



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

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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 intermediate level. In the second phase, a questionnaire and four reading comprehension texts were administered. The purpose of the questionnaire was to choose two texts as familiar and two as unfamiliar. Then, the four reading comprehension texts were given to the students to read and write their recall on a separate piece 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. The correlational result further was indicative of the positive relationship between proficiency and reading comprehension. Overall, the results supported the view that background knowledge and proficiency can be considered as factors affecting reading comprehension and recall and therefore, as a source of differential success in EFL language learning as well.