazines, newspapers, and different types of references in English language should be introduced and made public at the learners' demand.

5- A drastic shift from teacher-centered approach of teaching to learner-centered approach, which would ensure a reasonable development in the proficiency of learners in general. In any educational program, the learners' interests and motivations are essential, and the only way to enhance these things is to get learners involved in the learning process through implementation of learner-centered methods of teaching reading and the other language skills. This can be well achieved through the practice of pair and group activities in reading class and other classes of English.

6- The syllabus is, moreover, an influential feature in teaching/learning process in EFL situation in particular. Syllabus designers, material developers and the training colleges of teachers should collaborate so that at the time of drafting the syllabus the colleges should be informed and be fully aware of what the objectives and contents of the syllabus entail. Consequently, the English language syllabus in the department of English, colleges of education, should include particular components for the trainee teachers. It should also have a clear vision on how to deal with reading in EFL situation, improve vocabulary acquisition, improve reading efficiency, and handle or assess the learner.

7- In an EFL/ESL context such as this of this study, and in accordance with the research findings in 'schema theory' ST, attention is to be paid to the selection of reading texts and reading materials. Similarly, the teacher while teaching reading must pay attention to the differences in background knowledge and should play a decisive role in preparing the learners for the passage that he is teaching by
providing relevant background knowledge so that their schemata would be activated and stimulated as well.

8- Sufficiently enough time should be allocated for teaching reading comprehension and reading skills in the department of English in the colleges of education in Aden University and the likes in Yemen as well. The limited number of contact hours that are now allocated for teaching reading is untenable.

9- In order to produce competent students, who will be future teachers in schools, there should be concurrent syllabus reform, revision, or change in the departments of English so as to train them properly. Their task of teaching later on will be effective and productive.

10- Programs like continuing education, or what so called in-service training, workshops, and seminars are supportive to teachers. It is through such programs that learners polish their skills and hence become effective in class. Thus, training of reading teachers and English language teachers, in general, remains a crucial area of concern. In these programs, concentration is due on teaching methodologies of reading and the other skills which would be achieved through running short term courses, workshops, discussion forums, etc.

To conclude, the rationale behind this study was to inspect and discuss thoroughly the reading problems of the Yemeni EFL learners of the Department of English college of Education, at Ataq, Shabwa; Aden University. Another important premise of the study was to propose some pedagogical and remedial measures, which based on the findings, to improve the teaching and learning of reading, as outlined in the above ten points.

Teaching reading is a too much researched area in EFL/ESL context, but research in reading problems, particularly, at the college level in Yemen, is relatively a new research domain. The study attempted to bring to the fore both reading problems and the factors that contributed to existence of
these problems which were really unique to the Yemeni EFL situation. The findings of the study revealed reading problems of the learners, and the ways of teaching and learning reading at the college level. This, probably, what makes it different from other studies carried out previously in this research area. It is hoped that the findings of our study would be inferential one, in the sense that it helps in diagnosing the problems of reading in other colleges of education at Aden University and the other Yemeni universities, because of the uniformity of the settings and contexts of learning English. It is also an ambition that this study would raise the awareness of education policy makers, syllabus designers, academic authorities, and English language teachers of the importance of reading and to have a clear insight into the reading problems of EFL learners. It is, indeed, an aspiration that the above concerned people would arrive at pedagogical decisions that would make reading, in particular, more fruitful and efficient at all educational levels.