

UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

College of Arts



**Department of English
Language and Literature**

**Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition:
Using Graded Readers for Vocabulary
Development and Retention in Bahrain
Schools**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master Degree in Applied English Language Studies

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ABSTRACT

The study reported in this thesis investigated whether the use of graded readers promoted incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention in a Bahraini intermediate school; It also explored student and teacher perceptions of the Graded Reader Program. The study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' incidental vocabulary development? (2) What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' vocabulary retention? (3) What perceptions do the students and teachers have of the use of the graded readers for English language learning in general? (4) What perceptions do the students and teachers have of the use of the graded readers for incidental vocabulary learning?

The participants of this study were 35 female second intermediate students and 28 female English language teachers. The data for this study was gathered in multiple ways. An experiment was used to collect data on the Graded Reader Program's effect on incidental vocabulary learning and retention. This was done through the use of a vocabulary knowledge scale test functioning as the pre-test, posttest, and retention test. Questionnaires and focus groups were used to explore the students' and teachers' perceptions of the Graded Reader Program. The results of the study revealed that the use of the Graded Reader Program promoted the acquisition of new, vocabulary; moreover, it assisted the retention of these new words for a two-month period. The student and teacher perceptions of the Graded Reader Program were found to be very positive.

DEDICATION

I thank God for all his blessings and dedicate this work to my love, my family.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides important background information to this study. It begins with a brief description of the status of reading in the Bahrain education system, the country in which this study was conducted, and then moves on to describe how learning vocabulary is perceived by prominent linguists. The main problem of the research is stated. The aims of the study are outlined and research questions are formulated for the two focal objectives of the study.

The chapter then redirects to shed light on the government's initiative of the use of Graded Readers, concluding with an assessment of the likely usefulness of the study to the Bahrain educational system and wider contexts.

1.2 Background

Many students in Bahrain strive to learn the required skills to become competent in the use of the English language. Teaching students English at an intermediate school in Bahrain reveals their struggle and makes their

efforts personal to me. One way of approaching the development of language at our school is through reading, as it is believed that reading is a great source for vocabulary acquisition to second language learners. Krashen (1993), amongst other influential linguists, is a firm believer of this as well. According to Krashen, "reading is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers" (1993, p. 23). In Bahrain, the education system is seen as the main driver for building literacy, not the home. Yet, studies have indicated that there are limits to what the school system can do in terms of literacy (Freimuth, 2014). Print-rich home environments and the modeling of good reading habits are necessary to build a society's reading culture. To what extent Bahrain's society is embracing this notion is unclear, but poorer communities have seen the implementation of the effective *Mother-Child Home Education Programme* (MOCEP). This program focuses on developing mothers' literacy skills in order to provide literacy training to their children (UNESCO, 2017). School systems are also making a concerted effort to improve literacy skills in both English and Arabic. Approaches available to schools to teach English literacy include pre-packaged phonetic reading programs, sustained silent reading practices, and graded reader programs. One initiative currently being supported in the intermediate school system in Bahrain is the use of graded readers (henceforth referred to as the Graded Reader Program). This program is used for the overall development of the English language, not just higher-level

reading skills. One main reason for the use of the Graded Reader Program in Bahrain is to build up vocabulary knowledge.

Many linguists believe that vocabulary is the most important part of learning a language, serving as a foundation for all other skills. Lewis, for example, claims that “ [l]exis is the core or heart of language” (1993, p. 89) Wilkins concurs with Lewis, stating “... while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed” (1972, pp. 111–112). The importance of vocabulary knowledge is also underscored by Schmitt (2010), who points out that “learners carry around dictionaries and not grammar books” (p. 4). Moreover, Nation (1994) believes that the learning of vocabulary has a positive influence on language learning beyond the building of lexis, claiming it improves the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing as well. Folse (2004) also argues that vocabulary is key for communication, stating the biggest communication breakdowns to occur in another language (for him) were related to inappropriate use of vocabulary, not grammar. Schmitt (2000) agrees and emphasizes the importance of lexical knowledge as being “central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” (p. 55).

The learning of lexis, however, does not have to be intentional – it can occur incidentally. Schmitt (2005) explains "vocabulary uptake is believed to occur in either one of two ways; through explicit learning by way of deliberate focus on the words to be learnt, ... or incidentally, through repeated exposure to words - from reading or listening - when attention is

directed more towards attributing meaning to words, than to the conscious effort of 'learning' the words themselves" (p.116).

Given that intentional learning of an enormous amount of new words each year is unrealistic, incidental learning needs to occur in the Bahrain education system in order for learners to develop their English language skills to the degree required for a knowledge-based economy. Incidental vocabulary acquisition refers to “the learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning” (Hulstijn, 2001, p. 271). And since incidental vocabulary learning can be achieved through repeated exposure to new words in written contexts, reading should come to the forefront in Bahrain.

In an attempt to build greater English language proficiency, the Ministry of Education in Bahrain has provided all of its thirty-six intermediate schools with Graded Readers Programs. These readers come with beautifully illustrated stories, dramatized audio recordings, music, sound effects and integrated activities that cover some of the vocabulary found in the reading materials.

This then should provide a rich reading environment for second language learners and allow for the incidental acquisition of vocabulary. But is this truly the case? The answer to this question is important to many stakeholders, in particular to decision-makers and classroom teachers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Even though the Graded Readers Program sounds promising, teachers attempt to use explicit approach to teach some of the vocabulary in the activities, leaving out an enormous number of words that are vital for learners to become competent in English. This enormous number of words is related to *incidental learning of vocabulary*.

Surprisingly, this approach of teaching vocabulary is neglected in the current English language syllabus as incidental learning of vocabulary takes place mostly through extensive reading, which could be included in the syllabus through the use of Graded Readers Program.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate whether the use of the Graded Reader Program in the intermediate school system in Bahrain serves to increase the acquisition and retention of incidental vocabulary, thereby improving English language skills. Furthermore, this study will examine the relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and retention, using the Graded Readers Program. Moreover, this study will consider the relationship between a word's high level of frequency and retention using the program. This study will also examine the perceptions that students and teachers have of the use of the Graded Reader Program, particularly for the learning of new vocabulary.

1.5 Research Questions

The first goal of this research is to investigate incidental vocabulary acquisition through the use of the Graded Reader Program. The second goal is to examine both teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of these readers for incidental vocabulary development.

1. What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' incidental vocabulary development?
2. What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' vocabulary retention?
3. What perceptions do the teachers and students have towards the use of the graded readers for incidental vocabulary learning?
4. What perceptions do the teachers and students have towards the use of the graded readers for English language learning in general?

1.6 Null Hypotheses

Based on the research questions above, the following hypotheses are made.

H.01: The use of graded readers in the classroom does not promote incidental vocabulary acquisition.

H.02: The Graded Reader Program does not have an effect on students' vocabulary retention.

H.03: The students and teachers do not believe the Graded Reader Program is effective in promoting incidental vocabulary learning.

H.04: The students and teachers do not believe the Graded Reader Program is effective for English language learning in general.

1.7 Contributions

The findings of this study will not only contribute to the body of research on Education in EFL/ESL contexts in the Middle East, which is minimal at best, but will also add to the body of research on the use of the Graded Reader Program to build vocabulary through reading. This study has aimed to achieve the following practical contributions:

1. The results of this study can help decision makers find out if the time, money and resources spent on the Graded Reader Program is producing positive educational results in Bahrain government schools.
2. The results can encourage teachers of English into developing more explicit or implicit teaching techniques with the use of the Graded Reader Program to cater to students' vocabulary learning.
3. The impact of this study may be of value to policy makers and syllabi designers as it clarified the effect of the Graded Reader Program on vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Furthermore, this study put forth the following theoretical contributions:

1. This study could contribute to the research of L2 acquisition in that it could highlight the importance of the GRP on improving incidental vocabulary acquisition.
2. This study may yield results related to vocabulary *retention* through the use of the Graded Reader Program.
3. This study could highlight the relationship between word frequency and retention.
4. This study could contribute to the body of research in regards to the perceptions the teachers and students hold towards the Graded Reader Program.

1.8 Limitations to the Study

A number of limitations exist in this study. Firstly, there were only thirty five students and a small number (40) of target words used in the study. These numbers may not be sufficient to draw a firm conclusion from the findings in regards to whether the Graded Reader Program ensures students' incidental vocabulary development and retention. The same holds true for the 'perception' part of the study; with only thirty five students and twenty eight teachers – a small number in comparison to the number of teachers and students in the Bahraini educational system. Therefore, to be more confident of the results, more research needs to be conducted with larger samples of the population.

1.9 Organization of the Study

In order to answer the research questions, the thesis takes the following form. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review. Chapter 3 describes the methodologies employed and the reasons for their use in this study. Chapter 4 reports on the findings of the experiment and is followed by a discussion. Chapter 5 reveals the findings of the questionnaires and focus group study and is also followed by a discussion. Chapter 6 is the conclusion to the study, highlighting the study's overall significance before making suggestions for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This study aims to answer four questions related to the use of the Graded Reader Program in Bahrain schools as outlined in chapter one, and the way that the program is perceived. The upcoming chapters cover important background literature related to the study, the methodology used in the study, and the results of the study along with comments the researcher hopes will be of use to the Bahrain Ministry of Education and other school systems in the region.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the main issues regarding incidental vocabulary acquisition. Before it does, however, it is important to define the term ‘incidental vocabulary acquisition’ first.

Some define it simply as the learning of vocabulary without the *intent* to learn new words (Richards & Schmidt, 2002), while others believe it to be the unintentional act of learning vocabulary while engaged in another act, such as reading or listening (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Gass defines incidental vocabulary learning as a “by-product of other cognitive exercises...involving comprehension” (p. 319) whereas Rott (2013) describes it as more of a casual acquisition. All of these definitions are similar in nature in that they focus on the learning of vocabulary ‘by chance’, not intention. This study chooses the following definition as a guide due to its simplicity and conciseness: “learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning” (Hulstijn, 2001, p. 271). This definition does not imply that incidental vocabulary learning is a completely unconscious process; it merely suggests that the learner is not using a strategy to intentionally learn unknown words he/she comes across in a text.

Huckin and Coady (1999) suggest that a solid vocabulary base is needed in order for incidental vocabulary acquisition to occur. The argument is that once learners have learned the first thousand to two thousand words of a language through *intentional* learning strategies, they are capable of guessing the meanings of unknown words while reading. Some researchers, however, place this number higher - closer to 3000 words. Regardless, the belief is that for incidental vocabulary learning to occur in a second language, learners must have access to a solid vocabulary base first.

Before any of these topics can be addressed, however, a brief overview of second language acquisition theory is needed. This will lay the foundation for understanding L2 vocabulary acquisition. This will then be followed with a brief history of incidental vocabulary learning before moving on to examine the relationship between this phenomenon and reading. Studies discussing the frequency of word exposure needed to achieve vocabulary retention will also be discussed. The chapter will then move on to explore graded reader programs and the learning of incidental vocabulary within this context. The review will also summarize studies related to student and teacher perceptions of graded readers before concluding with a look at the Oxford Dominoes Graded Reader series used in this study to measure incidental vocabulary learning and retention.

2.2 Second Language Acquisition Theories

Of the various language learning theories in existence, two have been particularly influential in the field of second language acquisition: Skinner's theory of Behaviorism and the Innate Theory put forward by cognitive linguist Noam Chomsky.

Skinner's theory of Behaviorism (Skinner, 1991) posited that learning in general is the learning of a new set of 'habits' through a series of stimulus and response events. Skinner came to this conclusion by observing the causes of an action and its consequences, an approach he referred to as 'operant conditioning'. Operant conditioning focuses on the intentional actions or 'operants' of someone or something. Through his 'Skinner' box experiments with animals, he discovered that positively reinforced behavior tended to be repeated (Law of Conditioning). Conversely, behavior that is negatively reinforced (through punishing or ignoring) was minimized or eliminated altogether (Law of Extinction). Skinner's work with rats, in particular, illustrated how the concept of positive reinforcement worked. The box in which the rat was placed had a special lever in it. Whenever, the rat inadvertently touched the lever, it was rewarded with food. Soon, the rats learned that moving the lever translated into getting fed, encouraging the rats to repeat their behavior.

This theory, alongside others from structural linguists (Brown, 2001), became the basis of the 1960's Audiolingual Method to teaching a second language, light-heartedly referred to as 'the drill and kill' in the teaching community in later years. This method focused on repetition, imitation,

mimicry, memorization, and the use of positive reinforcement to learn languages (Brown, 2001). Grammar was taught inductively through structural drills while vocabulary was teacher-controlled and learned through contextual dialogues (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979). This method enjoyed favorable reviews for many years despite strong criticism from nativist theorists. In fact, traces of it can still be found in classrooms worldwide today.

A more viable theory of language learning emerged in the early 1960s in direct response to the theory of Behaviorism (Smith & Allot, 2016). The Innate Theory by Noam Chomsky claimed that the learning of language was not the result of habit formation, but rather a natural cognitive process (Chomsky, 1994). According to Chomsky, all children are born with the knowledge of ‘universal grammar’ (UG), allowing them to generate the grammar rules of any language to which they have been exposed. Chomsky (2015) coined the intangible cognitive mechanism responsible for the development of the human language the ‘Language Acquisition Device’ or the LAD. In reality, one can consider the LAD more of a natural human ability than a device. It includes, for example, the ability to recognize speech sounds and the ability to categorize linguistic features (Brown, 2000). Chomsky’s Innate Theory has gained considerable ground over the years due to numerous research studies showing support for the existence of Universal Grammar. O’Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011) refer to several studies conducted on infants and young children as evidence that children have the natural ability to formulate grammar rules, supporting

Chomsky's notion that "language learning is not really something that a child does; it is something that happens to the child...[just as] the child's body grows and matures..." (Chomsky, 1988, p. 34). Slobin, one of Chomsky's many supporters, points to the ability of children from diverse backgrounds and from different layers of society to learn language in a similar manner as *evidence* for the existence of UG (Fromkin et al., 2014). Chomsky's theory of innateness has served as a solid foundation from which to build other theories.

Krashen was perhaps the most prominent linguist to draw on this nativist theory, formulating controversial hypotheses relating to second language acquisition: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, and the Input Hypothesis (Brown, 2000). Of these, the Input Hypothesis is the most relevant in terms of vocabulary acquisition, but the others warrant a brief synopsis here as well.

Krashen (1982) claims a clear distinction exists between language learning and language acquisition in his Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. The process of acquisition is a subconscious act whereas the process of learning is a conscious act. This ties in with Huckin and Coady's (1999) belief that the first few thousand words of a language need to be 'learned' before incidental vocabulary acquisition can occur.

Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis states that language rules are acquired in a 'natural' or predetermined order, not haphazardly (Brown,

2000). This hypothesis is supported by various research studies, including those conducted by Dulay and Burt (1974, 1976).

The Monitor Hypothesis states that conscious language learning is done through the use of a 'monitor' – an abstract mechanism in the brain. This 'device' edits a person's language output. According to Krashen (1981), this is best done once fluency has been achieved.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis is based on the notion that language acquisition occurs best when a student's 'affective filter' (anxiety level) is low (Brown, 2000).

Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis is of particular interest in this study for it states that in order for 'acquisition' to occur, the learner must be exposed to language that is slightly higher in level of that of the learner ($i + 1$). Krashen (1982) terms this level of language 'comprehensible input'. According to Krashen (1982), without comprehensible input, new linguistic items, such as vocabulary, cannot be 'incidentally' acquired by the learner. Krashen (1989), citing strong proof, posits that comprehensible input can allow for incidental vocabulary acquisition particularly through reading:

Good evidence exists that this assertion is...true for vocabulary and spelling: more comprehensible input, in the form of reading, is associated with greater competency in vocabulary and spelling (p. 441).

It is this theory of $i + 1$ that is the foundation of the use of the Graded Reader Program and thus the most important theory for this study. This

brings the thesis to the next part of the literature review: reading theories and the relationship between incidental vocabulary acquisition and reading.

2.3 Reading Theories

Reading has evolved over time. Initially it was thought to encompass a laborious task of deciphering visual information to retrieve meaning. Now, it is believed to be even more complex. From the metacognitive perspective, the reader is a strategist that performs numerous tasks throughout the reading process (Klein, Peterson, & Simington, 1991). These tasks are functions such as identifying the purpose of and type of text, selecting appropriate reading strategies, and making predictions. This particular theory of reading assumes that the individual possesses a variety of skills, ranging from the ability to classify, hypothesize, infer, and summarize to the ability to establish links between textual parts. It is expected that, particularly due to the growth of electronic text and worldwide literacy rates, the definition of reading will continue to evolve (Fischer, 2003).

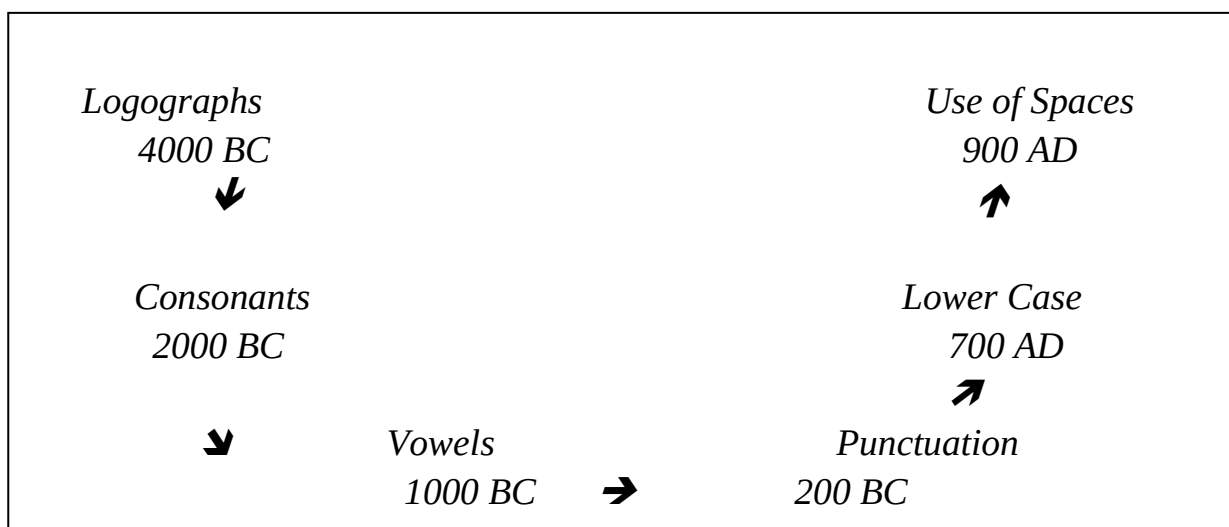
Historically, the sight sound correlation – crucial to alphabetic literacies – originated in Mesopotamia. This then spread widely throughout the region to the Nile, Iran, and then to the Indus Valley. Civilizations soon realized that the written word was a much more efficient method for recording dates, names, numbers, and places than the human mind (Fischer, 2003). Stories, on the other hand, were easily retained and retold orally (Olson, 1977). The diverse civilizations and languages that encountered elementary reading influenced the graphic expressions that were later

created. This resulted in many different manifestations of the written word. An examination of the range of languages is beyond the scope of this study so this context will focus on the Western alphabet – the Latin script and standard method of writing found in most Western and Central European languages – only.

The Phoenicians invented the Western alphabet around 2000 BC (Fischer, 2003). Initially, only consonants were used. A thousand years later, this rudimentary alphabet experienced a significant transformation – the introduction of vowels. This is the basic foundation of the alphabet that is used today. The next major advancement was the introduction of punctuation 800 years later. Finally, in 700 AD lower case characters were invented, and years later spaces began to be used. This allowed the reader, for the first time, to read silently. The following diagram illustrates the evolution of this process:

Figure (1)

Development of the Western Alphabet



Although difficult to prove, it is believed that, originally, reading focused on the simple act of decoding (i.e. trying to get to the end product): “Initially, it was the simple faculty of extracting visual information from an encoded system...”(Fisher, 2003, p. 1). Later, the shift from product to process, a distinction still used today, was made. According to Alderson (2000), process is the interaction between the reader and the text, whereas product is the result of this process, equating to the understanding that is gained from the interaction.

Alderson (2000) states that three levels of understanding take place in the process of reading. First is literal understanding. This is the meaning that is derived simply from the letters that make words and from words that make sentences and so on. The second level of understanding is inferential. This is far more complex, where the individual is expected to ‘read between the lines’, thereby gaining meaning and understanding from ideas that are not explicitly stated in the text. The third and cognitively the most complex level of understanding is the ability to make critical evaluations from a text.

Kintsch and van Dijk (1978) provided an alternative approach to the the process of reading, dividing the practice into two categories: micro-processes and macro-processes. The micro-processes generate the first level of understanding – the literal – and include the analysing of sentences and words and the examination of texts at face value. This level of understanding was the focus of the early readers. It was not reading for pleasure, but regarded as work. In contrast, macro-processing provides a much deeper and global understanding. These processes, which are part of the

metacognitive view of reading, include higher order thinking skills such as hypothesizing and inferencing.

Yet, these two perspectives of the theory of reading imply significant debate. The current controversy questions whether micro-processing is actually possible. It is argued that reading is essentially one global act of interaction with the text, a so-called unitary skill (Alderson, 2000), rather than a combination of separate skills (Lunzer & Gardner, 1979). Yet, the dominant theory of reading asserts that it consists of two parts: the act of decoding and the act of comprehension (Alderson, 2000). Reading is no longer viewed as a simple bottom-up process requiring only the ability to decode messages, as proposed by Gough (1972). According to his theory, reading follows a set sequence – letter and sound to word and then to meaning.

In contrast, the top-down process contends that the individual derives meaning via a holistic examination of the text, utilizing personal experience - an idea first put forward by Goodman (1971). He argues that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game where the reader constructs hypotheses and tests them throughout the process of reading, thereby attempting to “reconstruct, as best he can, the message which has been encoded by writer as a graphic display” (Goodman, 1971, p. 135). This model can be interpreted as the opposite of the bottom-up process.

Other theorists maintain that reading is a combination of these two practices, a so-called interactive process (Day & Park, 2005). This philosophy originates from Rumelhart’s (1977) interactive model, whereby

reading is viewed as the interaction of text and reader – particularly taking into account the background knowledge of the reader.

While, in general, the interactive process of reading is thought to occur automatically (i.e. deciphering a letter), more complicated aspects of the process require conscious execution (i.e. the evaluation of an article). Alderson (2000) contends that the skills and strategies related to reading vary significantly, with some more related to product and others to process. In fact, the number of testable reading skills and abilities is assumed to be approximately one hundred, as concluded by Lemon in Alderson (2000, p. 94), “if the labels of tests are to be believed, then we can test some seventy to eighty reading skills and abilities”. This is an overwhelming number of skills within which lie vocabulary-related learning strategies as well, such as guessing the meaning of a word from context required for incidental vocabulary acquisition.

2.4 Reading and Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

The exact emergence of the notion of ‘incidental vocabulary acquisition’ is difficult to trace. Whereas common sense suggests the notion has been around for thousands of years, Huckin and Coady (1999) claim studies in the field did not really begin to intensify until the late 1980s, with significant work being done throughout the 1990’s. Zhu (2015) attributes the term ‘incidental vocabulary acquisition’ to Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985), stating they were the first to propose the term in their work. However, studies were taking place as early as the 1970’s, particularly in

terms of first language acquisition (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008), these studies have established that reading is an effective method for incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Before various studies supporting this theory are explored, it is important to note that incidental vocabulary acquisition is mainly built upon the frequent exposures to a word in a text or in different texts. Learners come across a variety of known and unknown words during reading, but the acquisition and retention of those words depends on different conditions – frequency of exposure being one of these. However, the number of exposures to a word that can achieve full acquisition is not yet agreed upon. A single encounter of a word in context, however, is unlikely to aid in a full gain of knowledge of a word. In fact, according to Nagy et al. (1987), the possibility of acquiring a word incidentally through seeing it only once is 0.05%. According to Nation (1990), exposure to a word needs to be anywhere from 5 to 16 times for full acquisition to occur. Others place the exposure needed to acquire a word around this range as well. According to Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998) a minimum of 8 exposures is needed. Wu and Xu (2006) estimate this number to be much higher – between 14 to 17 exposures.

Studies in L1 language acquisition do, for the most part, indicate that greater frequency of word exposure leads to greater vocabulary acquisition. One of the earliest and most influential studies was conducted by Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985). Their study revealed that “learning from written context is estimated to account for a third or more of the words

acquired annually by school-age children.” (1985, p. 3). In this study, Nagy et al. examined the amount of vocabulary learning that occurs from context during normal reading. Grade eight students read one of two texts from books of their grade level: an exposition book and a narrative. Words were chosen from the texts, and subjects were told that they would be tested on what they have read. The subjects did not know the purpose of the experiment. Following the reading, students were tested on their knowledge of some difficult words through an interview and a multiple-choice test. The tests were designed to measure the degree of word knowledge. Both measuring methods showed notable partial word knowledge outcomes. But this study, like all studies, had its limitations. First, only two texts were used. Second, subjects were (able-readers) from grade eight only, and third - the tests were given directly after the reading, possibly reflecting temporary memory of the words rather than real word knowledge.

Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) then redid the study to overcome the limitations of the experiment. 352 students from third, fifth, and seventh grade were chosen as subjects this time. These subjects’ reading abilities were represented by their percentiles from previous vocabulary and reading comprehension scales found in their school files. Subjects were then assigned randomly to read either an expository or narrative text from grade-level books. The target words in the readings were the most difficult words from each text. The decision of word difficulty was made by teachers with experience at each age. Researchers gave lists of words to the teachers and asked them to circle words that they believed difficult for average students

of each grade. Subjects were also given a pre-test to serve as a control of their prior knowledge of words.

The study consisted of two sessions in which students were asked to read either two narratives or two expositions. One week later, researchers administered a surprise multiple-choice test. The results showed a significant effect of learning from context in texts judged easy. However, in texts judged to be hard, little gain was noticed. Nonetheless, these results confirm that incidental learning of word meanings does take place during reading. Researchers of this study believe that the result of learning from context is a generalizable phenomenon. However, there were still some limitations to this study: only two sessions took place, two texts were used, and the test took place after only one week. The fact that only two sessions were held suggests that there may not have been many repetitions of the target vocabulary. As mentioned, it is generally agreed that repeated exposure is key to vocabulary acquisition. The use of two texts may also have had an effect on the frequency of word exposure, as the two texts may not have shared much of the same vocabulary. Finally, one week is not a significant amount of time to establish vocabulary retention.

Later studies continue to confirm that greater vocabulary acquisition occurs through repetitive exposure to words. Biemiller and Boote's (2006) study, for example, revealed that children made an average gain of 12% in vocabulary knowledge when there was repeated word exposure. This confirms the findings of an earlier study by Coyne, Simmons, Kame'enui, and Stoolmiller (2004) who studied the effects of re-reading texts to at-risk

children on vocabulary development. Their findings also revealed an increase in vocabulary acquisition. Justice, Meier, and Walpole (2005) conducted a similar study as well, generating similar results.

Another study was conducted by Saragi, Nation, and Meister (1978). In this study, 20 English speakers read the novel 'Clockwork Orange'. The novel contained 90 'nadsat' words (Russian slang words) which none of the participants knew as no one spoke Russian. Two experimental groups and one control group were used in this study, with the control group not reading Clockwork Orange. The experimental groups read the chapters in 60 minutes. After ten minutes, subjects were tested using a multiple-choice meaning recognition test. The results showed that the lowest score on the multiple-choice test was 50%, and the average score of the target words known by participants was 76%. This shows that although subjects had no prior knowledge of the target words, an actual increase in word knowledge occurred.

According to numerous studies (see for instance Paribakht 2004, 2005; Schmitt, 2008; Wesche & Paribakht, 2010) the process of acquiring incidental vocabulary in L2 learners starts with inferring unknown word meanings from context using conscious cognitive operations. However, in order to guess the meaning of unknown words in context, learners must know most of the surrounding words first – which L1 learners often know. According to Nation and Hwang (1995), the knowledge of the 2000 most-frequent word families (a word's base form and all of its derived and inflected forms) of English usually enables learners to recognize

approximately 84% of the words in written texts. But sometimes this percentage is not enough to fully comprehend a text by an L2 learner. According to Nation (1990), learners should have prior knowledge of at least 95% of the words in the text in order to reach a satisfactory level of comprehension.

Studies confirming L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition through authentic reading also exist, but none from the Middle East where this study is situated. A recent study conducted by Daskalovska (2014), for example, focused on English language learners at a university in Macedonia. The study was carried out on a sample of 18 English major students. The participants were asked to read and listen to eight chapters of the novel 'Pride and Prejudice'. In this study, 51 target words were chosen from the text. Both a pre-test and a post-test were given. The pre-test showed that the participants knew the meaning of 26.9% of the target words. The results of the post-test showed that the participants learned 24% of the previously unknown target words. The vocabulary gain was also affected, to some degree, by the word frequency in the text.

This confirms the general findings of a much earlier study conducted in Japan by Day, Omura, and Hiramatsu (1991). There were two groups of subjects in this investigation: a high school group of 191 students and a university group of 397 students. The high school students were enrolled in a private school where English was taught thoroughly – meaning being taught the four skills by native speakers of English. The university students were either first or second year students. Sustained silent reading of a short story

was used in this investigation. Participants read a short story appropriate for their level of English competency with a pre-test helping to determine the unknown words. In all, 17 target words were chosen for a multiple choice vocabulary test. This choice was based on the words' sufficient frequencies that would enable reasonable guessing of their meanings. Both high school and university students were assigned to either controlled or treatment groups. The treatment group received the story and were asked to read it. After this, they were given the vocabulary test. The control group, on the other hand, was only given the vocabulary test. The results showed that students in the treatment group knew notably more vocabulary than those who had not read the story. This shows a positive effect of sustained silent reading on the language development of Japanese students.

Lee and Pulido (2016) also tried to examine the effect of topic interest on EFL incidental vocabulary acquisition. One hundred and thirty five female and male from ninth-grade participated in the study. Two expository passages were used. One represented a high-interest topic and the other a low-interest topic. Ten advanced students non-participants read the passages before the experiment to help choose unfamiliar target words. Two weeks prior to the experiment students were tested using a yes/no checklist to measure students' familiarity with the words. After four sessions over a period of eight weeks vocabulary gains were assessed immediately after the reading and the retention test was carried out after four weeks. The results revealed significant effects of topic interest on vocabulary acquisition (90.10%) in comparison with (52.87%) vocabulary gain with the low-

interest topic. The retention test on the other hand showed decreased scores for both passages (38.73%) and (22.80 %).

A study was also undertaken by Kweon and Kim (2008) on word frequency and word *retention* in second language learning in Korea. Kweon and Kim used 12 intermediate English language students enrolled in an English reading course in the winter of 2006 at Pohang University of Science and Technology as their subjects. The most frequent content words in the students' texts were identified using a software program that quantified the word frequencies. Common words were removed and participants were tested on 367 words. The words were stored within three bands of frequency (20 or more, 7-19, and 1-6 occurrences). Participants in this study read authentic texts – meaning not graded in level or controlled for complexity. A pre-test was administered on the first day of class. The test measured the word knowledge for the 367 words. The treatment stage took five weeks. Every day, students read an average of 4-6 hours at home. They were given a comprehension quiz at the beginning of each class. In the class, students were asked to sit in groups and discuss a topic chosen by the instructor from the material they had read prior to each session. No class activities focused on vocabulary meaning. After reading three chapter books, an immediate post-test (1) was given on the last day of instruction and another post-test (2) was administered 4 weeks later. The results of post-test 2 showed that the general retention was significantly higher than percentages of the pre-test. The notable increase was attributed to the amount of reading. All in all, words that occurred in higher frequency bands

were learned and retained better than the lower frequency bands, regardless of word classes. One significant limitation to this study, however, was shown on the pre-test. The pre-test revealed that the participants understood 50% of the words before the experiment, meaning that they had fewer opportunities to meet unknown words than learners with smaller vocabularies.

Tekmen and Daloglu (2006) conducted a study on Turkish university students learning English to examine the relationship between acquisition and word frequency in a text. In their study, they asked three groups of students to read *The Golden Fleece* in English. Over a two-week period students were thoroughly tested in lexical gains using four vocabulary tests. Analyzing the data of the tests revealed significant lexical gains for each group ($p < .05$) and word frequency was also found to be a significant factor in vocabulary acquisition ($p < .05$).

These and other studies show that vocabulary development in second language learners is gradual and that an abundance of reading is required to build a sizable vocabulary. But these studies focus on students of high school to university age not on reading in L2 primary classrooms – warranting further investigation. These studies also focus on the use of authentic texts in the classroom whereas many English teachers around the world are opting to use Graded Readers instead.

2.5 Graded Reader Programs and Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

Many second language teachers use graded readers or ‘simplified texts’ in their classrooms as they provide “better conditions for learning new words and consolidation of previously met words” (Daskalovska, 2014, p. 202). In addition to controlled vocabulary and syntax, graded books of stories often offer marginal glosses to help learners comprehend the reading material. These glosses mainly focus on key words in the text; they can provide easy definitions, general information or synonyms.

A recent study that measured the effects of L1 and L2 glosses on incidental vocabulary acquisition was that of Choi (2015). A hundred and eighty Korean tenth graders took part in this study. To reduce the effect of variance in the chosen sample, the researchers selected only male native speakers of Korean. The participants were divided into three groups according to their English scores in a proficiency test. The control group didn’t use glosses. The participants read a story one with no glosses another with L1 (Korean) glosses and third with L2 (English) glosses. Seven target words appeared twice, another seven appeared four times. The target words consisted of two sets: a set of words occurring twice (F2 words) or four times (F4 words). Two tests were administered and immediate and a one-week delayed vocabulary test. Participants were not told they would be tested on the target words. Results showed a poor performance of the control group. On the other hand the other two groups showed significant vocabulary gain in the immediate test ($p < .001$). But L1 group surpassed the

L2 group in the long-term retention of F4 words, but not F2 words. The results suggest that the mechanism of retaining vocabulary may vary depending on the gloss type, nevertheless, they highlight the positive impact of glosses on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Another study conducted by Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996) investigated the effect of glosses on incidental vocabulary learning by examining the outcome of three treatments or conditions on Dutch students of French. The first condition was the use of marginal glosses, the second was employing a bilingual dictionary to aid learners in the search for word meanings, and the third one was the text-only condition or the control. The study concluded that marginal glosses were more effective than the other two conditions, proving that the use of marginal glosses is a successful strategy for promoting incidental vocabulary learning.

Other studies have also been done on the use of graded readers. Both Nation and Wang (1999) and Wodinsky and Nation (1988) investigated the possible contribution of graded readers to vocabulary learning, concluding that, if used appropriately, the readers serve as an effective second language learning tool. Nation and Wang's study (1999), however, concluded that incidental vocabulary acquisition is less likely to occur at the lower levels than the higher ones. Nonetheless, the use of a series of graded readers can be effective if students read a minimum of five books at each level with around one book per week. Wodinsky and Nation's (1988) earlier study found similar results claiming that "it would be necessary to read several

readers [the longer the better] written at the same level” for incidental vocabulary acquisition to take place (p. 160).

A relatively recent and noteworthy study was conducted in Canada by Zahar, Cobb, and Spada (2001). The study involved 144 grade seven ESL children in Quebec, Canada. Although from a variety of backgrounds, the majority of the students were Francophone. The students, of various proficiency levels, were pre-tested on 30 words from a story they would read. Of these 30 words, 37% came from the 0-1000 frequency word list, 30% from the 1000-2000 wordlist, and 33% of the list (low frequency). In the pre-test, students matched the words to their meanings, a task they were very familiar with. The participants then read a text of 2387 words. A few days after the reading, the participants were tested again. The post-test was exactly the same as the pre-test and was administered under the same conditions. The post-test showed an increased meaning knowledge of about 20.88% of the targeted words. Although a modest gain, this study confirms, once again, that incidental vocabulary learning does occur through reading – even graded reader reading. The study also confirmed the importance of word frequency in a text. Frequent exposure to a word is necessary for its acquisition and retention, especially, the study found, for beginner level students. Some researchers claim this exposure needs to occur very frequently though. Barcroft, for example, discovered the highest vocabulary learning scores occurred with “eight 3-second repetitions” (2015, p. 216).

In a study that took place in Japan using Graded Readers, Waring and Takaki (2003) found that participants recognized almost half of the meaning

of target words on an immediate multiple-choice test. However, after three months this score dropped significantly, indicating that incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading is mainly based on recognition than on recall of lexical knowledge. Hence, the results shown in the study's immediate post-tests cannot be considered long-term learning, bringing the issue of retention of newly acquired vocabulary back into the forefront.

An important argument against the *sole* use of graded readers is made by Nation himself. Nation (2006) argues that second language learners need to know up to 8000-9000 word families to achieve independent reading. According to Nation, this number is far beyond the highest graded reader level. So, to become independent readers, authentic texts must be used in the classroom at some point, especially at the higher levels. Perhaps a mixture of authentic texts and graded readers at all levels of English is the answer.

2.6 Student and Teacher Perceptions of Graded Readers

Graded Readers offer a simplified level of language to help second language learners to read them. The Ministry of Education supplied intermediate schools in Bahrain with the Graded Readers Program to provide learners with an enjoyable extensive reading experience. According to Wang (2013), material of this type can greatly contribute to the learning process. But, is this something that students and teachers believe in as well?

In a further review of the literature, only a handful of perception studies in ESL/EFL were found on reading and graded readers. One noteworthy study on the use of novels was conducted in Taiwan on college

level EFL students. In this study, Tsai (2012) used a novel as the main resource for an EFL reading course. Findings revealed that after a full semester's use, an improvement in attitude and interest towards reading occurred. More importantly, students reported perceptions of having a higher level reading ability. But this study used authentic literature, not graded readers.

Fortunately, Claridge (2011) focused her work on the perceptions stakeholders have of graded reading programs. Claridge's two-year study investigated, among other things, twenty-five learners' views and thirteen teacher's views of the readers. Again, none of these students originated from the Middle East; all came from Asia and the South Pacific. The findings indicated that the teachers' perception of a 'good graded reader' depended on the mechanics of reading and how the text could best be used to extend language proficiency. Learners, on the other hand, chose their graded readers mainly on appearance and interest, wanting a reader for a "primarily emotional, rather than cognitive, experience..." (Claridge, 2012, p. 107). Whereas learners wish to enjoy reading a good story – meaning it has to be easy enough to read (i-1), teachers want students to read stories a little higher than their level (i+1) to activate learning. This puts the two at odds in the classroom.

In another perception study conducted recently in Malaysia, researchers discovered that perceptions of lower level EFL students of Graded Readers were overall encouraging (Lin, Pandian and Jagantham, 2016). Findings revealed that the use of graded readers built a more positive

attitude towards reading in English, but the study made no mention of vocabulary acquisition and retention.

In fact, no studies on the perceptions of teachers and students on the use of graded readers for incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention were found in the existing literature. If such studies exist, they are few and far between. The goal of this research, then, is to bridge this gap in the literature and bring together two areas of study. Firstly, the study will examine if and to what extent vocabulary acquisition occurs in the use of graded readers in students in intermediate schools in Bahrain. Then the study will move on to look at how the teachers and students themselves feel about the use of graded readers for the purpose of vocabulary development. This combination makes this study unique in nature.

2.7 The Oxford Dominoes Series of Graded Readers

This is the series of readers which is in use in Bahrain schools by the Ministry of Education. It is a series for learners of English as a Foreign Language, specifically targeting the upper primary and lower secondary age group. With this relatively narrow focus, the series has only four levels, whereas most EFL graded readers series have six or seven. The levels correspond to the first four levels of the well-known Oxford Bookworm series. The *Starter* level is limited to 250 words in its vocabulary, while Stage 3 reaches 1,000 words. As well as vocabulary, sentence structure is also carefully controlled.

The series aims to engage learners' interest through full-color presentation and entertaining content, aiming at a generation which has grown up with multi-media. The publisher's goal is to attract children to read, realizing that the graded readers need to compete with video games, YouTube, etc. for the children's attention. The books include integrated language activities with personalized projects. In the second edition, each book is accompanied by a "MultiROM", which has dramatized audio, interactive games and an interactive wordlist. However, the disc which comes with the edition used in Bahrain has only dramatized audio.

There are 239 books in the series: 56 in the "Starter" level, plus 34 "Quick Starter" titles (books written to 'Starter' specifications, but very short), 64 at Level 1, 47 at Level 2 and 38 at Level 3. There is a range of genres, both fiction and non-fiction. The fiction includes simplified classics, such as "The Count of Monte Cristo" by Alexandre Dumas, and books which have been specifically written, such as "A Pretty Face" by John Escott. The non-fiction collection includes historical items such as "The Travels of Ibn Battuta" and contemporary issues such as "Green Planet". It should be possible, therefore for any student to find something of interest.

Nonetheless, in the English classroom, teachers face great difficulties in helping students feel the pleasure of reading in a second language. Within set time constraints, teachers work hard to get students to reach the required level of proficiency. To help with this goal, the decision has been made in Bahrain to make use of the Oxford Dominoes Graded Reader Program. This program, from my point of view, will not only improve students'

comprehension skills but will further assist other communicative skills, such as listening and speaking. The program has been well established among intermediate government schools, with selected titles chosen for each of the three intermediate levels. In view of the fact that this program is taught alongside the English curriculum, only one graded reader is scheduled to be taught in each semester. These readers are:

“The Teacher’s Secret” and “The Blue Diamond” (First intermediate).

“Nicholas Nickleby” and “The Lost World” (Second intermediate).

“The Sign of Four” and “The Last of the Mohicans” (Third intermediate).

The Ministry of Education organizes training workshops from time to time to propose fresh ideas and new teaching methods for teachers, including the use of graded readers. The implementation and teaching of the stories is flexible; teachers can innovate ways that best suit their students. Particularly, teachers are encouraged to make the once-a-week reading class fun and pleasurable and to encourage more reading. For instance, a teacher can assemble other graded readers from the Oxford Dominoes graded readers series to launch a class library for his/her students to borrow and read. Teachers can also create interactive lessons using Smart Board and Active Board to augment the limited resources provided in this initiative.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

As already outlined, this study aims to assess the effects of a Graded Reader Program, specifically the Oxford Dominoes series discussed above,

on incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention. It also examines student and teacher perceptions of the Graded Reader Program. Since these research questions are very different in nature, both quantitative and qualitative research need to be used in this study. To address the research questions properly, three different methodologies need to be used. Since the first two questions focus on the effect the Graded Reader Program has on incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention, they require pure quantitative analysis in the form of an experiment. The tool chosen to conduct this measurement was Paribakht and Wesche's (1993) *The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale* (VKS), a test that allows learners to assess their vocabulary knowledge.

To address the perceptions of students and teachers, however, a different approach is needed. With the aim here being to understand the perceptions stakeholders have of the Graded Reader Program, a more in-depth and personal approach is required, calling for a mix of quantitative and qualitative research. The methods chosen to answer research questions 3 and 4 then are a questionnaire followed by a focus group study. The reason for using the questionnaire is that it is a particularly useful tool for collecting large amounts of quantitative data on people's attitudes, opinions, values, and experiences on a variety of issues (Bell, 2005). It also tends to be quick, efficient, and low-cost in nature. The questionnaire consists of a Likert scale with closed statements related to reading and vocabulary learning and teaching (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The reason for choosing a Likert scale is that it is commonly used to investigate attitudes in survey research and is effective at measuring intensity of feelings (Bryman, 2012).

Both teachers and students have to rate the statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

In order to delve more deeply into the attitudes and perceptions reported in the questionnaire, a more qualitative approach is needed. Therefore a focus group study was chosen to conduct a deeper investigation into the students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes of the Graded Reader Program (see Appendix L). This method was chosen as it is useful in exploring "how group participants view the issues with which they are confronted" (Bryman, 2012, p. 503) and why they hold those views.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the definition of incidental vocabulary learning and highlighted various theories related to second language acquisition, reading, and vocabulary learning. It has discussed the general agreement among theorists and researchers that reading has a beneficial effect on vocabulary learning. The graded reader series, Oxford Dominoes, was also described, together with its role in the public school system in Bahrain. Finally, the rationale behind the research methods used to investigate the phenomena was explained, highlighting the need for a mixed-method approach which will be outlined in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design in greater detail. It describes the general nature of the study, i.e. a multi-methods study, and the components of the study, i.e. an experiment, a survey using questionnaires, and a focus group study. It describes how each component was prepared and administered in this study, giving an overall rationale for the design.

3.2 Design of the Study

Educational research often makes use of a mix of research methods to triangulate or strengthen findings (Warfa, 2016). The use of multiple methods in a study allows for “multiple ways of seeing and hearing [and] multiple ways of making sense of the social world...” (Greene, p. 20). It allows, first and foremost, for triangulation to occur. Triangulation is “the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings can be cross-checked” (Bryman, 2012, p. 717). This is necessary to establish the validity and reliability of a study (Yeung, 1997; Zainal, 2007). Whereas qualitative methods give deeper insight into a phenomenon, quantitative methods reveal empirical evidence on the phenomenon itself. The research problem investigated in this study uses a mixed methodology approach since no single method can sufficiently

address all the questions of this study. Consequently, there are three different parts to this study – an experiment, a questionnaire for teachers and students, and a small focus group study for teachers and students.

3.3 Parts of the Study

Before outlining the participants, instrumentation, and procedures of this study in greater detail, a general look at the three different parts of the study and the rationale behind their use is warranted.

3.3.1 The Experimental Treatment

The experiment serves to measure if vocabulary acquisition and retention occurred at the end of the treatment. A pre-experimental design is chosen because of the researcher's inability to access more than one group of students (one class) due to the school time-table restrictions, which did not allow for a control group. Nevertheless, the class was assigned to the researcher on a random basis. Consequently, of the various pre-experimental designs available to the researcher, the One Group Pretest Posttest Study design matched the best. This design allowed for the determination of baseline scores before the treatment itself, helping to establish if a change occurred after the Graded Reader Program treatment.

3.3.2 The Questionnaires

In order to gain an understanding of the perceptions students and teachers held towards the Graded Reader Program, reading, and vocabulary

acquisition in general, questionnaires were administered. This method was chosen because it is a highly useful tool for collecting large amounts of quantitative data on people's attitudes, opinions, values, and experiences on a variety of issues (Bell, 2005).

3.3.3 The Focus Group

A small focus group study - a form of group interview which centers on a particular topic (Bryman, 2012) - was conducted to gain more insight into the students' and teachers' perceptions of the Graded Reader Program beyond the questionnaire. This method was chosen because it is a useful tool for examining more deeply the participants' views and perceptions of a given phenomenon (Bryman, 2012).

3.4 The Participants

For the experiment itself, one class of thirty-five female intermediate students between the ages of twelve and thirteen years at Sitra Intermediate Girls' School participated. Students were studying the required curriculum (Upstream 2) alongside the Graded Reader Program. These same students also participated in the completion of the student questionnaire.

In terms of teacher participation, a total of twenty-eight female English language teachers familiar with the Graded Reader Program, some from Sitra Intermediate Girls' School and others from Bahraini intermediate government schools, completed the questionnaire.

A group of five female English teachers and six female intermediate students all from the school in this study participated in the focus group. Due to time constraints, however, there was limited flexibility for selecting the participants in the focus groups. Ultimately, they were selected on the basis of availability at the time needed. Ideally, they would have been selected by a random method, such as drawing names from a full list, but their availability itself was essentially random.

3.5 Testing Instrumentation

The Instrumentation used for each part of the study was different. Since the purpose of the experiment was to determine if vocabulary learning and retention occurred after the Graded Reader Program treatment, a tried and tested instrument of measurement was needed. The researcher, therefore, chose to adopt Paribakht and Wesche's (1997) *The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale* (VKS), which had been used in several studies before. The VKS measures both self-perceived word knowledge and demonstrated word knowledge, through a combination of self-report and performance items. The original version of the VKS as designed by Paribakht and Wesche (1997) included the following five categories:

- I: I don't remember having seen this word before
- II: I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means
- III: I have seen this word before and I think it means _____
(synonym or translation)
- IV: I know this word. It means _____ (synonym or translation)
- V: I can use this word in a sentence. e.g.: _____

The purpose of the scale is to ‘measure progressive degrees of word knowledge’ (Waring, 2002). Here Level I indicates what the learner does not know. Levels II-IV measure the recognition of a word, and Level V measures the production of a word.

In this study, however, the fifth level (using a word in a sentence) was dropped. The reason for the removal of the highest level of the scale could actually be said to further improve the validity of the study in terms of its focus on vocabulary, since it removes the complicating factors of syntax and creativity, furthermore, the researcher knew this part of the scale would take the students a long time to complete. Therefore, the version of the VKS in this study asked students to rate their understanding of the readers’ vocabulary words and did not measure production skills (see Appendix C):

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Level I | I have never seen or heard this word before |
| Level II | I have seen the word but I don’t know what it means |
| Level III | I have seen this word before and I think it means... |
| Level IV | I know this word. It means... |

This kind of testing scale stems from the view that vocabulary acquisition occurs along a continuum of knowledge:

Henrikson suggests that...language develops...in some kind of hierarchical order...Knowledge moves from initial word recognition through rough characterization or vagueness to mastery of finer shades of meaning. That is, the better the word meaning is known, the further along the continuum one moves. (Waring 2002, p. 2-3)

Supporters of this view of vocabulary acquisition are numerous, for example Melka (1997), Pigott (1984), Faerch, Haastrup, and Phillipson,(1984), and Palmberg (1987) - amongst others. This notion has developed into different forms of vocabulary knowledge scale tests, which have been used in numerous studies to measure learners' vocabulary knowledge (see for example: Joe, 1995; McNeill, 1996; Scarcella & Zimmerman, 1997). This study, however, decided to use elements of *The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale* (VKS) designed by Paribakht and Wesche (1997).

The words on the test came from the graded reader used in the treatment *The Lost World* (from now on referred to as the Graded Reader), from the Level 2 Oxford Dominoes Series. This is the third of the four levels in the series, 72 pages long, and with vocabulary based on seven hundred headwords.

The words for the VKS were first chosen by the teacher whose class took part in the study, originally isolating seventy words. This word list (see Appendix D) was then given to the other English teachers at the school to assess. In the end, the teachers' input helped create a list of 40 words (Appendix E).

The questionnaire for this study consisted of a Likert scale with closed statements related to reading and vocabulary learning and teaching (see Appendix A and Appendix B). Statements in the student questionnaire included topics related to students' reading habits, learning techniques, usefulness of the readers, and opinions of teacher instruction and competence. Statements in the teacher questionnaire targeted their

perceptions towards students' attitudes to reading, the usefulness of the reading program for learning, and their views towards their own teaching techniques and methodology. The student questionnaire was made up of 37 statements whereas the teachers' consisted of twenty six statements. Both teachers and students had to rate the statements from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

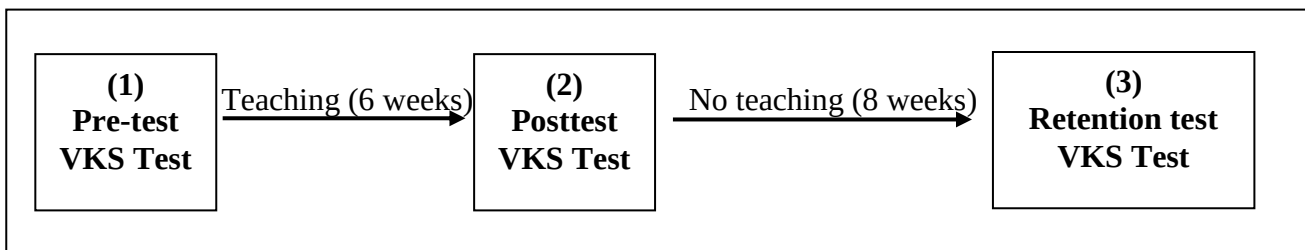
The focus group study used a semi-structured interview approach with mainly open-ended questions to allow for further exploration of the findings from the questionnaires.

3.6 The Procedures

The first step in this study was to determine a baseline of student vocabulary knowledge. For this, The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale – which is the sole instrument in this experiment – was used. This was called the pre-test (Appendix C) and was administered to the thirty five students to measure their knowledge of the target words before the Graded Reader Program treatment started.

Figure (2)

A Diagram Showing the Experimental Procedure



Students then read the graded reader twice a week for six weeks (twelve teaching hours in total). During class time, students read silently, listened to the audio recordings for the reader, and worked with the teacher on comprehending the main events, predicting future events, describing characters, and thinking critically about what they would do in given situations. However, when students approached the teacher to inquire about meanings of unknown words, students were asked to stop and reread the paragraph a number of times and then try to predict the meaning. Nonetheless, most of the time the glosses provided in the graded reader resolved this problem. After they finished the Graded Reader treatment, the same vocabulary knowledge scale test was given to determine if any new words were incidentally acquired. After a set period of time (8 weeks), the retention test (the same vocabulary knowledge scale test) was administered to students again to see if *retention* of any of the new words had occurred.

After students finished reading the Graded Reader, they were given the student questionnaire to complete. The teachers were given their questionnaire in the same manner around the same time. The data from these were compiled and then a focus group study was called. The researcher met with the five teachers and six students separately. The interviews were guided by the findings of the questionnaires in a semi-structured format to allow for free flow of speech. The focus group study was recorded and then transcribed in Arabic and then translated into English. For anonymity, each participant was given a number in the transcription with the researcher receiving the number 0.

3.7 Ethical Issues

It is important to note that, since this study involved working with human subjects, steps were taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Consequently, numbers were assigned to teachers and students, and no names appear in this study. Furthermore, this study used methods that are generally seen as a regular part on any classroom instructions, thus no physical or mental risk threatened the participants. Moreover, the researcher obtained consent from the Ministry of Education to conduct the experiment and study on the target class.

3.8 Data Analysis

Since there are three parts to the study, it stands to reason that there are three parts to the data analysis. The data from the experiment's VKS was scored using a 1–4 point scale. This matches the first four levels of Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) scoring categories at which Level 1 (I have never seen or heard this word before) was assigned 1 point and Level 2 (I have seen the word but I don't know what it means) was assigned 2 points. Level 3 (I have seen this word before and I think it means...) was assigned 3 points if the students got the meaning correct, but 2 points if the meaning was incorrect. The final Level – Level 4 (I know this word. It means...) – was assigned 4 points if correct and 2 points if incorrect. These values were assigned to the VKS used in the pre-test, post-test, and retention test (Weschke & Paribakhat, 1996, p. 30). The data collected from the pretest, post-test, and retention periods were compared using Repeated Measures

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was done to see if there was an improvement in the vocabulary knowledge before and after the intervention and if this improvement is retained later. A repeated measures ANOVA was used because it is ideal for comparing measurements of the same samples across different periods of time. A post-hoc analysis was also done to pinpoint the significant increase in vocabulary acquisition and the retention that occurred.

In terms of the questionnaires, tests were run to ensure reliability. The Likert-type questionnaire used in this study was examined using SPSS reliability procedures for Cronbach's alpha. This is a measure of scale reliability that provides evidence of how closely related the items are in the questionnaire. Results revealed the reliability co-efficient ($\alpha=0.775$) of the student questionnaire to be within acceptable standards in most social science research. The reliability co-efficient for the teacher questionnaire was $\alpha = 0.932$, even stronger than that of the students. The student and teacher questionnaire responses were then analyzed with important percentages and findings highlighted.

The focus group transcripts compiled after the questionnaires underwent a content analysis. In this analysis, recurring views were highlighted to shed light on student and teacher beliefs and attitudes related to the Graded Reader Program, the act of reading, and vocabulary learning and teaching in general. The reason 'content analysis' was chosen for the data analysis was that is known to be a useful tool for analyzing raw data in

documents, including transcripts such as the ones in this study (Bryman, 2012).

3.9 Validity

In every study, validity or the credibility of one's findings is of great concern. There are two major categories of validity: internal and external. In terms of internal validity, the experimental part of this study comes under focus. With the use of a One Group Pretest Posttest design where a control group is lacking, the findings leave themselves open to debate. To minimize this, the nine threats that can endanger internal validity are addressed here.

First is the threat of history. This refers to an unanticipated event occurring during the experiment itself that could influence the posttest scores. No such event occurred during the experiment in this study.

Maturation is another possible threat to internal validity. This refers to the posttest results being influenced by the simply maturation of subjects over the course of the experiment. With the experimental part of this study only 14 weeks in length, the posttest results being influenced by maturation is highly unlikely.

Instrument decay is another concern. This relates to some kind of change in the instrument itself or the scorer (often fatigue related) which could affect the results. This study can rule out any such threats since a solid established instrument was used for assessment (VKS) and a computer assigned the scores.

The fourth possible threat to the experimental part of the study is the characteristics of the data collectors, such as age, gender, ethnicity and so on. In this case, however, there was only one person collecting data throughout the experiment – the researcher, so no threats could come from this perspective either. This links closely to the next possible threat: data collector bias. Where there are numerous data collectors and scorers, there is the possibility of distorting data to ensure certain outcomes. In this study, the only person involved with the data collection was the researcher herself with the scoring and data entry being done by a third party (not related to the study in any way).

The fact that a pre-test was completed in this study could also be a threat to the findings in that it might have ‘alerted’ students to the vocabulary to study. This threat was reduced by not informing the students of the upcoming post and retention tests nor making any further reference to the list of words throughout the treatment.

A regression threat is also not likely to occur for this study. This threat appears when the group that is studied is either extremely low or high in ability. In this study, a randomly chosen regular classroom with the usual variation of ability was used.

When students are informed that a study is being conducted, their view of the study and overall participation can affect the outcome of the study, compromising the results. In this study, however, students were unaware of the entire process and were informed one step at a time. This minimized the influence their attitudes could have had on the findings.

The final threat to internal validity that needs to be addressed here is that of implementation. This refers to the treatment or the method used in the experiment and how it is administered by different people. Since this study only had one administrator, this threat is also not of concern here.

Furthermore, both questionnaires and focus group questions were validated by a panel of judges from Department of English Language and Literature in the University of Bahrain.

In terms of external validity or the ability to generalize findings to the greater population, two issues should be taken into consideration. First, the nature of the study which uses a mutli-method approach to achieve triangulation; that allows for the validation of data through cross verifying the findings obtained from different methods. Second, are the similarities between this school (students' age, reading ability, syllabi, and reading materials) and other government school in Bahrain. Due to these similarities, one can assume similar developments could occur. Therefore, results will be of interest to the Bahrain Ministry of Education and to teachers, parents and management of other Bahrain intermediate schools, which are all following the same Graded Reader Program.

3.10 Reliability

The results of the three administrations of the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale were subjected to the ANOVA procedure, which found a highly significant change between the pretest and posttest, and between the pretest

and the retention test. This suggests strong reliability for the vocabulary measures.

The reliability of the questionnaires was assessed using the Cronbach alpha test that measures the internal consistency of a set of items, which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.78 for the students questionnaire items and 0.93 for the teachers', both well within the acceptable range.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter reported the methods used to complete the study, i.e. an experiment involving a pre-test, post-test and retention test, questionnaires for both students and teachers, and focus groups of teachers and students. The following two chapters will outline the findings of this study and present a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
PART ONE:
THE EXPERIMENT

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PART ONE: THE EXPERIMENT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at the experiment's VKS results in detail and offer a thorough analysis. The results are presented, showing the analysis with appropriate statistical procedures.

Results are shown for the pretest, posttest, and retention test, and scored according to the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale devised by Paribakht and Wesche (1997). The mean and standard deviation were noted for each test to indicate the average performance of the students (mean score) and the range of different scores achieved. The scores on the different tests are compared through the Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the significance level of the results discussed.

The chapter closes with the findings on vocabulary retention and the frequency of repetition of the target words in the reader investigated and discussed. These are then compared to the findings of similar studies.

4.2 Pretest, Posttest, and Retention Test Results

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale test was conducted three times over a period of 14 weeks. It was first administered to the target group before the intervention took place to measure the students' self-perceived knowledge of

the forty words. Then the same test was carried out directly after the completion of the Graded Reader Program treatment. After a period of eight weeks, the test was administered again to measure retention. Appendix F shows the differences in individual scores in each of the three periods.

The pre-test VKS administered to the students before the Graded Reader Program intervention resulted in the data shown in Appendix G. These scores indicate the students' self-perceived knowledge of the forty words on the scale before intervention. The mean scores ranged from 1 up to 3.05, indicating that the data is dispersed around 2.05 points. The scores' standard deviations also show that the individual responses of the students were generally close to each other and that they had a relatively homogenous set of responses.

After the treatment, an observable increase in mean scores of the students was detected (see Appendix F and H). The mean scores range from 1.4 to 3.525. This shows that the range of scores increased from 2.05 points on the pretest to 2.125 points on the posttest. Standard deviations also showed greater variation in the responses, which may indicate an effect brought about by the treatment.

After eight weeks, the retention test results showed that there were still observable changes in the scores of the students. The mean scores ranged from 1.5 to 3.575 (see Appendix F and I). This shows that the range of scores decreased from 2.125 points on the posttest to 2.075 points on the retention test. Although retention was not found to be statistically significant between the posttest and retention test, yet, between the pretest and retention

test significant retention had occurred. This is important to note as there was a significant time difference (8 weeks) between the posttest and retention test.

Table (1)
Descriptive Statistics of Pre/Post/Retention Tests

Tests	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest	1.66929	.425306	35
Posttest	2.16357	.622594	35
Retention	2.24357	.596847	35

Looking at overall statistics in **Table 1**, a substantial increase is clear between the pretest (1.669) and the posttest (2.164). This shows that students' recognition and understanding of the target words increased substantially over the course of the reading program. In fact, the mean score continued to rise after the program was completed. This is shown by the mean score of 2.244 on the retention test, which was administered 8 weeks after the end of the reading intervention.

The standard deviations of scores on the three tests are also notable. In the pretest, the standard deviation was 0.44, indicating that the scores were quite closely grouped around the mean and that there were no large differences between the vocabulary knowledge of different students. On the posttest, the standard deviation increased to 0.62, indicating a wider range of vocabulary knowledge than before. This suggests that some students benefited from the intervention program more than others. This is not surprising as learners acquire language at their own pace due to a number of

factors that include, but are not limited to, their personal characteristics, level of motivation, and use of different learning strategies (Brown, 2001).

4.3 Repeated Measures ANOVA

To calculate the results of the data collected from the three test periods, a Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. This is due to its suitability to measure the results collected from the same group across different periods of time (see **Table 2**).

Table (2)
Results of Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Periods	6.773	2	3.386	25.263	.000	.426
Error(Periods)	9.115	68	.134			

The above test of within-subject effects shows that there are significant differences among the scores across the three test periods. This is shown by the Sig. (p) value of .000, which is less than (.05). Furthermore, the Partial Eta-Squared of .426 indicates that there is an observed improvement in the scores from pretest to the retention test. This improvement is statistically quite substantial. In order to pinpoint where the differences are, a Post-Hoc Analysis was conducted.

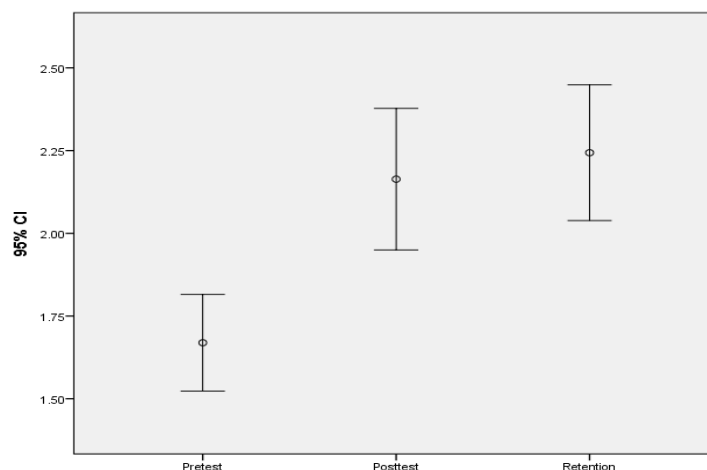
Table (3)
Post-Hoc Analysis Results

Periods		Sig. ^b
Pretest	Posttest	.000
Pretest	Retention	.000
Posttest	Retention	.350

The results in **Table 3** show that there was a significant difference from the pretest to the posttest, with a probability of $p=0.00$. Another significant difference was seen between the pretest and retention periods ($p=0.00$). This indicates that there was a very low likelihood of the results being obtained by chance, and therefore the improvement in scores can be safely attributed to the Graded Reader Program. However, if seen from this angle, the same does not apply for the difference in results from the posttest to the retention test, with a probability of $p=.350$.

To further clarify the issue of the difference between the posttest and the retention test, a plot model is used in **Figure 3**.

Figure (3)
Plot Model for Mean Scores across Periods (Pretest, Posttest and
Retention Test



This plot model shows that there is substantial improvement in students mean scores from the pretest to the posttest. It also shows that the retention mean scores increased slightly from the posttest even though no teaching of the Graded Reader Program took place in that two-month time period.

4.4 Word Frequency Data Analysis

The forty words on the VKS were analyzed for word frequency in the Graded Reader. These were then combined with the students' individual mean scores on the questions across the three time periods. The results are shown below in **Table 4**.

Table (4)
Word Frequencies and Mean Scores of Forty Words

Word No.	Word Frequency (No. of occurrences)	Pre-test Score (Mean)	Posttest score (Mean)	Retention test score (Mean)
1	27	1.37	2.69	2.77
2	20	1.17	2.20	1.77
3	28	1.74	2.51	2.31
4	10	1.26	1.83	1.77
5	9	1.54	1.80	2.17
6	8	1.31	1.86	1.80
7	2	1.51	2.06	1.66
8	1	1.94	1.94	2.06
9	8	1.66	1.86	1.77
10	14	1.69	2.43	2.54
11	12	1.14	2.74	2.89
12	6	2.11	2.66	2.57
13	6	1.91	2.17	2.43
14	5	1.86	2.86	3.03
15	5	2.14	2.06	2.14
16	8	1.66	1.91	2.14
17	7	1.43	2.71	2.51
18	5	1.77	2.06	2.40
19	4	1.77	2.23	2.20
20	1	1.80	1.91	2.06
21	3	2.03	2.43	2.20
22	3	1.43	1.60	2.06
23	3	1.66	1.97	2.17
24	2	1.54	1.83	2.14
25	3	1.31	2.80	2.63
26	1	1.63	2.03	2.31
27	1	1.80	1.94	1.80
28	2	1.51	1.74	1.94
29	1	1.77	1.94	2.11
30	1	1.66	1.91	2.14
31	2	2.09	3.09	3.26
32	2	1.57	2.00	2.29
33	2	1.66	2.06	2.29
34	2	2.03	1.94	2.11
35	2	1.46	1.80	2.23
36	3	1.80	1.94	2.17
37	2	1.66	2.69	2.80
38	4	1.97	2.46	2.23
39	1	1.57	1.83	1.91
40	1	1.83	2.06	1.94

This table shows that words were repeated within a wide range of frequencies. Whereas some words were repeated only once or twice, others saw a recurrence of twenty or more times. This table indicates that higher word frequency did not necessarily equate to the *retention* of a word, defined here by an equal or higher mean score on the retention test to that on the posttest. For example, Word 3 was found 28 times in the Reader but shows a decrease in mean score from the posttest (2.51) to the retention test (2.31). Conversely, Word 20 was found only once in the reader yet reported an increase in the mean score in both the posttest and retention test. This runs contrary to the earlier theories discussed in the literature review. Firstly, it questions the findings of Nagy et al. (1987), which state that the chance of acquisition of a word, albeit by an L1 learner, through one exposure is only 0.05%. This study has 8 words that are only found once in the treatment, of which six show an increase in the retention mean score from the posttest. Nation's (1990) claim that word exposure needs to occur between 5 to 16 times for full acquisition (meaning *retention*) to occur in L2 learners is also thrown into doubt by these findings. The results show that out of the 13 words repeated between 5 to 16 times in the Reader, only 8 showed an increase in their mean retention scores from the posttest scores. Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998) believe that a minimum of 8 word exposures are needed for acquisition to occur. In this study, 10 such word frequencies occurred of which 5 showed an increase in mean scores from posttest to retention.

When the data was analyzed by the Pearson Correlation test, the following results were found:

Table (5)
Pearson Word Score Correlations

		Word Freq.
Word Score Posttest	Pearson Correlation	.318
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046
	N	40
Word Score Retention test	Pearson Correlation	.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.359
	N	40

To further clarify **Table 5**, a correlation is considered moderate if it lies between 0.3 and 0.5. In terms of correlation between word frequency and acquisition in the posttest results, a moderate positive correlation of 0.318 was observed, indicating that during the post-test, students scored higher on words they were exposed to more frequently during the intervention phase. This finding then is in line with many other researchers' that claim vocabulary acquisition is linked to frequency of word exposure. However, this is only short-term in nature. The analysis found that there was a positive but weak correlation of 0.149 between a word's frequency and its recognition in the retention test eight weeks after treatment. This confirms the findings in **Table 4** that a word's high level of frequency does not necessarily equate to the word's long-term retention.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

There are several points that can be gleaned from the results of the study. First, the results point to a positive effect of the Graded Reader Program treatment on the posttest mean scores of the students, suggesting that they learned new words right after the treatment. However, *statistically* the results between the posttest and the retention test were shown to be insignificant, nonetheless, newly acquired words were still retained even eight weeks after treatment finished. Nevertheless, an attempt to explain the statically *insignificant* results between the posttest and retention test is warranted, bearing in mind the question – why did this result appear?

The answer may lie with the time difference of two months between the two tests. Is the time frame between the post-test and retention test – without reinforcement of the words in some manner – simply too long? Or was something else at play here? To answer this, another look at similar retention studies in the field is warranted.

One major study mentioned in the literature review that showed opposite findings in retention to this study was that of Kweon and Kim (2008). Here, the retention test was administered four weeks after the post-test, not eight weeks later. This shorter time period could account for the more positive retention results. Another major difference that could account for the difference in the findings, however, is the amount of time students read in each study. In Kweon and Kim's (2008) study, students read every day for several hours at a time whereas students in this study only read two hours a week.

The findings in this study are somewhat similar –from a statistical perspective- to the findings of a study conducted in Japan by Waring and Takaki (2003). In this study, 15 Japanese students at a university read a simplified version of a book (similar to a graded reader). While substantial vocabulary learning occurred during the treatment itself (61.2% of the target words), the gain dropped significantly after a three-month period (33.6%).

So the issue may lie with the *length of time* until the retention test is administered. Further studies would need to be conducted on two things. Firstly, what did the students who did gain word retention in this study do differently than the other students? Secondly, at what point in time between the posttest and the retention test is there a drop in knowledge? With the Kweon and Kim study (2008) showing retention at the 4-week mark and this study showing insignificant retention between posttest and retention test at the 8-week mark, one may assume the drop in knowledge occurs anywhere between 4.5 to 8 weeks, but more research is needed to confirm this assumption. Furthermore, once more studies have pinpointed a ‘retention period’, instructors would need to repeat the vocabulary exposure again – which leads to the question: how often do the teachers need to do this before ‘permanent retention’ sets in? Perhaps, a distinction needs to be made in the literature between different levels of ‘retention’ in vocabulary, such as short-term and long-term retention. This might yield more concrete answers.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the experiment and a discussion

of the findings. The experiment showed that a significant gain in vocabulary knowledge occurred over the course of the 6-week Graded Reader treatment. Furthermore, it also revealed that there was a notable positive gain difference between the pretest and the retention test mean scores eight weeks later. Moreover, the study found no connection between the word exposure frequency and the retention of a word. The results were then compared to the results of similar research, leading to a recommendation for further study on retention gaps.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
PART TWO: THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND
FOCUS GROUPS

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PART TWO:

THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND FOCUS GROUPS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the second part of the study, which focused on students' and teachers' perceptions of the Graded Reader Program, the act of reading itself, and vocabulary learning and teaching on the whole.

The results of the student and teacher questionnaires are presented and discussed, with comments classified into groups. The students' responses were grouped under the headings of attitudes, usefulness of the graded reader, and quality of teaching. The teachers' responses were classified into categories focusing on students' attitudes, students' ability, usefulness of reader, and evaluation of their own teaching. The questionnaire findings for students and teachers are compared.

The student and teacher focus group discussions which followed the questionnaire administration are reported and compared.

5.2 Student Questionnaire Results

The student questionnaire's statements were divided up into three categories to guide the analysis of perceptions: attitudes, usefulness of

reader, and quality of teaching (See Appendix J). The results revealed a number of interesting findings on students' perceptions. However, the analysis and discussion will begin with a closer look at student attitudes first before exploring student perceptions on the usefulness of the graded reader and the quality of instructional teaching.

5.2.1 Students' Attitudes

There were eleven statements on the questionnaire that fell into this category. The STRONGLY AGREE and AGREE findings and the STRONGLY DISAGREE and DISAGREE findings were combined for ease of analysis. These twelve statements were then divided up into smaller categories for ease of discussion.

Table (6)
Students' Attitudes towards Reading in English

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
1	I enjoy reading in English.	56.7	10.0	33.3
2	I enjoy reading Graded Readers.	73.3	10.1	16.6
5	I enjoy reading English at home.	56.7	10.0	33.3

Table 6 presents the findings of questions 1, 2, and 5 on student attitudes towards reading in English. Just over half of the students, 56.7%, reported that they enjoy reading in English – with the same amount claiming they enjoy reading English at home. This, of course, does not necessarily equate to students *reading English* at home, but it does speak to a positive

mindset towards reading. This comes as a surprise in light of various reports in the region that highlight a lack of reading culture and might make one conclude (falsely) that people do not *enjoy* reading in the region. The Arab League Table, for instance, states that less than one-quarter of Emiratis consider themselves to be ‘readers’ (Al Yacoub, 2012). The Arab Thought Foundation also confirms this lack of reading culture in its fourth annual cultural development report, stating that “the average Arab child reads ‘six minutes’ a year in comparison to 12,000 minutes its Western counterpart spends” (Al Yacoub, 2012, para. 3). Moreover, statement 2 of the questionnaire revealed that 73.3% of the students enjoyed reading graded readers. This is a significant finding as this increase of 16.6% shows that students who do not enjoy reading do, in fact, enjoy reading graded readers. This makes for a strong argument for the Ministry to continue to invest in this initiative and for teachers to continue to use the Graded Reader Program in their classrooms.

Table 7 presents attitudes students hold on how they approach their English language learning.

Table (7)
Students’ Approach to Learning English

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
10	I practice reading so that I get better at it.	80.0	10.0	10.0
23	I only learn English words taught in class.	16.7	6.6	76.7

Question 10 addresses the students' attitude with respect to 'the more you read the better you get at reading' – a concept promoted by many educators, including Krashen (2004). One way to build this notion in learners and encourage students to read more is for teachers to engage in sustained silent reading alongside their students in class (Von Sprecken & Krashen, 1998; Wheldall & Entwistle, 1988). In the case of the learners in this study, 80% reported they practice reading to get better at it – a clear indication that they are aware of this important concept. The majority of students (76.7%) also acknowledged that learning, at least in terms of English lexis, occurs outside of the classroom as well (Question 23). This attitude to learning English is beneficial as it helps students build their language skills through other avenues outside the classroom, such as movies and music.

Table 8 highlights attitudes that students hold on whether or not the learning of vocabulary helps them to learn English.

Table (8)
Students' Attitude towards Learning Vocabulary

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
24	Learning more vocabulary helps me improve my English reading skill.	96.7	0.0	3.3
27	Learning new vocabulary helps me improve my English language.	96.6	3.4	0.0

Question 24 determines whether students are aware of the importance of learning vocabulary in order to improve their English reading skills. Not

only did an overwhelming 96.7% of the students agree that vocabulary learning was important for improved reading to occur, but 96.6% also reported that they felt vocabulary learning was necessary to improve their *overall* English language skills. These attitudes are positive in that they align with the studies discussed in the literature review linking vocabulary learning as a key factor for language development.

In terms of the level of the vocabulary found in the Graded Readers, student reviews were mixed. When asked about the importance of understanding the text, however, 90% agreed it was important to them. As the literature review highlighted earlier, the two are complicatedly intertwined.

Table 9 outlines the various responses to these questions.

Table (9)

Students' Attitude towards Word Difficulty in Readers

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
28	I find the vocabulary in the Graded Readers difficult to learn.	23.4	36.6	40.0
33	I know most of the words already in the Graded Readers.	26.7	16.6	56.7
36	Understanding what I read is important to me.	90.0	10.0	0.0

When asked to rate the statement 'I find the vocabulary in the Graded Readers difficult to learn', the highest combined percentage (40%) fell into the disagree category. However, nearly the same amount (36.7%) was unsure, indicating some confusion in this matter. Question 33 asked about

the amount of vocabulary students already knew from the graded readers they read in class. With 56.7% of the students admitting that that they did not know most of the words in the graded readers, it makes the level of the reader used a reasonable choice in terms of Krashen's $i+1$ theory. Question 36 speaks to this theory as well, where 90% of the students reported that it is important for them to understand what they read. This can only be done with readers that are either too easy for the students or at an $i+1$ level.

In the matter of wanting to continue the use of the readers for vocabulary development in the future, 63.3% of the students indicated a positive response.

Table (10)
Students' Attitude towards Using the Graded Reader

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
34	I want to use Graded Readers in the future to learn new vocabulary.	63.3	23.3	13.4

Although not an overwhelming number, this does suggest the majority of the students hold a positive attitude towards the use of the reader for vocabulary learning purposes. *How useful the reader was from the students' perspective is analyzed in the next section.*

5.2.2 Student Perceptions of the Usefulness of Graded Readers

There were thirteen statements on the questionnaire that related to the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program. These were divided up into smaller categories for ease of discussion as well. The first category related to the usefulness of the Graded Readers in terms of vocabulary development.

Table 11 summarizes the responses to these 6 questions.

Table (11)
Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Graded Reader for Learning Vocabulary

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
3	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn new words.	90.0	3.4	6.6
14	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn new words in context.	70.0	26.7	3.3
25	I think the vocabulary in the Graded Reader is useful.	83.4	16.6	0.0
26	I will use the vocabulary I learnt in the Graded Readers in my life.	93.3	6.7	0.0
30	Graded Reader activities help me develop my vocabulary in English.	76.7	13.3	10.0
37	The Graded Reader Program helps me remember learnt words.	86.7	3.3	10.0

As the table above shows, 90% of the students reported that the Graded Reader Program helped them learn new words, especially in context of the text. Not only did the readers help 70% of the students learn new words, the readers also helped the students remember the newly learnt

words. The majority of the students felt the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program was useful, with 93.3% stating they will use the vocabulary in real life. Activities related to the Graded Reader Program also appeared to help students develop their vocabulary knowledge. But the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program did not end there according to the students.

Table (12)

Students' Perceptions of the Overall Usefulness of the Graded Reader

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
4	The Graded Reader Program improves my English.	93.3	6.7	0.0
6	The Graded Reader Program improves my reading comprehension in English.	83.3	16.7	0.0
7	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn more about life.	76.6	13.4	10.0
8	The Graded Reader Program improves my confidence in learning English.	70.0	20.0	10.0
9	The Graded Reader Program is important for learning English.	83.3	10.1	6.6

The majority of the students (93.3%) felt the Readers helped them improve their English language skills overall, with 83.3% acknowledging the program was important for the learning of English. This importance is noted in the literature itself, with Day and Bamford (1998), for example, highlighting the power of the readers in terms of language learning. Some have even gone so far as to call the readers 'indispensable' (see Hafiz & Tutor, 1989; Nation, 1997; Renandya, 2007; Renandya & Jacobs, 2002; Waring, 2006). Seventy percent of the learners even said the Graded Reader

Program increased their level of confidence in learning English. A recent study conducted by Sheehan (2015) confirms this finding, stating that not only did the readers in his case study motivate the students, but they also built greater confidence.

In terms of reading comprehension, 83.3% of students believed that the Graded Reader Program helped them improve this skill, with no student disagreeing with this statement (see Question 6). To see if the Readers had a greater life impact, students were asked if the Graded Reader Program helped them learn more about life (Question 7). The majority of the students agreed the readers helped them learn about life. This speaks to the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program on the whole. Interestingly, when students were asked whether they wanted their teacher to continue using the Graded Reader Program in class, only 56.7% agreed. This percentage is low in comparison to the positive responses given elsewhere by the students and warrants further investigation.

Table (13)

Students' Response to Continued Teacher Use of the Graded Reader

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
35	I like the teacher to continue using Graded Readers in class.	56.7	33.3	10.0

5.2.3 Student Perceptions of Quality of Instruction

There were ten statements on the questionnaire that related to the quality of teaching of the Graded Reader Program. Many of these pertained

to teacher disposition during teaching (helpfulness, enthusiasm) while others referred specifically to teaching techniques and competence.

Table (14)
Students' Perceptions of the Teaching of Graded Readers

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
11	My English teacher is helpful in my Graded Reader class.	96.7	3.3	0.0
13	My English teacher is competent to teach Graded Readers.	96.6	3.4	0.0
15	My English teacher is enthusiastic in the Graded Reader class.	100.0	0.0	0.0
16	My English teacher is boring in the Graded Reader class.	6.7	3.3	90.0
17	My English teacher uses different teaching techniques to teach Graded Readers.	93.3	3.4	3.3
18	My English teacher encourages me to read.	96.7	3.3	0.0
19	My English teacher uses the time reasonably in the Graded Reader class.	93.3	6.7	0.0
21	My English teacher is good at teaching vocabulary.	86.7	10.0	3.3
22	My English teacher is good at teaching reading.	96.7	3.3	0.0
31	My English teacher gives me a lot of homework on the Graded Readers.	13.4	16.6	70.0

As can be seen in **Table 14**, an overwhelming number of students (96.7%) reported the teacher as helpful in class, with the same number stating the teacher encouraged them to read. All of the students felt the teacher was enthusiastic in the class. This last piece of data, seemingly high, can be cross-referenced with Question 16 where students commented on whether the teacher was boring in the Graded Reader class. Here, 90% of

students disagreed with the statement that the teacher was boring, thereby confirming the other finding.

In terms of teacher competence, students were asked to comment on the instructor's ability to teach vocabulary and reading. On the teaching of the Graded Reader Program overall, a significant number of students (96.6%) agreed their teacher was competent. In fact, 93.3% of the students felt the teacher used the time in class reasonably well and employed various teaching techniques. An overwhelming number of students felt the teacher was both competent at teaching reading (96.7%) and at teaching vocabulary (86.7%). Both percentages are highly favorable towards the teacher, indicating a high level of competence. With regards to homework, 70% of the students disagreed with the statement that the teacher gave them a lot of homework on the Graded Readers.

According to the students in this study then, the teachers were highly effective. This is a positive finding since teacher effectiveness is closely linked to student achievement:

We know intuitively that...highly effective teachers can have an enriching effect on the daily lives of children and their lifelong educational and career aspirations. We now know empirically that these effective teachers also have a direct influence in enhancing student learning. (Tucker & Stronge, 2005, p. 2).

5.3 Teacher Questionnaire Results

The teacher questionnaire's statements were also divided up into categories to guide the analysis of perceptions: student attitudes, student

ability, usefulness of reader, and evaluation of own teaching. Similar to the students' questionnaire results, the percentages were compiled for an easy analysis and comparison. The results revealed findings of considerable interest.

The analysis and discussion of teacher perceptions will start with a look at student attitudes as viewed from a teacher's perspective. Then it will move on to examine teacher perceptions of student ability, the Graded Reader Program, and the teachers' own idea about their teaching competence.

5.3.1 Teachers' Assessment of Students' Attitudes to Reading

The teachers were asked to evaluate their students' attitudes towards the Graded Reader Program and reading in general. **Table 15** outlines the different responses.

Table (15)
Teachers' Assessment of Students' Attitudes to Reading

Q.	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
1	My students enjoy reading in English.	53.5	25.0	21.5
2	My students enjoy reading Graded Readers.	57.2	28.5	14.3

Just over half of the teachers surveyed felt that students enjoy reading in English, with 57.2% claiming their students enjoy reading Graded Readers.

This indicates that the teachers are not fully convinced of their students' joy of reading. Looking back on the student responses, however, 73.3% of the students surveyed said they did enjoy reading Graded Readers.

5.3.2 Student Ability to Learn Vocabulary in Graded Readers

In terms of teachers commenting on their students' English language ability, only one question addressed this issue in the survey: Question 18. This statement asked teachers to comment on how difficult the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program was to learn for students. Findings revealed a mix of answers, as seen in **Table 16**.

Table (16)
Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Ability to Learn Vocabulary in Graded Readers

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
18	Students find the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program difficult to learn.	39.3	25.0	35.7

The above table shows that the majority of teachers are almost equally divided between agreeing (39.3%) and disagreeing (35.7%) with the statement 'students find the vocabulary difficult to learn'. This shows similar confusion to that of the students' perceptions where 40% disagreed with the same statement, indicating both students and teachers have difficulty gauging this phenomenon. Why the teachers have a difficult time

determining the students' ability to learn the vocabulary is unsettling and requires further investigation.

5.3.3 Usefulness of the Graded Reader Program

There were twelve questions on the teacher survey related to the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program, ranging from as broad a scope as life to the more narrow focus of vocabulary learning. **Tables 17, 18 and 19** outline the various responses to these twelve questions. Tables are separated for ease of discussion.

Table (17)

Teachers' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Graded Reader -1

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
7	The Graded Reader Program is important for learning English.	78.6	17.8	3.6
19	The G.R. Program activities are useful to the students.	82.1	7.2	10.7
25	Students find the Graded Reader Program useful.	67.8	21.5	10.7
26	Students know the Graded Reader Program helps them develop their English.	75.0	14.3	10.7

In terms of the importance of the Graded Reader Program for learning English shown in **Table 17**, 78.6% of the teachers agreed. This, interestingly, is slightly lower than the students' views (83.3%) on the same subject matter. A high number of teachers (82.1%) felt the activities related to the Graded Reader Program were useful. This is almost identical to the student findings of 83.4%. However, teachers reported a much lower number

when asked if they felt *the students* found the Graded Reader Program useful. Only 67.8% of the teachers agreed with this statement, with 25% claiming that students did not know the program helped them develop their English. This finding is at odds with the student perceptions reported on earlier, where a high level of awareness of the importance of the reader for language learning existed amongst students.

Table (18)

Teachers' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Graded Reader -2

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
3	The Graded Reader Program helps my students learn new words.	89.3	10.7	0.0
16	The Graded Reader Program helps students learn new words incidentally.	85.7	10.7	3.6
17	The Graded Reader Program encourages students to use the newly learned vocabulary in their lives.	78.5	10.8	10.7
22	The Graded Reader Program reinforces words already learned in class.	71.4	14.3	14.3

Shown in **Table 18**, teachers reported high percentages in the Graded Reader Program helping their students with vocabulary development. Of the teachers surveyed, 89.3% felt the program helped students learn new words, although a slightly lower percentage of teachers (85.7%) believed this learning was incidental in nature. This last finding was relatively higher than that of the student perceptions where only 70% of the students felt they learned new words in context. The program, according to 71.4% of the teachers, also reinforced vocabulary learnt in class, with 78.5% stating the

Graded Reader Program encouraged students to use newly learned words in their lives. Student findings were higher in this belief, with 93.3% claiming they would use the vocabulary in their lives.

Table (19)

Teachers' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Graded Reader -3

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
4	The Graded Reader Program improves my students' reading comprehension in English.	85.7	10.7	3.6
5	The Graded Reader Program motivates my students to learn more about life.	78.6	14.3	7.1
6	The Graded Reader Program improves my students' confidence in English.	71.4	17.9	10.7
24	The Graded Reader Program motivates students to read different graded readers.	78.6	10.7	10.7

In reference to reading comprehension as appears in **Table 19**, 85.7% of the teachers felt the Graded Reader Program helped students improve this skill. This is almost identical to the student findings. Moreover, 78.6% of the teachers believed that the program motivated learners to read a variety of readers. This finding is very plausible as the Oxford Dominoes series offers 239 books in total, with 47 different titles in Level Two alone consisting of various genres. In fact, 78.6% of the teachers surveyed felt students would learn more about life from these readers – a finding that is overall in line with the one found on student perceptions. In terms of the Graded Reader Program building confidence in English language learning, teachers and students reported similar findings (71.4% and 70% respectively).

All of the above findings have one thing in common; they reveal a strong sense of usefulness of the Graded Reader Program – by teachers and students alike.

5.3.4 Self-Evaluation of Teaching

Since the student survey included statements on the competence and disposition of the teachers, the teachers were given a chance to evaluate themselves on this as well. **Table 20** on the next page highlights these findings.

Table (20)

Teachers’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards Their Own Teaching

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
8	My students find my teaching methodology helpful in the Graded Reader Program.	75.0	21.4	3.6
9	I think I am competent in teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	14.3	14.3
10	I use new teaching techniques to teach the Graded Reader Program.	78.6	21.4	0.0
11	I encourage my students to read.	100.0	0.0	0.0
12	I believe I use my teaching time reasonably in the Graded Reader Program.	67.8	17.8	14.4
13	I often use the whiteboard when teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	28.6	0.0
14	I find teaching vocabulary challenging.	57.2	17.8	25.0
15	I have attended a number of workshops on teaching reading.	67.9	14.4	17.7
20	I give my students a lot of Graded Reader Program homework.	35.7	25.0	39.3

Q	Statement	Agree %	Not Sure %	Disagree %
21	I want to use The Graded Reader Program in future classes for vocabulary development.	67.8	14.3	17.9
23	I enjoy teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	21.4	7.2

Firstly, when asked if teachers enjoyed teaching the Graded Reader Program, 71.4% responded affirmatively with 100% of the teachers stating they encourage their students to read. Most teachers felt they were competent in teaching the program (71.4%), citing frequent use of the whiteboard (71.4%) and the use of a number of new teaching techniques (78.6%). A slightly lower number of teachers, although still more than half, believed they made reasonable use of their class time (67.9%) and believed students felt their teaching methodology was helpful overall (75%).

It is interesting to note that students rated their teachers higher in competence than the teachers themselves. The majority of the students (over 90%) felt the teachers were both helpful and competent, using their time reasonably well in the Graded Reader Program class. This shows that teachers are more critical of themselves than their own students. Although 57.2% of the teachers found the teaching of vocabulary to be challenging, students overwhelmingly (86.7%) reported their teacher to be good at teaching vocabulary and even better at teaching reading (96.7%), although over half the teachers (67.9%) had reported having gone to a number of workshops on the teaching of reading. Perhaps the upcoming Focus Group Study analysis can shed more light on this phenomenon. In terms of

assigning homework, 39.3% of the teachers said they did not give a lot of homework on the readers. This is substantiated by the student perceptions where 70% reported not a lot of homework was given.

Finally, the majority of the teachers (67.8%) stated they would like to continue to use The Graded Reader Program to teach vocabulary in the future. The above findings along with the student survey results indicate the Graded Reader Program is viewed positively overall and thus should continue to be supported by the Ministry of Education and the teachers in the school system.

5.4 Focus Group Study Findings

Two small groups took part in a focus group study: one student group and one teacher group. The purpose of this part of the study was to explore the findings of the study more deeply from a qualitative point of view to triangulate the findings. Please note that to honor the authenticity of the participants' speech, there may be minor errors in the transcription. These were left in on purpose.

5.4.1 Student Focus Group Findings

The student focus group revealed some interesting findings. One major theme that ran through the group transcripts was that of teacher, not student, responsibility. Students felt the responsibility of learning fell on the teachers and not on themselves. Some students clearly expected a more passive or teacher-centered approach to learning:

Student 5: They [teachers] should provide us with the meanings of new words.

Student 6: They [teachers] should explain what is going on in the story, each paragraph alone.

Student 6: They [teachers] should try harder.

Student 5: It's the teacher's job to teach and improve students' language skills.

These comments indicate a preference for teacher-centered instruction. With ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Education to modernize the learning and teaching occurring in the classrooms, a mismatch has now resulted between traditional and modern learning (Baghat, 1999). This is evidenced by the following student comments, which highlight the use of technology in the classroom but not modern teaching methods or approaches:

Researcher: What about 80% of teachers claim that they use new technology techniques to teach the readers?

Student 1: Yes, they do. They use smart boards, Zipgrade, and PowerPoint.

Researcher: Yes, this is technology-wise, but what about teaching ways, for instance, teachers ask students to discuss, to create posters or dialogues, it could be to ask them solve a problem.

Student 6: No, not many teachers do that. They mostly talk all the time and

we just sit and listen.

Researcher: Seventy percent [of the teachers] claim they enjoy teaching the reading program. What do you say to that?

Mix of students: No...

Student 4: They come to class with a bad mood.

Student 5: Especially when the class is noisy, she would be very mad and upset.

One major difference between the focus group study and the questionnaire was the student rating of teacher competence in terms of teaching the Graded Reader Program. The survey revealed 96.6% of the students felt their teacher was competent. Some of the focus group study comments revealed an entirely different scenario though:

Researcher: Seventy one percent [of the teachers] think they are competent in teaching the graded program. What do you say about that?

Student 6: We have a few good teachers.

Student 4: Yes, some teachers only read and ask us to listen.

Researcher: Seventy five percent of teachers claim that their teaching methodologies during the reading class are helpful to students.

Student 2: Some teachers just sit and expect us to understand everything. They don't explain.

Student 1: Our previous teacher, for instance, writes the answers ... on the board and asks us to write them down, without explaining a thing.

Other comments focused on the teacher's inability to manage a class, citing an excess of chaos and noise in the lesson:

Student 3: ... the class becomes really chaotic.

Student 5: ... sometimes the class becomes so noisy and chaotic that the teacher just stops at the first objective.

When asked why students did not take more initiative to read on their own, some of the students referred to the lack of reading culture in general and a lack of a print/technology-rich home environment:

Student 6: Many of us don't know how to read.

Student 5: Many just won't read.

Student 3: Some don't have dictionaries or Internet access to help them learn new words.

This lack of reading culture was addressed earlier in the thesis and does not come as a surprise. What is of new concern here, however, is the mention of a lack of internet access. This seems at odds with local statistical studies where 90% of people surveyed in Bahrain use the internet on a daily basis with the majority of respondents owning 1 to 2 computers at home (Mohammad & Awadhi, 2012).

In terms of the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program – the main focus of this study – students were overwhelming positive. Firstly, students

all agreed in the focus group study that the program encouraged them to read more graded readers. Everyone also reported that there was no doubt the program helped improve their English abilities, rating the usefulness of the program between 80 to 91%:

Student 4: It is a very useful reading program, even though it takes time, but it is really beneficial.

Some of the benefits listed by the students included learning many new useful words:

Student 4: ... we learned many things, we learned a great deal of new words.

Student 5: Yes, we learned plenty of new words that we didn't know before.

Student 4: [the new words] are very useful, we already used them not only while speaking but even when we write English.

Another benefit of the program was the learning of new reading strategies:

Student 3: We read what comes before and after the word [if we don't know the word]. At times, I try to divide the word into parts, sometimes this works and helps me guess its meaning.

All students in the focus group stated they wanted the Graded Reader Program to continue being taught, claiming it gives them confidence, improves their spelling and pronunciation, and makes them more

knowledgeable culturally.

5.4.2 Teacher Focus Group Findings

The teacher transcripts also revealed a number of interesting findings. One of the most pressing issues that arose from the transcripts was the teachers' time pressure to do other things in the curriculum besides the Graded Reader Program:

Teacher 5: Yes, it [the program] is important for sure, but it depends on the time. I am a total supporter of the program except for the shortage of time and the dense curriculum along with other projects that we have to teach.

Teacher 2: It all depends on time. Sometimes we are pressured just as students are pressured too.

When asked how to mitigate this time pressure, teachers came up with different solutions:

Teacher 4: They could shorten the course book [main class text not graded reader].

Teacher 2: It can be taught in a different period, not necessarily the English class.

Teacher 5: Correct, it can be taught in the remedial classes.

Teacher 3: I normally ask my students to read the chapter at home...

When asked whether the percentage reported by the students for the statement “I practice reading to get better at it” (80%) was accurate, most teachers disagreed, claiming this percentage were too high in light of the low marks students received on their reading tests:

Teacher 2: I don’t think this is true as our students have very low marks in the exams. It doesn’t seem that they are practicing anything.

However, teachers all agreed that one way to remedy the situation is to allocate ‘marks’ for the Graded Reader Program. This would most certainly make students read more.

One major difference between the students’ and teachers’ findings in the focus study group relates to the use of diverse teaching techniques. Although students reported teachers were overall traditional in their teaching styles except for the use of technology, teachers opinions differed. When asked about teaching strategies, the following responses were noted:

Teacher 5: I normally ask them [students] questions to introduce the story, thus help them predict what is coming ahead.

Teacher 1: Sometimes I read a very small part of the story which I think is very interesting to them... sometimes I would ask them to act out a main event too.

Teacher 5: For example, chapter one students do a role-play, chapter two they do a poster, etc. ... the end of the chapter activities are so interesting and

diverse.

Teacher 4: They are like games.

Teacher 3: Yes, they are like puzzles and students like puzzles.

Teacher 2: We ask questions like “if you were in her shoes what would you do?”

In order to explain these two diverging opinions, however, more research would be needed. Two possible explanations are perhaps the students do not recognize the more modern teaching methodologies when employed or the teachers rarely use them. To answer this, further probing needed to occur in the interview. Perhaps this speaks further to the ‘mismatch’ between traditional and modern learning reported by Baghat (1999).

When asked about the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program on the whole, the teachers responded positively, claiming the readers were highly interesting, colorfully illustrated, entertaining in nature, and improved the students’ English skills overall. Teachers confirmed that the Graded Reader Program is an important resource for them – along with the program’s audio CDs – but that they would like to see some minor updates to the program in the future:

Teacher 5: The program is good, but it would be better if it was updated...with interactive activities.

Teacher 4: Imagine these beautiful exercises were turned into interactive

activities, it would be really great... we can ask students to turn the activities into electronic ones, they are good at these things.

Teacher 3: Imagine they provide us with a movie for each story?

Overall, the teachers agree with the students and find the Graded Reader Program a useful addition to their English classrooms. This finding should encourage the Ministry of Education to continue funding this initiative in the future.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the responses of students and teachers to the questionnaires and the focus group discussions. In general, they are in agreement about the value of the Graded Reader Program and its importance in learning vocabulary. They also see it as a useful tool more generally for learning English.

However, some of the students' responses in the focus group session differed from the impression given in the questionnaires: the questionnaire responses were almost unanimous in praising the teachers competence, but in the Focus Group they criticized the teachers for not engaging them more in classes. Teachers themselves reciprocated, to some extent, by expressing lower opinions of the students' ability to learn than would be expected from the students' test performance.

Despite these disagreements, there is a general consensus that the Graded Reader Program is valuable and should be continued.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONCLUSION

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6.1 Introduction

This final chapter begins with a summary of the study and its findings with reference to the study's null hypotheses. It then concludes with recommendations and future research suggestions.

6.2 Summary of the Study and its Research Questions

This investigation into incidental vocabulary learning and retention through the use of graded readers took the form of a mixed-method study to answer the following questions:

1. What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' incidental vocabulary development?
2. What effect, if any, does the Graded Reader Program have on students' vocabulary retention?
3. What perceptions do the teachers and students have towards the use of the graded readers for incidental vocabulary learning?
4. What perceptions do the teachers and students have towards the use of the graded readers for English language learning in general?

The participants consisted of thirty-five female students at an intermediate government school in Bahrain and twenty-eight female English language teachers in Bahrain. The students underwent a six-week experimental intervention where they read a graded reader for two hours a week. Before and after the graded reader intervention, students used the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) test to assess their word knowledge of forty words in the reader. Eight weeks after the intervention, students sat the VKS again to determine if retention of the vocabulary words occurred.

After the graded reader intervention, teachers and students were given a questionnaire to complete on their perceptions and attitudes of the Graded Reader Program. The student questionnaire asked students to rate their perceptions of the program and its instruction as well as their attitudes towards reading and vocabulary learning. The teacher questionnaire, similar in nature, asked the teachers to rate their perceptions of the program along with their students' attitudes and abilities and their own instructional skills. Of this group of participants, six students and five teachers were invited to take part in a focus group study to further explore their perceptions.

6.3 Summary of the Study's Findings

This study had four research questions and four null hypotheses. The first two null hypotheses related to the experiment itself. The null hypothesis of '**H.01**: The use of graded readers in the classroom does not promote incidental vocabulary acquisition' was found false. The study showed there was a significant increase in word knowledge from pretest to posttest in 32

out of 35 students. The second null hypothesis of ‘**H.02:** The Graded Reader Program does not have an effect on students’ vocabulary retention’ was also found false. Although no statistical significance improvement between posttest and retention test results was found, there was a significant increase in word knowledge from pretest to posttest, much of which was retained after 8 weeks. Hence, this null hypothesis was also confirmed to be false. This study therefore confirmed that the Graded Reader Program *did* promote incidental vocabulary acquisition with the *retention* of newly acquired words occurring at a notable level.

The remaining two null hypotheses related to student and teacher perceptions. The null hypothesis of ‘**H.03:** The students and teachers do not believe the Graded Reader Program is effective in promoting incidental vocabulary learning’ was found false. Both students and teachers reported the program to be highly useful for vocabulary learning. The null hypothesis of ‘**H.04:** The students and teachers do not believe the Graded Reader Program is effective for English language learning in general’ was also found false.

Student and Teacher perceptions reported in the study were overall positive. The students reported high percentages of agreement in many categories. For example, 73.3% of the students stated they enjoy reading graded readers with 90% claiming the program helps them to learn new words. Of the students surveyed, 83.4% found the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program useful, with 93.3% saying they would use this vocabulary in their lives. Overall, 83.3% of the students recognized the importance of

the program in terms of English language learning with the same percentage claiming it helps them improve their reading comprehension.

Teachers reported similar perceptions as well. Of the teachers surveyed, 89.3% felt the Graded Reader Program helps their students learn new vocabulary, with 85.7% stating the program helps students learn new words incidentally. The majority of the teachers (78.6%) felt the Graded Reader Program is important for learning English and motivates learners to read different readers. A similar percentage also claimed the program encourages students to use the newly learned vocabulary in their lives – something the students confirm as true.

The focus group study consisting of one group of teachers and one group of students confirmed the usefulness of the Graded Reader Program as well. For example, all of the students felt the program encouraged them to read more, with many stating it allowed them to apply new reading strategies and learn new words. The program not only improved their overall confidence in learning English but also improved their spelling, pronunciation, and world knowledge. All of the students in the focus group study agreed the program should continue to be taught in school. The teachers confirmed the importance of the program as well but noted that time constraints, due to a dense curriculum, limit their ability to teach the program. Teachers suggested the allocation of marks to the program to further motivate students to engage with it. In general, the teachers felt the readers were highly interesting, colorful, and entertaining and improved their students' English language abilities. One recommendation made by the

teachers was to have the publisher provide more interactive activities and films with the readers.

To sum up, the findings of this study support the claims of earlier studies that incidental vocabulary learning takes place through reading. On the other hand, findings concerning the retention of new words are relatively in line with the study of Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) whose retention test outcomes were considered to be significant, however, not long-term in nature. Although long-term retention is not conclusively proven in this study either, it is strongly suggested by the high scores on the retention test. It is also important to highlight that short-term vocabulary gains occurred in a very high percentage of students in this study. These findings, along with the positive perceptions of the Graded Reader Program from both students and teachers, clearly support the continued use of the Graded Reader Program in the intermediate government school system in Bahrain.

6.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study lead to a number of recommendations for the Ministry of Education and its teachers in Bahrain.

Recommendation 1: The use of more techniques that enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition should be considered by English language teachers and the Ministry of Education for the purpose of establishing a rapid enlargement of vocabulary.

Recommendation 2: The current English syllabus should be complemented by the use of more than one Graded Reader per semester to provide students with more extensive reading opportunities.

Recommendation 3: More workshops should be organized by the Ministry of Education to provide teachers with suitable techniques that can be utilized in the teaching of the Graded Reader Program.

Recommendation 4: Reasons behind the significant rates of vocabulary retention should be further explored and then built upon.

Recommendation 5: Causes of the weak correlation between a word's high frequency in a text and retention should be investigated.

Recommendation 6: To promote more incidental vocabulary learning, funding for a small Graded Reader section in every classroom is suggested alongside (a majlis) where students can comfortably read every day for pleasure.

6.5 Future Research

One way to confirm this study's findings is to repeat the study with a similar group of students and teachers in Bahrain. Further studies could also include a larger group of participants, both male and female students and teachers, a greater number of target words, more texts to be read over a longer period, a greater intensity of reading, and a more sensitive instrument for measuring learning gains.

Overall, the lack of research in Bahrain in any of the domains related to this study, such as reading, vocabulary acquisition, graded readers, and

student and teacher perceptions, allows for an abundance of research possibilities.

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Appendix A



Kingdom of Bahrain

University of Bahrain

Department of English Language and Literature

Dear Students,

This study attempts to measure the importance of the Graded Reader Program in the ESL English reading classroom. It focuses on students' perceptions towards the Graded Reader Program and whether it is a useful tool for learning new words. This questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality. The questionnaire's results will be analyzed and used ultimately for academic purposes. Thank you for your kind cooperation in the conduct of this study. Your responses will contribute to the academic research.

Thank you,

Student Questionnaire

Indicate your opinion about the following statements using the scale below:

5= strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Not sure, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree

Statements		Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Not sure 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1.	I enjoy reading in English.					
2.	I enjoy reading “Graded Readers”.					
3.	Graded Readers Program helps me learn new words.					
4.	Graded Readers Program improves my English language.					
5.	I enjoy reading English at home.					
6.	Graded Readers Program improves my reading comprehension in English.					
7.	Graded Readers Program helps me learn more about life.					
8.	Graded Readers Program improves my confidence in learning English.					
9.	Graded Readers Program is important for learning English.					
10.	I practice reading so that I get better at it.					
11.	My English teacher is helpful in the Graded Readers class.					
12.	Graded Readers Program provides me with new learning techniques.					
13.	My English teacher is competent to teach Graded Readers.					
14.	Graded Readers Program helps me learn new words in context.					
15.	My English Teacher is enthusiastic in the Graded Readers class.					
16.	My English teacher is boring in the Graded Readers class.					
17.	My English teacher uses different teaching techniques to teach Graded Readers.					

Statements		Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Not sure 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
18.	My English teacher encourages me to read.					
19.	My English teacher uses the time reasonably in the Graded Readers class.					
20.	My English teacher often uses the whiteboard.					
21.	My English teacher is good at teaching vocabulary.					
22.	My English teacher is good at teaching reading.					
23.	I only learn English words taught in class.					
24.	Learning more vocabulary helps me improve my English reading skill.					
25.	I think the vocabulary in the Graded Readers is useful.					
26.	I will use the vocabulary I learnt in the Graded Readers in my life.					
27.	Learning new vocabulary helps me improve my English language.					
28.	I find the vocabulary in the Graded Readers difficult to learn.					
29.	Graded Reader activities are useful.					
30.	Graded Reader activities help me develop my vocabulary in English.					
31.	My English teacher gives me a lot of homework on the Graded Readers.					
32.	I like to do homework on vocabulary.					
33.	I know most of the words already in the Graded Readers.					
34.	I want to use Graded Readers in the future to learn new vocabulary.					
35.	I like the teacher to continue using Graded Readers in the class.					
36.	Understanding what I read is important to me.					
37.	Graded Readers Program helps me remember learnt words.					

Appendix B



Kingdom of Bahrain

University of Bahrain

Department of English Language and Literature

Dear Teachers,

This study attempts to measure the importance of the Graded Reader Program in the ESL English reading classroom. It focuses on teachers' perceptions towards the Graded Reader Program and whether it is a useful tool for learning new words. This questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality. The questionnaire's results will be analyzed and used ultimately for academic purposes. Thank you for your kind cooperation in the conduct of this study. Your responses will contribute to the academic research.

Thank you,

Teacher Questionnaire

Indicate your opinion about the following statements using the scale below: 5= strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Not sure, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree

Statements		Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Not sure 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1.	My students enjoy reading in English.					
2.	My students enjoy reading “Graded Readers”.					
3.	The Graded Reader Program helps my students learn new words.					
4.	The Graded Reader Program improves my students’ reading comprehension in English.					
5.	The Graded Reader Program motivates my students to learn more about life.					
6.	The Graded Reader Program improves my students’ confidence in English.					
7.	The Graded Reader Program is important for learning English.					
8.	My students find my teaching methodology helpful in the Graded Reader Program.					
9.	I think I am competent in teaching the Graded Reader Program.					
10.	I use new teaching techniques to teach the Graded Reader Program.					
11.	I encourage my students to read.					
12.	I believe I use my teaching time reasonably in the Graded Reader Program.					
13.	I often use the whiteboard when teaching the Graded Reader Program.					
14.	I find teaching vocabulary challenging.					
15.	I have attended a number of workshops on teaching reading.					
16.	The Graded Reader Program helps students learn new words incidentally.					

Statements		Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Not sure 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
17.	The Graded Reader Program encourages students to use the newly learned vocabulary in their lives.					
18.	Students find the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program difficult to learn.					
19.	The Graded Reader Program activities are useful to the students.					
20.	I give my students a lot of Graded Reader Program homework.					
21.	I want to use the Graded Reader Program in future classes for vocabulary development.					
22.	The Graded Reader Program reinforces words already learned in class.					
23.	I enjoy teaching The Graded Reader Program.					
24.	The Graded Reader Program motivates students to read different graded readers.					
25.	Students find the Graded Reader Program useful.					
26.	Students know the Graded Reader Program helps them develop their English.					

Appendix C

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Test

How well do you know these words? Tick each word to show your understanding.

No.	Vocabulary word	I have never seen or heard this word before	I have seen the word but I don't know what it means	I have seen the word before and I think it means....	I know this word. It means...
1.	Ape				
2.	Plateau				
3.	Cliff				
4.	Pinnacle				
5.	Enormous				
6.	Tunnel				
7.	Editor				
8.	Cage				
9.	Edge				
10.	Bone				
11.	Pterodactyl				
12.	Pointed				
13.	Discovered				
14.	Zoologist				
15.	Sight				
16.	Roared				
17.	Rifle				
18.	Prisoners				

No.	Vocabulary word	I have never seen or heard this word before	I have seen the word but I don't know what it means	I have seen the word before and I think it means....	I know this word. It means...
19.	Servant				
20.	Fellows				
21.	Unusual				
22.	Institute				
23.	Escaped				
24.	Tied				
25.	Slave				
26.	Trap				
27.	Scratched				
28.	Plated				
29.	Mystery				
30.	Guard				
31.	Footprints				
32.	Ragged				
33.	Escape				
34.	Disappeared				
35.	Bullets				
36.	Belongs				
37.	Axe				
38.	Attacked				
39.	Stagnant				
40.	Dragging				

Appendix D

As a teacher of English to the intermediate level in Bahrain, do you think students of second intermediate are familiar with the words in the list below?. Please (✓) the box corresponding to your answer.

	Word	Familiar	Unfamiliar	I don't know
1	Ape			
2	Plateau			
3	Cliff			
4	Crowd			
5	Perhaps			
6	Cave			
7	Journey			
8	Pinnacle			
9	Rock			
10	Enormous			
11	Tunnel			
12	Lying			
13	hole			
14	Liar			
15	Bridge			
16	Brave			
17	Wing			
18	Editor			
19	Cage			
20	Edge			
21	Bone			
22	Pterodactyl			
23	Shot			
24	Scientist			
25	Pointed			
26	Discovered			
27	Zoologist			
28	Stone			
29	Sight			
30	Roared			
31	Rifle			
32	Prisoners			
33	Arrow			
34	Sticks			
35	Servant			

	Word	Familiar	Unfamiliar	I don't know
1	Rope			
2	Bottom			
3	Fellows			
4	Unusual			
5	Ship			
6	Institute			
7	Escaped			
8	Death			
9	Cheering			
10	Tied			
11	Slave			
12	Warm			
13	Trap			
14	Scratched			
15	Plated			
16	Mystery			
17	Guard			
18	Footprints			
19	Ragged			
20	Proud			
21	Monsters			
22	Guns			
23	Escape			
24	Enemy			
25	Disappeared			
26	Cross			
27	Conversation			
28	Bullets			
29	Belongs			
30	Axe			
31	Attacked			
32	Adventure			
33	Stagnant			
34	Partner			
35	Dragging			

Appendix E

The target forty words

Ape	Pterodactyl	Unusual	Footprints
Plateau	Pointed	Institute	Ragged
Cliff	Discovered	Escaped	Escape
Pinnacle	Zoologist	Tied	Disappeared
Enormous	Sight	Slave	Bullets
Tunnel	Roared	Trap	Belongs
Editor	Rifle	Scratched	Axe
Cage	Prisoners	Plated	Attacked
Edge	Servant	Mystery	Stagnant
Bone	Fellows	Guard	Dragging

Appendix F

Pre-test, Posttest and Retention Test Individual Results

	Pretest		Posttest		Retention	
Student No.	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
student1	1.575	0.501	2.95	1.011	2.275	0.751
student2	2.175	0.549	1.65	0.483	2.375	0.925
student3	1.575	0.636	1.8	0.687	1.85	0.662
student4	1.625	0.586	1.975	1.050	1.825	0.549
student5	1.15	0.362	1.725	0.599	1.7	0.464
student6	1.475	0.554	1.725	0.506	1.975	0.832
student7	3.05	1.085	3.425	0.958	3.35	0.949
student8	1.1	0.304	1.4	0.496	1.325	0.730
student9	1.8	0.405	1.625	0.628	2.1	0.441
student10	1.7	0.939	2.45	1.176	2.975	1.050
student11	1.675	0.694	2.55	0.904	3	1.013
student12	1.65	0.483	1.425	0.501	1.75	0.439
student13	1.3	0.464	1.65	0.622	1.675	0.616
student14	1.8	0.648	2.125	0.883	2.275	0.679
student15	2	0.847	2.9	0.900	3.2	1.159
student16	1.875	0.822	2.025	1.230	1.5	0.751
student17	1.475	0.506	2.025	1.230	1.75	0.809
student18	1	0.000	1.775	0.423	2.025	1.000
student19	1.6	0.900	2.5	1.038	3.575	0.813
student20	2.025	0.158	2.05	0.316	2.05	0.316
student21	1.75	0.439	3.25	0.954	3.05	1.011
student22	1.7	0.758	2.8	0.966	2.9	0.982
student23	1.725	0.506	1.8	0.516	1.85	0.662
student24	1.125	0.335	1.55	0.639	2.025	1.000
student25	1.325	0.474	1.575	0.549	1.55	0.749
student26	1.7	0.564	2.225	0.800	2.125	0.883
student27	1.475	0.506	2.125	0.723	2.8	0.883
student28	1.7	0.516	2.425	0.958	2.375	0.740
student29	1.475	0.506	1.9	0.810	2.025	0.920
student30	1.325	0.616	1.7	0.791	1.9	0.928
student31	1.875	1.090	3.525	0.847	2.8	1.224
student32	1.75	0.707	2.3	0.823	3.175	1.010
student33	1.45	0.504	1.675	0.474	1.85	0.921
student34	2.95	1.197	3.6	0.871	1.875	0.516
student35	1.475	0.506	1.525	0.679	1.675	0.616

Appendix G

Pretest Results

	Pretest	
	Mean	SD
student1	1.575	0.501
student2	2.175	0.549
student3	1.575	0.636
student4	1.625	0.586
student5	1.15	0.362
student6	1.475	0.554
student7	3.05	1.085
student8	1.1	0.304
student9	1.8	0.405
student10	1.7	0.939
student11	1.675	0.694
student12	1.65	0.483
student13	1.3	0.464
student14	1.8	0.648
student15	2	0.847
student16	1.875	0.822
student17	1.475	0.506
student18	1	0.000
student19	1.6	0.900
student20	2.025	0.158
student21	1.75	0.439
student22	1.7	0.758
student23	1.725	0.506
student24	1.125	0.335
student25	1.325	0.474
student26	1.7	0.564
student27	1.475	0.506
student28	1.7	0.516
student29	1.475	0.506
student30	1.325	0.616
student31	1.875	1.090
student32	1.75	0.707
student33	1.45	0.504
student34	2.95	1.197
student35	1.475	0.506

Appendix H

Posttest Results

	Posttest	
	Mean	SD
student1	2.95	1.011
student2	1.65	0.483
student3	1.8	0.687
student4	1.975	1.050
student5	1.725	0.599
student6	1.725	0.506
student7	3.425	0.958
student8	1.4	0.496
student9	1.625	0.628
student10	2.45	1.176
student11	2.55	0.904
student12	1.425	0.501
student13	1.65	0.622
student14	2.125	0.883
student15	2.9	0.900
student16	2.025	1.230
student17	2.025	1.230
student18	1.775	0.423
student19	2.5	1.038
student20	2.05	0.316
student21	3.25	0.954
student22	2.8	0.966
student23	1.8	0.516
student24	1.55	0.639
student25	1.575	0.549
student26	2.225	0.800
student27	2.125	0.723
student28	2.425	0.958
student29	1.9	0.810
student30	1.7	0.791
student31	3.525	0.847
student32	2.3	0.823
student33	1.675	0.474
student34	3.6	0.871
student35	1.525	0.679

Appendix I

Retention Results

	Retention	
	Mean	SD
student1	2.275	0.751
student2	2.375	0.925
student3	1.85	0.662
student4	1.825	0.549
student5	1.7	0.464
student6	1.975	0.832
student7	3.35	0.949
student8	1.325	0.730
student9	2.1	0.441
student10	2.975	1.050
student11	3	1.013
student12	1.75	0.439
student13	1.675	0.616
student14	2.275	0.679
student15	3.2	1.159
student16	1.5	0.751
student17	1.75	0.809
student18	2.025	1.000
student19	3.575	0.813
student20	2.05	0.316
student21	3.05	1.011
student22	2.9	0.982
student23	1.85	0.662
student24	2.025	1.000
student25	1.55	0.749
student26	2.125	0.883
student27	2.8	0.883
student28	2.375	0.740
student29	2.025	0.920
student30	1.9	0.928
student31	2.8	1.224
student32	3.175	1.010
student33	1.85	0.921
student34	1.875	0.516
student35	1.675	0.616

Appendix J

Students' attitudes towards reading, vocabulary learning, or the graded readers program

No.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1	I enjoy reading in English.	56.7	10	33.3
2	I enjoy reading Graded Readers.	73.3	10.1	16.6
5	I enjoy reading English at home.	56.7	10.0	33.3
10	I practice reading so that I get better at it.	80.0	10.0	10
23	I only learn English words taught in class.	16.7	6.6	76.7
24	Learning more vocabulary helps me improve my English reading skill.	96.7	0.0	3.3
27	Learning new vocabulary helps me improve my English language.	96.6	3.4	0.0
28	I find the vocabulary in the Graded Readers difficult to learn.	23.4	36.6	40.0
32	I like to do homework on vocabulary.	40.0	13.4	46.6
33	I know most of the words already in the Graded Readers.	26.7	16.6	56.7
34	I want to use Graded Readers in the future to learn new vocabulary.	63.3	23.3	13.4
36	Understanding what I read is important to me.	90.0	10.0	0.0

Students' perceptions of usefulness of Graded Reader for learning

No.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
3	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn new words.	90	3.4	6.6
4	The Graded Reader Program improves my English.	93.3	6.7	0.0
6	The Graded Reader Program improves my reading comprehension in English.	83.3	16.7	0.0
7	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn more about life.	76.6	13.4	10

8	The Graded Reader Program improves my confidence in learning English.	70.0	20.0	10
9	The Graded Reader Program is important for learning English.	83.3	10.1	6.6
12	The Graded Reader Program provides me with new learning techniques.	63.3	26.7	10
14	The Graded Reader Program helps me learn new words in context.	70.0	26.7	3.3
25	I think the vocabulary in the Graded Reader is useful.	83.4	16.6	0.0
26	I will use the vocabulary I learnt in the Graded Readers in my life.	93.3	6.7	0.0
29	Graded Reader activities are useful.	83.4	10.0	6.6
30	Graded Reader activities help me develop my vocabulary in English.	76.7	13.3	10.0
35	I like the teacher to continue using Graded Readers in class.	56.7	33.3	10.0
37	The Graded Reader Program helps me remember learnt words.	86.7	3.3	10.0

Students' perceptions of the teaching of Graded Readers

No.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
11	My English teacher is helpful in my Graded Reader class.	96.7	3.3	0.0
13	My English teacher is competent to teach Graded Readers.	96.6	3.4	0.0
15	My English teacher is enthusiastic in the Graded Reader class.	100.0	0.0	0.0
16	My English teacher is boring in the Graded Reader class.	6.7	3.3	90.0
17	My English teacher uses different teaching techniques to teach Graded Readers.	93.3	3.4	3.3
18	My English teacher encourages me to read.	96.7	3.3	0.0
19	My English teacher uses the time reasonably in the Graded Reader class.	93.3	6.7	0.0
20	My teacher often uses the whiteboard.	90.0	3.4	6.6
21	My English teacher is good at teaching vocabulary.	86.7	10.0	3.3
22	My English teacher is good at teaching reading.	96.7	3.3	0.0
31	My English teacher gives me a lot of homework on the Graded Readers.	13.4	16.6	70.0

Appendix K

Teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes to reading

Q.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1	My students enjoy reading in English.	53.5	25.0	21.5
2	My students enjoy reading Graded Readers.	57.2	28.5	14.3

Students' perceptions of students' ability to learn vocabulary in Graded Readers

Q.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
18	Students find the vocabulary in the Graded Reader Program difficult to learn.	39.3	25.0	35.7

Teachers' perception of usefulness of Graded Reader for learning

Q.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
3	The Graded Reader Program helps my students learn new words.	89.3	10.7	0.0
4	The Graded Reader Program improves my students' reading comprehension in English.	85.7	10.7	3.6
5	The Graded Reader Program motivates my students to learn more about life.	78.6	14.3	7.1
6	The Graded Reader Program improves my students' confidence in English.	71.4	17.9	10.7
7	The Graded Reader Program is important for learning English.	78.6	17.8	3.6
16	The Graded Reader Program helps students learn new words incidentally.	85.7	10.7	3.6
17	The Graded Reader Program encourages students to use the newly learned vocabulary in their lives.	78.5	10.8	10.7
19	The Graded Reader Program activities are useful to the students.	82.1	7.2	10.7
22	The Graded Reader Program reinforces words already learned in class.	71.4	14.3	14.3
24	The Graded Reader Program motivates students to read different graded readers.	78.6	10.7	10.7
25	Students find the Graded Reader Program useful.	67.8	21.5	10.7
26	Students know the Graded Reader Program helps them develop their English.	75.0	14.3	10.7

Teachers' perceptions of own teaching (techniques, methodology etc.)

Q.	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
8	My students find my teaching methodology helpful in the Graded Reader Program.	75.0	21.4	3.6
9	I think I am competent in teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	14.3	14.3
10	I use new teaching techniques to teach the Graded Reader Program.	78.6	21.4	0.0
11	I encourage my students to read.	100.0	0.0	0.0
12	I believe I use my teaching time reasonably in the Graded Reader Program.	67.8	17.8	14.4
13	I often use the whiteboard when teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	28.6	0.0
14	I find teaching vocabulary challenging.	57.2	17.8	25
15	I have attended a number of workshops on teaching reading.	67.9	14.4	17.7
20	I give my students a lot of Graded Reader Program homework.	35.7	25.0	39.3
21	I want to use The Graded Reader Program in future classes for vocabulary development.	67.8	14.3	17.9
23	I enjoy teaching the Graded Reader Program.	71.4	21.4	7.2

Appendix L

Teachers' and Students' Focus Group Questions

Teacher Focus Group Questions

- 1- Do you believe 56% of students enjoy reading in English?
- 2- What do you think of the Oxford Graded Reader Program? Why do you think that?
- 3- What do you think of the end of chapter activities?
- 4- Ninety-three percent of the students believe the GRP improves their English skills. What do you think?
- 5- Students think the program helps them improve their reading comprehension and help them learn more about life. Do you think this is true?
- 6- Do you think this program is important for learning English and that it complements the English syllabus?
- 7- Do you believe that 80% of students practice reading to get better at it?
- 8- Sixty-nine percent of the students reported they think their teacher is helpful in the reading class. Do you think that you are helpful to them?
- 9- What teaching strategies do you use while teaching the program?
- 10- Sixty percent of students think that this program helps them acquire new learning techniques. What is your response to that?
- 11- Ninety-six percent of the teachers believe they are competent in teaching reading. Do you think you are competent enough to teach reading? Why?
- 12- Most of the students believe that the EFL classroom is not the only source of learning new words? Is that true? How?
- 13- Do you find the vocabulary found in the Graded Reader Program useful to students?
- 14- Do you believe the Graded Reader Program should continue to be supported by the Ministry of Education?
- 15- What about homework? Do you give plenty of HW? Do students like doing HW on vocabulary?
- 16- If you were told that a new reading program will be implemented in the future, would you still choose this program, the Oxford Graded Reader program?

Student Focus Group Questions

- 1- Fifty-three percent of the teachers said that you enjoy reading in English. Do you think this percentage is correct?
- 2- Do you like reading stories?
- 3- Eighty-nine percent of the teachers believe the Graded Reader Program helps you learn new words. Is that true?
- 4- Do think the words you learn in this program are useful? Are you going to use them in your life?
- 5- Eighty-five percent of the teachers think this program helps you improve your comprehension skills. Is this true?
- 6- If you don't understand the meaning of a word while you are reading, what do you do?
- 7- Seventy percent of teachers think the program helps you be more confident. Is this true?
- 8- This program - does it help you improve your English language competency?
- 9- Seventy-five percent of teachers reported that their teaching methodology in the Graded Reader Program class is helpful. What do you think?
- 10- Seventy-one percent of teachers claimed that they are competent in teaching the program. Is this percentage accurate?
- 11- Do you believe 80% of teachers use new teaching techniques while teaching the program?
- 12- All teachers reported that they encourage their students to read. Does your teacher encourage you to read?
- 13- Was the language level in the reader suitable or difficult?
- 14- Do you think you learn words without making an effort to learn them?
- 15- What do you think of the end of chapter activities?
- 16- Do your teachers give you a lot homework on the Graded Reader Program?
- 17- Do you believe your teacher enjoys teaching the program?
- 18- Do you think this program encourages you to read more? If yes, can you give a percentage?
- 19- Do you think this program should continue being taught?

المخلص

بحثت هذه الدراسة فيما إذا كان استخدام برنامج قراءة القصص المختلفة المستوى في المدارس الحكومية الإعدادية في مملكة البحرين يساعد الطلبة على اكتساب المفردات عرضيا و تذكرها. كما نظرت هذه الدراسة أيضا في آراء الطلبة والمعلمين تجاه هذا البرنامج. سعت الدراسة للإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: (1) ما هو مدى تأثير برنامج قراءة القصص المختلفة المستوى في تطوير المفردات التي يكتسبها الطالب عرضيا؟ (2) ما هو مدى تأثير برنامج قراءة القصص المختلفة المستوى على مقدرة الطالب في الاحتفاظ بتلك المفردات؟ (3) ما هي آراء الطلاب والمعلمين حول مقدرة برنامج القصص المختلفة المستوى على المساهمة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل عام؟ (4) وماهي آراء الطلاب والمعلمين حول امكانية أن يساهم البرنامج في زيادة تعلم المفردات بطريقة عرضية؟. شملت هذه الدراسة 35 طالبة من مرحلة الثاني الإعدادي، حيث تم اختبار الطالبات في مدى معرفتهن ب 40 كلمة من القصة المعطاة. تم جمع البيانات من خلال تقديم إختبار قبلي و بعدي ومن ثم اختبار مؤجل وذلك للإجابة عن سؤالي البحث الأول والثاني. كما استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي للإجابة على السؤالين الثالث والرابع من أسئلة البحث من خلال تقديم استبيانات وعمل مقابلات لعدد من الطلبة والمعلمين لمعرفة النتائج المتعلقة بأرائهم تجاه البرنامج. كشفت النتائج أن استخدام برنامج القصص المختلفة المستوى يساعد الطلبة على اكتساب كلمات جديدة عرضيا بشكل كبير، كما كشفت أيضا أن البرنامج كان فاعلا في مساعدة الطلبة على تذكر المفردات المكتسبة عرضيا بعد شهرين من إنتهائه. إضافة إلى ذلك أظهرت الدراسة أن تصورات وآراء الطلبة والمعلمين تجاه برنامج قراءة القصص المختلفة المستوى كانت إيجابية.

جامعة البحرين

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و آدابها

كلية الآداب



اكتساب المفردات عرضيا:

استخدام القصص مختلفة المستوى لتنمية المفردات اللغوية وتذكرها في مدارس البحرين

بحث تكميلي مقدم لنيل درجة الماجستير في الدراسات التطبيقية في اللغة الإنجليزية

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