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PHD PROGRAM IN EDUCATION SCIENCES**

**The Role of Extensive Reading in Supporting English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
Students to Master English Language Vocabulary and Grammar**

(A Case Study of Ishik University Preparatory School in Iraq)

Bünyamin Çelik

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**Scientific
Supervisor:**

Nikoloz Parjanadze

Associate Professor, Doctor at International Black Sea University

Experts (full name & academic title):

1. Professor, Doctor Natela Doghonadze

2. Associate Professor, Doctor Lia Todua

Opponents (full name & academic title):

1. Associate Professor, Doctor Maia Alavidze

2. Associate Professor, Doctor Tamar Mikeladze

3. Professor, Doctor Deena Boraie

Introduction

General description of dissertation

Extensive reading has been considered as a necessary component of language learning (Richards & Schmidt 2002; Day & Bamford, 1998; Horst, 2005). It enables language learners to become fluent, independent and confident readers (Day & Bamford, 1998). When learners gain fluency in reading, their comprehension of language materials develop. Extensive reading enhances grammar and vocabulary knowledge of learners (Day & Swan, 1998) and helps them with their development of writing style (Tsang, 1996). Extensive reading is useful for language learners in that it allows learners automatic word recognition, language structure development, vocabulary enhancement and world knowledge acquisition (Grabe, 1991). These components are key factors in language proficiency development.

Extensive reading can provide learners the language input they need for further development because through extensive reading learners are constantly exposed to the target language. Those learners, who are always engaged in the target language, stand a better chance of learning. Moreover, extensive reading develops overall competence of learners. When learners gain overall competence, their ability to use the language skills improve as well.

Language learning is a hard task. Foreign language learners cannot easily develop their language skills unless they are constantly involved in the learning process. Yet, extensive reading enables learners to be engaged in the learning process and is a major factor in language learning which can help learners develop their language proficiency. Extensive reading is a stress free activity and can increase motivation of learners to master the target language. When learners read more and begin to understand, their attitude towards foreign language learning will increase as well. They will have self-confidence to accomplish more.

Repeated exposure to new words and structures help learners promote linguistic knowledge. Extensive reading plays the major role for vocabulary growth. Learners have an opportunity to learn outside the classroom by extensive reading. Language skills develop better through extensive reading (Renandya, Rajan & Jacobs, 1999). Reading, listening, writing and speaking skills are improved when learners do extensive reading. Thus, these learners stand a better chance of achieving high scores in language tests (Gradman & Hanania, 1987).

Extensive reading provides a learning environment for learners where they can learn the target language in a natural way. Through reading large amounts of materials learners see the

relationship between words and sentences and understand how words work in sentences. Realizing this relationship will enable learners to use the language effectively. Extensive reading develops reading skills of learners. Reading can provide learners comprehensible input they need for language proficiency. Moreover, world knowledge of learners increase via reading, and imagination of learners develops as well. Extensive reading enhances personal growth of learners. Reading materials provide learners with information about culture. When learners have sufficient information about culture, their understanding of other people develops and learners become mature.

Graded readers are useful language materials to practice in the target language. They are designed to improve learners' language skills (Wodinsky & Nation, 1988). Graded readers aim to help learners with their language proficiency development in an enjoyable way. Vocabulary and grammar structures are repeated in graded readers to enable learners to become familiar with them. Graded readers are complementary to course books and without them learning a foreign language would be challenging. Graded readers motivate learners and raise enthusiasm for language learning. This advantage allows learners to have a stress-free learning environment in which they can develop their language skills in an enjoyable way.

While doing extensive reading, learners focus on meaning. Meaning-focused instruction provides the meaningful use of the second language in context. Through meaning-focused reading learners are expected to develop their linguistic knowledge so that they could stand a better chance of improving their communication skills. However, it was found that focus on meaning is not sufficient to develop linguistic knowledge of learners. Focus on form has been considered more useful and advocates of focus on form instruction stress that to develop communication skills of learners linguistic knowledge should be emphasized. In focused-on-form instruction learners pay more attention to linguistic elements. This allows learners to have detailed study of language materials. When learners focus on form, they put emphasis on accuracy. Accuracy will encourage learners to use the language more effectively. However, it has been suggested that it is the best way of instruction when form and meaning are integrated (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Learners through integration of form and meaning in language learning develop their fluency and accuracy simultaneously.

Objectives of the Study

This study compares extensive reading and intensive reading. The aim of this study is to examine the benefits of extensive reading in the foreign language teaching process; moreover, this study

explores the differences between focus on meaning and focus on form and investigates which of them is more useful. The objectives of the study are:

- a) To identify the role of extensive reading in vocabulary development;
- b) To offer an efficient model of extensive reading;
- c) To discuss the role of graded readers in language learning;
- d) To explore the role of teachers in using graded readers;
- e) To examine the differences between focus-on-form and focus-on-meaning instruction;
- f) To develop a useful methodology of reading, which could be used in the process of English language teaching.

Statement of the Problem

There are different reading strategies that are applied during English language learning, but there is no well-defined reading strategy for English language learning. While some of these strategies put more emphasis on meaning, others concentrate on the form. Extensive reading refers to reading abundant materials outside the classroom. Readers focus on meaning in extensive reading; therefore, they do not have an ample opportunity to develop their language knowledge. However, intensive reading is conducted in the classroom under the lecturers' monitoring. Though readers do not read much, they have an opportunity to master linguistic competence, such as vocabulary and grammar.

Reading should receive central attention in foreign language learning. It provides learners language input. Through reading learners develop their vocabulary, grammar knowledge and understand how they function in sentences. This linguistic knowledge that learners gain through reading helps them with the development of other language skills. Another issue arises during reading process; focus on form and focus on meaning. While some readers focus on content comprehension, some readers focus on grammatical forms.

Comprehension in reading is significant, because reading cannot be sustained without understanding. Some learners give priority to structure, so they study the structure in the materials in a detailed way. These readers focus on form. However, some readers enjoy reading large amounts. They read to learn about cultures and world issues and through reading they enhance their language skills. There are quite many readers who integrate focus and meaning.

They are of the opinion that reading without learning structure is not sufficient to promote language knowledge. While reading, they focus on structures and comprehension simultaneously.

Teachers are not fully aware of the necessity of developing new strategies to teach reading so that other skills and language learning components are involved and accordingly, learners develop language competence in not only reading, but also master vocabulary and structures. In the same vein, learners themselves are not aware of their own learning styles, so teachers need to help them identify their style so that they develop approaches which could help them boost their learning.

Research Questions

The questions are based on the vast literature review which helped to look right into the core of the problem and the questions were shaped accordingly.

1. What effect does extensive reading have on achievement in English language learning?
2. What effect does intensive reading have on achievement in English language learning?
3. What is the role of graded readers in English language learning?
4. What effect does focused-on-meaning instruction have on achievement in English language learning?
5. What effect does focused-on-form instruction have on achievement in English language learning?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of my dissertation is:

Extensive reading makes a major contribution to language proficiency, particularly, through developing grammar and vocabulary knowledge, if done as follows:

- Extensive reading does not mean no activities or assessment, it means different (focused on the meaning, communicative) activities and assessment;
- Extensive meaning entails a high degree of student autonomy (selection of reading materials, making up activities and tests, carrying out peer and self-assessment).

Methods of research

To solve the above-discussed problems I used the following methods of research:

- Review and analysis of existing literature on the topic;
- Questionnaires;
- Experiment;
- Statistical analysis of obtained through experiment data.

The questionnaires and the experiment provided qualitative and quantitative data for analysis.

Significance of the Study

Reading has been considered as one of the most important skills in foreign language learning, because reading can provide students with linguistic knowledge which they need to promote language learning. Reading will result in a better comprehension of language materials. Reading enables learners to improve their vocabulary knowledge and grammar structure awareness that are considered as important factors in improving communication skills. Reading is an easy way of enhancing language skills. Those who read very often will develop better language skills. Reading will allow learners to see how words and sentences function in context and this will provide an opportunity for learners to develop accuracy and fluency. As a result learners will be able to use the language effectively. Extensive reading can help learners with improvement of their target language. Learners stand a better chance of developing their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Furthermore, they will have the chance to improve their confidence, which is considered as a crucial element in foreign language learning. Compared with intensive reading, extensive reading is done to obtain meaning. Extensive reading is mostly meaning focused, because learners endeavor to understand and develop their language knowledge. Intensive reading, on the other hand, is done under lecturer monitor and form is emphasized. Whether extensive reading or intensive reading is more useful is still an ongoing issue. But the integration of both extensive and intensive reading is highlighted. Learners, while reading, focus on meaning or form. Yet the integration of them will allow learners to develop fluency and accuracy simultaneously. The effectiveness of language teaching increases when extensive and intensive readings are combined because learners focus on accuracy and fluency concurrently.

Novelty

This study tries to link the concepts of extensive and intensive reading with form-focused and meaning-focused instruction. The dissertation finds all these types of reading useful, but underlines the necessity of more efficient approaches to extensive and meaning-focused reading.

The suggested approach is the application of extensive reading which does not ignore dealing with vocabulary and grammar, but deals with them in a communicative, meaning-focused way, is innovative, compared to traditional view on extensive reading as purely pleasure reading which does not involve any activities and assessment.

The topic was new for the region where the study was held (Iraq), where reading is still traditionally mostly intensive and form-focused.

Theoretical and Practical Value

Such issues as intensive and extensive reading, form and meaning-focused reading, role of graded readers, and role of teacher while applying extensive reading were analyzed. An original approach to teaching extensive reading which entails students' active involvement in the process of acquiring a language is suggested in the dissertation.

Extensive reading has been considered a significant way of learning a foreign language, not just as having a good time. This study revealed that both extensive reading and intensive reading have their own advantages, therefore a combination of both impacts instructors' strategies in the language classroom. The implementation of both reading strategies affects the enhancement of language education process in terms of practicality.

The study has a great practical value, as it offers a feasible model of language acquisition through extensive reading, which can be useful for students, teachers and researchers.

Organization of the Chapters

The dissertation involves an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references and abundant appendices.

In the first chapter the study defines the concept of extensive reading, and what extensive reading leads to in language learning. Extensive reading is compared with intensive reading. The first chapter also discusses the role of graded readers in language learning and gives suggestions how extensive reading could be implemented through graded readers outside the classroom.

The second chapter discusses the issues of focusing on meaning and focusing on a form while doing extensive reading. The terms 'focus on meaning' and 'focus on form' are defined and their contribution to language proficiency is investigated.

The third chapter analyzes the research held at Ishik University, Iraq. It presents the collected data through graphics and charts chapter. Major findings are presented.

Research held at Ishik University

For this study two groups were needed: control group and experimental group. These two groups were created randomly. Learners in both groups were selected from the same level course. The learners in both groups were students at preparatory school in Ishik University – 20 students in each group. It was ensured that the language level of the learners in both control and experimental groups were more or less the same (pre-intermediate). A survey was carried out to learn about reading habits of the learners. Yet the survey did not play any role in selecting the learners. The major goal of the survey was to stimulate the learners to read significantly. The students had to assess the given items in Likert scale format (except item 2) (1 – totally disagree → 5 totally agree). The results of the survey are shown in the table below:

Table 3.1. Opinions of learners in the groups about extensive reading

	Control group	Experimental group
Reading is useful	3.8	3.9
They read ... pages per month	5.5 p.	5.7 p.
Reading develops vocabulary knowledge	4.0	3.9
Reading improves grammar skills	3.4	3.5
Reading improves other language skills	3.6	3.7
Reading advances accuracy	3.3	3.4
Reading enhances fluency	3.5	3.6

It is easy to see that the results in both groups before the experiment are similar. They definitely value reading, especially its impact on vocabulary development, however, they do not read too much (on average 5.5-5.7 pages a week).

The experiment lasted for nine weeks. The pre-test was administered at the beginning. Progress tests were given in the fifth week; post-test was set at the end of the program. For pretest learners had a KET (Key English Test) examination, an elementary level exam, which tested basic written and communication skills of learners. The pretest involved three parts:

Reading and writing part tested whether learners can understand simple texts, and write simple sentences in the target language
Listening part tested whether learners can understand simple spoken directions
Speaking part tested whether learners can simply communicate in the target language

The pre-test was set to have an idea about language proficiency level of learners. After pretest examination, learners in the experimental group started an extensive reading program, while learners in the control group were taking an intensive reading program. All learners in both groups were pre-intermediate level learners of English. Learners in both groups dealt with meaning and form simultaneously, but the emphasis in the control group was on form and in the experimental group – on meaning. Table 3.2 compares the activities in the groups, while table 3.3 compares the skills on which the students of both groups focus.

Table 3.2. Reading activities for learners in both groups

Control group	Experimental group
Learners read one story from graded readers in a week	Learners read 2-4 graded readers in a week
Learners listened to the story in English on a recording or told by the teacher	Learners listened to each other's' stories in English
Learners did the grammar and vocabulary drills reading comprehension questions	Learners participated in discussions and presentations
Learners were provided detailed explanations of grammar structures and vocabulary of the graded readers	A deep study of linguistic forms was avoided; learners did it independently or with each other's help, when otherwise they could not understand the meaning
Learners retold and wrote a brief summary of graded readers	Learners retold and wrote a brief summary of graded readers, also wrote essays on the topics dealing with the reading matter

Table 3.3. Language skills learners focused on during the extensive reading program

Control group	Experimental group
Reading skills: detailed comprehension	Reading skills: overall comprehension
Listening skills: recordings and teacher	Listening skills: each other
Speaking skills (reproduction)	Speaking skills (reproduction and production)
Writing skills (reproduction)	Writing skills (reproduction and production)

Extensive reading program in the experimental group had three main purposes:

1. To enhance the reading skills (their speed, amount and comprehension level)
2. To enhance vocabulary knowledge of learners
3. To improve grammar knowledge of learners

The learners in the experimental group read and listened to the graded readers, and they did the reading comprehension questions as well. Furthermore, they retold the stories they read to the lecturer individually. The lecturer tested their comprehension through asking questions based on vocabulary and grammar questions. In the meantime, the learners had a great opportunity to practice in English that helped them with improvement of their communicative competence. The lecturer also organized discussions consisting of three or four learners from those who read the same graded reader to create a learning environment for learners where they can have practice. When learners discussed an issue about the story, they developed their communication skills and had an opportunity to use the new words or structures they learnt from the graded readers. This activity prevented learners from forgetting the new words they have learnt. It was seen that even later learners endeavored to use the new words they learnt previously in discussions. In addition to these activities, the learners in the experimental group were asked to write a summary of the graded reader they finished. Though writing is not a very interesting activity for learners, its effects on language development cannot be underestimated. In the study, after reading, listening and speaking activities learners had a great opportunity to reinforce lexical and grammatical structures they learnt in the graded readers.

The learners in the control group after reading the graded readers had detailed study of the materials in which grammar and vocabulary knowledge was provided and at the same time they did the reading comprehension questions that demanded vocabulary and structure knowledge. The lecturer asked them questions about the stories they read and he created some 20 minutes for each of the learner in the control group to test their comprehension. During comprehension questions mistakes of learners were instantly corrected and learners were asked to produce sentences of their own to ensure that they totally understood the material. In addition, questions, such as what the story is about, what the most interesting thing in the story is or whether the learner has liked the story or not allowed learners to have practice.

During the experiment the learners in both groups were given progress tests. These tests were held in the middle of the extensive reading program. Progress tests included grammar and vocabulary as well as reading comprehension tests. PET (Preliminary English Test)

examinations were administered as progress tests. FCI (First Certificate in English) was used as a final assessment.

Selection and Development of Material

Experimental group students were provided with approximately 500 English graded readers at different levels from series of Oxford, Cambridge and Penguin. The graded readers were at the university library. Learners returned finished books to the library and borrowed new ones. During the experiment principles by Day & Bamford (2002) were all utilized. Learners chose the graded readers they enjoyed reading, and they were free to discontinue reading unless they liked the story. They did not continue reading if it was difficult to understand either. Learners selected the books by genre, title, picture on the cover and mostly the number of pages in the book. But later learners recommended each other the books they liked. The lecturer kept records of what the learners read (e.g., the name of the book, genre, number of pages). To ensure that the story was understood, the lecturer raised some questions to learners in office hours.

Every week learners in the control group read one story selected for them by the lecturer. They were also required to do reading comprehension questions of them. Their answers were checked by the lecturer and incorrect answers were immediately corrected. The titles of graded readers read by a student were kept in a file.

Design of the Study

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data for analysis included:

- a) pre- while- and post-test results obtained via PET, KET and FCE tests;
- b) weekly grammar and vocabulary quiz results.

The quantitative results were obtained through student and teacher interviews.

Sample Selection

The target population of this study was students and lecturers. Ishik University Preparatory students and lecturers participated in this study. Two groups of learners were chosen randomly after getting the required permission from the university administration and each group involved 20 learners, so totally 40 students were selected for this research. The students in both groups were formed from existing four groups at pre-intermediate level. Selecting participants from the

same level was necessary to obtain comparable data. Learners were placed to the control and experimental group randomly, no criteria were followed in forming the groups.

The lecturers in the study participated on voluntary basis. All lecturers who were solicited in the study teach at Preparatory school at Ishik University. Pre-intermediate level students totally have 10 lecturers of English Language and a total of 5 lecturers were interviewed, and they all teach different language courses to learners in both groups. Furthermore, a total of 5 students from each group were interviewed. Students were chosen spontaneously based on their own willingness; so, they were voluntary participants.

Data Collection

The goal of the student semi-structured interview held with the experimental group students was to investigate the performance improvement of learners in terms of language learning. 10 students and 5 lecturers were interviewed when the experiment was finished. The interview provided the researcher with an idea about how what the students learnt in the extensive reading program contributed to their achievement in other courses. The interview process provided a wealth of data to utilize in analysis part.

A semi-structured interview was held with the lecturers who teach the students participating in the experiment. Some open-ended questions were prepared beforehand, but the lecturers were also allowed to provide their own comments without any restrictions. The interviewer was neutral, but encouraged to give answers. The goals of the interview was to find out whether the implementation of extensive reading program was useful for learners and whether the learners were capable of using the structures and words in the classes they learnt in the extensive reading program. Through the interview process the researcher had the opportunity to find out whether the learners in the experimental group did better than the other students in the same level at Preparatory School. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcribed versions were confirmed by the respondents.

Ethical Issues

The students were informed that there will be some innovative approaches tested in the classes and assured that it would on no condition negatively affect their academic performance, would cause no harm to them and the data would not be disclosed to the public. Some of the learners who participated in this study were unable to receive satisfactory scores. However, this study did not reveal the names of students, so could not do any harm to them.

In the same vein, in the interview process, the names of lecturers and learners were not revealed either.

Gender and ethnicity is another ethical issue in this study. Both female and male students participated in the study and there were also international students. This study would not make any comparisons concerning the scores of learners from different genders and nations.

Data Analysis

The experiment results in the control and experimental groups were measured via testing. The experiment lasted for nine weeks. Weekly averages of learners in both groups were calculated and they were transformed into tables, charts and figures. Their weekly achievement was calculated to see how much progress (if any) they made weekly. Weekly charts allowed observing the progress of the learners better. Every week vocabulary and grammar scores of learners were compared with the previous week scores to see their progress. Pre-test, while-test, and post-test (which involved all language skills) analysis were carried out as well. Averages of learners in these tests were calculated and their achievement was shown in a chart.

To see the grammar and vocabulary skills' growth during the whole experiment, figures 3.4-3.5 were built. The grammar quiz results in the control group grew from 69.8 to 81.6 (by 11.8 points or by 17%), while for the experimental group from 72.6 to 89.4 (by 16.8 or by 23%). The vocabulary quiz results in the control group grew from 72.4 to 84.4 (by 12 points or by 17%), while for the experimental group from 73.4 to 89.4 (by 16 points or by 22%). Both in absolute values and in percentage, the results for the experimental group are more impressive. Thus, the weekly quiz results reveal that both intensive and extensive reading contributed to the development of both grammar and vocabulary skills, however, the extensive reading yielded better results, with a statistically important difference between the two groups.

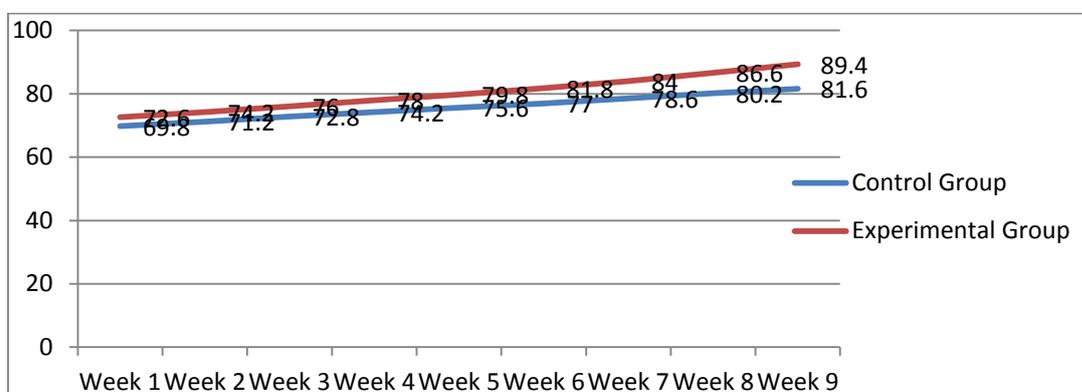


Figure 3.4. Grammar knowledge total growth of learners in both groups in nine weeks

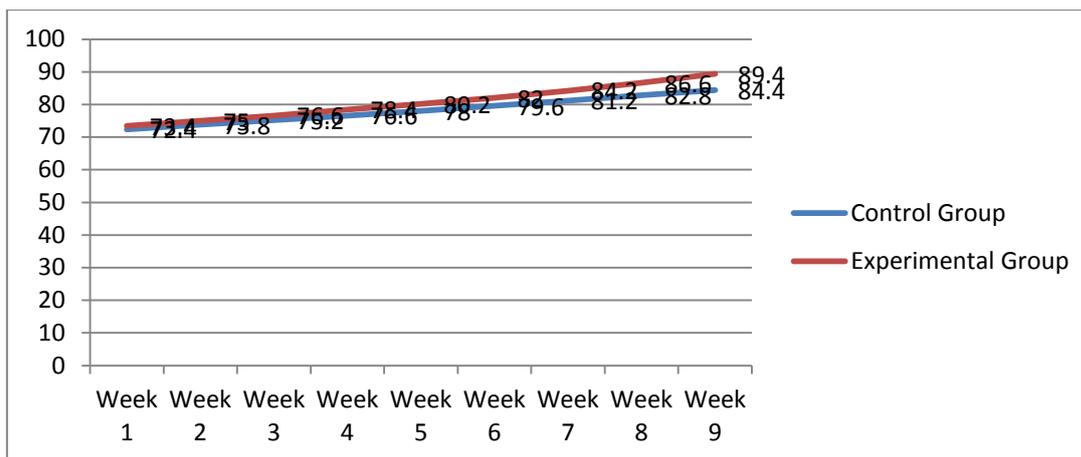


Figure 3.5. Vocabulary knowledge total growth of learners in both groups in nine weeks

As for the development of reading skills and language skills on the whole, in the control group the pre-test results for reading was 15.4, while-test result - 17.55, and the post-test it became 17.86, so grew by 2.46. On the other hand, the average total score in the pre-test was 69.75, in the while-test - 73.15 and in the post-test it became 79.95 – it grew by 10.2 points.

In the experimental group the pre-test results for reading was 14.85, while-test result - 17.55, and the post-test it became 17.86, so grew by 3.01, a little more than in the control group. On the other hand, the average total score in the pre-test was 67.3, in the while-test - 73.15 and in the post-test it became 88.3 – it grew by 21 points – considerably more than in the control group. It is possible to say that there is a tangible improvement of general language skill level, while the improvement in the reading skill is not so impressive.

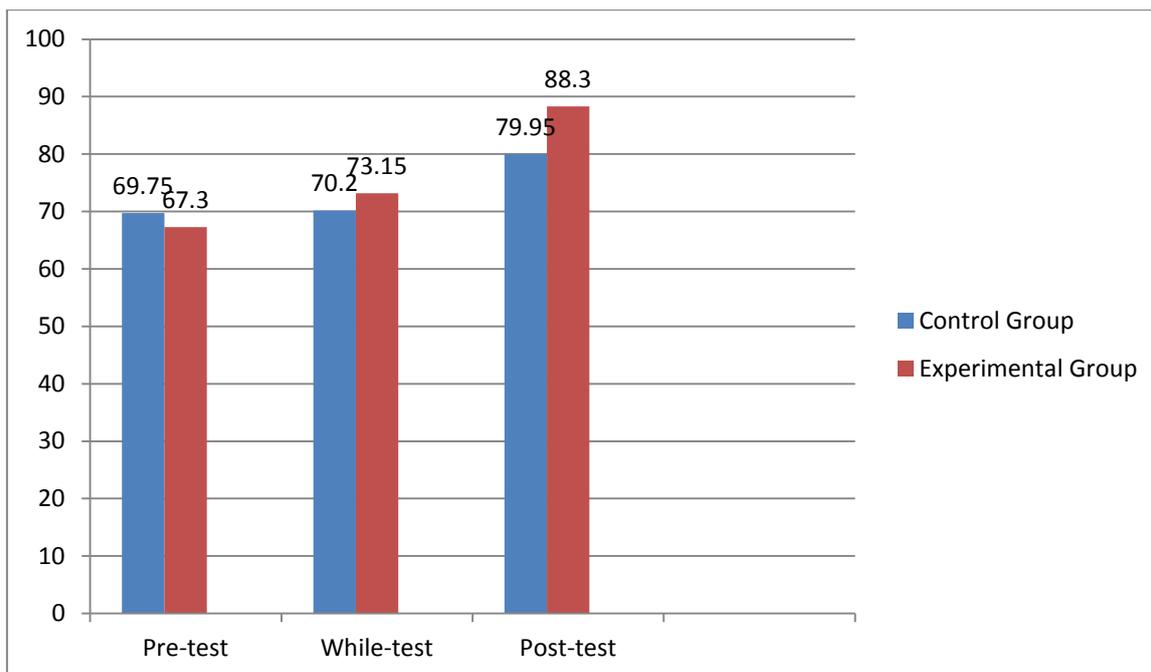


Figure 3. 3. Average scores of pre-, while and post-tests

Figure 3.26 presents visually the overall results of the two groups. When the pre-test, while-test and post-test scores of learners are examined, it is clearly seen that the overall achievement of learners in both groups increased in all exams, however, it increased more significantly in the experimental group.

Interview findings

In the sub-chapter researchers' opinions, results of student and lecturer qualitative (semi-structured) interview held in the frames of the experiment, and experiment results are summed up.

a) Extensive Reading helped learners develop their attitudes towards language learning

Extensive reading creates positive attitudes towards learning (Dupuy et al., 1996). As learners read large amounts, their motivation and enthusiasm towards learning English language increased. Grabe (1991) stresses that extensive reading promotes confidence and motivation of learners. Meaning construction is a difficult process in reading because learners encounter unfamiliar words and structures. Reading large amounts in the target language develops automaticity (Grabe, 1991). After meeting the same word or structure many times, learners easily recognize it. When learners understand the reading materials, they gain confidence.

Learners in the control group were stimulated more to language learning. Comprehension of reading materials increased their motivation to learn new language items.

Motivation is a key factor in language learning. Highly motivated learners produce greater language achievement. One of the primary roles of language teachers is to ensure that they sufficiently motivate their students. The extensive reading program motivated the learners through immersing them in interesting reading activities.

It was observed that learners gained self-confidence in extensive reading program and their classroom participation increased. Learners became eager to contribute to the class through expressing their opinion and experiences. Extensive reading program enabled readers to become enthusiastic in language learning. Learners' encouragement increased. Most of the learners before extensive reading program talked about the frustration of foreign language learning. But the experiences they had during extensive reading program influenced positively their ideas about language learning.

The use of graded readers offers a great variety of choices of interests for learners. These graded readers draw attention of learners and learners are stimulated to read more.

b) Extensive reading program enhanced learners' language proficiency

Extensive reading is useful in foreign language learning process in that it develops learners' language skills and linguistic knowledge. Learners through extensive reading will gain reading fluency and speed (Walker, 1997). In this study, it was found that learners' reading fluency increased.

Extensive reading helps learners develop their language skills (Elley, 1991) and language knowledge. It allows learners to grow their vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 1993), which is the key factor in comprehension. Learners read graded readers and had weekly tests. These test scores yielded that learners enhanced their vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, it was observed that learners could use the new words they learnt successfully in their classes. Laufer-Dvorkin (1981) stresses the impact of extensive reading on vocabulary enlargement and discourse generating abilities.

Extensive reading, in addition to vocabulary growth, allows learners to enhance their grammar knowledge (Mccarthy, 2000), develops listening and speaking skills (Cho & Krashen, 1994) and promotes writing skills (Lai, 1993). It was found in this study that learners developed their

linguistic knowledge and language skills. In the tests the experimental group students performed better than the control group students. Furthermore, they are good at language skills; they can generate sentences accurately.

Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) stress the impact of extensive reading on development of communicative competence. Learners develop through reading their language knowledge and simultaneously learn about how to construct sentences accurately. They see how sentences fit each other.

c) Students who participated the extensive reading program influenced the others

The efforts of those who read great amounts motivated the others. Their level of proficiency they have gained through reading influenced the others. Learners started to compete with each other in terms of language development. Their weekly examination scores and the performance they showed during classes influenced the other learners.

d) Their (students who participated in the program) overall achievement in language learning increased

Reading improves language proficiency of learners (Horst, 2005). Their language knowledge will get promoted (Day & Swan, 1998). Reading encouraged learners to use what they have previously learnt. While reading, learners practice the language they have learnt previously.

e) Reading develops test performance of learners

Reading significantly increases test performance of learners (Gradman & Hanania, 1987). Learners in the preparatory school at Ishik University have monthly examinations and the scores they get have an impact on their yearly average. It was seen that the learners who participated in the extensive reading program did well in reading comprehension questions, speaking, essay writing and listening comprehension.

Through reading learners are constantly engaged in learning process. During reading they explore how sentences are connected to each other, how words are used in the sentences, how words are meaningfully related to each other. Needless to say, learners try to endeavor get an overall meaning of the context which helps learners develop their reading comprehension. Comprehension is a crucial factor that helps learners do better in tests because without understanding the texts, learners fail to answer the questions.

f) The use of short stories is useful to develop language knowledge, cultural awareness and personal growth

The use of short stories has some benefits for language learners: authentic material, cultural awareness, language improvement and personal growth (Collie & Slater, 1991). Authentic materials provide real language in context for language learners.

Short stories provide a large number of examples to teach vocabulary and grammatical structures. Learners through reading large amounts improve their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. At the same time they see how words and structures function in sentences. Furthermore, their language skills develop (Povey, 1967).

Short stories provide learners cultural information (Collie & Slater, 1991). When learners read, their knowledge of the world increases. They learn how other people in other countries live. Reading short stories significantly develops personal growth and intellectual development of learners (Carter & Long, 1991).

g) Focus on form instruction provided learners better language development

Focused on form instruction draws attention of learners to linguistic accuracy, Long (1991, p. 45-46) argues that “focus on form overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements...”. Grammar rules are explained explicitly in isolated units and always immediate feedback is provided. For that reason learners have a chance to study the grammatical patterns and vocabulary in detail. Focused on form instruction is useful for learners to have high proficiency in English language.

Learners need linguistic knowledge for mastery of the language. Focuses on form instruction emphasizes lexical and structural knowledge. De Keyser (1998) argues that “grammar should first be taught explicitly to achieve maximum of understanding and then should be followed by some exercises to anchor it solidly in the students’ consciousness in declarative form so that it is easy to keep in mind during communicative exercises“(p.58).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reading in a foreign language, especially English, is very important nowadays for academic reasons. Continuous professional development is practically unimaginable without proficient reading.

Reading in foreign language teaching is done in two major formats: intensive and extensive. Both have advantages and disadvantages, so they have to be combined. However, this study shows that eventually extensive reading offers more advantages and thus has to be emphasized.

Extensive reading creates positive attitudes towards learning. As learners read large amounts of reading materials, their motivation and enthusiasm towards learning the English language increases. During extensive reading learners meet unfamiliar words and structures and through making predictions learners develop their lexical and grammatical knowledge. Extensive reading stimulates language learners towards language learning. This stimulation is useful for learners because it leads learners to better achievement in developing their proficiency.

Motivation is a key factor in language learning. Highly motivated learners produce greater language achievement. During extensive reading learners are immersed in reading activities, for that reason they are sufficiently motivated to learn better.

Extensive reading is useful in foreign language learning process, because it develops learners' language skills and linguistic knowledge. It allows learners to grow their vocabulary and grammar knowledge, which are key factors in comprehension.

Authentic materials introduce learners to a great number of words, structures and daily expressions. Extensive reading allows learners to see how they are used in real life settings.

To sum up, reading is an important skill in language learning because it presents all components learners need. Extensive reading provides lexical and grammatical knowledge for learners. When learners have sufficient amount of vocabulary and grammar knowledge they can use the language accurately. Besides, through extensive reading learners practice what they have learnt and their fluency develops.

It can be concluded that the continuity of teaching reading includes: intensive reading (form-focused teaching: focus on forms → focus on form) and extensive reading (focus on form → meaning-focused teaching). In this way the student can gradually form sufficient language skills in order to be able to concentrate attention on meaning. As the final goal is meaning

comprehension, the emphasis should be on meaning. Unless comprehension is achieved, reading has no value.

In the dissertation an effective model of extensive reading was developed:

- Pre-reading: scanning and skimming, dealing with background knowledge;
- While-reading: applying metacognitive strategies, providing general comprehension, probably, making some informal notes, communicating with peers – more knowledgeable others – to elicit the meaning;
- Post-reading: discussions, presentations, recommendations (teacher's implicit remedial work on errors);
- Assessment: peer-assessment of comprehension, student-made quizzes, self-assessment of progress in reading, vocabulary and grammar.

The model was tested in the experiment and the data of the experiment support its efficiency. The hypothesis of the study (based on the given case) dealing with the positive impact of extensive reading on the overall development of language skills, including vocabulary and grammar skills, and student motivation was supported. Thus, the model can be recommended for application in the process of extensive reading.

I recommend the lecturers to integrate both extensive and intensive reading programs into their language curriculum, with an emphasis on extensive reading. Extensive reading develops not only overall language knowledge of learners, but also particular language skills. When learners are involved in reading, their language proficiency develops. When extensive reading is included in language curriculum, learners will have a good practice of what they have learnt previously. Moreover, if the scope of this study is expanded, more reliable results can be gained. This study belongs to a specific university. However, the implementation of extensive reading program in many other universities may result in innovative findings.

Major Research Findings of the Dissertation Are Presented in the Following Publications:

Çelik, B. (2015). Comparing the Effectiveness of Form-Focused and Meaning-Focused Instructions in EFL Teaching. *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region* , 1 (1), 5-15.

Çelik, B. (2014). The role of extensive reading in fostering the development of grammar and vocabulary knowledge. *5th International Visible Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 37-42). Erbil, Iraq: Irfan Publishing.

Çelik, B. (2014). Developing Writing Skills through Reading. *5th International Visible Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 85-89). Erbil, Iraq: Irfan Publishing.