THE EFFECTS OF PRE-READING ACTIVITIES IN EFL CLASSES ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: This research aimed at investigating the place of pre-reading activities in upper-intermediate level ELT first year students' reading comprehension at the European University of Lefke in the spring semester of the 2008-2009 academic year.To reach this aim, the researcher collected relevant data through pre-test, post-test, students' interviews, and teachers' interviews. The researcher observed that the majority of the students, particularly the Turkish-speaking students, have comprehension problems in reading in the target language among the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department the first year students, due to the lack or disregarding pre-reading activities before the actual reading phase. Therefore, the researcher applied various pre-reading activities in the experimental group, whereas he did not make any pre-reading activities in the control group. Thus, the effect of pre-reading activities on students' performance was assessed with two tests: the pre-test and the post-test. Besides, the researcher applied interviews given to both the teachers and the students to see how teachers and students view the use of pre-reading activities. The results of analysis of data demonstrated that both the teachers and the students like the use of pre-reading activities, help them to better comprehend the reading text, and they think that teachers' using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates their background knowledge about the topic of the text. As long as the students are exposed to appropriate pre-reading activities, they have the opportunity to better comprehend the reading tasks.

Keywords: reading strategies, background knowledge, interactive process, pre-reading, schema theory.

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı, 2008-2009 Akademik Yılı Bahar döneminde Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü birinci sınıf, orta üstü seviyesi öğrencileri arasında, ön okuma etkinliklerinin okuduklarını anlamaya yönelik etkilerini araştırmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için araştırmacı, araştırmaya ilişkin verileri, iki kısa sınav sonucundan (pre-test ve post-test) ve öğrenci ve öğretmenlere verilen anket sonuçlarının dönütlerinden elde etmiştir. Araştırmacı, LAÜ İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin çoğunluğunun,

özellikle de ana dili Türkçe olan öğrencilerin, okuduğunu anlamaya yönelik sorunlar yaşadığını ve bu sorunların sebebi olarak ön okuma etkinliklerinin azlığı olduğunu veya göz ardı edilmiş olduğunu gözlemiştir. Bundan dolayı, araştırmacı, deney grubunda çeşitli ön okuma etkinliklerine yer verirken kontrol grubunda bu etkinliklere yer vermemiştir. Böylece ön okuma etkinliklerinin aracılığı ile öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlama oranının nasıl etkilendiği, uygulanan iki adet (ön test ve son test) sınavla ölçülmüştür. Ayrıca, hem öğrencilere hem öğretmenlere uygulanan anketle, öğretmen ve öğrencilerin ön okuma etkinliklerine karşı tutumları araştırılmıştır. Bu araştırma sonucunda elde edilen verilerin sonuçları, hem öğretmenlerin hem de öğrencilerin ön okuma etkinliklerinin kullanımını sevdikleri, ön okuma etkinliklerinin, öğrencilerin okuma metinlerini daha iyi anlamalarına yardımcı olduğu, öğretmenlerin sınıf içerisinde ön okuma etkinlikleri kullanmaları halinde öğrencilerin konuyla ilgili alt yapısal bilgilerinin canlandığı ve uygun ön okuma etkinliklerine taabi tutuldukları sürece öğrencilerin, okuduklarını göstermiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: okuma stratejileri, alt yapı bilgisi, etkileşimli süreç, ön okuma, şema teorisi.

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent studies conducted on reading comprehension have revealed that pre-reading activities have helpful effects in stimulating readers' background knowledge which is required for a total reading comprehension. Those studies demonstrate that pre-reading activities not only prepare the reader for the following concept but also facilitate him/her to connect the new concept more meaningfully to the prior knowledge, which will lead to a easier and a more enjoyable reading task. Thus, pre-reading activities are well-meant to trigger suitable knowledge structures or to provide the ground for the necessary knowledge that readers lack.

In the light of the schema (plural schemata) theory, which emphasises the place of background knowledge, the pre-reading phase to the actual reading, should therefore be a constant practice for all teachers of reading to be able to help students to better comprehend the written text.

Noticing that the pre-reading phase was mostly disregarded among English Language Teaching Department, the first year students, the researcher aimed at finding out whether or not there is a correlation between the foreign language teachers' use of pre-reading activities and students' reading comprehension. In order to be able to reach this aim, the researcher collected relevant data through pre-test, post test, students' interview and teachers' interview. To meet the purpose of the study, one group of randomly selected students were chosen as the experimental group and the other randomly selected group of students were chosen as the control group. The both groups attended two hours non-credit reading course for six weeks. Prior to the application, the researcher administrated a post-test the both groups to

see the subjects' level in reading. The experimental group was taught reading with various pre-reading activities; whereas, the control group did no pre-reading activities. After the application of six weeks, the post test was administered to the both groups. The goal of the post-test was to find out whether the treatment given to the experimental group led to a higher achievement than those students' achievements in the control group.

The T-test results have demonstrated that there is a significant progress in the experimental group.

The limitations related to this study are as follows;

- This study was limited to two groups: one as the experimental group, and the other as the control group.

- The student number in each group was 15. The students attended fully to the lessons, both in the experimental and the control group.

- This study included only the first year students of the ELT Department of the European University of Lefke.

- The students who attended this study were at the ages of 17 and 28.

- The allocated time for his study was limited with 6 weeks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & BACKGROUND

Formerly considered as a "passive" skill, but currently seen as an "interactive" process, reading should be emphasized by language teachers as reading comprehension is one of the core aims of teaching English as a foreign language. In some cases, no matter how hard teachers work to elicit the correct answer(s) of a piece of reading, they cannot get the perfect answer. At this point, we need to think of the reasons why it is sometimes not easy to get correct answer(s). The first reason may be the reading text itself. It may not be at the readers' level and may contain complex structures and unfamiliar vocabulary. The second reason may come from the reader himself/herself. If s/he is unmotivated and feels no need for reading, then s/he cannot be expected to be successful in reading. The third reason, which is discussed in this study, may be the readers' schema, that is, reader's background knowledge that s/he can activate and reflect knowledge towards the reading passage in question. Some reading researchers have put forward two views to reading to examine the reasons why reading comprehension may not be pure. The first view is known as a "product oriented approach", which claims the meaning is existent in the text itself, and what determine meaning are the text-based factors. According to this view, the reading activities are greatly dependent upon the process of clarifying the meaning of difficult words and complex structures. The second one is known as a "process-oriented" approach to reading, which stresses that a successful interaction between the reader and the text reflects the appropriate meaning. It is believed that inside-the-head factors play an important role in comprehending a piece of written text. Relevant to this piece of information, it is obvious that background knowledge

or knowledge of the world of an ESL learner and also schema-based pre-reading build up such background knowledge.

Widdowson (1979) mentions that reading is viewed as a reasoning activity whereby the reader is creating meaning on the basis of textual clues. Goodman (1970) states that reading is an act of participation in a discourse between interlocutors. The amount of information contained in a text cannot measure reading efficiency, because it depends on how much knowledge the reading can reflect on the text and how much s/he hopes to extract from it. Actually, in this view, reading is seen not as a reaction to a text, but as an interaction between the writer and the reader.

According to Alderson and Urquhart (1984) reading can be viewed as both a product and a process, and their recent study discovers that the focus is on the product rather than what really occurs when a reader interacts with a text. They conclude that the process determines the product that differentiates from reader to reader, purpose to purpose, and time to time etc. Additionally, Susser & Rob (1990) emphasise that reading is the mainstay of English as a foreign language instruction in many countries and has been the most emphasized skill in traditional foreign language teaching. Also, Kamhi-Stein (2003) concludes after his study that, as reading in English is very important for learners' academic success, teachers and researchers should attribute attention to understand the factors effecting success in reading comprehension. Pang's study (2003) reveals that readers make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and experience to help them understand a written text. Similarly, Peregoy and Boyle (2001) discover that readers use their background knowledge about the topic of the text and apply their linguistic knowledge to achieve their purpose for reading.

2.1. The Importance of Pre-reading activities in Reading Comprehension

Pre-reading activities can be defined as the activities that are used with the students prior to the actual reading material. These activities aim to provide students with required background knowledge that will be needed to have a better comprehension when they interact with a text. Pre-reading activities are also useful tools for setting up a purpose for reading. That is why, they can be considered as vital activities that should be done as the learners' schema should be activated to prevent any failure in comprehending a piece of written text. Through the use of pre-reading activities, students get familiar with the topic, vocabulary, or complex structures in the passage.

The effectiveness of pre-reading activities can especially be seen on providing the motivation for reading, as well as on teaching key cultural concepts. Chastain (1988) points out that pre-reading activities are important factors in motivating the readers to read the text, and when they have motivation, then they are prepared for the reading activity. Moreover, they can finish the activity better without spending too much effort and are more willing to take part in the activity as they have gained confidence. In addition, Ur's study (1996) reveals that pre-reading tasks make the activity more interesting, let the students have a purpose in reading, and give the

teacher a chance to see how well the text can be understood with the help of the tasks given before/after reading.

Wallence (1992) concludes after his study that in order to reach satisfactory interpretation of the text, second language readers need to operate on appropriate schematic knowledge.

Carrel and Floyd (1987) point out the importance of pre-reading activities mentioning that the ESL teacher must arouse and/or provide the students' background knowledge s/he lacks, and also needs to teach the students how to make a link between existing knowledge and new knowledge, which is required for text comprehension.

Abraham (2002) emphasizes that teachers need to give importance to pre- reading activities to activate the students' "schema" by helping them recognize the knowledge that they already have about the topic of the text. This can be achieved by the discussions of titles, subtitles, photographs, identifying text structure, previewing etc.

The common pre-reading activities used to activate background knowledge are classified as:

- Previewing
- Pre-questioning
- Semantic mapping
- Brainstorming
- Providing background knowledge

- **Previewing:** This type of pre-reading activity is, particularly, suitable for passages that are culturally not familiar. Students are encouraged to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles, and headings.

- **Pre-questioning:** According to Royer (1983), pre-questioning should consist of a set of written questions. Taglieber (1983) states that students can generate their own questions about the topic of the passage.

- **Semantic mapping:** In semantic mapping, students use brainstorming strategies. Nevertheless, this strategy is organized and controlled by the teacher. As students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the teacher writes these ideas on the board.

- **Brainstorming:** one of the most popular kinds of pre-reading task is 'brainstorming' in which teachers ask the students to examine together the title of the selected material they are about to read. The teacher makes a list of all the information that comes to his/her mind as students read the title on the board. These pieces of information are then used to further recall, and in the process considerable knowledge will be activated.

- **Providing background knowledge:** This activity is especially suitable for culturally unfamiliar passages. As one culture may be different from the other one, it

becomes very difficult for the teacher to activate the students' existing schema towards the target culture, which results in having a lack of comprehension to have a sufficient comprehension; students should be supported to have enough background knowledge.

2.2. Definition of a Schema and the Schema Theory

A schema (plural: schemata) is a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts that are stored in memory. It can be defined as the organized background knowledge, which leads us to make expectations or predictions.

Barnett (1932) posited that people's expectations and prior knowledge shape their understanding and remembrance, and these expectations are mentally presented in some kind of schematic organization.

Pritchard (1990) states that, schemata can be defined as our theories of the way things are, or as representations of one's background experiences and it is obvious that the culture one lives in influences schemata. Zhu (1997) simply defines it as background information and background knowledge.

Considering the place of background knowledge in language comprehension has led to a formalization of what is called "schema theory". According to schema theory, a text cannot only lead directions for readers (or listeners), but also how they ought to retrieve or build up meaning from previously acquired knowledge. Clearly, this previously acquired knowledge is called 'background knowledge', and according to Barnett (1932), Adams and Collins (1979), and Rumelhart (1980), the previously acquired knowledge structures are called 'schemata'.

Schema theory is the result of the search for making out the correlation between background knowledge and comprehension. This model tries to describe and help us to understand the process of cognition, and it puts a heavy emphasis on the importance of the learner's background within a psycholinguistic model of reading. This process that Goodman (1971) suggested can be examined in the figure below.

Process strategies

Background   *Conceptual*
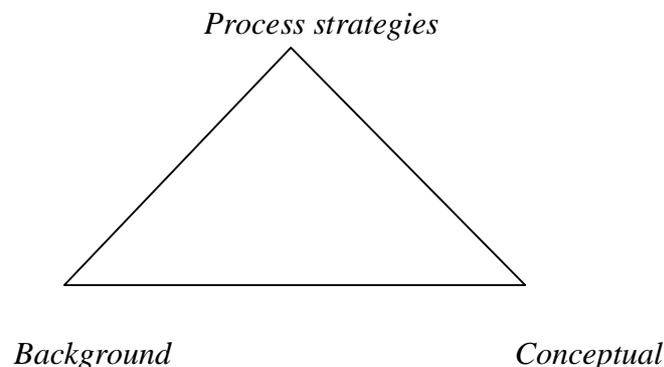
As seen in the figure, schema theory can be regarded as a model that claims to comprehend a text goes through an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text itself.

2.3. Schema Types

Despite the fact there is no single categorization for schema, many reading researchers in general, subcategorize it, namely, **linguistic schemata, formal schemata and content schemata** in order to figure out the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension.

As it is known, linguistic knowledge is one of the essential parts in text comprehension, and basically *linguistic schemata* refer to the readers' current language proficiency in grammar, vocabulary and idioms, etc. It becomes almost impossible for the reader to decode and comprehend a text without linguistic schemata. It is clear that the more linguistic schemata a reader stores in his/her mind, the quicker the reader acquires information and has a better understanding.

Formal schemata refer to the rhetorical structures and organizational structures of written texts, which include knowledge of different text types and genres, as well as the knowledge that different types of text use, text organization, vocabulary, grammar, level of formality and various language structures. Readers activate their schematic representations towards the text through the use of fiction, poems, newspaper articles, academic articles, essays and journals to aid them in comprehending the information in the text. The results of the studies demonstrate that knowing what type of genre of text will be read may facilitate text comprehension.

Content schemata refer to the background knowledge of the content area of the text or the topic in question in the text that a reader may bring to a text, such as knowledge about the world, the universe, people and culture. Languages should not be regarded as only the simple mixture of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, but also carrying different levels of the language.

3. THE STUDY

3.1. Problem

It is obvious that reading in a foreign language involves various factors, like the type of the text, the language, the vocabulary and probably the most important factor is the text familiarity both culturally and conceptually. If a reading text is not interesting and not familiar to the reader, then a total comprehension cannot be expected. To activate the background knowledge of a learner in relation to a piece of reading text, it is quite important to do some pre-reading activities to arose the background of a foreign language learner/reader. In our learning environment, maybe the most important part of a reading lesson, the pre- reading phase, is mostly

disregarded, or not effectively and sufficiently used, which leads to students experience failure in reading comprehension.

3.2. Aim of the study

The researcher himself observed that the majority of the students, particularly the Turkish- speaking students, face comprehension problems in reading in the target language (among the ELT Department first year students), due to the lack of or disregarding pre-reading activities prior to the actual reading phase. Trying various pre-reading activities seemed to be a possible solution. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the effects of using different pre-reading activities on ELT first year students' reading comprehension.

3.3. Research Questions:

In this study, the researcher tried to investigate if language teachers use pre-reading activities to teach reading to their students in ELT Department in EUL. Hence, the study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

- Do language teachers use pre-reading activities to teach reading to their students in ELT Department in EUL?

- Do language teachers like using pre-reading activities when teaching reading?

- What pre-reading activities do language teachers use to teach reading?

- Do students like the language teacher's using pre-reading activities to teach reading?

- Do students think that the language teacher's using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps them to better comprehend the reading text in the target language?

- Are students who are exposed to pre-reading activities more successful in reading texts than those who are not exposed to pre-reading activities?

3.4. Hypothesis

This study is based on the following hypothesis:

Students who are exposed to pre-reading activities become more successful in reading comprehension than those who are not exposed to pre-reading activities.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Setting

This study was conducted among the first year upper-intermediate ELT students at the EUL.

4.2. Participants

For the purpose of the study, the researcher divided the randomly selected students, who were used as participants, into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. In each group, there were 15 students. Their ages were between 17 and 28, and they were the first year, upper-intermediate level students from the English Language Department of the European University of Lefke.

4.3. Preparation of the Reading Materials in Use

The researcher selected six reading passages to be used both in the experimental group and in the control group. However, the reading passages used in the experimental group were proceeded by various pre-reading activities. The reason for this was to see if the experimental group would be more successful in reading comprehension than the control group. As a result of the application after six weeks, the control group was supposed to be less successful than the experimental one.

4.4. Data Sources

To determine the level of the students in both the control and the experimental group, the researcher prepared and administered a pre-set. The pre-set consisted of questions that tested the students' vocabulary knowledge, comprehension check with wh-questions, and true-false type of questions.

The next step was to select the appropriate reading materials according to the purpose of the study. The selected reading materials were suitable for both of the groups, which were upper-intermediate. Only for the experimental group, the researcher prepared appropriate and effective pre-reading activities, such as previewing, class discussions, predicting, and visual aids. After teaching the students in both groups for six weeks, a post-test was given to the groups, which consisted of a reading passage and around it there were questions like wh-type, vocabulary and true/false questions. The results of the post test showed that the subjects in the experimental groups got higher scores than those in the control group because of being exposed to pre-reading activities.

4.5. Data Analysis Method

The aim of the study was to see if there would be a significant difference in reading between the experimental group, (various types of pre-reading activities), and control group (reading was taught with no pre-reading activities). For this

reason, students from the two groups took the pre-test to see their level of reading abilities.

At the end of a-six-week application, twelve hours of teaching in total in both groups, they sat for the post- test to see their achievement. The result of the pre- and the post- tests were analyzed by using a t-test and with the aid of the SPSS software and were shown on graphics as well to display the findings.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Analysis of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of the Control Group and the Experimental Group in Relation to the Reading Test:

There were 30 questions in the pre-test: some of the questions were reference questions, some were vocabulary questions, some were true/false questions and some were comprehension questions. The pre-test was prepared to be implemented in both the experimental and the control group at the beginning of the teaching period. The average numbers of correctly answered questions were 38%. The average number of the wrong answers was 62%.

Quite similar to the pre-test format, the post-test also consisted of 30 questions, in which there were some vocabulary recognition questions, some true-false questions, and some comprehension questions. At the end of the teaching period, the post-test was administered to the students in both the experimental group and the control group to assess the progress of the students who were taught reading with pre-reading activities in their reading lessons. The average of number of correctly answered questions was 49%. The average number of the wrong answers was 51%.
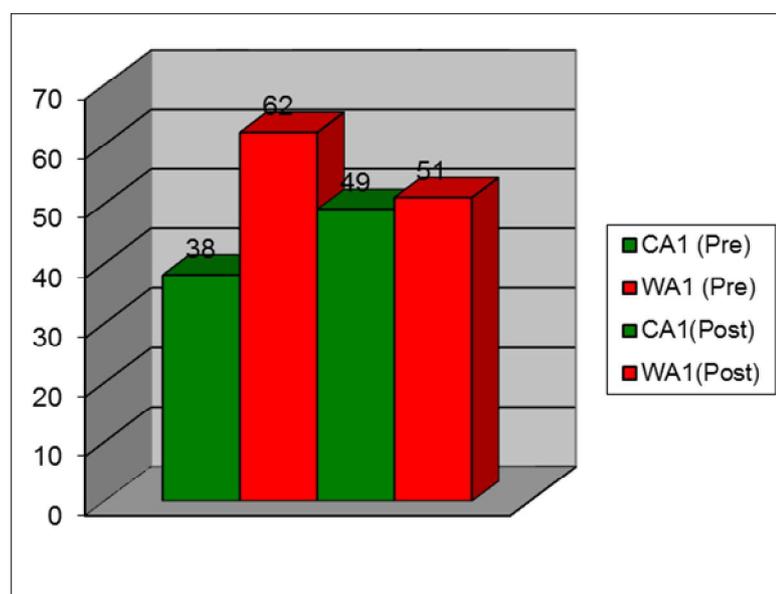
To reveal the progress in the control group in relation to reading comprehension, mean values of the post-test and pre-test scores were compared via paired samples t test as seen in the following table.

Measurement p	N	X	sd	df	t
PRE-TEST 7.528 0.000	15	11.4	5.86	14	
POST-TEST 15.001 0.000	15	14.8	3.82	14	

Table 1: Post-test and Pre-test Scores

When the mean values of the pre-test score (x=11.4) and post-test score (x=14.8) of the control group are compared, it can be stated that the control group has made a significant progress [t (14) = 0.000, p<0.005]. The following graphic exhibits the progress observed in the control group. In Graphic 1, the average of correct answer

and wrong answer percentages of the control group in both pre-test and post-test in relation to the selected reading passages are shown.

Graphic 1: Average of Correct and Wrong Answer

In the graphic (1) above, CA1 (pre) refers to the average correct answer percentage of the control group in the pre-test, WA1 (pre) to average wrong answer percentage in the pre-test. However, CA1 (post) refers to the average correct answer percentage of the control group in the post-test and WA1 (post) to the average wrong answer percentage of the control group in the post-test. As seen in the graphic above, the average percentage of progress in relation to reading comprehension in the control group is 11% at the end of the post-test.

To reveal the progress in the experimental group in relation to reading comprehension, mean values of post test and pre-test scores were compared via paired samples t- test as seen in the following Table 2.

Measurement *p*	*N*	*X*	*sd*	*df*	*t*
PRE-TEST *0.000*	*15*	*12.67*	*6.72*	*14*	*7.294*
POST-TEST *0.000*	*15*	*18.4*	*4.95*	*14*	*14.385*

Table 2: Sample T-Test Mean Values of Pre-test and Post-test

When the mean values of the pre-test score (x=12.67) and post-test score (x=18.4) of the experimental group are compared, it can be seen that the experimental group has made a significant progress [t (14) = 7.294, p<0.05]. The following graphic exhibits the progress observed in the experimental group. In

Graphic 2, average correct answer and wrong answer percentages of the experimental group in both the pre-test and post-test in relation to the selected reading passage are shown.
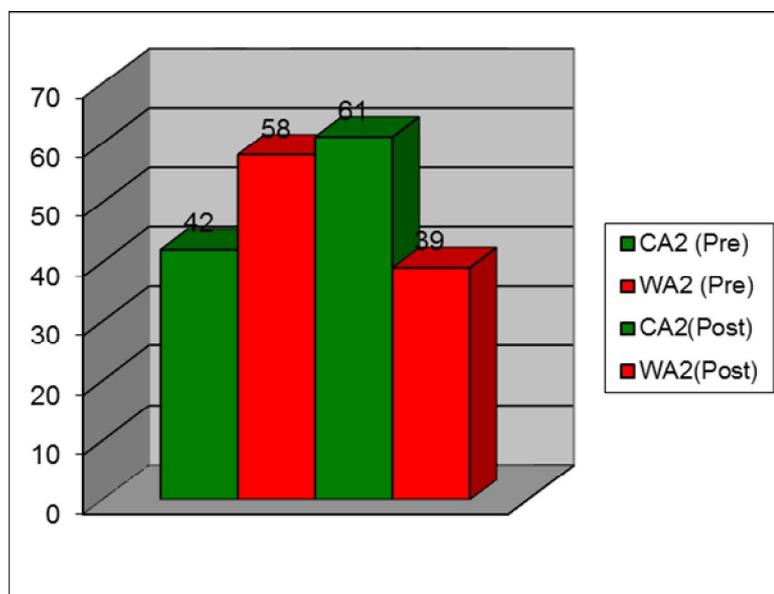
Graphic 2: Average Correct and Wrong Answers

In the graphic above, CA2 (pre) refers to the average correct answer percentage of the experimental group in the pre-test, WA2 (pre) to average wrong answer percentage in the pre-test. However, CA2 (post) refers to the average correct answer percentage of the experimental group in the post-test and WA2 (post) to the average wrong answer percentage of the experimental group in the post-test. As seen in the graphic above, the average percentage of progress in relation to reading comprehension in the experimental group is 19% at the end of the post-test.

To deal with the main concern of the study, it is necessary to find out if the progress in the performance of the experimental group is significantly greater than the progress observed in the performance of the control group.

The following independent samples t-test compares the progress in the scores obtained in the control and the experimental groups Table 3.

Group	*N*	*X*	*sd*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Control 0.000	*30*	*13.1*	*5.16*	*29*	*13.9*	
Experiment 0.000	*30*	*15.5*	*6.49*	*29*	*13.1*	

Table 3: T-test Comparisons

According to t-test results, the progress observed in the experimental group is statistically significant [1(29) =13.9 p<0.05]. This indicates that the experimental group made a statistically significant progress. It is also seen in the table that the

mean value of the progress rate in the experimental group (x=15.5) is greater than the mean value of the progress rate in the control group (x=13.1). The subjects in the experimental group made more progress than the ones in the control group. This result shows that the treatment has been successful because of revealing the expected outcome.

5.2. Analysis of Interview Results

In order to gain more insights about the importance of pre-reading activities on reading comprehension, the researcher held interviews with both teachers and students. The following is the results of the interviews.

5.2.1. Results of the Students' Interview

The student participants of this study were 30 first year students at the ELT Department of the European University of Lefke. 18 of them were female and 12 of them were male students. Their ages varied from 18 to 28, and apart from one of the respondent students, who was an international learner of English, the others were all Turkish learners of English.

The respondent students were asked the following five questions, and the researcher evaluated all the responses and commented on them accordingly.

The interview questions were asked to discover:

5. whether the foreign language teachers use pre-reading activities to teach their students in reading lessons or not?

2. whether the students like their teacher's using pre-reading activities in the reading lessons or not?

3. the kinds of pre-reading activities that are used by the foreign language teacher in the reading lesson

4. whether the students think that the pre-reading activities used by their teacher in the classroom helps them to better comprehend the reading text in the target language or not?

5. whether the students think that the pre-reading activities used by their teacher in   classroom activate their background knowledge or not?

Table 4, below demonstrates the interview questions and responses;

Questions	Answers
1. Does your teacher use pre-reading activities to teach reading to the first year students in the ELT Department or not?	• Yes(10/30) 33.3% • No(13/30) 43.3% • Sometimes(6/30) 20% • When necessary(1/30) 3.3%
2. Do you like your teacher using pre-reading activities to teach reading to	• Yes(25/30) 83.3% • No(5/30) 16.6%

you in your reading lessons?	
3. Check(√) the pre-reading activities that your teacher uses to teach reading to you in your reading lessons	• Classroom discussions(18/30) 60% • Previews(5/30) 16.6% • Semantic mapping(1/30) 3.3% • Visuals/Pictures(6/30) 20% • Others (0/30) 0%
4. Do you think that your teacher using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps you to better comprehend the reading text in the target language?	• Yes(23/30) 76.6% • No(7/30) 23.3%
5. Do you think that your teacher using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates your background knowledge about the topic of the text?	• Yes(26/30) 86.6% • No (4/30) 13.3%

Table 4: Students' answers for the interview questions

As seen in the table above, for the first question, the majority of the student respondents (43.3%) indicated that their teacher does not use pre-reading activities before the actual reading phase in the classroom, there is not a significant difference in percentage for the answer yes, which is 33.3%. However, 20% of the student participants expressed that their teacher uses pre-reading activities sometimes, and very slight amount of the participants indicated that their teacher uses pre-reading activities when necessary by a percentage of 3.3%. The students' answers to the second question significantly demonstrated that they liked their teacher's using pre-reading activities to teach reading to them in their reading lessons (83.3%). 16.6% of the participants; however, pointed out that they did not like their teacher's using pre-reading activities. For the third question, the majority of the participants indicated the *classroom discussions* as the most frequently used pre-reading activities(60%), followed by *visuals/pictures* which were used as the second most frequently used pre-reading activities by a percentage of 20%. 16.6% of the participants indicated that *previews* were used by the teacher as a pre-reading activity. *Semantic mapping* was used by the teacher very seldom by 3.3%, and for the option 'other' there was no answer for it. For the fourth question, %76.6 of the participants stated that using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps them to better comprehend the reading text in the target language. However, 23.3% of the participants indicated that they did not think that their teacher's using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps them to

better comprehend the reading text in the target language. The great majority of the respondents (86.6%) reported that teacher's using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates their background knowledge about the topic of the text. Yet, only the 13.3% percentages of the participants reported just the opposite.

5.2.2. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview Results

To analyse the data obtained from the teachers' interviews, the researcher evaluated all the responses given by the teacher respondents who were teaching the upper-intermediate ELT first year students, and commented on them accordingly.

The teacher participants of this study were 4 female and 4 male teachers, who were teaching English to the first year ELT students. Their ages varied from 24 to 57, and all of the participants had at least 2 years of teaching experience. Among the participants, only one teacher was a native teacher of English, and the others were all non-native teachers of English.

The following interview questions were asked to discover whether the teacher uses pre-reading activities to teach reading to the first year students in the ELT Department in EUL or not.

1. Whether the teacher uses or does not use pre-reading activities to teach reading.
2. Whether the teacher likes using pre-reading activities to teach reading.
3. Which pre-reading activities are used to teach reading?
4. Whether the teachers think that using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps students to better comprehend the reading text in the target language.
5. Whether the teacher thinks that using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates the students' background knowledge about the topic pf the text or not.

The interview questions and responses are recorded in the following table:

Question 1	Do you use pre-reading activities to teach reading?
Teacher 1	Yes, I do.
Teacher 2	Yes, I do.
Teacher 3	Yes, I do.
Teacher 4	Yes, I do.
Teacher 5	Yes, I do.
Teacher 6	Yes, I do.
Teacher 7	Sometimes.
Teacher 8	Yes, I do.

Table 5: Teachers' interview results on item 1

As seen in the table above, almost all of the respondent teachers pointed out that they use pre-reading activities in their reading lessons. However, one of the teachers reflects that s/he sometimes uses pre-reading activities in his/her reading lessons.

For the following interview question (**Do you like using pre-reading activities to teach reading?)** all the respondents totally indicated that they like using pre-reading activities to teach reading to the first year students in ELT Department

Question 3	**Check( ) the pre-reading activities that you use to teach reading to the first year students in ELT Department**
Teacher 1	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 2	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 3	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 4	( ) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. (*) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 5	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 6	( ) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping (*) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 7	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures
Teacher 8	(*) A) Classroom discussions. ( ) B) Previews. ( ) C) Semantic mapping ( ) D) Visuals/Pictures

Table 6: Teachers' interview results on item 3

According to the results shown in the table above, six of the eight respondent teachers indicated that they use *classroom discussions* as a pre-reading activity. One of the teachers stated that s/he uses *semantic mapping.* Also, one of them indicated that s/he uses *visuals/pictures* as a pre-reading activity. There are no indications that teachers use *previewing* as a pre-reading activity.

The result of the forth interview question (**Do you think that using pre-reading activities in the classroom helps students to better comprehend the reading text in the target language?**) indicated that all the participant teachers were positive towards using pre-reading activities in the classroom, and they believe that those activities help students to gain better comprehension in the reading text in the target language.

The result of the last interview question (**Do you think that using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates the students' background knowledge about the topic of the text?**) demonstrated that all the participant teachers believe that using pre-reading activities in the classroom activates the students' background knowledge about the topic of the text.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study indicated that, by the help of the pre-reading phase prior to the actual reading stage, the students' schemata can be activated and they can have better comprehension in reading a written text. It is obvious that pre-reading activities make a change in a positive way in students' reading comprehension achievements, and should therefore become a regular practice for all teachers of reading.

This study aimed at investigating the effect of using pre-reading activities on the first year upper-intermediate level students' reading comprehension achievements in reading lessons at the ELT Department of the European University of Lefke. Nevertheless, a further research may be done to investigate some other factors that are supposed to be affecting reading comprehension, such as vocabulary recognition, text difficulty level, culturally different text, the relationship between reading comprehension and memory (short-term memory and long-term memory), motivation and purpose, and so on.

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