

**Abstract****The Effect of Formal Instruction  
on Reading Proficiency**

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The role of formal instruction on language proficiency has been the subject of much debate among specialists in language acquisition throughout the history of the communicative approach (Ellis, 1999). This study specifically investigates the role that formal instruction plays in the area of receptive skills, namely, reading. The study attempts to probe the impact of exposing college students to two general English courses on their reading proficiency. A group of college students from different majors were tested in reading before they had started their English courses, then they were asked to sit for the same test after finishing the courses. Results showed that exposing students to formal instruction in the form of English courses has influenced the different aspects of reading proficiency in various degrees. Several variables such as the students' majors, the specific abilities required for each aspect, and the type of questions may stand behind these results.