1.1. **Statements of the problems and rationale of the study**

Nowadays, the English language plays an important role in the increasing development of science, technology, politics, culture and international relations in Vietnam. Therefore, there is a great demand for teaching and learning English throughout the country for different purposes. This has resulted in changing the outlook of the Ministry of Education and Training for the teaching and learning of English. English has become a compulsory subject in the state examination and it is one of three subjects for the entrance exam of some universities.

To meet the demand for teaching and learning English in Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training has recently decided to introduce a new series of English textbook for grade 10. The introduction of the new textbooks is considered as the first step towards the achievement of better quality of English language teaching and learning in secondary schools. Therefore, although the two curricula for general students and for those specializing in English remain, the shared objectives have recently been adjusted for a better use of English “as a tool of communication at basic level in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing” (Hoang et al., 2006a:33).

Becoming an effective and fluent reader in another language has a number of important benefits for the learner. First, reading in the target language helps students consolidate the learning that has taken place. Second, it may help students to increase knowledge of the target language through exposure to new vocabulary and grammatical structures. According to Carrell (1984:1), “for many students, reading is by far the most important of the four macro skills, particularly in English as a second or a foreign language”. Unfortunately, teaching and learning reading skills at high schools is still far from satisfactory for various reasons. Despite the teacher’s effort, sometimes the students’ motivation for intensive reading is still low and the reading lesson is said to be a boring one.

Le Hong Phong High School, which was founded in 1962, is one of the high schools chosen to pilot the set of English textbook 1. During the piloting period the teachers have
confronted a number of difficulties, one of which was identified by Hoang et al. (2006:18) as “students’ general lack of motivation and opportunities to practise communicating in the target language”. It is further exacerbated by students’ familiarity with passive learning, the uneven teachers’ capacities, the large size of the classes and the poorly equipped classrooms. Regarding reading skills, students at Le Hong Phong share a number of difficulties with their counterparts throughout the country. As specified by Hoang et al. (2005), they confront five major obstacles in reading, such as: the habits of word-by-word reading; overemphasis on forms rather than meaning; excessive focus on details rather than main ideas; poor vocabulary and limited background knowledge.

In this situation, the teachers need to take a serious look at the teaching and learning of English in general and the teaching and learning of the reading skills in particular so as to suggest suitable techniques to enable the teaching and learning of the reading comprehension at high schools to be more effective. Being a teacher of English at Le Hong Phong High School, the researcher wishes to give a hand in promoting reading skills for her 10th-form students. This matter of fact has offered her a chance to conduct a study on “How to Improve Reading Comprehension of the 10th-Form Students at Le Hong Phong High School”.

1.2. Aims and objectives of the study

This thesis has been carried out to investigate the real situation of teaching and learning reading at Le Hong Phong High School, the difficulties in reading that the 10th-form students often cope with so as to give some suggestions for improving their reading comprehension.

In brief, these objectives are summarized into the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the teaching and learning of reading?

2. What difficulties do the teachers and students meet when dealing with a reading lesson?

3. What are the techniques suggested to help the 10th-form students at Le Hong Phong High School improve their reading comprehension?
1.3. **Significance of the study**

This study has been carried out to search for a better and more effective way to develop students’ reading skills. Its findings hopefully would help the 10th-form students find out the suitable way for improving their reading comprehension. Regarding teachers, the study would raise their awareness concerning the topic and provide them with useful pedagogical suggestions in deciding to use the new teaching method to better develop their learners’ reading skills. Finally, with regard to researchers, those who happen to share the same interest in the topic could certainly rely on this research to find reliable and useful information for their related studies in the future.

1.4. **Scope of the study**

Although the “How to Improve Reading” has been generally set as the title for the whole study, this paper placed a stronger focus on some techniques that teachers employ to improve reading comprehension of the 10th-form students at Le Hong Phong High School. Due to the limited time, the researcher can only conduct a survey on the teachers and the 10th form students to identify reading problems experienced by teachers and students. After that some techniques to help them better in teaching and learning reading comprehension would be made. Consequently, other techniques that can be usefully used to enhance learners’ reading comprehension were not discussed in detail in this paper.

In addition, it is noteworthy that the study is limited to the area of teaching and learning reading comprehension of the 10th-form students at Le Hong Phong High School.

1.5. **Methods of the study**

To achieve the aims mentioned above, the qualitative approach, which involves survey questionnaires, is employed to collect the data for the study.

The two survey questionnaires have been used, involving 97 10th form students and 8 teachers of English at Le Hong Phong High School, in order to address the aims of the study:

- Investigating the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the teaching and learning reading comprehension at Le Hong Phong High School.
- Assessing what difficulties are dominant.
- Evaluating what techniques are best fit.
1.6. **An overview of the rest of the paper**

The rest of the paper consists of four chapters as follows:

    Chapter 2 (Review of literature) provides the theoretical background of the study. The focus of this chapter is definitions of reading and reading comprehension, classifications of reading, reading in second language teaching and learning.

    Chapter 3 (Methodology) describes the participants and instruments of the study as well as data collection and data analysis.

    Chapter 4 (Data analysis and findings) offers some major findings, some suggestions for improving students’ reading comprehension and a sample work for a reading lesson of the 10\(^{th}\)-form students.

    Chapter 5 (Conclusion) is a review of the study, the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter involves different issues in the theories of reading in a foreign language. Three main features will be presented here: definitions of reading and reading comprehension, kinds of reading, and reading in second language teaching and learning.

2. 1. Definitions of reading and reading comprehension

2.1.1. What is reading?

Reading is a completely individual activity which takes place in all different ways from newspapers, magazines, written texts, telephone directory, labels on medicine bottles, notices, etc. The ability to read is such a natural part of human beings that they seldom try do define reading. However, there are still different points of view on the definition of reading.

According to Goodman (1971:135), reading is “a psycholinguistic process by which the reader, a language users, reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display”, and the act of reconstruction is viewed as “a cyclical process of sampling, predicting, testing and confirming.”

Ur’s simple definition is “reading means reading and understanding” (Ur, P. 1996:138). Harmer J. (1989:190) seems to be interested in the notion of reading. He says “reading is an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain. The eyes receive message and the brain then has to work out the significance of the message.”

Moreover, Rubin, J. and Thompson, I. (1994:91) offer another definition of reading: “Reading is an active information-seeking process in which readers relate information in the text to what they already know”. From this point of view, the reader’s knowledge of the language and knowledge of the world is of importance to their reading success.

To advocates of cognitive reading model, reading is defined as the interaction between the reader and the text. It is also a process of negotiating understanding between the reader and the writer. Aebersold and Field (1997:15) propose, “Reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbol in that text.”

Sharing the same point of view, Richard and Thomas (1987:9) also do believe that reading is best described as “an understanding between the author and the reader. Reading
is much more than just pronouncing words correctly or simply knowing what the author intends; it is the process whereby the printed page stimulate ideas, experiences and responses that are unique to an individual.”

In addition, reading in language teachers’ opinions is “a developmental process”. Students learn to read and achieve the accomplishment not in one effort but gradually through continuous and sequential learning and practice.

2.1.2. What is reading comprehension?

Reading comprehension plays an important role in teaching and learning reading a foreign language. It has the nature of communication, in which reading activity acts as a means of communication between the writer and the reader.

Reading comprehension can be affected by world knowledge, with many demonstrations that readers who possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of a reading often understand the reading better than classmates with low prior knowledge. Roe, Stood and Burns (1987:2) consider “Reading comprehension is reconstruction, interpretation and evaluation of what author of written content means by using knowledge gained from life experience.”

Anderson and Pearson (1984:255) argue that when students make a critical evaluation of the ideas conveyed in the text, “they are making connections between the new information on the printed page and their existing knowledge”.

According to interactive model of reading, comprehension is built up or constructed from knowledge sources which interact with each other on the input from the written page.

Comprehension, by definition, is the process of relating new or incoming information to information already stored in memory. Readers make connections between the new information on the printed page and their existing knowledge. They must allow the new information to enter and become a part of their knowledge store.

(Lee and Vanpatten, 1995:191)

Though these opinions are not exactly the same, what comes up as a common point is that reading comprehension is the process in which the readers, as they read, can recognize the graphic forms of the reading text and understand what is implied behind these forms.
2.2. Kinds of reading

One of the most important points to keep in mind when teaching and learning reading comprehension is that there is not one type of reading but several according to one’s purposes for reading. Students will never be good readers unless they can adapt their reading skills to their aim when reading. In considering the reading process, it is important to distinguish the reading activities according to manners and purposes of reading.

2.2.1. According to manners of reading

Reading, according to manner, is divided into reading aloud and silent reading

2.2.1.1. Reading aloud

“Reading aloud involves looking at the text, understanding it and also saying it.” (Doff, 1988:70). Though reading aloud is considered a way to convey necessary information to the others, it is unpopular activity outside classroom. For the teachers, reading aloud is more of a speaking exercise of pronunciation.

In fact, reading aloud proves itself to be advantageous for the learners because it helps them make the connection between sounds and spelling of letters and words and assists the teachers to check learners’ pronunciation.

As for Doff (1988:58), reading aloud is not a very useful technique for some reasons:
- Only one student is active at a time, the others are either not listening at all or listening to a bad model.
- Students’ attention is focused on pronunciation, not on understanding the text.
- It is an unnatural activity, most people do not read aloud in real life.
- Because students usually read slowly, it takes up a lot of time in class.

By whispering the words while reading, reading aloud slows the reader down and forces him to read every word so it can distract him from understanding the text.

2.2.1.2. Silent reading

Silent reading is the activity we usually engage in when we read books, newspapers, advertisements, etc. Silent reading is widely used in both real life and classroom, and “it is the method we normally use with our native language, and on the whole the quickest and most efficient” (Lewis, 1985:110). With silent reading we can best understand the reading materials in the shortest possible time because we do not need to read all the words in the
text, we can read at our own speed and if we do not understand what we are reading, we can read again or slow down for intensive reading.

For the teachers, silent reading is helpful for controlling the class. In silent reading, students are in fact concentrating on the text, obtaining the meaning and extracting what they need.

In short, silent reading is the most useful and practical way to develop the students’ reading ability. However, it is more beneficial when the teacher sometimes combines it with reading aloud to improve students’ pronunciation and intonation because reading aloud also has its own advantages.

2.2.2. According to purposes of reading

According to purposes, reading is categorized into four types: skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading.

2.2.2.1. Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or ‘gist’. According to Grellet, F. (1981:19), “When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer.”

Hedge, T. (2000:195) states that “Skim reading is used to get a global impression of the content of a text. An example would be previewing a long magazine article by reading rapidly, skipping large chunks of information, and focusing on headings and first lines of paragraphs.”

Examples of Skimming:

- The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day)
- Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail)
- Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get informed)

Skimming is a useful reading skill which is often applied for the first reading stage of reading teaching so that the students can have an overview of what they are reading.
2.2.2.2. Scanning

Scanning occurs when a reader looks quickly through the text searching for a specific piece of information or to see if the text is suitable for a specific reading purpose. Hedge, T. (2000:195) points out that “Scanning involves searching rapidly through a text to find a specific point of information, for example, the relevant times on a timetable, items in a directory, or key points in an academic text.”

Scanning is the reading skill we use when we want to find the answer to a specific question. Like skimming, scanning is a useful reading skill that may at first strange to a learner who is used to reading everything in a foreign language with the same degree of attention.

Though these two reading techniques are important for quick and efficient read, they should not be selected separately. Davies, F. (1995:137) asserts that “it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between the types of reading termed skimming and scanning; in real life, scanning inevitably involves some skimming (and skipping) of large sections of text, and skimming, reciprocally, must embrace some scanning.”

2.2.2.3. Intensive reading

Intensive reading “involves approaching the text under the guidance of a teacher or a task which forces the students to focus on the text” (Nuttall, 2000:38). In the view of Brown (1990:297) intensive reading “is usually a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage”.

Grellet, F. (1981:4) states that “Intensive reading means reading short text to extract specific information. This is an accuracy activity involving reading for detailed”. The objective of intensive reading is to achieve a full understanding of the text not only of what it means but also of how the meaning is produced. Through intensive reading, the reader must arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of logical arguments, the rhetorical arrangement, the pattern of the text, the attitude and purposes of the writer and his linguistic means to achieve his purposes. In other words, intensive reading is reading for accuracy which is essential to the students’ comprehension.
2.2.2.4. Extensive reading

Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as business books. Use extensive reading skills to improve our general knowledge of business procedures. Grellet, F. (1981:4) points out “Extensive reading means reading longer texts, usually for one’s pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding”. What is more, Nuttall, C. (2000:127) argues that “getting students to read extensively is the easiest and most effective way of improving their reading skills”.

Extensive reading is considered to be useful for students’ self-learning. Their reading habit and passion for reading are also formed through extensive reading. Students can choose the topics they like and read for their own purpose for pleasure or entertainment. However, it is more effective if students’ extensive reading is followed an instructional program with the help of the reading teacher.

In short, reading is necessary to every learner and undeniably an important skill in comparison with others. In addition, it is notable that intensive and extensive reading should not be seen as in being opposition but need to be paid equal attention for the sake of the students. For second or foreign language learners, both intensive and extensive reading are of great importance as they act as a means to gain knowledge.

2.3. Reading in second language learning and teaching

2.3.1. The importance of teaching reading in the L2 classroom

In a second language classroom, reading plays a significant role in building both linguistic and background knowledge for other language skills. Hoang et al. (2006:191) even consider reading as the most effective means of improving students’ language competence. Especially, when there is a lack of L2 environment, reading is even more significant since it helps enlarge students’ background knowledge and vocabulary as well as supports other skills (Pham, 2005 cited in Hoang et al., 2005:515).

2.3.2. Reading purposes of second language learners

On examining the question of task authenticity in reading activities, it is important to mention the real-life reading purposes of language learners. As far as it is concerned,
Rivers and Temperley suggest that second language learners may read in another language for the following purposes:

- to obtain information for some purpose or because we are curious about some topic
- to obtain instructions on how to perform some task for our work or daily life
- to act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle
- to keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters
- to know when or where something will take place or what is available
- to know what is happening or has happened
- for enjoyment or excitement

(Rivers and Temperley 1978, cited in Nunan, 1989:34)

Nevertheless, it is a fact that reading tasks in the classroom do not always correspond to real-life purposes. As pointed out by Nuttall (1996:223), plenty of reading tasks merely require students to answer task questions like gap-fill or multiple choice questions. Consequently, they fail to reflect how the students comprehend similar texts in the real world. In fact, there exist numerous reasons for our real-life reading. As far as it is concerned, Nuttall distinguishes functional texts from descriptive, discursive texts and fiction. Accordingly, texts like leaflets, notices and advertisements belong to the former due to their practical purposes which are evident and typical of their genres. On the contrary, when reading descriptive and discursive texts and fiction, the readers may have various aims, most typically to make decisions or express the extent of agreement with the author’s arguments.

2.3.3. Different ways for L2 learners to process a text

As pointed out by Nuttall (1996:16), there are two main ways for a reader to process a text. Specifically, students may take the bottom-up approach, in which “the reader builds up a meaning by […] recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structures”. Otherwise, their “intelligence and experience” may serve as a means of comprehending the
text if they take “the top-down approach” (Nuttall, 1996:16). Whereas the bottom-up approach suffered from severe criticism in the past, recent studies have suggested that interactive reading, which combines both approaches to processing a reading text, may account for efficient reading (Stanovich, 1980, cited in Nunan, 1989:33).

2.3.4. Factors in teaching and learning reading

2.3.4.1. Teachers’ roles in a reading lesson

So far, there have been various approaches to teaching reading, such as the traditional approach, process-based approach and task-based approach (Pham, 2005 cited in Hoang et al., 2005:517). In all these approaches, apart from the evident roles of learners in the process of reading comprehension, the roles of teachers in an EFL reading lesson are also significant and worth mentioning. On the one hand, Nuttall (2000:32-33) specifies some of these roles as choosing reading texts, designing tasks, facilitating reading process and monitoring progress. He thus comes to a conclusion that there is always a great deal for the teacher to do in a reading lesson. On the other hand, he also reminds teacher of several pitfalls in teaching reading, in which “testing instead of teaching” and teacher’s overly dominance in processing the reading texts are among the most common mistakes.

Broadly speaking, in whichever role, teachers’ tasks could be said to ensure six major principles of teaching reading in the classroom as pointed out by Anserdon (2003) and Hedge (2000) (cited in To et al., 2006:153-154), namely: exploit student’s background knowledge; build a strong vocabulary base; teach for comprehension; teach reading strategies; encourage students to transform strategies into skills and finally, set criteria to select reading texts.

2.3.4.2. Students’ roles in a reading lesson

Nuttall (2000:33) mentions several main roles for the students in a reading lesson. They are as follows:

- Taking an active part in learning: This is the first and foremost responsibility of the learner. They have to be active and take charge of what they do

- Monitoring comprehension: Students need to understand how texts work and what they do when they read.
- Learning text talk: It is clear that a good reader carries on a dialogue with the text. Consequently, the students have to learn how to do this. An effective way to promote this skill is to talk about texts in class.

- Taking risks: Students have to take the risk of making mistakes because a mistake is an opportunity to learn.

- Learning not to cheat oneself: Learning to read is learning to give students enormous advantages in life. It may lead to better jobs, to personal development, interest and enjoyment. Students who do not want to learn to read can easily cheat but they are only cheating themselves.

2.3.5. Stages of a reading lesson

Although the role of reading activities in teaching reading is made apparent, how they are organized and sequenced in a lesson varies among different approaches to language teaching. In light of the recent and widely accepted communicative approach, it is a common practice that a reading lesson includes three stages: pre-, while-, and post- reading (William, 1984; Dubin and Bycina, 1991 cited in To et al., 2006:158) (Hoang et al., 2005). Each stage is characterized by its own aims and procedures as follows.

2.3.5.1. Pre-reading stage

In this early stage, teachers are expected to motivate students to read, specifically by activating or building students’ background knowledge of the subject and familiarizing them with some of the language needed in coping with the text. According to Williams (1984:37), the purposes of the pre-reading stage are:

- To introduce and arouse interest in the topic.
- To motivate learners by giving a reason for reading.
- To provide some language preparation for the text.

Normally, pre-reading phase often last from two to ten minutes depending on each lesson. Several techniques, as suggested by To et al. (2006:158) are: using pictures, predicting from the titles, guessing and brainstorming to see what students have already known.
2.3.5.2. While-reading stage

Later on, students are lead into the main reading activity of the lesson, which principally aims at helping the students to understand the specific content and become aware of the rhetorical structure of the text. Williams (1984:38) states that while-reading stage is the main part of a reading lesson with the following specific aims:

- To help understanding of the writer’s purpose.
- To help understanding of the text structure.
- To clarify text content.

The techniques applied in this stage widely vary, ranging from guessing new words in contexts, asking questions to note-taking. Teachers, at the while-reading stage, need to help their students comprehend the text thoroughly while students have to apply to the best their reading skills like skimming, scanning, guessing, etc. to understand the text as well as the writer’s purposes conveyed through the reading text. Apparently, time allocation for this is nearly two thirds of the whole lesson.

2.3.5.3. Post-reading stage

Finally, in order to review the content, work on bottom-up concerns and relate the text to students’ knowledge, interests and opinions, teachers may conduct several activities in this final stage. In Williams’ view (1984:39), “the post-reading stage is aimed at consolidating or reflecting upon what has been read and relating the text to the learners’ own knowledge, interests or views”. Some possible techniques, as offered by To et al., (2006) include discussing the main points, retelling and rewriting the stories. Normally, it takes about ten minutes to complete all activities at this stage.

2.4. Summary

The chapter so far has presented the relevant literature, which has helped to form the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. It has talked about different aspects related to the reading skills and reading activities. What is more, the importance of teaching reading in the second language classroom and factors in teaching and learning reading have been reviewed.

The following chapter will display the methodology and findings of the research under the light of the above-mentioned theories.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapter, the literature on the research topic was briefly reviewed for the theoretical basis of the whole study. Turning to the practical side, this research was carried out with strict adherence to justified methods of data collection and analysis in order to maximize its validity and reliability. This claim would be substantiated in this chapter as the participants, the instruments as well as the data analysis are discussed in detail.

3.1. Participants

The process of data collection involved the participation of both teachers of English and grade 10 students as follows:

3.1.1. Teachers of English

In Le Hong Phong High School, there are totally 8 teachers of English, including the researcher, aged from 31 to 47. Half of them graduated from Hanoi Foreign Languages Teachers’ Training College. The others had in-service ELT training courses. The number of female teachers formed the majority (7 female teachers and only 1 male teacher). All of them are enthusiastic with their career and had at least 9 years experienced in teaching English.

However, since graduating from their respective universities, few of them have taken refresher courses to improve their English and their teaching methods. These teachers were trained under the strong influence of the Grammar-Translation method, the emphasis of which is on the learning of the rules of the language, not on the acquisition of language skills. This is obviously manifested in their teaching methods.

3.2.2. The 10th -form students

The subjects of the study were 97 students coming from two different classes at Le Hong Phong High School. All of them were born in 1991 and they are both male and female. Lots of them come from comparatively poor families so their learning condition is low. Their parents can hardly afford to pay even small expenses required for their
children’s schooling; a dictionary, a cassette player or even some English books are beyond their reach.

In addition, their lack of awareness on the importance of English as well as motivation makes them not interest in learning English. Although most of them have already learnt English for at least four years at lower secondary school, their knowledge of English is still poor and limited. Hardly can they say a complete sentence in the target language.

3.2. Material

The 2006 - 2007 academic year witnesses the introduction of new grade 10 English course books and the reformed language teaching methodology towards the communicative approach. Therefore, although the two curricula (one for general students and the other for those specializing in English) remain, the shared objectives have recently been adjusted for a better use of English “as a tool of communication at basic level in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing” (Hoang et al., 2006a, p.33). In terms of reading skills, this goal has been specified into developing students’ abilities:

- to read 190 – 230 word texts for main ideas and details on familiar topics included in the course book, and
- to develop their vocabulary via reading.

It is also noteworthy that apart from these objectives, English-specialized students are also expected to improve their word usage regarding synonyms, anonyms and word buildings. (Hoang et. al., 2006b, p. 34)

In order to realize these goals, reading lessons have been chosen as the starting point of every unit. Moreover, a reading lesson is uniformly implemented in three stages “Before you read” “While you read” and “After you read” to facilitate students’ reading comprehension. To be specific, students are equipped with adequate background knowledge of the subject, familiarized with some of the language needed in coping with the text and motivated to read in the section “Before you read”. After reading for comprehension with guiding questions and activities in the next section “While you read”, students have the chance to consolidate and relate the text to real life in “After you read”.
This three-stage model is believed by Hoang et al. (2006a, p. 213) to minimize time consumption and maximize reading effectiveness.

3.3. **Data collection instrument**

For a collection of sufficient reliable and valid data for the study, two sets of survey questionnaires were administered to 97 students and 8 teachers of English at Le Hong Phong High School.

3.3.1. **The questionnaire for students**

The questionnaire was designed to get information concerning:
1. Students’ reasons for learning English
2. Students’ attitude towards the role of reading
3. Students’ attitude towards class reading activities
4. Students’ difficulties when learning reading at school
5. Students’ expectations from their teachers
6. Students’ effort for improving their reading comprehension

3.3.2. **The questionnaire for teachers**

Questionnaire designed for the teachers aims at finding out:
1. Teachers’ views on the aims of teaching English at school
2. Teachers’ opinion about the aspects of language taught at school
3. Teachers’ attitude towards the role of reading.
4. The situation of using pre-teaching techniques in a reading lesson at Le Hong Phong High School
5. Teachers’ difficulties when teaching reading
6. Activities employed by the teachers to help their students overcome the difficulties
7. Teachers’ opinions about an effective reading lesson
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Data analysis

4.1.1. Questionnaire for the students

4.1.1.1. Students’ reasons for learning English

The data obtained from the students’ questionnaire will be discussed to find out the students’ purposes of learning English. The result of Question 1 is presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating effectively in English</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing the school graduation exam</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing a compulsory subject at school</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for the future jobs</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying abroad</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Students’ reasons for learning English (N = 97)

As shown in the above table, most of the students of Le Hong Phong High School learn English in order to pass the school graduation exam (72.1%), while 45.3% of the students learn English with the aim of communicating, only 25.8 % for completing a compulsory subject, 8.2 % for studying abroad and only 1 student (1 %) answered that he just loved English. It is interesting to discover that 51.5 % of the students revealed their main reason for studying English was to meet the future job requirements. They seem to know that with the rapid development and expansion of information technologies, there should be a common language for people of all countries to exchange information with each other and it is English that is used as means of international communication. Therefore, they want to have good preparation for their future jobs.
4.1.1.2. Students’ attitude towards the role of reading

4.1.1.2.1. Students’ attention paid to the aspects of language taught at school

Number of students

![Chart 1: Students’ attention paid to learning language](image)

The survey results in the questionnaire indicate that 64.6% of students spend most of their time on learning Grammar and vocabulary whereas 21.6% on reading, 12.4% on speaking, 7.2% on writing and only 4.1% on listening. It is not surprising to discover that students spend more time on grammar and vocabulary than other skills because of their main purpose of learning English as Table 1 showed above.

4.1.1.2.2. Students’ attitude towards the importance of learning reading comprehension at school

![Chart 2: Students’ attitude towards the importance of reading](image)
As shown in Chart 2, most of the students in the survey have positive attitude towards reading. 80.4% of them find reading very important and important (28.9% and 51.5%, respectively). To them, reading is important and necessary in their learning English. However, a certain number of students (19.6%) do not highly appreciate the important role of reading. The reasons for this can be the fact that reading is not very beneficial to them.

4.1.1.2.3. Students’ attitude toward the benefit of reading

Number of students

![Chart 3: Students’ attitude towards the benefit of reading](image)

a. Improving other language skills  
b. Broadening students’ knowledge of the world  
c. Enriching students’ vocabulary  
d. Improving students’ grammar

As can be seen from Chart 3 reading is beneficial to students in any way, especially for their vocabulary. 68 students (70%) admit that reading can help them enrich their vocabulary. Reading can help 54 students (56%) broaden their knowledge of the world and 38 students (40%) improve their grammar. 40 students (41%) can improve other language skills through reading. This could reflect the fact that reading cannot be taught separately. All the four skills ought to be combined to reinforce one another. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to know how to integrate these skills in teaching a language.
4.1.1.3. **Students’ attitude towards class reading activities**

4.1.1.3.1. **The frequency of using pre-reading techniques designed by teachers**

![Chart 4: The frequency of using pre-reading techniques designed by teachers](chart.png)

As can be seen from the chart, 61.8% of the students state that besides pre-reading tasks in the textbook, their teachers sometimes design pre-reading exercises or activities to make them more interested in reading. 36% admit that their teachers never design some more pre-reading activities to motivate them in reading and it is not surprising to see that only 2.1% say their teachers usually design more pre-reading exercises for them. An explanation for these is that designing pre-reading is time consuming and challenging for most of the teachers.

4.1.1.3.2. **Students’ attitude towards pre-reading activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>Teachers’ employment of the activities responded by the students</th>
<th>Students’ enjoyment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving some pre-reading questions to think before reading</td>
<td>N = 54, % = 55.7</td>
<td>N = 35, % = 36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a short discussion before reading</td>
<td>N = 0, % = 0</td>
<td>N = 0, % = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-teaching new vocabulary in the reading text</td>
<td>N = 63, % = 64.9</td>
<td>N = 41, % = 42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up a clear goal for students to read</td>
<td>N = 0, % = 0</td>
<td>N = 0, % = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using games to introduce the topic</td>
<td>N = 3, % = 3.1</td>
<td>N = 65, % = 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making students brainstorm words, structures or idea related to the topic</td>
<td>N = 3, % = 3.1</td>
<td>N = 59, % = 60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using visual aid to introduce the topic</td>
<td>N = 6, % = 6.2</td>
<td>N = 11, % = 11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Students’ attitude toward pre-reading activities**
The very noticeable thing that can be realized from the table is that, pre-teaching new vocabulary in the reading text is the most popular technique or activity that teachers often use (64.9%) due to the students’ limitation of vocabulary and ability of guessing the meaning of new words from the context. Pre-teaching some key words in the text is necessary to help students to get involved in the reading tasks easily. Giving some pre-reading questions to think before reading, as can be seen from the table, is ranked the second in terms of popularity (55.7%). An explanation can be made here is that the technique might save teachers time and energy from designing pre-reading activities.

From the table, we can also see that the majority of the students like using games to introduce the topic or brainstorming words or idea related to the topic (65% and 59%, respectively). On the contrary, only 3 students assume that their teachers sometimes use games to introduce the topic or make them brainstorm the new words related to the topic. This is, perhaps, because it is difficult and time consuming to design these techniques.

No students asked (0%) report that the teachers often start the reading lesson by giving a short discussion or setting up a clear goal for students to read. Using visual aid to introduce the topic is less frequently applied by the teachers (6.2%). It might be explained that these techniques are quite new to the teachers and perhaps it is difficult to make the students get involved. In conclusion, from Table 3 we can see that the majority of students enjoy using games and brainstorming techniques but teachers rarely employ those. They often apply pre-teaching vocabulary and pre-questions techniques.

4.1.1.3.3. Students’ attitude towards while-reading activities

4.1.1.3.3.1. Students’ activities when looking for specific information

![Chart 5: Students’ activities when looking for specific information]
a. Reading the text carefully before reading the questions and answer them.

b. Reading the questions first and answer them after understanding everything in the text.

c. Reading the questions first and answer them by scanning the text.

Finding from Chart 5 indicates that a large number of students (52%) read the questions first and then answer them by scanning the text. It is pleasing to see that these students seem to have appropriate reading skill when finding out specific information. However, there are still numerous students who apply inappropriate reading skills. They often read the text carefully before reading the questions and answer them or read the questions first and answer them after understanding everything in the text (47% and 7%, respectively). Applying inappropriate reading skills make students spend much time on unnecessary information they do not need to look for.

4.1.1.3.3.2. Students’ activities when looking for the main idea of the text

![Pie chart](chart.png)

**Chart 6:** Students’ activities when looking for the main idea of the text

- **a.** Choosing the best answer by skimming the text
- **b.** Reading the text carefully then choose the best answer after understanding every word

Being asked what they often do when looking for the main idea of the text, most of the students (75%) say they read the text carefully and then choose the best answer after understanding every word. Only 25% propose they skim the text to find the best answer.

4.1.1.3.3.3. Students’ activities when meeting new words

When unfamiliar words or structures appear, most students rely on dictionaries or their friends for the meanings or explanations (61.8% and 59.8% respectively). Surprisingly, only 10.3% say they try to figure out the meaning of the words from the
context. Up to 25.8% admit that asking the word meaning from the teachers is the easiest and most effective way.

**Number of students**

![Chart 7: Students’ activities when meeting new words](image)

- a. Looking them up in the dictionary
- b. Figuring out the meanings of the words from the context
- c. Asking the teacher
- d. Asking friends

### 4.1.1.3.4. Students’ attitude toward post-reading activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing the text (focusing on the main ideas)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing on topics relevant to the reading text</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing on the topics for supplementary reading in groups</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing multiple-choice exercises, checking students’ understanding</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing nothing</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Students’ post-reading activities**

Data in Table 3 states clearly that students do not have the habit of writing on the topics relevant to the reading text and discussing on the topics in groups. These techniques seem to be difficult for these students to apply. Summarizing the text after reading is very
beneficial to students to gain better understanding and memorizing of the text, but only 12% often apply this. Doing multiple-choice exercises after reading is also an easy and effective way to check students’ understanding about the texts. 37% admit that they are often allowed to do this. It is surprising to see that 58 out of 97 students involving this study propose that they often do nothing in post-reading. The reason they mention is the time for a reading lesson. They usually lack time in reading.

The post-reading activities play an important part in improving students’ language skills. Students can consolidate or reflect upon what has been read and relate it to their own knowledge. In short post-reading work contributes enormously to develop writing, speaking and listening skills.

4.1.1.4. Students’ difficulties when learning reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of motivation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of background knowledge</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time limitation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ limitation of vocabulary &amp; grammatical structures</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of appropriate reading strategies</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Problems students face when learning reading

Table 4 represents problems which students are facing when dealing with reading tasks. Actually, there are several elements that can be counted on. The most difficult problem is the limited capacity of vocabulary and grammatical structures. 85 students in the survey (87.6%) assume that if they experience lots of new or difficult vocabulary and grammatical structures from the text, their motivation for reading will surely be decreased. The next one (70.1%) is the lack of appropriate reading strategies. It is obvious that students cannot do reading tasks easily if they do not have appropriate reading strategies. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to suggest their students essential reading strategies needed for each kind of reading tasks. 44 out of 97 students (45.3%) blame on the lack of background knowledge to the topic of the reading text. Whereas 26.8% of the
students admit that their motivation for reading is still poor. Only 12 students (12.4%) think that they do not have enough time for their reading.

4.1.1.5. The expectations of the students towards teachers’ reading techniques

It is assumed that students involving in this study have certain difficulties in learning reading, and thus when they are asked, “What do you expect from your teachers to help you overcome difficulties in learning reading?” Their responses as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging you to activate your previous knowledge into reading texts</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating comfortable environment for you to exchange information before reading</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering you as many chances to read the passage as you expect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing you with certain key words</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining clearly about the reading contexts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting you essential reading strategies needed for each kind of reading tasks</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploiting different kinds of reading materials suitable to your reading ability and your interest</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: The expectations of the students towards teachers’ reading techniques

As can be seen from the table, the students wish to get a great deal of support from their teachers to overcome difficulties in learning reading. The majority, 71.1% of all students expect to get essential reading strategies, which reveal that the grade 10 students lack sufficient reading strategies. They need to be provided with more reading strategies to become effective readers. 64.9% of the students in the survey wish to have more different kinds of reading materials suitable to their abilities and interests. It is true that students want to read what they like and what are relevant to them. 60 students involving in this study (61.8%) would like their teachers to encourage them to activate their previous knowledge into reading texts. 57.7% desire to acquire new key words needed for the
reading text so that they can deal with reading tasks easily. It is not surprising to see that only 9.3% want their teachers to explain clearly about the reading contexts and 3.1% like to read the text as many times as they expect. It is hoped that teachers are supposed to be instructors that need to be flexible in teaching techniques so that they can help students overcome difficulties in language learning, specifically in learning reading.

4.1.1.6. Students’ effort for improving their reading comprehension

In order to improving the reading comprehension, all the students need a lot of efforts. They often try their best in learning English. Surprisingly, over half of the students think that they should learn all the new words by heart for improving their reading comprehension. Having extensive reading outside classroom ranks the second with 26% of the students think they had better do this. 24% think they should share experience with their friends to find out the best way of learning reading. Only 16% choose searching for reading materials on the Internet. Besides their effort, they can’t deny the role of the teachers who often help them much in learning.

Number of students

![Chart 8: Students’ activities for improving reading comprehension]

- a. Sharing experience with their friends
- b. Having extensive reading outside classroom
- c. Searching for reading material on the Internet
- d. Learning by heart all the new words
4.1.2. Questionnaire for the teachers

4.1.2.1. Teachers’ views on the aims of teaching English at school

Question 1 attempts to find out the aims of teaching English identified by the teachers of the school. The result of Question 1 is presented in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating effectively in English</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing the school graduation exam</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a compulsory subject at school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for the future jobs</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying abroad</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Teachers’ views on the aims of teaching English at school (N = 8)*

It is good to find that most teachers (75%) selected “communicate effectively in English” as the aims of teaching English to their students. This means that teacher does help students communicate effectively in English. The students can have simple conversation in English with other English-speaking people, read simple texts in English, understand English grammar and do grammar exercises easily. It is not surprising to see that 100% of participants assign the importance of grammar to the aims of teaching English in order to prepare their students for the final exam. And they were all well aware that grammar plays an essential part in learning a foreign language. The question is how to teach grammar and how to relate it with communication. Some teachers graduated from university many years ago; therefore, they prefer to use the grammar-translation method. This method, as its name suggests, focuses on accuracy, the detailed analysis of grammar rules and application of these rules to the translation of sentence and text into and out the target language. This has become out of date now. Only 37.5% selected “Being a compulsory subject at school”. No teachers suppose the purpose of teaching English at their school is to help their students to study abroad or to prepare for their future jobs.
4.1.2.2. Teachers’ opinion about the aspects of language taught at school

This question tries to identify those aspects of the target language which should be given priority in teaching the subject at school. It is designed in the type of ranking question with number 1 to being the most important and number 5 being the least. The complete results are summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of language</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Overall ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I  II  III  IV  V  VI  VII  VIII</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>2  2  4  2  1  3  2  3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3  4  3  3  1  3  1  1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>5  5  5  5  5  5  5  5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>4  3  1  4  3  2  4  2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Vocabulary</td>
<td>1  1  2  1  2  4  1  4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Teachers’ opinion about the aspects of language taught at school

As can be seen from Table 7, Grammar and Vocabulary is ranked in the highest position. It is because of testing. As the tests are also designed chiefly to test vocabulary and grammar, the teaching at school mainly focuses on vocabulary and grammar. Reading is ranked the second. It means that most of the teachers involving this study are aware of the important of teaching reading at their school. Speaking is ranked the 3rd, which is completely relevant to the responses to Question 1. This reveals that teachers of English now have realized that one cannot learn to use language by just learning rules or reading the language without speaking it. However, they also realize that speaking is not the goal of high school examination system. Writing and Listening are ranked the 4th and the 5th which prove that they are not much focused on.
4.1.2.3. Teachers’ attitude towards the importance of teaching reading comprehension at their school

As shown in Chart 9, most of the teachers in the survey have positive attitude towards reading. 87% of them find teaching reading important. To them, reading is important and beneficial to their students. However, only one teacher (13%) does not highly appreciate the important role of reading. The reasons for this can be the fact that this teacher focuses most on teaching grammar and vocabulary.

4.1.2.4. Teachers’ attitude towards the benefit of reading

Chart 10: Teachers’ attitude towards the benefit of reading

As can be seen from Chart 10, reading is beneficial to students in any way, especially for their vocabulary. All the teachers in the study (100%) admit that reading can help
students enrich their vocabulary. 87% state that their students can broaden their knowledge of the world by reading. And 75% believe reading can help their students improve other language skills. This could reflect the fact that reading cannot be taught separately. All the four skills ought to be combined to reinforce one another. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to know how to integrate these skills in teaching a language. Only 36% accept that their students can improve their grammar thanks to reading.

4.1.2.5. The situation of using pre-reading techniques in a reading lesson at Le Hong Phong High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving some pre-reading questions to think before reading</td>
<td>2 25</td>
<td>5  62.5</td>
<td>1 12.5</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a short discussion before reading</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>4 50</td>
<td>4 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-teaching new vocabulary in the reading text.</td>
<td>6 75</td>
<td>2  25</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up a clear goal for students to read</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>5 62.5</td>
<td>3 37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using games to introduce the topic</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>2  25</td>
<td>4 50</td>
<td>2 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making students brainstorm words, structures or idea related to the topic.</td>
<td>1 12.5</td>
<td>3  37.5</td>
<td>3 37.5</td>
<td>1 12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using visual aid to introduce the topic</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>2  25</td>
<td>3 37.5</td>
<td>3 37.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: The frequent order of pre-reading techniques

The table indicates that in a reading lesson, pre-teaching new vocabulary (75%) is the most frequently used technique. The explanation for this can be that it is the most traditional technique for pre-reading stage or students’ vocabulary is poor and their abilities of guessing the meaning of the new words from the context is low. The teachers want to provide their students some key words to help them overcome their difficulties when dealing with reading texts. The next category consists of giving some pre-reading questions to think before reading and making students brainstorm words, structures or ideas related to the topic of the text, which are reported to be used sometimes. Clearly, the rest of the techniques are considered to be the least-frequently used due to the fact that it
takes time to prepare such techniques as games or visual aids and some are not motivational enough.

4.1.2.6. Teachers’ difficulties when teaching reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of motivation</td>
<td>N 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of background knowledge and world knowledge</td>
<td>N 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time limitation</td>
<td>N 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ limitation of vocabulary &amp; grammatical structures</td>
<td>N 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ lack of appropriate reading strategies</td>
<td>N 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Problems teachers face when teaching reading

When asking the teachers about the problems they were facing with in teaching reading, the majority (87.5%) respond that their students’ background knowledge and world knowledge are poor. It cannot be denied that students’ background knowledge and world knowledge are the important factors which affect students’ reading comprehension much. Clearly, readers who possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of a reading often understand the reading better than classmates with low prior knowledge. It is not very surprising to find that students’ lack of motivation is also the big problem which is caused difficulties for the teachers. Although the students have a profound awareness of the importance of reading, it does not lead to high interest and motivation in learning this subject because of what they are being taught in the classroom. 62.5% of the teachers admit that their students lack of appropriate reading strategies so they often fail to finish their reading tasks in time. 4 out of 8 teachers involving this study find teaching reading difficult because of students’ limitation of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Only 25% state that they cannot teach reading effectively because time is limited. They often have no time for the post-reading activities.

4.1.2.7. Teachers’ activities to overcome the difficulties when teaching reading.

Knowing clearly the difficulties when dealing with a reading lesson, the teachers have applied lots of techniques in order to make their lessons more interesting and less difficult to their students. These techniques are presented in the table below:
### Options and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging your students to activate their previous knowledge into reading texts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating comfortable environment for the students to exchange information before reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering your students as many chances to read the passage as they expect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing your students with certain key words</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining clearly about the reading contexts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting your students essential reading strategies needed for each kind of reading tasks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploiting different kinds of reading materials suitable to your students’ reading abilities and their interest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10: Teachers’ activities to help students overcome the difficulties**

Refer to Table 10, among seven different techniques employed by the teachers to help their students overcome difficulties when learning reading, providing students with certain key words is most carried out by 100% of the teachers. The explanation for this can be that this technique is easy to apply and teachers do not spend much time preparing it. Encouraging students to activate their previous knowledge into reading texts is employed by 75% of the teachers. It indicates that the teachers are aware of the importance of activating students’ existent knowledge and arousing their interests before reading. However, only 12.5% of the teacher uses suggesting students essential reading strategies needed for each kind of reading tasks. 37.5% exploit different kinds of reading materials suitable to their students’ reading abilities and their interest.

**4.1.2.8. Teachers’ effort for improving their teaching**

Professionalism of the teachers is a problematic area which should be given much consideration. To keep up with the changes in teaching and learning, teachers’ professional knowledge must be regularly updated. Question 9 in the questionnaire for the teachers tries to find out opportunities for the teachers’ professional development. The result of this question is that 100% of the teachers mainly share their teaching experience with their
colleagues. Using the internet is another way which is used by most of the teachers to improve their teaching (75%). 50% of the teachers say they read books or journals. Upgrade training courses for teachers are thought to be an effective means of professional development. 100% say that they have participated in language teaching methodology workshops.

4.1.2.9. Teachers’ need to have an effective reading lesson

100% of the teachers say the most important thing is that the teachers should prepare their lessons in such a way that it is interesting and relevant to the students as much as possible. Teachers need to have well-prepared lesson plans for their lessons before going to classes and the more one prepares carefully for the lessons the better the learning teaching process will be. At the lesson, the number of the teachers who expect to have active students in learning process and teachers’ enthusiasm is 70%. 60% of the teachers agree that the effective lessons depend on the teaching materials. They will have successful lessons if the reading text is interesting and familiar to the students. Many teachers want reading texts to be authentic and realistic.

4.2. Findings

The major issues addressed in the paper are summarized by briefly answering the research questions as follows:

4.2.1. Research question 1: What are the teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the teaching and learning of reading?

Although most of the teachers and students at Le Hong Phong High School are aware of the importance of reading, it is still ranked the second behind grammar and vocabulary. This is because of the main purpose of teaching and learning English at Le Hong Phong High School. As mentioned above, passing the final exam is considered the most important purpose of teaching and learning English at school so both teachers and students there focus mostly on grammar rather than on other aspects of language.

The survey results in the questionnaire for the teachers indicate that most of the teachers have tried their best to improve their teaching method in order to meet their students’ need. However, some of them still reveal some shortcomings in the way they
deliver their lessons due to the lack of experience, their persistence in using traditional
teaching method or their limitation of language knowledge.

Students express their positive attitudes to English learning. They appreciate the
importance of learning the language, especially, learning reading. However, not all of them
satisfied with the lessons provided by their teachers, the topics, the techniques to motivate
them in learning.

4.2.2. Research question 2: What difficulties do the teachers and students meet
when dealing with a reading lesson?

From the data analysis, it is clear that students’ limitation of vocabulary and
grammatical structures, their lack of appropriate reading strategies and their background
knowledge are students’ main difficulties which influence their motivation for reading as
well as their understanding. Not only the students but also the teachers cope with numerous
problems when dealing with reading lessons. Students’ lack of background knowledge and
world knowledge are considered the biggest problems in a reading lesson. Reading
comprehension can be affected by background knowledge and world knowledge, with
many demonstrations that those who possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of a
reading often understand the reading better than the others with low prior knowledge.
Students’ lack of appropriate reading strategies and vocabulary structures are the other
problems which the teachers have to face.

4.2.3. Research question 3: What are the techniques suggested to help the 10th-form
students at Le Hong Phong High School improve their reading
comprehension?

What have been discussed and analyzed in Chapter 3 show that teaching and learning
reading comprehension at Le Hong Phong High School are not very effective and
satisfactory. The 10th-form students more or less know something about reading skills and
they apply them in dealing with the reading tasks. However, the number of the students
being effective readers is modest while the rest of the students seem to be ineffective ones.
Thus, it is time the teachers did something to help their students as well as themselves
overcome the difficulties and get more effective reading lessons. The techniques suggested
hereafter hopefully can serve as a tool to enable teachers of reading at Le Hong Phong High School to become more successful.

4.3. Suggested techniques

4.3.1. Techniques for reading interest and motivation

Interest and Motivation appear to be keys to any learning, especially to learning a foreign language. It is easy to assume that without the strong motivation of the students, the reading lesson will be boring and tough. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the students’ interest and motivation for reading at the first stage. Teachers should vary pre-reading techniques, use pre-reading techniques appropriately and flexibly. Moreover, teachers should take account of the students’ preferences in order to make full use of the pre-reading techniques which students prefer. Here are some suggested pre-reading techniques which hopefully can help to increase students’ interest and motivation.

4.3.1.1. Using visual aids

It can not be denied that visual aids are of great help in stimulating the learning of a foreign language. As a result, using visual aids is considered to be one of the most efficient techniques used in teaching new items since it is a way to show the meaning of the words visually through real objects, drawing, pictures, gestures and facial expressions. (see Appendix 3)

4.3.1.2. Using a brainstorming web

It is one kind of group work activity. Each group must take a brainstorming web and write the title of the article in the center. Then a group leader must be appointed so as to complete the following duties: make sure everyone speaks English only; make sure everyone in the groups contributes; be the writer for the group in filling the brainstorming web below:
In the circles, groups write everything they already know about the topic and everything they think might be in the passage. They can add as many circles as needed. Actually, a brainstorming web reminds the students of what they have already known and gets their minds ready to take new information as well. In other words, a brainstorming web can activate the students’ schemata as well as stimulate their interests and curiosity.

4.3.1.3. Giving pre-reading questions

Pre-reading questions or guiding questions are comprehension questions asked either orally or written on the board before the students read the text. It is evident that these questions are necessary to students because “they give the students a reason to read and to lead them to the main points of the text” (Doff, 1988:61). Guiding questions, obviously, should be concerned with the general meaning or with the most important point of a text and not focus on minor details. More importantly, pre-reading questions should be fairly easy to answer and not too long.

4.3.2. Techniques for enriching vocabulary

Vocabulary is a language component that plays an important role in deciding a learner’s language proficiency. It is central to language because it is considered as the basic building block of language, the unit of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole text are formed. For methodologists, vocabulary is considered as the strong foundation for learners to build up their communicative castles. Concerning the significance of vocabulary, Wilkin (1972:110) stated “vocabulary is one of the three dimensions of a language (phonetics, grammar, vocabulary). Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”

The 10th-form students often find reading tasks are difficult and boring because of their limitation of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Some suggested techniques below can be employed to solve this problem.

4.3.2.1. Encouraging students to have extensive reading habit

Familiarizing the students with extensive reading is a way to fuel their enthusiasm for learning English. By reading extensive materials, the students can feel the joys of reading in other language. Moreover, it can help students enrich their vocabulary, strengthen their
understanding of language and consolidate their grammar. In order to motivate the students to have extensive reading habit, here below are some principles to keep in mind.

- The reading material is easy enough.
- There is a variety of reading materials on a wide range of topics.
- Students can choose what they want to read.

4.3.2.2. Using word games

Word games should be used more frequently in class especially during consolidation stage. Students of Le Hong Phong High School are very reserved and afraid of being exposed in a crowded class. They get used to working individually and seem to be unwilling to work cooperatively with their friends. However, once they understand what they should do and see the tasks are not as difficult as they think, they will enthusiastically get engaged in the activities. In addition, if students are made to take part in word games voluntarily, they will become more active and hard working; thus, their vocabulary acquisition will be improved. Moreover, through such activities, the interaction among students in the classroom can be promoted. Students are brought closer to each other. That makes a better studying environment, a very important factor that helps a lot in bringing good learning results.

4.3.2.3. Using word list

Using word list is also the effective way to revise vocabulary. In order to help students become familiar with the new way of vocabulary learning, which encourage their autonomy, teachers should guide them how to make their word lists. Students are asked to write their own record sheets, on which they have to list each word they have selected along with its pronunciation, part of speech, meaning, collocations and related forms. By letting students choose their own words in each unit, they were given a big opportunity to perform significant amount of autonomy to establish individual learning goals and work towards them in a structured way. They not only chose their own words but also decided which learning strategies are going to work most effectively for them.

(see Appendix 4)
4.3.3. Techniques for improving students’ background knowledge

4.3.3.1. Ask students to read, collect and synthesize information from various sources for presentations, projects, group discussions etc.

Asking students to collect the information from various sources and then select, summarize and synthesize it for a presentation, a group project or a discussion is actually a variant of the previous task. It is a variation because students still have the chance to practise reading in the real world with certain freedom to choose the topic and the information that they are particularly interested in. However, since the outcome of their reading will be assessed via their performance in the presentation, project or group discussion, more intensive reading becomes necessary in this reading task. Therefore, this task could be said to well resemble the in-depth reading activities in students’ real life, such as when they wish to learn from various Internet sources about available scholarships or self-study a complicated subject matter by reading different materials in English. The authenticity of this task, however, is rather simulated since assessment is imposed on the outcome of their reading.

As for classes with lower English competence, a simpler reading task was suggested by one interviewee as an alternative. Instead of an oral presentation which might be time consuming and over-challenging, the students were asked to search for information and read as much as possible about a specific topic of their favourites. Then during a class contact, the teacher would start by sharing with the whole class some information that she had collected before asking her students for further supplementation. Alternatively, teachers should subdivide a theme into several subtopics and assign each of them to different groups in the class. Subsequently, each group of students should read at home to discuss or exchange the information with other groups in the following lesson.

(see Appendix 5)

4.4. Sample work

4.4.1. Unit 12: MUSIC (page 124, TIẾNG ANH 10)

(see Appendix 6)
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this last chapter, recapitulation of the study is provided with a brief description of the study as well as the limitations of the study and some recommendations for further study.

5.1. Summary of the study

As reading, one of the receptive skills through which students can widen their knowledge of the target language more effectively than the others, it is important for the students to have good techniques in reading to become good readers.

In the case of this study, the teachers of reading at Le Hong Phong High School are supposed to be aware of many factors that affect students’ reading comprehension. Among these, there are four main factors that should be taken into consideration for the 10th-form students: Students’ lack of background knowledge and world knowledge, students’ low motivation, students’ limited vocabulary and grammatical structures and their lack of appropriate reading strategies.

This study gives an analysis of the difficulties in reading and the sources of these difficulties as perceived by the 10th form students at Le Hong Phong High School, specifically, difficulties in vocabulary, reading strategies, and background knowledge and knowledge of the world. The study has also looked into the teachers’ perceptions of their students’ difficulties in reading acquisition in order to investigate to what extent the teachers understand their students in the process of reading acquisition. The findings of the study indicate that there is a big gap between what the teachers have done to motivate the students and what the students prefer. The majority of students prefer having supplementary reading texts or for extensive reading. They want their teachers to provide them with reading strategies, how to read efficiently. Besides, it reveals that the teachers do not make full use of games and visual aids of which catch the interest of most the students.

Coming from the real situation of teaching and learning reading at Le Hong Phong High School, in this study, an effort has been made to present some useful reading
techniques which hopefully can be employed to help the 10th form students at Le Hong Phong High School improve their reading comprehension.

5.2. Limitations and recommendations for further study

Personally, I believe that the findings in my study are overall success. However, shortcomings were unavoidable.

Firstly, the researcher only uses survey questionnaires to collect data on views of the teachers and the 10th-form students about reading difficulties and their needs in teaching and learning reading. The number of the students taking part in the questionnaires is only from 2 classes (97 students), which may not be sufficient for the researcher to have precise judgments.

Secondly, not all the suggested techniques for teaching and learning reading are experimented properly, so the researcher can’t draw a conclusion of the effectiveness. Therefore, the suggestions to improve reading comprehension for 10th-form students at Le Hong Phong High School may be subjective and uncompleted.

Finally, this study was carried out within the area of Le Hong Phong High School so the mentioned teaching methods may not be suitable to apply to other high schools because of learners’ differences in language proficiency and other social constraints.

Despite such limitations, I strongly believe that my research is successful to some extent. Though this is just a small-scale study on the issue, it really provides some helpful suggestions for the teaching reading to the 10th-form students. However, any further researches that employ supplementary instruments such as experimental research or observations and carry out in a longer period of time on a larger scale can help to prove the above results more strongly and persuasively and can also help to avoid the subjective assessments from the researcher of this study.