

A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARABIC VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT, READING COMPREHENSION OF ISLAMIC TEXTS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF SAYYIDA KHADIJA ISLAMIC SECONDARY SCHOOL KANO

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ABSTRACT

To ensure competitive learning and positive outcomes in secondary schools, the students are required to engage in identified reading comprehension on every assigned text under study. But presently, significant number of these students shows less commitment towards the necessary acquisition of Arabic words requiring for successful understanding of certain Arabic text in Islamic studies syllabus. This therefore have resulted some challenges ranging from poor communication, non-mastery of subject, demotivation and deficient learning process among many others. The aims of this study are to determine the relationship between Arabic vocabulary developments, reading comprehension, and their relationship with academic performance, which certainly will inspire the teachers to establish sensible program that will enhance Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension in order to assist these students achieve to the maximum. The present investigation used Quantitative method; a survey type of descriptive study was utilised. A self-developed questionnaire was simply administered on a sample of 40 SS II students of Sayyida Khadija Islamic Secondary School Kano. The findings revealed positive correlation between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text $r = 0.547$, and also a moderate positive relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance $r = .585$. Therefore, attempt should be made to introduce more strategies and techniques that will promote the development of Arabic vocabulary and enhance reading comprehension towards learning various texts in Islamic studies syllabus in secondary schools. However, learners should be assisted to acquire reach Arabic vocabularies so as to enable them promote their reading comprehension and academic performance in schools.

Keywords: Arabic vocabulary, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge is a major component in the language learning process and can no longer be disregarded in language acquisition, while reading comprehension is regarded as the backbone to comprehend and get message from the text. However, restrictions in lexical knowledge are considered a major cause of communication problems, which hinder language comprehension as well as production (I.S.P, Nation, 2001). Vocabulary knowledge is now measured as the most essential factor in language skill and academic achievement for its close relation with all other language proficiencies and more particularly text comprehension (Bernhardt, 2005). Despite this, some of these students exhibited lack of enthusiasm to do the amount of reading needed in Islamic studies, especially at the lower classes of their study. Nevertheless, the effort to reduce the students' lack of enthusiasm should be placed thereby motivating the learners against the identified reading deficiencies. Another learning difficulty observable from these students is specifically deals with poor and inadequate Arabic vocabularies that can enable them read and comprehend certain content of Islamic studies. The present study focused completely to investigate the extent to which Arabic vocabulary development relates to reading comprehension of Islamic text as well as its adverse effect on students' academic performance in schools. Attempt was made by the present study which highlighted some beneficial recommendations that are considered helpful to bring about holistic improvement in the phenomena.

Objectives Of The Study

The present study is designed to achieve the following:

1. To determine a relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text.
2. To determine a relationship between Arabic vocabulary developments, reading comprehension of Islamic text and students' academic performance.

Research Questions

The present study is designed to answer the following:

1. Is there any relationship between Arabic Vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text?
2. Is there any relationship between Arabic vocabulary developments, reading comprehension of Islamic text with students' academic performance?

Hypotheses

Following are the possible hypotheses predicted in the present study:

H0: There is no significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text

H0: There is no significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and students' academic performance

Significance Of The Study

The sizeable number of students learning various subjects of Islamic studies described with the poor and inadequate Arabic vocabularies as key of their learning difficulties most especially in their effort to apprehend certain terms in Islamic studies. Therefore, the present study if utilized will help teachers draw and establish workable strategies that are best to promote Arabic vocabulary development in students which will certainly advance their comprehension and academic success relatively. It is in the interest of this study to prove the previous findings through active survey and empirical evidence which it has observed. The study is indeed helpful to the teachers as such findings gives them account and identifies the need to adjust in their teaching approach so as to allow these students develop in their Arabic vocabularies in order to understand and excel academically.

Concept of Vocabulary Development

Vocabularies can be described as the words of a language, comprising single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning. There are five separate categories in which vocabulary development usually take place: First, form is singled out, which encompasses the ability to recognize a word in aural and written contexts as well as being able to pronounce and spell the word. The second category is word structure, which alludes to the morphemes (free or bound) that constitute a word, as well as its derivatives. Third, syntactic behaviour is found, which signifies how a word operates in a sentence and what lexical consequences have to be taken into consideration when using the designated word. The fourth category is meaning, which includes its referential meaning (homonyms, polysemy, idioms etc.) affective meaning, and its pragmatic meaning. The last category found is lexical relations, which denotes knowing the word's relationship to other words and their meanings (synonymy, antonym, hyponymy), as well as its collocations (Laufer, 1991). Vocabulary is of utmost important to Arabic language instruction, as lacking adequate Arabic vocabulary; learners cannot comprehend Islamic text or expresses their own thoughts.

Concept of Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the essence of reading and the active process of constructing meaning from text (Durkin, 1993). It is defined by the Research and Development (RAND) Reading Study Group (RRSG, 2002) as "the process of simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print." Reading comprehension is a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text (van den Broek & Espin, 2012). Comprehension depends beyond the mental characteristics of the reader, but entirely on language processes, such as basic reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, and sensitivity to text structure, inference as well as motivation. Comprehension also requires effective use of strategic processes, such as metacognition and comprehension monitoring. As commonly found in the readers' attitudes towards comprehension skills, readers are able to grasp efficiently from the stage of learning the art of communal reading to the level of purposive comprehension (Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2005). In view of the above, the reading comprehension can be the most reliable factor that can assist students towards the comprehension of variety of aspects on mastery of language and academic performance.

Academic Performance

Pandney (2008) defined academic performance as the performance of the pupils and students in the subjects they study in the school. This determines the pupils' status in the class. It gives children the opportunity to develop their talents, improve their grades and prepare for future academic challenges. Academic performance refers to one's performance in a given academic area (e.g. reading or language arts, Islamic studies, mathematics, science and other areas of human learning. Academic performance relates to academic subjects a child studies in school and the skills the child is expected to master in each (Kathryn, 2010). Academic performance is the extent to which a pupils or student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term learning and teaching objectives. It also entails how far we have achieved in the seasonal assessment as well as our productivity in the working environment (Admin, 2012). Therefore, these assertions made above become evidence that academic performance is the overall determinant describing the situations of students in the aspects of academic activities.

Review of Related Literature

Selma (2013) conducted a research designed to investigate a relationship between text comprehension and learning vocabulary through word-focused activities. The participants were 100 first year students. They were given a vocabulary checklist before the treatments to make it sure that all participants were unfamiliar with the target words. There were four groups and all groups read one text each week during eight weeks. Each text contained one target word which appeared six times in the text. The treatment

group read the texts, answered the comprehension questions and they completed the vocabulary activities. Then, they answered the form-recognition and meaning recognition tests as the last step of the process. On the ninth week, and tenth week, the participants were given the delayed post-tests to investigate whether they are familiar with the target words after treatments. First, participants' answers to comprehension questions were analyzed. Then, means were calculated for form-recognition and meaning-recognition tests. Comprehension and vocabulary learning were compared for treatment and control groups. The analysis showed that the treatments have an effect on learner scores and results when learning an unknown word. One of the aims of the study was to explore the effect of completing a variety of vocabulary exercises while reading. It seemed to have tapped different levels of processing capabilities such as recognition and interpretation. The analysis showed that there is not a significant correlation between vocabulary learning through word-focused activities and text comprehension. It is concluded that to learn vocabulary through reading, text comprehension is a necessary condition.

Nadia and Badia (2016) conducted a research aimed to examine a relationship between two dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, namely size and depth, and whether these two dimensions of vocabulary correlate with reading comprehension performance. It also empirically evaluates the tests used to measure these three constructs in the Moroccan EFL context. To this end, 32 freshmen specializing in telecommunication engineering at the National institute of Posts and Telecommunication in Rabat-Morocco and taking English classes were involved in the study. The instruments used include a) vocabulary size test, b) vocabulary depth test c) and reading comprehension test. The findings reveal a moderate correlation between size and depth of vocabulary knowledge, a significantly strong correlation ($p < .01$) between depth and reading comprehension performance, but only a low correlation between vocabulary size and reading comprehension performance.

Tina and Sara (2017) conducted a research aim to investigate how students can develop and strengthen their vocabulary through reading. Their research questions are: What cognitive processes and strategies are used when learning vocabulary? What does research say about incidental vocabulary learning through reading? What relationship does vocabulary have with reading comprehension?

They answered the above questions by synthesizing and analyzing empirical studies which have been divided into two categories: cognitive processes and strategies, and vocabulary acquisition through reading. The findings show that, when encountering new vocabulary, learners use memory, determination, social and metacognitive strategies. Learning vocabulary happens both incidentally and intentionally and during this procedure words go through cognitive processes that determine where in our knowledge system they belong but this procedure can be affected by both internal and external factors. Results show that learners find reading and reading while listening to be a good method of learning vocabulary and these approaches also show good results in incidental vocabulary acquisition. Learners acquire new vocabulary incidentally through reading but the number of words they learn varies greatly. Learner's prior vocabulary knowledge and the level of the target text are important for the outcome of new vocabulary acquisition. If the learner does not have an adequate prior vocabulary, associations and connections cannot be made and coherence not completed. In summary, the relationship between incidental vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension is mutually beneficial. Reading provides context during a learner's integration process and this leads to comprehension and vocabulary growth. There is a reciprocal relationship between comprehension and vocabulary growth, where both build on one another. However, since all the empirical studies did not take the same factors into consideration, the results have varied. In other words, external and internal factors can have a major impact on incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading. We suggest further research to investigate these factors in order to get a clearer picture of how we as teachers can improve strategies and instructions for vocabulary acquisition through reading.

Therefore, the uniqueness of the present study from the above findings is that, there is no single study conducted to find out a relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text among the students of Sayyida Khadija Senior Islamic Secondary School. Furthermore, many studies related to this were conducted on English vocabulary development and its reading comprehension, while the present study focused completely on Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension and their relationship with academic performance. Moreover, many of them were conducted in different countries and places with different school setting, philosophical underpinning and typical curriculum but no such study ever reported to have investigated this school under the present survey. Hence, the present study is mainly designed to fill this gap identified in the above research reports.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design, Sample and Sampling Technique

The study was carried out using a correlational survey type of descriptive study. Nworgu (2006) defined correlational survey as a type of study that seeks to establish the relationship exists between two or more variables. It was considered appropriate in the present study because the study is seeks to find a relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text, and a relationship between Arabic vocabulary developments, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance. A self-developed questionnaire was designed for this study. These questionnaires were administered on a number of 40 respondents of SS 11 from Sayyida Khadija Senior Islamic Secondary School. The Questions seeks to generate answers regarding a statement on Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text. The sample was carried out using a simple random technique. Moreover, a carefully selected passage was used as second

instrument to measure the reading comprehension of Islamic text for the students as well as their performance. It consisted a selected texts followed by questions to be answered.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instruments, the initial draft of the instruments were subjected to face validation. It has been done by experts in language and education. They have moderated it in terms of relevance of the content and clarity of the statement as well as suitability of the rating scale. Observations given by them were taken into consideration in the final modification of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was tested on a sample of twenty (20) students from the designated area of study. Cronbach Alpha Statistical analysis was used to determine the internal consistency coefficient of the instrument. To have reliable items, Cronbatch alpha value should be at least 0.6 for the new constructed questionnaire as recommended by Nunally (1978). From the test, it has 0.7, which shows that the items used were reliable.

Data analysis and presentation

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. It was used as a statistical tool for data analysis through applying a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19. It was used to measure the degree of relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text, and a relationship between Arabic vocabulary developments, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance. This tool measures the strength of two measurable variables. Data collected were presented in tabular forms below for easy interpretation.

RESULT OF THE STUDY

The research questions and hypotheses were addressed via Pearson correlation coefficient (r).

Hypothesis 1 testing: There is no significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistic

	Mean	std. Deviation	N
Arabic Vocabulary development	4.2483	.43832	40
Reading comprehension of Islamic text	4.1752	.56897	40

Table 1 indicated the mean and standard deviation of the variables as well as the total number of the sample particularly selected for the study. The mean value of Arabic Vocabulary development is 4.2483 while for the reading comprehension is 4.1752 which indicated the arithmetic average of the items under each variable. However, the standard deviation measures the variability of each variable which is .43832 for Arabic vocabulary development and .56897 for reading comprehension of Islamic text. From the above, it can observe how all the variables related to each other.

Table 2 Pearson correlation for the variables

Variables	r	p	n
Arabic Vocabulary development	.547**	.000	40
Reading comprehension of Islamic text	.547**	.000	40

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table, it is observed that, there is a moderate positive correlation between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text, $r = 0.547$, $n = 40$, $p = 0.00$. $P < .05$ ". However, the $P = 0.000$ which is extremely less than .05 indicates a statistically significant correlations between the two variables which is the answer to the first objective. This means increase in Arabic vocabulary development is significantly related to the increase in reading comprehension of Islamic

text. Overall result revealed that, there is a moderate positive correlation between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Therefore, the analysis accepted to reject the first null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 testing: There is no significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance

Table 3 Descriptive Statistic

	Mean	std. Deviation	N
Arabic Vocabulary development,	3.3526	.44681	40
Reading comprehension of Islamic text			
Academic performance	4.1851	.46217	40

Table 3 indicated the mean and standard deviation of the variables as well as the total number of the sample particularly selected for the study. The mean of Arabic Vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text is 3.3526 while for the academic performance is 4.1851 which indicated the arithmetic average of the items under each variable. However, the standard deviation measured the reliability of each variables is .44681 for Arabic Vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and .46217 for academic performance.

Table 4 Pearson correlation for the variables

Variables	r	p	n
Arabic Vocabulary development,	.585**	.000	40
reading comprehension of Islamic text			
Academic performance	.585**	.000	40

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

However, the above table also identified there is a significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance, $r = .585, n = 40, p = 0.000, P > .05$. The $P = 0.000$ which is extremely less than 0.000 indicated that statistically there is a significant correlations between the two variables which is the answer to the second objective. This described the increase in the Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text is significantly related to the increase in academic performance. Overall result revealed that, there is a significant correlation between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance. Therefore, the analysis accepted to reject the second null hypothesis.

DISCUSSION ON THE MAIN FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to find out a relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text, as well as a relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance among Sayyida Khadija Senior Islamic Secondary School. The findings indicated a moderate positive correlation between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text, and also a moderate positive relationship between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance. This corresponded with Piaget cognitive theory where he asserted that cognitive processing of organization and adaptation is used when perceiving new information, and when doing so, the brain is always in search of equilibrium. This means that learners need new and adequate vocabularies to make them know and comprehend certain aspects in their syllabus. This however indicated that learners should make optimum effort and manage their previous Arabic vocabularies in order to grasp and master various Islamic texts under study. Therefore, it is imperative that the learner should be encouraged to do amount of reading and search the newer vocabularies when learning a language, because new information must be able to consolidate and create equilibrium with already existing knowledge (Tina & Sara, 2017). Moreover, the relationship between reading and vocabulary acquisition is also reinforced by Krashen's (1985) interpretation about reading as a learning technique. This method offers a greater foundation of context for learners to help them in their integration process, which in turn leads to comprehension and vocabulary growth. This indicated that the two variables are going hand in hand; it means that the more vocabularies learner possessed the more

reading comprehension will emerge and that will eventually advance his/her performance in any subject under study. Therefore reading comprehension will emerge and vocabulary development regarded as road-map for academic excellence. The result also does not support the finding which described the insignificant correlation between vocabulary learning through word-focused activities and text comprehension (See Selma, 2013). This might be largely dependent upon the subject used and the area in which the research was conducted.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

From the data released above, the study accepted to reject the first null hypothesis. It revealed a significant relationship between Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text $r = 0.647$, $n = 140$, $p = 0.00$. $P < .05$ ". This means that increases in Arabic vocabulary development is significantly related to increases in reading comprehension of Islamic text. . In the second hypothesis, it can simply observed a moderate positive correlation between Arabic vocabulary development, reading comprehension of Islamic text and academic performance $r = .537$, $n = 140$, $p = 0.000$. $P > .05$. This means increases in Arabic vocabulary development and reading comprehension of Islamic text is significantly related to the increase in students' academic performance in Islamic studies. Therefore, the analysis also accepted to reject the second null hypothesis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study described the important benefits of Arabic vocabulary development to the reading comprehension. Therefore, effort should be made to advance the vocabulary learning process and its necessary development.
2. Teachers should assist learners acquire the multi Arabic vocabularies in order to enable them promote their reading comprehension and their subject performance most especially during textual studies.
3. Reading comprehension of Islamic text should be the ladder for students who strategy to expand their Islamic thoughts and understanding in Islamic studies, but this can never be achieved without developing sound Arabic Vocabularies.
4. Students should develop the reading culture and possess the attitude of independent reading through which will realize successful comprehension of variety of subject area.
5. Upcoming studies should also use the preliminary information produced in the present study, thereby consolidating other subject areas to bring more improvements against such educational phenomena.

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