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تأثير القراءة المكثفة للنصوص الأصلية على إتقان اللغة: دراسة تجريبية في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المملكة العربية السعودية.

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Exploring the Effect of Intensive Authentic Reading Material on Saudi EFL Students ' English proficiency: pre-test,post-test approach.

A thesis submitted for the requirements of the degree of Masters (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages) Education

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الكلمات المفتاحيّة:
قراءة النصوص الأصلية، تدريس القراءة باللغة الانجليزية، الفهم القرائي، الكلمات المكتسبة. المملكة العربية السعودية.

KEY WORDS:
Authentic Reading Materials, Teaching Reading, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary

مستخلص البحث:

هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى التقييم العملي لمعرفة مدى فائدة استخدام نصوص القراءة الأصلية المستمدة من واقع الحياة اليومية باللغة الإنجليزية (خارج المنهج) في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للبالغين في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال قياس تأثير هذه المواد على الطالبات في فهم المقروء واكتساب الكلمات.

ولتحقيق ذلك تم تصميم برنامج تم فيه اختبار المشاركات اختبار قبلي واختبار نهائي -بالإضافة إلى استبيان للطالبات. شارك في هذه التجربة أربع طالبات من المستوى الأول (مبتدئ) تتراوح أعمارهم من ٢٠-٢٧سنة.

وقد أظهرت نتائج تحليل البيانات إلى أن استخدام هذه النصوص زاد في تحسين فهم المقروء لدى الطالبات، وزيادة المهارات اللغوية (اكتساب الكلمات)، كما وأظهرت النتائج إشادة المشاركين بفوائد هذه النصوص في تحسن لغتهم وتحفيزهم لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.

ABSTRACT:

This quantitative study has adopted an exploratory approach, aims to investigate the effectiveness use of authentic reading materials on Saudi adult EFL students, the variable of the study are reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, also, the study attempt to collect the students' point of views of authentic materials. The participants of the study are 4 EFL adult learners, beginner level (A1) CEFR, studying at Saudi English Language Institute. To collect data, the research has used two instruments; first, a pre and post -test one group method. The tests conducted to measure students' performance in both tests by comparing their scores. The second was an online survey questionnaire was sent at the end to elicit students' perspectives. After the analysis of the quantitative data by using the software program of SPSS, the study shows that Authentic reading material has a significant change on students' reading comprehension from pre-test to post-test showed the major difference in the mean (7.0) and (11.75) before and after the implementation of AM program. Similarly, with the vocabulary the mean was (2.50) and (4.25). Also, it was revealed that a large majority of the students preferred the use of authentic reading materials. They found that AM have facilitate their learning process by enabling them understand English text better than before and enhance their use of new vocabulary. Nevertheless, students liked using AM reading classes, which probably relate to their positive experience towards the AM program and students' feelings of enjoyment during the program.

Introduction:

The background and scope of the current study are presented in the next chapter, which explains why this particular topic was chosen, research's significance while outlining the study's aims, objectives, and questions.

Study Background:

The 25th of April 2016 marks a remarkable day in Saudi Arabia's history with the inception of the Saudi Vision 2030, led by Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman. This ambitious initiative aims to achieve various short and long-term goals, particularly in economy, business, and culture sectors. Education is a key focus of the Vision, with strategies outlined to enhance teaching quality across all levels.

A recent study by Albiladi (2022) investigates effective English Language Teaching (ELT) practices aligned with the Vision's objectives. Findings suggest that the educational goals of the Vision can be met by substituting authentic materials, leveraging technology, promoting cooperative learning, encouraging openness and tolerance, and providing job market-oriented instruction are vital. Encouraging the use of authentic materials in language classrooms is proposed to cultivate language proficiency aligned with real-world communication needs (Rogers & Medley, 1988). Reading authentic materials is emphasized, as it not only imparts information and pleasure but also plays a crucial role in language acquisition, enhancing language skills (Rivers, 2018, cited in Al-wossabi, 2014). Reading involves learners' interaction with encoded messages, drawing upon prior knowledge and linguistic proficiency (Goodman, 1973, cited in Sharma, 2022). Reading fosters critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, essential for 21st-century skills (Sharma, 2022). Exposure to real-world materials builds learners' confidence and proficiency, enabling them to engage effectively in workforce settings (Microsoft, 2023). This study investigates the impact of intensive authentic reading materials on adult Saudi EFL students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

Research Problem:

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, ‘reading’ is considered one of the four fundamental L2 learning skills (speaking, writing, and listening being the others). In the Saudi EFL context, it's crucial to prioritize reading real authentic material alongside other linguistic components such as grammar, vocabulary, and spelling (Alfallaj, 2017). Neglecting this skill impedes linguistic competence development since understanding texts is integral to learning. Language learners need authentic input for accuracy and fluency, yet many Saudi EFL classrooms lack suitable materials, treating reading ad hocly and repetitively (Al-Qahtani, 2016; Alfallaj, 2017: 12). The significance of reading authentic material in EFL classrooms has already been established in the field (Guo, 2012). My study assesses how reading authentic texts enhances SEFLLs' learning experiences, focusing on vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, which are crucial for improved learning outcomes.

Research Objectives:

The study aims to investigate the effect of intensive authentic reading material on the study aims to investigate the effect of intensive authentic reading material on

students' English proficiency levels. Brwon (2001) has indicated that intensive reading is carried out to comprehend a specific passage which is the main aim of intensive reading. Contrary, extensive reading is meant to understand the general concept of longer materials. e.g., reading a book (Miftah, 2013). This study intends to adopt an exploratory approach to the effect of authentic reading material on learners' proficiency levels; the variables are vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension skills. This will also help explore students' attitudes toward intensive authentic reading materials in the Saudi EFL context.

The Significance of the Research:

The findings will enhance students' English proficiency by improving their vocabulary and understanding of reading strategies. Additionally, it will indirectly boost their speaking skills through expanded vocabulary and expressions, while also honing their reading and critical thinking abilities. These results align with the 2030 vision's goal of enhancing education outputs in Saudi Arabia and improving English language instruction

Literature review:

Definitions of Authenticity:

Authenticity encompasses various meanings and definitions. Oxford Dictionary defines it as genuine and not false, exemplified by a policeman verifying the authenticity of a car license card. Cambridge describes it as the quality of being real or true, as seen in the unquestionable authenticity of a story. Longman Dictionary characterizes authenticity as something done or made traditionally or originally, such as authentic Chinese food, or possessions identical or as good as the original, like authentic dresses in a movie re-enacting Victorian fashion.

The Theoretical Notion of Authenticity:

Two factors drive changes in language teaching: external influences, such as global progress and economic shifts leading to increased English use across sectors, necessitating responsive English programs; and internal factors, including evolving ideas, study paradigms, and technological advancements impacting language education (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s reflects these influences, emphasizing authenticity in materials (Long, 1997). While the use of authentic materials is not new, it aligns with CLT's goal of real communication (Huda, 2017). Many teachers now favor a communicative approach, focusing on communicative competence through activities like dialogs and role plays (Richards, 2005), while authenticity serves as a bridge to real-world language (Pinner, 2016).

Saudi Arabia (2030) Vision and Authentic Material in ELT:

Unlike many other countries in the Middle East or North Africa, Saudi Arabia has never been under the control of a modern European country, thus avoiding the impacts of colonization and missionaries (Rahman, 2011; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Engaging in trade with various cultures and languages worldwide, Saudi Arabia mastered sailing in the first century BCE, establishing contacts with African and Indian cultures (Wynbrandt, 2010). However, this connection declined during the Age of Ignorance, lasting over 200 years (Al-Rasheed, 2010; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). The advent of Islam reignited connections,

with Mecca and Medina drawing visitors from across the globe, facilitating renewed global contacts (Wynbrandt, 2010; Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). In 1932, the Arabian Peninsula became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, marking the beginning of significant transformations across sectors (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Today, Saudi Arabia is a powerful and wealthy country globally (Al-Rasheed, 2010), undergoing steady transitions to meet modern demands while adhering to Islamic principles, particularly in education (The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2022).

Saudi Arabia's Education System:

Education in Saudi Arabia has seen significant reforms, particularly in English language acquisition, starting in the 1970s (Alqahtani, 2018). The emphasis on English learning arose in response to the country's rapid modernization driven by oil discovery, impacting various sectors including the economy and education (Al-Abed & Smadi, 1996, cited in Alotaibi, 2014). While improvements in teaching English by the Ministry of Education have been evident, they have not fully met expectations, possibly due to factors such as attitudes, motivation, and anxiety (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims to develop its people and enhance its international standing, focusing on diversifying the economy and leveraging its strategic location for global trade (Vision 2030, 2021). A recent study by Albiladi (2022) investigates strategies aligning with Vision 2030's educational objectives. Findings suggest substituting authentic materials for traditional curriculum, integrating technology, fostering cooperative learning, promoting openness and tolerance, and providing job market-oriented instruction. This study aims to contribute to Vision 2030's goals by improving English language education quality.

Authenticity and Authentic Materials:

Authenticity in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a concept widely discussed and debated. The term itself is ambiguous, prompting many authors to attempt defining it for clarity in their writings (Will, 2018). However, achieving and defining authenticity in EFL is complex and challenging (Pinner, 2016). Various authors offer different definitions, focusing on the purpose of materials:

- Adams (1995) defines authentic materials as those created by or for native language users, not specifically designed for second language learners.
- Nunan (1999) describes authentic materials as language data produced in genuine communication, not intended for language teaching purposes (Cited in Qura, 2001).
- Rogers & Medley (1988) examine authenticity in relation to language samples mirroring naturally occurring language forms within situational and cultural contexts (cited in Baghban, 2014).
- Tomlinson (1998) and Wallace (1992) define authentic texts as real-life texts not created for pedagogic purposes.
- Kilickaya (2004) defines authenticity as exposure to language used by native speakers in real-world situations.
- Kramsch (1998) relates authenticity to culture and the ability to behave or think like a target language group (Cited in Umirova, 2020).

- Additionally, authenticity extends beyond materials to describe tasks, interactions, and topics discussed in classrooms (Will, 2018). Discussions on authenticity date back to early materials development research and have evolved to encompass learner and curriculum authenticity (Maley & Tomlinson, 2017). Breen (1985) identifies four forms of authenticity: text authenticity, learners' authenticity, authenticity of tasks, and classroom authenticity (cited in Rashid Hamed Al Azri 2014). These definitions highlight the multifaceted nature of authenticity in EFL education.

The Role of Authentic Materials in EFL Classrooms:

Authenticity plays a pivotal role in second language acquisition, fostering connections between students, teachers, and real-world English usage, thereby enhancing engagement and interaction (Pinner, 2016). Wong, Kwok, and Choi (1995) assert that authentic materials enrich students' English learning experiences, exposing them to real-world language usage (page 318, cited in Maley& Tomlinson, 2017). Many educators advocate for the use of authentic materials in language classrooms, providing learners with a glimpse into how English is used in authentic contexts, such as newspapers and recipes (Kilickaya, 2004). Rogers and Medley (1988) categorize authentic materials into audio, video, and print formats, emphasizing the importance of selecting reading activities that suit the text type and balance pleasure with informative content.

Widdowson, 1979 criticizes conventional materials for lacking creativity and imagination, exemplifying how language is presented in repetitive and unrealistic contexts, which can lead to disengagement and boredom among students (cited in Adams, 1995). Harmer (2001) echoes this sentiment, highlighting how excitement over new textbooks wanes as familiarity breeds predictability. Adult literacy programs, according to Herod (2002), must cater to diverse learner needs and goals, emphasizing the importance of relating instructional content to learners' lives to increase motivation.

Arguments Support Authentic Materials in EFL Classroom:

In the 21st century, many modern pedagogical tools have been used to enhance students' understanding; one vital tool is authentic materials which play a significant rolein EFL and ESL education. Researchers and teachers who see reading as an interactive activity between the reader and the author commend using authentic texts as more eligible and interesting to learners (Bernhardt 1991, cited in Mera Rivas, 1999).

One of the challenges English language teachers face in their classrooms is keeping students motivated; teachers tend to stimulate students' attention by imaging situations to help them engage and understand; however, when they use authentic materials, they do not put that effort into grasping students' attention because they're studying meaningful materials (Oura, 2001). Jacobson et al. (2003) believe that the effect of classroom instructions that involve contextualized or authentic materials and the collaboration between teachers and students to discuss and elaborate classroom materials improved the students' literacy inside and outside the classroom. The advantages of using

authentic materials in EFL (English as a Second Language) are endless. Maley & Tomlinson, (2017) add that learners are more likely to realize the potential benefit of authentic texts if they find the texts interesting and relevant, and if they are exposed to a variety of text kinds and genres. Some authors outlined the main advantages of authenticity in language acquisition. (Clarke 1989; Peacock 1997 cited in (Kilickaya, 2004).

- Authentic materials help students to stay positively motivated.
- Authentic materials introduce real new cultural information to students.
- Authentic materials connect students to the real language.
- Authentic materials serve more the students' needs.
- Authentic materials allow creativity in the classroom, particularly in teaching approaches.

Nowadays, authentic materials are considered pedagogical tools that can be used to teach all language skills; teachers and linguistics believe it's a great and fast way to learn the target effectively (Umirova, 2020). According to Peacock (1997), 'Authentic materials are more motivating for students, even lower-level students, than artificial materials.' (Cited in Rao, 2019).

Selecting Authentic Materials:

Many experts have written about how to choose relevant materials. Enable your materials to support learners in language learning. Two types of materials can be used for reading education: real-world materials and pedagogical teaching materials (Tomlinson, 1998, cited in MANNONG, 2016). Ghosn (2002) claims that authentic short stories effectively motivate students and promote the development of skills necessary for L2 academic literacy. Harmer (2001) suggests that, despite many textbooks' uses of non-authentic materials to practice specific language points, only authentic materials will 'genuinely' improve listening and reading skills.

Reading and Second Language Acquisition:

"Reading is about understanding a written text; it is a complex activity, consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension" (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt, and Kamil,2003). Reading comprehension simply means understanding the meaning of a language presented in written form (Day & Bamford, 2002). Comprehending or understanding a text means extracting the information required from a written language as efficiently as possible (Grellet & Francoise, 1981).

Undoubtedly, all four basic skills are essential components of learners' endeavors to learn a second language, such as English. According to some linguists, reading in second language acquisition is the most important of the four language skills because it can improve the overall students' proficiency levels (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Krashen & Brown, 2007), cited in (Qrqez, & Rashid, 2017). Al Asmari & Gulzar (2016) investigate the perceptions of EFL Taif University teachers [77 males &60 females] about the significance of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) textbooks and the effectiveness of authentic materials for the academic year 2014, the instrument validity and reliability was quite high 0.93. The research analysis shows that female and male teachers supported using Authentic Materials because it stimulates Saudi EFL

students 'interest. Furthermore, both gender teachers believe the use of AM borders students' understanding of the culture, and this aspect help them achieve some embedded meaning in the (EAP) textbooks.

Second Language Reading and Saudi EFL Context:

Numerous studies assert that second language reading improves proficiency, engagement, comprehension, and writing skills. Guo (2012) found that an eight-week extensive reading course enhanced language levels and fostered autonomous learning, improving reading habits, speed, and vocabulary. Similarly, Meniado (2016) discovered high motivation among Saudi EFL students for academic reading, though their performance lags. Ismail and Tawalbeh (2015) observed significant improvements in reading skills among EFL low achievers after a reading program intervention.

Al-Musallam conducted a study gathering EFL female students' and teachers' perspectives on authentic reading materials in Riyadh. Questionnaires and interviews involved 144 students and 32 teachers across three higher education institutions. Exposure to various authentic texts from Newsweek, The New York Times, and Walter's (1986) Genuine Articles garnered support from the majority for supplementing textbooks in reading classes. Students displayed more positive attitudes than teachers, possibly due to class time constraints or workload. Additionally, students expressed interest in incorporating stories and diverse, up-to-date topics like world news, education, fashion, and sports into their reading classes, emphasizing relevance to their interests, needs, and proficiency levels.

Methodology:

Research Design:

This study employed an exploratory approach, primarily gathering data through pre- and post-tests along with an attitudinal questionnaire. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Prior to the study, reliability tests of the data collection tools was performed. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to assess the validity of the instruments and eliminate any ambiguity from the tools before the data collection phase.

Research Instrument:

1. Pre & Post Reading Comprehension Test

This study is following the one group pretest and posttest design, at the first time the research was given the pretest before the beginning of treatment (authentic reading program), at the end of the program, the researcher gave the post-test. So, there were two test, T1= the pretest, T 2= the posttest. X represents the treatments (Hatch and Farhady, 1982:20)

The experiment design can be seen as follow: $T_1 X T_2$

Before the execution of the treatment (authentic reading program) the participants were given the pretest to measure their' ability. Posttest was administrated after the treatment to compare both students' scores and measure their achievement.

2. Students' Perception Questionnaire

A closed-ended survey questionnaire was used as the second instrument in this study, in quantitative research, this kind of questionnaire is used to generate statistics

results (Dawson, 2002, 21). Questionnaires are used to ask attitudinal questions to find out about participants' thoughts of something including opinions, beliefs, values, and interests (Dornyei, 2007). The questionnaire was developed using Google Forms. Items questions were mainly adopted from (de Morgado, 2009), and some were written in the light of the reviewed literature and the researchers' experience. It consisted of 8 major statements. The participants were required to answer each item with either yes, no, or sometimes. The three scales standard answers were related to the students' perception of using authentic materials in teaching reading in Saudi EFL classrooms (Items 1 and 4), students' opinion about reading authentic materials and developing vocabulary acquisition (Items 5 and 6), students' reading skills and comprehension progress and reading authentic materials during class time (Items 7 and 8). The questionnaire was translated into Arabic by the researcher to avoid any misunderstanding and ensure items' comprehension. It also helped in avoiding any language barriers in stating the reasons.

Variables:

In this study there were three variables explained as follow:

First: Independent variable is student's authentic reading material booklet (X). Because the dependent variable may be influenced by or affected by this variable.

Second: Dependent variable is reading comprehension (Y) this variable is measured to determine the impact of the independent variable.

Third: Dependent variable is vocabulary comprehension (Z) this variable is measured to determine the impact of the independent variable.

Context:

The English training program offered by the English Institute consists of sequential English courses, each tailored to a specific level of English proficiency aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The course selected for this study is the beginner English level (A1), utilizing the *Interchange 4th Edition course book and workbook.* The duration of the English course spans a maximum of 7 weeks, totaling 33 hours of classroom instruction, with classes conducted for 8 hours per week. This course is designed to progress students from a basic beginner level (A1 CEFR) to an advanced level.

Sampling and Participants:

Population

The population of this study are EFL adults 'learners in academic year 2023/2024. They are studying general English language in an English Training Institute at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Sampling:

For this study, a single class was selected as the sample, comprising 4 females adult EFL learners who have completed high school. Dawson (2002) suggests that while larger samples generally yield more accurate results in quantitative research, a small, carefully chosen sample can provide equally significant insights.

The participants are classified as beginners (A1) according to the Common European Framework for language proficiency. Reading authentic materials is highly beneficial in language learning as they are not designed for educational purposes and are written for native speakers of the target

language. They can enhance reading comprehension for learners at both low and high proficiency levels (Yasrida, 2017).

Data Collection and Procedures:

This study consists of several phases that, together, allowed us to assess the impact of intensive authentic reading material on students' learning at the level beginner, in the context of teaching reading. Data generation was performed in two different places. The first part was conducted in the classroom of the participants themselves, which consisted of completing the pre-reading comprehension test which was at the beginning of the course (1st week), and post-reading comprehension (4th week). The second part was an online student perception questionnaire.

Procedures:

To ensure the smooth execution of the study, several steps were taken after designing the study materials, including the AM Reading Booklet, pretests and posttests, course syllabus, lesson plans, and invitation letters using Microsoft Word, Canva, and PDF, as well as designing the questionnaire using Google Forms.

The experiment was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024, from September 5th to October 5th. Prior to the study commencement, a consent forms were distributed to participants to obtain their approval. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, scope, and their voluntary participation, as well as their right to withdraw at any stage and the confidentiality of their participation.

The reading program consisted of 8 sessions, with two sessions per week for 4 weeks, each lasting 30-45 minutes. The participants, comprising the experimental group, were administered a pre-reading comprehension test. They were provided with reading texts from their course books along with an Authentic Reading Booklet, designed weekly with categorized topics:

- Week 1: English language song lyrics (audio & typed)
- Week 2: Instagram Posts and Ted Talks (transcription)
- Week 3: Celebrities Interviews
- Week 4: Movie plots and Actors autobiography

Each session began with eliciting students' prior knowledge about the chosen topics, followed by pre-teaching vocabulary and explaining new vocabulary items through direct and indirect methods. Short constructed L1 responses were used to evaluate L2 word knowledge (Hammadou Sullivan, 2001, cited in O'DONNELL, 2009), considering comprehension as an internal, invisible, and complex process, especially for low-level EFL learners (Hammadou Sullivan, 2001). Cook (2001) suggests using learners' first language positively to aid comprehension, such as switching to the learners' L1 while explaining vocabulary. The next stage involved reading the texts, completing comprehension exercises, and engaging in peer or group discussion, following Harmer's (2007) reading teaching sequence stages method: engage, study, and activate (ESA). The session concluded with classroom feedback provided by the teacher on students' answers. At the end of the 4-week program, students took the reading comprehension post-test, conducted in the same manner as the pre-test. The program's efficacy was evaluated by comparing the scores obtained in both tests. Additionally,

an online questionnaire was distributed to participants to gather their feedback on the reading program's effectiveness and the contribution of authentic reading texts to their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension of complex reading materials.

Data Analysis:

This study have used descriptive statistics to analyze data, as follow:

Pre & Post Reading Comprehension Test:

The data collected from pre and post – reading comprehension test by employing statistically analyzed procedures: descriptive statistics and a paired group T-test sample. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM SPSS, version 24.0) was used to analyze the data.

Students' Perception Questionnaire:

After the participants completed the questionnaires, the data were exported to an MS® Excel file then to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, IBM SPSS, version 24.0), was used to analyze the data.

Trustworthiness:

In this section the validity and reliability of the instruments will be explained:

Validity:

Validity refers to the degree of the test, not the test itself, so what is meant by validity is the degree to which the procedure's outcomes fulfill the purposes for which they were designed. (Hatch & Farhady, 1982, p 251). The researcher used face validity, content validity, and construct validity to ensure the test's validity (Heaton, 1991: 159).

a. Face validity:

Expert judgment is used to ensure face validity by carefully reviewing each word in the instrument to ensure that no typos have been made. In addition, mechanical aspects are also examined to ensure that the instrument appears well-maintained.

b. Validity of content:

The degree to which a test assesses a representative sample of the subject matter content is known as content validity (Hatch and Farhady, 1982:251). In order to determine the content validity of the test, the researcher used the materials in the class and modified them based on the K–13 syllabus's teaching objectives for senior high school students in the eleventh grade. According to the curriculum for the

Reliability:

The reliability refers to the test capacity to measure the same topic at different times while producing the same results, "when administrated under the similar conditions" (Hatch & Farhady, 1982, p 244).

Reliability of Reading Test:

The researcher assesses the whole test's reliability in order to determine how consistent the reading test's reliability is (Heaton, 1991: 164 & Hatch and Farhady, 1982:248), using the following formula:

$$\mathbf{r_{11}} = \frac{N}{N-1}\left(1 - \frac{m(N-m)}{Nx^2}\right)$$

Where N= the number of items in the test

m = the mean score on the test for all the testers

x = the standard deviation of all the testers' score

$\mathbf{r_{11}}$ = reliability

The calculation of the mean and standard deviation of scores on the reading comprehension test containing 15 items is illustrated. The mean is found to be 7 and the standard deviation 2.828. Using these figures with the above formula, we obtain:

$$r = \frac{15}{14}\left[1 - \frac{7(15-7)}{15 \quad 2.828^2}\right]$$

$$r = \frac{15}{14}(1 - .45)$$

$$r = \frac{15}{14}(.55)$$

r = .59

The criteria of reliability are as follows:

0.80 up to 1.00 is very high

0.60 up to 0.79 is high

0.40 up to 0.59 is average

0.20 up to 0.39 is low

0.0 up to 0.19 is very low

(Cited in Yasrida, 2017)

Result and Discussion:

Results:

This section is divided into three sections to address the three research questions as follow: **Question 1: Does reading authentic texts help improve students' reading comprehension skills?**

This experiment was conducted to investigate whether the reading of authentic materials has any effect to enhance EFL learners reading comprehension skills and vocabulary acquisition improvement. Specifically, it tests the participants' scores achievements of two reading comprehension tests (Pre-test & post- test) for beginner level (A1) learner. After getting exposed to authentic texts during their reading EFL classes (real world materials). It also examines if there is any vocabulary knowledge enhancement after reading many authentic texts. After one week of administrated the post –test, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the difference between students' achievements between the two tests. The results revealed a significant increase in the students reading comprehension scores in the post test, similarly, to the vocabulary acquisition.

The mean of the gain scores from pre -test was (7.0) and from the post-test (11.75). The results indicated that the mean increment from the post-test was significantly higher than that of the pre-test.

Table1: Means comparison of difference in gain scores on the reading comprehension test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Reading Test	7.0000	4	2.82843	1.41421
Post-Reading Test	11.7500	4	2.75379	1.37689

Result were surprisingly as the participants are beginners. A similar study was conducted to Saudi college weak students, the participants of the study have positive effect on the learners' reading skill and positive perspective of implementing the program to their curriculum as well (Guo, 2012).

Question 2: Does reading authentic texts help improve students' vocabulary acquisition?

Main part of this experience was dedicated to investigate the potential impact of the AM on students' vocabulary acquisition ability. Accordingly, some of the data collected from the pre and post reading comprehension test were designed for the vocabulary acquisition in order to answer one of the key questions of this study which is to inspect if the students are able to get out the meaning of new word from the context and if the raise of reading comprehension help them to recognize the new words meaning. Based on the results taken from the paired sample t-test, there is a difference on vocabulary as summarized in Table (2)

Table 2: Means comparison of the gain scores from on vocabulary

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre - Test	2.5000	4	1.73205	.86603
Post-Test	4.2500	4	.95743	.47871

Question 3: What is the EFL students' attitude towards using authentic reading materials in English language classrooms?

This third section of the result section presents the quantitative findings of the students' questionnaire intending to answer the research question and to gain more information about the AM program validity from the participants' perspective. The questions were the opinions and feelings of the students towards their experience as a whole. Moreover, the questionnaire has eight items aimed at collecting participants' attitudes towards their experience and their perspective on using such materials to enhance English language learning in the EFL classrooms, and whether or not this reading program helps them to build reading habits during their daily lives. The participants were asked to fill out the answers by using Yes, No, or Sometimes. The SPSS analysis of the students' survey responses (quantitative data) is provided in the following section the findings have been divided into three main sections according to the aim of the questions, and to answer the research inquiries, (A) Students' perception toward the AM reading program, (B) Authentic materials and students' vocabulary development process, (C) Authentic materials and students' reading skills.

(A) Students' Attitude toward Authentic Reading Program

The EFL students' responses to the four questions indicate their attitude to the use of AM in EFL classrooms. Table 3 illustrates that more than half of the students (75%) have positive attitudes toward using authentic reading materials in teaching the English language in the Saudi EFL context. However, one student (25%) is uncertain about the use of AM in their EFL classrooms.

Table 3: My opinion of the Intensive Authentic Reading program is positive.

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Some times	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

In line with the first item, Table 4 shows almost identical responses as most of the participants advocate the use of AM in their EFL reading classrooms teaching (75%) or sometimes (25%). The table also indicates that the majority of participants endorsed the use of authentic materials in their instruction of EFL reading classes.

Table 4: Was the Intensive Authentic Reading program useful?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

Table 5: Should the Intensive Authentic Reading program be applied to your current level?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
No	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

Table 6: Did you enjoy the Intensive Authentic Reading program?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

As the above three tables display the students' positive choice of using authentic reading materials in EFL classrooms, Table 3 indicates an overwhelming response as (75%) of participants like the idea of using AM in classrooms. However, only (25 %) show a neutral attitude towards the use of AM in EFL classrooms.

shown a very positive attitude towards its use at their level, although they are at beginner level (A1 CEFR). Table 5 evidently shows that most of the students (75%) believe that the use of authentic material can facilitate EFL learning. Nevertheless, (25%) of the participants have the opposite idea (Table 6). Overall, the EFL students in this study show a positive attitude toward the use of authentic materials in the classroom as more than half of them frequently advocate this type of reading material in their learning English in the Saudi EFL context.

(B) Students' attitudes towards using authentic reading material to acquire new vocabulary.

The questionnaire survey elicited the Saudi EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials in EFL classrooms to enhance their vocabulary bank (Table7). In response to the questions of whether the use of such materials in EFL classrooms has an impact on their learning of new words, all of the students (100%) are sure that the intensive reading program helped them acquire new English vocabulary. and the second was if they were able to use it. The statistics show that (100%) all the four students agreed that the reading program helps them to know new words, but (75%) have used it in.

Table: 7 Did the Intensive Authentic Reading program help you to acquire new English words??

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	100.0%

Similarly, Table 8 delineates the students' views about the use of MA in EFL classrooms. Out of (75%) of the participants, think that reading authentic materials helps them use new English words. On the other hand, one of the participants reckons that AM Sometimes (25%) encourages her to make use of new words in classrooms.

Table: 8 Did the Intensive Authentic Reading program encourage you to use more new words in English

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

C. Students' Opinions about the effect of Authentic Reading on their Reading skills

The quantitative data illustrate the positive attitudes of the learners toward developing their reading comprehension and reading skills after involving in the authentic reading program in their EFL classrooms. Table 9 shows the EFL learners' opinions about the use of AM, (75%) they think that the program encourages or motivates them to read more as shown in the result. While (25%) of her feedback was partially different, she believes that sometimes she was encouraged to read more than usual.

Table: 9 Did the Intensive Authentic Reading program encourage you to read more in English?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

Similar to Table 9, the participants have shown a very positive response to the question indicated in Table 10. In response to the question about the learners' opinion

regarding the impact of using MA on their English reading skills more than 75% of the students agree with the idea that reading authentic materials improves or contributes to the progress of their reading skills. The table further shows very little disagreement (25%) with the concept of using AM in Saudi EFL classrooms.

Table: 10 Did the Intensive Authentic Reading program help improve your reading skills?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

In addition, a general question learner were asked which is whether or not the AM reading program develop a habit for autonomous reading skill three say it does and one disagree.

Table: 11 Did the Intensive Authentic Reading program help you develop a habit for autonomous reading in general?

Valid	Frequency	Percent
No	1	25.0%
Yes	3	75.0%

Regarding the effect of using authentic materials to improve their autonomous reading of English outside of the classroom, the learners' opinions were asked. Table 11 shows that a resounding majority of respondents (75%) think it helps them read autonomously. However, (25%) of the participants hold a different opinion.

Overall, EFL learners and teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of authentic reading materials in EFL classrooms. Learners' views and experiences show that the AM encourages, and motivates them to read, increases their reading comprehension, and builds their linguistics competence by learning and using new vocabulary. The data evidently show that authentic reading materials can be a useful learning tool in the Saudi EFL context.

Discussion:

Introduction:

Finding indicated a significant improvement in post-test scores for reading comprehension, along with an increase in vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, a perception questionnaire was administered to the participants at the program's conclusion, revealing that the majority found the reading-intensive, authentic curriculum enjoyable and beneficial for their English language acquisition. The ensuing discussion will address the following research questions:

RQ1: Does reading authentic texts enhance students' reading comprehension skills?

RQ2: Does reading authentic texts facilitate students' vocabulary acquisition?

RQ3: What are the students' perceptions of the reading authentic texts program?

Reading Authentic Materials and Reading Comprehension:

As the findings of this study suggest that the use of authentic materials develop reading skills, and clearly aids second-language acquisition and fosters positive attitudes toward language learning. The findings of the current study have shown that teachers have good reasons for using authentic written material in the Saudi EFL context. According to Harmer (2007) there are many reasons to advocate the use of reading in language acquisition. At least some of what they read stick in their mind. He added getting students to read is important, at the first place they need it either in their career or for study purposes. Also, for language acquisition, using reading is very important to help students' study the language.

However, using interesting, engaging reading texts is likely to make the acquisition more successful. As a result, it is a good idea that teachers consider anything make reading more easily. Nevertheless, reading is useful for writing skill, it shows students an example of what we encourage them to write. Moreover, it provides an opportunity for students to study vocabulary, grammar, and sentence construction. Furthermore, interesting topics, stimulates students for discussion, deep and critical thinking and ignite their imaginations (Harmer, 2007).

In the field of teaching English language, the controversy is about what kinds of reading texts are suitable for students. The discussion is centered on whether the texts should be authentic or not. That is because artificial materials seems to be untypical to the reality, at the same time if we give low level students' *The Times* (authentic material), students probably will not be able to cope up with the new words, phrases and the grammar, the style will push them back (Harmer, 2007). It is suggested by Harmer, to use a balance scale between authentic written material on one scale and on the other scale, students' interests and abilities. In spite of that, he said that, there are a considerable amount of authentic reading material are very suitable and appropriate for beginner students. He emphasized on the need to keep such texts like they used in reality a way from adapting as possible even for beginner level.

This study has assessed students' reading comprehension performance, the findings showed a significantly better performance in the post-test than the pre-test. Many scholars affirmed the use authentic materials for reading comprehension can be incredibly beneficial for language learners. Baghban, (2014) has assumed that the benefits of using authentic materials are many specifically in raising learners' motivation level, especially for English for Specific Proposes (ESP) learners as he believes that language is a tool used in people's real-life to convey real purposes. Nuttall (1996) contends that "authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purpose by real people." (cited in Al Azri, & Al-Rashdi,2014). Henry Sweet (1899) believed that natural texts "do justice to every feature of the language" while artificial materials include "repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, certain combinations of words to the almost total exclusion of others which are equally, or perhaps even more essential" (Cited in Gilmore, 2004 by Baghban, 2014). Learners of languages must observe how to use language in everyday situations (Mishan, 2005).

A decade ago, de Morgado, (2009) stated that the process of implementing extra reading material to student's curriculum, is considered quite complicated, costly, and time consuming. Nowadays, technology plays a vital role in all aspects of education, teachers can use a variety of techniques to teach foreign language and help students enhance their SLA.

Reading Authentic Materials and Vocabulary Acquisition:

The second research question of this study is about whether using authentic materials increase students' vocabulary acquisition or not. The descriptive analysis of the study finds that the post-test indicated a good

increase in students' understanding of new words, we can conclude that authentic reading materials were effectively helpful for students to enhance and enrich their vocabulary acquisition the effective of using written authentic material can be illustrated as follow:

Firstly, in terms of introducing new vocabulary to the learners' memories, authentic material can connect students to the real world most used and up-to-date vocabulary. In addition, it familiarizes students to the language context and the function and the accurate use of the word, which gives the learner the confidence to use it in the future. Burton (1992), said that learners are more self-confident when they have effective exposure to vocabulary usage and its lexical (cited in Rabadi, 2016). When using authentic written material students are leaning how the language is used in reality and how it is produce by the native speakers. Authentic material can create vivid image in students' minds, because it reflects reality, more related to people lives, more interesting and engaging than artificial material, which some authors and scholars believe it lacks students 'imaginations and interests. Berardo (2006) point out that, too much use of artificial materials does not only lack students 'interests but it does not consider students' background knowledge (Cited in Bin Jusoh, 2016). Vocabulary acquisition is the core of acquiring new language, vocabulary is fundamental requirement for a meaningful communication (Laufer 1986, cited in Rabadi, 2016). Reading is thought to be a very effective method for teaching language acquisition. It can assist students in comprehending meaning of the new words (Boudjhaiche & Bensaadi, 2020).

Students' Perception of Reading Authentic Materials:

The results showed that students encouraged the use of authentic materials. It appeared a bit surprising as the expectation was that students had a negative attitude towards the use of such materials as they may appear as a challenging task due to the style of the writing and they could contain unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases. Moreover, it was also assumed that Saudi EFL learners only preferred English authentic materials to be used in advanced-level EFL classrooms in order to comprehend the text, acquire new vocabulary, and develop linguistic competence. However, the findings indicated a completely different perspective of the learners as they considered it a tool to facilitate their language learning process.

The participants of this study have declared their opinions positively about authentic material that it helps them learn and memorize vocabulary, further it helps comprehend better in reading. Similarly, Boudjhaiche and Bensaadi (2020) state that teachers can use authentic materials to increase students' interest and introduce real-world situations into the classroom; the materials also help students' language skills and prepare them to be ready for social situations.

Even though, the participants of this study were low level students, besides it was useful, they revealed their preference to use authentic written material in their current level. This could be related to the gap between writing style of the artificial material and real-world material and the

type of topic between both materials. In light of that, Herrington and Oliver (2000) have mentioned in their study about authentic learning environment that many studies like (Brown, 1997), and Whitehead (1932) have argued about the separation between knowing and doing in the educational institutes like school and university. The abstract knowledge taught is not retrievable in reality, this disconnected due to lack of cognition. When learning and real context are unconnected, information is viewed by students as the final step of knowledge rather than as a dynamic tool for problem-solving. In conclusion, decontextualized information misses the essence of meaningful learning (Entwistle, Entwistle, & Tait, 1993). Further, learning a second language is challenging for students, in order to succeed in learning any language, material must be interested to keep students motivated (Al Azri, & Al-Rashdi, 2014).

Conclusion:

Summary of Findings:

This is a quantitative experimental study aims to investigate the effective use of authentic reading materials with EFL adult learners, the variable of the study are reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The participants of the study are 4 EFL adult learners, beginner level (A1) CEFR. The research has used two instruments to collect data; first, a pre and post -test method to measure students' achievements by comparing their scores. The second was an online questionnaire was sent at the end of the experiment. Learners were exposed to authentic materials for one month, two sessions /week (40-60 minutes). Based on the findings, using AM in teaching reading have a positive impact on students' professional level. Also, it shows that most of the students positively evaluated authentic material and enjoyed it the program.

Pedagogical Implementation for EFL Teaching:

This study supports the use of AM to adult low EFL learners. Therefore, as a pedagogical implication of the study, teachers should consider adding authentic material to EFL reading classes to enhance students' reading skills using real language resources, not only for learning English, but to prepare them in the future to response to the urgent different life situations, and to help them achieve their communicative goal as well. Now days, as virtual teaching and learning continue, it would be useful for students if teachers familiarize them with online authentic material by practicing some reading on the classrooms or in a virtual environment.

Assessing reading comprehension skills is a bit complex especially in classrooms with large number of students. I's suggested to use online platforms It's option and during class time teacher can discuss the topic and analyze the text, and do the task. In some of the Saudi universities like KAU University, this new method of material has been adopted, which is used in preparatory year students' science track, however, the topic are real but some are not up to date.

Research Limitations:

This exploratory study has certain limitations. Integration of qualitative components might produce a more comprehensive and richer picture of the research phenomenon, more data collection methods, i.e., interviews can be used to examine this study from various other angles.

Further Research:

Future research is recommended to explore the perceptions of EFL experts and students regarding the incorporation of authentic materials in English language reading classes, particularly focusing on how these materials can be effectively implemented online. Given students' familiarity with online platforms for learning, investigating the impact of using online authentic materials on students' progress and performance in EFL learning is crucial. Additionally, it would be beneficial to gather Saudi students' preferences regarding the types of authentic reading materials and to identify any obstacles to implementing such materials in various Saudi universities, providing a deeper understanding of material selection processes.

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