

The Effect of Using Authentic Materials on the Performance of Jordanian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

Mohammad Awwad Alshra'ah

Ministry of Education || Jordan

Abstract: This study aimed at investigating the effect of using authentic reading materials on the performance of Jordanian EFL learners' reading comprehension. The participants of the study were 53 9th grade Jordanian EFL students during the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021 from the Northeastern Badia Directorate of Education who were assigned randomly into two groups: an experimental group, which consisted of 26 students, and the control group, which consisted of 27 students. The control group was taught conventionally by using the instructions of the Teachers' Book while the experimental group was taught by using authentic materials. Both groups sat to a pre-test to assure that both groups have the same actual level in reading comprehension skills (scanning, skimming, summarizing, brainstorming and making decision) before executing the experiment. Data were collected within eight weeks. Students of both groups sat to a post-test to see if any change occurred, if it occurred, to what extent, and in what dimension. Descriptive statistics, T-test and One-way ANOVA were used to analyze data. The findings showed that using authentic reading materials significantly improved all reading comprehension skills in general and in scanning and skimming in particular.

Keywords: Authentic materials, non-authentic materials Reading Comprehension, Performance.

أثر استخدام المواد التعليمية الأصلية على الأداء الاستيعابي القرائي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في الأردن

محمد عواد الشرعه

وزارة التربية والتعليم || الأردن

المستخلص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أثر استخدام المواد التعليمية الأصلية باللغة الإنجليزية على الاستيعاب القرائي والاتجاهات لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في الأردن. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 53 طالبا وطالبة بالصف التاسع الأساسي في مديرية التربية والتعليم لمنطقة البادية الشمالية الشرقية خلال الفصل الثاني من العام الدراسي 2021/2020. تم اختيار عينة الدراسة عشوائيا حيث تكونت من 27 طالبا في المجموعة الضابطة، و26 طالبا في المجموعة التجريبية. قام الباحث بتدريس التجريبية باستخدام المواد التعليمية الأصلية، وقام أيضا بتدريس الضابطة باستخدام المنهج المقرر فقط اعتمادا على التعليمات المقترحة في دليل المعلم. تقدم جميع المشاركين لاختبار قبلي وذلك للتأكد من أن كلا المجموعتين لديهما نفس المستوى من القرائية الاستيعابية ومهاراتها قبل تطبيق التجربة. تم جمع البيانات في ثمانية أسابيع وبعدها خضع جميع الطلبة لاختبار بعدي من أجل معرفة حدوث أي تغيير، ولأي مدى حدث هذا التغيير وبأي اتجاه. وتم استخدام المعالجات الاحصائية الآتية: المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية واختبار تحليل التباين الأحادي. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن تدريس القراءة الاستيعابية باستخدام المواد التعليمية الأصلية أدى إلى تحسن أداء الطلبة بالقراءة الاستيعابية بكل مهاراتها بشكل عام، وبمهاري القراءة (لإيجاد تفاصيل ومعلومات محددة)، والقراءة السريعة (للوصول إلى الفكرة العامة) بشكل خاص.

Introduction.

The terms authentic and non-authentic materials were used to differentiate between the two types. One of the important issues in looking at the role of materials in ESP is that of authenticity. Authentic materials are of vital importance in language classrooms in general and in ESP classes in particular. Authentic material has to fulfill some features in order to achieve the teaching objectives. One can judge material authenticity by its relevance to the learners' needs, its applicability in real-life situations, its truthfulness and its updating (Widdowson, 1990, & Harmer, 2001).

Kilickaya (2004) stressed that authentic materials give learners the opportunity to interact with the real language and content rather than the form, through filling the gap between competency and performance of the language learners. He adds that students considerably feel that they are learning a target language as it is used in our daily life.

Berardo (2006) discussed the benefit from using authentic materials inside classroom is to expose students to real language that used in a real context. Also it promotes motivation and encouragement, and provides students with a sense of achievements through further reading. Moreover, authentic materials promote different skills by using real language rather than artificial language. Benavides (2010) reported that the significance of implying authentic materials in EFL setting and their role for English teachers to improve their student's ability to face real language situation. He concluded that authentic materials presents teaching materials in a different and effective way, supporting in this way class communication. Similarly, Shirai (2013) conducted a study to examine the extent to which authentic materials affect Japanese university students' classroom motivation, seeking an effective way to teach mixedlevel language classes at universities. He also tried to explore the relationship between enjoyableness and meaningfulness of teaching materials to seek the most effective way of using authentic materials, and discusses the effects of other possible factors such as activities and topics. A questionnaires consisting of eight motivation items as quantitative data and journal entries and learners' comments in semistructured interviews as qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The sample of the study were (117) students of national science university located in Tokyo, Japan. Shirari concluded that appropriate use of authentic materials, especially enjoyable ones, can be helpful for university teachers of relatively larger classes of freshmen with mixed proficiency levels to raise their L2 motivation

Ghanbari & Shamsaddini (2015) investigated the using of authentic materials in vocabulary teaching which can be an effective way for acquiring vocabulary knowledge by selecting the most suitable authentic texts, taking into consideration students' level, age, gender, interests, and needs. They showed that authentic materials can fill the gap between the unreal situations of classes and the real world situations, stressing that the activities which are designed for these materials and classes should be related

to real life. Moreover, they should contain some communicative tasks that can be attained by mixing authentic materials with communicative activities.

Aftab and Salahuddin (2015) conducted a study to tackle the varied perspectives towards authenticity and discussed the effect of utilizing authentic texts instead of the traditionally used passages on the Grades VI and VII students in an Asian ESL context, namely Pakistan. They stressed that the reading comprehension abilities of more proficient and average learners who were exposed to authentic texts improved significantly as compared to the abilities of those who only had exposure to the traditional textbook material.

Marzban and Davaji (2015) explored the effect of studying authentic texts in classrooms on reading comprehension and motivation of intermediate language learners. They concluded that there was a strong relationship between authentic texts and reading comprehension of intermediate learners. They stated that authentic reading can increase not only students' comprehension but also promote other aspects of language learning such as motivation.

Assiddiq (2019) investigated the use of authentic materials to develop the reading comprehension achievement of Indonesian EFL Students. The findings of his study showed that the use of authentic materials was effective than pedagogic materials to develop reading comprehension achievement of the first year students. The findings also revealed that authentic materials were effective to develop students' reading motivation.

Mohammed (2021) examined how teaching through authentic material to intermediate learners can be made more effective and primarily learners' views of the use of authentic material in language learning. The study revealed that the use of authentic material was effective in fusing the real world with the classroom and considerably enliven the ESL/EFL class and the entire learning experience. Thus, exposing the students to cultural features and references especially is bound to spawn a deeper understanding of and a sustained interest in the subject.

Namaziandost, Razmi, Tilwani, & Gilakjani (2022) investigated the effect of using authentic materials on English as a foreign language learners' reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading anxiety. They reported that authentic materials enhanced Iranian learners' reading motivation and their reading comprehension ability. In addition, the findings illustrated that the use of authentic texts significantly improved EFL learner's anxiety in the experimental group.

Statement of the problem:

EFL learners face difficulties in reading comprehension skill and its sub skills since the use of authentic materials is essentially rare in the Jordanian EFL contexts. However, teaching authentic both written and spoken texts that are rich in vocabulary might develop productive skills of the learners.

Accordingly, this paper investigates the effect of using authentic materials on Jordanian EFL students' reading comprehension and attitudes.

Significant of the study:

This paper is an attempt to investigate the effect of the use of authentic materials on Jordanian EFL Learners' reading comprehension to enable students to use English to communicate inside the classroom. This paper is also meant provide steak holders and curricula designers of ideas about how to include authentic materials in EFL textbooks.

Questions of the study:

- 1- Are there any statically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the reading comprehension due to the use of authentic materials?
- 2- Are there any statically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the reading comprehension sub-skills (scanning, skimming, summarizing, brainstorming and making decision) due to the use of authentic materials?

Definitions of Terms:

Authentic materials: materials reflect the real world language like TV commercials, films, news items, weather forecasts, radio talks, interviews, articles, train timetables, advertisements, brochures, and application forms.

Reading comprehension: constructing meaning and decoding the written words and then using background knowledge to construct an understanding of the writer's message.

Limitations of the study:

The relevant limitations of this study include the following: first, the sample size is small and only includes a random sample of 9th grade EFL students from the North/West Badia directorate in the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021. Second, the duration of the study is limited to a period of 8 weeks. It is also limited to authentic materials and their effect on students' reading comprehension.

Participants of the Study:

The participants are (53) Jordanian EFL 9th grade students from North/West Badia Directorate of Education who were randomly assigned into an experimental group (26) and a control group (27) during second semester of the academic year 2020/2021.

Instrumentation:

This study used two instruments: a pre-test, which was administered by the researcher before the experiment to decide the actual level of both groups in reading before starting the experiment. After two

months, post-test was administered to determine if authentic materials have any effect on students' reading comprehension.

Validity and Reliability:

A group of jury who are specialized in TEFL, CALL, linguistic and literature validated the pre/post-tests. Those experts were asked to review the instruments of the study. Remarks comments and recommendations of these experts were taken into account .They checked the test regarding the distribution of the scores, the content, form, grammar and time needed to answer the questions. To establish the reliability of the pre/post-tests, the test-retest technique was used. The reliability was 90% which is considered appropriate for the purpose of the study.

Design of the Study:

This study follows the quasi-experimental design in term of using pre/post-tests. The experimental was taught in term of using authentic materials for 8 weeks while the control group was taught conventionally through the instructions of the Teachers' Book.

Procedures.

The researcher used videos, pictures, songs, stories, articles and subjects related to English language community. They were taken from British and American magazines and YouTube. A pre-test was administrated for both groups to determine the actual level of the participants' reading comprehension. Participants were asked to listen to audios and watch authentic videos that contained short stories, conversations, dialogues or songs before answering the reading comprehension questions. The control group was taught conventionally through the instructional material suggested Action Pack 9 textbook whereas the experimental group was taught the same topics but by using authentic materials such as videos, pictures, songs and authentic subjects that were purposefully selected by the researcher to cover the same topics and subjects found in Action Pack 9 textbook. The authentic materials used for teaching the experimental group were collected from online British and American newspapers: Daily American, Educational magazines: Time and Time for Kids Sunset and authentic You Tube videos.

Statistical Analysis:

Descriptive statistics, T-Test, One-Way ANOVA were used to analyze participants' scores on the tests.

Equivalence of the experimental and control groups:

A reading comprehension test was administrated to both groups to determine the actual level of students before starting the experiment through the use of descriptive statistics as shown in Table 1.

Table (1) Means, Standard Deviation and T-Test of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pre-Test

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	"T"	DF	sig (2-tailed)
Experimental	26	56.42	10.527	1.007	51	.319
Control	27	53.44	10.987			

Table1 shows no statistical differences between the experimental group and the control group. This means that the two groups were equivalent, before starting the experiment.

Findings of the Study.

This section includes three parts: findings related to the first question, finding related to the second question and findings related to the tired question.

Findings related to the first question:

To answer the first question: "Are there any statically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the reading comprehension due to the use of authentic materials?" means, standard deviations for the experimental group and the control group scores were analyzed as shown in Table 2.

Table (2) Means, Standard Deviation and T-Test Results of Material of Instruction by Group (Experimental, Control)

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	"T"	DF	sig (2- tailed)
Experimental	26	75.77	10.234	7.088	51	.000
Control	27	57.74	8.207			

Table 2 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group reading comprehension due to the material of instruction in favor of the experimental group.

Findings Related to the Second Question:

To answer the second question: "Are there any statically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the reading comprehension sub-skills (scanning, skimming, summarizing, brainstorming and making decision) due to the use of authentic materials?" means, standard deviations were calculated as shown in table 3.

Table (3) Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental Group Students' Proficiency in Reading Comprehension Sub-Skills due to instructional material (Using Authentic Materials) in Pre and Post Test by Experimental Group.

Reading sub-skills		Mean	Std. Deviation
Summarization	Post-test	13.00	3.045
Scanning	Post-test	14.11	3.030
Skimming	Post-test	14.42	3.532
Brian storming	Post-test	13.25	2.278
Decision making	Post-test	11.81	2.580
Total	Post-test	66.58	12.916

One-way ANOVA was used to determine if there are any significant differences between the between the experimental group and the control group due to the use of authentic materials on the reading comprehension sub- skills as shown in Table 4.

Table (4) One-way ANOVA analysis of the experimental group students' mastery of reading comprehension sub- skills due to the use of authentic materials on the pre/post-tests

Group	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	352.231	4	88.058	16.813	.000
Within Groups	654.692	125	5.238		
Total	1006.923	129			

Table 4 shows that there are statistically significant differences in the performance of students of the experimental group for reading comprehension sub- skills due to the use of authentic materials.

Discussion.

The findings of the current study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on their reading comprehension performance. This improvement in students' reading comprehension may be due to using authentic materials. In other words, students in the experimental group might have cared more about topics, themes and language from real English culture which might helped them in their real life much more than the non-authentic reading materials. Using authentic materials in FL classes improved and supported teaching and learning process. The findings of the current study is consistent with Miller's (2005) and Thanajaro's (2000), who reported that the use of authentic materials might lead to aural language development. The results of the current study are also in line with Berardo's (2006) who also noted that the use of authentic material was quite useful in improving reading skills and motivates students for future reading. Furthermore, the findings of the current study also showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the reading sub- skills which include: scanning, skimming, summarizing, brainstorming and making decision. These findings agree with

those of Taylor's (1986) who has stated that summarizing "requires certain written language skills which are apart from and may be more complex than mere reading skills" (p. 206). Moreover, research reported that instructing students in summarization not only enhances their writing ability (Taylor & Beach 1984), but can also facilitate learning (Brown et al. 1981). The results of the current study are also in line with Richard's (2004) who stressed the connection between critical thinking and reading comprehension. Facione (2011) also found that there is a significant correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension. Finally, the findings of the current study showed that the use of authentic materials motivated students' learning and helped them build a positive attitude toward learning the language. It is highly recommended that authentic materials can be adapted and applied to most classes in teaching comprehension skills.

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