Research

The Effect of Readıng Novels on Iraqı EFL Learners, Vocabulary Knowledge and Readıng Comprehensıon Abılıty

Istanbul Aydin University

Nabard Fouad Ghareeb Al-Bajalan[1] Akbar Alıshah[2]

[1]Department of English Language and Literature Isnstitute of Social Science, Istanbul Aydin Univresity Istanbul, Turkey
[2]Department of English Language and Literature Isnstitute of Social Science, Istanbul Aydin Univresity Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract:

The study investigated the effect of reading novels in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) among sixty-five students at the Department English Language and literature/ Sulaimani University. The participators were in two groups (control and experimental groups) including both sexes (39 male and 21 female). All of them were third-year students; they had already studied literature for two years prior to their participation. In order to determine the effect of reading novels on language learning, it was necessary to measure placement test, vocabulary and reading comprehension tests, Rosetta Stone software for vocabulary knowledge and Tell Me More software for reading comprehension. The findings showed that control and experimental groups both reported higher than vocabulary in language learning with the mean score of pre-test 15.16, and that for post-test being 17.03. The findings also revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between both groups' vocabulary knowledge, while a statistically significant difference was found to exist in the post-test. The findings showed that reading comprehension reported higher than control and experimental groups in pre-test with mean 14.30 while in post-test, control and experimental groups scored higher than Reading comprehension with mean 17.03. Again, there was no statically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the pre-test of reading comprehension of both groups, while statistically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the post-test of reading comprehension of both groups existed. Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge, adhering to the administration of tests. In both groups, the results demonstrated that there was appositive relationship between the students' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in their learning of English as a foreign language.

Key words: Communicative Standards, Non novels, Reading Comprehension, Reading Novels

Introduction:

In today's globalized world, learning English as a foreign language is prerequisite for any progress and achievement, as it enables individuals and nations to effectivel communicate with others on a global arena and thus creating the spirit of collaboration and overcoming problems As an international

language utilized by more than 750 million individuals, English provides the tools for this communication. These tools are employed in almost all the social networks and commercial affairs (Marsh & Lange, 2000; Shamim, 2011) Thus, a thorough understanding of the English language is deemed necessary (Ma, Weiyi, 2017).

For those who strive to acquire English, there are some prerequisites that need to be considered. For example, the relationship between reading textbooks and learning English as a second language deserves some attention. More broadly, the reading process in general, e.g. how it works and how content knowledge can be transferred into pedagogy, should be examined closely by educators in order to enhance the quality of learners. This understanding of the reading process is significant, as reading enables learners to remember new vocabulary and sentence structures (Singh & Foong, 2012).

When learners have poor reading skills, they experience much difficulty in acquiring a new knowledge (Isarji & Ainul, 2008; as cited in Rahim, 2013). Exposing language learners to texts and focusing their attention on the language patterns of these texts is crucial to the overall extent and quality of their language acquisition.

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During the first stages of learning EFL, learners are usually exposed to short novels so that they can easily comprehend and remember the vocabulary and sentence structures. This present study seeks to investigate whether reading these novels really does affect learning EFL among teens and adults.

It is through language that information is organized, processed, and transferred from one person to another. Accordingly, learning a language involves deriving structure from usage, which is achieved by learning about different world aspects and engaging in diverse sociocultural settings. Learning a language also utilizes the all aspects of cognition, including the following: happenings; determining patterns among and between stimuli; categorizing

experience; using cognitive patterns, of puns, analogies, and images, and generalizing conceptual schema and prototypes from samples. Language itself serves the purpose of helping a listener focus his/her heed to the world; it can make connections between stories and viewpoints about the same prospect (Tien, 2015; Ma & Weiyi, 2017).

One learns what one attends; thus, attention affects language acquisition. Within the language learning process, cognition, experience, consciousness. undistinguishably entwined in rich, complex, and dynamic ways (Khabiri, 2012; Singh & Foong, 2012).

However, despite this complexity, language patterns exist that are not preordained by human policy, i.e. school curriculum. These patterns include many levels (phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse genre, etc.).These patterns also include dynamic models of usage, the patterns of creative developmental in child language acquisition, and diachronic aspects of language change. Through reading, one's knowledge about important news is enriched. It also enables the reader to enhance his or her vocabulary. Although some people believe that there is only one way of teaching reading, there are two ways of teaching reading: Extensive and Intensive.

The two differ in three aspects. Intensive reading may require teacher involvement while extensive reading requires little or no teacher involvement.

The main difference between the two is that in extensive reading exposure to language is widened while intensive reading exposes students to specific academic and/or technical vocabulary Extensive reading engages students with reading more and large texts to increase their overall understanding, having enjoyment as the greatest aim Extensive reading gives the students the chance of choosing the topics they are interested in. In this case, the students should look for relevant topics to help them make more of their topic and give them background knowledge. Increasing the use of dictionary led by writing summary and preparing presentation in extensive reading, which broadens students' knowledge is totally in contrast with intensive reading in which students' activities are more limited since the topic chosen by the teacher doesn't motivate them to look for more

knowledge, as they depend only on the teachers instructions.

The aim of the current research is to define the influence of reading novels on the language acquisition of these learners as well as the other areas of improvement (in terms of listening, speaking, and writing) which stem from this activity. Specifically, this study possesses the following research aims:

1. Do students who read novels make advancement in learning English as foreign language than those who use non-novel texts in group?

2. Do students who read novels to learn high frequent vocabular demonstrate significantly improved reading comprehension than those who read non-novel texts in control group?

3. Is there any significant relationship between EFL students' vocabulary learning and their reading comprehension through reading novels?

Literatur Rview:
Reading:

Reading is the most vital scholarly language aptitude for the students of second language which can prompt their expert, social, and self-awareness. This ability, however, is an intricate and dynamic phenomenon and is regularly considered as a critical wellspring of language input which includes a unique cooperation between the reader, author and the content (Berardo, 2006).

Thus, an important part of the student's success is critical reading ' university. To read critically, second language learners must be granted the opportunity to check the text closely while focusing on the author's presumptions, standpoints, aims, and doctrine (Khabiri & Pakzad, 2012).

Numerous researchers have focused on the importance of reading in an academic context. Palani (2012 : 91) states that "effective reading is the most important avenue of effective learning" and to achieve an academic success, one needs to be a successful reader. Reading has always been given more attention than other skills because it functions not only as skill but also as the essential source of language input for EFL learners (Dubin & Bycina, 1991).

Reading and the Reading Procss:

Regarding the nature of the reading process, scholars have asserted that reading fluently is a rapid and requires the reader maintains of the information flowing of at a sufficient rate to make associations and surmising essential to understanding. Reading is also helpful, with reader motivation ranging from entertainment to information and research, as well as interactive, meaning that the reader utilizes information from background knowledge. Several skills work together during the process. Finally, successful reading comprehension means that the reader thoroughly understands what he/she is reading. Unlike many EFL students, the reader does not initiate the reading process in anticipation that he/she wondering might not understand the text. Rather, for the fluent reader, reading is flexible, meaning that he/she utilizes a mane ways and strategies to efficient reading (Scherer, 2016; Bernhardt, 1991).

A final aspect of the reading process is that skills develop step by step. That is, the reader does not need to be fluent accidently or immediately accompany be a reading development course. Instead of long-term endeavor and steady change, both of which occur as a result of extensive reading practice, particularly via the reading of novels, as this thesis will argue.

Purpose of Reading:

Reading plays a multifaceted role in the learning process. Especially when learners are prompted to answer comprehension questions, investigate grammar use and think critically about the texts they are reading, they benefit from an increased ability to utilize language in diverse ways as well as to solve problems related to language learning. It is commonly understood by scholars that reader motivation (purpose) involves two main categories: reading for pleasure and reading to glen information (Grellet, 1996).

Adequate Reading Skills
Skimming

Nuttall (1996: 61) has characterized skimming as the process of looking quickly through text's contents in order to determine its substance. Other scholars have further elaborated that skimming enables readers to condense large amounts of information in a relatively quick amount of time (Rayner and Pollatsek, 1989)

In contrast to the above views, Grellet (1996: 19) views skimming as "a more thorough activity" because it "requires an overall view of the text" Likewise, Urquhart and Weir (2009: 213) define

the purpose of skimming as the establishment of a general sense of the text.

Browsing:

A less intentional form of skimming, browsing has been defined as a "sort of reading where goals are not well defined" (Urquhart & Weir, 1998).

Search Reading:

Unlike skimming, search reading supports readers with adequate information needed to answer a set question. According to Urquhart et. al. (1998: 103), search reading "is directed by predetermined topics." Moreover, it consists of both bottom-up and top-down reading procedures , and the duration of 'closer attention' in search reading is longer than in any other reading strategies.

As indicated by Urquhart et. al. (1998: 214), search reading incorporates the following: alertness for words in the same or related semantic field, utilization formal learning of content structure for finding data utilization of titles and subtitles, utilization of abstracts and attention to words as well as expressions.

Careful Reading:

According to Urquhart et. al. (1998: 214) careful reading is comprised of the following aspects:

    (a) The reader endeavors to deal with the dominant part of data in the content, that is, the procedure is not particular;

    (b) The reader embraces a docile part, and acknowledges the author's association, including what the essayist seems to consider the essential parts; and

    (c) The reader endeavors to develop a "macrostructure" on the premise of most of the data in the content.

Careful or "watchful" reading widely is considered the best reading procedure.

Prediction

Prediction implies the anticipation of what is to come next while utilizing linguistic, lexical and social sign (Grellet, 1996). As per Greenall and Swan (1986: 3) prediction involves recognizing what data is new to the reader and what data he/she contemplates while perusing the content. Nuttall (1996: 77) regards the process of prediction as readers' sharing of the writer's mind. In the same time, good readers rely on

their ability to foresee what will come next. They use the smallest traces acquire suitable meanings of texts.

EFL readers mostly rely on predicting from "the syntactic and semantic clues and their previous knowledge" (Hedge, 1985).

As mentioned previously, these readers rely on previous experiences in order to make sense of the texts. Moreover, Nuttall (1996: 77) explains that prediction is significant in that it stimulates these readers' schemata or reading strategies and enables readers sensibly complex sentences.

The process of prediction guarantees the reader's dynamic interaction with content. Moreover, it focuses readers by defining the series of things to look for and it enables the reader to read more efficiently. In this way, developing the skill of prediction ensures that readers do not become over-burdened with excess information.

Inferencing:

Sometimes, a text proposes something indirectly rather than directly. It is the accountability of the reader to conclude this information. Thus, by means of the process of inferencing, readers are invoked reconstructing the writer's unstated premises.

Grellet (1996: 14) sees that inferencing as using syntactic and logical hints to find out unknown elements' meaning. It is worth mentioning that inferencing does not necessitate certainty rather, it hinges upon probability. In any case, the potential outcomes determined through inferencing may slowly transform into assurances when the reader meets a word andcomprehends it more unequivocally. Inferencing influences the elucidation of content to an expansive degree. It is, in this way, a fundamental aptitude (Nuttall, 1996). It is an effective guide for the students attempting to grasp content, and it enables readers to comprehend texts more efficiently. In addition, inferencing can cause a text's content to be more enjoyable.

In order to generalizethe information of a given text effectively, students shouldutilize common sense and related schemata. Thus, inferencing is an effective method for EFL readers as it engages them in comprehending and exploring meaning while testing their assumptions regarding language content

Previewing:

Previewing includes utilizing the title of a text, the list of chapters, introductory sections,

headings or subtitles, data on the back cover, and so on. This process is valuable in that it provokes readers to consider a text from numerous points of view. It leads readers toward expected information and, is time-efficient. They Students can use this method to form a general idea about a text by quick examination of information about the content.

Anticipation:

Anticipation involves shaping a thought regarding a text's essence prior to reading. Grellet (1996: 47) has asserted that readers sometimes utilize texts to locate various aspects of its content, e.g. information, thoughts, answers to various inquiries and so forth In other words they expect that texts will be able to fulfill some question or assumption which they possess regarding content.

Anticipations commence during the pre-reading stage and continue to develop during the reading process. These begin to be fulfilled and/or anticipations become to be established or modified during the post-reading phase. Anticipation has a profound significance for readers, as it motivates them to continue reading a text throughout its entirety. Moreover, it "aid[s] the readers' overall understanding, thus allowing the teacher to concentrate on new items of language" (Watson 1991). Anticipation also enables students to think intently regarding a text's content concentrate on new points of inquiry and prepare to enter the content of a text (Watson, 1991). Anticipation does not require precision—regardless of whether an anticipated component of a text is realized or disproven, the process itself is beneficial for readers.

Presupposition:

Presupposition is an anticipatory process that enables readers to comprehend intrinsic links that occur between concepts in a text. Students who are not heedful of these links may confront difficulties in comprehending the message of the author.

Nuttall (1996: 112) has classified presupposition into two types: 1. the learning and experience that the writer anticipates from the reader and 2. The standpoint, attitude and feelings that the writer anticipates from the reader. Along these lines, the accurate translation of a text's content relies mostly on a reader's shared perspective with the writer.

Shared Assumptions:

As mentioned above, Nuttall (1996: 112) claims that the reader and the writer ought to have "certain things in common if communication is to take place." In this sense, the author and the reader must acquire in the same manner a comparable command over a similar language.

Vocabulary is one aspect that should be shared between the reader and the author. If the reader's vocabulary knowledge is less that than the writer, the content increases in difficulty for the reader who lacks the vocabulary necessary for grasping the content.

Shared between readers and authors depend upon shared attitudes, convictions, values, thoughts standards, culture and traditions. Each of these aspects may contribute to the better comprehension of content and, thus the more pleasure a reader derives from a text. Moreover, readers consequently are better able to enhance their reading skills in this case.

Recognizing Text Organization:

Recognizing text organization refers realizing and internalizing sentences which are joined together to make paragraphs (Greenall et. al., 1986).

If a reader is unable to comprehend how paragraph is arranged .he/she will experience difficulty in forming a cohesive sense of the text. Organizational patterns may enable readers to anticipate the meanings of sentences, overall aiding them in the interpretation of especially difficult texts.

Approaches to Reading:
Top-down Approach:

The top-down approach, which was first put forth by Goodman (1967), involves readers who "have previously formed a plan before coming to the text , and probably, neglect large parts of the text which are not related to their aim" (Urquhart and Weir: 42).

Nuttall (1996: 114) regards the top-down approach in the following way:

We draw all alone knowledge and experience the forecasts we can make, in view of the schemata we have procured to understand the content. We make apprehensive use of it when we try to see the general encouragement behind the content, or get an unpleasant thought of the example of the essayist's contention, with a specific end goal to

make a contemplated speculate next stride. (Nuttall ,1996)

This approach empowers the reader to foresee the author's motivation, the feasible pattern and after that to translate troublesome parts of the content. The top-down method gift a sense of point of view and makes usage of all that the reader conveys to the content: earlier learning, sound judgment, and so forth which have infrequently been underestimated. (Nuttall ,1996).

Bottom-up Approach:

The bottom-up approach, which was suggested by Gough in 1972, refers to the process in which "the reader builds up a meaning from the black marks on the page: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure" (Nuttall, 1996).

In this way, the bottom-up approach is content-driven and does not necessitate prior background knowledge on behalf of the reader. the claim that bottom up procedures play a crucial role in reading is further supported by comparing between good and poor readers. In this view, sluggish readers are quite sensitive to context and use it to direct their quick of print, while sluggish readers have problem foreseeing the forthcoming terms in a sentence. However, research has demonstrated that unskilled readers use context at least as much as skilled readers (e.g., Perfetti et al. 1979).

Schema Theory:

Despite its significance for EFL learners, schema theory is not a very much characterized structure for the mental portrayal of learning (Garnham, 1985; Kintsch, 1988; Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989). Nevertheless, it is a helpful idea for portraying how earlier learning is coordinated in memory and utilized as a part of larger amount appreciation forms (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Moreover, the ramifications of construction hypothesis have turned out to be helpful in enhancing perusing guideline. This down to earth knowledge, alongside the natural interest of schema theory which sounds has a prime concentration on EFL reading research during the 1980s.

Methodology:

This study is quantitative in nature and utilizes an experimental research design which is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques, it adapted in the form of sveral tests administered during analysis stages and data collection. It focuses on the effect of reading novels,vocabulary knowldg and reading comprhension among Iraqi EFL learners at Sulaimani University's English Department.

Participants:

60 Iraqi EFL learners (39 males, 21 females) who are in the third stage at college of Arts-English Department of Sulaimani University participatd in this study. Participants' ages were ranging from 19 to 20 years old.

Instruments:

The instruments and materials utilized in this study included the following: a placement test, vocabulary and reading comprehension tests, and Rosetta Stone software for vocabulary knowledge as well as and Tell Me More software for reading comprehension. The reading tools include one difficult novel and one simple novel: Animal Farm by George Orwell (simple) and Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad (difficult). Placement Test is a computer-based test which delivers real-life measures of test takers' language ability and it is for non-native speakers. Rosetta Stone is a proprietary computer-assisted language-learning (CALL) software which utilizes a compile of symbols, texts, and sound, with difficult levels which gradually increas as the student progresses in order to test different vocabulary and grammatical rules intuitively, i.e. without tasks or translation through materials . In this way, the software employs what is known as the "dynamic immersion method." According to the makers of Rosetta Stone, the software's main objectives are to teach language and evaluate language level. Finally, Tell Me More, the objective of the Tell Me More softwareis to provide language learners with a wide range of tools to address speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar, sentence-level writing and cultural awareness. The main advantage of this software is that it can determine the reading levels of EFL students via the reading of novels.

Data Collection and analysis:

This study had a six-week duration which consisted of three sessions per week. Each session lasted one-and-a-half hours for each

group. Students in the experimental group learned vocabularies through novels on computers. First the teacher introduced the novels and programs, then he/she instructed them regarding how to utilize the computers for this purpose. Students read the novels section-by-section and the completed exercises related to learned vocabularies. They received immediate feedback from the programsin immediate feedback students holding responsibility. Giving quick criticism to understudy reactions, rectifying and clearing up irregularities in understudy rationale, and requesting clarifications to answers builds understudy execution. Repetition alone doesn't prompt expanded execution, and criticism can increment the precision of execution. Effective learning expects teachers to note and right blunders in information and rationale. Instructional clarifications increment learning results contrasted with the individuals who don't get. The Immediate feedback expands data obtaining and maintenance of material, it expands the likelihood of accurately noting inquiry later on, particularly if addressed erroneously and revised in the principal cycle. In terms of pacing, the students completed each practice at their own pace, progressing with each section.

Moreover, students they felt that it made their work easier and more fun to complete. Concerning words or phrases unfamiliar to the students, an online dictionary enabled them to focus on the reading materials and made the reading process easier. Exercises were both of recognition and production type. On recognition tests students were instructed to choose correct words as well as omitted words. On production tests, they were asked to complete the spelling of words for each vocabulary and as well as some matching components.

For control group, the procedure for learning vocabulary was different. Students were provided vocabulary terms alongside textual definitions, but pictures and animations were not included. Students were asked to study the words via pictorial novels and memorize their meanings based on the static textual definition presented. Reading passages were presented to learners in the control group. They were supposed to read one passage from the printed pages at the end of each section, while the experimental group read the same texts from the computer screen. After a

six-week treatment period, a post-test was delivered to participants in order to measure their achievements.

Findings:

Results of the data analysis is organized based on research question to better illustrate the findings of the study.

RQ1: Do students who read novels make advancement in learning English as foreign language than those who use non-novel texts in group?

To determine whether any significant difference existed between the control and experiment groups, an Independent-Sample T-Test procedure was used. Table 1 represents the pr-tst Vocabulary Knowledge of both groups.

Table 1: Independent-Sample T-Test for Comparing Means of Groups on Vocabulary Knowlede Pre-Test

Pretest-Vocab.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference
Eq.V assumed	-.996	58	.323	-.56667	.56869
Eq. V not assumed	-.996	56.678	.323	-.56667	.56869

Table 4.2 reveals the results of the independent samples t-test. Pertaining to the results of this test, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the pre-test of vocabulary knowledge of both groups (M = 15.1667 SD = 2.36473), t (58) = -.996, p= .323.

For th post-test, the Tble below reprsents the Vocabulary knowldge of both groups in post-test.

Table 2: Independent-Sample T-Test for Comparing means of Groups in Posttest of Vocabulary knowledge

Pretest-Vocab.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference
Eq.V assumed	-4.754	58	.000	-2.36667	.49785
Eq. V not assumed	-4.754	57.188	.000	-2.36667	.49785

Table 4.3 gives the results of the independent samples t-test. According to the results of this test, there was statistically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the post-test of

vocabulary knowledge of both groups (M = 17.0333 SD = 1.80962), t (58) = -4.754, p= .000.

RQ2: Do students who read novels to learn high frequent vocabular demonstrate significantly improved reading comprehension than those who read non-novel texts in control group?

To answer the second question, an Independent-Sample T-Test procedure was applied to find if there isa significant difference that might exist between the two groups. Table 3 represents the Independent-Sample T-Test for Comparing means of Groups in Pretest of Reading comprehension

Table 3: Independent-Sample T-Test for Comparing means of Groups in Pretest of Reading comprehension

Pretest-Vocab.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference
Eq.V assumed	.224	58	.823	.10000	.44606
Eq. V not assumed	.224	56.026	.823	.10000	.44606

Table 4.5 gives the results of the independent samples t-test. According to the results of Reading comprehension, there was no statically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the pre-test of Reading comprehension of both groups (M = 14.3000 SD = 1.55696), t (58) = .224, p= .823.

For the post-test, Table 4 below represents the both goups' reading comprehension

Table 4: Independent-Sample T-Test for Comparing means of Groups in Posttest of Reading comprehension

Pretest-Vocab.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference
Eq.V assumed	-4.639	58	.000	-2.16667	46704
Eq. V not assumed	-4.639	57.972	.000	-2.16667	46704

Table 4.6 gives the results of the independent samples t-test. According to the results of Reading comprehension, there was statistically significant difference in the mean of the scores of the post-test of Reading comprehension of both groups (M = 17.0333 SD = 1.80962), t (58) = -4.639, p= .000.

RQ3: Is there any significant relationship between EFL students' vocabulary learning and their reading comprehension through reading novels?

To address the third research question, a Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to measure the strength of any linear relationship found to exist between EFL students' vocabulary knowledge and their reading comprehension via program use. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5 : The correlation matrix of Vocabulary knowledge and Reading comprehension:

		Vocabulary knowledge	Reading comprehension
Vocabulary knowledge	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.382**
			.003
	N	60	60
Vocabulary knowledge Sig. (2-tailed) N		.382** .003	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There was statistically significant correlation between VK and RC, r = .382, n= 60, p= .003.

Discussion:

In accordance with those of previous studies, the results of this study support the fact that utilizing technology, in general and in programs, assists students in enhancing their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skills. In addition, it was found that the greater the vocabulary knowledge, the greater the success in terms of reading comprehension. The outcomes of the independent sample t-test for the first research question indicate that there was a significant difference between EFL students who utilize CALL and interactive English programs to learn high-frequency vocabularies and those who using static textual definition. That is, teaching vocabulary through computer programs enhanced student learning in the experiment group. This finding is in full agreement with previous studies (Chun, 2006; Levie, 1987; Arnhein, 1994; Yoshii, 2006; Yoshii & Flaitz, 2002).

The findings of recent studies (Gaudio, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2001; Folse, 2004) reveal that using dynamic and interactive programs enhances students' cognitive understanding, especially through reading novels and it also aids them in

grasping abstract concepts of materials due to visual and auditory components. As demonstrated by this study, EFL programs containing animations and audio-visual materials to teach various vocabularies enhance learners' achievements in terms of expanding their vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, this finding is supported by those of similar studies (Chun and Plass, 1996; Willows & Houghton, 1987). Therefore, using technology use in EFL classrooms is capable of providing widespread opportunities for students to advance their language skills.

Pertaining the second research question revealed that students who used novel programs on computers to learn vocabularies performed better in terms of reading comprehension than did those who used non-literal texts in the control group. Again, these findings are highly consistent with those of previous studies (McKenna, 1998; Meyer and Rose, 2000; Sadeghi and Soltanian, 2009; Tozcu & Coady, 2004).

Moreover, investigating the effect of direct vocabulary learning on reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge and word recognition via software incorporating novels, Tozcu and Coady (2004) also reported that using computer-based materials contributes to self-management during reading, development of reading experiences and enhance reading strategies. Likewise, findings of the current study are supported by Sadeghi's and Soltanian's (2009) study, which assessed the effects of two modes of reading pedagogy (i.e. the computer-assisted reading and the traditional print mode) with regard to their effectiveness for foreign language reading comprehension. The results of their study indicated that the medium of instruction significantly impacted reading comprehension levels, with the CALL mode resulting in better performance and significant improvement in students' reading comprehension when compared to the print reading mode.

Therefore, software programs not only enhance students' ability to acquire vocabulary knowledge, but also aid them in terms of reading comprehension.

Regarding the third research question, there was a significant and positive relationship between EFL students' vocabulary knowledges and their reading comprehension via the use of literary and nonliterary software programs.

This finding supports the fact that vocabulary knowledge enhances reading comprehension among EFL students. Moreover, the finding is in full agreement with those of other studies (Kim, 2002; Arikan and Khezerlou, 2010; Smidt and Hegelheimer, 2004). For instance, Chun and Plass (1996) examined the effects of multimedia vocabulary glosses on reading comprehension. The results of their study revealed that multimedia vocabulary glosses significantly aided in comprehension, and that vocabulary annotations consisting of both visual and verbal definitions were more effective than those providing textual definitions alone.

It is undeniable that computer software is capable of providingan enjoyable and fruitful collaborative learning environment for EFL learners. With software use, students learn more quickly, demonstrate greater retention, and are better motivated to learn a language as software programs encourage students to reflect on their learning processes. The educational effectiveness of a particular program depends upon how it is utilized and for what purpose. In terms of EFL study, the CALL environment is more advantageous that a textbook-oriented learning environment (Kahn, 1991:1145).

Conclusion:

The effects of computer technology on students' performance have been an open question for researchers. The existing body of research concerning this topic has painted a mixed picture of the effects of such programs. Thus, this study investigated the possible effects of literary and nonliterary reading software and computer programs on EFL students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Moreover, itexamined the possible relationship between EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The participant sample was selected from Iranian EFL learners including boys and girls studying intermediate English.

CALL programs have been deemed effective byseveral language scholars (Kolich, 1985). The findings of this study revealed that using literary and non-literary reading software and computer programs containing audio-visual multimedia for acquiring high-frequency vocabularies had positive effects on students' learning.

The results of this study also reveal that-the acquisition of English vocabulary via the reading of computer-based literary texts enhanced students' ability to comprehend reading passages. Furthermore, it was found that expanding vocabulary knowledge was positively correlated with increased reading comprehension ability among intermediate EFL learners. This implies that the use of literary and non-literary reading software and computer programs facilitates vocabulary acquisition, which is an important factor in improving language skills, particularly reading comprehension.

It is also clear that participants perceived the software to make a positive difference in their vocabulary acquisition as well as their confidence in demonstrating new language skills. Furthermore, it was inferred that using dynamic and interactive videos and pictures enhances students' cognitive understanding and aids them in grasping abstract concepts within reading materials. Finally, these programs can enhance learning, provide individualized instruction and allow students to work at their own pace.

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