



On the Effect of Background Knowledge on Reading Comprehension and Recall Process of a Group of Advanced Iranian Students

Mahboobeh Khosrojerdi

Islamic Azad University, Sabzevar Branch (Iran)

mkhosrojerdi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study reported here sought to find further evidence of the role of background knowledge in EFL reading comprehension and recall. The study was conducted in two succeeding phases. First, 90 subjects studying at the Iran Language Institute took the TOFEL test. The results enabled the researcher to select 20 subjects in advanced level. In the second phase, a questionnaire and four reading comprehension texts were administered. The purpose of using the questionnaire was to measure the amount of familiarity with the texts. Based on the answers of the subjects to the questions the texts were divided into two familiar and two unfamiliar. Then, the subjects were supposed to read the texts and write down their recalls on separate sheets of paper. Finally, the recall protocols were analyzed. The result of the matched t-tests showed that background knowledge had effects on reading comprehension and the recall of the texts. Overall, the results supported the view that background knowledge can be considered as a factor affecting reading comprehension and recall and therefore, as a source of differential success in EFL language learning as well.