Implementing Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy to Teach Reading Comprehension: Algerian EFL Teachers' Perspective

تنفيذ اصول التدريس المتمايز لتدريس فهم المقروء. منظور المعلمين الجزائريين للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية.

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Abstract:

This descriptive research study attempts to investigate Algerian EFL teachers' use of Differentiated Instruction pedagogy. The researchers link the approach to reading comprehension. The main concern is to take a closer look at the subjects' perceptions of the nature of the model, its principles and implementation in general, and differentiated reading instruction in particular. The paper also aims at obtaining further recommendations for the better use of the pedagogy to teach the skill under study. To gather relevant data, a teachers' questionnaire was administered to a sample of 100 Algerian EFL teachers. The results indicate some gaps in the educators' attempts to implement the model in addition to their claims to have many obstacles which hinder the process in the Algerian educational context. Hence, further recommendations to rid the context of such hindrances are highlighted by the participants.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Reading Comprehension, Differentiated Reading Comprehension, Algerian EFL teachers.

ملخص البحث

هذه الدراسة البحثية الوصفية تحاول التحقيق في استخدام معلمي اللغة الانجليزية الجزائريين للتدريس بالتمايز. يتمثل الشاغل الرئيسي في القاء نظرة فاحصة على تصورات المعلمين حول طبيعة النموذج ومبادئه وتنفيذه بشكل عام وتعليم القراءة المتمايزة بشكل خاص. يهدف البحث ايضا الى الحصول على مزيد من التوصيات من اجل تنفيذ افضل لهذا المنهج التدريسي وتعزيز المهارة قيد الدراسة. لجمع البيانات ذات الصلة تم اجراء استبيان للمعلمين على

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عينة من 100 مدرس جزائري للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية. تشير النتائج الى بعض الثغرات في محاولات التربويين لتطبيق علم اصول التدريس المتباين بالاضافة الى ادعائهم بوجود الكثير من العقبات التي تعيق العملية في السياق التربوي الجزائري. ومن هنا تم تسليط الضوء على العديد من التوصيات المقترحة من طرف المعلمين لتخليص السياق التعليمي من هذه العوائق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس المتمايز، فهم المقروء، القراءة المتمايزة، المعلمين الجزائريين للغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية.

I- Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century, educationalists shifted their concern from the conventional fashion of instructional delivery of "one size fits all" to more inclusive approaches. The latter have come into light to confirm that varying sizes fit different students. Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an inclusive pedagogical model which highlights student variance and individuality. The main aim of DI is to accommodate for the numerous individual differences of learners to achieve effective learning and academic success for all (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). DI can be adopted in EFL classrooms to teach the different language areas. Reading comprehension is hard to be acquired by students since it draws on various cognitive processes and skills (Cain, Oakhill, & Bryant, 2004). As a matter of fact, differentiated reading instruction can serve as a promising approach to teach this skill. EFL Teachers, in many countries around the world, such as the United States (US), have already blended DI approach in their classes. On the other side, there is no clear evidence that Algerian EFL educators have aspired to do the same as there is no legal evidence supporting the integration of DI in the Algerian educational context. In fact, students with disabilities are given the right to schooling, yet there are no clear mechanisms for the inclusion of this category in the Algerian educational system (Bessai, 2018). Shortly said, inclusive education has not yet founded its pillars in the Algerian context. However, it is still possible for EFL teachers to embed DI in their classes and adjust instruction to meet their students' needs.

The present study is an endeavour to provide an overview of DI as a recent inclusive pedagogical model. The aim here is to investigate Algerian EFL teachers' implementation of this approach in their classes, their awareness level of its nature and importance and the possibility of seeing it as a success in the Algerian EFL context. The scientific novelty of this research is that such a model is not yet officially used in Algeria where English is

being taught as a foreign language. The paper is mainly an attempt to explore EFL teachers' use of DI to teach reading comprehension in particular, where the researchers try to collect evidence about the subjects' attitudes about the use of the approach to teach such a skill. Further suggestions about the ways that could enhance the implementation of DI in general in the Algerian language teaching context, and differentiated reading instruction in particular are also sought to be obtained from the subjects. The main research question is whether Algerian EFL teachers use DI pedagogy in general, and differentiated reading instruction in particular. It is hypothesized that Algerian EFL teachers make use of such a model and are aware of its importance in their classes to teacher reading comprehension. To obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, the researchers have used a semi-structured teachers' questionnaire which was administered to a sample of 100 Algerian EFL teachers in various high and middle schools across the country.

II- Literature Review:
1- Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy in EFL Classrooms:
a) Defining Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy:

Tomlinson (1999; 2001) is a leading proponent of this approach. She asserts that students are diverse in multiple aspects, especially in today's world of personalization. Hence, DI approach has come into undeniable existence, setting up inextricable threads with the modern educational settings. Some teachers tend to wrongly perceive DI as a mere set of strategies that should be implemented. However, it is a much broader concept. This inclusive modal is a whole belief system, a philosophy, or a way of thinking. Once teachers have such a philosophy in mind, they can act accordingly by planning strategically in order to meet the diverse needs of their students (Chapman & Gregory, 2007; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Tomlinson and Eidson (2003) underscore this view and define differentiation as "a way of thinking about the classroom with the dual goals of honoring each student's learning needs and maximizing each student's learning capacity" (p. 3). This approach is an engine through which teachers translate their differentiation beliefs into instructional decisions. The latter include a variety of learning options which attend to students' diversity in regard to three attributes: *readiness levels*, *interests*, and *learning profiles* (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). DI is also perceived as a methodology. Tomlinson (2001) clarifies that teachers differentiate instruction by shaking up what goes on in their classrooms in order to present learners with multiple options and avenues *to take in information*, *make sense of concepts and ideas*, and *express what they learn.* In other words, differentiation in teaching means providing

different avenues and approaching *content*, *process*, and *product* from various angles. Crawford (2008) and Hall (2003) believe that differentiating instruction is a methodology through which educators determine their learners' varying needs, background knowledge, strengths and interests, and act responsively by planning instruction and using multiple strategies. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) similarly add that DI is a responsive teaching approach that calls on teachers to stay attuned to students' diverse learning needs. From a reading/literacy perspective, Jones et al. (2010) provide their own definition of DI. According to them, DI is a "turn-around" pedagogy in which teachers get to know their students well and responsively tailor instruction and plan reading activities and materials to match learners' interests. The researchers emphasize that such reading practices ought to engage students in relevant real-life issues important to them.

b) Rationales for Using Differentiated Instruction:

DI has emerged with the aim of replacing traditional approaches which neglected student variance. Researchers have provided many rationales for the use of DI. Thousand et al. (2007) state five main rationales: to meet the various needs of learners, to be more effective teachers, to dispel myths about learners and break all the false assumptions which can blind the teacher to a student's strengths, to fulfill legal mandates which aim at making education inclusive to all children with no exception, and finally, to be ethical and implement democratic values in classes. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006), on their turn, hold their own views on the "why" behind using DI. They explain that attending to a flexible teacher-learner relationship boosts students' energy to learn. Besides, DI calls for a supportive environment which, if attended to, would create an effective context for learning. Furthermore, addressing student variance builds bridges that connect learners to relevant content areas. In addition, attending to learners' *readiness levels, interests,* and *learning profiles* allows for *increased achievement levels, academic growth, motivation levels, and efficiency in learning.*

c) Differentiated Instruction Principles:

DI pedagogy is guided by a set of distinguished principles. First, a DI classroom requires an encouraging and supportive environment. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) state that "The way in which students experience the classroom learning environment profoundly shapes how they experience learning" (p. 5). A well-articulated curriculum also plays a central role. Such curriculum revolves around essential and clear learning targets (knowledge, understandings, and skills: KUDs) and is meaning-driven and engaging. It is also underpinned by the "teaching-up" principle which requires the use of

scaffolding to enable struggling learners to work effectively with advanced-level tasks (Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011). Another principle is the use of assessment to inform instruction for appropriate adjustment and differentiation. Assessment here is both diagnostic and ongoing. The main goal is to provide day-to-day information about students in regard to their three attributes, in addition to their learning as a whole (Tomlinson, 1999). Instruction is planned as a response to these two assessment's findings. Planning instruction which responses to student variance is another tenet of DI. A well-planned instruction can compensate for an inefficient curriculum. The teacher's duty is to attend to such variance through the use of a variety of strategies and techniques. Flexible grouping represents one of DI strategies where students regularly get the chance to work with various peers who are both similar and different when it comes to the three students' attributes. Educators also make use of respectful tasks which ensure that each learner's work is as interesting and challenging as every other learner's work in the class to guarantee growth from all. Another equally important principle is the modification of the three main instructional elements: content, process, and product. Such components are differentiated based on the beforementioned students' characteristics (Tomlinson, 1999; Tomlinson & Moon, 2013; Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011). Last but not least, for an effective DI classroom, teachers should both lead students and manage routines and activities. Tomlinson and Sousa (2011) argue that teachers should "lead" and not "manage" students. Leaders focus on individuals, respect, appreciate and have a shared vision with them. They also collaborate and work with them as a team to achieve growth and success for all. On the other hand, routines should be managed in a thorough and flexible manner. Teachers manage routines through planning schedules, handling details, preparing materials…etc. In few words, teachers should be flexible and know when to "manage" and when to "lead".

d) Differentiated Instruction Components:

DI pedagogy is linked to the adjustment of three instructional components: content, process, product. Content refers to the input that teachers plan to teach and which students should learn. It comes in the form of knowledge, understandings, and skills. It also encompasses the way learners get access to the input. Process represents the sense-making activities through which learners can master or "own" the content. It starts when learners stop taking in the input from outside sources and begin actually working with it. Product is the summative assessment through which learners show to what extent they have come to "own" the input in regard to the

essential learning goals (KUDs) by the end of a sequence/unit of learning, or at some critical points in a unit. As a matter of fact, product or "culminating product" assignments are graded and they are directly linked with students' achievements. Teachers pro-actively differentiate these three components in three different ways. The latter are defined by students' attributes of readiness (current proximity in regard to the specified KUDs), students' interests, and their learning profiles which include their learning styles, intelligence preference, culture and gender. The last element is the learning environment or the affect. In a DI classroom, it is a must for teachers to maintain a supportive and flexible environment in which learners' affect is kept positive. In this way, students will feel safe to learn and reach individual potentials to achieve growth (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010; Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011; Tomlinson & Moon, 2013).

2- Differentiated Reading Instruction:

a) Reading Comprehension Strategies:

Brown (2001) points out that reading comprehension is all about the development of appropriate and efficient comprehension strategies. Reading strategies are categorized into two main types: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies range from bottom-up (concrete) to top-down (abstract) strategies (Coady, J. in Mackay, C. et al., 1979). The 'bottom' refers to knowledge about language which is related to the recognition of print including letters and words. Therefore, bottom-up strategies are used to process information at the level of words and sentences, and they transform the "squiggles" that the reader encounters in the text into symbols with meaning (Birch, 2002). Such strategies include phonological strategies (to recognize sounds of a language), orthographic or decoding strategies (to match letters with their sounds), lexical (to recognize and link words with their meaning), and syntactic ones (used during the construction of structures to build meaning) (Birch, 2002). Rereading, classifying words, inferencing or guessing the meaning of new linguistic items, are namely some examples of this type of cognitive strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The 'top' refers to the background/prior knowledge of the reader. Top-down strategies are related to what readers can bring to the text to achieve comprehension and make sense of the different pieces of information. Such abstract strategies may include associating textual information to background knowledge, predicting the content of the text, anticipating ideas, previewing, skimming, scanning, elaborating new ideas with known ones, setting purposes for different readings …etc. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, are those which involve thinking and reflecting on one's own learning (O'Malley

& Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive reading strategies may include checking outcomes, testing the effectiveness of the use of a given strategy, planning, self-monitoring, and evaluating or checking comprehension by the end of a reading task (Brown et al., 1983; Oxford, 2011).

b) DI Strategies to Teach Reading Comprehension:

Teachers can use a wide variety of strategies and activities which can be based on readiness, interests, or learning profiles in a DI classroom to teach reading comprehension. Readiness-based strategies may include "tiering" in which teachers adjust the degree of difficulty of (reading) activities/texts keeping the same essential set of KUDs (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005). Besides, compacting strategy aims to maximize learning time for advanced students (Reis & Renzulli, 1992). Furthermore, reading contracts between the teacher and the student in which the latter gets to complete certain challenging work assignments in a period of time under some conditions (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). Think-aloud is another strategy which helps struggling readers to better make sense of texts (Wilhelm, 2001). In other words, it is a "comprehension building strategy in which a competent reader verbalizes the connections, inferences, reactions and questions that go through his or her mind while reading" (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005, p. 357). In this way, reading becomes a dynamic social interaction to better comprehend texts (Wilhelm, 2001). Interest-based reading strategies may include Jigsaw reading which is a cooperative strategy that encourages interaction to build comprehension (Aronson et al., 1978, Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). Literature circles is another cooperative reading strategy where students meet in group discussions where they read and analyze a given reading text (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). Interest reading groups is a strategy where students meet in groups based on a common reading topic of interest (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). Learning profiles-based strategies represent the last category which can include learning styles strategies to teach reading such as pictures for visual learners, discussions for aural ones …etc. (Fleming, 2001). Entry points strategy was suggested by Gardner (1993) and is based on intelligence preference. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language-learning technique which involves the coordination of both speech and physical movement (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005). When teachers make use of various strategies targeting all students' attributes, they give all learners a chance to experience learning at its best.

III- Research Methodology:

1- Method

In this research study, we opted for the descriptive method. It is based on the construction of hypotheses which are tested by collecting and evaluating numerical data in order to determine statistical results, in addition to enquiring and exploring views and attitudes from the specified sample of population. Hence, the researchers used a semi-structured teachers' questionnaire in order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data.

In this current study, the researchers made use of web-based survey. The latter was constructed using Google forms. The teachers' questionnaire was administered online to both middle and high school Algerian EFL teachers, which represent the target population. The subject sample comprised 100 teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used in order to give all members of the selected population equal chances to participate in the study. In this way, a wider geographical coverage was guaranteed since Algeria is a large country and its population is geographically dispersed. Thus, all Algerian EFL teachers, from east to west and south to north, were given the chance to be part of this research study. Wray, Trott, and Bloomer (2006) state that, "The questionnaire is useful for surveying a lot of people in many different locations" (p. 158). Besides, online questionnaires provide more anonymity for the respondents which results in more reliable responses.

2- Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The main aim of this research is to investigate Algerian EFL teachers' use of DI pedagogy to teach reading comprehension. This aim translates into the following research questions. (1) Do Algerian EFL teachers implement the recent DI pedagogical model in their EFL classes? (2) Are they following the correct procedures of DI implementation? (3) Do Algerian EFL teachers use differentiated reading instruction in their classes? (4) Do Algerian EFL teachers think that this responsive approach can be a success to teach reading comprehension in the Algerian EFL context? and what can they suggest/recommend for its success in the same context?

These research questions, in turn, translate into the following working hypotheses. (1) Taking the diversity of students in the Algerian EFL context into account, most Algerian EFL teachers would be aware of the need to use DI pedagogy so that no student is left behind. (2) Teachers would follow the correct procedures of DI implementation. (3) Since teachers would use DI in their classes, and due to the high importance of reading comprehension skill, most of them would also implement differentiated reading instruction in their EFL classes. (4) As the majority of educators would use the current approach to teach language areas such as reading comprehension, they would demonstrate the high possibility for its success in the Algerian EFL context if

the conditions they would suggest were met. The null hypotheses are summarized into the following. (1) Algerian EFL teachers would not be aware of DI pedagogy; thus, they would not implement it. (2) Teachers would randomly apply DI without following its correct procedures. (3) They would not use differentiated reading instruction. (4) As they would not be aware of the approach and not use it, they would not suggest neither the possibility of its success, nor ways to facilitate its implementation in the context.

IV-Questionnaire's Results and Discussions

1- Part One: Teachers' Information

a) Teachers' Gender

Table 1 reveals that the majority of teachers are females (75 %) while only 25 % are males. When it comes to DI pedagogy, gender is such an important issue. In fact, it makes up a part of the learning profile of students along with other elements like culture, intelligence preference and learning style. The same way students' gender may affect their learning approaches and preferences, teachers' gender as well may influence their teaching choices and teaching approaches and techniques (Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011).

Table 1. Teachers' Gender.

Item 1 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
Male	25	25%
Female	75	75%

b) Teachers' Experience

The results shown in Table 2 indicate that most teachers (58 %) have less than 5 years of experience while only 24% have between six and ten years in teaching and the least percentage (18%) represents more experienced teachers with more than 10 years in the profession. In few words, the majority of participants are novice teachers with less than ten years of experience.

Table 2. Teachers' Experience.

Item 2 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
1-5 years	58	58%
6-10 years	24	24%
More than 10 years	18	18%

2- Part Two: Differentiated Instruction Pedagogy

a) Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature of DI Pedagogy

Table 3 shows that 38 teachers think that DI refers to the use of various strategies and techniques while, in approximate numbers, 35 of them assert that it refers to all the above-mentioned options ranging from the use of materials/media, the use of various strategies and techniques, addressing students' diversity, and finally, planning and adjusting instruction in response

to learners' needs. On the other hand, 31 educators perceive the approach as the process of planning and adjusting instruction to meet students' needs whereas only 6 link it to students' diversity. Even though the latter is considered one of the main pillars based on which DI pedagogy is built, most participants ignored it. In fact, DI is not just a methodology or a set of techniques to be used, it is also philosophy which is directly linked to students' diversity and how teachers should address this diversity while planning instruction. A good number of respondents have shown awareness of this fact that DI is both an approach and a methodology, while the slightly bigger majority have restricted it to the mere use of various strategies. Heterogeneity and diversity are the key to differentiation.

Table3. Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature of DI Pedagogy.

Item 3 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Using different materials/media to teach	21	21%
b. Using various strategies and techniques to teach	38	38%
c. Addressing students' diversity	6	6%
d. Planning and adjusting instruction in response to students' needs	31%	31%
e. All of the above	35	35%

b) Teachers' Perceptions of the Importance of DI Pedagogy:

The results of the fourth question show that almost all teachers confirm the importance of using DI in EFL classes. Fifty-six respondents (56%) think it is a very important practice while 43 % of them think it is important. The findings reveal that Algerian EFL teachers are actually aware of the significance of the implementation of DI pedagogy. In nowadays world of personalization and increasing diversity, students' differences are more highlighted and their diverse needs are more likely to catch the concern of teachers who attempt to find ways to reach them all.

Table 4. Teachers' Perceptions of the Importance of DI Pedagogy.

Item 4 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Very important	56	56%
b. Important	43	43%
c. Not important	1	1%
d. Not important at all	0	0%

c) Teachers' Frequency of Using DI in their Classes:

As shown in Table 5, most participants (46 %) usually use DI in their classes while 35 % of them sometimes implement it. On the other hand, we find that only 12 % always adopt it in their teaching and 6 % rarely do it. The results displayed are logically linked to the ones of the previous question where most educators confirm the importance of DI pedagogy.

Table. 5 Teachers' Frequency of Using DI in their Classes.

Item 5 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Always	12	12%
b. Usually	46	46%
c. Sometimes	35	35%
d. Rarely	6	6%
e. Never	1	1%

d) Teachers' Perspectives about the Rationales behind the Use of DI:

Table 6 shows that most teachers (89 %) agree that the main rationale is to motivate all students to learn and engage in activities. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) confirm that attending to students' interests and passions results in increasing levels of motivation which indicates a positive relationship between the teacher and learners. Enhancing students' proficiency level in English comes second in selection with a percentage of 61 %. As a matter of fact, when educators attend for students' readiness levels, proficiency in the language as well as growth and achievement will increase. Besides, attending to students' learning profiles will guarantee efficiency of learning which in turn will lead to growth and proficiency in English (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Last but not least, attending to learners' variance (35 %), and being effective teachers (37 %) are the least picked rationales in this study. Learners' variance, on many aspects, is the main motive that urges educators to differentiate instruction. By implementing DI, teachers will shake up what exists in their teaching repertoire to improve their practices and come up with new techniques to differentiate instruction and be more effective (Thousand et al., 2007).

Table 6. The Rationales behind DI Use from Teachers' Perspectives.

Item6 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. To attend to students' variance	35	35%
b. To motivate all students to learn and engage in activities	89	89%
c. To enhance students' proficiency level in English	61	61%
d. To be effective teachers	37	37%

e) Teachers' Pre-assessment Choices based on Students' Attributes:

Pre-assessment is one of DI pillars. Instruction is adjusted and built based on its results. This assessment could be based on different areas. Table 7 displays teachers' choices in regard to pre-assessment based on students' three attributes. As shown in the table, most teachers (47 %) use pre-assessment to obtain information about students' readiness level only (in the form of reading comprehension questions, oral and written assessment). On the other hand, 18 % base it on students' interests while only 16% on their learning profiles. As for the ones who claim that they pre-assess based on the three mentioned areas, they make up 38 % of the respondents.

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Table 7. Teachers' Pre-assessment Choices based on Students' Attributes

Item7 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Students' readiness level (current proximity in regard to the learning goals)	47	47%
b. Students' interests	18	18%
c. Students' learning profiles (Learning styles, intelligence preferences, gender, culture)	16	16%
d. All of the above	38	38%

f) Teachers' Differentiation Choices based on Students' Attributes:

Tables 8 shows that 38 teachers claim that they differentiate instruction in response to all of learners' characteristics: readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Comparing this result with the one of question 7, we can notice that it is the same number of teachers who pre-assess all of the attributes. So, we can say that there is a congruence between pre-assessment and the type of instructional differentiation for this category of respondents. The other results show that 32 % of teachers seem to differentiate instruction based on students' learning profiles and 29 % based on their interests. Such results contradict to what teachers revealed in the previous question. In fact, there is a gap in how this category of educators apply DI pedagogy in their classes since both interests and learning profiles are the attributes the least pre-assessed by the subjects while here, they are more used as a basis for differentiating instruction. On the other hand, only 26% of teachers differentiate instruction based on readiness. In fact, according to the previous question's results, readiness is the most pre-assessed attribute while here, it is the least feature based on which teachers differentiate instruction.

Table 8. Teachers' Differentiation Choices based on Students' Attributes.

Item 8 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Students' readiness level	26	26%
b. Students' interests	29	29%
c. Students' learning profiles	32	32%
d. All of the above	38	38%

g) Teachers' Choices of the Differentiated Instructional Elements:

The results show that most teachers (49 %) differentiate the content which encompasses both the input and the access to it. Next in approximate numbers, the process comes in the second position with about 44 % of the whole number of participants. On the other hand, we find that only 16 teachers implement the DI pedagogy in summative assessment or the product. Twenty-two (22) teachers in total claim that they differentiate all the three instructional components. This question's findings show that product is the

most neglected curricular element by most teachers. In fact, differentiation cannot be effective unless all three components are targeted.

Table 9. Teachers' Choices about the Differentiated Instructional Components.

Item 9 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Content (The input or the access to the input)	49	49%
b. Process (sense-making activities)	44	44%
c. Product (summative assessment)	16	16%
d. All of the above	22	22%

h) Teachers' Use of Flexible Approaches in their Classes:

Table 10 shows how often Algerian EFL teachers use flexible approaches in their classes to create an encouraging and supportive environment. The latter addresses both cognitive and affective needs of learners. The table reveals that 44 teachers usually use such approaches in their classes while 36 of them claim that they sometimes use them. Only 18 participants are always flexible in their teaching approaches while few (2 %) admit that they never consider flexibility of approaches in their classes.

Table 10. Teachers' Frequency of Using Flexible Approaches.

Item10 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentages
a. Always	18	18%
b. Usually	44	44%
c. Sometimes	36	36%
d. Rarely	0	0%
e. Never	2	2%

3- Part Three: Differentiated Reading Instruction

a) Teachers' Perspectives about Teaching Reading Comprehension:

Table 11 reveals that most teachers (66%) think that the task is challenging while 27% of them find it very challenging. Only 7% of them see it as not challenging at all. As a matter of fact, many scholars and researches have come to agree that reading comprehension skill is a highly complex and critical skill for most students; thus, teaching it is viewed as challenging task.

Table 11. Teachers' Perspectives about Teaching Reading Comprehension.

Item 11(N= 100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Very challenging	27	27%
b. challenging	66	66%
c. not challenging at all	7	7%

b) Teachers' Challenges when Teaching Reading Comprehension:

As the findings clearly demonstrate, most teachers (78%) agree that the main difficulty they face when teaching reading comprehension is students' lack of English language proficiency. Forty-four teachers (44%) see

that students lack schematic/systematic knowledge which refers to the background knowledge related to the text. Furthermore, 34% of respondents believe that students lack motivation to learn the skill while 25% of them reckon it is the hard task of selecting reading materials suitable for a particular level or type of students. Only 1% think that there is a shortage of reading resources that can be adapted for teaching the skill.

Table 12. Teachers' Faced Challenges when Teaching Reading Comprehension.

Item 12 (N=100)	Subjects	percentage
a. Lack of students' motivation	34	34%
b. The selection of reading materials	25	25%
c. Lack of students' English language proficiency (lack of linguistic competence)	78	78%
d. Lack of students' schematic/systematic knowledge (background knowledge related to the text)	44	44%

c) Reading Comprehension Strategies That Teachers Use:

Reading comprehension can be taught using a variety of strategies. Table 13 shows that the mostly used ones are scanning (76%) and skimming (73%). Most participants seem to focus on these two reading techniques which involve speed reading for different purposes; either reading for details or gist. Predicting the content of the reading passage is the other reading strategy which takes up the concern of a good number of participants (69 picks). Besides, we find that anticipating ideas, inferencing, and elaborating new ideas with known ones are the least picked (47, 38, and 35 picks successively). Using various reading strategies, in fact, will guarantee a better implementation of DI. Algerian EFL teachers seem be selective in the matter.

Table 13. Reading Comprehension Strategies that Teachers Use.

Item 13 (N= 100)	Subjects	percentage
a. Predicting the content of the text	69	69%
b. Anticipating ideas	47	47%
c. Scanning	76	76%
d. Skimming	73	73%
e. Inferencing	38	38%
f. Elaborating new ideas with known ones	35	35%

d) Teachers' Use of DI to Teach Reading Comprehension:

The table clearly demonstrates that most teachers (88 %) claim that they use DI pedagogy to teach reading comprehension. In other words, they do take into account students' various needs and attributes while preparing the reading instruction beforehand. Only 12% of respondents deny the

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implementation of the approach under study to teach the skill. This implies that most Algerian EFL teachers are aware of the importance of differentiated reading instruction. Since they claim the difficulty of the task of teaching the skill, and since most of them claim the use of the approach, this implies that they see it as the best way to render the skill less challenging for students.

Table 14. Teachers' Use of DI to Teach Reading Comprehension.

Item 14 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Yes	88	88%
b. No	12	12%

e) Reading Instruction Areas that Teachers Differentiate:

Table 15 shows that Algerian EFL teachers seem to differentiate three main areas (in approximate numbers): reading content's level of difficulty, students' access to the reading content, and sense-making reading activities (48, 48, 46 participants respectively). On the other hand, summative reading assessment is the least picked (24) area. In fact, there is a gap between what is taught and what is tested by teachers. Both reading content and process are differentiated, and students are exposed to a variety of options and avenues to reach the assigned KUDs. However, when they are tested on what they have been learning, they find themselves restricted with limited options through which they can prove their mastery of the KUDs which is something that goes against their expectations. Tests, here, may address only a small category of students, and not all. This would result in disappointment and demotivation from the part of learners and would affect their achievement.

Table 15. Reading Instruction Areas that Teachers Differentiate.

Item 15 (N= 100)	Subjects	Percentages
a. Reading content's level of difficulty…)	48	48%
b. Students 'access to the reading content	48	48%
c. Sense-making reading activities	46	46%
d. Summative reading assessment	24	24%

f) The Used DI Strategies to Teach Reading Comprehension:

Table 16 shows the different strategies that are based on students' three attributes and which teachers use to teach reading comprehension. It is clearly demonstrated that most teachers (69%) use learning profiles-based strategies. On the other hand, we find that both readiness-based strategies and interest-based strategies are the least chosen (31, 35 picks successively). In comparison to question seven's results discussed earlier about pre-assessment, we find that teachers, to some extent, ignore students' learning profiles when they conduct diagnostic assessment. They mostly pre-assess learners' readiness and interests. However, when it comes to actual

differentiation, they focus on strategies based on learning profiles (the attribute the least pre-tested according to the findings).

Table 16. The Used DI Strategies to Teach Reading Comprehension.

Item 16 (N=100)	Subjects	Percentage
a. Readiness-based strategies	31	31%
b. Interest-based strategies	35	35%
c. Learning profiles-based strategies	69	69%

g) Teachers' Suggestions for the Success of Differentiated Reading Instruction in the Algerian EFL Classroom:

Teachers have provided a variety of suggestions and recommendations for the success of DI to teach reading comprehension in Algerian EFL classrooms. The main suggestion is for the government to implement real educational reforms. Educators confirm that all attempts to use the model and improve EFL teaching and learning in the country will only remain fairy-tales as long as there are no political intentions to make a change. Others add that such an instruction should be suggested (imposed) by the state. Until then, teachers will still have a small space to manipulate freely through such an approach and its techniques and strategies. Other teachers suggest that the ministry of education should also make new updates in regard to the coursebooks/textbooks. They assert that current textbooks (both middle and high school textbooks) lack diversity of materials and resources (especially reading materials) and are demotivating and boring to most students. Hence, all attempts to use DI in EFL classrooms are in vain despite their attempts to use it. In few words, conducting a needs analysis is a must at this point for the design of new teaching (reading) materials that fit students' expectations and needs. Another category of teachers recommends that professional training in this pedagogy. A better understanding of the use of DI will result in a better implementation of it. Thus, inspectors should take the lead and organize seminars in order to thoroughly explain the pedagogy under analysis. Furthermore, there is an agreement among a big portion of respondents that the time dedicated for teaching English as a foreign language in general, and for teaching reading comprehension in particular, is very limited. Therefore, it is suggested that more time should be allocated for teaching the skill so that teachers can use DI pedagogy and be more innovative. Participants also add that classrooms should be less crowded. Having more than 30 or 40 students in one class is considered to be a hinder to teachers' creativity and use of DI according to many respondents, especially to teach reading comprehension which is considered to be a

challenging skill. Other suggestions include the use of texts with sociological and cultural contexts, providing more media, more use of technology…etc.

V- Conclusion and Recommendations:

This paper mainly attempted to explore EFL teachers' views about the use of DI in the Algerian EFL classroom to teach English in general, and reading comprehension in particular. Quantitative and qualitative information obtained from the teachers' questionnaire show that most Algerian EFL teachers are aware of the importance of DI pedagogy and are implementing it to some extent. Besides, they are using it to teach reading comprehension, hence, differentiated reading instruction is present in the Algerian EFL classrooms. However, they do not seem to be so sure of the exact nature of the approach and they are restricting it to a set of strategies and materials to be used instead of being a whole responsive philosophy to students' diversity.

The question that is raised here is whether they are following the correct procedures of DI implementation or not, since most of them confirm its use. The findings reveal that there is a gap in the way teachers are applying the pedagogy. In other words, there is a gap between pre-assessment and differentiation: pre-assessment is based on some students' criteria which are less used in actual differentiation. In addition, most Algerian EFL teachers are focusing only on some instructional components in differentiation. As explained earlier, most of them ignore summative assessment (summative reading assessment) and just focus on both content (reading content) and process (reading sense-making activities) elements. As for the DI strategies to teach differentiated reading instruction, again, most educators use learning profiles-based strategies, though this student's attribute is the least diagnosed.

The researchers go further to obtain suggestions and recommendations from the participants about the ways that could enhance the use of DI pedagogy in Algerian EFL classes to teach reading comprehension. The responses imply a lot of hindrances to the use of the approach in Algeria. Most of them confirm that it is all in the hands of the ministry of education and to what extent it is ready to make several educational reforms on many levels and aspects. Based on all of the previous results and detailed discussions, and teacher's recommendations, we suggest the following key points that would help the success of DI pedagogy in Algerian EFL context:

- The Algerian Ministry of Education had better start thinking about the inclusion of all categories of students (the ones with disabilities, special needs, various cultural and social backgrounds, capacities, learning profiles…etc) and the adoption of DI pedagogy in the Algerian context.

- The ministry should devote rich pedagogical training in order to guide teachers and help them establish a solid understanding of this inclusive approach. It also ought to make efforts to create less crowded classes to facilitate teachers' use of the pedagogy and students' understanding and mastery of the skill.
- Teachers should collaborate and devote meetings for the discussion and improvement of teaching reading comprehension through the use of DI model.
- Teachers should be provided with all the necessary reading resources and media, in addition to the necessary teaching time to teach the skill and all what it takes to better use the differentiated reading instruction approach.

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