

Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effect of lexical and morpho-syntactic knowledge on reading comprehension. It also aims to investigate if there are significant differences between subjects' performance in reading comprehension according to sex and general ability in English (GAE).

The study aims at answering the following questions:

- 1- To what extent are the effects of lexical and grammatical knowledge on subjects' performance in reading comprehension?
- 2-What is the difference in performance in reading comprehension between male and female subjects who have background knowledge on lexis and morpho-syntactic and those who do not have any knowledge?
- 3- What is the difference between subjects' performance in reading comprehension and their general ability in English?

The population of this study consisted of all first -year students majoring in English at Hebron University in the first semester of the academic year 2010/2011. They were 200. The sample of the study consisted of 60 subjects, males and females divided into two groups, one experimental and the other controlled. The researcher followed the experimental method.

The researcher gave the first experimental group five lectures on lexis and syntax while the first controlled group was not given any lecture. The researcher gave the two groups of subjects a post test. The first experimental and controlled groups were given a post test concerns lexical and syntactic knowledge . The post test consisted of two texts followed by twenty questions for each group.

Means, standard deviations and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were calculated by using SPSS program.

The study revealed the following results:

1. There are statistically significant differences in performance in reading comprehension between subjects who have lexical and grammatical knowledge and those who do not have any knowledge.
2. There are no statistically significant differences in performance in reading comprehension between male and female subjects who have lexical and grammatical knowledge and those who do not have any knowledge.
3. Subjects' GAE revealed that there are statistically significant differences in performance in reading comprehension between subjects who have lexical and grammatical knowledge and those who do not have any knowledge.

In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Teachers of English language should give more attention to lexical and grammatical knowledge as the two main factors in improving reading comprehension.

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