# Iraqi Preparatory Schools Learners Use of Quranic Passages on the Development of Reading Comprehension

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**Abstract**

This research deals with the use of Quranic passages on the development of reading comprehension of Iraqi preparatory schools learners.

Therefore, the study aims at investigating the effect of using Quranic passages on the development of reading comprehension of Iraqi preparatory schools learners.

To fulfill the aim of the study, an experiment is designed. Two groups of preparatory school are randomly chosen. One of the two groups is assigned to be the experimental group, which is used Quranic passages and the other one is the control group which is not used Quranic passages.

By using the t- test for two independent samples, it is found out that the calculated t-value is greater than the table t-value. This result indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups in their achievement in the developing of reading comprehension in favor of the experimental group.

**Key words:** Quranic passages,Reading comprehension,ilent reading techniques,Semantic mapping,Analyze vocabulary,Student-text interaction,Oral language communication,Classroom  Interaction

**الخلاصة**

تضمن البحث استعمال السور القرآنية لتطوير مهارة القراءة لدى طلبة الدراسة الاعدادية. لذا هدفت الدراسة الى تقصي اثر استخدام السور القرآنية في تطوير مهارة القراءة لدى طلبة  الدراسة الاعدادية .

لذا افترضت الدراسة عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين تحصيل المجموعة التجريبية التي تستخدم السور القرآنية وبين المجموعة الضابطة التي تستخدم الطريقة التقليدية .

اظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين المجموعتين لصالح المجموعة التجريبية التي استخدمت السور القرآنية في تطوير مهارة القراءة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية**: السور القرآنية، مهارة القراءة ،تكنيك القراءة الصامتة، مخطط المعاني، تحليل المفردات، تفاعل الطلبة مع الموضوع، الاتصال اللفظي للغة، النشاط الصفي.

## 1-Introduction

Holy Quran regards as a main reference to improve reading and writing for learners with both sexes , ages , as well as it regards the main base of developing reading and writing skills in several Islamic countries specially and worldwide in general.

The skills of learner's reading needs firstly understanding correctly , then answer all questions that concerning with.

Every soars and verses regards the best iterance to understand them, pronounce , recitation a  , beside that it is a way of giving a desire to read and understanding that create a knowledge to know that kind of meaning contain , that is to say they give the positive action (motion ) for learning.

The importance of sixth secondary stage comes from transformation from secondary to university stage that needs more specification according to which branch

the students need. So that, the researcher should make details studying to reach to the point that says (soars) were the best way to understand the reading skills.

The prevailing traditional methods of teaching have weakened the four skills of communication: listening , speaking , reading and writing for most of our students , since such approaches to preparatory schools teaching perceive students as passive learners who listen to the teacher and write down their notes without being actively engaged in language learning . Such learning environments are mind-numbing and uninspiring for students, education. The result is that most of Iraqi preparatory schools Learners face many difficulties in recognizing and producing many aspects of English skills .

There is still a great number of  learners who complain that they have really use the language , in spite of having had a lot of oral work in the classroom. (Brown-1987:55) points out that a glance through the past century of language teaching gives the reader an idea of how varied are interpretations about the best method of teaching a foreign language .

Iraqi preparatory students as learner of the English language face difficulty in learning the English language. So, this study aims at investigating the effect of using Quranic passages to learn the reading comprehension. To fulfill the aim of the study the researchers attempt to test the following hypothesis in order to accomplish the aim of the research.

1. Iraqi preparatory school learners face difficulty in developing reading comprehension.
2. There is no difference between the experimental and the control group in reading comprehension.

## 2- Strategies for Reading Comprehension

For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies. Some strategies are related to bottom-up procedures, and others enhance the top-down processes. Following are many strategies, each of which can be practically applied to your classroom techniques.

**1. Identify the purpose in reading**

How many times have you been told to read something yet you don't know why you' re being asked to read. It? You did only a mediocre job of retaining what you "read" and perhaps were rather slow in the process. Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something. By doing so, you know what you' re looking for and can weed out potential distracting information., Whenever you are teaching a reading technique, make sure students know their purpose in reading something.

**2. Use graph emic  rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding (especially for beginning level learners).**

At the beginning levels of learning English, one of the difficulties students encounter in learning to read is making the correspondences between spoken and written English. In many cases, learners have become acquainted with oral language and have some difficulty learning English spelling conventions. They may need peculiarities. While you can often assume that one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspond-denies will be acquired with ease, other relationships might prove difficult.

**3. Use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension (for intermediate to advanced levels).**

If you are teaching beginning level students, this particular strategy will not apply because they are still struggling with the control of a limited vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Intermediate-to-advanced level students need not be speed readers, but You can help them increase efficiency by teaching a few silent reading rules:

• You don't need to "pronounce" each word to yourself.
• Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
• Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning from its context.

**4. Skim the text for main Ideas.**
Perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners (as well as native speakers) are skimming and scanning. Skimming consists of quickly running one's eyes across a whole text (such as an essay, article, or chapter) for its gist. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas.

**5. Scan the text for specific information.**
The second in the most valuable category is scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for name or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details.

**6. Use semantic mapping or clustering.**
Readers can easily be overwhelmed by a long string of ideas or events. The strategy of semantic mapping or grouping ideas into meaningful clusters, helps the reader to provide some order to the chaos. Making such semantic maps can be done individually, but they make for a productive group work technique as students collectively induce order and hierarchy to a passage.

**7. eGuss when you aren't certain.**
This is an extremely broad category. Learners can use guessing to their advantage to
• guess the meaning of a word
• guess a grammatical relationship (e.g., a pronoun reference)
• guess a discourse relationship
• infer implied meaning("between the lines")
• guess about a cultural reference
• guess content messages.

**8. Analyze vocabulary.**
One way for learners to make guessing pay off when they don't immediately recognize a word is to analyze it in terms of what they know about it. Several techniques are useful here:
a. Look for prefixes (co-, inter-, un-, etc.) that may give clues.
b. Look for suffixes (-tion, -tive, -ally,etc.) that may indicate what part of speech it is.
c. Look for roots that are familiar (e.g., intervening may be a word a student doesn't know, but recognizing that the root ven comes from Latin "to come" would yield the meaning "to come in between").
d. Look for grammatical contexts that may signal information.
e. Look at the semantic context (topic) for clues.

**9. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.**
This requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skills. The fact that not all language can be interpreted appropriately by attending to its literal, syntactic surface structure makes special demands on readers. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing pragmatic information.

**10. Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships.**
Many discourse markers in English signal relationships among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners' reading efficiency.(Brown,2001:306-309)

**2.1 Classroom Interaction**
Mortensen (1972:12) states that classroom interaction depends on verbal and non-verbal interactions. He argues that verbal and non-verbal interactions are complementary aspects of communicative act. Non-verbal interaction includes all non-linguistic or extra-linguistic aspects of behavior, which contribute to the meaning of message these include body movements, gestures, facial expressions, contact, etc. While verbal interaction includes words as discrete entities. To sum up the classroom of language tutoring where EFL instruction takes place is seen as communities and sociolinguistic environments where interaction is considered a key factor to learner's foreign language development. Hall and Verplaetse (2000:10) assert this saying.
To sum up, the classroom of language tutoring where EFL instruction takes place is seen as sociolinguistic environments and discourse communities (Cazden, 1988).

**2.2 Teacher Interactions with Learners**
This type of interaction deals with the ongoing process of classroom interaction between teachers and their students. Because of its importance in promoting preparatory education, researchers in this field have built up many research tools for scrutinize and analyze classroom interaction "Over twenty observation instruments have been developed just for studying classroom interaction in second language classes… most of these focus on the teacher" (Long and Sato 1983).
Throughout process learners commit mistakes and errors, but it is preferable for the teacher not to confuse the teaching-learning process by telling the learners that this is wrong, or that they have performed wrongly. Instead ,his duty would be to lead his student(s) to recognize their mistake and direct them to avoid such an error in the future(ibid).

**2.3 Student-text interaction**
In this type, the learner acts as a reader and a participant in creating the text. That's why it is adopted in teaching the reading and writing skills interactively.
The learner draws upon his previous knowledge, as well as the facts found in the syllabus content Recent views see comprehension as drawing upon both top-down and bottom-up processing. In what is known as interactive processing. The top-down processing (TDP) refers to "The use of background knowledge, knowledge of text structures , and/or knowledge of the world to assist in the interpretation of discourse" (Nun an, 2001: 316), while the bottom-up processing (BUP) is "Decoding the smallest elements (phonemes and graphemes) first, and using theses to decode and interpret words, clauses, sentences, and then whole texts" (ibid: 302). It is claimed that BUP influence TDP, and vice versa. According to Richards, et al (1992:383-4). Interactive processing will take over if there is a problem with the other type, and preferred, and it is only when stimulus quality deteriorates that top-down processing takes over as a compensatory device.

**2.4 Interactive Teaching Skills**
There are several major interactive teaching skills that a teacher ought to master in order to promise classroom interaction. These skills are intermingled and related to each other like a network. Studies about the teaching skills revealed that a unique characteristic of "teaching skills is their interactive nature" (Kyriako, 1991: 33). The teacher faces varying situations, most of which are unexpected, thus he needs to redirect his performance to cope with these changes. Clark and Peterson (1986)

have noticed that the successful teachers moderate and adjust their manners and tactics with regards to the lesson progress. They have also pointed out that with the passage of time a lot of this interactive executive is converted into a custom which is somewhat conscious and the teacher just has to consider the more unpredictable circumstances which need a careful attention and care.

## 2.5 Oral language communication

In order to achieve oral communication, the following demonstration are worthy to consider:

- Language in oral real contexts is introduced: for example, a cop of a sports column from a recent newspaper could be presented.

- Motivation of learners by asking them to figure out the speakers intentions.

- The target language is a vehicle for classroom oral communication. Hence, the teacher gives learners the directions for the activity in the foreign language.

- The emphasis is on the process of communication through manipulating various linguistic forms, for example, learners are asked to state the reporter's predictions in different words.

- Learners exchange meaning in this regard, they work in small groups to maximize the amount of communicative practice, for example, learners play a language game.

- main task is to establish situations that promote strip story and a task to perform. Correction of errors postponed since oral communication works on fluency. When a learner makes an error, the teacher and other learners ignore it.

- The teacher

Oral communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among learners. For example. Learners work with partners to predict what the next picture in the strip story will look like,(Larsen – Freeman (2003: 125- 126).

## 2.6 Pedagogical Advantages of Classroom Interaction

Many specialists in the field of teaching preparatory schools have assigned the significant role of classroom interaction in education. The researcher has detected the following advantages of classroom interaction for the learning process:

1. Classroom interaction encourages critical thinking. Wilkins (1976: 19) thinks that the method of people working through language is more important than "the mastery of the language as an unapplied system". When students use "discovery techniques" or "activities" they are highly en gaged in discovering rules of language using their "cognitive powers" (Harmer, 2007: 82).

2. Classroom interaction encourages students to benefit from the knowledge of language rules during their interaction "i.e. the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately" (Bruit, 1983, 92), or functions of language rather than its forms (Yule, 1999: 193). Since it broadens the Chomsky an concept of 'competence into 'communicative competence' classroom interaction emphasizes the importance of applying the abstract system of rules in the mind of the student within real life situations (Cook, 2003: 9).

**3.** Classroom interaction activities assist learners to acquire communicative competence, hence they are mainly co-operative and the class is not teacher fronted on the contrary, the teacher is a facilitator and observer who initiates and organizes the interaction process, also provides consultation and support whenever necessary. Communicative competence can only be achieved when dialogue is not dominated. This means that classroom interaction reduces anxiety leading to greater participation of learners who know and preserve their mutual rights during interaction, Ellsworth ( 1989: 314**).**

**2.7 Testing Reading**

Successful choice of texts depends ultimately on experience, judgment, and a certain amount of common sense. Clearly these are not qualities that a handbook can provide; practice is necessary. It is nevertheless possible to offer useful advice. While the points may seem rather obvious, they are often overlooked.

1. Keep specifications constantly in mind and try to select as representative a sample as possible. Do not repeatedly select texts of a particular kind simply because they are readily available.

2. Choose texts of appropriate length. Scanning may call for passages of up to 2,000 words or more. Detailed reading can be tested using passages of just a few sentences.

3. In order to obtain acceptable reliability, include as many passages as possible in a test, thereby giving candidates a good number of fresh starts. Considerations of practicality will inevitably impose constraints on this, especially where scanning or skimming is to be tested.

4. In order to test scanning, look for passages which contain plenty of discrete pieces of information.

5. Choose texts which will interest candidates but which will not overexcite or disturb them.

6. Avoid texts made up of information which may be part of candidates' general knowledge. It may be difficult not to write items to which correct responses are available to some candidates without reading the passage. (Hughes,1989:119).

**3- Experimental Design**

The researcher should choose the suitable experimental design which provides valid conclusions about the relationship between both independent and dependent variables (Brown and Rodgers, 2002: 210).

A "pretest-post-test control group design" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 231) is used, in which two groups "matched for age, sex, ratio of boys to girl" (Bell,1987: 9) are chosen randomly. The form of this design is shown in Table No.1

| Post-test | Independent variable | Pre-test | Experimental group |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Post-test | _ _ _ _ _ | Pre-test | Control group |

**Table (1)The Experimental Design**

The experimental design is characterized by the following features:

1. Selecting two groups at random and assigning them to an experimental and a control group.

2. The independent variable is administered only to the experimental group.

3. Both group of subjects submit to "a pre-test and post-test" to measure the influence of the dependent variable.

The experimental group is taught by using Quranic passages , while the control group is taught by using the traditional method. The experiment is lasted for two months.

**3.1-The Sample**

The sample of this study has been selected randomly from preparatory school learners. According to Byrne (1987: 9) Classroom interaction activities require the participation of small groups of learners who can be easily directed and guided by the teacher to perform the educational tasks depending mainly on themselves, therefore, the size of the sample can be described as typical. The students are distributed into two groups, the experimental and control. Each group consists of (20) students.

As for the experimental group , the researcher begins every lecture with questioning strategies via Quranic passages in order to create an interactive language classroom . In addition , it provides necessary stepping stones to communication. Then the subjects are given the title of the passage. Then , they are given a clear definition of the difficult words. After that the researcher explains to them the Quranic passage .Finally , the subject are asked some questions about the Quranic passage and give the meaning of some Quranic words

**3.2-The Test**

Language tests can be a valuable tool for providing information that is relevant to several concerns in language teaching (Bachman & Palmer, 2000: 8). Tests are considered useful tools for language learning research since they benefit from this type of research and provide assistance to FL research. Bachman (1990: 2-3) puts it in plain words "language tests… are frequently used as criterion measures of language abilities in second language acquisition research. Similarly, language tests can be valuable resources of information about the effectiveness of learning and teaching. " therefore, a written test is formulated to elicit data about the effectiveness of using Quranic passages in teaching Quranic passages. The researcher has collected the items of the test from various Quranic passages.

The current research is conducted in order to assess the influence of teaching Quran passages to develop reading comprehension. At the end of the teaching period, the subjects of the control group and the experimental group were post-tested. The same testing procedures were followed in conducting the test. The  whole tests were applied by the researchers.

**3.3-Statistical Tools**

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

1. The "t-test" formula is used in order to identify whether there are any significant differences between the two groups in certain variables such as age and level of achievement in English. It is  also used to calculate the statistical differences between the experimental and control group in the pre-test and post-test.

$$T = \frac{\bar{x_1} - \bar{x_2}}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2 \cdot \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}{(n_1 + n_2) - 2}}}$$

(Glass ,1970:295)

Where:

X1 = the mean of the experimental group
X2 = the mean of the control group
n 1 = the number of the experimental group
n2 = the number of the control group
S1 = the variance of the experimental group
S2 = the variance of the control group
(Brown and Rodgers, 2002: 208)

2. One-sample   t test of two tailed for correlated samples to test the differences between the pre-test and post –test within each group, i.e. experimental and control group.

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{SD\frac{\square}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

D: Mean of differences between scores.

SD: Standard deviation of differences between scores.

N: Number of subjects

(Glass, 1970:298)

**4- Discussion of the Results**

The statistical analysis of the results indicates that the mean value of the experimental group was found to be (67.1), which is higher than the mean value of the control group, in the post-test, which was found to be (40.8). This means that the achievements of learners in the experimental group is significantly higher in average than the achievements of learners in the control group in the total scores of the post-test. It can be concluded that this experiment demonstrates significantly higher learning effects for using Quranic passages.

This indicates that teaching Quranic passages is more useful than the traditional method which does not give the students the chance to discuss and communicate inside the classroom. Therefore, interaction among the learners as well as with and under the supervision of the teacher is better for learning.

The result of the present study can be attributed to the following reasons :

The first one is the training that the subject of the study have received via using Quranic passages has led to the improvement in their performance.

The second one is the information which is presented in the context via using Quranic passages is remembered.

**5-Conclusions**

This study has investigated the efficiency of using Quranic passages to develop the reading comprehension of the preparatory school learners. The findings of the present study can be worded as follows:

1. The result of the post test for two independent samples shows that there is significant difference between the subjects of the two groups. This difference is in favor of the subjects of the experimental group who is taught the Quran passages. Therefore, the previous hypothesis which states that there are no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in their achievement in reading comprehensions is   rejected and an alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that there are statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their achievement in reading comprehensions.

2. The less the number of students in the class, the more the opportunities to interact and negotiate the meaning among students will be.

**6-Recommendation**

The following list of recommendations may be helpful for students, teachers, syllabus designers.

1. Syllabus designers should stress the implementation of Quranic passages in the educational curriculum, at all levels, for all subjects and foreign languages in particular.

2. There is a need for adding a new subject to the syllabus of English by adding Quranic passages to develop reading comprehension.

**Appendix-2-Learners' Post-test Scores**

| Control Group | | Experimental Group | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Scores | No. | Scores |
| | 54 | | 4 |
| | 36 | | 0 |
| | 44 | | 1 |
| | 32 | | 4 |
| | 46 | | 8 |
| | 44 | | 2 |
| | 36 | | 1 |
| | 27 | | 5 |
| | 49 | | 0 |
| 0 | 36 | | 0 |
| 1 | 42 | | 0 |
| 12 | 41 | | 2 |
| 13 | 53 | | |
| 14 | 51 | | 1 |
| 5 | 63 | | 2 |
| 16 | 59 | | |
| 7 | 28 | | 7 |
| 18 | 31 | | |
| 19 | 39 | | 2 |
| 20 | 40 | | 3 |
| | | | 1 |
| | | | 8 |
| | | | 4 |
| $X2$ = 42 | | $X1$ = 68.2 | |
| $\Sigma yi2$ =854 | | $\Sigma yi$ 1 = 1363 | |
| $\Sigma yi2^2$ =37863 | | $\Sigma yi1^2$ = 94515 | |

| $\sum(yi2)^2$ = 729317 | $\sum(yi1)^2$ = 1863226 |
|---|---|
| $SD$ = 8.582 | $SD$ = 8.451 |
| $S^2$ = 73.693 | $S^2$ = 71.462 |

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**The-post-test**

Q1/**Read the following Quranic Passage carefully then answer the questions about it**

**Al-Rahman**

In the name of Allah , the Beneficent , the Merciful.

The Beneficent God

Taught the Quran

He created man

Taught him the mode of expression

The sun and the moon follow a reckoning

And the herbs and the trees do adore

And the heaven , he raised it high , and he made the balance

That you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure

And keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient

And the earth , he has set it for living creatures

There in is fruit and palms having sheathed clusters

Which then of the bounties of your lord will you deny?

He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels

And he creates the jinn of a flame of fire which then of the bounties of your lord will you deny?

Lord of the East and lord of the west which then of the bounties of your lord will you deny?

He has made the two seas to flow freely (so that) they meet together

Between them is a barrier which they cannot pass

1. Sky , seals in which way they mentioned?
2. From what that Allah created Human?
3. From what that Allah created jinn?
4. Why the two seas never meat?
5. Both seas what they produced?

Q2/ **Give the meaning of the following Quranic words from the preceding Quranic passage?**

1. Mode of expression
2. Reckoning
3. Adore
4. Inordinate

5. Bounties
6. Barrier