

Research Article

# The ER-IR Approach and Its Impact on the Enhancement of First-Year University Students' Reading Comprehension at Al Ghad International College

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## Abstract

The aim of this research study is threefold. First, it investigates the effects of the ER-IR Approach on the enhancement of college students' reading comprehension. The participants are first-year university students studying applied medical sciences who experience significant difficulties in their prior literary studies. Second, it responds to current research demonstrating how reading strategies can improve students' and teachers' thoughts, reading processes, and achievements. Third, it addresses the need to enhance students' metacognitive knowledge, monitor skills and approaches, and assist progress in applied medical sciences. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, and the intervention lasted for 75 learning hours. A total of 36 male students, aged 18 to 30, were selected and allocated to an experimental group that received treatment and a control group that did not receive treatment. A pre-test and post-test of reading comprehension were conducted to collect quantitative data, and structured interviews were used to identify students' views on the impact of the ER-IR Approach. One-way ANOVA, box plots, and thematic analysis were utilised in the data analysis. The findings revealed that participants in the experimental group made remarkable progress in reading comprehension skills. The study indicated that implementing the ER-IR technique as a method of teaching could enhance EFL students' reading comprehension and train teachers on strategies that support low-achievers' reading abilities.

## Keywords

ER-IR Approach, Reading Achievement, First-year College Students, Reading Comprehension, Quasi-experimental Study

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, reading English has become a widely used language skill worldwide. It serves as a foundational skill for knowledge, education, technology, and communication in many countries [33].

In Saudi Arabia, English reading skills are incorporated into the school curriculum and taught to children in elemen-

tary classes (grades 4-6), intermediate, and secondary schools [4]. According to the Saudi Ministry of Education, the main objectives of teaching the English language are to equip students intending to study at university colleges with adequate English knowledge and to assist them in completing their future education. Additionally, it aims to provide students

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who complete the third year of secondary school with sufficient English proficiency to facilitate their entry into the job market [5].

Since the importance of the English language has been growing for various reasons, the Saudi Ministry of Education emphasises achieving the objectives of English language use. Consequently, Al Ghad Colleges have placed significant focus on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction and have reformed their educational processes multiple times. As a result, numerous facilities have been established on the main campuses as training centres, English clubs, and academic support centres for students. Professional trainers from English-speaking countries have been invited to train new teachers. Furthermore, English curriculum designers have come to Al Ghad Colleges to develop new science syllabuses that include the English language. Native English speakers and expatriate scholars from Arab and Asian countries have also been recruited to teach English to students specialising in the sciences, medicine, and nursing.

In fact, reading skills are regarded as a primary source of EFL input that enhances students' knowledge and discourse structure [7]. This study primarily focuses on reading comprehension. This research posits that reading comprehension is a key factor leading student to knowledge of the medical sciences.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The majority of EFL students in the Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at some Saudi university colleges tend to have below-average reading comprehension levels for several reasons.

Practically, the primary reason for learners' low level of reading comprehension is their lack of English literacy due to prior school backgrounds [5]. Public schools in Saudi Arabia start teaching the English language in grade four and continue until the third year of secondary school. During these nine years, learners study basic elements of the English language, including the English phonics and phonograms, dictation and decoding of words, paragraph structure, making the sequence of events, understanding inferences, reordering sentences, and asking and answering informational questions, along with discussing simple issues and describing their environment. Unfortunately, after this lengthy period, a significant gap exists between the English syllabuses students are supposed to study and the limited knowledge they have acquired from these syllabuses [30].

Moreover, one gap in the literature review concerns the lack of empirical studies investigating the effects of the integrative approaches of extensive reading (ER) and intensive reading (IR) on the reading comprehension of students taught in a single study group. Almost all previous studies have described the effectiveness of ER on reading comprehension and the influence of IR on EFL learners' reading abilities separately; however, the combination of ER and IR as a

teaching method for EFL students in a classroom to enhance their reading comprehension has not been sufficiently researched. For this reason, the present study examines the effects of the ER-IR Approach to improve students' reading comprehension at Al Ghad Colleges and to fill this literature gap.

## 3. Research Objectives

The present study investigates the implementation of the ER-IR Approach as a teaching technique for first-year university students at Al Ghad College. This new technique aims to increase students' reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the objectives are:

1. To examine the levels of reading comprehension among students in the experimental and control groups at Al Ghad College before the intervention study.
2. To investigate the effects of the ER-IR Approach on the improvement of experimental group students' reading comprehension.
3. To examine students' perceptions in both the experimental and control groups about the roles of the ER-IR Approach on their reading comprehension skills.

## 4. Research Questions

Based on the reading comprehension skills and the perspectives of first-year university student participants on the main role of the ER-IR Approach, the study states the following questions:

1. What are the levels of reading comprehension among students in the experimental and control groups before the intervention study?
2. To what extent do participants in the experimental group achieve higher scores in reading comprehension post-tests compared to their pre-test scores due to the effects of the ER-IR Approach?
3. What are the views of the experimental and control group participants towards the roles of the ER-IR Approach in enhancing their reading comprehension?

## 5. Literature Review

Reading comprehension is one of the most complex human activities within the field of education. Over the last six decades, curriculum designers, policymakers, and researchers have made significant efforts to improve students' reading performance in the United States. However, 44% of fourth-grade students and 46% of eighth-grade students failed to meet the standards for reading proficiency on the most recent National Report Card [34]. In their study findings, [27] noted that some minority groups in the U.S.A. experienced difficulties in reading comprehension. For instance, black students in fourth grade scored an average of 26 points lower

than their white peers, and similar discrepancies were observed for other non-majority groups.

Cooper states that a lack of comprehension when reading science texts hinders students from learning secondary science [17]. It is noted that inadequate reading skills lead to several problems, resulting in poor learning in science [15, 11].

In recent years, scholars, including [42] and [2], have confirmed the importance of reading skills for both science comprehension and academic achievement. In this regard, some research studies reveal that expanding vocabulary and engaging in reading activities are highly recommended to achieve science goals [39, 20].

Additionally, [28] and [13] posited that both science achievement and reading comprehension share similar mental processes, such as identifying cause and effect, specifying main ideas, arranging the sequence of events, predicting information, inferring results, and summarising facts.

In many Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, interest in English language reading comprehension has increased in recent years [3, 43]. The primary purpose of this growth is to encourage learners' productive skills and support them in achieving cultural awareness. In other words, reading offers the chance to learn about other people's civilisations and their ways of life. It reinforces students' background knowledge of the language they intend to learn and use, while also providing them with insights into new technologies, modern sciences, and functional literary skills [8].

In summary, reading comprehension is associated with academic performance and correlates with students' understanding of medical sciences.

## 5.1. Definition of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to understand the content of the text by utilising critical thinking and reading [22]. [23] claim that reading comprehension is the ability to understand the language of the text at the word level, sentence level, and whole-text level.

Moreover, [38] states that reading comprehension is the process of both extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and participation with written texts. He adds that comprehension involves three interconnected components: the reader, the text, and reading activities. To understand a text, a reader needs various abilities, including attention, memory, and inferencing; motivation that encompasses reading goals and interest; as well as knowledge, such as communicative and linguistic understanding. These components are influenced by the texts used and the reading tasks engaged in [14].

Furthermore, [27] view reading comprehension as one of the most vital activities individuals can perform. The difficulty of reading tasks hinders the development of comprehensive concepts that facilitate accurate predictions across readers, texts, and discourse contexts.

## 5.2. Six Aspects of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension comprises six key aspects: identifying the main idea, extracting detailed information, understanding the sequence of events, recognising causes and effects, making inferences, and determining word meanings. Table 1 illustrates these aspects of reading comprehension.

**Table 1.** Six Types of Reading Comprehension Aspects.

| Aspect               | Its function/role/purpose                                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Main Idea            | Identify the theme of the text or a paragraph.                          |
| Detailed Information | Practise detailed reading to gather information about a specific issue. |
| Sequence of Events   | Identify several events of a certain issue in a sequence.               |
| Cause and Effect     | Identify and practise the aspects of a cause and its effects.           |
| Identify Inferences  | Ability to infer meaning from a certain context.                        |
| Vocabulary Meaning   | To examine the students' vocabulary knowledge.                          |

## 5.3. The Concept of the ER-IR Approach

Extensive reading ER and intensive reading IR approaches can be applied together in the EFL classroom as strategies for learning English. Intensive reading (IR) enables teachers to encourage all learners to read a similar text about a story or a given topic for later discussion or to study a particular lan-

guage skill. It enhances students' grammar, vocabulary, and all four language skills [6].

In contrast, (ER) refers to a classroom setting where learners select a short book of their choice, comprehend it, and report back in either oral or written form using their own words. The main benefit of the ER and IR Approach (ER-IRA) is to engage students in an extended reading project that improves their reading skills and enhances their language

knowledge [12, 29].

Regarding the current study, participants in the experimental group were asked to read simplified texts intensively for three months. During class, students engaged in various activities, including summarising, paraphrasing, asking questions, and participating in discussions to enhance their reading comprehension.

In recent years, the literature on EFL studies has employed two approaches, extensive reading and intensive reading, to enhance learners' reading skills. These two learning methods contribute to the development of learners' reading comprehension abilities in different contexts [9]. In this regard, [40] investigated the effectiveness of the IR and ER approaches on EFL participants' reading skills. To achieve this goal, twenty participants were selected from university students in Indonesia. Questionnaires were administered to collect data from participants. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis techniques. The findings disclosed that students made significant improvements in their reading performance and had positive attitudes towards both ER and IR approaches.

Similarly, [33] reports that both ER and IR are essential for acquiring the reading comprehension aspects of the target language. He researched the effects of ER and IR on reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. The study's findings revealed that both extensive and intensive group participants made progress in their reading skills.

Ibrahim mentioned another study comparing various participant groups using ER and IR [26]. The researchers conducted a 13-week intervention study.

Twenty male participants were selected from university students in Saudi Arabia. They had learned English in public schools for nine years but exhibited low levels of English proficiency. They were divided into two groups: the IR Approach and the ER Approach. The IR group was exposed to

various topics accompanied by comprehension questions, while the ER group read a book of short stories. Two tests, a pre-test and a post-test, were administered to assess participants' reading abilities. The study findings revealed that both the ER Approach and the IR Approach demonstrated statistically significant differences in reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary improvement.

To sum up, numerous previous studies utilising extensive and intensive reading approaches, either concurrently or separately, indicate that these methods are effective and beneficial for participants in enhancing their reading comprehension abilities [42, 35]. In light of these results, the present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of integrating ER and IR approaches on students' reading comprehension skills.

## 6. Research Methodology

### 6.1. Research Design

The present study utilised a quasi-experimental research design, which included two basic groups: an experimental group of 18 participants who were exposed to ER implemented in reading simplified texts, and a control group of 18 participants who were not exposed to any treatment [16].

Additionally, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative designs. Quantitative data was utilised to assess the subjects' low level of reading comprehension, while qualitative data was also vital for exploring the subjects' views and opinions on the benefits of the ER-IR Approach. Although the two methods used different tools for data collection and analysis, together they provided comprehensive, valid, and reliable research findings.

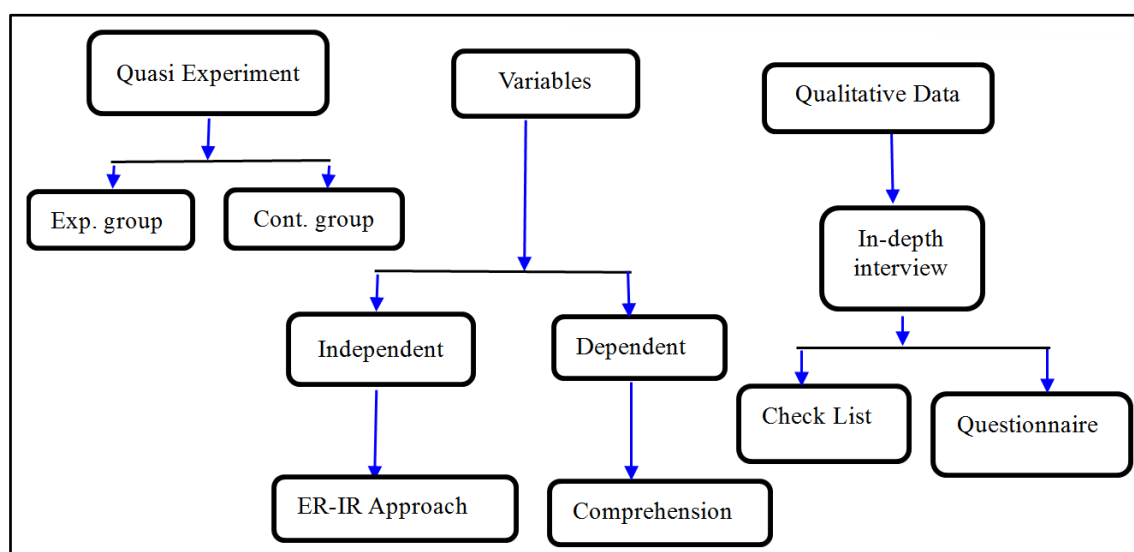


Figure 1. Illustration of the Study Research Design.

## 6.2. Research Instruments for Data Collection

In the present study, two main instruments were used: quasi-experimental data and qualitative data.

### 6.2.1. Research Instruments for Quasi-Experimental Study

The quasi-experimental research involved two instruments: the intervention materials, 'short texts,' and the reading comprehension test.

#### (i). The Intervention Material: Simplified Texts

The material used in the intervention study comprised simplified short texts. These texts were written in simple vocabulary and were frequently used in English as a Foreign Language teaching [32]. They were selected because they included vocabulary knowledge and grammatical structures that aligned with the learners' reading enjoyment and academic levels.

Before selecting short texts, a pre-test assessed the students' levels to determine their actual English proficiency. The results indicated that the students were at the elementary level.

Moreover, the comprehension texts were selected from the Headway Series Books, which suited the learners' levels and were narrative in style. These books were written and published by Oxford University Press. They were special editions designed specifically for non-native speakers of English, complete with resources for learning the language. The topics were chosen based on learners' interests and text readability, and all were narrative.

#### (ii). Reading Comprehension Pre-post Tests

To check the readability of the texts for comprehension, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level was employed. [36] states that the formula's process is based on calculating the average sentence length in words and the average word length in syllables (the number of syllables per 100 words) to determine a reading ease score.

The analysis of the selected texts examined various aspects. For the text 'How do you decide', the total number of words is 476, the average number of syllables is 724, the total number of three-syllable words is 56, the average number of words per sentence is 10, and the total number of sentences is 48.

For the text 'How do colours make you feel?', the total number of words is 481, the average number of syllables is 760, the total number of three-syllable words is 50, the average number of words per sentence is 10, and the number of sentences is 47.

In terms of test structure, reading comprehension tests involved four passages for pre- and post-tests. The information questions were used as a comprehension test. Each test had ten questions. All the questions were open-ended, including six major reading comprehension aspects. These aspects were

asking for the main idea, detailed information, the sequence of events, cause and effects, inferences, and word meanings. The time allocated for each test was one hour. The total score for each test was 20 marks. The test questions were equally scored. Each question had two marks. Full marks were given for the complete answer, and half marks were given for a partial answer.

### 6.2.2. Research Instruments for Qualitative Research Data

The first instrument in the qualitative research method used to collect information for this study was the in-depth interview protocol. [41] argues that in-depth or unstructured interviews are commonly used in investigative studies. The interviewer generally aims to obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the problem by communicating with respondents and exchanging views on various aspects of the issue.

Thus, in this study, the researcher selected ten participants who attended the intervention: five from the experimental group and five from the controlled group. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to inquire about their experiences and expectations related to the program, as well as their thoughts on how the program operated.

The primary reason for conducting the in-depth interview was to explore participants' views on the effects and influence of the ER-IR program on their reading comprehension levels, expressed in their own words and expressions.

## 6.3. Research Instruments for Data Analysis

The present study utilised three types of instruments for analytical processes: descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and box plot analysis.

### 6.3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The initial analysis of participants' reading comprehension results focuses on frequency distribution. Participants are classified into an experimental group and a control group, with each group organised into columns. The first column, for instance, contains students' index numbers or names, while the second lists the scores of each participant.

Next, measurements of central tendency, the mean, median, and mode, are calculated to evaluate individual differences between students in the experimental group and those in the control group [31].

### 6.3.2. One-Way ANOVA Analysis

The present study utilised the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique to assess whether statistically significant differences exist between the two variables. This technique allowed the researcher to identify the significant differences between the means of the comprehension tests for the control

and experimental groups [24].

6.3.3. Box Plot Analysis

The present study also employed a box plot for data analysis. The box plot is a graph that provides a clear indication of how the values in the data are distributed. It serves as a powerful tool for understanding data. In some situations, researchers find that they need more information than the measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode).

Therefore, the box plot is essential [21].

The advantages of a box plot include, first, its ability to take up less space, which is useful for comparing distributions across many groups or data sets. Second, it condenses all the information regarding the study data into a single, concise diagram. Third, it allows readers to comprehend the nature of the research data [37].

Table 2. Summary of Statistical Analysis.

| Research Question | Description of Analysis                                 | Types of Variables  | Descriptive Statistics            | Analysis Techniques                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| RQ1               | Students' reading comprehension level before the study. | Dependent variables | Means, median, standard deviation | Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA and Box Plots |
| RQ2               | The levels of reading comprehension among EFL students. | Dependent variables | Means, median, standard deviation | Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA and Box Plots |

6.4. Research Sample and Population

The study population comprised first-year university students enrolled in the PYP at the male campus of Al Ghad College in Najran, Saudi Arabia. A total of 120 students registered at the PYP level during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Initially, this study determined the sample size of its population, or the total number of participants, based on a calculation from a published table developed by [10]. This table was specifically designed to establish the sample size for a given population. According to the formula, the student population in PYP was 120. Therefore, the appropriate sample size was 60 students. However, in the current setting, the 60 students were not applicable for two main reasons.

First, the college administration established a building for Al Ghad College in Najran town. All classes in the building are small, accommodating only 15 to 25 students each. Consequently, dividing 120 students into two groups of 60 participants and managing their instruction in a classroom proved to be challenging. Second, the distribution of new students into English sections was the responsibility of the college administration at the main campus in Riyadh, which mandates 18 students per classroom. No one has the authority to add, reduce, or rearrange the classes. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample for this study. According to [19], availability sampling is a technique in which elements are selected because of their accessibility to the researcher. Thus, the groups were selected based on their English classroom sizes.

Using the availability sampling method, two English clas-

ses with a total of 36 students were selected as a sample for the study, representing a population of 120 first-year college students. The participants were male, aged between 18 and 30. They were current learners enrolled in the E105 English language course, which is compulsory and worth 5 credits in the second semester of the academic year 2024-2025. Each participant attended 13 one-hour lectures per week. The course lasted 17 weeks, including two weeks set aside for midterm exams and one week for the final English exams. The participants were divided into two equal groups: experimental and control. Both groups were taught by the teacher-researcher from the Department of English Language in the PYP. All participants were Saudi. They shared a similar culture, traditions and customs. Their mother tongues were Arabic. They did not study the English language in English-speaking countries.

Regarding the in-depth interview questions, a total of ten participants from the intervention study were selected: five from the experimental group and five from the control group. Table 3 illustrates the demographic characteristics of these participants.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.

| Group        | Gender | No. | Age   | Ethnic |
|--------------|--------|-----|-------|--------|
| Experimental | male   | 18  | 18-30 | Arab   |
| Control      | male   | 18  | 18-30 | Arab   |
| Total        |        | 36  |       |        |

## 7. Data Analysis

The present study analysed scores from 36 first-year college students at Al Ghad International College in Najran City, alongside interview responses from 10 participants. The study aimed to discover the impact of an ER-IR Approach on improving participants' reading comprehension in pre-tests and post-tests within a quasi-experimental design. The results will be analysed based on the study's research objectives and questions. Data were collected from quantitative measures in the form of achievement tests for reading comprehension and from qualitative measures through structured interviews.

The data analysis comprised three subsections, each effectively addressing the study's research questions. The first subsection focused on analysing pre-test results for reading comprehension, comparing both the experimental and control groups to ensure that all respondents had similar levels of reading comprehension before the study. Additionally, the pre-test results can be compared with post-test results to assess the effectiveness of the intervention study.

The second subsection presents an analysis of the pre-test and post-test findings for both the experimental and control groups to examine the differences in reading comprehension performance between EFL students who were exposed to the ER-IR Approach with simplified topics as reading material and those who were not exposed to any treatment.

The third subsection provides an analysis of the interview data for the two groups, aimed to uncover the participants' views on the role of the ER-IR Approach on their reading comprehension.

The present study comprises two primary findings: quan-

titative data and qualitative data. These would be explained in detail in the following points:

### 7.1. Findings of Quantitative Data

The findings of the quantitative data can be categorised into two groups according to the research questions of the study. These groups include the levels of reading comprehension before the study and the levels of reading comprehension tests following the study.

Research Question 1: What are the levels of reading comprehension among students in the experimental and control groups before the intervention study?

In terms of the reading comprehension pre-test, Table 4 summarises the descriptive statistics of the findings. From the table, both the experimental and controlled groups had similar scores in the reading comprehension pre-test, with means of 5.9 and 5.7, medians of 6.5 and 6, and modes of 6.9 and 5.8, respectively. This similarity in scores between the two groups was confirmed by the ANOVA analysis in Table 5, which revealed that the distribution of scores for both the experimental and control groups was not significantly different ( $p > 0.05$ ).

To provide further confirmation, Figure 2 illustrates that both the experimental and control groups had nearly identical distribution ranges, indicating no significant differences. These results demonstrate that all participants in both groups possessed similar levels of reading comprehension before the study commenced.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics for Reading Comprehension.

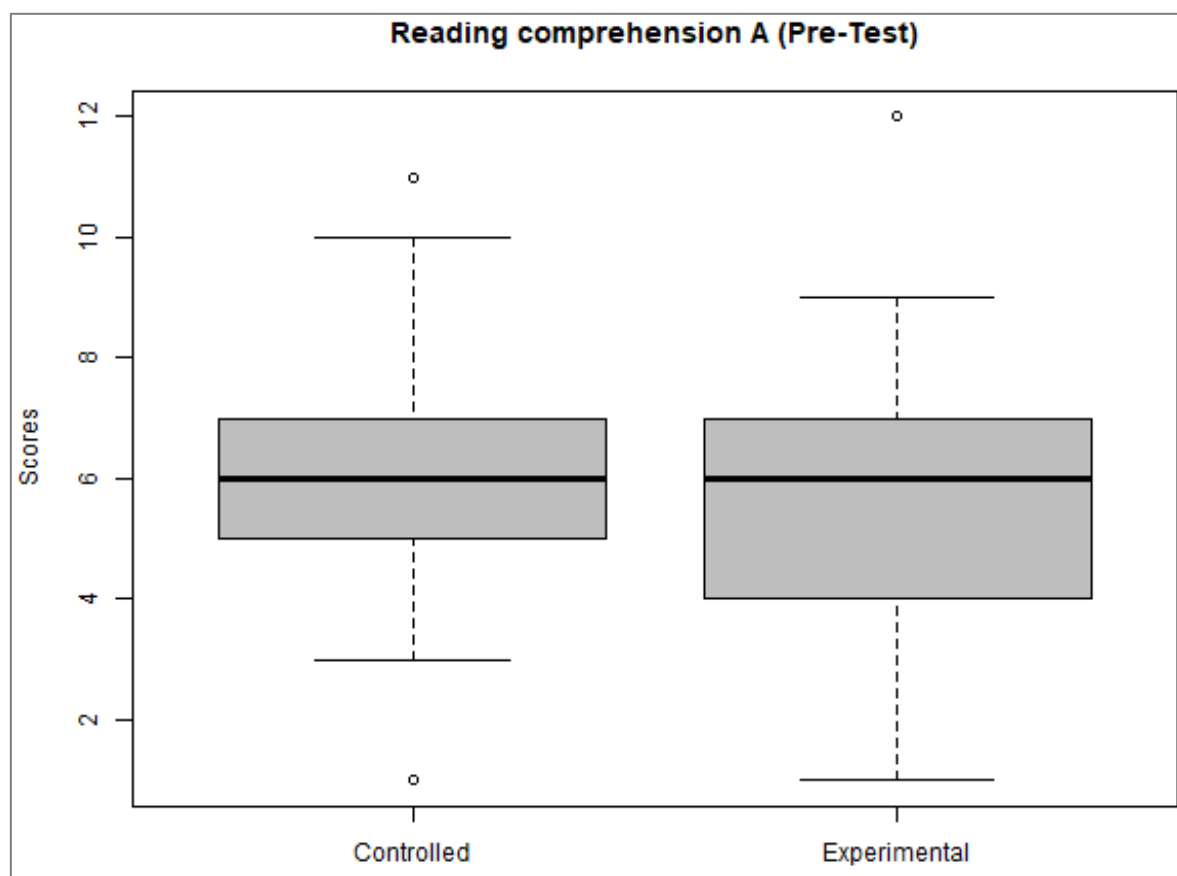
| Source             | Mean | Median | Mode | SD  | kurt | Skn  |
|--------------------|------|--------|------|-----|------|------|
| Experimental Group | 5.9  | 6.5    | 6.9  | 2.6 | 0.13 | 0.48 |
| Control Group      | 5.7  | 6      | 5.8  | 2.4 | 0.18 | 0.40 |

N=36

**Table 5.** Analysis of ANOVA for Reading Comprehension Pre-test.

| Source       | Sum   | Average | Variance | Sum of Square | Degree of Freedom | Mean Squar | P-val |
|--------------|-------|---------|----------|---------------|-------------------|------------|-------|
| Experimental | 106.2 | 5.9     | 7.6      |               |                   |            |       |
| Control      | 102.6 | 5.7     | 5.9      |               |                   |            |       |
| Bet. Group   |       |         |          | 0             | 1                 | 0          | 1     |
| Within Group |       |         |          | 212.4         | 32                | 5          |       |
| Total        |       |         |          | 212.4         | 33                |            |       |

N=36



**Figure 2.** Box Plot for Reading Comprehension Pre-test.

In summary, the analysis of all participants' scores from the reading comprehension pre-test demonstrated that they had comparable levels of reading comprehension before the intervention study.

Research Question 2: To what extent do participants in the experimental group achieve higher scores in reading comprehension post-test compared to their pre-test scores due to the effects of the ER-IR Approach?

Table 6 displays the pre-test and post-test scores for both the experimental and control groups. The participants in the experimental and controlled groups had similar scores in the pre-tests, with means of 5.8 and 5.9, a median of 5.9 and 6.3, and modes of 8 and 6, respectively. The table also shows that in the post-tests, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group, as indicated by means of 12.3 and 6, medians of 12.2 and 7, and modes of 11 and 5.9,

respectively.

This improvement in experimental participants' reading comprehension post-test was confirmed by the ANOVA analysis in Table 7. The findings revealed no significant difference between the experimental group's pre-test scores and the control group's pre-test scores, with averages of 6 and 5.8, variances of 6.9 and 4, and sums of 108 and 104.4, respectively. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group, as the P-value (1.02E-01) was less than 0.05.

According to the box plot analysis in Figure 3, the findings indicate that in the pre-test, both groups exhibited a similar range of score distribution. However, in the post-test, the score distribution range for the experimental group was greater than that of the control group.

**Table 6.** Descriptive Statistics for Reading Comprehension Test.

| Source       | Mean | Median | Mode | SD  | Sum |
|--------------|------|--------|------|-----|-----|
| Experimental |      |        |      |     |     |
| Pre-test     | 6    | 5.7    | 6    | 2.5 | 108 |
| Post-test    | 12.3 | 12.2   | 11.8 | 2.4 | 216 |

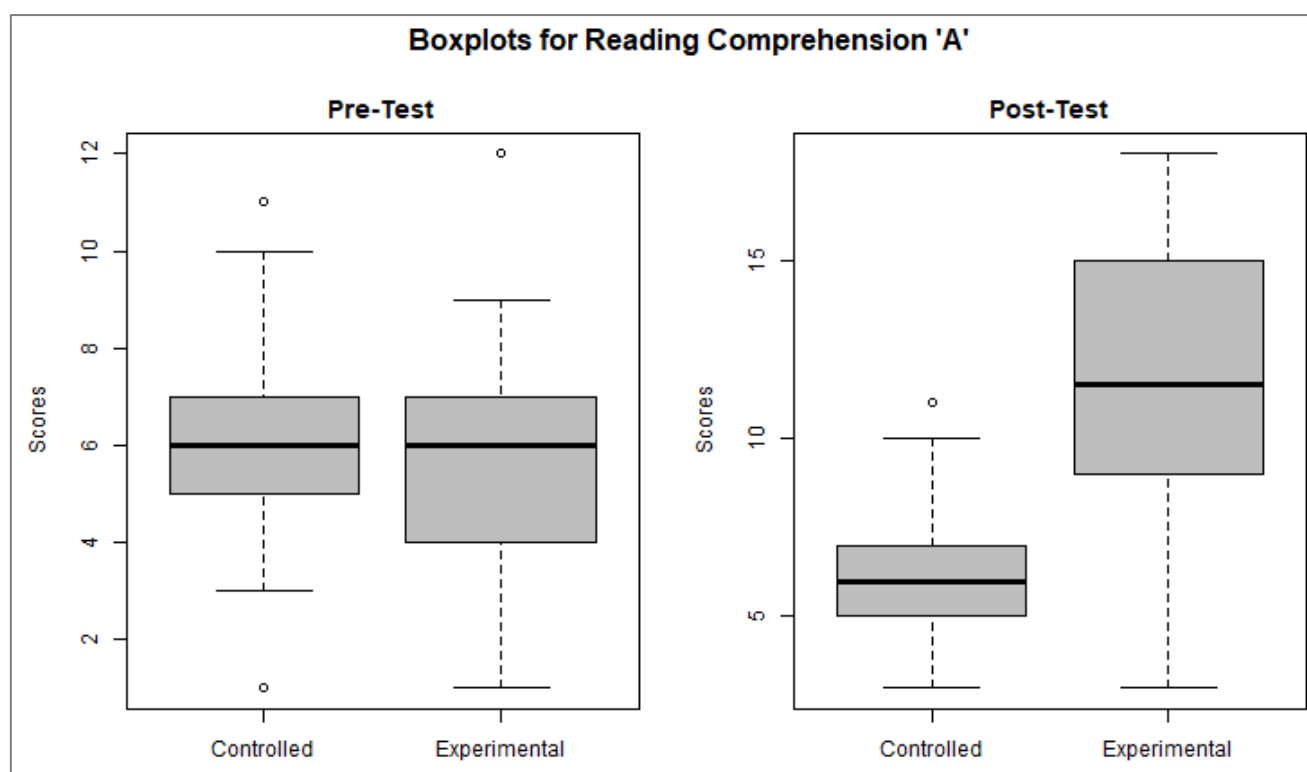
| Source    | Mean | Median | Mode | SD  | Sum   |
|-----------|------|--------|------|-----|-------|
| Control   |      |        |      |     |       |
| Pre-test  | 5.9  | 6      | 5    | 2.3 | 105.4 |
| Post-test | 6.2  | 6      | 5    | 1.9 | 110.2 |

N = 36

**Table 7.** The Analysis of ANOVA for Reading Comprehension Test.

| Source          | Sum   | Average | Variance | P-value  |
|-----------------|-------|---------|----------|----------|
| Exp. Pre-test   | 108   | 6       | 6.9      |          |
| Exp. Post-test  | 223.2 | 12.4    | 11.9     | 1.02E-01 |
| Cont. Pre-test  | 104.4 | 5.8     | 4        |          |
| Cont. Post-test | 106.5 | 5.9     | 4        | 0.589    |

N = 36



**Figure 3.** Box plot for Reading Comprehension Test.

## 7.2. The Findings of Qualitative Data

Research Question 3: What are the views of the experimental and controlled group participants towards the role of an ER-IR Approach in enhancing their reading comprehension?

sion?

The qualitative data was gathered from ten students through structured interviews, referred to as S1 to S10 in the results description. The primary purpose of the interviews was to uncover the respondents' views on the impact of the ER-IR Approach on their reading comprehension in the intervention

study. The qualitative data analysis emphasises the participants' perspectives regarding the influence of the ER-IR Approach on their reading comprehension.

#### *Participants' Views on Their Performance in Reading Comprehension*

Regarding the influence of the ER-IR Approach on the participants' reading comprehension, most respondents reported that this approach encompassed four factors that positively affected their reading comprehension. These factors included the number of exercises and activities, the teaching methods used, the variety of vocabulary addressed, and the development of language structure.

The key factor that positively influenced the respondents' reading comprehension was the number and variety of activities employed by the students. The present study revealed that nearly all participants strongly believed that the extensive range of activities utilised in the intervention study had enhanced their reading comprehension. They felt that the greater the number of exercises used in the classroom, the more comprehension occurred (S1, S4, and S5). Accordingly, (S3) clarified that 'before the intervention study, I could not read four words together, but by doing various tasks including answering the comprehension questions and follow instructions carefully, I am able to read short paragraphs. (S1) added that I can discuss the comprehension questions with my colleagues.' (S2) stated that "I like some activities such as 5-minute reading competition, and TV interview. These activities help me choose some passages, read them many times, and do the tasks." (S3) agreed with S5 in this regard. He explained that "...it was not possible for me to read a short text in order to answer the comprehension questions but, after practising many exercises, it becomes easy to read a short simplified topics and answer its exercises correctly."

Furthermore, S2 claims that the chance to use many activities for some time supports students to know written passages and to understand the questions. He posits that "We benefit from some activities, like a 5-minute presentation, a letter to a character and a vocabulary dictionary. We always read and read to answer the tasks. By the end, we are able to read our textbooks and to discuss questions with partners and the English teacher."

Another chief factor that had positive effects on the learners' reading comprehension was the teaching methodology that the researcher implemented in the classroom. Most participants reported that their teacher had used effective techniques in English classroom while teaching. These techniques played a vital role to maintain students reading comprehension. So, (S5 and S10) confirmed that our English teacher explained reading goals effectively. He always told us the information that was relevant to the tasks (S6). Summarising technique is good idea. It allowed me to check if I had understood what I had read (S10) and (S1) questions were used after each work. Many participants (S2, S4 and S1) had an idea of comprehending written topics. They were able to answer information questions and yes/no questions correctly.

Moreover, the kind of vocabulary knowledge used was a central factor that enriched participants' reading comprehension skills. Most participants' responses explored that gaining new words from the ER-IR Approach in the intervention study improved their reading comprehension. In this concern, (S1 and S5) agreed that working with new words, to know their meanings, forms and how to say them for three months, made them know new vocabulary. It also inspired them to read and understand new texts. (S4) mentioned that 'the ER-IR Approach reinforced me to guess the meaning of new words from the reading contexts. Extracting the meaning of words from a text while reading made me acquire some new words that I never understood before. I was able to read simple stories, make inferences and form questions for discussion'. Similarly, (S9) and (S3) believed that with ER-IR activities, our vocabulary information was getting better and our reading comprehension increased.

Besides that, students' reading comprehension was also influenced by the process of building language structure. (S2, S1 and S6) stated that finding the tense of verbs, e.g. past tense - ed, looked, answered, irregular verb forms like break, broke, drink, drank, etc., promoted students to know more about simple texts and stories. Consistently, (S8, S7, and S3) described that 'group discussion in the classroom regarding parts of speech, e.g. train (v), trainer (n), clear (adj), clearance (n), etc., allowed us to know the main ideas of paragraphs. Finally, verb endings (e.g. third person, he write 's', she go 'es, we go no 's' etc.) that were explained in the classroom were helpful. They pushed participants to describe places, events, and settings (S5, S2 and S4).

In conclusion, implementing various types of exercises, employing diverse teaching methodologies, enhancing vocabulary knowledge, building language structure, reading short texts, and increasing reading practice are the primary factors that encourage respondents to progress in reading comprehension.

## **8. Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that participants in the experimental group made significantly greater progress in their reading comprehension post-tests compared to their pre-test scores. Additionally, the study showed that the post-test scores of the experimental group were much better than those of the controlled group respondents. In other words, using the ER-IR Approach as a method of instruction significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension.

In this regard, the findings of this study align with those of previous studies that employed extensive reading and intensive reading approaches to develop reading comprehension. For instance, [25] conducted a study to explore whether the ER or IR Approach improved the reading comprehension of EFL university students in Japan. To compare the findings of the Huffman study to those of the present study, there were some similarities, including the English level of participants

(both studies have participants from university levels), the duration of the intervention (15 weeks and 12 weeks), the administration of pre-tests and post-tests, and the use of simplified texts as reading resources in both studies. However, the two studies differed in several aspects: in the Huffman study, the participants were females divided into two experimental groups, while the participants in the present study were males assigned to experimental and control groups.

The findings of the two studies reported that in the Huffman study, participants in the experimental group who used the ER Approach demonstrated remarkable improvement in reading comprehension. In contrast, the other experimental group, which used the IR Approach, did not show any improvement. Meanwhile, the results of the present study revealed that the ER-IR Approach enhanced reading comprehension for participants in the experimental group compared to the control group, who did not make any progress.

Similarly, the findings of the present research align with those of [1], who conducted a study to explore the effects of the ER Approach on EFL secondary school learners in Bangladesh. A comparison between the studies of Akhter and Haider and the present research can be discussed at these points.

In [1] study, the participants were 100 trainee teachers who took part in an intensive program called Continuous Professional Development for EFL Teachers. Questionnaires were distributed to gather information, and the findings revealed that students studied ER books solely to pass the exam. In the present study, the participants were 36 EFL university students divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Achievement tests, including pre-tests and post-tests, as well as structured interviews, were administered to collect data from participants. The findings indicated that participants made significant progress in their reading comprehension due to the positive impact of the ER-IR Approach.

On this concern, two points should be highlighted. First, the present research examined the effectiveness of the ER-IR Approach on participants' reading comprehension, with data obtained directly from the students themselves. In contrast, the research by [1] explored the effects of the ER Approach on participants' reading performance, collecting data from their teachers. Therefore, when a study focuses on students and the researcher gathers data from the students directly, the findings are more robust than when the data is sourced from teachers.

Second, for the present study, two measures were utilised to collect data from students: pre-tests and post-tests for gathering quantitative data, and interview questions for collecting students' views. In contrast, the study by [1] utilised only one measure: a questionnaire to gather information from teachers. Thus, the combination of quantitative data and qualitative information provides a better understanding of the study problem and yields more powerful results than using just one measure for qualitative data [18].

## 9. Conclusion

Reading comprehension skills are essential for first-year university students to acquire knowledge in science, medicine, and nursing terminology. The study claimed that implementing the ER-IR Approach in EFL classroom interactions positively influenced students' reading comprehension and helped them achieve notable success in their scientific reading performance.

Moreover, the study findings revealed that the cognitive reading strategies used in this research helped create mental images, improved students' understanding, and contributed to long-term retention of information. A strong emphasis on external strategies, such as using dictionaries or rote memorisation, weakens learners' abilities and obstructs their understanding of new material.

Furthermore, the empirical findings of this study demonstrated that reading passages and completing post-reading exercises provide students with a significant opportunity to practise both main branches of reading skills: comprehension and fluency. This approach improves reading habits, enhances learners' motivation, and aids them in mastering language use.

## Abbreviations

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| EFL   | English as a Foreign Language        |
| ER    | Extensive Reading                    |
| ER-IR | Extensive Reading -Intensive Reading |
| IR    | Intensive Reading                    |
| PYP   | Preparatory Year Program             |

## Author Contributions

Mohammed Hassan Abdel Rahman Ibrahim is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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