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Conclusions:

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Extensive graded reading was effective in improving students' performance in writing. It provided the students with opportunities to experience different uses of vocabulary and structure.
2. Extensive graded reading could be an enjoyable experience where students would receive interesting and comprehensible input in English.
3. Extensive graded reading not only strengthened students' word knowledge such as meaning and spelling, but it also affected other aspects of writing such as the appropriate use of English grammar, capitalization and the punctuation marks.
4. While we emphasize schooling and academic success in class, learning English writing could extend beyond the walls of the classroom by reading texts within students' linguistic competence, which are enjoyable and expected to fulfill students needs.
5. Students learning English can understand a lot more than they can produce. They need to be familiar with the target language to overcome the fear of using the language by building reading habits.

Recommendations:

Based on the study results, and to reduce students' weak performance in writing the researcher recommended:

1. Drawing the attention of the educators to the importance of extensive graded reading in enhancing vocabulary and improving writing skill.
2. Encouraging the students to be reading lovers.
3. In the real world, elements of language exists in context. Thus, learning vocabulary in different contexts should replace or go side by side with drills and exercises existing in abstract systems.
4. Establishing reading corners inside classrooms and encouraging students to share their English stories is emphasized.
5. Selecting interesting reading materials that fit students' needs and are within students' linguistic competence.

marks for the experimental group also improved. This change in performance can be attributed to being exposed to extra- curricula English texts.

Writings of the experimental group in the pre- test were mostly of one paragraph- not long enough to meet the requirements of the composition, for their writing of developmental paragraph lacked support to the topic sentence. The ideas lacked the skill of self- expression, and some writings couldn't be understood because of grammatical, vocabulary and spelling mistakes.

As for the performance of the experimental group in the post- test, the researcher noticed an increase in the length of the writing, to become in most cases, two paragraphs (something that could be interpreted as an improvement in the quality of writing) . Students were better able to focus on the ideas they wanted to express. In addition, the misuse of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, capitalization and the punctuation marks proved to decrease, which shows further the effectiveness of graded reading in developing students' writing skill.

To confirm the effectiveness of extensive graded reading in developing students' writing performance, the researcher calculated the differences of students' achievements between the pre- test and the post- test for the experimental group. The results indicated that the calculated mean scores for the experimental group equaled (45.19) in the pre- test. The calculated mean scores improved to be (49.53) in the post- test. This difference in students' achievement was significant at $\alpha = .001$ in favor of the post- test. In addition, the difference in the mean scores on the post- test between the control group and the experimental group was calculated to be significant at $\alpha = .001$ in favor of the experimental group. The results came to provide an evidence for the effectiveness of extensive graded reading in enriching students' word knowledge. This significant difference is attributed to the influence of comprehensible input, and emphasizes the effectiveness of graded reading in developing students' writing skill, which provided support for the hypothesis.

The results of this hypothesis agree with the following studies: Pigada & Schmitt (2006), Elley's (1991), Renandya's (1999) Carlson's (1997), Al-Sadder (1997), Awad's, Rennert & Kobayashi's (2001), and Iwahori (2008) where the use of extensive graded reading proved to have positive effects on acquiring vocabulary and improving students' performance in writing.

Table (4)
Results of the Paired T- Test for Students' Performance
Scores of the Experimental Group in Writing

Domain	Post- test		Pre- test		t- value	Sig
	Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev		
Grammar	6.03	2.11	4.12	2.28	.973	.001*
Spelling	5.12	1.99	4.29	2.16	1.045	.001*
Vocabulary use	6.22	2.13	4.98	2.31	.940	.001*
Capitalization & punctuation marks	5.59	2.16	5.04	2.25	1.09	.05*

Results in Table (4) indicate that there are significant differences in students' performance in the four domains. The computed mean of students' scores in using English grammar equals (4.12) in the pre- test and improved to be (6.03) in the post- test. This difference is significant at $\alpha = .001$ in favor of the post test. Another change is found in students' performance in spelling English words. The computed mean of students' scores in this domain equals (4.29) on the pre- test and improved to be (5.12) on the post- test. The difference is found to be significant at $\alpha = .001$ in favor of the post test.

Moreover, the results show that the computed mean of students' scores in using English vocabulary is (4.98) in the pre- test and improved to be (6.22) in the post- test. The difference between the two tests is significant at $\alpha = .001$ in favor of the post- test. Also, there is a difference in the proper use of capitalization and the punctuation marks, where the mean of students' achievement scores is (5.04) in the pre- test and developed to be (5.59) in the post- test. This difference is found to be significant at $\alpha = .05$

Discussion:

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of extensive graded reading on students' performance in writing.

Extensive graded reading appeared to lead to substantial vocabulary learning for the students in the experimental group. Students in the experimental group achieved better scores in grammar and spelling, and improved their knowledge of the repeated words more than the students in the control group. The appropriate use of capitalization and the punctuation

Table (2)

Results of the T- Test for the Overall Performance of the Control and the Experimental Groups in the Post- tests

The Experimental Group		The Control Group		t- value	Sig
Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev		
49.53	15.237	45.79	17.139	2.749	.001*

The results in table (2) indicate that the calculated mean of students' achievement scores in writing for the control group equals (45.79) in the pre- test, and improved to be (49.53) in the post- test. The results also indicate that there is a significant difference in students' mean scores in writing at (&=.001) in favor of the experimental group.

Paired t- test statistical analysis was also used to measure the differences in students' mean scores on the pre- test and the post test. The results of this analysis are presented in Table (3)

Table (3)

Results of the Paired T- Test for Students' Performance Scores of the Experimental Group

The Experimental Group		The Control Group		t- value	Sig
Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev		
49.53	15.237	45.19	19.139	2.748	.001*

The results in table (3) indicate that the calculated mean of students' achievement scores in writing for the experimental group equals (45.19) in the pre- test, and improved to be (49.53) in the post- test. Also, there is a significant difference in students' performance scores at & =.001 in favor of the post –test. This provides another support for the hypothesis of the study.

To confirm the effectiveness of graded reading in developing students' writing proficiency, the researcher calculated the differences in performance for the experimental group in the pre- test and the post- test in grammar, spelling, vocabulary use, capitalization and the punctuation marks.

word order, using the correct forms of English verbs, and using capitalization and the punctuation marks appropriately were tested in the pre and post-tests.

The study aimed at testing the following hypothesis: there is no significant difference at $\alpha = .05$ between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group in writing.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher compared the mean scores of students' achievements of both groups on the post- test using paired t- test, and descriptive analysis (means and standard deviation) . This is to measure whether the differences between the control and the experimental groups are significant.

Results:

A pre- test was done to investigate the equivalence in students' performance in using appropriate vocabulary and writing. The differences of mean scores between the two groups were calculated. The results were found as follows:

Table (1)
The Differences of the Mean Scores
between the Experimental and the Control Groups in the Pre- Test

The Experimental Group		The Control Group		t- value	Sig
Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev		
41.9	17.3	42.60	17.16	1.173	.425

The results in Table (1) indicate that the calculated mean of students' achievement scores in writing for the control group equals (42.60), and (41.9) for the experimental group in the pre- test. The difference between the two groups was calculated and the result shows no significant differences in students' performance in writing English between the experimental and the control group before applying the study.

At the end of the study, the researcher measured the differences in students' achievements between the experimental group and the control group. The results of the analysis are presented in Table (2)

preferred instead of complex ones. The researcher chose and prepared extra-curricula materials within the participants' level and linguistic competence. In corporation with some school teachers, the researcher reviewed related contexts on the internet and journals to fit students' age, linguistic competence, and interests. The contexts were related to what students have in class in order to meet repetitions of the new words soon enough to reinforce the previous meeting. Other short stories were selected such as: Thumb and Robin hood from ladybird, Golden Goose and Tales from the Arabian Nights from Oxford Press, Puss in Boots from Leopard and stories from the Arab World from Longman. This comprehensible input was chosen to fulfill students' needs and meet students' interests. The researcher supplied the students in the experimental group with copies of these different graded readers.

Participants:

To investigate the effect of graded reading on supporting and enhancing students' stock of vocabulary and improving the writing skill, the researcher randomly selected 210 students in the tenth grade in governmental basic schools in Nablus city. The average of their age was 15 years old. The selected sample was divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group received regular instruction and was evaluated at the beginning and the end of the experiment. The experimental group was evaluated, subjected to the treatment- exposed to extra- curricular graded reading material-, and re- evaluated at the end of the study.

Treatment:

The study lasted for ten weeks. During this time, the researcher, with the help of the regular school teachers of the selected sample, supplied students with the graded reading contexts to be read at home. The teachers discussed students' summaries, logged texts read and recognized students' progress in recalling and using vocabulary. At the end of the study after ten weeks, the participants were asked to write a composition about one of three topics suggested by the teacher. The target topics were related to issues discussed previously in the class. The study aimed at investigating the effect of the frequent existence of the target vocabulary, in the selected reading materials, on reinforcing students' knowledge of the words, grammatical function of the target words (their parts of speech and use), and spelling. In addition to that,

in all noun frequency groups and in all but two verb groups. For meaning, low-frequency nouns and verbs showed limited learning, and verbs were more limited than nouns. Grammatical behaviour knowledge was improved in all frequency groups of nouns, while the percentage of grammatical mastery of verbs was much lower than that of nouns. The results suggest that extensive reading can contribute to the long-term retention of certain word features; however, further research in this area is needed.

In another recent study, Kewon and Kim (2008), had 12 Korean learners of English read authentic literary texts and tested them on their knowledge of vocabulary before, immediately after, and one month after reading. The results showed a significant vocabulary growth among the students and that most words were retained after the first month. Three different word classes were used: nouns, verbs and adjectives. Of the three word classes, nouns were a little easier to retain than verbs and adjectives. In addition, more frequent words were more easily learned than less frequent words across all three word classes. However, words of lower frequency were better learned than words of higher frequency when the meanings of the lower frequency words were crucial for meaning comprehension.

Other research into second language vocabulary learning has determined that incidental vocabulary learning is possible through graded reading: (Huckin & Coady, 1999; Krashen, 1993; Day, 1997; Mason & Krashen, 1997).

To sum up, the literature provides a good evidence that vocabulary is learned or acquired from reading, but there is still much to be learnt about this topic. More research is needed about how extensive reading enhances knowledge of words which are already partially known, how this learning may be linked with how often a word occurs in the texts, and to what extent the incidental learning demonstrated in EFL environments also occurs when the target language is not English (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006).

Methodology:

The readers:

Because the researcher was interested in knowing the effect of extensive graded reading on improving students' performance in writing, the participants were encouraged to read extensively. Simplified materials were

and is contrasted with intentional vocabulary learning, defined as “any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory,” (Hulstijn, 2001). In this respect, wide reading promotes incidental vocabulary learning (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987). Through extensive reading, Swanborn and De Glopper (2002), approved that “new word meanings are derived and learned even though the readers’ purpose for reading is not the learning of the new vocabulary.”

Incidental vocabulary acquisition research has verified the assumption that exposure to reading texts can contribute to the second language, and also the first language, vocabulary growth, as all studies have found evidence of incidental vocabulary learning (Pigada, M., Schmitt, N., 2006). Previous studies into incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading have shown relatively small amounts of learning. Horst (1998), surveyed the literature and concluded that the learning rate overall was about one word in twelve. Horst and Meara (1999), stated that one likely reason why previous studies fail to show much vocabulary growth from reading is that the measurements utilized required knowing the meaning of the word in order for it to be counted as being positively affected. Schmitt (2000), stated that more sophisticated testing is necessary in order to fully appreciate the benefits reading has for vocabulary reading. Knowing a word involves much more than just understanding its meaning. Text frequency has effects on the acquisition of word meaning, spelling and grammatical behavior.

A recent study, by Pigada and Schmitt (2006), tried to overcome limitations of word knowledge acquisition by having sought out both different facets of lexical knowledge (spelling, meaning and grammatical function) and partial degrees of that knowledge. The study was applied to a participant whose mother tongue is Greek and learning French as a foreign language. The study used 70 nouns and 63 verbs in investigating incidental vocabulary acquisition by using four graded readers in French. Because the texts were short, Pigada and Schmitt included only “the most common parts of speech found in natural text”, in the hope that further research would include other word classes (Webb, 2005). They organized the two word classes into six different frequency groups according to the number of encounters and tested three types of word knowledge (meaning, spelling, and grammatical function). They found that extensive graded reading appeared to lead to the enhancement of knowledge about the spelling, meaning and grammatical behaviour of words in the text, but it is not a uniform across all word knowledge types. Spelling was enhanced

intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading (Yamashita, 2008) .

Studies of implicit vocabulary acquisition have shown that learning vocabulary through extensive graded reading is not only possible, but is almost certainly the means by which native speakers acquire the majority of their vocabulary (Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978) . For such learning to occur, however, the reader must understand approximately 95% of the running words in the text (Laufer, 1989; Parry, 1991) in order to infer meaning.

While such high levels of comprehension pose no problems for native speakers, they are clearly out of reach for most foreign- language learners who are using authentic materials. Linguistically, graded versions of authentic texts have, therefore, been created to artificially raise the level of reading comprehension for students of English. As a result, students can make vocabulary gains with each reader they complete (Davis, 1995) . Vocabulary acquisition occurs chiefly through spoken input in child first language learning. Lexical acquisition has usually been assumed to develop naturally, as children grow older, with no explicit instruction needed. However, the situation differs in a second/ foreign environment. Here, vocabulary acquisition often occurs more through written text (Grabe, 2004). Of course, explicit instruction in word meanings can facilitate vocabulary acquisition by drawing attention to form and meaning mappings. However, incidental vocabulary learning has some advantages over direct instruction. For one, reading and word learning occur at the same time. For another, a richer sense of a word is learned through contextualized input (kweon & kim, 2008).

Exposing learners to large quantities of material and pleasurable reading within learners' linguistic competence can be motivating. It provides learners with the opportunity to meet words in their context of use, increases sight vocabulary, and theoretically results in substantial vocabulary learning, which seems difficult to achieve with explicit teaching during the relatively short period of time that foreign language learners spend in the classroom, (Thornbury, 2002).

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition Through Extended Reading:

Incidental acquisition or learning of vocabulary is generally defined as the by- product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning”

Renandya, Rajan and Jacobs (1999), emphasized that the best way to improve one's use of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it. Reading activity aims at increasing students' skill in the language and their command of vocabulary. It enriches their knowledge of the target language and culture through introducing them to more mature or more timely material than that found in school textbooks.

Moreover, reading forms an additional tool of communication to listening and speaking. People who have no opportunity to talk with native speakers of the target language can have an access through reading to their literature, journals, and consequently, understand much about their civilization. In this sense, reading is considered the window through which they can see other cultures and gain more general or specific knowledge.

Zahar and others (2001), investigated word frequency as a factor conducive to incidental vocabulary acquisition. He suggested that the number of encounters needed to learn a word might depend on the proficiency level of the learners, because more advanced learners who know more words seem to be able to acquire new words in fewer encounters.

There are many reasons why it is prolific to develop vocabulary through extensive graded reading, one of which is because it is considered a "pedagogically efficient approach", (Huckin and Coady, 1999) ; another one is that activities such as 'vocabulary acquisition and reading' occur at the same time. However, it is argued that reading for meaning does not automatically lead to the acquisition of vocabulary (Huckin and Coady, 1999) .

Extensive Graded Reading and Vocabulary Acquisition:

The idea behind extensive graded reading is that a lot of reading of interesting material that is slightly below, at, or nearby above the full comprehension level of the reader improves language skills (Gee, 1999). Wide reading promotes incidental vocabulary learning, (Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1987). During reading, new word meanings are derived and learned even though the readers' purpose for reading is not the learning of new vocabulary.

Extensive reading is a form of reading instruction. It means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is

Introduction:

Krashen (1993) indicated that written language is simply too complex to master solely by direct instruction. The huge amount of input that can be gained by reading are necessary for L1 and L2 learners to acquire high levels of literacy. Therefore, students learning English as a foreign language need to read.

Nation and Wang (1999), investigated the potential contribution of graded readers to vocabulary learning by examining word frequency. They concluded that graded readers can be an important source of vocabulary learning for second language learners if used appropriately.

Many studies have shown that second language learners can acquire vocabulary through graded reading. In addition to quantitative gains, graded reading offers qualitative gains with respect to newly learned lexis. To begin with, readers provide a textual environment from which students can infer context- based meanings which are generally not found in dictionaries, such as connotations, collocations, or referential meanings, (Critchley, 1998). Moreover, every time a word is repeated in the text, it is in a slightly different context. This helps the learner develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of word meaning, and fosters vocabulary acquisition (R. Ellis, 1995). Some studies argue that the use of reading may be the only practical option for out of class language development for some learners, especially in EFL contexts.

Extensive Graded Reading:

Extensive graded reading is defined as a reading activity that exposes learners to “large quantities of material within their linguistic competence”, (Grabe and Stoller, 2002) . It is what students don't have in their textbook, and is meant for enjoyment and for general information. Students are offered the choice of readings and are able to select topics which interest them. Although extensive graded reading is a free activity that should take place outside the classroom, the students may be asked to give a summary of what they are reading, and they can present their work in the class, (The Open Education Program, 1996 .

Abstract:

Vocabulary knowledge has long been considered critical to students' success in learning English in Arab countries. When students' increase their reserves of word meaning, they also broaden their thinking and become aware of new semantic and conceptual relations. Their broadened awareness, in turn, increases reading comprehension and writing abilities.

Second language reading and writing have traditionally been conceptualized both in research and teaching as individual skills that could be analyzed and taught as sets of independent sub- skills and strategies. Naturalistic studies of second/foreign language acquisition and use, however, show that reading and writing can't be separated from each other, and from other activities in which they are situated.

From this point of view, this study tried to measure the effect of extensive graded reading on improving students' performance in writing in governmental schools in Nablus district. The collected data indicated that extensive graded reading helped the students acquire the language easier and developed their writing abilities.

ملخص:

تعد معرفة مفردات كلمات اللغة أمراً حرجاً عند تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلفة أجنبية. فعندما يزداد مخزون معاني الكلمات لدى المتعلمين، فإنهم يوسعون قدرتهم على التفكير ويصبحون مدركين للعلاقات بين دلالات المعاني والمفاهيم الجديدة. إن إدراكهم الموسع يزيد بدوره من قدرة المتعلمين على استيعاب ما يقرؤون، ويزيد من قدرتهم على الكتابة باللغة الأجنبية.

لقد عدت مهارات القراءة والكتابة للغة الأجنبية في البحث العلمي والتدريس سابقاً مهارتين منفصلتين يمكن تحليلهما وتدريبهما كمجموعتين من المهارات الثانوية والاستراتيجيات المستقلة. ولكن أشارت الدراسات المتعلقة بالأسلوب الطبيعي لاكتساب اللغة واستعمالها إلى أن مهارتي القراءة والكتابة لا يمكن فصل بعضهما عن بعض، أو عن نشاطات أخرى مرتبطة بهما.

ومن وجهة النظر هذه، هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى قياس أثر القراءات الخارجية المتدرجة في تحسين أداء الطلبة في الكتابة في المدارس الحكومية في منطقة نابلس. وأشارت النتائج إلى أن القراءة الخارجية المتدرجة ساعدت الطلبة في اقتباس اللغة بطريقة أسهل وطورت من قدراتهم على الكتابة.

Graded Reading and its Effect on Enhancing Students' Vocabulary and Improving Performance in Writing

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