THE EFFECT OF READING ON IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Abstract

Foreign language learning without reading is difficult, because reading provides learners with a good opportunity to understand the written texts. Through better comprehension, learners stand for a better chance of having a good command of language. There is an increasingly high relationship between reading and communication skills. There is no question that people who attain grammar and vocabulary knowledge through reading tend to develop accuracy and fluency in communication. Word knowledge, which is considered as essential in foreign language learning process, plays a facilitating role in improvement of communication skills. Therefore, fostering vocabulary and grammar knowledge through reading will lead to speaking skills. This study focuses on how written words contribute to speech.

Key Words: Reading skills, speaking skills, vocabulary knowledge, grammar knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

There is a connection between developing skills and speaking skills. Reading widely will result in better comprehension of the target language materials. Reading abundantly enables learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge and grammar structure awareness that are considered as crucial elements in improving communication skills, therefore reading widely will highly contribute to communicative competence.

The importance of speaking cannot be underestimated. Messages are conveyed via spoken words, for that reason a good command of communicative competence in the target language can be provided through reading widely.

Literature Review

There is a strong correlation between reading and language skills. Reading is an easy way of developing language skills. Reading has two components: word recognition and comprehension (Alderson, 2000). Reading will help learners with vocabulary knowledge enhancement (Nation, 1993; Cho & Krashen, 1994). Word

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knowledge facilitates learners' speaking performance. Reading can provide practice for learners to improve their conversation skills. Learners need to produce verbal utterances to convey meaning (Nunan, 2003). Accuracy and fluency learners need to convey meaning can be obtained through reading. As learners read more they will master the target language and use it effectively.

Learning structure is another gain by reading. Grabe (1991) stresses the contribution of reading to speaking. Reading will allow learners to see how language works in texts. Learners will become good aware of the language structure and consequently they will have a good proficiency in the target language.

Confidence is another key element in language learning process. Adequate word and grammar knowledge will lead to better comprehension of the target language. Easy comprehension of language materials will provide confidence for learners to speak with ease.

Research Questions
This study has tried to investigate the following questions.
1. Does reading widely increase learners' vocabulary and grammar knowledge?
2. Does reading widely enable students to communicate fluently and accurately?
3. Does reading widely help learners to develop communicative competence?

METHOD

Aim
The study aims to investigate the bond between reading and communication skills. Reading widely contributes to development of communicative competence is what the research focuses on.

Participants
The participants in the study are English Language Teaching department students at Ishik university. 98 students have participated in the survey. The students are all third and fourth year students who are all well aware of learning strategies in foreign language learning process. Therefore participants know the importance of reading and its contributions to developing other skills.

Data Collection

In the study descriptive method is used. Survey data collection technique has been applied. The gathered data has been analyzed through SPSS. The reliability and the validity of the scale answered the purpose and the Cronbach's Alpha reliability was calculated as 87 (see Appendix). Factor analysis is used to analyze the relations among factors.

FINDINGS

The percentage of students whose oral skills scores are higher than 90 is 19.39. While % 63.27 of the students have more than 70 as an achieving score in oral skills course, % 36.73 of them have lower than 60 as an achieving score. Furthermore the percentage of students who read more than 50 pages is % 12.12 (Figur 2). The percentage of students who read 50 pages in a week is % 33.33. Totally % 45.45 of the students read at least 50 pages in a week. % 48.98 of the students has more than 70 as an achieving score in oral skills.
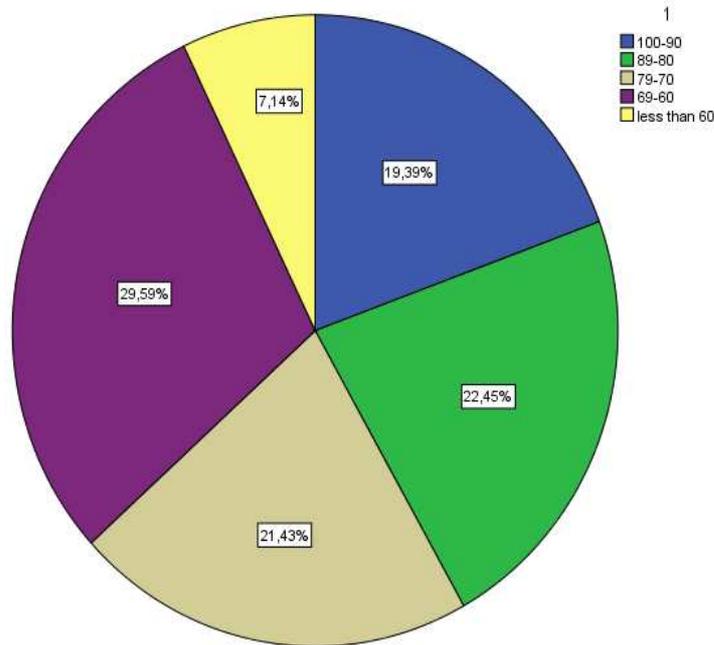
Figur 1: Oral skills scores of students

And consequently this study has shown that students who read at least 50 pages in a week in the target language have more than 70 as an achieving score in oral skills. In other words the relationship between reading and speaking in this study has been clearly seen. Reading promotes learners' conversation skills. If reading is implemented constantly it will provide a good opportunity for learners to practice in the target language and learners will stand a better chance of developing their language competence. Reading through providing learners vocabulary and grammar knowledge help learners gain accuracy and fluency in communication.
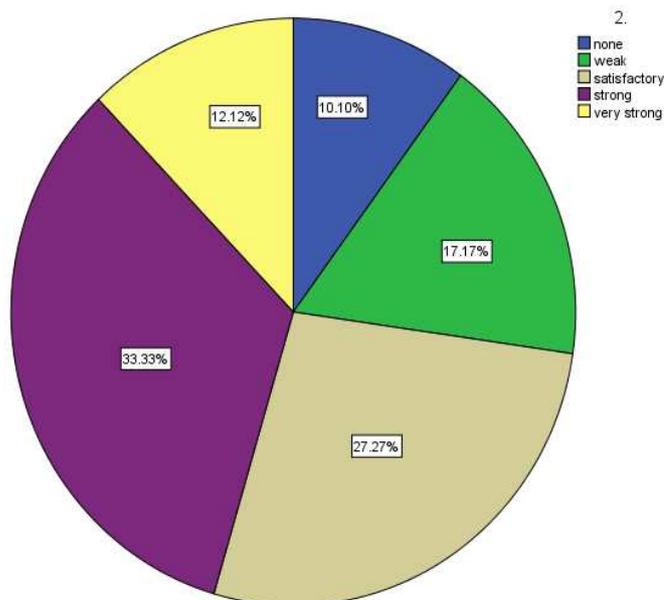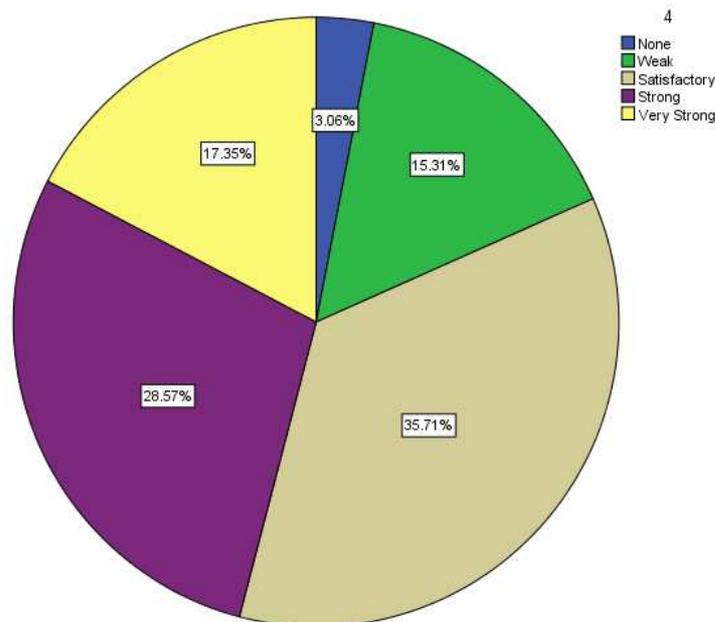

Figur 2: The amount of reading in a week

Figur 3 demonstrates the percentage of the students who think reading improves word knowledge in the target language. While % 21.43 of the students has strong opinions about reading's effect on vocabulary knowledge, 76.53 of the students advocate that reading widely is useful in that it improves word knowledge. Reading is a good way for encouraging word recognition. As learners read widely they will recognize the words in texts. Moreover, reading helps learners inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words from context (Nation, 1993).
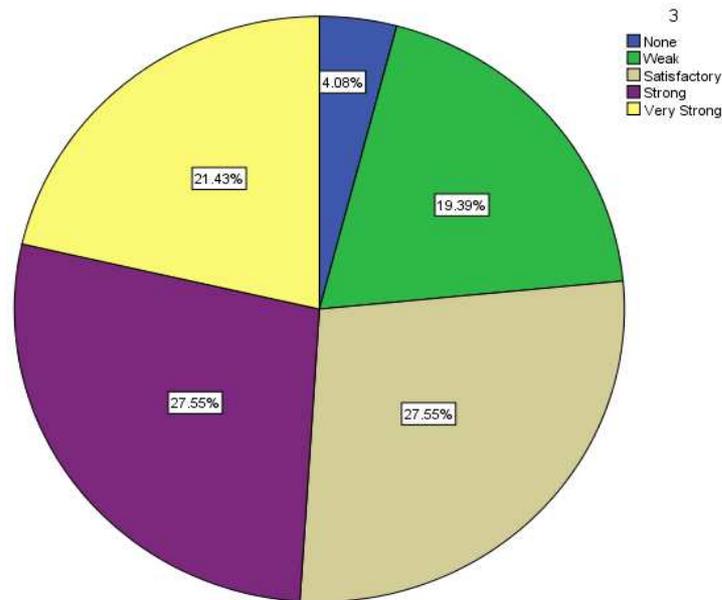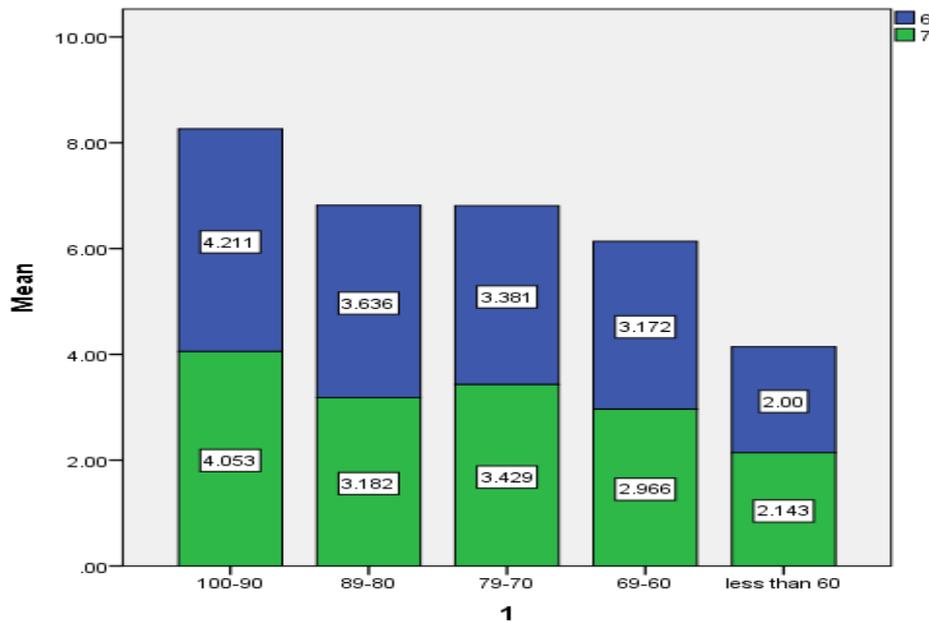

Figur 3: Reading increases vocabulary knowledge

Figur 4: Reading increases grammar knowledge

Figur 4 displays the percentage of the students who think reading improves grammar knowledge in the target language. While % 17.35 of the students have strong opinions about reading's effect on grammar knowledge, % 81.63 of the students advocate that reading widely is useful in that it improves grammar knowledge. Reading generates comprehensible input which leads to language acquisition (Krashen, 1993). Learners will develop their awareness of grammatical characteristics in language materials.

Figur 5: Scores of students in Oral skills and their views on the effects of vocabulary and grammar to increase communicative competence

Figur 5 briefly summarizes the effects of reading on vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Those who have higher achieving scores in oral skills are of the opinion that vocabulary and grammar knowledge contributes to communication skills, and at the same time students with higher scores in oral skills give attention to reading because it enhances comprehension which finally increases their proficiency in the target language.

Table 1: Variables in the survey

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	7, 3, 4, 5, 6[b]		.Enter

a. Dependent Variable: 1
b. All requested variables entered.

The oral skills scores of students have been compared with the variables in Table 1. These variables are:
3.   reading increases vocabulary knowledge
4. reading increases grammar knowledge
5. reading develops fluency and accuracy
6. vocabulary and grammar knowledge facilitate communication skills
7. reading enhances comprehension

Table 2: Reading influences speaking skills

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,519[a]	,269	,229	1,09915

a. Predictors: (Constant), 7, 3, 4, 5, 6

After analysis of the survey of 98 students, this study has concluded that the contribution of reading to the development of speaking skills is % 26.9. Learners through reading develop their word and grammar knowledge that will result in better comprehension of the target language. Furthermore reading provides a low anxiety learning environment for learners where they can develop confidence. These key elements of speaking skills will enable learners to communicate effectively in the target language.

Table 3: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40,903	5	8,181	6,771	,000[b]
	Residual	111,148	92	1,208		
	Total	152,051	97			

a. Dependent Variable: 1
b. Predictors: (Constant), 7, 3, 4, 5, 6

The ANOVA significance level in this study is 0.000. if the ANOVA significance level is lower than 0.01 the findings in the study answer the purpose. Similarly in Table 4 when scores of students are compared with the variables it is found that coefficient level is high.

Y3= 0.081x+5.223
Y4= 0.024x+5.223
Y5= 0.045x+5.223
Y6= 0.389x+5.223
Y7= 0.217x+5.223

The achieving scores of the students are listed from highest to lowest, whereas the variables are listed from lowest to highest in the survey. Therefore the coefficient levels are minus. But it has been found that if students have high scores in oral skills, the coefficient levels of the variables are high too.

Table 4: Coefficiency table

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,223	,454		11,504	,000
	3	-,081	,132	-,074	-,612	,542
	4	,024	,142	,020	,171	,865
	5	-,045	,156	-,039	-,290	,772
	6	-,389	,165	-,322	-2,364	,020
	7	-,217	,146	-,179	-1,489	,140

a. Dependent Variable: 1

CONCLUSION

Reading is an easy way of promoting language skills. Through providing a comfortable learning environment it helps learners to develop vocabulary and grammar knowledge. These elements hold an important place in

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foreign language learning because they contribute to comprehension. Furthermore, reading is not stressful so it allows learners to develop confidence. Speaking which requires word and grammar knowledge, better comprehension skills, and confidence may be accomplished through reading.

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Appendix

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,870
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	217,247
	df	10
	Sig.	,000

The minimum KMO level in a study is 50, and in this study KMO level is 87.

Factor Analysis

Anti-Image	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation
,878[a]	3,4286	1,14873	,620
,896[a]	3,4184	1,04461	,613
,854[a]	3,4286	1,08409	,723
,847[a]	3,4388	1,03611	,728
,884[a]	3,2653	1,03097	,613

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

Anti-image should be more than 0.5, and in this study the minimum anti-image level is 0.84.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,297	65,937	65,937	3,297	65,937	65,937
2	,532	10,643	76,580			
3	,475	9,508	86,088			
4	,373	7,457	93,545			
5	,323	6,455	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
6	,853
5	,850
3	,787
4	,783
7	,783

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,870	5

The reliability was calculated as % 87.