

Abstract

The Relationship between Background Knowledge and Reading comprehension of Upper Basic Stage Students

By

Mohammad Ali Bani Issa

Supervisor

Prof. Riyad Fayez Hussein

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between prior knowledge of a certain topic and reading comprehension of the eighth and tenth graders in Jordanian public schools.

The study aimed to investigate the following hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant relationship at the ($\alpha=0.05$) level between reading comprehension and background Knowledge levels (high , medium and low) of the 8th grade students .
2. There are no statistically significant relationship at the ($\alpha=0.05$) level between reading comprehension and background Knowledge levels (high , medium and low) of the 10th grade students .
3. There are no statistically significant differences at the ($\alpha=0.05$) level in students' results of reading comprehension and background Knowledge tests due to grade levels (8th and 10th grades).

A random sample of 721 students was selected ; 434 students in the eighth grade and 287 in the tenth grade.

The following procedures and instruments were used.

1. An appropriate reading passage about a general topic (The American Cowboy), which contained 492 words.
2. A Comprehension multiple-choice test with (20) items was constructed to measure subjects' comprehension of the reading passage.

3. A Yes/No test was constructed to measure subjects' background knowledge about the reading passage.
4. Eighth EFL experts confirmed the validity of the instruments.
5. The reliability of the three instruments was computed on a sample of (73) subjects from the study population.
6. The instruments used in this study were a background knowledge test and a Multiple- choice reading comprehension test.

To analyze the collected data Pearson correlation coefficient and T.Test were used with grade levels and background knowledge as independent variables.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. There was statistically significant relationship at the ($\alpha=0.05$) level between reading comprehension and background Knowledge levels (high , medium and low) of the 8th grade students .
2. There was statistically significant relationship at the ($\alpha=0.05$) level between reading comprehension and Background Knowledge levels (high , medium and low) of the 10th grad students .
3. There was statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) level in students' results of reading comprehension and background Knowledge test in favor of 10th grade students.

Finally, the researcher recommended English teachers to stimulate their students' prior knowledge about the reading topic before reading and to provide them with the necessary knowledge they need. Teachers should also encourage students to enrich their background knowledge by referring to varied and suitable resources.