In the Name of God

The compassionate The Merciful

Shahrood University of Technology

English Language Department

The Effect of Background Knowledge on EFL Learners' Reading Poems Comprehension

By: Abolfazl Akbari

Supervisor:

Dr. Fatemeh Mozaffari

Advisor:

Dr. Seyed Hamzeh Mousavi

April, 2020

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father and my mother whose affection, love, encouragement, and prayers of day and night make me able to get such success and honor. My deepest thanks and gratitude to them for their unconditional love and support. I am forever indebted to my parents for all their sacrifices. Thank you for educating and preparing me for my future.

Acknowledgement

Abstract

The current study is an attempt to investigate whether background knowledge have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension. To this end, 60 learners out of 97 Iranian EFL learners from six language classes in Shahrood, Iran were selected and divided into two equal groups of experimental and control group. A pretest was administered for the two selected groups. The experimental group received 12 sessions of special instruction to build background knowledge, utilizing THIEVES strategy (Manz, 2002), while the control group received the routine treatment of teaching poems. Each session lasted for one hour with the discussion of one English poem and the course was held three times a week. To analyze the gathered data independent samples t-tests were run. The findings revealed that instruction via THIEVES strategy to activate their background knowledge had a positively significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension. That is, the THIEVES strategy enhanced the Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension.

Keywords: Background Knowledge; THIEVES strategy; Reading Poem Comprehension; Iranian EFL Learners,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Overview

Chapter one starts with the introduction, and continues with the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, significance of study, research questions and hypotheses, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and ends with definitions of the key terms.

1.1. Introduction

Reading is a very complex process, which educators, psychologists, and linguists are interested in for decades (Ellis, 2004). Because of its complexity, a number of theorists are devoted to defining or developing reading models of reading process. The proposal of reading models, from the ones that are linear in nature, such as bottom-up processing (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Hayes, 1991) and top-down processing (Eskey, 1986) to interactive processing (Gove, 1983), demonstrates the efforts that the theorists have delved into what happens when readers are reading.

In fact, according to Hayes (1991), reading is regarded as a meaning-constructing process from this complex process, readers can interact with various sources, such as the content and the background of a text or the pragmatic context and then construct meanings from the information in the reading. Every reading material requires its own background knowledge. Students with different background knowledge may comprehend a reading text differently. Generally speaking, background knowledge is formalized in a theoretical model known as schema theory (Carrell, 1984). Following schema theory, numbers of studies demonstrated the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension (Pritchard, 1990; Bensoussan, 1998). According to Gatbonton and Tucker (1971), relevant cultural information should be provided. The learners will learn better, if they are provided with suitable and relevant background information. In addition, Droop and Verhoeven (1998) proposed a facilitating effect of cultural familiarity for both reading comprehension and reading efficiency. Hence, we cannot deny the importance of background knowledge in reading instruction.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

A number of studies on ESL/EFL reading show some common obstacles encountered by Iranian EFL learners especially regarding the literary texts such as poems. According to some

teachers teaching English in an EFL context like Iran, students could read an essay better than the other text genres such as newspaper articles, poems, and novels. They read very slowly, and in general, students' vocabulary is deficient. They do not know how to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Most students lack English grammar ability. They lack cultural background knowledge in the target culture. Most of them adopt the 'word by word' reading strategy for interpreting a text. Even though they understand the meaning of each word in a text, they are not able to comprehend the whole meaning of the text. They are demotivated for reading and lack efficient problem-solving strategies in reading comprehension. Most of students lack clear and specific objectives for English reading. (O'Reilly & McNamara, 2007)

Despite the preponderance of studies that reported the advantage of background knowledge, several recent studies (Awabdy, 2012; Liu, Schedl, Malloy, & Kong, 2009) indicated that there was no significant relationship between background knowledge and the reading comprehension. In addition, reading is considered a very complicated psycholinguistic operation. The interactive role of the reader during this operation is to comprehend and get meaning from written symbols, it is one among complex operations and something taken very much for granted in our society, many strategies have been used to teach this skill, among them is activating background knowledge. Moreover, no study has been conducted to investigate the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension of poem among Iranian EFL learners. Thus, the current study was an attempt to fill such gaps in literature.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Extant text comprehension theories also assume that prior knowledge is used to complete, and enrich, the reader's mental representation of the text (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). Therefore, the present study aims at investigating the effect of the background knowledge on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Establishing background knowledge before reading a poem is important to the students so they are aware of the nuances of vocabulary words related to the topic. Developing the domain knowledge provides the students with new meanings of words which they can call

upon when they come across the word or phrase in a poem. Prior knowledge on a given topic leads to utilizing the correct definition of the word essential for overall text comprehension.

The previous researches investigated the effect of background knowledge on comprehension, and found it to be an important individual differences factor in the ability to generate inferences and maintain local and global coherence (O'Reilly & McNamara, 2007), the potential to set up cognitive representation of the text (Rawson & Kintsch, 2004), and enhances comprehension (Shapiro, 2004). Furthermore, studies that provided readers with background knowledge prior to reading found benefits of prior knowledge on comprehension (Rawson & Kintsch, 2004).

Although most researchers agree on the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension, there are still lots of problems. First, for the role of background knowledge at different proficiency levels, a controversial situation existed in studies. Chan (2003) suggested that the relative importance of background knowledge and language proficiency in L2 (second language) reading comprehension should be considered. According to Rahman and Bisanz (1986), poor readers' schema does not have a good performance compared to that of good readers. They argue that the priority of background knowledge was more important in good readers. However, in Hudson's (1982) and Carrell's (1984) studies, they both suggested that there was no significant background effect on learners' reading comprehension in advanced readers. Additionally, Chan (2003) maintained that background knowledge was more fruitful to low level students. As a result, the role of background at readers with different proficiency levels seems to become an unsolved problem.

In addition to the benefits of the background knowledge and poetry in language teaching, the findings of this study might make an important contribution to the field of teaching and language learning. It is hoped that the result of this study raises language teachers' attention toward a better and more conscious classroom behavior with language learners by considering their different background knowledge. It is also expected that this research would help the language teachers to become more aware of various types of poems, in order to help and lead the learners toward autonomy and metacognitive awareness and learning in a maintained engaged and motivated atmosphere. In addition, the findings of the current study would be beneficial for curriculum designers, stakeholders, policy makers, language instructors, and EFL/ESL learners.

1.5. Research Question

In line with the purpose of the current study, the following research question was proposed:

RQ1. What is the effect of background knowledge on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension?

1.6. Research Hypothesis

HO1. Background knowledge has significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension.

1.7. Limitations and Delimitations

Like any other research, the present study was constrained by a number of factors. There were three sorts of limitations to this study. The first one was due to the inability to control all the factors influencing learners' reading poem comprehension such as motivation, personality, etc. during the research. The second one was related to the changes in participants' strategic behavior as a result of participating in the research. For example, when the learners know that they are participating in a study, they may behave differently. The third limitation addressed the limited number of the sample of study. That is, it is assumed more participants are needed to be involved in such studies to generalize the findings easily.

The study set several delimitations as follows: the participants were deliberately only Iranian EFL intermediate level English learners from Iranian private language institutes. Thus, the research was done on this proficiency level and educational context only. Moreover, this study only delimited to the learners' background knowledge, and other variables such as autonomy, willingness to communicate were not investigated.

1.8. Definition of the Key Terms

1.8.1. Background Knowledge

According to Gebhard (2000), background knowledge links our real world experiences and expectations that we have. This kind of knowledge is vital when we take the language processing problems into account on the part of the students. For the purpose of the study, the

background knowledge refers to the learners' knowledge which is activated via THIEVES strategy.

1.8.2. Prior Knowledge

Gebhard (2000) believes that prior knowledge is a knowledge the learners already possess before they encounter new information. Resulting from a new idea that readers cannot only rely on the letters in the text to comprehend the reading passage, the top-down model has emerged. The reading process of the top-down model is an opposite process to that of bottom-up model since it requires readers to rely on their prior knowledge and experience in understanding the text rather than constructing meaning from words and sentences.

1.8.3 Reading Comprehension

It is defined as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with written language" (The Reading Study Group, 2002, p. 11). It is also defined as the core of reading and the dynamic process of constructing meaning from text (Durkin, 1993). Reading comprehension is a complicated interaction between automatic and strategic cognitive processes that makes the reader to construct a mental representation of the text (van den Broek & Espin, 2012)

1.8.5. Schemata

According to Rumelhart (1980, p. 34), schema as 'a data structure for representing the genetic concepts stored in memory'. He argues that schema theory refers to how readers utilize the prior knowledge to comprehend and learn from text. Research on the theory of schema has had a great impact on understanding reading. Researchers have identified several types of schemata. Content schema, which refers to a reader's background or world knowledge, provides readers with a foundation, a basis for comparison (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Carrell, Pharis & Liberto 1989).

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0. Overview

Chapter Two consists of three main sections, namely, definition of the variables under study, theoretical framework, and empirical background of the study. Each section will be elaborated in detail.

2.1. Background Knowledge

It is widely accepted in the reading research community that readers' background knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension (Carrell, 1983, 1984b, 1991; Grabe, 1991; Ulijn & Salager-Meyer, 1998). Although current emphasis in reading research seems to focus on the use of background knowledge in reading, it would help to have a better understanding of the use if we can have a clearer idea of what background knowledge has been used, or what background knowledge that readers think they have used in reading comprehension.

Eskey (1986, p. 44) refers to the reader's background knowledge as "knowledge crucial to reading", which is then categorized into two types: "knowledge of form" and "background knowledge" (p. 18). The knowledge of form gives the readers certain opportunities about the language of the text and enhances making correct identifications of forms in reading process. According to Eskey, knowledge of form is linguistic in nature, and it includes recognition of graph-phonic, lexical, syntactic/semantic and rhetorical patterns of language. Knowledge of substance, on the other hand, encompasses cultural, pragmatic and subject-specific information and it provides the reader with certain expectations about the larger conceptual structure of the text. Whereas formal knowledge facilitates making accurate identification of forms from a minimum number of visual cues, subject-specific, cultural and pragmatic knowledge determines not only a personal reconstruction of the meaning of a text but also its depth and richness (Eskey, 1986).

In Rumelhart's (1994) `Toward an interactive model of reading', the knowledge of form is classified into syntactic, semantic, orthographic and lexical knowledge. In an analysis of knowledge, Bernhardt (1991) identifies two types of knowledge: domain-specific knowledge and culture-specific knowledge, the combination of which coincides with Eskey's knowledge of substance.

Generally speaking, reading researchers often differ in their subdivisions of the reader's prior knowledge. Their categorizations, however, demonstrate a tendency to make distinctions among linguistic, conceptual and sociocultural knowledge. Like L1 (first language) reading comprehension, L2 (second or foreign language) reading comprehension starts with word recognition. Studies of eye movements in reading indicate that, as reported in Adams' study (1990) and Bernhardt's research (1991), readers do not guess or sample texts. Instead, they see almost every word in the text.

According to Singer (1994), experienced readers differ remarkably from inexperienced readers in that they have attained automaticity in word recognition and usually focus their attention on higher-level processing, while inexperienced readers usually have to undertake fretful decoding, focusing their attention on the processing of the components of the individual words. Stanovich (1991) also notes: "[i]t is not that the good reader relies less on visual information, but that the visual analysis mechanisms of the good reader use less capacity. Good readers are efficient processors in every sense." (p. 21)

Being able to recognize L2 words, however, does not necessarily mean being able to interpret their meaning. L2 readers may well be able to recognize L2 words without knowing what they mean. They need to build up their vocabulary and learn to automate the link between word recognition and word meaning. As we all know, words usually do not come in isolation in natural texts, and their combination into larger units is governed by the syntax of the language (Lyons, 1981). Readers need syntactic knowledge to construct an interpretation of what they read. According to Adams (1980), "syntactic competence is an important dimension of linguistic competence in general" (p. 18). Berman (1984) also notes, on the basis of her experiments with Hebrew-speaking college students learning English as a foreign language, that "efficient FL [i.e. fluent] readers must rely in part on syntactic devices to get at text meaning" (p. 153).

Apart from word recognition and syntactic knowledge, L2 readers also need knowledge of textual structure. According to Meyer (1984), textual structure is realized in various linguistic devices such as superordinate references like topic sentences. It may also take the forms of `pointer words or signals' (Roller, 1990), which indicate sequential, causal or concessive relations, etc. A considerable amount of research has been conducted about the impacts of textual organization on L2 reading (Barnitz, 1985; Bernhardt, 1991; Carrell, 1984a; Cohen et al, 1979; Davies, 1984; Roller, 1990; Steffensen, 1987, 1988; Ulijn &

Salager-Meyer, 1998; Urquhart, 1984). Horiba (1996) summarizes it as compensating for the difficulty in processing at a lower level.

Apart from knowledge of form, knowledge of content also influences L2 reading comprehension. According to Carrell (1983), "comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than just relying on one's linguistic knowledge" (p. 557), because "a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge' (Carrell, 1984b, p. 332).

The relationships between knowledge of content and knowledge of form in regard to their contributions to L2 reading comprehension have long been a research topic. According to Grabe (1991), most academically oriented L2 learners are literate in one language and trying to become literate in another. Cummins (1976) and Clarke (1980) propose the notion of threshold level, as they find out that L2 readers will not be able to read as well in L2 as in their L1 until they have reached the threshold level of competence in L2. Ulijin and Salager-Meyer (1998) note in their studies that helping students of low L2 proficiency to improve their word-identification skill is a more important goal than helping them to develop problem-solving skills such as using context to figure out interpretations, intentions and conclusions. Hudson's (1988) experimental data also show that L2 readers with advanced proficiency levels had less trouble processing visual information than those with lower proficiency level and that advanced L2 readers were able to bring more prior knowledge to bear on the reading process than beginning or intermediate L2 readers. Some researchers (Bensoussan, 1998; Carrell, 1988) argue that L2 readers' inadequate L2 proficiency may cause them to over-rely on their prior conceptual and sociocultural knowledge to compensate for their insufficient L2 proficiency. Pritchard (1990) found that L2 readers appeared to use different reading strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar texts. Comparing proficient and less proficient ESL readers in the United States, Fitzgerald (1995) concludes that:

"[o]n the whole, more proficient ESL readers (a) made better use of vocabulary knowledge, (b) used a greater variety of metacognitive strategies and used selected strategies more frequently, (c) took more action to solve miscomprehension and checked solutions to problems more often, (d) used psycholinguistic strategies that were more meaning-oriented, (e) used more schema knowledge, and (f) made better and/or more inferences." (p. 180)

2.2. Literature and Language Teaching

Concerning the role of literature such as novels and poetry in the process of language teaching, a number of points are noteworthy. The first important point is that no previous study looks at empirical research into literature in language teaching. It is true that there was far less research then than there is now (Carter, 2007), but whatever research there was then is not always accorded a place. Secondly, studies focus very much on English, with only a few references to other languages, reflecting the predominance of English as the main global foreign language, and the division between it and other foreign languages. Having said that, it is also important to note other divisions in this area. Kramsch and Kramsch (2000) point out that, in general, foreign language teaching in the US has tended to remain enclosed within language boundaries, with separate professional organizations for different languages. Also in the US there is at university level the division between language teaching and learning and literature in general, a phenomenon which Kramsch and Nolden (1994, p. 28) call "the institutionalized dichotomy between literary studies and language training", as well as the division between the focus on language learning in the initial stages of an undergraduate degree, and literature learning in the later years of study (e.g. Lyman-Hager 2000; Murti 1996). Burnett and Fonder-Solano (2002), for example, have documented the misunderstandings between literature teachers and language teachers, including incidents of actual hostility (Byrnes & Kord 2002; Fonder-Solano & Burnett 2004).

There is some tentative agreement that these divisions are beginning to be bridged. According to Paran (2006b), EFL, at last, there has been a move towards integrating language and literature, and Carter (2007) suggests that at least some of the differences have begun eroding, and goes on to say that literature has begun to assume a higher profile in contexts of second language acquisition, a dimension absent from the research radar in 1986. Figure 2.1 presents the relationship between literature and language learning as the intersection of two axes. The horizontal axis refers to the extent to which any program or lesson focuses on literature or on literary competence and its development. Thus, on the left hand side of this axis, where the learners are learning a second or a foreign language, there is little wish on the part of teachers to teach language per se; even where there is an engagement with language, this engagement serves a literary aim (e.g. understanding the linguistic choices made by the writer). The vertical axis represents the extent of engagement with language learning: at one end we have a focus on language learning, where the teacher focuses explicitly on language

learning and activities are specifically designed to further this aim. At the other end of the axis, we have classes or courses where there is no explicit aim on language learning at all.

Language learning focus

(1) *Literary knowledge and skills are focused on, but there is also a conscious focus on the lexis, grammar etc.*

(2) *Literature is used just as a text with no focus on literary values, literary knowledge, or literary skills*

Literary focus ——————————————————— No literary focus

(3) *Literature is discussed only as literature; any focus on language is on its literary effects*

(4) *Extensive reading*

No language learning focus

Figure 2.1. *The intersection of literature and language teaching*

The intersection of these two axes results, as Figure 2.1 shows, in four quadrants. Quadrant 1 represents a situation where both areas are focused on. Quadrant 2 presents a context where no distinction is shown between representational texts and referential texts. Quadrant 3 shows a context where literature is discussed only as literature, and no overt attention is given to language development: it is concluded that the learner has gained the linguistic level required to discuss literature. Finally, Quadrant 4 presents extensive reading, where there is no attention to literary qualities of what is being read. Figure 2.1 is, of course, a simplification: there are other important elements that can enter into a reciprocal relationship with literature in the language classroom. One, for example, is reading and the study of reading comprehension. The other is the issue of culture, cultural knowledge, and intercultural competence. A true picture of the situation would most likely resemble a web, with a large number of possible permutations of the interactions between the strands.

EAP courses in the USA are among the arena where the use of literature has increased. Belcher and Hirvela (2000), Hirvela (2001a) and Vandrick (2003) provide an overview of the area, linking the controversy to debates in L1 teaching of writing in the US. Belcher and Hirvela (2000) show how, initially, composition and literature tended to be taught by the same people at the time when the two areas emerged as subjects worthy of academic study, and the two subjects have diverged and converged over the years. In the L2 context, Belcher and

Hirvela (2000) trace the rise of ESP and the way in which the focus among L2 composition teachers on discourse communities and the language required for participants, meant that literature and literary language were regarded as unappropriated second language teaching. However, they suggest that reading and writing only information-based texts may in fact prevent students from developing the "array of rhetorical and linguistic resources" (Belcher & Hirvela 2000, p. 29) that they need for their writing. According to Vandrick (2003), the objections to the utilizing of literature include the difficulties it might have, the lack of relevance and motivation for learners.

An important discussion of the arguments for and against using literature in the L2 classroom is Edmondson (1997), whose overall position is that literature has nothing special to offer language teaching. Although the observations he makes at the beginning of his paper are drawn from a variety of contexts, the picture that Edmondson (1997) draws is one in which learners are faced with to the same literature teaching in EFL/ESL contexts. He then argues either against the utilization of literature, and maintains that literature does not have any special benefit compared to other texts; that literature is not more motivating than other texts, and can sometimes be extremely demotivating, depending on the way the text is used.

In Paran (2006b), Edmondson's view of the language learner chimes in with this, and is implicit in his phraseology: he talks about 'the business of language learning' (p. 42) and 'the business of achieving proficiency or general competence in an L2' (p. 45); the students are pedagogical users. This is similar to the trend that Shanahan (1997) identifies in FL teaching in the US, which he claims is a utilitarian business.

If we take as our starting point an understanding of the role of literature in daily life, the way in which narratives function in learning, the role of literature and narratives in education, and the language-literature link– all these are important in understanding that literature may have a place in L2 teaching more than the subjects mentioned by Edmondson in the quote above, or subjects such as 'philosophy, art, contemporary political issues, or other subjects on the humanist agenda' (Horowitz, 1990, p. 162). Language learning is not only about language – it is about learning as well; it is not only about training, but also about education. As Bredella points out 'literary texts in the foreign language classroom are not only important for foreign language learning, but also provide it with significant educational goals' (Bredella, 2000a, p. 380).

Shanahan (1997) presents an integrated view of this area, stressing that 'our fundamental goal as language professionals is to expand and enrich the lives of our students and the society in which they live' (Shanahan, 1997, p. 171), and going on to explore the importance of the affective element of language learning and the importance of symbolic expression. More recent theorizing has shifted away from a limited, isolating perspective in which the different areas of language learning are compartmentalized and teaching has a utilitarian, market-economy driven purpose, to more holistic perspectives which takes different aspects of the learner and the context of learning into account, looking at the whole person and the whole culture, in which literature is part of developing the whole person, and in which affective development and affective factors are taken into account.

Kern and Schultz (2005) view literature in a foreign language within a re-framing and redefining of literacy. They explore parallels between new concepts of literacy and "the work of the literary specialist" (2005, p. 383), suggesting that the multiple-layered reading of texts characteristic of literary readings can, within a larger literacy framework, be of use for the teaching of this type of reading.

2.2.1. Poem in Teaching Language

The conventional concept of poetry as one of the most complex forms of literary expression is not accessible for all learners to have a clear-cut definition. In new concept of literature definition, Collins Cobuild, (2001) defines it as "a poem is a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their beauty and sound and are carefully arranged, often in short lines which rhyme" (p. 547).

Many scholars argue that poetry enhances the senses and literary. It assists learners to present an image in their mind. Poetry can be represented in a number of forms. In addition, its language can be simple or ornamental. To utilize pottery in EFL contexts, there are many approaches. First, Poetry can provide opportunities for language learning and teaching profession. For example, it presents learning vocabulary and structure in a different context. Second, poetry can give aspiration to language learning environment via emerging techniques and innovative ideas and contents.

Poetry is an ideal entry into language learning for English language learners because of its rhythm, repetition, and rhyme (Vardell, Hadaway & Young, 2001). Through listening to, reading, and rereading poetry, students can begin to increase their exposure to language. They also highlight the fact that poems are usually brief, making them less intimidating and more manageable pieces of text for ELLs to read. Additionally, choral reading of poetry allows students to practice word recognition and pronunciation of English in a fun, supportive, and appealing way. Poetry also promotes oral fluency and lays a strong foundation for reading in a new language (Vardell, Hadaway & Young, 2006). Poetry is especially appropriate and amazingly effective for language learning and they advocate that poetry is an ideal entry point for language learning. They list even more benefits of using poetry in the ESL classroom:

• Beginning readers are more able to understand the meaning of poetry because of its rhyme, rhythm, and repetition, and because the accent falls on meaningful words.

• Poetry can serve as a brief introduction to other literature as well as introduce content and concepts across the curriculum.

• Poetry can encourage students to write longer narratives from its brief introduction of characters, scenes, and stories.

• Poetry is written in a variety of formats which offer wonderful beginning writing opportunities.

In addition to the benefits listed above, Vardell, Hadaway, & Young also offer strategies for sharing poetry in the ESL classroom (2006). They indicate the importance of reading poems aloud to the class because it helps English language learners attend to the sounds of the words and lines as well as to their meaning. Reading aloud also sets the stage for student participation in the read-aloud process and it invites students to follow the teacher's lead in enjoying poetry. This step is particularly important for middle school students, who may be self-conscious about reading poetry aloud. Less attention is called to them when they participate in a choral reading of poetry (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2002).

Responding to poetry is also an effective way to help English language learners develop both oral and written communication skills in English (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2001). These authors also list some questions for facilitating conversations about poems including: What did you think about the poem? What did you like about the poem? What did

this poem remind you of? What is the poet saying here? For students who are not comfortable contributing to class discussions because of limited language skills, talking with a partner may be more beneficial, as some ELLs are often more comfortable sharing with one person, rather than the entire class. Teachers can also use poetry circles, similar to literature circles, to encourage students to share and read about poetry. Also highlighted in this article was one middle school teacher's use of art projects in small groups to help students explore multicultural poetry. Each group read and performed a poem for the class. They then created murals to illustrate their poems and explained them to the class (Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006). "This kind of response activity helped students think deeply about a poem, talk critically with classmates about the words and ideas, and express themselves creatively about their own interpretations of the poem's meaning to them" (p. 804). Other literature suggests using illustrations to respond to poetry. Peregoy & Boyle (2005) recommend that teachers encourage students to illustrate poems they have read to provide another way of developing English language learners' response to literature. They suggest that students can also make published books of poems and create illustrations to go along with them. The illustrations involve all learners, even beginners, and assist the students in expressing and defining their individual responses to the literature.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Theoretical Framework of Background Knowledge

In schema theory, one assumption is that any spoken and written text does not by itself possess meaning. Comprehending a text needs knowledge to make a sense between the materials to one's own knowledge. In this section, first, the notion of schema should be presented. Schemas, or schema as they are sometimes known, have been described as "cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in long-term memory" (Widdowson, 1983, p. 55). Widdowson and Cook both emphasize the cognitive characteristics of schema that allow us to related incoming information to already known information. This covers the knowledge of the world, from everyday knowledge to very specialized knowledge, knowledge of language structures, and knowledge of texts and forms they take in terms of genre, and organization. In addition to allowing us to organize

information and knowledge economically, schemas also allow us to predict the continuation of both spoken and written discourse. The first part of a text activates a schema, that is, calls up a schema, which is either confirmed or disconfirmed by what follows.

Research on the theory of schema has had a great impact on understanding reading. Researchers have identified several types of schemata. Content schema, which refers to a reader's background or world knowledge, provides readers with a foundation, a basis for comparison (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Carrell, Pharis & Liberto 1989). Formal schema, often known as textual schema, refers to the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. It can include knowledge of different text types and genres, and also includes the understanding that different types of texts use text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar, level of formality/register differently. Schooling and culture play the largest role in providing one with a knowledge base of formal schemata. While formal schemata cover discourse level items, linguistic or language schemata include the decoding features needed to recognize words and how they fit together in a sentence. First language readers, through repeated examples, are able to generalize a pattern or guess the meaning of a word, which may not have initially been part of their linguistic schema. The building of linguistic schema in a second language can proceed in the much the same way.

From the above discussion it is evident that schema plays an important role in text comprehension, both in the L1 and L2 context. For example, whether reading in a first or second language, one can assume that both native and non-native readers will understand more of a text when they are familiar with content, formal, and linguistic schema. An L2 reader, however, who does not possess such knowledge can experience schema interference, or lack of comprehension-ideas which are examined further in the following discussion pertaining to relevant research in this area.

Content schema or cultural orientation in terms of background knowledge is also a factor that influences L2/FL reading and has been discussed by Barnett (1989), Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), and Johnson (1982). Most methodologies investigating the role of schemata or background/prior knowledge were variations on Carrell's (1987) paradigm. This study involved 28 Muslim Arabs and 24 Catholic Hispanic ESL students of high-intermediate proficiency enrolled in an intensive English program at a Midwestern university. Each student read two texts, one with Muslim-oriented content and the other with Catholic-oriented content. Each text was presented in either a well-organized rhetorical format or an unfamiliar,

altered rhetorical format. After reading each text, the students answered a series of multiple-choice comprehension questions and were asked to recall the text in writing. Analysis of the recall protocols and scores on the comprehension questions suggested that schemata affected the ESL readers' comprehension and recall. Participants better comprehended and remembered passages that were similar in some way to their native cultures, or that were deemed more familiar to them. Other studies have shown similar effects in those participants better comprehended and/or remembered passages that were more familiar to them (Ammon, 1987; Carrell, 1981; Johnson, 1981, 1982; Langer, Barolome, Vasquez& Lucas 1990; Shimoda 1989). Further evidence from such studies also suggested that reader's schemata for content affected comprehension and remembering more than did their formal schemata for text organization. For example, in the Carrell's (1987) study described above, students remembered the most when both the content and rhetorical form was familiar to them. However, when only content or only form was unfamiliar, unfamiliar content caused more difficulty for the readers than unfamiliar form.

Steffensen and Joag-Dev (1984) did a study on readers' comprehended texts about their own cultures. They found that readers would comprehend texts about their own cultures more appropriately than the other texts. In addition, Johnson (1981) explored the impact of the cultural origin of prose on the reading comprehension. His findings revealed that the cultural origin of the story had a significant impact on reading comprehension than syntactic or semantic complexity of the text.

2.4. Empirical Studies on Background Knowledge

Researchers have investigated the role of prior knowledge in a variety of ways. For instance, Kashani Mahmood (2013) investigated the effect of graphic organization on reading comprehension. He concluded that graphic organizers give students maps that they can use to pinpoint, collect, organize, and combine information from a multitude of resources. Students can use this knowledge to develop possible solutions for real-life, messy problems. Teachers may activate students' prior knowledge, cultivate students' meta-cognition, and build up their holistic concept of a given topic for long-term memory by modelling graphic organizers strategy.

In another study, Khosrojerdi (2010) investigated the role of background knowledge and IQ and recall of the texts in advanced learners in Iran. She found that there is no relationship between IQ and recall of the texts in advanced learners in Iran. The researcher believes that one probable explanation for this, rather strange, result may be due to the advanced level of the subjects. In other words, advanced learners are capable of using other skills such as reading comprehension strategies for better a better comprehension of the texts and therefore better recalling. When confronting the unfamiliar texts, advanced learners attempt to use skills other than their background knowledge to comprehend and recall the texts. She also found that the subjects' intelligence has no role or effect on the comprehension and recall of the texts. This finding is not in line with the previous ones.

In another research, Caillies and DenhieÁre (2002) explored the relationship that readers, with various levels of prior knowledge, showed between the text's elements. They found that readers with different levels of prior knowledge differ in regard to reading times, recognition performances, and comprehension questions. The more prior knowledge a reader has, the shorter the reading time, and the higher the percentage of accuracy on comprehension questions. They also found that prior knowledge provides the retrieval structures that give readers direct access to the information they need and *when* they need it. Thus, high-knowledge readers are able to develop a type of hierarchical retrieval structure, which allows them to automatically retrieve distant information in the surface structure of the text.

In another investigation by Najjari (2002), the researcher tried to prove that preparing the ESP (English for Specific Purpose) learners with the appropriate background information helps them to perform better on discipline-based achievement tests. He found that teacher's major role in ESP is to recognize the importance of genre-based activities in building related information in such a way that the new material is easily assimilated into the learners' existing field of knowledge. Due to the fact that comprehending a text can be construed as an interactive process between reader's background knowledge and the text, it is the role of the teacher to give.

Long (1990) investigated the relationship between background knowledge and L2 listening comprehension. He showed that no significant differences were found between the familiar and unfamiliar passages for the recognition measure. In addition, Bacon (1992) investigated the effect of background knowledge during listening process. Her findings revealed that successful listeners favored using their personal, world, and discourse

knowledge while less successful listeners either made erroneous meaning from their prior knowledge or ignored it altogether.

In the same vein, Chiang and Dunkel (1992) explored the effect of speech modification, prior knowledge, and listening proficiency on EFL listening comprehension. The results showed that the participants' scored higher on the familiar-topic lecture than on the unfamiliar-topic lecture.

Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) examined the effects of topic familiarity on L2 listening comprehension. The findings showed that participants scored mainly higher on the familiar topic than on the new one.

Ghorbandordinejad and Bayat (2014) considered the impact of cross-cultural foundation information on Iranian EFL learners' reading perception capacity. To aim this goal, sixty female EFL learners in the vicinity of 17 and 19 years old were chosen at a private language institute in Sabzevar in view of their scores in language capability test and were arbitrarily appointed to two gatherings of thirty. The educator gave ten reading sections the social substance in both control and experimental groups. During the investigation, the educator made her students comfortable with target culture. Then again, the students in Control group did not appreciate any of the benefits of social warm-up exercises which were intended to actuate the multifaceted foundation data of students in Experimental gathering. Toward the finish of this treatment, the two groups took a post-test to see whether the treatment had any effect on their reading cognizance capacity. The consequences of the post-test demonstrated that the groups performed contrastingly on the post-test, which showed that commonality with particular culturally oriented language reading content would enhance Iranian EFL learners' reading perception capacity.

The main concentration of Yousef, Karimi and Janfeshan's (2014) study was to consider the connection between social foundation of Iranian EFL learners and reading understanding. Forty-five Iranian language learners majoring in TEFL and English language interpretation from three distinct ethnicities in various provinces were chosen through deliberate selecting. All members got three distinctive reading cognizance sub-tests: a reading sub-test involving socially recognizable points and two reading sub-tests with socially new themes. The outcomes demonstrated that the means of all gatherings on socially natural reading tests were more noteworthy than their means on reading tests with new contents. On the premise of the results, it could be reasoned that foundation learning was truly instrumental

in relating the relevant meanings with EFL readers' perception. The capacity to comprehend content was construct not just in light of the reader's linguistic information, additionally on general learning of the world and the degree to which that information was actuated during processing. With socially pertinent information, EFL students' earlier and recognizable encounters were profitable to their reading understanding.

Based on Singaravelu's (2004) study, it was found that that prior knowledge provided to the treatment group learners enhanced their reading comprehension. In the same vein, Tarchi (2009) examined both direct and indirect effects of prior knowledge on reading comprehension. Results showed that prior knowledge played an essential role, affecting comprehension both, directly and indirectly.

In 1990, Chai investigated the effects of pre-reading instructions on the comprehension of text by ESL readers based on their level of proficiency. The research was conducted on selected ITM MARA students, pursuing intensive English course. The respondents were divided into two groups: good readers (group1) and poor readers (group 2). Background knowledge input was given to group 2 during the pre-reading. The results showed that the pre-reading instructions are effective and have benefited more to the high proficiency readers than the low proficiency readers.

O'Brian (2007) in her research intended to investigate the most effective pre-reading activities that can activate students' background knowledge, in helping them to comprehend texts. The pre-reading activities are KWL Chart and Anticipation Guide. The research was conducted in a high school in Mid-Western, USA. The result showed that both KWL Chart and Anticipation Guide are effective pre-reading activities strategies in activating students' background knowledge and that the students' grade has improved due to the usage of them.

However, despite the positive effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension performance, Johnston (2009) argued on the effects of background knowledge. They have found out that background knowledge has not given positive effect or no effect at all on reading comprehension. Background knowledge also has been said to be interference rather than facilitates. The effect depends on the cost that associates with schema activation and the process involved in understanding such as translating, predicting or 'pre-fetching' (summaries, advance organizer, informative titles) before reading texts. The effect of activation of background knowledge is no longer positive due to those elements that readers have in mind before they read the texts.

Sadighi and Zare (2006) examined the role of background knowledge on listening comprehension. Having done the research and analyzing the data, they concluded that the findings of the study show that the experimental group had a better performance as compared with the control group in their listening comprehension, and this better performance in the listening test seems to be the result of the background of the subjects in the experimental group.

In sum, the reviewing of the related literature revealed that the effect of background knowledge on interpreting poems in EFL /ESL contexts is undeniable. However, no study was shown to be conducted in Iranian EFL context in terms of background knowledge and poetry interpretation. Accordingly, the current study made an attempt to fill such gap in literature.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Three deals with the methodology, which enjoys an experimental research, and describes the participants, research design, instruments and materials, data analysis and finally statistical treatment.

3.2. Participants

Consulting two language experts who were holding PhD. in TEFL, the researcher decided to select upper-intermediate and advanced learners for the study. In doing so, before conducting an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), it was expected to select those whose score would fall between one standard deviation (+1SD) above the mean and one standard deviation (-1SD) below the mean as the cut-off criterion and set as upper-intermediate and advanced. As the result, administering an OPT and based on its results, 60 out of 97 Iranian EFL learners from six language classes were selected as the main participants of the current study. Their age ranged between 17 and 23 years old. All of the participants were supposed to take a pretest and posttest. The participants were divided into two groups of experimental and control group with 30 learners in each. Prior to the instruction, the researcher got the consent forms from the participants and their instructors in four language institutes in Shahrood, Iran. All of them agreed to participate in the study and signed the consent forms.

In addition, all of them were native Persian speakers and the only language learning experience for them was through the language institute. Table 3.1. displays the grouping procedure.

Table 3.1. Number of EFL participants of the study.

Groups	No.
Experimental Group	30
Control Group	30
Total	60

3.3. Research Design

The method adopted in this study was quantitative research in nature. The design of this research was nonrandomized control group, pretest-posttest design in type of quasi experimental design (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010)

Table 3.2. Nonrandomized Control Group, Pretest-Posttest Design

Group	Pretest	Independent Variable	Posttest
E	P1	X	P2
C	P1	-	P2

According to Ary et al. (2010), this design is similar to true experimental design in that it involves manipulation of the independent variable, but there is a big difference which is in "quasi", the research does not use the groups randomly, due to any reasons like school systems or parents disagreement. This design, thus, has lower internal validity than true experimental design.

In this design, a researcher exposes one or two different pre-existing groups of students to treatment and measures the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable, administrating pretest to both groups and also a posttest. If the teacher is the same in both groups, and the pretest result verifies that there is no or very little difference between the C group and the E group before the exposure to the treatment, there are not serious threats to internal validity.

Since three criteria of a quasi-experimental design, namely, nonrandom selection, treatment, and control group were met, this kind of research design was chosen. There were also a pretest and a posttest for all the groups and a twelfth-session treatment period (between the pretest and posttest). In addition, a reading poem instruction was utilized. Prior to the instruction, the researcher as the instructor made an attempt to conduct the treatments appropriately. The instruction was administered as the independent variable and the amount of Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension was regarded as dependent variable.

It is worth noting here that the validity of the poem selection was confirmed in a pilot study with four expert judges. In examining the validity of good poems to teach, Boote (2006) suggests that poems with words known by 40%-80% of the population are words worth teaching. She indicates that words known by less than 40% of the population are not worth teaching nor are the words known by over 80% of the population, suggesting, possibly, that those under 40% may be too difficult and not within an instructional range and that those over 80% are already known and be acquired independently.

3.4. Instruments and material

For the purpose of the current study, the following instruments and material were utilized.

3.4.1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

In order to check the level of general language proficiency of the participants at the beginning of the study and find out a homogenous sample, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was utilized. The items of the OPT test were taken from 'Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test' by Philips (2017). In addition, using the KR21 formula, the internal consistency of the test was calculated and reported to be (.76), which was fairly satisfactory. Furthermore, to ensure its validity, it was reviewed by two language experts and their comments were utilized in the follow-up version in the main study.

The OPT consisted of three parts: listening comprehension, reading comprehension and grammatical structures. The test has 80 items. Listening section of the test consisted of 20 items in multiple-choice form followed by reading comprehension section consisting of four passages with 40 questions in multiple-choice form. The third section of the OPT aimed at testing the grammatical knowledge of participants by giving 20 items in multiple-choice form. The participants were supposed to do the test in 100 minutes. (See Appendix 1)

3.4.2. Pretest on Reading Poem

In addition to OPT, a researcher-made reading poem comprehension pretest was utilized as the other required instrument in this study. The aim was to determine whether participants were homogeneous in terms of their reading poem comprehension prior to the instruction. This pretest consisted of eight poems with follow-up multiple-choice test items. The poems and their related questions were also reviewed by two language experts to ensure the validity. In addition, through KR-21 the reliability of the pretest was calculated. (See Appendix 2)

3.4.3. Posttest on Reading Poem

An identical reading poem comprehension test as the posttest was developed and administered. This test also consisted of 50 multiple-choice items. The only difference between this test and the pretest was that the sequence of the items was changed in order to avoid "practice effect" (Bachman, 1990) on the part of the participants.

3.4.4. Reading Poem Book

For the purpose of the study, the poem book named as "Poems selected by Tom Paulin" written by Thomas Hardy was selected. Hardy preferred his poetry to the novels that made him famous, writing beautifully about the wild Dorset countryside where he grew up, wind and rain, churchyards and nature. He wrote some of his finest love poems in his later years, many of them harking back to the early days of his relationship with his first wife, Emma Gifford. In "The Voice", written a month after her funeral, he remembers the "air-blue gown" she wore when they first knew each other and starts with the famous line, "Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me". The poems were reviewed by the expert comments and eight poems were finally selected for the instruction. The book was taught in the targeted language institutes as the supplementary reading book.
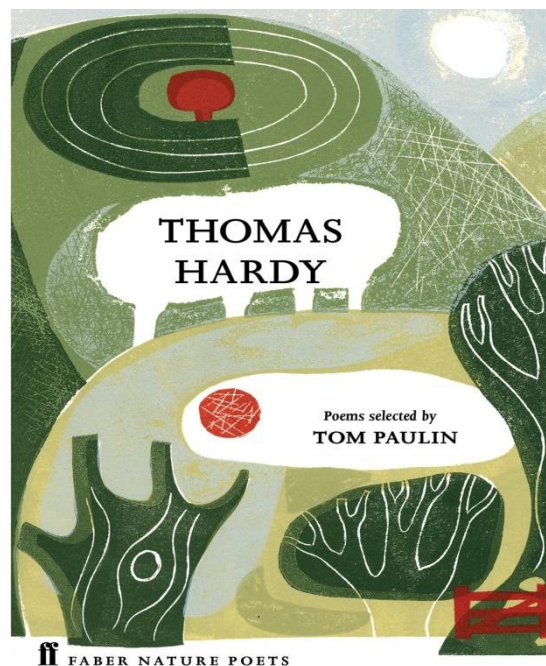
3.5. Procedure

To answer the main research questions in the present study, first the OPT was administered among 97 language learners at four language institutes in Shahrood, Iran. All of the participants were supposed to take this placement test. The allotted time for this test was 100 minutes. Then, based on the results of the placement test, 60 students, from six language classes with nearly the same score were selected. Next, 30 learners as the experimental group and 30 learners as the control group were selected. A pretest was also taken for the two selected groups. That is to say, as the fundamental part of the procedure in this study, a pretest including reading poem items, from *Poems selected by Tom Paulin*, was given to all the participants in order to measure their general English reading poem comprehension. In addition, the amount of students' familiarity with selected poems was assessed. After conducting the pretest, the results scores were analyzed and showed no significant difference between two groups. That is to say, the mean of the two groups was almost the same.

The experimental group received 12 sessions of instruction, but the control group received the conventional treatment of teaching poem. Each session lasted for one hour and was held three times a week during the first educational semester of the institute. In every session, the researcher was supposed to teach one English poem. To build background knowledge in the instruction THIEVES strategy (Manz, 2002) was utilized. This strategy was said to assist students with comprehension by allowing them to preview the text structure in

an organized manner. This pre-reading strategy will allow students to "steal" information before they actually begin reading the poem. The Acronym (THIEVES) stands for:

[**T**]itle – Students sometimes skip the title, but it provides valuable information by establishing the topic and the context of the chapter.

[**H**]eadings – Headings indicate the important sections of the chapter. They help students identify the specific topics covered.

[**I**]ntroduction -The introduction provides an overview of the chapter. It may come after the title and before the first heading.

[**E**]very first sentence in a paragraph – First sentences are often the topic sentences of the paragraph, and by reading these a student can get an idea of the information that will be contained in the chapter.

[**V**]isuals and [**V**]ocabulary – Students should look at all pictures, charts, tables, maps and graphs contained in the chapter. They need to read the captions and labels on each. This enables students to learn a little about the topic before they begin to read.

[**E**]nd-of-Chapter Questions. Many texts contain a summary at the end of the chapter. Students can read the summary to activate prior knowledge and give them an idea of the important concepts contained in the chapter.

[**S**]ummary enhances comprehension and retention of the information and ideas encountered during reading. (Manz, 2002, p. 11)

In the control group, the learners were only supposed to express some of the vocabularies in the poems and discuss the poems. However, in the experimental group, the instructor utilized the THIEVES strategy and made an attempt to activate or build background knowledge by talking about the poet's bibliography, his/her intention, the context of the poem, the historical event, the social and contextual factors, etc.

After conducting 8 sessions of instructions, a posttest with the same content as the pretest was given to all the participants in order to measure their poem comprehension in English. Finally, the results were analyzed and described in detail.

3.6. Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, after conducting the placement test, 60 participants who scored 1 standard deviation above the mean and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. Then, based on the gathered data from the pretest and posttest, the mean scores of the two tests were also compared through utilizing independent samples t-tests. This helped us to ensure that there was no significant difference between control and experimental groups in the present research and confirmed that any possible poem comprehension gains after conducting the instruction were not due to preexisting differences. Once the researcher ensured that two groups were at the same level of English poem comprehension, independent samples t-test was run.

Chapter Four

Results

4.0. Overview

This chapter presents the data analysis and results of the analysis. Moreover, discussion of the results also follows.

4.1. Restatement of the Research Question

As mentioned earlier, the question of the current study lies on the fact that EFL learners encounter problems in interpreting the poetry which could be resolved by activating background knowledge.

4.2. Reliability Indexes of the Research Instruments

Before utilizing the research instruments in the current study, their reliability indices were estimated. Table 4.1 shows the reliability indices of the research instruments.

Table 4.1. Reliability of research instruments

Test	Items	KR- 21
OPT	100	0.76
Pretest	50	0.79
Posttest	50	0.81

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Tests

To answer the research questions of the study, descriptive statistics of all tests were calculated. First, the descriptive statistics of the Oxford Placement Test are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics of the Oxford Placement Test

	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
OPT	97	35	87	61	1.602
Valid N	97				

According to Table 4.2, the mean and standard deviation of OPT scores are 61 and 1.602, respectively. Based on the OPT results, 60 out of 97 language teachers, whose scores were between 63 and 87 were selected. As mentioned earlier, from 82 learners, 30 learners as the experimental and 30 learners as the control group were selected. Similarly, the descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest of the control group are presented in Table 4.3.

4.3.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

Descriptive analysis of the pretest and posttest of the control group are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. The Descriptive analysis of control group

N		Min.	Max.	M	SD
Pretest	30	36	86	61	1.233
Posttest	30	37	84	60.5	1.705

As shown in Table 4.3, the control group's pretest mean score is 61 (SD= 1.233). In addition, the initial comparing the pretest results with those of the posttest score (mean=60.5, SD= 1.705) revealed that no much development in Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension happened. Moreover, Figure 4.1 illustrates pretest scores for the control group.
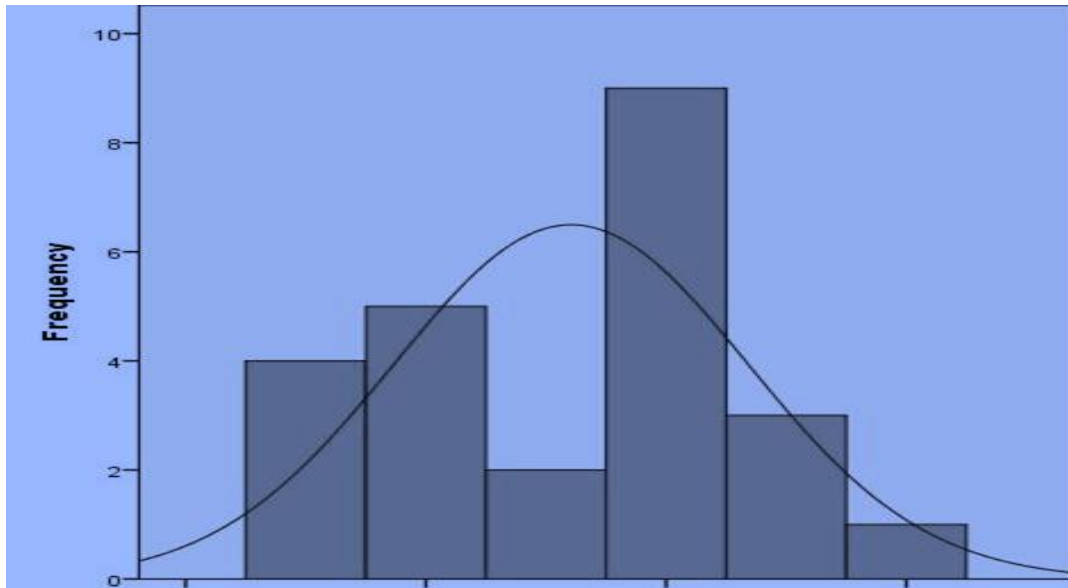
Figure 4.1 Pretest of the control group

In addition, the results indicated in Figure 4.2 illustrate the posttest scores of the control group.
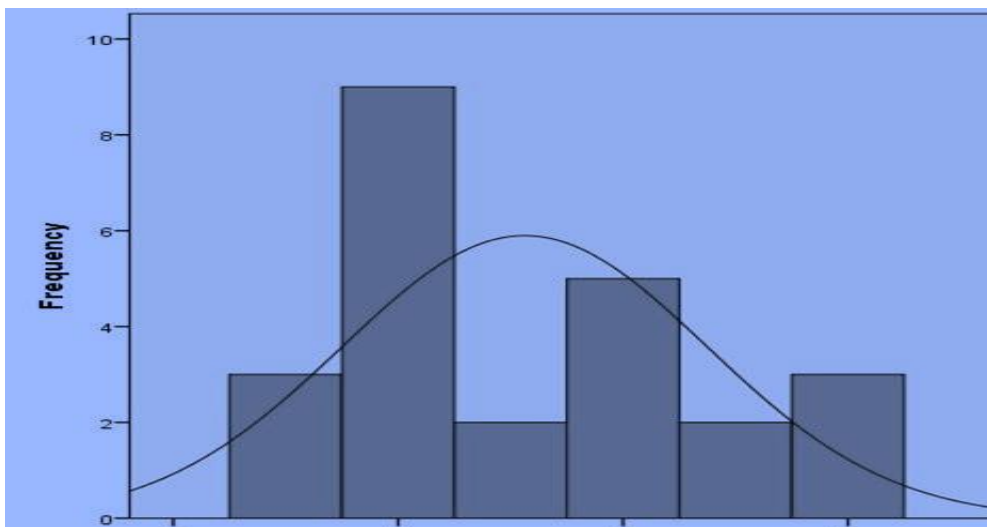
Figure 4.2. Posttest of the control group

4.3.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group

As mentioned earlier, the experimental group received instruction via THIEVES strategy to activate their background knowledge. The results of pretest and posttest of the experimental group are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. The Descriptive analysis of the experimental group

	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD.
Pretest	30	36	87	61.5	1.233
Posttest	30	42	86	64	1.715

As shown in Table 4.4., the experimental group's mean in pretest is 61.5 with the standard deviation of 1.233; while in the posttest, the experimental group indicated a mean score of 64 with the standard deviation of 1.715. In addition, the following figures show the pretest and posttest of the experimental group, respectively.
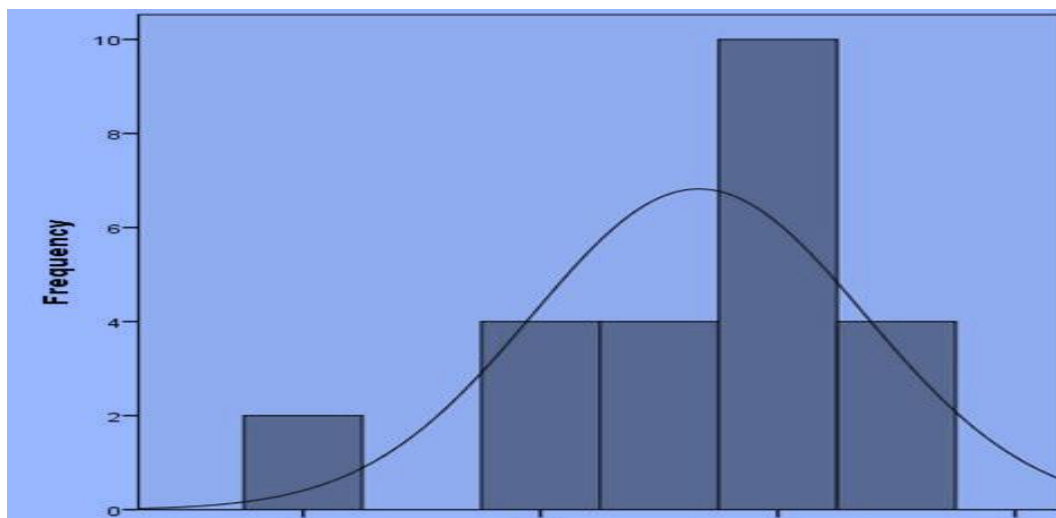
Figure 4.3. The pretest of the experimental group

Moreover, the Figure 4.4 represents the posttest of the experimental group.
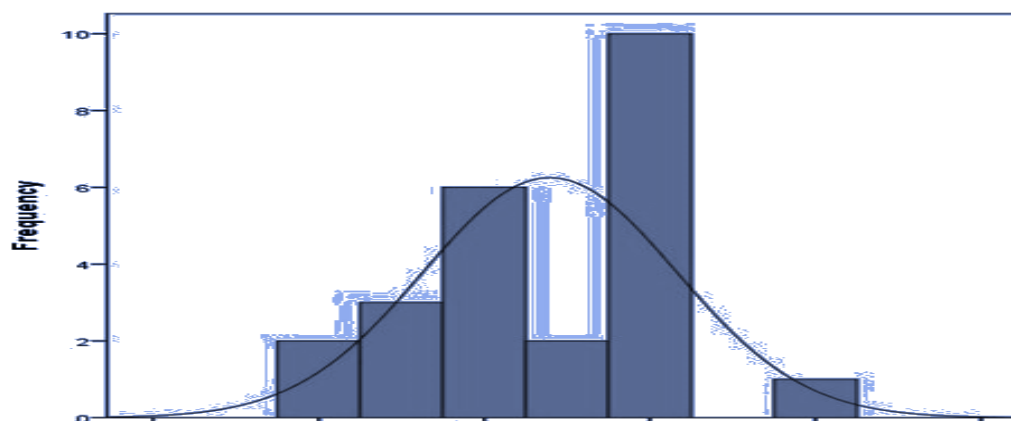
Figure 4.4. The Posttest of the experimental group

4.4. Examining the Normality

Prior to the analysis of posttests of two groups, to ensure the normality of data distribution, *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* set of scores was run. Table 4.5 demonstrates the results of this test.

Table 4.5. One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Posttest in Control Group	Posttest in Experimental Group
N		30	30
Normal Parameters[a,,b]	Mean	60.5	63
	SD	8.624	8.20
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.367	354
	Positive	.367	.284
	Negative	-.233	-.354
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.367	.354
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.216	.374

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.

As it is shown in Table 4.5, p-value for both sets of scores was higher than 0.05. Hence, the scores were normally distributed, and the parametric test of independent samples t-test could be appropriate to be administered.

4.5. Answer to Research Question

To answer the research question, since there were a control group and an experimental group which were taught separately independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the performance of the experimental group and the control group at the end of the instruction.

Table. 4.6. Independent Samples T-test Results

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
				F	Sig.	T	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	30	64	1.715	13.928	0.001	2.494	59	0.014
Control	30	62						

As it can be seen in Table 4.6, the mean of the experimental group is 64, and that of the control group is 62 with the level of significance of .001. Since the level of Sig. is less than 0.05 set for the study, F (2, 59) = 13.928, $p<.05$), it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between two groups' performance in the posttest. That is, the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group. Thus, the research question is answered, and the null hypothesis is also rejected.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

5.0. Overview

Chapter Five begins with the discussion, conclusion, pedagogical implications, and ends with suggestions for further research.

5.1 Discussion

The present research explored whether background knowledge had any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension. The findings revealed that instruction via THIEVES strategy to activate their background knowledge had a positively significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading poem comprehension.

The data found in this study is in line with those of Carrel's study (1987) in which the results indicated that learners' comprehension and recall increased if they had familiarity with passages they read. In another study, Rawson and Kintsch (2004) concluded that providing readers with prior knowledge before reading improves comprehension. In general, if students have sufficient "prior knowledge" on the specific subject, any teaching approach will do for students' learning. On the other hand, if students "prior knowledge" is less than sufficient, more support is needed, and this support should help students to deal with reconstructing the message from the text and storing it in the memory (Rosenshine, 1986).

The findings of this study also revealed that background knowledge has an important effect on reading comprehension especially when it is activated by utilizing literature such as poems. If the learners are provided with background knowledge and systemic information their comprehension will enhance accordingly. This is related to schemata theory, which plays a very important role in reading comprehension. It could be used as an efficient method of teaching English and specifically reading comprehension. It is extremely crucial for teachers to activate learners' background knowledge and raise their attention prior to the reading process. This could be achieved by choosing relevant, familiar, and authentic topics for reading activities in order for the learners to be able to predict what the passage is a bout for a richer understanding of it.

The findings are also consistent with the results of the Narimani (2017). He found that background knowledge had significant effects on the learners' reading comprehension at higher levels of language proficiency, but low-level learners did not show significant development on their reading comprehension.

The findings may confirm the claim made by some researchers like Hill and Liu (2012), who argue that when the content is more general, it requires less background knowledge. Therefore, the effect of background knowledge would not be highly predictable when the content is specific to the EFL learners. It may also be due to the low level of complexity in the texts. A plausible explanation might be that poems were more difficult for the EFL readers. They included abstract terms and required specialized knowledge. The above finding does not provide evidence to support the findings of Hill and Liu (2012) and Awabdy (2012); they have concluded that background knowledge does not always work to one's advantage and that it does not have a lasting effect on reading performance; its effect varies depending on the text type.

It seems that background knowledge can interact with the complexity of topical content. Hence, further research needs to be conducted to explore its direct and mediated effect. The future investigations should answer questions such as the factors, which interact with background knowledge on the performance of reading texts. According to Awabdy (2012), there are many other factors that contribute to students' reading comprehension. For instance, students' comfort level, confidence, and interest in the topics are a few among others. In summary, the learners' prior knowledge about specific topics in reading comprehension cannot necessarily guarantee a better performance on reading tasks.

The findings are also parallel with the research conducted by Yesim and Muharrem (2006) who have mentioned that reading strategies are essential and should be developed for the students to understand the text better especially for literary texts. The findings are also similar with the research conducted by Chubuku (2007) who stated that it is important of have reading strategies to help students in their reading comprehension. Cognitive reading strategies have been administered to them and they have enhanced the students' reading comprehension. Thus, it is important to have reading strategies and most importantly to have an effective reading strategy to help students in their reading comprehension.

The findings of the present study are also parallel with the research conducted by Nur Airen and Nurul Shuhada (2010), who revealed that cognitive reading strategies had given a positive impact on the students who have undergone a reading course. The reading strategies have helped them to comprehend the text better.

The findings are also allied with the research conducted by Ajideh (2003) who mentioned that activating the background knowledge through pre-reading activities helped the students in

enhancing their reading comprehension. The students have showed positive improvements in the reading comprehension of texts after the pre-reading activities as the reading strategy were given to them.

The present study supported the findings of the research conducted by Eghbal (2012) who revealed that activating background knowledge via cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies given through pre-reading activities helped the students with their reading comprehension scores. There are improvements in their reading comprehension scores after pretest and posttest were conducted on them. Hence, the cognitive reading strategies assisted the students in their reading comprehension performance.

Finally, the findings supported the The Rubeval's (2004) Schema Theory and supported by Li and Wu's (2007) and Parviz Ajideh (2003) who agreed on the role of background knowledge in aiding readers' reading comprehension. Hence, the activation of background knowledge is an effective reading strategy and the teachers would apply them in their reading classes.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that poetry can be an ideal entry into language learning for English language learners for many reasons, but especially because of its rhythm, repetition, and rhyme. Through listening to, reading, and rereading poetry, students can begin to increase their exposure to language, and the fact that poems are usually enjoyable and brief, makes them less intimidating and more manageable pieces of text for reading.

In an EFL classroom, the teachers seldom teach learners how to read or comprehend a text. As a result, comprehension instruction becomes an important part to help learners to read. In a reading task, predicting questions and some problem-solving questions are useful for teaching comprehension skills. Thus, the teacher can help learners to ask the predicting questions to check if they really understand the text. From those questions, learners can apply their knowledge to solve those questions and finally they can comprehend the content.

As EFL teachers, the task is to help learners build appropriate background knowledge and teach them that reading is a process of making good use of prior knowledge to build new

knowledge. Only if teachers try to take background knowledge into consideration during the teaching processes, will learners' reading comprehension be improved.

Meaning does not come from the text alone; it needs the reader to predict and interpret the message presented in print. Meanings and comprehension happened when readers' prior knowledge or schemata are in line with the information obtained from the text. According to Goodman (1967), reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. In general, if readers have sufficient prior knowledge in the specific area, any teaching method will do for students' learning. If students' "prior knowledge" is less, they need more support such as improving the models of teaching sources, supporting definite teaching or directive teaching, so as to help students deal with message into memory (Rosenshine, 1986).

Proper educational materials and methods benefit learners to organize the messages and direct them to pay attention to the main points of learning for decreasing their burden of memory. It is evident that literature does have something very unique to present to language learning. According to Hanauer (1997), literature integrates attention to meaning with attention to form. We have evidence that it is motivating and engaging, and, in the cases where learners show resistance and dislike of literature, we understand why it is the case. We understand its value for the learner, and we are also beginning to understand the importance of the learning task that is provided by the teacher for the success of language learning in this context and for the success of literary understanding as well. Clearly, providing adequate direction and clear scaffolding is vital. This scaffolding may be provided by a textbook or a reader, but more often than not, it is provided by the teacher, who is important in two ways. One is the way in which the task is set up; the second is the way in which a teacher can react to the way a discussion is going, provide scaffolding as and when it is needed. Overall, we are also beginning to understand the role of the teacher in this area, providing us with the beginnings of an understanding of how to go about training teachers who will be competent and confident in confronting the issues involved in using literature in the language classroom.

5.3 Pedagogical implications

The results of the current study lead to several implications for EFL/ESL teachers. Teachers are supposed to help their students make connections between their prior knowledge and new reading materials through implementing different approaches such as utilizing literature and poems. Teachers should also be aware that even though it might take them more time to

prepare literary texts and implement them, the benefits gained from these texts merit the effort as the texts contribute to improving learners' reading comprehension.

Regarding the efficacy of background knowledge from the findings, it is necessary for teachers to remember that the role of literature and literary texts is to facilitate the activation of students' background knowledge or schemata rather than to impose the opinions mentioned in the text. Moreover, the opinions expressed by students should not be judged or criticized at any cost; that is, learners should freely and spontaneously express their views, and as they hear their opinions, they can assess the rationality of their ideas which is in line with Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld's claim (2005) that learners can understand which concepts are important, and examine the significance and appropriateness of what they had stated for the first time. In so doing, they can develop reflective thinking and higher-order level thoughts.

Concerning the activating the background knowledge, teachers need to be taught how to implement several teaching practices. Therefore, more professional development through in-service teacher training is needed to aid teachers in the successful practice and implementation of a variety of background knowledge activation strategies. Teachers need to be provided with formal and informal training that guides them in the systematic utilization of poems aimed at enhancing reading comprehension. In this regard, the teacher's book can play an essential role in providing many examples of effective poems as instructional techniques.

In addition, concerning language teaching, the research revealed a significant role of background knowledge activation on reading comprehension; hence, it is highly recommended that besides reading skills, vocabulary, and grammar, content teaching should be included in teaching reading to speakers of foreign languages. The benefits of poems are cognitive as well as emotional. In other words, prior knowledge through poems helps learners of English as a foreign language understand the informational text as it increases their engagement and make them confident that they know something about the topic before they begin reading.

While reading poems, students come across new vocabulary, which is indispensable for understanding a text. We found that an important part of activating reader's background knowledge is teaching the vocabulary related to it. Lexicons selected for pre-teaching activities should be specialized vocabulary which teachers predict lead to problems for most learners, or words that convey concepts or relatively unfamiliar to most learners.

The study focused on another implication for writers as well. Since the purpose of writing is communication and the writer is not present to supply additional information the reader may need, writers –then - must have a profound knowledge of the subject matter that will be conveyed to readers and must decide what details the reader will need. Therefore, writers must intuitively assume the reader's role.

Finally, teacher trainers can use specific programs that train language teachers on the appropriate methods of activating students' schema before reading texts. Foreign language teachers should be aware of the results of the studies on the crucial role of schema activation on reading comprehension.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Based on the findings of this study, it can be suggested that schema and culture are the basic elements for learners to learn and understand their surroundings. Therefore, language instructors should make full use of schema and different cultural values and norms in language teaching and pay more attention to their application and impacts. Instructors should also enrich learners' knowledge in this facet. Therefore, they can use cultural difference to enhance comprehension of texts. In that case, efficiency of learning the foreign language is developed (Yang, 2010).

The key to incorporating the information into the reader's knowledge base is partly dependent on the amount of background knowledge of the reader. Background knowledge assumes that the reader has a certain capacity of knowledge of the topic of the text or related knowledge due to personal experiences and cultural background. In sum, background knowledge plays so essential role in reading skill that any teacher cannot teach reading skill well without caring for the background knowledge.

Moreover, for the replication of this work of research it is advisable to use several comprehension exercises. The multiple-choice format tests are not a sufficient means to insure accurate reflection of readers' comprehension. The combination of the multiple-choice exercises and the cloze procedure types of reading comprehension activities may be of more help. The cloze procedure is intended to cover readers' haphazard choice of the correct answers as it tests readers' accuracy in understanding the text's details. Success of THIEVES which is a prior knowledge activation strategy in enhancing learners' reading comprehension

of the poems paves the way for testing other prior knowledge activation strategies suiting other types of the poem.

Further, it is suggested that for future studies mixed methods research design be utilized instead of pure quantitative and qualitative (e.g. use of interviews, diaries, and learning journals) designs. Therefore, adapting the teachers' general discourse and ways of expression about teaching literary texts such as novels and short stories to develop the study scale would result in a more accurate measurement of their reflective teaching skills and prevent the problems of differing conceptions between the respondent and the researcher. In addition, if an explanatory design was followed that would allow the researcher to develop interview questions that touch the main results of the quantitative findings and expand the understanding of the survey respondents' answers.

One of the main limitations in this study was the timing of conducting the research, which could impact the accuracy of the participants' responses. Thus, a recommendation for future researchers to take this point into consideration by allowing more time for this stage of their studies.

In the future studies, this study could be replicated on different groups of participants such learners from other EFL/ESL contexts, to be compared with the present study and check the accuracy of its findings.

It is also suggested that background knowledge is proved to be suitable for maximizing students' comprehension of documentary narrative. Further research should explore the differential effectiveness of poems and providing background knowledge for specific text types (genres of expository or narrative nature or combination of two).

References

Ajideh, P. (2006). *Schema-theory based considerations on pre-reading activities in ESP textbooks*. Retrieved February 28th, 2008 from: http://www.asian-efl-journal.co

An, S. (2013). Schema theory in reading. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3*(1), 130-149.

Anderson, N. J. (1999). *Exploring second language reading: Issues and strategies*. BOSTON: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Anderson, N. A., & Hite, C. E. (2010). Building comprehension for reading novels: The pre-reading-schema building process. *New England Reading Association Journal, 45*(2), 26-39.

Awabdy, G. W. (2012). *Background knowledge and its effect on standardized reading comprehension test performance*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California.

Aysegül, N. (2012). Exploring the factors that affect reading comprehension of EAP learners. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12*, 1-9.

Bachman, L. F. (1990). Fundamental considerations in language testing. Longman.

Bartels, N. (Ed.). (2005). Chapter 1: Researching applied linguistics in language teacher education. *Applied linguistics and language teacher education, 3*(5), 1-26.

Bensoussan, M. (1998). Schema effects in EFL reading comprehension. *Journal of Research in Reading, 21*, 213-227.

Boote J. & L. (2006). Crossing the boundaries between literature and pedagogy: Perspectives on a foreign language reading course. In Scott & Tucker (eds.), 75–106.

Boyle, O.F., & Peregoy, S.F. (2000). English learners reading English: what we know, what we need to know. *Theory into Practice, 39* (4), 237-247.

Brindley, D. J. (1980). *Breaking the poetry barrier: Towards understanding and enjoying poetry*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Conference on the Teaching of English. Sydney, Australia, 1980.

Brock, C. H., & Raphael, T. E. (2005). *Windows to language, literacy, and culture*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Brownson, J., & North D. (1988). Using knowledge to build knowledge: The thematic approach to content reading No. 20. Insights.

Cantrell, S., Almasi, J., Carter, J., Rintamaa, M., & Madden, A. (2010). The impact of a strategy-based intervention on the comprehension and strategy use of struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(2), 257-280.

Carrasquillo, A., & Rodriguez, V. (2002). *Language minority students in the mainstream classroom* (2nd ed.), Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Carrell, P. (1987): *Fostering Interactive Second Language Reading. Initiatives in Communicative Language Teaching II*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Chai, M. H. (1990). The effect of pre-reading instruction on the comprehension of text by ESL readers. *The English Teacher, 2*(6), 55-69.

Chen, C. (2008). *The effect of background knowledge and previews on elementary native Mandarin-speaking English language learners' reading comprehension*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University.

Chia, I. (2008). *The effect of background knowledge and previews on elementary native Mandarin-speaking English language learners' reading comprehension*. Ph.D Dissertation. Florida State University.

Chhabra, V., Kapinus, B., & McCardle, P. (2008). *Reading research in action: A teacher's guide for student success*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co, Inc. Cunningham, A., & Shagoury, R. (2005, October). The sweet work of reading. Educational Leadership, 53-57.

Chubuku, P. K. W. (2007). Literature, language awareness and EFL. *Language Awareness* 8.1, 38–50.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: practitioner research for the next generation*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Connell, J. M. (2000). Aesthetic experiences in the school curriculum: Assessing the value of Rosenblatt's transactional theory. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 34*(1), 27-35.

Dewitz, P., Jones, J., & Leahy, S. (2009). Comprehension strategy instruction in core reading programs. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44*(2), 102-126.

Dochy, F.J. R.C., & Alexander, P.A. (1995). Mapping prior knowledge: A framework for discussion among researchers. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 10*(3), 225-242.

Eghbal. F. (2012). E-learning and *Language and Style* in Hong Kong. *Language and Literature, 6,* 277–290.

Elish-Piper, L., Wold, L. S., & Schwingendorf, K. (2014). Scaffolding high school students' reading of complex texts using linked text sets. *Journal of adolescent & Adult Literacy, 57*(7), 565-574.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2009). *Background knowledge: The missing piece of the comprehension puzzle*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fisher, D., Ross, D., & Grant, M. (2011). Building background knowledge: improving student achievement through wide reading. *The Science Teacher (National Science Teachers Association), 77*(1), 23-40.

Foster, S. (1998). The daily use of poems to develop skilled readers: A language arts curriculum enhancement. *Thresholds in Education, 4*(3), 11-14.

Gill, S. R. (2007). The forgotten genre of children's poetry. *International Reading Association, 10*, 622-625.

Guthrie, J., Wigfield, A., Humenick, N., Perencevich, K., Taboada, A., & Barbosa, P. (2006). Influences of stimulating tasks on reading motivation and comprehension. *The Journal of Educational Research, 99*(4), 232-245.

Hadaway, N. L., Vardell, S. M., & Young, T. A. (2001). Scaffolding oral language development through poetry for students learning English. [Electronic version]. *The Reading Teacher, 54*, (8), 796-806.

Hadaway, N. L., Vardell, S. M., & Young, T. A. (2002). Choosing and sharing poetry with ELL students. [Electronic version]. Book Links, 51-56.

Hadaway, N. L., Vardell, S. M., & Young, T. A. (2006). Matching books and readers: Selecting literature for English learners. *International Reading Association, 10*, 734-741.

Harley, B.; Patrick, A.; Cummins, J.; Swain, M. (2000). *The development of second language proficiency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Henderson, B., Meier, D. R., Perry, G., & Stemmel, A. J. (2012). The nature of teacher research. *Voices of Practioners*, 1-7.

Hill, Y. Z., & Liu, O. L. (2012). Is there any interaction between background knowledge and language proficiency that affects TOEFL iBT® reading performance? *ETS Research Report Series, 4*(2), 11–34.

Karakas, M. (2002). *The effects of reading activities on ELT trainee teachers' comprehension of short stories*. (Unpublished master's thesis). CanakkaleOnsekiz Mart University, Canakkale.

Langer, J. A. (1984). Examining background knowledge and text comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly, 4*(19), 53-65.

Lenski, S. D. (1998). Intertextual intentions: Making connections across texts. The clearing house: *A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 72*(2), 74-80.

Li, T. & Wu. F. (2007). Exploring literary responses in an EFL classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* 34.1, 35–45.

Li, X. H. & Wang, W. H. (2007). Analysis of schema theory and its influence on reading comprehension. *US-China Foreign Language, 11* (5), 44-61.

Liu, O. L., Schedl, M., & Kong, N. (2009). *Does content knowledge affect TOEFL iBT reading performance?* A confirmatory approach to differential item functioning (TOEFL iBT Research Series Report No. TOEFLiBT-09). Princeton, NJ: ETS.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2008). *Second language research methodology and design*. New York: Routledge.

Manz, S.L. (2002). A strategy for previewing textbooks: Teaching readers to become THIEVES. *The Reading Teacher, 55*, 434–435.

Marzano, R. (2010). Summarizing to comprehend. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org. Mills, K. (2009). Floating on a sea of talk: Reading comprehension through speaking and listening. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(4), 325-329.

MacMillan, M. (11). Student connections with academic texts: a phenomenographic study of reading. *Teaching in Higher Education, 19*(8), 943-954.

Meneghetti, C., Carretti, B., & De Beni, R. (2006). Components of reading comprehension and scholastic achievement. *Learning and Individual Differences, 16*(4), 291-301.

Mills, K. (2009). Floating on a sea of talk: Reading comprehension through speaking and listening. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(4), 325-329.

Moore, J. N. (2002). Practicing poetry: Teaching to learn and learning to teach. *English Journal, 91*(3), 44-50.

Narimani, K. (2017). Literary texts and grammar instruction: Revisiting the inductive presentation. *Foreign Language Annals* 38.1, 15–24.

Neuman, S. B., Kaefer, T., & Pinkham, A. (2014). Building background knowledge. *The Reading Teacher, 68*(2), 145-148.

Nguen, T. (2012). *The impact of background knowledge and the constraint on reading comprehension of Vietnamese learners of English as a second language*. Unpublished master's thesis, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Researching applied linguistics in language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nur Airen, S. & Nurul Shuhada, Z. (2010), Helping foreign language learners to make sense of literature with metaphor awareness-raising. *Language Awareness,* 14.2&3, 142–152.

Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O. F. (2005). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. Philippot, R., & Graves, M. (2009). Fostering comprehension in English classes. New York: The Guilford Press.

Philippot, R., & Graves, M. (2009). *Fostering comprehension in English classes*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Pressley, M. (2006). *Reading instruction that works: The case for balanced teaching*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Rawson, G. & Kintch, E. (2004). Technothrillers and English for science and technology. *English for Specific Purposes, 19*(3), 221–236.

Richgels, D. J. (1982). Schema theory, linguistic theory, and representations of reading comprehension. *The Journal of Educational Research, 76*(1), 54-62.

Rosenshire, E.. (1986). The role of literature in foreign language learning and teaching: Some valid assumptions and invalid arguments. In A Mauranen. & K. Sajavaara (eds.), *Applied linguistics across disciplines. AILA Review, 12(6),* 42–55.

Rubeval, W. (2004). *The complexity of literature teaching in the language classroom: A reflective practitioner's view*. In Bredella & Delanoy (eds.), 62–90.

Rumelhart, D. (1980). *Schemata: The building blocks of cognition*. In: R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce & W. F. Brewer. (Eds.), Theoretical issues in reading comprehension. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Scharlach, T. (2008). START comprehending: Students and teachers actively reading text. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(1), 20-31.

Spangenberg-Urbschat, K., & Pritchard, R. (1994). *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Stoller, F. (1994). Making the Most of a New Magazine Passage for Reading Skills Development. *English Teaching Forum, 32*(1), 2-7.

Sulaieman, H. (2005). Teaching reading comprehension to ESL/EFL learners. *The Reading Matrix, 2* (5), 22-39.

Taylor, B., & Ysseldyke, J. (Ed.). (2007). *Effective instruction for struggling readers*, K-6. New York: Teachers College Press.

Trinkle, C. (2009). Reading for meaning: Making connections and searching for answers. *School Library Media Activities Monthly, 25*(6), 48-50.

Trinkle, C. (2009). Reading for meaning: Questioning. School Library Media Activities. *Monthly, 25*(5), 48-50.

Vacca, R., & Vacca, J. (2005). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum*. Boston: Pearson.

Wilfong, L. G. (2008). Building fluency, word-recognition ability, and confidence in struggling readers: The poetry academy. [Electronic version]. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(1), 4-13.

Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J., Tonks, S., & Perencevich, K. (2004). Children's motivation for reading: Domain specificity and instructional influences. *The Journal of Educational Research, 97*(6), 299-309.

Yesim, A. & Muharrem, S. (2006). *Literature in Language Teaching and Learning.* Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (2005). *Best practice: Today's standards for teaching & learning in America's schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendices

Appendix A

Oxford Placement Test

Part A: Listening Section

Listen carefully to each conversation and choose the appropriate choice.
1. What did the principal like best about the band?
(A) The students wrote their own music.
(B) The band played several kinds of music.
(C) The band played during the whole festival.
(D) The students played many different instruments.
2. What will the class probably do next?
(A) Design a poster
(B) Color the leaves
(C) Eat lunch outside
(D) Collect fallen leaves
3. What is the purpose of the talk?
(A) To tell the students when they can begin working on their projects
(B) To request the students work with each other in pairs
(C) To specify the types of materials the students will use
(D) To inform the students they will need time to clean up
4. What is the teacher explaining?
(A) Why the city is located where it is
(B) How travel to the city has changed over time
(C) How the first tunnels in the city were built
(D) Why the river is important to the city's history
5. What does the teacher tell the students to do?
(A) Bring in some gardening tools
(B) Wear old clothes to school
(C) Look outside for seeds to plant
(D) Clean the dirt off their clothes
6. What is probably true about the dance?
(A) It is a very popular event.
(B) It is not usually held on a Friday.
(C) It will take place in the cafeteria.
(D) It is the first dance of the school year.

7. What does the teacher ask?
(A) For someone to turn on the lights
(B) For someone to close the curtains
(C) For someone to move the television
(D) For someone to turn on the television
8. What will the students probably do next?
(A) Read a book
(B) Write an essay
(C) Watch a video
(D) Form discussion groups

9. What is the purpose of the talk?

(A) To help students understand the characters they are reading about
(B) To advise students on ways they can improve their writing
(C) To praise the students who wrote the best stories in class
(D) To describe the lives of some famous writers
10. What point does the speaker make about the alphabet in ancient Norway?
(A) It had very few letters.
(B) It was quite difficult to learn.
(C) It spread to other parts of the world.
(D) It was similar to the Chinese writing system.
Choose the correct choice according to the dialogues you will listen.

11.

(A) He will call Pete before he goes home.

(B) He will call Pete after he gets home.

(C) He Called Pete at home.

(D) He will call Pete tomorrow.

12.

(A) To the cafeteria.

(B) To the movie theater.

(C) To her dorm room.

(D) To the library.

13.

(A) Term paper are easy for him.

(B) He has a lot of essay exam.

(C) He finds lab experiments easier that writing term papers.

(D) He is busier this semester that last semester.

14.

(A) To demonstrate tutoring techniques.

(B) To explain school policies.

(C) To recruit childcare workers.

(D) To explain a service.

15.

(A) Give your child extra tutoring.

(B) Take your child to the program today.

(C) Apply as soon as you can.

(D) Pay next month.

16.

(A) The teacher is excellent.

(B) The professor thinks the new literature book is great.

(C) He likes the subject, but he is afraid of the professor.

(D) He thinks the class would've better with another teacher.

17.

(A) Go to the movies with the man.

(B) Take her brother to the movies.

(C) Eat at her brother's.

(D) Cook dinner with Lois.

18.

(A) The man should have offered his assistance earlier.

(B) She doesn't need the man's help.

(C) She didn't realize the boxes were empty.

(D) She wants the man to move the boxes.

19.

(A) He'd like to have the windows open.

 (B) He rarely leaves the windows open.

(C) He thinks the air is polluted.

(D) He'll help her close the windows.

20.

(A) She doesn't remember much about Portland.

(B) She's never been to Portland.

(C) She know someone else who could help him.

(D) She'd be happy to talk to the man later.

Part B: Reading Comprehension.

Read the following paragraphs and choose the best answer.

During most of their lives, surge glaciers behave like normal glaciers, traveling perhaps only a couple of inches per day. However, at intervals of 10 to 100 years, these glaciers move forward up to 100 times faster than usual. The surge often progress along a glacier like a great wave, proceeding from one section to another. Subglacial streams of meltwater might act as a lubricant, allowing the glacier to flow rapidly toward the sea. The increasing water pressure under the glacier might lift it off its bed, overcoming the friction between ice and rock, thus freeing the glacier, which rapidly slides downhill. Surge glaciers also might be influenced by the climate, volcanic heat, or earthquakes. However, many of these glaciers exist in the same areas as normal glaciers, often almost side by side.

Some 800 years ago, Alaska's Hubbard Glacier advanced toward the sea, retreated, and advanced again 500 years later. Since 1895, this seventy-mile-long river of ice has been flowing steadily toward the Gulf of Alaska at a rate of approximately 200 feet per year. In June 1986, however, the glacier surged ahead as much as 47 feet a day. Meanwhile, a western tributary, called Valerie Glacier, advanced up to 112 feet per day. Hubbard's surge closed off Russell Fiord with a formidable ice dam, some 2,500 feet wide and up to 800 feet high, whose caged waters threatened the town of Yakutat to the south. About 20 similar glaciers around the Gulf of Alaska are heading toward the sea. If enough surge glaciers reach the ocean and raise sea levels, West Antarctic ice shelves could rise off the seafloor and become adrift. A flood of ice would then surge into the Southern Sea. With the continued rise in sea level, more ice would plunge into the ocean, causing sea levels to rise even higher, which in turn would release more ice and set in motion a vicious cycle. The additional sea ice floating toward the tropics would increase. Earth's albedo and lower global temperatures, perhaps enough to initiate a new ice age. This situation appears to have occurred at the end of the last warm interglacial (the time between Glaciations), called the Sangamon, when sea ice cooled the ocean dramatically, and spawning the beginning of the Ice Age.

21. What is the main topic of the passage?
(A) The classification of different types of surge glaciers.
(B) The causes and consequences of surge glaciers.
(C) The definition of a surge glacier.
(D) The history of a particular surge Glacier.
22. The word "intervals" in line 2 is closest in meaning to
(A) records
(B) speeds
(C) distances
(D) periods
23. The author compares the surging motion of a surge glacier to the movement of a
(A) fish
(B) wave
(C) machine
(D) boat
24. Which of the following does another mention as possible cause of surging glaciers?
(A) The decline in sea levels.
(B) The occurrence of unusually large ocean waves.
(C) The shifting Antarctic ice shelves.
(D) The pressure of meltwater underneath the glacier.
25. The word "freeing" in line 7 is closest in meaning to
(A) pushing

(B) releasing
(C) strengthening
(D) draining

26. According to the passage, the Hubbard Glacier
(A) moves more often than the Valerie Glacier.
(B) began movement toward the sea in 1895
(C) is 800 feet wide.
(D) has moved as fast as 47 feet per day.

27. Yahutat is the name of …
(A) an Alaskan town
(B) the last ice age
(C) a surge glacier
(D) an Antarctic ice shelf

28. The word "plunge" in line 20 is closest in meaning to
(A) drop
(B) extent
(C) melt
(D) drift

29. The term "vicious cycle" in line 22 refers to the
(A) movement pattern of surge glaciers
(B) effect surge glaciers could have on the temperature of tropical areas
(C) effect that repeated rising sea levels might have on glacial ice
(D) constant threat surge glaciers could pose to the Gulf of Alaska

30. The author provides a definition for which of the following terms?
(A) Tributary (line 14)
(B) Ice dam (line 15)
(C) Albedo (line 23)
(D) Interglacial (line 24)

The canopy, the upper level of the trees in the rain forest, holds a plethora of climbing mammals of moderately large size, which may include monkeys, cats, civets, and porcupines. Smaller species, including such rodents as mice and small squirrels, are not as prevalent overall in high tropical canopies as they are in most habitats globally. Small mammals, being warm blooded, suffer hardship in the exposed and turbulent environment of the uppermost trees. Because a small body has more surface area per unit of weight than a large one of similar shape, it gains or loses heat more swiftly. Thus, in the trees, where shelter from heat and cold may be scarce and conditions may fluctuate, a small mammal may have trouble maintaining its body temperature. Small size makes it easy to scramble among twigs and branches in the canopy for insects, flowers, or fruit, but small mammals are surpassed, in the competition for food, by large ones that have their own tactics for browsing among food-rich twigs. The weight of a gibbon (a small ape) hanging below a branch arches the terminal leaves down so that fruit-bearing foliage drops toward the gibbon's face. Walking or leaping species of a similar or even larger size access the outer twigs either by snapping off and retrieving the whole branch or by clutching stiff branches with the feet or tail and plucking food with their hands. Small climbing animals may reach twigs readily, but it is harder for them than for large climbing animals to cross the wide gaps from one tree crown to the next that typify the high canopy. A macaque or gibbon can hurl itself farther than a mouse can: it can achieve a running start, and it can more effectively use a branch as a springboard, even bouncing on a limb several times before jumping. The forward movement of a small animal is

seriously reduced by the air friction against the relatively large surface area of its body. Finally, for the many small mammals the supplement their insect diet with fruits or seeds, an inability to span open gaps between tree crowns may be problematic, since trees that yield these foods can be sparse.

31. The passage answers which of the following questions?
(A) How is the rain forest different from other habitats?
(B) How does an animal's body size influence an animal's need for food?
(C) Why does rain forest provide an unusual variety of food for animals?
(D) Why do large animals tend to dominate the upper canopy of the rain forest?

32. Which of the following animals is less common in the upper canopy than in other environments?
(A) Monkeys
(B) Cats
(C) Porcupines
(D) Mice

33. The word "they" in line 4 refers to
(A) trees
(B) climbing mammals of moderately large size
(C) smaller species
(D) high tropical canopies

34. According to paragraph 2, which of the following is true about the small mammals in the rain forest?
(A) They have body shapes that are adapted to life in the canopy.
(B) They prefer the temperature and climate of the canopy to that of other environments.
(C) They have difficulty with the changing conditions in the canopy.
(D) They use the trees of the canopy for shelter from heat and cold.

35. In discussing animal size in paragraph 3, the author indicates that
(A) small animals require proportionately more food than larger animals do.
(B) a large animal's size is an advantage in obtaining food in the canopy.
(C) small animals are often attacked by larger animals in the rain forest.
(D) small animals and large animals are equally adept at obtaining food in the canopy.

36. The word "typify" in line 19 is closest in meaning to
(A) resemble
(B) protect
(C) characterize
(D) divide

37. According to paragraph 4, what makes jumping from one tree crown to another difficult for small mammals?
(A) Air friction against the body surface.
(B) The thickness of the branches.
(C) The dense leaves of the tree crown.
(D) The inability to use the front feet as hands.

38. The word "supplement" in line 24 is closest in meaning to
(A) control
(B) replace
(C) look for
(D) add to

39. Which of the following terms is defined in the passage?
(A) Canopy (line 1)

(B) Warm blooded (line 5)

(C) Terminal leaves (line 13)

40 .Which of the following statements is supported by the passage?

(A) The movement of surge glaciers can be prevented.

(B) The next ice age could be caused by surge glaciers.

(C) Surge glaciers help to support Antarctic ice shelves.

(D) Normal glaciers have little effect on Earth's climate.

The first navigational lights in the New World were probably lanterns hung at harbor entrances. The first lighthouse was put up by the Massachusetts Bay Colony In 1766 on Little Brewster Island at the entrance to Boston Harbor. Paid for and maintained by light dues levied on ships, the original beacon was blown up in 1776. By then there were only a dozen or so true lighthouses in the colonies. Little over a century later, there were 700 lighthouses. The first eight erected on the West Coast in the 1850's featured the same basic New England design: a Cape Cod dwelling with the tower rising from the center or standing close by. In New England and elsewhere. Though. Lighthouses reflected a variety of architectural styles. Since most stations in the Northeast were built on rocky eminences, enormous towers were not the rule. Some were made of stone and brick, others of wood or metal. Some stood on pilings or stilts: some were fastened to rock with iron rods. Farther south. From Maryland through the Florida Keys, the coast was low and sandy. It was often necessary to build tall towers there – massive structures like the majestic Cape Hatteras, North Carolina lighthouse, which was lit in 1870. At 190 feet, it is the tallest brick lighthouse in the country. Notwithstanding differences in appearance and construction, most American lighthouses shared several features: a light, living quarters, and sometimes a bell (or, later, a foghorn). They also had something else in common: a keeper and. usually. The keeper's family. The keeper's essential task was trimming the lantern 'Nick in order to maintain a steady bright flame. The earliest keepers came from every walk of life-they were seamen. Farmers, mechanics, rough mill hands-and appointments were often handed out by local customs commissioners as political plums. After the administration of lighthouses was taken over in 1852 by the United States Lighthouse 803rd, an agency of the Treasury Department, the keeper corps gradually became highly professional.

41. What is the best title for the passage?

(A) The Lighthouse on Little Brewster Island

(B) The Life of a Lighthouse Keeper

(C) Early Lighthouses in the United States

(D) The Modern Profession of Lighthouse Keeping

42. Why does the author mention the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

(A) It was the headquarters of the United States Lighthouse Board.

(B) Many of the tallest lighthouses were built there.

(C) The first lantern wicks were developed there.

(D) The first lighthouse in North America was built there.

43. It can be inferred from the passage that light-houses in the Northeast did not need high towers because

(A) ships there had high masts

(B) coastal waters were safe

(C) the coast was straight and unobstructed

(D) the lighthouse were built on high places

44. According to the passage. Where can the tallest brick lighthouse in the United States be found?

(A) Little Brewster Island   (B) The Florida Keys

(C) Cape Hatteras   (D) Cape Cod

45. In line 19, to which of the following does the word "They" refer?

(A) Lighthouses   (B) Differences   (C) Quarters   (D) Features

46. It can be inferred from the passage that the Treasury Department, after assuming control of the lighthouses, improved which of the following?

(A) The training of the lighthouse keepers   (B) The sturdiness of the lighthouses

(C) The visibility of the lights   (D) The locations of the lighthouses

47. Where in the passage does the author tell how lighthouses in the Northeast were fastened to the surrounding rock?

(A) Lines 3-4   (B) Line 12   (C) Lines 14-15   (D) Line 19

48. The author mentions all of the following at tributes that enable a homing pigeon to return home EXCEPT

(A) instinct   (B) air sacs   (C) sensitive ears   (D) good eyes

49. In line 16, the pronoun "it" refers to which of the following?

(A) Radar   (B) Bird   (C) Loft   (D) Form

50. Why does the author mention bees, ants, toads, and turtles in the last paragraph?

(A) To describe some unusual kinds of pets

(B) To measure distances traveled by various animals

(C) To compare their home-finding abilities with those of homing pigeons

(D) To interest the reader in learning about other animals

The difference between a liquid and a gas is obvious under the conditions of temperature and pressure commonly found at the surface of the Earth. A liquid can be kept in an open container and fills it to the level of a free surface. A gas forms no free surface but tends to

diffuse throughout the space available; it must therefore be kept in a closed container or held by a gravitation field, as in the case of a planet's atmosphere. The distinction was a prominent feature of early theories describing the phases of matter. In the nineteenth century, for example. One theory maintained that a liquid could be "dissolved" in a vapor without losing its identity and another theory held that the two phases are made up of different kinds of molecules: liquids and gasses. The theories now prevailing take a quite different approach by emphasizing what liquids and gases have in common. They are both forms of matter that have no permanent structure, and they both flow readily. They are fluids. The fundamental similarity of liquids and gases becomes clearly apparent when the temperature and pressure are raised somewhat. Suppose a closed container partially filled with a liquid is heated. The liquid expands, or in other words becomes less dense; some of it evaporates. In contrast, the vapor above the liquid surface becomes denser as the evaporated molecules are added to it. The combination of temperature and pressure at which the densities become equal is called the critical point. Above the critical point the liquid and the gas can no longer be distinguished; there is a single, undifferentiated fluid phase of uniform density.

51. Which of the following would be the most appropriate title for the passage?

(A) The Properties of Gases and Liquids

(B) High Temperature Zones on the Earth

(C) The Beginnings of Modern Physics

(D) New Containers for Fluids

52. According to the passage, the difference between a liquid and a gas under normal conditions on Earth is that the liquid

(A) is affected by changes in pressure   (B) has a permanent structure

(C) forms a free surface   (D) is considerably more common

53. It can be inferred from the passage that the gases of the Earth's atmosphere are contained by

(A) a closed surface

(B) the gravity of the planet

(C) the field of space

D) its critical point

54. According to the passage, in the nineteenth century some scientists viewed liquids and gasses as

(A) fluids   (B) dissolving particles

(C) heavy molecules   (D) different types of molecules

55. According to the passage, what happens when the temperature is increased in a closed container holding a liquid?

(A) The liquid and gas phases become more similar.

(B) The liquid and the gas become less dense.

(C) The container expands.

(D) The liquid evaporates out of the container.

56. According to the passage, which of the following is the best definition of the critical point?

(A) When the temperature and the pressure are raised

(B) When the densities of the two phases are equal

(C) When the pressure and temperature are combined

(D) When the container explodes

57. The author implies that bacteria were investigated earlier than viruses because

(A) bacteria are easier to detect

(B) bacteria are harder to eradicate

(C) viruses are extremely poisonous

(D) viruses are found only in hot climates

58. All of the following may be components of a virus EXCEPT

(A) RNA   (B) plant cells   (C) carbohydrates   (D) a coat of protein

59. Which of the following statements about the salinity of a body of water can best be inferred from the passage?

(A) The temperature of the water is the most important factor.

(B) How quickly the water moves is directly related to the amount of alt.

(C) Ocean salinity has little effect on sea life.

(D) Various factors combine to cause variations in the salt content of water.

60. The word "it" in line 19 refers to which of the following?

(A) Sea ice   (B) Salinity   (C) Seawater   (D) Manner

Part C. Structure

Choose the choice which should be replaced to make every sentence grammatical.

61. More <u>and</u> 90 percent of the calcium in the <u>human </u>body <u>is</u> in <u>the</u> skeleton.
         A   B   C   D

62. <u>Perhaps</u> the <u>most popular</u> film <u>in movie</u> history, *Star Wars* was written and

A   B   C
direction by George Lucas.
D
63. Some animal activities, such as mating, migration, and hibernate have a yearly
     A   B   C   D
cycle.

64. Geographers were once concerned largely with exploring areas unknown to
                           A   B
them and from describing distinctive features of individual places.
           C   D
65. In his animated films, Walt Disney created animals that talk and act like people
                               A   B   C
while retaining its animal traits.
           D
66. The first city in the United States that put into effect major plan for the
                                A   B
clustering, of government buildings was Washington, D.C.
  C   D
67. In a microwave oven, radiation penetrates food and is then absorbed primarily
                                     A
 by water molecules, caused heat to spread through the food.
      B   C   D
68. The cultures early of the genus*Homo* were generally distinguished by regular
       A   B   B
use of stone tools and by a hunting and gathering economy.
       C   D
69. Dolphins are sleek and powerful swimmers that found in all seas and unlike
     A   B   C
porpoises, have well defined, beaklike snouts and conical teeth.

70. range in color from pale yellow to bright orange.

  a) Canaries

  b) Canaries which

  c) That canaries

  d) Canaries that are

  71. Carnivorous plants   insects to obtain nitrogen.
  a) are generally trapped

  b) trap generally

  c) are trapped generally

  d) generally trapped

  72. A federal type of government results in .
  a) a vertical distribution of power

b) power is distributed vertically

c) vertically distributed

d) the distribution of power is vertical

73. February normally has twenty-eight days, but every fourth year, has twenty-nine.

a) there

b) its

c) is a leap year

d) a leap year, it

74. Evidence suggests that one-quarter of operations bypass surgery may be unnecessary.

a) they involve

b) involve

c) involving

d) which they involve

75. A tornado spins in a counterclockwise direction in the northern hemisphere, it spins in the opposite direction in the southern hemisphere.

a) However

b) Because of

c) Although

d) That

76. The Caldecott Medal, for the best children's picture book, is awarded each January.

a) is a prize which

b) which prize

c) which is a prize

d) is a prize

77. Sports medicine is a medical specialty that deals with the identification and treatment of injuries to persons.

a) sports are involved

b) involved in sports

c) they are involved in sports

d) sports involve them

78. The Wilmington Oil Field, in Long Beach, California, is one of oil fields in the continental United States.

a) productive

b) the most productive

c) most are productive

d) productivity

79. Thunder occurs as through air, causing the heated air to expand and collide with layers of cooler air.

a) an electrical charge

b) an electrical charge

c) the passing of an electrical charge

d) an electrical charge passes

80. The population of Houston was ravaged by yellow fever in 1839 in 1867.
a) it happened again

b) and again

c) was ravaged again

d) again once more

Appendix B

Pretest on Reading Poem

(1)

When cats run home and light has come,

And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,

And the whirring sail goes round

And the whirring sail goes round

Alone and warming his five wits

The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,

And rarely smells the new-mown hay.

And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch

Twice or thrice his roundly

Twice or thrice his roundly

Alone and warming his five wits

The white owl in the belfry sits.

Choose the most appropriate option:

1 .The arrival of the morning is heralded by the:

(A) running stream

(B) tower clock

(C) fishermen cry

(D) cock's singing

2. The poetic device used in the phrase 'merry milkmaids' is:

(A) simile

(B) metaphor

(C) alliteration

(D) imagery

3. The owl prefers:

(B) loneliness

(C) hooting with other owls

(D) watching of' milkmaids

4. The idiom 'warming his five wits' means:

(A) taking rest after hunting

(B) enjoying fun

(C) enjoying sunshine

(D) getting knowledge

5. The poem describes:

(A) cats

(B) milkmaids

(C) cocks

(D) an owl

6. A word in the poem which means 'a roof' covering 'is

(A) whirring

(B) thatch

(C) hay

(D) latch

7. Morning activities described in the poem are:

(A) milking of cows and cocks crowing

(B) mowing of grass and running of stream

(C) running of dogs and running of stream

(D) hooting of owls and barking of dogs

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(2)

Read the following poem carefully.

In the middle of the city

Is an open space called a Park;

It is difficult for us to do what we like there

Even after dark.

In the middle of the Park, there is a statue,

A huge man made of stone;

We are not allowed to climb his legs or

Scribble on his trousers,

He has to be left alone,

In the middle of the grass, there is some water

Surrounded by an asphalt path;

We are forbidden to fish or throw stones into it

Or swim or take a bath.

On the basis of the reading of the poem tick the answer to the following questions:

1. What is the open space called?

a) market

b) playground

c) park

d) none of these

2. What is not possible even after dark?

a) What they like

b) What they don't like

c) What they want

d) None of these

3. Who do you think is forbidden from running freely in the park?
a) Children
b) Boy
c) Girl
d) None of these

4. Whose statue is in the park?
a) A huge man
b) A young man
c) An old man
d) None of these

5. Find the synonym of 'permit 'from the poem?
a) Deny

b) Allowed

c) Followed

d) None of these

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(3)

The little caterpillar creeps,
Through my garden like a soft sculpture.
Nibbling here, nibbling there,
Munching on leaves everywhere,
Eating and growing.
Now in the chrysalis it sleeps,
After weaving a silken home.
Changing here, changing there,
Being transformed within its lair,

71

Created anew.
A beautiful butterfly now peeps,
From its silken home to the skies.
Flying here, flying there,
Lighting on flowers everywhere,
Delighting me.

What happens FIRST in the poem?
a) The butterfly flies
b) The caterpillar eats
c) The chrysalis is formed
d) The caterpillar creeps

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

(4)

Morning dawns,
breaking darkened shades
draped heavy in the night.
The watercolor sky
 in a kaleidoscope of hues
brushed across the horizon's cusp
A proclamation
that today will arise anew.
The glow of all things possible
reflects on passing clouds
illuminating the grandeur
in all that is around.
With a nudge, a prod . . .
crisp early breezes
floating over dew-laced grass
Whisper carpe diem
To those who are willing to hear
Seize this day and make it yours.
Why envelop your life
with the weight of regret?
What's been put off—or done—
is over and gone.
It's this moment, this here and now.
Today
Take a step toward
striving for your dreams.
Become a bit of the person you want to be.

1. Which literary device does the poet use in lines 1 and 2 of the poem?
A. irony
B. symbolism
C. foreshadowing

D. personification

2. In line 13, what is the purpose for the ellipsis?
A. to indicate omitted text
B. to indicate a slight pause
C. to indicate a mood change
D. to indicate an unstated thought

3. Which phrase contains a meaning of carpe diem?
A. . . . willing to hear
B. Seize this day . . .
C. . . . weight of regret
D. It's this moment . . .

4. At which line does the poem shift to address the reader directly?
A. line 4
B. line 12
C. line 18
D. line 25

5. What is the prevailing mood of *Morning Dawns*?
A. defeatist
B. encouraging
C. worrisome
D. nonchalant

6. What is the poet's purpose for writing *Morning Dawns*?
A. to describe a sunrise
B. to inspire the reader
C. to encourage goal setting
D. to promote reflective thinking

7. What is an alternate title for the poem?
A. Seize the Day
B. Letting Go
C. One Step at a Time
D. Enjoying Nature

………………………………………………………………………………………………

(5)

The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girls cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl – some twelve years or so
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's that was before I was born.

And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.
Some twenty-thirty, years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach. "The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the labored ease of loss.
Now she's been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstances
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

Choose the most appropriate option out of the following:

1. The two girl cousins were holding
(a) Each other's hands
(b) The hand of the poet
(c) Their uncle's hands
(d) One of his mother's hands

2. The 'big girls' stands for
(a) The poet's cousin
(b)The poet's mother
(c) The mother's elder cousin

(d) His sister

3. Their feet are 'terribly transient 'because
(a) they were delicate
(b) they are mortal and will not stay for long
(c) they were very weak
(d) they were immortal

4. After twenty or thirty years she would laugh at the snapshot because
(a) Dolly and Betty were laughing
(b) Dolly and Betty looked the way they were dressed up.
(c) Dolly and Betty looked ridiculous
(d) Dolly and Betty looked funny

5. The word 'transient' here means:
(a) immortal
(b) funny
(c) strange

(d) that lives only for a short time.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(6)

What is this life is full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare,

No time to stand beneath the boughs

And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass.

Where squirrels hide their nuts in the grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,

Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

And watch her feet how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can

Enrich the smile her eyes began.

A poor live this if, full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare.

On the basis of the reading of the above poem tick the correct option:

1. What does the modern man not have?

(a) Time

(b) Food

(c) Tide

(d) None of these.

2. Whose life is better than a human being?

(a) Human

(b) Animals

(c) Birds

(d) None of these

3. Whose life is full of cares and worries?

(a) Ancient man

(b) Modern man

(c) Old man

(d) None of these

4. For what does the modern not have time?

(a) For walking

(b) For dancing

(c) For the glance of beauty

(d) None of these

5. Life is not worth living if we have no time to stand and ---------------.
(a) stare
(b) shore
(c) bank
(d) none of these

6. The world is full of the ----------------- of nature.
(a) flowers
(b) beauty
(c) praise
(d) none of these

7. He has no time to see streams full of ---------------------.
(a) stars
(b) shining
(c) praising
(d) none of these

**8. He also does not have the time to look at how a beautiful woman moves with-------------
steps.**
(a) moving
(b) dancing
(c) singing
(d) none of these

Find the words from the poem which means the same as following:
9. "GAZING" means -----
(a) known
(b) familiar
(c) stare
(d) none of these

10. "DOWN" means -----
(a) stopped

(b) beneath

(c) under

(d) none of these

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(7)

Freedom is the right to do
Anything that pleases you,
As long as you keep in sight
That others also have a right
Have you the right to kill a cat?
Oh no! It's wrong, just consider that
The cat has the right to live like you
A right to eating and drinking too!
So remember that it's certainly wrong
To deprive a nightingale its song
To cheat the poor people, as rich men do
To rob the innocent, as robbers do.

On the basis of the reading of the poem tick the answer to the following questions:
1. What is freedom?
a) The wrong
b) The right
c) The correct
d) None of these

2. What do the rich men do?
a) Cheat the poor people
b) Hate the poor people
c) Like the poor people
d) None of these

3. What do the robbers do?
a) Cheat the innocent
b) Rob the innocent
c) Respect the innocent
d) None of these

4. What is the right of the cat?
a) To respect like us
b) To hate like us
c) To live like us
d) None of these

5. Find the synonym of 'liberty' from the poem?
a) Independence

b) Freedom

c) Fight

d) None of these

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(8)

The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl's cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl – some twelve years or so
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.
Some twenty-thirty, years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach. "The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the labored ease of loss.
Now she's been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstances
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

Choose the most appropriate option out of the following:
1. The two girl cousins were holding
(a) Each other's hands
(b) The hand of the poet
(c) Their uncle's hands
(d) One of his mother's hands

2. The 'big girls' stands for
(a) The poet's cousin
(b) The poet's mother
(c) The mother's elder cousin

(d) His sister

3. Their feet are 'terribly transient 'because
(a) They were delicate
(b) They are mortal and will not stay for long
(c) They were very weak
(d) They were immortal

4. After twenty or thirty years she would laugh at the snapshot because
(a) Dolly and Betty were laughing
(b) Dolly and Betty looked the way they were dressed up.
(c) Dolly and Betty looked ridiculous

(d) Dolly and Betty looked funny

5. The word 'transient' here means:
(a) immortal
(b) funny
(c) strange

(d) that lives only for a short time

Posttest on Reading Poem

(1)

Freedom is the right to do
Anything that pleases you,
As long as you keep in sight
That others also have a right
Have you the right to kill a cat?
Oh no! It's wrong, just consider that
The cat has the right to live like you
A right to eating and drinking too!
So remember that it's certainly wrong
To deprive a nightingale its song
To cheat the poor people, as rich men do
To rob the innocent, as robbers do.

On the basis of the reading of the poem tick the answer to the following questions:
1. What is freedom?
a) The wrong
b) The right
c) The correct
d) None of these

2. What do the rich men do?
a) Cheat the poor people
b) Hate the poor people
c) Like the poor people
d) None of these

3. What do the robbers do?
a) Cheat the innocent
b) Rob the innocent
c) Respect the innocent
d) None of these

4. What is the right of the cat?
a) To respect like us

b) To hate like us
c) To live like us
d) None of these

5. Find the synonym of 'liberty' from the poem?
a) Independence

b) Freedom

c) Fight

d) None of these

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

(2)

The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl's cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl – some twelve years or so
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.
Some twenty-thirty, years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach. "The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the labored ease of loss.
Now she's been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstances
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

Choose the most appropriate option out of the following:
1. The two girl cousins were holding
(a) each other's hands
(b) the hand of the poet
(c) their uncle's hands
(d) one of his mother's hands

2. The 'big girls' stands for
(a) the poet's cousin
(b) the poet's mother
(c) the mother's elder cousin

(d) his sister

80

3. Their feet are 'terribly transient 'because
(a) they were delicate
(b) they are mortal and will not stay for long
(c) they were very weak
(d) they were immortal

4. After twenty or thirty years she would laugh at the snapshot because
(a) Dolly and Betty were laughing
(b) Dolly and Betty looked the way they were dressed up
(c) Dolly and Betty looked ridiculous
(d) Dolly and Betty looked funny

5. The word 'transient' here means:
(a) immortal
(b) funny
(c) strange

(d) that lives only for a short time

………………………………………………………………………………………………

(3)

What is this life is full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare,

No time to stand beneath the boughs

And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass.

Where squirrels hide their nuts in the grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,

Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

And watch her feet how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can

Enrich the smile her eyes began.

A poor live this if, full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare.

On the basis of the reading of the above poem tick the correct option:

1. What does the modern man not have?

(a) Time

(b) Food

(c) Tide

(d) None of these.

2. Whose life is better than a human being?

(a) Human

(b) Animals

(c) Birds

(d) None of these

3. Whose life is full of cares and worries?

(a) Ancient man

(b) Modern man

(c) Old man

(d) None of these

4. For what does the modern not have time?

(a) For walking

(b) For dancing

(c) For the glance of beauty

(d) None of these

5. Life is not worth living if we have no time to stand and ---------------.
(a) stare
(b) shore
(c) bank
(d) none of these

6. The world is full of the ----------------- of nature.
(a) flowers
(b) beauty
(c) praise
(d) none of these

7. He has no time to see streams full of ---------------------.

(a) stars
(b) shining
(c) praising
(d) none of these

8. He also does not have the time to look at how a beautiful woman moves with------------- steps.
(a) moving
(b) dancing
(c) singing
(d) none of these

Find the words from the poem which means the same as following:
9. "GAZING" means -----
(a) known
(b) familiar
(c) stare
(d) none of these

10. "DOWN" means -----
(a) stopped

(b) beneath

(c) under

(d) none of these

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(4)

The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl's cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl – some twelve years or so
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.
Some twenty-thirty, years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach. "The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the labored ease of loss.
Now she's been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstances
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

Choose the most appropriate option out of the following:

1. The two girl cousins were holding
(a) each other's hands
(b) the hand of the poet
(c) their uncle's hands
(d) one of his mother's hands

2. The 'big girls' stands for
(a) the poet's cousin
(b) the poet's mother
(c) the mother's elder cousin

(d) his sister.

3. Their feet are 'terribly transient 'because
(a) they were delicate
(b) they are mortal and will not stay for long
(c) they were very weak
(d) they were immortal

4. After twenty or thirty years she would laugh at the snapshot because
(a) Dolly and Betty were laughing
(b) Dolly and Betty looked the way they were dressed up.
(c) Dolly and Betty looked ridiculous
(d) Dolly and Betty looked funny

5. The word 'transient' here means:
(a) immortal
(b) funny
(c) strange

(d) that lives only for a short time.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

(5)

Morning dawns,
breaking darkened shades
draped heavy in the night.
The watercolor sky
 in a kaleidoscope of hues
brushed across the horizon's cusp
A proclamation
that today will arise anew.
The glow of all things possible
reflects on passing clouds
illuminating the grandeur
in all that is around.

84

With a nudge, a prod . . .
crisp early breezes
floating over dew-laced grass
Whisper carpe diem
To those who are willing to hear
Seize this day and make it yours.
Why envelop your life
with the weight of regret?
What's been put off—or done—
is over and gone.
It's this moment, this here and now.
Today
Take a step toward
striving for your dreams.
Become a bit of the person you want to be.

1. Which literary device does the poet use in lines 1 and 2 of the poem?
A. Irony
B. Symbolism
C. Foreshadowing
D. Personification

2. In line 13, what is the purpose for the ellipsis?
A. To indicate omitted text
B. To indicate a slight pause
C. To indicate a mood change
D. To indicate an unstated thought

3. Which phrase contains a meaning of carpe diem?
A. . . . willing to hear
B. Seize this day . . .
C. . . . weight of regret
D. It's this moment . . .

4. At which line does the poem shift to address the reader directly?
A. line 4
B. line 12
C. line 18
D. line 25

5. What is the prevailing mood of *Morning Dawns*?
A. defeatist
B. encouraging
C. worrisome
D. nonchalant

6. What is the poet's purpose for writing *Morning Dawns*?
A. to describe a sunrise
B. to inspire the reader
C. to encourage goal setting

D. to promote reflective thinking

7. What is an alternate title for the poem?
A. Seize the Day
B. Letting Go
C. One Step at a Time
D. Enjoying Nature

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(6)

When cats run home and light has come,

And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,

And the whirring sail goes round

And the whirring sail goes round

Alone and warming his five wits

The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,

And rarely smells the new-mown hay.

And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch

Twice or thrice his roundly

Twice or thrice his roundly

Alone and warming his five wits

The white owl in the belfry sits.

Choose the most appropriate option:

1 .The arrival of the morning is heralded by the:

(A) running stream

(B) tower clock

(C) fishermen cry

(D) cock's singing

2. The poetic device used in the phrase 'merry milkmaids' is:

(A) simile

(B) metaphor

(C) alliteration

(D) imagery

3. The owl prefers:

(A) hay mowing

(B) loneliness

(C) hooting with other owls

(D) watching of' milkmaids

4. The idiom 'warming his five wits' means:

(A) taking rest after hunting

(B) enjoying fun

(C) enjoying sunshine

(D) getting knowledge

5. The poem describes:

(A) cats

(B) milkmaids

(C) cocks

(D) an owl

6. A word in the poem which means 'a roof' covering 'is

(A) whirring

(B) thatch

(C) hay

(D) latch

7. Morning activities described in the poem are:

(A) milking of cows and cocks crowing

(B) mowing of grass and running of stream

(C) running of dogs and running of stream

(D) hooting of owls and barking of dogs

…………………………………………….…………………………………………………

(7)

Read the following poem carefully.

In the middle of the city

Is an open space called a Park;

It is difficult for us to do what we like there

Even after dark.

In the middle of the Park, there is a statue,

A huge man made of stone;

We are not allowed to climb his legs or

Scribble on his trousers,

He has to be left alone,

In the middle of the grass, there is some water

Surrounded by an asphalt path;

We are forbidden to fish or throw stones into it

Or swim or take a bath.

On the basis of the reading of the poem tick the answer to the following questions:

1. What is the open space called?

a) Market

b) Playground

c) Park

d) None of these

2. What is not possible even after dark?

a) What they like

b) What they don't like

c) What they want

d) None of these

3. Who do you think is forbidden from running freely in the park?
a) Children

88

b) Boy
c) Girl
d) None of these

4. Whose statue is in the park?
a) A huge man
b) A young man
c) An old man
d) None of these

5. Find the synonym of 'permit 'from the poem?
a) Deny

b) Allowed

c) Followed

d) None of these

………………………………………………………………………………………………
(8)

The little caterpillar creeps,
Through my garden like a soft sculpture.
Nibbling here, nibbling there,
Munching on leaves everywhere,
Eating and growing.
Now in the chrysalis it sleeps,
After weaving a silken home.
Changing here, changing there,
Being transformed within its lair,
Created anew.
A beautiful butterfly now peeps,
From its silken home to the skies.
Flying here, flying there,
Lighting on flowers everywhere,
Delighting me.

What happens FIRST in the poem?
a) The butterfly flies
b) The caterpillar eats
c) The chrysalis is formed
d) The caterpillar creeps

چکیده

این تحقیق به بررسی اینکه آیا دانش زمینه ای اثر قابل ملاحظه ای بر درک شعر دانش آموزان ایرانی دارد می پردازد. برای این منظور از ۹۷ دانش آموز در ۶ کلاس زبان در شاهرود ۶۰ نفر انتخاب شدند و به تعداد برابر به دو گروه آزمایش و کنترل تقسیم شدند. از این دو گروه یک پیش آزمون گرفته شد. در گروه آزمایش ۱۲ جلسه تدریس ویژه انجام شد و برای ایجاد و فعال کردن دانش زمینه ای افراد از استراتژی THIEVES استفاده شد. در حالی که در گروه کنترل تدریس شعر به روش معمول و همیشگی انجام شد. کلاس ها سه روز در هفته و به مدت یک ساعت تشکیل شد و در هر جلسه یک شعر انگلیسی تدریس شد. برای تحلیل داده ها از Independent Samples T-tests استفاده شد. نتایج تحقیق نشان داد که تدریس به وسیله ی استراتژی THIEVES که برای فعال کردن یا ساختن دانش زمینه ای استفاده شد تاثیر بسیار زیادی در درک شعر دانش آموزان ایرانی داشت. به عبارت دیگر استراتژی THIEVES به بهبود درک شعر دانش آموزان ایرانی کمک کرد.

کلید واژه : دانش زمینه ای؛ استراتژی THIEVES؛ درک شعر؛ دانش آموزان ایرانی،

دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود

گروه زبان انگلیسی

پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد آموزش زبان

تاثیر دانش زمینه ای بر درک شعر دانش آموزان ایرانی

نگارنده: ابوالفضل اکبری

استاد راهنما:

دکتر فاطمه مظفری

استاد مشاور:

دکتر سید حمزه موسوی

اردیبهشت ۱۳۹۹