Impact of Related Activities on Reading Comprehension of EFL Students

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Abstract

This experimental study reported in this article is casual research since it aims to improve reading comprehension of EFL students by means of applying pre-related reading activities. The study is quantitative. It used two instruments: (1) Reading Engagement Scale developed by Whitaker (2003) to determine the efficacy of pre-related reading activities and (2) pretest/posttest to measure comprehension level after implementing related reading activities. The subjects, Saudi EFL learners, were students in an English college in Buraidah city. The research used two groups: experimental and control groups. The subjects in the control group (27 students) were receiving a regular reading instruction, whereas those in the experimental group (24 students) did some pre-related reading activities at home and before the class. Multiple statistical tests were used to find out reliability, regression, and pearson correlation. The result of the study showed that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. The students in the experimental groups far outperformed those in the control group. The study suggests that EFL learners' comprehension level increases with reading engagement that is related to the class reading. Recommendation of this finding for EFL reading environment is discussed.

Keywords: activities, comprehension, EFL, engagement, ESL, pre-reading, problems, reading, strategies, task

1. Introduction

Comprehension is considered as the essence of reading as it accounts for the process that supports effective extraction of meaning from a written passage. Modern literacy standards require that the students can self-modify, self-manage and self-monitor as a means to become strategic readers who can select information from the text, develop rational and incorporate critical reflection on the text while reading. In this instance, the students are required to be provided with an extensive range of reading and writing activities that include effective reading comprehension techniques (Alfallaj, 2011).

The practice of effective reading comprehension techniques is essential to enhance the extent of comprehension among students and thus, language instructors are required to implement adequate reading strategies to improve comprehension and facilitate critical thinking in understanding complex texts. Reading comprehension is comprised of complicated factors; mainly comprising of cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural variables, due to which the development of an effective reading strategy is difficult for language instructors (Alenizi, 2019; Ismail & Tawalbeh, 2015).

The effectiveness of reading strategies is accepted widely, but the language instructors should also understand the significance of engagement in reading. Because engagement is not a mere consequence of reading strategies, as it is a combination of strategies that incorporate mental dispositions known as 'Habits of Mind' (HoM). The Habits of Mind include factors like managing impulsivity, empathic listening, rational and flexible thinking, and persistence. These factors are considered significant in the development of students with effective problem solving skills by means of enabling their ability to ask the right question, reflect on available information and think constructively (Abdelhalim, 2017).

Reading comprehension integrated with HoM promotes interaction between students and reading material, due to which reading objectives in language courses are rejuvenated to develop HoM skills in reading practices. Furthermore, language instructors accentuate collaborative reading practices to provide the students with an

effective means to engage in their social environment while developing their comprehension skills. The adequate social environment that can improve reading comprehension is comprised of literature circles, group discussions, reading apprenticeship, book clubs and author analyses. These activities result in stimulating an interpretive discussion among the students and utilize critical reflection while reading and engaging with texts (Abdelhalim, 2017).

Similarly, engaging readers in shared inquiry on account of a discussion-based reading model results in effective stimulation of cognition among students as they engage in reflecting and thinking about questions in a complex text. It has been implied that reading engagement is an antecedent of developing attentiveness among the students which eventually results in high performance of students in reading comprehension. The context of engagement resides in keeping the readers cognitively and behaviorally active and thus, it is essential balance of interest, self-regulation, motivation, reading attitude and involvement with text should also be included in measuring readers' engagement (Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019).

The study conducted by Jingblad and Johansson (2017) implies that lack of motivation prevails in students, due to which students are required to be intrinsically motivated as a means to develop autonomous and engaging reading habits. It can help in improving reading comprehension in EFL learners while keeping them intrinsically engaged in reading activities that improves their extent of comprehension. Similarly, Protacio (2017) has suggested that reading engagement accounts for students' motivation to read, participate in social activities that promote reading, use learning strategies while reading and developing meaning from texts.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The education system in the Saudi Arabia has been rejuvenated on account of its affordability and global integration by means of making education free for its citizens and incorporating EFL in curriculum (Alenizi, 2019). The current study is considered significant in providing implications regarding the effective utilization of implementing reading techniques and strategies in a classroom setting to improve the extent of reading comprehension in students. Furthermore, the data indicating the extent of comprehension level can help in comparing the EFL performance of learners, whereas it can also provide an action plan for educational institutions to enhance the design of reading courses as a means to keep the students highly engaged. Similarly, this study will is also considered highly significant in supporting the EFL students in enhancing their reading proficiency as a means to secure improved prospects in their professional and academic outcomes.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Globalization has increased the significance to process information in international language, due to which reading to learn is considered as a major skill to develop future workforce that can study, work and live in a diverse environment. Historically, the focus of language acquisition programs resided in improving the speaking and listening skills of learners, which hindered the ability of learners to adopt a necessary study skill. It is essential that the learners can comprehend the text in an effective manner to succeed in their academic and professional objectives at the global level (Meniado, 2016).

However, learning a second language is a complex process and comprehension is the significant objective that associates with teaching the students to read effectively. Students face challenges in reading comprehension that associate with several factors like lack of motivation and engagement. It has been implied that mere reading activities in classroom before the start of any lesson are inadequate enough to keep the students highly engaged in text (Taj et al., 2017).

In Saudi Arabia, English is classified a compulsory second language and it is widely used in professional organizations, and reading activities are part of EFL classroom activities but lack of empirical studies hinders the ability to conclude the efficacy of reading techniques as a means to enhance the extent of reading comprehension in learners (Alfallaj, 2017). Therefore, the current study aims to identify the efficacy of reading techniques via reading engagement in improving the comprehension level of EFL students in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

- What is the effect of reading engagement on the comprehension level of EFL students?
- What is the relation between reading engagement and comprehension level of EFL students?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses addressed in this study are as follows:

H_{a1} Reading engagement positively impacts the comprehension level of EFL students in the experimental group in the Saudi Arabia.

H_{a2} Reading engagement and comprehension level has a positive association in the experimental group of EFL students in the Saudi Arabia.

H_{a3} There is a difference in pre-test comprehension level of students in experimental and control group.

H_{a4} There is a difference in post-test comprehension level of students in experimental and control group.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading and Comprehension

DeBruin-Parecki et al. (2015) states that reading enables students to become independent in comprehending complex text structures while improving their proficiency in academic and professional skills. Successful readers tend to have a higher extent of comprehension as they are able to create connection between different ideas, understand complex notions and reflect on the information simultaneously while reading. Hence, educators are required to implement educational strategies that promote critical thinking and pre-reading to develop comprehension skills in students (Javed et al., 2015).

Similarly, reading should be considered as a strategy by the educators and authors so that it can intrigue the readers attain related information from texts, improve their academic vocabulary while engaging in critical reflection to promote comprehension (DeBruin-Parecki et al., 2015). Glenberg (2017) implies that comprehension accounts as the ability to engage in adequate response to the information provided in text. Similarly, reading interventions in education setting enables the students to engage in the critical reflection and understanding text, and utilize rational in order to generate adequate responses in comprehension.

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

Self-determination theory (SDT) represents the prevalence of personality and human motivation that develops the tendency among individuals to grow in order to address their psychological needs based on intrinsic rewards. Similarly, this theory also incorporates the intrinsic motivation factors that are independent of external influence (Komiyama & McMorris, 2017). However, this theory also asserts that human nature is presumed to be curious regarding the environment, due to which individuals tend to engage in gaining knowledge and skills. Furthermore, habits of mind theory (HoM) accounts for specific behaviors that are regulated and used by individuals to respond to critical situations and find adequate resolutions. These behaviors; mainly comprising of, managing impulsivity, empathic listening, rational and flexible thinking, and persistence, represent the cognitive ability of students as a means to understand complex information and engage in effective comprehension (Abdelhalim, 2017). Therefore, motivational factors and habits of mind develop engagement in individuals to learn from their environment by means of using their skills while remaining motivated enough to remain persistent throughout the learning process.

2.3 ESL Reading and Comprehension

The study conducted by Jiang (2016) examined the association between oral reading and level of comprehension in ESL students with different backgrounds in first language. The findings suggested that difference first language backgrounds tend to have different factors that develop reading comprehension as each first language tends to be orthographically distant from English. Jiang (2016) provides implications regarding the ESL curriculum design and reading activities to improve the extent of reading comprehension among ESL learners. The prevalence of reading comprehension is actually the output of decoding and understanding, and such process becomes more complex for second language learners (Tobia & Bonifacci, 2015)). This study enlightens the significance of comprehension in second language acquisition and provides evidence regarding the efficacy of oral reading activities in improving the extent of reading comprehension in ESL students. The study conducted by Meyer and Ray (2017) indicate that ESL educators should group readings on the basis of problem solving, comparison, causation, collection and description in texts. Thus, the prevalence of variety in ESL reading material helps in teaching the students an effective means of comprehension while providing the ESL educators with feedback that is specific to the modeling and need of adaption in the text structure.

2.4 Reading Strategies

Moreover, Javed et al. (2015) conducted an exploratory study to develop Reading Comprehension Modules to support ESL coaches in implementing effective reading abilities of ESL learners as a means to enhance the level of comprehension. In this instance, the findings indicated that reading activities integrated with inferential and reorganization questions can help students in enhancing their level of reading comprehension as it associates with the prevalence of challenge and engagement in reading activity.

Swan (2015) determined the efficacy of reading strategies in improving comprehension, and provided evidence that active learners tend to have a lower level of performance in reading comprehension followed by pre- and-rereading activities based on keyword strategy in reading, whereas visual, sensitive and sequential learners performed in this reading strategy. In this instance, Swan (2015) suggested that keyword strategy should be integrated with reading strategy to enhance the extent of comprehension in students.

Similarly, Ness (2016) has enlightened the context of strategies that promote effective reading in students and their effect on enhancing their level of reading comprehension, and the findings suggest that teachers should adopt explicit teaching style in reading comprehension during reading activities. Rastegar et al. (2017) have implied that metacognitive reading strategies; mainly comprising of thinking about text and character, rereading, intuitive pause during reading, notes taking and underlining important information in text helps the students to engage in effective comprehension.

2.5 Pre-Related Reading Tasks, Comprehension and Engagement

Gorsuch et al. (2015) infers that reading provides input to educators regarding the extent of language acquisition and proficiency in ESL learners. However, the major challenge resides in intriguing learners to engage in reading activities as lack of reading fluency hinders their interest in taking proactive actions towards reading activities. In this instance, Gorsuch et al. (2015) provide significant evidence suggesting that repeated reading enables the learners to read the assigned text silently and aloud, which eventually improves work decoding and comprehension in EFL learners.

Ismail et al. (2015) proved that smart and apt reading strategies; that are mainly comprised of inferences, reorganization and literal comprehension are highly effective in improving comprehension in students. Moreover, these strategies are also found to increase the motivation level of learners to engage in reading activity. Hence, pre-reading activities in integration with smart and apt strategies can help low-achiever learners to practice and learn comprehension in an effective manner. Moreover, Mousavian and Siahpoosh (2018) enlightened the efficacy of pre-teaching vocabulary pre-questioning strategy to enhance reading comprehension; and proved that effective reading strategies are an effective means to support students in their academics students provided with effective reading strategies outperformed the students who were not provided with any pre reading strategy during comprehension activities.

3. Method

3.1 Type and Nature of Study

The current study is classified as an Applied Research because it is aimed to address the problem regarding hindered comprehension level of EFL learners in the Saudi Arabia, and this study accounts for Causal Research as it aims to improve the extent of reading comprehension of students by means of implementing related reading activities. Moreover, this is a quantitative study because empirical data and analyses will be conducted to address the research objectives. This is an experimental study as related reading activities to improve student engagement will be implemented in a group of students to determine their effect on their level of reading comprehension.

3.2 Sampling Design

This study intends to target EFL students, and the sample size is comprised of 51 second year EFL students in English Department at Qassim Private Colleges. The sample size is selected by means of non-probabilistic sampling design and the participants are selected by using convenience sampling method. The participants are represented two groups; experimental and control group; that are comprised of 24 male students and of 27 male students, respectively. The students are aged between 24 to 27 years. The students in both groups are registered in the same courses, and the total duration of their courses account for 18 hours including 3-hour reading course. The students in the reading course are assigned to two sessions irrespective of their GPA and demographics.

In both groups, pre-test for comprehension level is conducted, in which the teacher tests the comprehension skills of students. In this instance, each student is required to read a text, followed by 15 multiple choice questions. The purpose of this test is to record scores from the tests in order to determine a standard of comparison after

implementing related reading activities in the experimental group with respect to the control group. In experimental group, the EFL students are provided with related reading activities. The reading activities required the students pre-read passages at home that relate to the reading comprehension activities during classroom on the following day, and the reading engages the students to pre-read passages before the reading activity. It is ensured that the reading passages provided for home assignment provide introductory information to the students about the reading comprehension topic in order to develop their understanding in an effective manner. In contrast, the EFL students in the control group are not given any related pre-reading activities. Both groups take post-test for comprehension level, in which they are provided to read a text and answer 15 multiple choice questions. This test helps in understanding the extent to which comprehension level is improved in experimental group followed by the implementation of related pre-reading activity. The pre-related reading activities are:

1- assigning relative reading texts to the class reading

2- asking students to answer some questions prepared by the teacher

3- asking students to prepare questions about the class reading for class discussion

4- asking students to do a writing log about the reading class

5- assigning relative videos to watch

6- assigning some related words and asking students to do some exercises about them

3.3 Instrument

The instrument used to determine the efficacy of related pre-reading activities is Reading Engagement Scale developed by Whitaker (2003). This instrument is comprised of 40 items, and it is measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The Reading Engagement Scale is provided in Appendix. The comprehension level is determined by the individual score of students in reading comprehension. The comprehension level is tested in pre- and post-tests, in which the teacher provides a reading paragraph, followed by 15 multiple choice questions regarding the information provided in reading passage. It helps in understanding the extent to which the students have understood the reading material and the extent to which they can comprehend the text. In this study, only two tests are conducted, before the implementation of related pre-reading activities and after the implementation of related pre-reading activities in experimental and control groups.

3.4 Procedure of Data Collection

The primary data about reading engagement of students is collected by conducting test during classroom at the semester end to understand the extent to which the students have responded to the related pre-reading activities. The primary data about reading comprehension score is collected via conducting pre-test at the beginning and post-test is conducted at the end of the courses. These tests are conducted for all participants in both groups.

3.5 Statistical Technique

The data is analyzed by using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, regression analysis and pearson correlation. Descriptive statistics indicate the measure of mean values and standard deviation present in empirical data (Zikmund et al., 2010). In this study, descriptive statistics can indicate the extent to which average response of the students reside and the extent of deviation that takes place to understand moderation in their level of comprehension and reading engagement.

The reliability test for the data is conducted with Cronbach's Alpha, that helps in identifying the reliable data enough to provide consistent results in more than one attempts. In this instance, the higher value of alpha indicates a higher reliability of data suggesting that the study can be conducted to address the large populations. In the current study, Cronbach's Alpha helps in identifying the reliability of instrument, and consistency of results in a large population.

Pearson Correlation provides measure for determining the association between two variables by means of identifying the variance in given variables. In this study, Pearson Correlation is used to determine empirical association between Reading Comprehension and Reading Engagement. Regression analysis identifies the prevalence of linear relation between independent and dependent variables to predict the impact of independent variable on dependent variable (Zikmund et al., 2010). In this study, regression analysis helps in identifying the impact of. Reading Engagement on Reading Comprehension. Independent Sample T-test is conducted to identify difference in mean values in two groups (Zikmund et al., 2010). It helps in identifying the difference in Reading Comprehension of students before and after implementing the related reading activities.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

The findings from the descriptive statistics are as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Reading Comprehension (CG)	6.0169	.82861
Post-Test Reading Comprehension (EG)	5.9127	.81029
Post-Test Reading Comprehension (CG)	6.1149	.76113
Post-Test Reading Comprehension (EG)	10.521	.73822
Reading Engagement	4.6721	.47932

Pre-test Reading Comprehension in Control Group provides the moderation level with 6.01 value and standard deviation with value of 0.828 suggesting a low level of agreement in responses; whereas pre-test reading comprehension in Experimental Group accounts for 5.91 mean value and 0.81 standard deviation, indicating that the comprehension level of both groups is close to similar. On the contrary, post-test reading comprehension of control and experimental group has significant differences, as the control group accounts for 6.11 mean value and 0.761 standard deviation, whereas experimental group that has been provided with related pre-reading activities accounts for mean value of 10.52 in comprehension level with 0.738 standard deviation. Reading Engagement has the moderation level with 4.67 value and standard deviation of 4.793, indicating a moderate reading engagement in students with a higher level of agreeability in responses.

Table 2. Reliability Testing

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Reading Engagement	0.821	40

In the current study, "Reading Engagement" is comprised of 40 items with 0.789 and 0.821 as alpha value in pre- and post-test, respectively. Thus, this variable exceeds the threshold of 0.6 in their alpha value suggesting the acceptance of instrument used in this study.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

H_{a1} Reading engagement has a positive impact on the reading comprehension of EFL students in the experimental group in the Saudi Arabia.

This hypothesis tested by using Multiple Linear Regression to identify the impact of Reading Engagement on Reading Comprehension. The findings are provided in the further sections of this paper, indicating the prevalence of a significant impact of Reading Engagement on Reading Comprehension.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.775[a]	.600	.595	.48672	1.753

Model summary table is generated as a part of regression analysis to determine the extent to which the dependent variable; i.e. reading comprehension, can be predicted using the independent variable; i.e. reading engagement. In this study, the value of Adjusted R Square is 0.595, indicating that 59% variance can be explained to predict the variable of Reading Comprehension.

Table 4. ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	140.034	5	28.007	118.226	.000[a]
	Residual	93.335	394	.237		
	Total	233.369	399			

The null hypothesis tested in Table 4.4 states that model is not fit; and the p-value is found to be 0.000, indicating that proposed hypothesis is rejected and hence, the model is considered to be fit as Reading Engagement significantly predicts the Reading Comprehension.

Table 5. Coefficients

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.356	.158		2.254	.025		
	Reading Engagement	.217	.040	.236	5.468	.000	.547	1.829

The variable of Reading Engagement has p-value>0.05, due to which it is significant enough to participate in the construction of regression model. Moreover, VIF is found to be less than 10, whereas level of Tolerance has a higher value suggesting that regression assumptions are satisfied and hence, multicolinearity in the model does not prevail. Similarly, Beta values are used to develop the regression equation.

Job Performance = 0.356 + 0.217(Reading Engagement)

The constant value; i.e. 0.365 suggests the prevalence of other factors effecting the level of Reading Comprehension irrespective of the impact of independent variables. Furthermore, the regression equation suggests that 1 unit increase in Reading Engagement will increase Reading Comprehension with 0.217 units.

H_{a2} Reading engagement and reading comprehension are positively related among the EFL students in the experimental group.

This hypothesis is tested by conducting Pearson Correlation as a means to determine empirical association. The findings from Pearson Correlation are as follows:

Table 6. Correlation Analysis

		Reading Engagement	Reading Comprehension
Reading Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Reading Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.621[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

The findings show r-value of 0.621, indicating the prevalence of a positive moderate relation between Reading Engagement and level of Reading Comprehension. Moreover, p-value is below 0.01, which eventually suggests the prevalence of a significance relation between the Reading Engagement and Reading Comprehension. These findings conclude the acceptance of the proposed hypothesis suggesting prevalence of a positive and moderately strong relation between variables. Therefore, it is concluded that reading engagement among the EFL students takes place as a result of pre-reading activities, and improves the comprehension level of EFL students effectively.

H_{a3} There is a difference in pre-test comprehension level of students in experimental and control group.

This hypothesis is tested by using an independent t-test. The findings are provided and interpreted as follows:

Table 7. Group Statistics of Pre-Test Comprehension Level

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PretestCompr	Control	27	2.4815	.50918	.09799
	Experimental	24	2.5000	.51075	.10426

Pre-Test Reading Comprehension of control group is comprised of 27 participants, and the average score of comprehension is 2.4815, whereas experimental group has a higher comprehension score with mean value 2.5000.

Table 8. Independent Samples Test

		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
PretestCompr	Equal variances assumed	.032	.859	-.129	49	.898	-.01852	.14305	-.30599	.26896
	Equal variances not assumed			-.129	48.265	.898	-.01852	.14308	-.30616	.26912

It is observed that value from Levene's Test is p-value>0.05, which indicates that the difference in comprehension level of control and experimental group in pre-test setting is same. Furthermore, null hypothesis of Independent Sample T-Test suggesting the prevalence of a significant difference in mean values of both groups is also rejected with p-value>0.05, which eventually suggests that the comprehension level of control and experimental group in pre-test setting is same.

H_{a4} There is a difference in post-test comprehension level of students in experimental and control group.

The above mentioned hypothesis is tested by conducting an independent t-test. The findings are provided in the further sections.

Table 9. Group Statistics of Post-Test Comprehension Level

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PosttestCompr	Control	27	2.4815	.50918	.09799
	Experimental	24	4.7083	.46431	.09478

Post-Test Reading Comprehension of control group accounts for 27 participants, and the average score of comprehension is found to be 2.4815, whereas experimental group has a higher comprehension score with mean value 2.4815.

Table 10. Independent Samples Test

| | | 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
PosttestCompr	Equal variances assumed	5.307	.026	-16.245	49	.000	-2.22685	.13708	-2.50233	-1.95138
	Equal variances not assumed			-16.335	48.962	.000	-2.22685	.13633	-2.50081	-1.95289

The findings from Levene's Test suggest that p-value<0.05, indicating that the difference in comprehension level of control and experimental group is not same. Moreover, null hypothesis of Independent Sample T-Test indicates a significant difference in mean values of both groups. This hypothesis is accepted with p-value<0.05, and hence, it is concluded that the comprehension level of control and experimental group is not same.

4.4 Discussion

The comprehension level of students is increased by implementing the related pre–reading activities as the empirical association between student engagement and reading comprehension level due to the practice of related pre-reading activities is proved. Thus, these activities improve the level of engagement among the EFL students, which eventually increases their level of reading comprehension. These findings are consistent with the research by Abdelhalim (2017), where the students' level of comprehension is increased when they are assigned with pre-reading tasks that develop their level of engagement and promote critical reflection and understanding of text. The current study uses related pre-reading activities to enhance the comprehension level of students, and the study conducted by Jiang (2016) accounts for oral reading strategies and comprehension level of students, while providing evidence for the efficacy of reading strategies. Therefore, the findings presented in this study are found to be consistent with the results presented by Jiang (2016).

Jingblad and Johansson (2017) have implied that when students are demotivated then they lack engaging reading habits, and the current study shows that when reading engagement is high then the students perform well on reading comprehension. Thus, reading engagement via related pre-reading activities can be an effective means to improve the intrinsic motivation of students to practice reading as an autonomous activity, which eventually improves the level of comprehension. Moreover, the study conducted by Protacio (2017) implied that reading engagement represents the students' motivation to read and engage in reading activities to improve their understanding from texts and hence, the current study provides evidence regarding the efficacy of reading engagement and comprehension level.

As per self-determination theory (SDT), individuals tend to be motivated in order to address their psychological needs to achieve intrinsic rewards (Komiyama & McMorris, 2017). In this instance, the psychological need to learn in an individual can lead to intrinsic motivation for the achievement of intrinsic rewards; i.e. acknowledgement for improved knowledge, skills and abilities. The current study entails this notion by providing empirical evidence that reading engagement activities improves reading comprehension on account of increased motivation among the students to perform better. Similarly, habits of mind theory (HoM) is also integrated with the findings of the current study as related pre-reading activities are considered as an antecedent of promoting reflective thinking among the students to understand complex information and comprehend texts in an effective manner.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

English has become an international language and it is widely used in academic and professional contexts. The students need to attain comprehension skills in order to achieve better academic and professional prospects. The current study provides evidence regarding the efficacy of related pre-reading activities that improve the level of comprehension among EFL students in the Saudi Arabia. However, the sample size is limited as the sample size does not represent diverse demographics to indicate the effectiveness of the related pre-reading activities. Furthermore, the sample size represents students from one college and hence, the findings cannot account for the total population of EFL students.

Recommendations

It is essential that the course content for EFL students should be enhanced to include related pre-reading activities in the home assignments and warm-up activities in the classroom. It is essential that language instructors use adequate reading strategies to keep the learners highly motivated and engaged as a means to increase the extent of comprehension in reading. It is also required that EFL educators take proactive measures to keep their students intrinsically motived to participate in pre-reading activities as it can lead towards better engagement levels among the students. It is suggested that the significance to acquire a new language should be communicated with the students so that they can understand its association with better career and academic prospects and become intrinsically motivated based on their individual learning objectives. Furthermore, the future research should focus on addressing a broader sample size to attain consistent findings in order to represent the total population of EFL students in the Saudi Arabia.

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Appendix

Reading Engagement Survey (Whitaker, 2009)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Disagree
I have fun looking at books.					
It is hard to pay attention to what I'm reading.					
I think reading is hard.					
I feel happy with myself with what I read.					
I think I can be a good reader.					
I only read stories that look easy.					
I get worried when I do reading homework.					
I will get good grades in the next years.					
I worry about what people say about my reading.					
I work hard to become a better reader.					
When a book looks hard, I do not try to read it.					
I can read almost anything if I try hard.					
I only read if I have to.					
I do not like to go to the bookstore.					
I want to have the best reading grades of anyone in my class.					
I practice reading so that I get better at it.					
Understanding what I read is important to me.					
I get worried when I take reading tests.					
I think it is important to understand what I read.					
I get to choose what I read for fun.					
I feel scared when I have to read out loud in class.					
I work hard to understand what I read.					
I feel like I have some choice of what to read for assignments. I get nervous when I read something new.					
I get nervous when I read something new.					
I like to read about people.					
I sometimes pause when I am reading to make sure I understand what I have just read.					
I think reading is important.					
When I read I do not think about what's going on around me.					
I think it is important to be good at reading.					
I feel like I have a choice of what to read for fun.					

I plan how I am going to read something before
I read it.

I think reading is important.

I worry about what other students will say if I
mess up reading out loud.

It's important to me to be a good reader.

I try to get more answers right than other kids
in class about what we read.

I know what questions to ask for help with hard
reading.

I have trouble finding interesting things to read.

I like to learn new things about my hobbies
when I read.

I like to have choices of what I read.

I enjoy reading.