

## The Effect of Assisted Reading on Vocabulary Knowledge of Iranian Female EFL Learners

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**Abstract** – This study was conducted to see the effect of assisted reading vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. The participants were 50 female EFL Learners. They were between 18 to 22 year old. They were randomly divided into a control and an experimental group. A reading comprehension and a vocabulary test was administered as a pretest. Then the students in the control group received the normal procedure of reading comprehension whereas the students in the experimental group received both the normal procedure and assisted reading including reading aloud and repeated reading. At the end of the term, a reading comprehension and vocabulary test was administered as a posttest. The results showed that the assisted reading had a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition.

**Keywords:** assisted reading, reading aloud, repeated reading

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The knowledge of words and word meanings is vocabulary (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006). It is not something that anyone can fully learn. It is something that takes during a lifetime. In learning English, vocabulary is an important factor for EFL learners. Any foreign, second or first language cannot take place without the acquisition of vocabulary. There are many words in each language and many students have considerable difficulty with vocabulary and it is their biggest problem in learning English. Learning vocabulary is an activity that takes a lot of time and learners should be tolerant and it may be forgotten easily. They may feel that they don't have a good memory because they cannot remember quickly what they want and it is not easily accessible. Different researches showed that learning second or foreign language depends heavily on vocabulary, and if anyone relinquishes vocabulary knowledge, it is the biggest problem that she or he may encounter. Students should learn vocabulary on their own because vocabulary is not clearly taught in many second language classes. When learners find a new word, they usually know it, but they cannot use it later. After a period, when they use the new word in their normal speaking, it gets to their main vocabulary. (Baker & Westrup, 2000). Paul and O'Rourke (1988) explained that word knowledge is an important component in reading comprehension and they added that other researchers identified it as one of the most important component. It is a reality that vocabulary and reading have close relationship. In reading, there are new vocabulary. Therefore, we conclude that vocabulary is the main factor of reading comprehension. We should use techniques that are practical and can help EFL learners in vocabulary acquisition. Assisted reading including read aloud and repeated reading can solve the problem of vocabulary acquisition.

## **2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

For the first time, finding and studying new words are a challenging task and students may be confused. Some researchers say that there should be a little time for teaching vocabulary. Students can learn themselves. For example, they can ask a teacher or they can find in the dictionary. But, students need to learn new vocabulary by an instructor and he or she should spend time for difficult vocabulary. In addition to vocabulary, students should learn to read. Reading is the first step to learning different subjects in school. In EFL or ESL class, the goals of reading activity is to enhance comprehension and learn new vocabulary. They have extra exercises to develop comprehension skill. These kinds of skills cause that learners focus on new vocabulary and remember the vocabularies that they know. They can find new vocabularies and read aloud them and repeat them to memorize. So, vocabulary and reading comprehension has a close relationship together. If we want to make learning process easier and enjoyable, we should find new strategies. Teachers and instructors are trying to find a perfect teaching method to achieve their goals. Two types of assisted reading such as repetition and read aloud are used in EFL or ESL classes. Beck and McKeown (2001) said that through read aloud, vocabulary and language are decontextualized. Repetition is another kind of strategy that is used by EFL or ESL. According to many researches, repetition has been used in vocabulary acquisition in most Asian EFL learners. This study is trying to show the effect of assisted reading on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian female EFL learners.

### **2.1. Assisted Reading and Vocabulary Learning**

#### **2.1.1. Reading Aloud**

Razinski and Padak (2000) explained that in classes that students have problem in reading, reading aloud can be very useful. Franzese (2002) said that read aloud is when an adult talk about different genres of books and read then and the children listen. Terblanche (2002) said that in reading aloud, children can understand different matters and encounter with various topics that are in the books. Primamore (1994) also added that when students have difficulties in reading for example their vocabulary are poor, reading aloud can solve their problem and enhance their motivation. Seneschal and Cornell (1993) argued that when one reads a text aloud, children can learn new vocabulary incidentally. Guler (2013) said that read aloud is a dual engaging activity in which both teachers and learners interact with each other and teacher's read aloud can be a powerful tool to promote student's reading comprehension provided that it is integrated into ELT curriculum. When Brett, Rothlein and Hurley (1996) examined in their study the effects of three conditions on children's vocabulary learning, they found that when a teacher reads aloud to the students, the experimental group of children learned more words than the control group.

#### **2.1.2. Repeated Reading**

Repeated reading, initially known as multiple oral reading, involves multiple, successive encounters with the same visual material, the key being repetition- whether of the same words, sentences, or connected discourse (Han & Chen, 2010). Repeated reading is the pedagogical expression of automaticity theory which posits a causal relationship between improved fluency in

lower order word recognition and better reading comprehension (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Samuels (1979) provides a definition of repeated reading as “a supplemental reading program that consists of rereading a short and meaningful passage until a satisfactory level of fluency is reached. He explained that one of the important function of repeated reading is the practice of automaticity and repeated reading is as an effective way of increasing students’ reading fluency. Moyer (1982) said that another name of repeated reading is multiple oral rereading.

### **3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of assisted reading on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian female EFL learners. This study aims at investigating the following question:

Does assisted reading have any effect on vocabulary acquisition of the Iranian female EFL learners?

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of 50 EFL learners. All of them were female and they were between 18 to 22 year old. This study was implemented at intermediate level in Navid Institute in Darab, Iran. This study was held two times per week and each session lasted for 1 hour over a ten-week period. The text, *New Headway Student’s Book Intermediate* (Soars & Soars, 2005), was taught.

### **4.2. Instruments**

To see if participants were homogenized, a 50-item multiple choice reading comprehension and vocabulary test was administered as the pretest to the students. The participants were randomly assigned into a control and an experimental groups each containing 25 students. After I saw that the participants were homogenized, a 50-item multiple-choice reading comprehension and vocabulary test was administered as the posttest to see the improvement of the learner’s vocabulary knowledge after the instruction.

### **4.3. Procedure**

First, the participants were homogenized by a reading comprehension and vocabulary test. They were randomly assigned to control group and experimental group. The test was served as a pretest. In the control group, students were taught the normal procedure of the reading. They read the reading text. The new words were explained. Then, the students answered the questions of the reading. On the other hand, the learners in the experimental group received the assisted reading of reading aloud and repeated reading.

**4.4. Data Analysis**

First a descriptive statistics of pretest and posttest scores were conducted. To answer the research question, the scores of pretest and posttest were calculated through paired and independent T-Test.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As mentioned earlier 50 female EFL learners participated in this study. First, based on the results of the pretest, the participants were divided into two groups. One of the groups was considered as the experimental group which were exposed to the treatment. The other group taken as the control group was deprived of the treatment. To find out if assisted reading affects learners’ vocabulary acquisition, the researcher ran the paired sample *t*-test to compare the pre and post-test scores. Tables 1 summarizes the descriptive results of the pretest and post-test scores.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest and Post-test Scores**

|           | Group        | N  | Mean    | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|--------------|----|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Pretest   | Control      | 50 | 64.4000 | 9.61716        | 1.36007         |
|           | Experimental | 50 | 66.4000 | 7.89213        | 1.11612         |
| Post-test | Control      | 50 | 65.3000 | 7.85130        | 1.11034         |
|           | Experimental | 50 | 80.8000 | 7.37896        | 1.04354         |

As can be seen in the Table 1, the experimental group gained a higher post-test mean score (M= 80.80) compared with the control group. But to find if the difference between mean scores is significant, the researcher ran the paired sample *t*-test. Table 2 depicts the results of the paired sample *t*-test.

**Table 2: Paired Samples *t*-test to compare the Pretest and Post-test Scores**

|        |   | Paired Differences |                |                 |   |           | t       | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-----------|---------|----|-----------------|
|        |   | Mean               | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |           |         |    |                 |
|        |   |                    |                |                 | Lower                                     | Upper     |         |    |                 |
| Pair 1 | Pretest. Control Group - Post-test. Control Group           | -.9000             | 5.50417        | .77841          | -2.46427                                  | .66427    | -1.156  | 49 | .253            |
| Pair 2 | Pretest. Experimental Group - Post-test. Experimental Group | -14.4000           | 8.95795        | 1.26685         | -16.94582                                 | -11.85418 | -11.367 | 49 | .000            |

The results of the paired sample *t*-test in Table 2 indicate that there is a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores of the experimental group (sig. =.000,  $p < .05$ ). As Table 1 shows, the participants of the experimental group had higher mean score in the post-test ( $M = 80.80$ ) than the pretest ( $M = 64.40$ ). The results also revealed that the difference between the pretest scores and the post-test scores of participants of the control group is not statistically significant (sig. =.253).

In the next step, the independent sample *t*-test was run on the pre and post-test scores of the two groups. The pertaining results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Independent Sample *t*-test to compare the Pre and Post-test Scores of the Control and Experimental group**

|          |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |                 |                       |   |           |
|----------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-----------|
|          |                             | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |           |
|          |                             |   |      |                              |        |                 |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper     |
| Pretest  | Equal variances assumed     | 2.949                                   | .089 | -1.137                       | 98     | .258            | -2.00000        | 1.75941               | -5.49148                                  | 1.49148   |
|          | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -1.137                       | 94.405 | .259            | -2.00000        | 1.75941               | -5.49315                                  | 1.49315   |
| Posttest | Equal variances assumed     | .402                                    | .528 | -10.172                      | 98     | .000            | -15.50000       | 1.52376               | -18.52385                                 | -12.47615 |
|          | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | -10.172                      | 97.625 | .000            | -15.50000       | 1.52376               | -18.52399                                 | -12.47601 |

According to Table 3, the difference between the two groups in terms of pretest scores is not significant (sig. =.25). Concerning the post-test scores, Table 3 indicates the control and experimental groups are significantly different (sig. =.00,  $p < .05$ ). The results of the descriptive statistics in Table 1 indicated that the experimental group ( $M=80.80$ ) outperformed the control group ( $M=65.30$ ) in the post-test. It can be concluded that assisted reading have a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition of the Iranian female EFL learners.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of assisted reading on vocabulary knowledge of Iranian female EFL learners. The tests used in this study was pretest and posttest. The results showed that using assisted reading including reading aloud and repeated reading had an important effect on vocabulary knowledge. However, this study has some limitations. The class selected for this study was only female EFL learners. So, future studies can investigate this study on male EFL learners.

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