

**THE EFFECT OF MOBILE APPLICATION VOICE OF AMERICA,
SPECIAL ENGLISH (VOA, SE) FOREXTENSIVE READING TO IMPROVE
STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY
KNOWLEDGE**



Sangar Hamad

MAY 2016

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KNOWLEDGE**

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Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF MOBILE APPLICATION VOICE OF AMERICA, SPECIAL ENGLISH (VOA, SE) FOREXTENSIVE READING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

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Master's Thesis, Master's Program in English Language Education

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Yeşim KEŞLİ DOLLAR

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The purpose of this study is to examine the attitude of first-year Kurdish EFL students at ISHIK University in Erbil city by integrating the mobile application program VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA) into extensive reading. A sample of 48 EFL students participated in this study. The quantitative data was obtained through an attitude questionnaire, while qualitative data was gained through semi-structured interviews and vocabulary level tests (VLTs), which were conducted as both pre-and post-tests in this study. The findings of the study discovered that the participants in the experimental group showed a positive attitude toward using smartphones for extensive reading and achieved scores on the VLT that were higher than those of the control group. The results also showed that reading on mobile technology devices increases learners' desire to read more and gain more vocabulary knowledge. It is also suggested that reading on mobile phones helps EFL students in learning the second language because of the accessibility to the information whenever and where ever learners need it with today's modern electronic gadgets.

Keywords: Extensive reading (ER), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), first-year students, second language (L2), Voice of America (VOA).

ÖZ

AMERİKA'NIN SESİ (VOA) ÖZEL İNGİLİZCE (SE) MOBİL UYGULAMASININ, ÖĞRENCİLERİN OKUDUĞUNU ANLAMA VE KELİME BİLGİSİNİ GELİŞTİRME AMAÇLI KAPSAMLI OKUMA

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Erbil'deki ISHIK Üniversitesi'ndeki birinci yılındaki Kürt öğrencilerinin tutumlarını mobil uygulama programını (VOA) yaygın okumaya entegre ederek incelemektir. Bu çalışmaya örnek olarak 48 Kürt öğrenci katılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, nicel veriler bir tutum anketi yoluyla edinilirken, nitel veriler yarı yapılandırılmış röportajlar ve kelime seviye testleri (VLTs) ön test-son test yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları gösteriyor ki deneysel gruptaki katılımcılar yaygın okuma için akıllı telefon kullanımına karşı olumlu tutum sergilemişlerdir ve kelime seviye testlerindeki skorları kontrol grubuna nazaran daha yüksektir. Ayrıca sonuçlar gösteriyor ki; mobil teknolojik cihazlar, üstüne okuma öğrencilerin daha fazla okuma isteğini artırmakta ve daha fazla kelime bilgisini kazanmasını sağlamaktadır. Önerilen şu ki; mobil cihazlar sayesinde okuma Türk öğrencilerin ikinci dil edinimini günümüz modern elektronik aygıtları sayesinde erişebilir kılmış ve de öğrencilerin bilgiye ne zaman ve nerede ihtiyaç duyarlarsa ulaşabilmesine yardımcı olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kapsamlı Okuma, İkinci Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce (EFL), Birinci Sınıf Öğrencileri, İkinci Dil (L2), Voice of America (VOA)



To all my difficulties which bring me success

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

In today's global communication among human beings in all important aspects, such as social, economic, cultural, and political ties, and at all academic educational levels, the English language is the most widely recognized international language around the world. It has been largely effected our human lifestyle to learn English as much as needed while it is the most essential subject taught at all educational levels.

Due to the Iraqi invasion by Americans and other foreigners since 2003, Iraq has embraced the English language more in academic, economic, and social settings. The demand of learning the English language as a necessary language to communicate has widely spread among individuals. Most importantly, English is now an essential subject taught at all educational levels. It is a compulsory subject in the whole educational system, and is considered to be the main language for business and international communication. It is also one of the world's most needed languages Graddol (2004).

Learning the English language surely requires a great deal of effort from learners to pick up and study authentic materials for their academic and professional careers. The process of second language acquisition has been interrelated in all language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Reading and second language (L2) developments are connected with each other. Though reading is considered as one of the most essential skills other than speaking, writing, and listening, many ESL/EFL learners do not like to read since they feel it is a time-consuming activity and they do not get any benefit from it. In this case, it is very important to develop language learners' reading skills and reading fluency, and to increase their interest to read extensively. Other previous studies by Coady (1997) and Bell (1998), confirm the importance of ER, as they defined how ER helped language development to EFL learners to acquire the target language and increase general understanding, vocabulary knowledge and embrace the needed learning process for a second language.

Thanks to the rapid development of technology devices, mobile smartphones have been considered in the learning process especially for the English language. It can be used as an alternative learning tool instead of the traditional classroom in order to encourage students to read. Mobile devices have changed some of our hobbies and personal desires due to their portability and accessibility for our needs; users can easily access and read more digital texts because of the low-cost prices of e-books and the facility of borrowing e-books through online library resources. In a new survey reported by Harris (2008), he states that 68% of young adults like texting because they can multitask, which allows them to operate the device when watching television, using the computer, or listening to music.

As it has been discovered that reading through mobile applications have been taken into consideration for its user learning needs because of technology devices that effectively encourage students' interest in learning, even it changes teacher's teaching techniques and materials to change the curriculum and implement technology devices in the learning process Chinnery (2006). Curriculum designers and instructors are starting to find the potential of moderately cheap, portable and increasingly powerful devices as actual aides for the learning and teaching procedure Thornton and Houser, (2003).

Learning vocabulary is a tremendously essential part of the second language learning process. Grabe and Stoller (1997) stated that vocabulary is a fundamental need for reading extensively in the target language. As an effective learning approach for EFL students, learning vocabulary through reading has been implemented within second language teaching in many language schools. Hinkel (2000) explains that "the relationship between reading and vocabulary is well documented and reciprocal and the more one reads, the larger his or her language base becomes" (p.567). To produce output (speaking and writing skills) and improve good understanding in the second or foreign language, there is no doubt that word knowledge is a significant part of communicative language ability. To successfully accomplish this language learning process, Krashen (1993) proposes that "learners need multiple disclosures to unknown words. Extensive reading is the most often treatment for this lack. Since EFL learners will not become proficient and confident readers in the target language if they only practice for once.

This is where extensive reading comes in” (p.212). To become good readers, L2 learners are supposed to read as much as possible, and they need to read books that they enjoy and that are at their own level of language difficulty. They even stop reading if they do not like it or the topic is not their desire or interest.

According to Susser and Robb (1990), the basic structures of this process are: Reading “(a) of large amounts of materials or long texts from various resources ; (b) with the intention of obtaining pleasure from the text; (c) for world or general understanding” (P.33).

In addition to that, the objective of this approach intends to be directly related to reading: reading speed and improved fluency. Studies about the relation between reading speed and comprehension by Brown and Hirst (1983) indicated that comprehension and reading speed are connected. The entire knowledge from the text might be lost if the amount of processing information is too slow hence, fluency and comprehension benefit from extensive reading practice.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

In the frameworks of Extensive Reading (ER), the aims of Extensive Reading Program (ERP) through online and mobile application programs are considered effective and beneficial to learning a target language while reading is one of the main skills in a target language that learners have to take into consideration to learn the language accordingly.

The objective of reading is often detailed and understandable, but many people also consider reading as a pleasurable free-time activity that widens an individual’s knowledge and vocabulary. Its primary goal is to acquire knowledge and information, and to enjoy texts. ER mainly relies on selection and purpose, which are elementary elements of real-life reading, with the principal goal being to obtain pleasure from the text. Bamford (2009) describes ER activities when students are enjoying their reading, which increases their confidence in understanding and encourages them to read further through their own mobile phones due to their light weight and mobility that can be always wherever they go. (Bamford,2009) also states that “learners who read more will not only become confident and independent

readers, but they will also develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities, and their vocabulary size will be larger” (P.81)

A comprehensive hypothesis is proposed by Krashen (1985) as he claims that “when L2 readers concentrate on the meaning of a number of messages, they incidentally learn the second language acquisition which is yielded with lower anxiety context”. Thus, ER offers an opportunity for large amounts of pleasurable comprehensive input. In this approach, ER is a main factor of learning a second language (L2). Many practitioners say that L2 learners “learn to read by reading” (Krashen, 1993), especially, extensive reading targets to “develop good reading habits, so they can build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure.”(P.73)

According to Krashen’s input hypothesis, learners subconsciously acquire the target language (Krashen, 1989). To more comprehensive written texts are given, the more language acquisition occurs. Due to the learner’s own decision to choose reading texts, the material is easy, reading is its own reward, and learners read as much as they want. For these reasons, they gain comprehensible input, since there are different English proficiency levels among students and it is certain that comprehensible input is effective for any level of language learners.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Due to the revolution of smartphones and touch-screen devices, the young people of this generation are addicted to wasting most of their time by chatting, checking their own and friends’ statuses on social networks, and playing video games in the classroom. Therefore, they have a lack of participation and often keep themselves busy by overusing mobile devices. Furthermore, when reading in a target language generally, and in an EFL context specifically, learners often confront difficulties in reading comprehension and understanding the whole text. Reading in the second language usually becomes more of a translation exercise rather than comprehending the real text. Therefore, implementing the mobile application program VOA, SE for learning English can be productively useful for EFL learners. (Doiron, 2011) illustrates that early research into electronic reading proposed that it could encourage learners to read more.

Reading activities in most Iraqi universities are based on the format of intensive reading. Students only read texts when they have to, and they often prepare for the exams by carefully memorizing the texts, which is time consuming. There are times when students cannot even fully understand what they read, as they depend solely on word-for-word translation of the reading tasks and translate into their first language. As a result, many Kurdish EFL students do not have a positive attitude toward second language reading. To solve this issue, as a researcher I have decided to implement extensive reading through a mobile learning application, Voice of America (VOA), to at least make the students read about different topics such as: the news, health, reports, education, science, history, sports, and culture. The purpose using VOA to ER is to improve students' reading desire, speed, language competency, word recognition, and positive attitudes toward learning the target language.

To this point, it is recommended that this research will find the effect of an ERP through the mobile application VOA on second language learning and vocabulary gains of ISHIK university students in the English Language Teaching department. The study will also examine students' attitudes toward the ERP and its effects on their learning attitude.

A possible explanation for the necessity of conducting this study could be that the main concern of those studies that are the linguistic aspects of second language acquisition whereas limited number of research has shed light on students' perspectives toward using mobile application for learning a target language.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to find out the effect of using the mobile application learning program Voice of America (VOA) for extensive reading on Kurdish students' reading comprehension. The aim of helping the students improve their language competency especially in vocabulary gains, increasing their reading habits to involve them in an extensive reading program in an EFL context and even to make it easier for researchers to explore the use of technological devices to enhance their students' vocabulary size and look for more dynamic and effective learning methods through extensive reading.

1.5 Research Questions

The below questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language at ISHIK University?
2. Does extensive reading through the VOA mobile program lead to L2 vocabulary acquisition?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is driven by several factors, which are shown below.

First, the Kurdish college students have already studied English since primary school, but their English language ability is very low and limited since the Kurdish language is the standard of instruction in some classes, and the translation technique is often used with a focus on knowledge accumulation and memorization. There might be the result of the fact that students do not have enough time to read a large amount, or perhaps most of their lectures in English were mainly focused on grammar and they try to translate every single word before understanding the whole text. The main reason behind conducting this study came from that teachers teach English in a traditional way, while students have to carefully read the text word by word and look up every unknown or unfamiliar word to discover the meaning of the word, not the whole text. This reading approach not only decreases students' reading speed, but also hampers their reading ability (Nuttall, 1982). Other research studies by Day & Bamford, 2009) also explain that English language curricula mainly focus on grammar activities, and as a result it reduces reading process.

Second, as far as I start working on this study, there were no studies on the effective use of mobile application programs for extensive reading with Kurdish foreign language students to improve their reading comprehension and increase their vocabulary, as reading online or paper-based texts extensively has not been conducted in a Kurdish context. Therefore, the present study will fill a crucial gap in research on the use of mobile applications in extensive reading programs by Kurdish EFL university learners and the effects on vocabulary learning in the second language.

Furthermore, it seems to me that the best way for EFL learners to be exposed to various English written works is through mobile application programs. Nowadays everyone has a smartphone with touch-screen features, which makes it very convenient and user-friendly to read a lot of texts and timeline notifications as people connect their mobile devices to wireless internet systems.

Moreover, the absence of knowledge in choosing suitable English reading texts may result in negative attitudes towards L2 reading. Therefore, this study tries to see how an extensive reading program on learners' mobile phones could affect students' attitudes. Thereby, this study is significant not only for EFL learners, but also for teachers, practitioners, researchers, scholars, and educators.

1.7 Overview of Methodology

1.7.1 Research design. This study is concerned with whether implementing ER through two different programs; a mobile application program, VOA or graded readers materials can be affective EFL students' reading comprehension and, more accurately, what kind of ERP is useful for the purpose of students' positive attitudes about reading and their vocabulary acquisition. Since the study aims to examine the effect of using the mobile application for these purposes, it is suggested to conduct a mixed method research design to get the answers to the research questions. Therefore, this thesis implements a quantitative method using an attitude questionnaire and pre- and post-tests and a qualitative method using semi-structured interviews to support the statistical data.

1.7.2. Participants. The participants in this study were 48 first-year students aged 18-22 years. Of these, 27 were male and 21 were female. The students were studying English language in the department of English Language Teaching (ELT), Faculty of Education at ISHIK University. The participants were randomly selected out of 100 students at ELT department for both groups. They have been studying English for about nine years. Before starting the study conduct, the researcher explains the purposes of this research and its ethics to all participants.

1.7.3 Setting. This study was examined at the Faculty of Education, department of English Language Teaching (ELT) at ISHIK University during the first semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. ISHIK is a private university founded in 2008 and it is located in Erbil city, Iraq. Almost all public university education systems in Iraq last for four years, while some private universities such as ISHIK University have an extra preparatory year for the students who do not have enough English language competencies to continue their English-based education. This new education system was implemented and submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education in 2011, with the aim of standardizing the education system and improving students' English language competency. It was reported that Kurdish high school graduates could not pass the university entrance exam because they did not have enough English language background knowledge to understand clearly in their specific fields as they attended formal lessons. Generally, these students have problems at university because of their lack of, or insufficient competency in the English language. The students who are successful enough to be placed in a university still have difficulties with English, especially in reading and understanding.

1.7.4 Data collection instruments. In this study, a set of attitude questionnaires (see appendix A) and vocabulary tests (see appendix B) were given before and after the treatments for both groups. The first instrument, which is the attitude questionnaire, was prepared by modifying selected items from previous studies Doctorow, Alshwairkh, Hitosugi, and Day (2003) to describe the learners' attitudes and motivation towards L2 reading in order to obtain the objectives of the study. To confirm the reliability of attitude questionnaire were given to all participants in this study; a pilot study was tested in order to provide consistency of the current study measurements. It is essential if the measurement is to be analyzed to find out changes with different groups. As the researcher of this study, I did not make any new piloting for the VLT's reliability and internal consistency measurements while there are already available consistency statistics done by previous studies; Xing and Fulcher's (2007) is among the latest. From their study results the reliability measures for VLT scores were above accepted standard of .07 which shows that is strongly reliable.

At the beginning of the ER lessons, an attitude questionnaire (12 items) was given to measure the EFL college students' attitudes toward extensive reading to both groups. After implementing the mobile application program during eight-week teaching sessions, the same questionnaire with eight added items (see appendix C) for the VOA mobile application was distributed to the experimental group only to learn about the effective of using that mobile application program for learning the second language while the VOA was only given to experimental group. This was done for the purpose of seeing whether students' attitudes toward second language reading had undergone a positive change by using the mobile application, in order to gather quantitative data to see the effectiveness of the treatment.

The second instruments, which are the pre-test and post-test, were modified about more than 240 vocabulary items from (Alshwairkh, 2004) of the vocabulary levels test (VLT) (Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001) and the VOA wordbook applied to both groups as pre-test and post test to measure the rate of change happening as a result of the treatment, and measure participants' vocabulary size. The VLT was originally designed by Nation (1990) and is one of the most recognized tests worldwide that is freely available to scholars and researchers. It was given to all participants to evaluate their receptive vocabulary size before implementing the ERP, and the same test was used for the post-test after an eight-week period of teaching the ERP through the mobile application program VOA and graded readers materials to measure students' reading comprehension and their vocabulary knowledge for both groups. The students in the experimental group read several kinds of digital texts that interested them on the VOA mobile application, since ER is done for pleasure while the students in control groups various graded readers materials according to their language levels at the same time. A pre-test was conducted as the students were asked to select three vocabulary items listed on the left and match them with their meanings listed on the right side. Results for both groups were evaluated for quantitative data through mean scores, standard deviation and Mann-Whitney test.

For qualitative data, during the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked eight questions which they are mainly focused about their perception towards

using VOA, the diversity of articles and texts in VOA, learner's general understanding about available readings in VOA, various available texts and topics as one of the characteristics of ER, gaining more vocabulary, their preferences to discuss what they read in VOA and finally the learner's favorite place to read through mobiles. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed by content analysis, and the findings were evaluated to find the views of the participants on the use of extensive reading for vocabulary gains.

1.7.5 Data analysis. In this study, different data were collected from various tools, including the attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and VLT (pre- and post-test), in order to answer the research questions in this study, to examine students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language, and to examine students' vocabulary acquisition while reading selected topics from VOA in experimental group and graded readers materials in control group. The data achieved from the questionnaire was analyzed by using mean scores and standard deviation, and the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test was analyzed by frequency analysis (mean and standard deviation) including non- parametric Mann-Whitney test. Finally, the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews was examined through content analysis to find students' beliefs about reading on the mobile application program.

1.8 Operational definitions of significant terms

Extensive Reading (ER): ER is a method in which learners are exposed to various interesting, easy, and authentic materials and different pleasurable topics that students like to gain knowledge about. According to (Day & Bamford, 1998), ER is a method for the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large numbers of texts, books, and other materials that interest them and are well-organized within their linguistic competence.

Online Extensive Reading Program (OERP): This is a new program that is built mainly on a web-based instructional platform to draw the learner's attention to the importance of voluntary reading for the purpose of developing their language proficiency in the English language. The parts of the ER transcripts are shown in different approaches as written stories, oral language, and moving images to make the learners to understand better verbal and nonverbal information due to the interface of the eyes, the screen, the texts, and other technical facilities as well.

Voice of America (VOA): This is a mobile application that can provide a large number of authentic and interesting materials and highly valuable resources, since. It is also a timeline of daily news and information for millions of English learners around the entire world. As one of the biggest and best sites on the Internet for more advanced English learners, VOA has articles and stories at several levels.

English as a Second language (ESL): This is the learning of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking setting. That environment may be a country in which English is the mother tongue (e.g. U.K., U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Australia).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): A traditional phrase for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in countries where English is generally not a local standard of communication.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 The Definition of Extensive Reading (ER)

Extensive reading (ER), also known as pleasurable reading or self-selected reading, has been attracting the attention of L2 learners and researchers in both the learning and teaching process to provide better opportunities to experience a greater volume of comprehensible language. (Krashen, 1993) as quoted in Bray (2008) describes it as a teaching procedure, “free voluntary reading, When students and teachers quietly and independently read self-selected reading materials and texts in class,” (p.155). Many English language learners support ER as a key factor that has helped them become good speakers of the English language, and they appreciate the effectiveness of reading extensively.

In the early approaches to ER, Palmer (1969) described the term extensive reading in foreign language education to mean “rapidly read book after book” (p.88). Day (1998) also defines ER as “the development to the point of enjoyment and the ability to read the foreign language”. Grabe and Stoller (2002) frame it as an “approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which learners read large quantities of different texts within their linguistic competence” (p.259). Day & Bamford, 2004) also state that ER is a teaching method through which students read a great deal of easy resources in the target language. In an extensive reading environment, learners have the freedom to select the books that interest them and that they enjoy reading for pleasure, and they can stop reading if the book is either difficult or frustrating. “Students can progressively develop the practice of reading that will then build their confidence in language learning in general and reading in particular” (Day & Bamford, 2004. P.173). According to Johnson (1983) Reading is a time-consuming, complex activity that associate with conscious and unconscious use of various strategies, including problem-solving techniques, to make a clear meaning that the writer is supposed to give his or her intention.

2.2 The Purpose of ER

The most important purpose of reading is to gain understanding of a passage or text someone reads. When learners read a text or an article, they interpret the written information that is then connected with the readers' background knowledge about the topic in their brains to yield comprehension. By the same token, as one of the main basic skills of the English language, reading has been classified as an input skill. It has been shown that when people read something from a passage they will often obtain some information from it. Nunan (2004) defines reading as "an effortless process of the reader combining information from a text and their own prior knowledge to make meaning and interpret the text to general understanding" (P.94). Hafiz and Tudor (1989) state that using ER is to "flood learners with large amount of second language input with few or possibly no specific tasks to perform on this material" (p.5).

2.3 Approaches to Understanding Reading

To help understand about the reading process, Mikulecky (1990) illustrated information processing analogy to interpret the reading process and translate the general knowledge by three main metaphors: bottom-up (how to decode meaning), top-down (how to interpret and use background knowledge) and interactive processing. According to Grabe (1991), reading is a language skill that requires two main brain processes: a conscious process where the reader focuses on textual information (top-down mode), and an unconscious process in which the reader focuses mainly on his or her background knowledge

Bottom-up and top-down can be considered as two main learning strategies.

When a reader reads a text, two aspects of the human knowledge processing system regularly interact. When the reader concentrates mainly on what is already known as he/she attempts to understand a text, this strategy is called a "top-down" mode, which highlights the importance of schemata (i.e. networks of information stored in the brain) and the reader's shared knowledge about the incoming text. Both processes appear in the brain of the reader continuously and concurrently until the reader attains a satisfying level of comprehension of the text .

But, when the reader depends mainly on textual information to comprehend, this strategy is called a “bottom-up” mode Rumelhart (1980) “where the reader begins with the printed word, recognizes graphic stimuli, decodes them to sound, identifies words, and interprets meanings. Each part involves sub-processes which take place independently of each other, and build upon prior sub-processes” (P. 73).

The two brain processing modes are similarly measured as two different learning processing techniques taken by readers. In real learning practice, these two modes are applied interactively and accordingly as the reader wants to decode with the new information including what has been known.

The final approach, interactive strategy, has been considered for reading comprehension as well. According to Grabe (1991), “reading can refer to the general interaction between the reader and the text. The interaction of different component skills in simultaneous operation while the cognitive skills in the brain lead to fluent reading comprehension and the readers can easily interpret what has been written in the text and then transfer to general knowledge”(P.75).

2.4 Reading strategies

There are different cognitive reading skills that students may use when they like to read a text and develop their reading abilities. Farstrup (2006) found that good readers often face difficulties at an early language proficiency levels when they do not have comprehension skills that they need in reading texts so that these skills help them later to understand more complex and longer texts.

There are six reading strategies students can use to develop their reading techniques and comprehend the meaning of a text. Based on Duke and Pearson’s (2002) research, Pearson’s six strategies are: prediction, think-alouds, using text structure, using visual cues, summarization, and answering and questioning. Each strategy is defined as follows.

2.4.1 Prediction. The most effective technique for predicting is when “students ask questions in their minds about what they want to read. Transmitting what they read to their prior knowledge while using prediction skills will assist readers in making a link

to related works. This is very essential, as background knowledge helps readers to make sense of new information. By activating previous knowledge, learners can establish connections about the new information as they read it” (P.213).

2.4.2 Think-alouds. Thinking about how one reads is an example of “using metacognitive skills to develop one’s learning strategy. This helps readers to develop the thought processes of a competent reader. Readers often try to make meaning of what they read in their minds, so as to understand and deliver the right message of what they have read just before. This approach is a very good technique for teaching students to make inferences as they read. This strategy also provides examples of an active reader using metacognition approaches to solve problems” (P.213).

2.4.3 Using text structure. Readers have to read a variety of texts in all forms of fictional and non-fictional stories in order to gain more experience in learning vocabulary from different reading activities. For instance, a student knows what to anticipate when reading a fiction story. There is no doubt that two different characters will meet in the main story and usually the end of the story will be a happy conclusion. Giving fictional resources to a student to read will make working with adventures, mysteries, science fiction, and other genres helps readers identify the components of different genres, this it helps in understanding the text in the target language and even motivates them to read books. And as a matter of fact being familiar with the structure of a text supports the readers to organize the information and improves their comprehension levels.

2.4.4 Using visual cues. One of the best ways of “understanding a text while reading is to use visualization cues. This method might be implemented in order to self-monitor for understanding about what the reader reads. For example, a high-level reader should think and watch a film playing through his or her mind when reading. If the film or mind pictures stop, then the text is too difficult or the reader is not engaged: seeing an image when reading is a useful self-check for readers to gauge the speed with which they read” Fountas and Pinnell (2006), p.134).

2.4.5 Summarization. As readers usually read a text, they tend to create a real imaginary story about the topic to retell someone or even to themselves in a logical categorization and hold these details in memory to bring and recite what they have read in the text. This is a comprehension strategy called summarization. These important points are needed later in the text to make sense of what is read. For instance, a small but important detail may help a reader to solve the mystery in the novel (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, “Being able to summarize information effectively is an invaluable skill for readers of all ages” (p.48).

2.5.6 Questioning. Once a text or a book has been read by a reader, he or she will have to ask some questions in his or her mind about what was written in the text. The questioning process can be continued if the reader already makes self-monitoring for comprehending the text. As they ask themselves or each other about what was being read. The main reason for this activity is to stimulate readers’ thinking skills. Asking questions that start with *how* or *why* involves the reader much more and even creates new ideas about the topic the reader reads. In addition, by asking questions about the text, the reader is dynamically interacting with the text to incorporate the new material into his or her schema.

2.5 The Characteristics of ER

According to (Bell, Day and Bamford (1998), ER has many characteristics as follows:

1. ***Students read as much as possible.*** Variety gives opportunities to the learners to read things they want to read, whatever their desires. “Different kinds of reading material also encourage a flexible approach to reading. Learners are led to read for different purposes (e.g. entertainment, information, passing the time) and in different ways (e.g. skimming, scanning, and more careful reading)” (P.2).

2. ***The reading materials are easy.*** “This is the most significant value of extensive reading for language learning because students are not likely to succeed in reading extensively if they have to struggle with difficult materials. Students read texts and resources that contain few or no unknown words. There should be no more than one or two famous vocabulary items per page for beginners and no more than four or five for intermediate learners” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2).

3. ***Students read a variety of materials of their interest.*** “Self-selection of reading texts is the main basis of extensive reading, and it puts learners in a separate role from that in a traditional classroom. One reason that many students enjoy extensive reading is that they choose what they want to read. This choice increases beyond selection of reading materials and readers are also free to stop reading if the topic is not interesting or that they find out it is too difficult” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2).

4. ***Reading materials are well within students’ linguistic competence.*** “The language learning benefits of extensive reading come from quantity of reading. For the benefits of extensive reading to take effect, a book a week is an appropriate goal. Books written for beginning language learners are very short, so this is normally a realistic target for learners of any ability level” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2).

5. ***Students choose what they like to read.*** “Because learners read material that they can easily understand, it encourages fluent reading. Dictionary use is normally discouraged because it interrupts reading, making upper graded reading impossible, so Instead, learners are encouraged to ignore or guess at the few unknown language items they may meet” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2).

6. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower. “In contrast to academic reading and intensive reading, and the full comprehension they achieve, extensive reading motivates reading for pleasure and information. Rather than 100 percent comprehension, learners aim only for sufficient understanding to achieve their reading purpose” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2-3).

7. Reading is individual and silent. “Learners read at their own pace. In some schools, there is silent reading periods when students read their self-selected books in the classroom. Most extensive reading, however, is homework. It is done out of the classroom in the student’s own time, when and where the student chooses” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.3).

8. Reading is its own reward. “Because a learner’s own experience is the goal, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions. At the same time, teachers may ask students to complete some kind of follow-up activity after reading. There are a variety of reasons for this: to discover what the students understood and experienced from the reading; to keep track of what students read; to check student attitude toward reading; and to link reading with other parts of the curriculum. What is important is that any follow-up activity respects the integrity of the reading experience and that it encourages rather than discourages further reading” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.3)

9. The teacher orients and guides the students. “Extensive reading is different in many ways from traditional classroom practice, and teachers need to explain to students what it is, why they are doing it, and how to go about it. The teacher will also want to keep track of what and how much students read and their reactions to what was read in order to guide them in getting the most out of their reading” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.3)

10. The teacher is a role model of a reader. “Example is the most powerful instructor. If the teacher reads some of the same material that the students are reading and talks to them about it, this gives the students a model of what it is to be a reader. It also makes it possible for the teacher to recommend reading material to individual students. In this way, teacher and students can become an informal reading community,

experiencing together the value and pleasure to be found in the written word” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.3).

11. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding. “In contrast to academic reading and intensive reading, and the detailed understanding they require, extensive reading encourages reading for pleasure and information” (Bamford & Day, 2004, p.2-3)

Follow-up assignments should be easy and understandable and encouraging which relate to students’ reading by creating a friendly environment without fear or anxiety.

2.6 ER Motivating Learners

The usefulness of the ER approach in different contexts has been proven as a program to both improve reading comprehension and motivate learners. (Krashen, 1995) defines the program as one in which learners “do self-selected reading with only essential accountability, writing brief summaries on what they have read” (p.192). Based on the comprehensible input hypothesis, Krashen (1984) states that ER can help language learning mostly because the program is designed according to learners’ language levels and they choose what they prefer to read. Since the input texts are easy enough for learners to understand, this results in the generation of enough motivation to read more in order to be a better reader, especially in an EFL setting. This idea of ER as an outcome, in line with Krashen’s hypothesis, provides various interesting graded materials in a relaxed learning environment while students choose what they prefer to read.

ER can increase general language competency, “especially in EFL contexts where sources of input are more controlled and limited due to focusing more on understanding all connected words in a text” Gebhard (1996) and Redfield, (1999). ER is said to enhance learners’ language fluency - the ability to recognize several words and phrases naturally and automatically” (P.74). According to (Day & Bamford, 1998), through authentic reading, second language and EFL learners can gain both linguistic and world knowledge to develop their reading skills and equip themselves with more vocabulary knowledge to understand and do more reading. Thus, their perception about reading will be changed positively .

Through ER materials, when texts are organized and selected according to language proficiency levels, learners' motivation can be increased and their ability to get the task and understand the text that provide a great extent to their reading ability, therefore they can read the texts they prefer; as a consequence, reading will be an interesting and motivating activity that learners embrace, and they will have fun taking on different challenges. In a research study to learn about improving learners' habits and reading motivation, Bell and Campbell (1996) revealed that, from different methods of learning the second language, "ER was the most significant approach to motivate students to read. Motivation, as Ellis (1994) states, "affects the extent to which individual learners persevere in learning the L2 and the kind of learning behavior they employ, and their actual involvement" (p.36). Extensive reading will be supportive to create confident readers. A study on the effect of ER was examined by Kembo (1993), to learn student's ability in reading long texts, and he found that their confidence and writing skills improved. The findings of the study were found as considered as students' confidence in writing improved and they could read longer texts. For this purpose, it might be concluded that implementing ER in foreign/ second language teaching and learning not only assists with reading proficiency, but also overall language proficiency. Zamel (1992, P.172) states that "writing development always includes reading development".

Therefore, "ER can motivate both background knowledge and textual knowledge in the brain's left hemisphere, and automatically forces learners to use metacognitive skills as well as cognitive strategies while reading. Learners can exploit background knowledge, use pre-existing schema and decode and interpret the message of the text more easily" (Nunan, 1991, p.138).

2.7 E-Book Reading

The new smartphone mobile devices have shaped our everyday life habits, and have even changed some of our hobbies and personal desires due to mobile portability and accessibility for our needs. Users can easily access and read more digital texts in particular. Since Amazon first released the Kindle e-book reader in 2007, e-books have been welcomed by many users Huang (2013). Due to the cheap prices of e-books,

Browning and Westermann (2011) state that the capability to share e-books through online library resources, along with the need for schools to engage their learners with new technology devices, has caused learners to welcome e-books with great desire. Recently many universities are trying to implement electronic reading into their teaching programs.

2.7.1 The Benefits of E-book reading. (Doiron, 2011) showed in his early research on electronic reading through different communication tools like iPads and cell phones which can inspire learners to read more since the reader can easily connect to multimedia features, program categories and hyperlinks, (Huang, Chen and Doiron (2011). A previous study about E-book reading by Lei and Chang (2011), conducted in a Taiwanese University, they found that the capabilities of e-book resources swayed the students' decision to use an e-book reader over a paper-based book, and their motivation became much stronger. In addition to this motivation, reading activities appear to intersect with the limit of autonomous learning. Another useful feature of e-books is that, as Huang (2013) and Brown (2012) explained, students can connect with the latest updates of their assignments and unfinished reading activities wherever and whenever they need or want to. E-books are easily saved, and the more sophisticated e-book reading programs track the books being read, the reading perceptions, the levels of books, the total words read, and readers' time spent reading. (Doiron, 2011) argues that teachers can encourage more skillful and motivated readers by increasing students' access to reading materials and increasing the convenience time to interact with other learners about their reading. (Chen , 2013) found that ERP through e-books enhances EFL learner's motivation, reading comprehension, and vocabulary acquisitions because of the effects of reading e-books and their accessibility as the texts are short and segmented.

Other scholars such as Chang et al. (2013) reveal that students can download books, texts, or any other interesting resources in minutes. By the same token, one of ER's paradigms is "that student(s) read as much as possible" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p.7). Fuelling learners with the tools to read anytime and anywhere could enable students to have a more positive experience in extensive reading".

2.7.2 The benefits of E-books on mobile. Reading on mobile applications has been taken into consideration for its user needs and information to human life standards while technology giants have shaped the way humans live these days. “The use of smartphones and their popularity for learning purposes has received growing attention in recent years” (Chinnery, 2006, P.43). Teachers and curriculum designers are trying to find out the potential of relatively cheap and portable devices as effective aides for the learning and teaching procedure. This is perhaps what new language learners are looking for, as Thornton and Houser (2003) revealed in their study that Japanese learners like to use their cell phones for several daily life activities, from emailing, chatting, connecting with friends, and even reading books. A new study by Chen, Hsieh, and Kinshuk (2008) in Taiwan discovered that L2 learners enjoyed learning to read in the second language and favored using their mobile phones, mainly because they could easily read where and when they preferred to. The “bite-sized chunks” of learning content were actually supportive to them in making ease for their learning, and their attitudes toward reading on mobile devices increased positively.

Today’s smartphones are highly innovative mobile computing devices are capable of performing hundreds of functions. Mobile computing technology is driving the evolution of many aspects of our human needs and academic lives, and for language learners, therefore, the process of ERP can be practiced with smartphone technology. Mobile users tend to update themselves on the latest world news, interesting reading topics, their favorite team accomplishments, tournaments, health reports, education, research, etc.

There are fruitful pedagogical advantages of using mobile technology for learning a language. Mobile smartphones are taken everywhere and it can be helpful for situated learning. In previous studies about situated learning theory carried out by Lave and Wenger (1991), according to the theory, when the information is contextually important to the learners and can be put to use right after what has been read and finally learning is more likely to happen. In line with the previous fact that mobile phones are social equipment needs, they also facilitate all forms of communication and collaboration among users around the world. Mobile devices can also help diminish the

separation between the classroom and the out-of-school environment Reinders and Lewis (2009).

Further research Coiro and Hui-jo (2011) shows that different technical applications and assisting procedures such as electronic logs, journals, and mobile learning programs significantly encourage EFL learners to gain competency in the target language through reading on such devices. The integration of mobile learning applications in the EFL classroom is now a new learning approach for reading extensively in the new generation, as everyone has the newest smartphones in both Android and IOS systems for mobile programs.

Mobile technology and its software standards usually provide a practical approach to integrate the socio-constructivist approaches in EFL learning context especially when learners cannot use the language in their real-life settings and have fragile language input Lan, Sung and Chang (2009). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) includes urgent feedback, learning support, independency and targeted reading practice given to users. MALL also assists them in acquiring developments in language context awareness, social interactivity, individuality and connectivity Attewell and Webste (2004).

As an effective approach, MALL has provided L2 learners with intensive and collaborative learning practices both inside and outside the classroom, and has given exciting findings in accordance with the improvement of EFL learners' motivation and performance. In addition, in order to overcome classroom issues and demotivation among students, MALL has been used by many researchers (Chang & Hsu, 2011; Cui & Wang, 2008; Lan et al., 2007, 2009) while focusing on college students. Others studies have connected mobile technology with learning a foreign language and early EFL reading skills to set up cooperative and effective reading assignments. The researchers gained fruitful findings that MALL gives advances that it constantly benefits young learners to enhance their cooperative learning skills, improve their attitudes and reading development as well.

Furthermore, while talking about the accessibility of mobile devices which are both small and lightweight for ER. In their research, Runnels and Rutson-Griffiths (2013) studied Japanese university students' preferences for reading on electronic

devices with different sized tablets: the iPad or the smaller iPad mini. In the results, almost all of the students chose the iPad mini than heavier devices. Weight of the device and the mobile Portability were named as having the greatest positive response on the students' preference, as it allowed them to engage with their device anytime and anywhere. As a result, learners used their iPad mini devices more than larger digital screens.

2.7.3 Students' attitudes towards online ER. With the rapid development of wireless technology, almost all teenagers, youth, and adults are now using mobile phones. In today's world, humans have shifted to a new technology era as people read more on computer, TV and mobile smartphone screens than traditional printed books. Most importantly, reading is not only a linguistic process in the classroom, but also a social and cultural practice which shapes the development of human beings and their statuses in society. People have more knowledge about different topics, news, and other interesting fields in which they work or study, and can even learn languages in an easier and more interesting way. Stephen Krashen (2004a) describes the importance of favorite reading for improving all proficiency skills, including speaking and writing. (Krashen, 2004b) shows that those "who do more recreational reading show better development in reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary" (P.34). These findings apply to first and second language acquisition at all different ages, even for academic language.

Students' perceptions and their attitudes toward online ER were analyzed based on data gathered by surveys in Corio's paper, entitled "Digital Literacies". He found that many EFL students are interested in taking on challenges and formidable tasks in online reading, as they believe that ER on the internet is a valuable and advantageous means for developing their language competency. In a similar approach, Silva (2009) showed that reading on the internet provides new approaches for students to pick up new vocabulary incidentally, and develops students' writing ability as well.

As many researchers Abu-Rabia, 2004 and Sellers (2000) observed, EFL learners have high anxiety in L2 learning environment since they often tend to have weak performance in reading and writing activities. This weak performance is due to their lack of reading or lack of any kind of pleasurable reading tasks during their formal lessons, as they study English for academic purposes. Hui-jo (2011) implemented another strategy

to integrate ER and writing blogs on internet websites as a way to decrease EFL/ESL students' anxiety in their reading and writing assignments. To this point, "it is essential for language instructors to establish a less stressful environment for their students to learn and enhance their reading and writing skills in order to learn the target language" (P.81).

Previous study results on ER in the U.S. by Mason and Krashen (1997) demonstrated that ER allowed unenthusiastic students of EFL to catch up to traditional students. Hafiz and Tudor (1989) observed that ERPs would be particularly beneficial in situations in which students feel shy to speak in the target language because of their lack of confidence in language competency, such as grammatical knowledge and vocabulary. By the same token, (Krashen,1982) stated that "the unconscious process of language acquisition, like reading for pleasure, is more engaging and successful compared to conscious learning, as when students have to pass obligatory exams"(P.61). In studies by Schmitt (2009) and Liem (2005), six Vietnamese information technology students had to report their reading experience during a seven-week ER program. They found positive results related to students' perspectives towards reading in L2.

Nowadays, many learners have negative understanding to learn English language due to their initial experiences, especially in reading. Autonomy learning as a individual strategy can be integrated for EFL learners, which can improve their opportunities for exposure to in learning English language. This activity can be done on personal mobile phones since learners already use them for their life needs, fun, and free-time activities. Because ER is for pleasure and interest, students will spontaneously check and read texts related to their interests. Reading ability as described by Day and Bamford (1998), which is essential part for student proficiency language achievement, particularly for EFL learners with unsatisfactory exposure to the target language. Learners with satisfactory English reading ability can gain their vocabulary through independent reading, and can also use the input they have learned from their pleasurable reading activities. Thus, EFL reading has been drawing increased attention from EFL teachers and researchers, National Reading Panel Taipei City Government Department of Education (2012).

Alshwairkh (2004) carried out another study on ER with 18 ESL students who were asked to read on the internet, keeping journal entries, and vocabulary logs and write short paragraphs, they were being interviewed after eight weeks of reading. At the end of the study he found that the students' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge improved significantly, and that they were even more interested in reading more books through online resources.

The online reading practice has been implied by (Hui-jo, 2011) to motivate learners to do reading tasks on blogs instead of printed book activities; online blogs acts as major role in increasing reading and writing skills. By the same token, Brown, Waring, and Donkaewbua, (2008) have suggested another form of ERP that concentrates on reading as concurrently listening to reading programs, audio recordings, transcribed YouTube videos, or even VOA radio learning programs. These researchers confirmed that learners who use this learning strategy through the online program seem to improve their entire language proficiency, mainly in the areas of listening comprehension and authentic pronunciation, so they can use the right words and expressions while speaking.

Previous research studies (Johnson L and Adams (2012) state that “language researchers have been studying how mobile devices and their learning applications are able to establish a learning environment with high interactivity and rich resources with simple accessibility to assist life-long learning anywhere and anytime” (P.123). Harrison (2012) indicates that technologies enrich open-ended constructivist learning environments as learners build knowledge and develop metacognitive skills through authentic language contents.

Other researchers such as Thomas and Reinders (2010) state that different phases of using learning applications on mobile devices can be enhanced with the implementation of mobile devices, thus, we are convinced that it is worthwhile to examine the usefulness of mobile devices and iPads in task-based language learning and teaching methods. (Ellis, 2003) also argues that mobile learning will provide students with more comprehensible information, prompt feedback, and opportunities to modify production, so that interactions will be fostered during the learning process.

2.7.4 E-book reading challenges. While reading on digital screens is easier and devices are lighter to handle, some previous studies on e-book reading lessons in EFL teaching settings have shown that reading on electronic screens for long periods of time can be slower and more damaging to eyesight than reading paper-based materials. Three language researchers (Mangen, Walgermo and Brønnick (2013) discovered that blue light screens, especially on mobile devices, are suspected to cause visual fatigue, and specifically computer vision syndrome. In Huang's (2013, p.274) study of Taiwanese university students, participants complained of "tired eyes." Similarly, Taiwanese senior high school students in Huang and Lin's (2011, p.69) research complained of "eyestrain" when they read long texts on their mobile phones".

In another study by Mesureur (2013) on Japanese university English learners' reading efficiency using e-books on their mobile devices, students described their reading speed to be slower when they read text on a screen compared to text on paper. However, in another study comparing both paper and screen reading research, Dillon (1992) observed that readers generally do not feel that reading from screens is tiring, and that reading quality was only compromised when the screen quality was poor, however, in Huang and Lin's study (2011) students generally gave favorite to read smaller and shorter-lived English texts on their smartmobile phones than reading long and paper texts due to eye tiring and heavy materials. In an analysis of Japanese university students' use of mobile phones for vocabulary practice, Stockwell (2008) asked whether studying on a mobile device may be more suitable for learning tasks which are short or require a lower cognitive knowledge. These results of mobile group gadgets for learning the target language reduced reader's anxiety, including concentrating on one's consideration on the immediate task, especially while making a comparison between groups of students who are reading longer paper-based texts.

2.8 Rationale for using internet resources for Extensive Reading

Using internet sources like mobile applications for extensive reading in EFL language classrooms stems from the technological revolution that has shaped today's world. Nowadays, the new generation and college students in particular have smartphones with the latest mobile touch-screen systems. Peoples' habits have been changed by using wireless internet services from new mobile devices. Smart phones give people more autonomy to discover their own interests rather than being limited to the content offered to them from watching TV and sports games or reading magazines, and yet the young generation still does not like to carry around books they are interested in reading. Huang (2013) and Brown (2012) state that e-books are easily saved for later reading, help readers to track reading passages, and recommend new materials available on e-book programs. Mobile phones initiated to provide their admiration in educational settings, especially for learning languages, as has been confirmed by some recent publications e.g. Ally Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler (2008). In addition, smartphones are getting continuance for learning and teaching in both foreign and second language learning environment.

Different kinds of technologies currently exist, such as smartphones, iPads, laptop computers with WIFI feature, portable MP3 players, personal digital assistants, and hundreds of free mobile and software application programs for online dictionaries. However, mobile smartphones are one type of technology that that been popular to attract educator's, and learner's attention. One of the significant reasons for the focus on smartphones is that they are the most sophisticated technology device in today's market, mainly in the U.S. and Japan. In light of the above, educational institutions and language teachers are less inclined to give hard copies and printed materials to learners, but instead incorporate a mobile learning approach into their teaching context. New smartphones are cheaper than laptop computers and have the same features, such as internet browsers, wireless systems, and other functions that can be implemented in the learning process.

Today's new mobile smartphones provide live connection to the network service by pairing to a WIFI connection, which makes it easier for learners to access updated information as they request it. Learners can even save the text for later offline usage in

the form of podcasts and downloaded lessons. One current example is the VOA mobile application, which can provide various interesting and amazing reading topics that are authentic and highly valuable, since students are encouraged by a greater level of interest than that offered by traditional materials.

Internet servers can also facilitate readers' access to reading texts. Pinto and Silva (2006) carried out a study on ER through the internet and found that students were able to read several new and interesting articles, texts, reports, etc. through various internet resources. They also had got many options to read articles and texts as they like to read according to their personal interest and their own major, and they even learnt that reading through online is faster, easier, and more practical to read rather than reading from printed books. With the development of technology systems, especially mobile smartphones, readers tend to use their gadgets more than eight hours a day, according to the latest study by the *likewise* research center in the U.K. in 2014. Students do not need to buy expensive books anymore since it is easier and cheaper for students to enjoy reading whatever they like to read by browsing various resources. Therefore, accessing online reading materials is not very difficult for readers anymore. In addition, EFL readers have great chances to read whatever and wherever they like, and can read their favorite topics freely. This is very essential in an EFL context for those who study foreign languages in non-English environments Egbert (2005).

2.8.1 Mobile devices as a collaborative learning (CL) method. In today's technological language learning environment, there are different easy and learnable ways for those living in EFL countries to develop a second or foreign language and this is particularly important for college students. Earlier studies have examined the process of CL and its success via networks; for example, one study by Antonio, Soledad, and Carlos (2007) investigating the importance of an online CL environment found that it could motivate students' interest in learning the second language. Their results showed that more than 70% of the students showed positive attitude by using CL method for learning the second language.

Furthermore, other technology systems such as mobile smartphones are integrated to CL system in recent years. Some studies Lan et.al (2007) have examined

smartphones with regard to language instruction in a classroom environment to help CL in a primary school. There are also other studies related to using mobile phones in the classroom by Sharples and Milrad (2009) to assist an approach of conversation learning in the second language which developed learner's involvement with their peers. In the same token, Ogata, Saito, Paredes, San Martin, and Yano (2008) initiated a technology system to assist learners living outside of their own countries to learn outside of language classrooms by using smartphones. Using mobile devices to present students' learning material allows the learning process to be more dynamic and gives both teachers and students a two way approach wireless communication channels for learning the target language (Chinnery, 2006). Furthermore, smartphones can offer new convertible learning approaches for learners in the process of learning the second language in the classroom. It is suggested that mobile learning techniques give learners and instructors several benefits due to the devices' wireless functioning, portability, lightness, and the fact that these tools can be taken anywhere and used anytime. Therefore, the positive learning outcomes of studies on using mobiles as an effective language learning tool propose integration of smartphones in English reading classes. This can help students to read collaboratively in a general classroom environment, and to practice their knowledge and improve themselves independently outside of the classroom.

To encourage students with reading activities and develop their reading comprehension via technology, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) software was developed in language research studies for use on cell phone cameras to assist EFL learners. Having mobile devices on which the system was installed was found to contribute to students' learning and cooperation among each other. The system was confirmed to help boost the general classroom setting to such an extent that the normal classroom has the technical capabilities of modern classrooms. This system is mainly designed for language learning, such as an audio-visual classroom or a language laboratory.

By the same token, special smartphone features such as social interactivity, portability, connectivity, immediacy, and individuality e.g. Huang, Kuo, Lin and Cheng (2008) have presented various learning materials for both teachers and learners which

make the learning process easier and more dynamic. Another study on using smartphone for reading activity by Yan (1999) on the Chinese high school curriculum and classroom issues, he discovered that most of the teachers in Chinese high schools use a teacher-centered approach for reading classes as it has supposed to be student-centered approach in the planned program. In terms of a student-centered method for reading instruction, the constructivist theory of learning is supported by CL, which is widely used to help learners to be active and construct knowledge for themselves through active interactions between learners and the classroom setting. In contrast, CL has many drawbacks, such as distraction and an unbalanced loading system Lan et al. (2009), as well as other educational challenges that stop teachers from integrating CL into reading class assignments. Smartphone devices can provide active teaching tools and a way to overcome the traditional teacher-centered approach. To solve the teacher-centered classroom problem and assist Chinese teachers in implementing CL system in their classes, the study facilitated Chinese reading strategies in a mobile-assisted activity to help the teachers avoid the traditional approach and understand students' reading behaviors.

2.8.2 Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) program. The Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) program (<http://www.voaspecialenglish.com>) is an American radio program and website, and is currently a new mobile application for learning for both Android and IOS software systems. VOA radio launched in 1959 and is a valuable cost-free tool for reading and listening. It is the largest single “easier” resource online. VOA is a platform of daily news and information for millions of English learners around the globe. As one of the biggest and best sites on the internet for more advanced English learners, it has articles and stories at several levels. VOA claims that there are three things that make Special English especially supportive for people who want to learn English: audio programs and captioned videos are written using vocabulary at the beginner, intermediate, and upper levels; online texts, MP3s, and podcasts let users read, listen, and learn American English; All texts are structured to enhance readability. “Broadcasters undergo extensive special training over six months in SE enunciation and delivery, at 90 words per minute, which is about 30 percent slower

than normal broadcast speed for the purpose of making the materials more understandable and effective for L2 learners” Templer (2008b, 2008c, p.123). In addition to the 10 minutes of daily news, “the SE half-hour broadcast includes two slow speed features. These features, in 14 categories, are available as print texts and with audio, and many can be downloaded as MP3 files, for intensive and extensive listening and reading. Brief (370 to 1,380 words) and informative, they cover a wide range of reading topics from health, science, American biography, education, history, music, and economics” Krashen, Waring and Brown (2003, P.201). This creates a wide resource of intercultural awareness for learners who are not living in and studying English in ESL settings.

EFL learners can become familiar with not only the language, but also American culture and society, including hundreds of cultural tips and business conversations. The SE program shows learners a large amount of comprehensible input by using high-frequency words and repeating these words in different contexts, which makes it easier for learners to learn important vocabulary.

The VOA, SE program also provides other opportunities for speaking and writing, which encourages students and sparks their enthusiasm for English learning with productive output and interesting, informative reports. Therefore, VOA program provides students with authentic vocabulary for communication and gives them what they actually need for their academic and daily life situations.



Figure 1. The interface of the VOA Mobile Application and its Access to Reading Activities.

2.9 Vocabulary Learning and Mobile Phones

2.9.1 Vocabulary. Learning about vocabulary means “knowing all the words by someone in a particular language and including all the meanings of the words. Vocabulary also serves as an important tool for communicating with others and gaining knowledge. It has been suggested by Coady (1997) that word knowledge is an essential part of communicative competency, and is important for production and comprehension in a second language” (P. 97).

Learning vocabulary in the second language has been recommended as the best method for L2 learners and language researchers. According to Qian (1999), “vocabulary knowledge includes both breadth (the number of words someone knows) and the depth of knowledge about those words. Depth of knowledge refers to the

pronunciation, spelling, and various meanings of the word, as well as the contexts in which it can be used” (P.181).

A learner’s vocabulary knowledge has been classified into three dimensional models by Nation and Waring (1997), cited in Perry and MacDonald (2001) as follows: “(a) the amount of knowledge present for each word, (b) the number of words known, and (c) how quickly the word can be utilized. Therefore, knowing a word involves the following features: spelling, pronunciation, appropriateness, grammatical patterns, meanings, derivations, and relations with other words” (P.98).

2.9.2 Vocabulary acquisition in a second language (L2). In the past 25 years, L2 vocabulary acquisition has become a controversial topic for language researchers, especially in experimental research studies. Some language researchers believe in a “naturalistic vocabulary acquisition process happens when students learn most of the vocabularies in a context incidentally” Sternberg (1997) cited in Barr et al., 2000, p.522). They believe that words acquired in this way will be better learned and memorized than words taught through explicit vocabulary instruction, since learners only focus on the meaning of the words. However, there is a general agreement that most words are not learned in one encounter, but need many encounters for receptive understanding of the word. This is because incidental vocabulary learning is fragile and “if the practice activities of learning of a word is not reviewed more often, then that learnt vocabularies will be lost” Nation and Waring (2001, P.15). To solve this language issue, (Coady, 1997) states that “extensive reading is the best treatment to overcome forgetting new vocabularies” (p.533), since learners read by their own choice and do the activities whenever they want, which is quite different in compulsory academic study when learners have to prepare themselves for written or oral exams.

2.9.3 ER & L2 vocabulary acquisition. Different research studies have examined to what extend vocabulary is acquired from reading classes in a second language. The attitudes of ESL learners towards vocabulary improvement through ER, has been examined by (Alshamrani, 2003). In his study, the participants consisted of two different level groups. The study took three months for the participants who attended an

ESL ER course aimed at improving their academic reading ability. Interviews, notes, e-mail follow-ups, and document analysis were used. The participants in his study showed preference towards learning vocabulary via ER of certain resources; Macmillan and Oxford graded reader's materials. The study results also showed that the ER increased their vocabulary and other language skills such as speaking and writing.

2.9.4 Vocabulary learning and mobile phones. As stated earlier, vocabulary learning is one of the most essential and important integral parts in the learning language process for foreign or second language learners for their survival and fluent communicative ability. As Hamer (1994) explains, "If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. It has been revealed that vocabulary software applications can easily become one of the most popular sellers around the globe, since learners often spend some of their free time each day on intentional English vocabulary learning program applications on their smartphones" (p. 153). In addition, learners can also accelerate their vocabulary acquisition.

Previous studies have found that the nature of foreign language activities and vocabulary acquisition has varied through using mobile phones for learning vocabulary. An overview of a learning environment was examined by Browne and Culligan (2008), in which students finish reading activities on a laptop device, and after a while they are able to access vocabulary flash cards on their smartphones. In their research study, an explanation is given of how the assignments are beneficial, especially mentioning that the items are provided for learners to learn at a comfortable place and suitable time. In another study by (Thornton and Houser, 2005), students used a video learning program by showing some video lessons for English idioms on their smartphones in the classroom and completed multiple choice exercises about the idioms they studied in the video lessons. The online video resources were given a positive evaluation by the participants, who found them both useful and fun as students could watch scenes, listen and read the texts at same time.

Other studies on learning vocabulary have suggested that mobile phone learners acquire vocabulary via using devices for learning purposes, especially reading and

grammar quiz activities. Chen and Kinshuk (2008) have also applied mobile phones to their research. Students considered having visual learning skills and varying verbal activities according to an online questionnaire of short-term memory abilities were given four categories of glossaries for learning L2 vocabulary. The resources; four different annotations were sent to their mobiles via text message. The participants had only 50 minutes to pick up the words on flashcards. The posttest results showed that pictorial annotation type assisted the learners to remember vocabularies.

(Thornton and Houser, 2005) studied the sending of SMS messages outside of the classroom to learners' cell phones and their study exams were based on the "push" mode of operation. This is a technique which timing and frequency of messages sent to the students can be controlled by the teacher- invigilators. Short mini-lessons were sent to learners' smart phones, applying new vocabulary in different language contexts in order to make the learners to see the words and guess their meanings three times a day via personal e-mails. By the same token, in other studies by Kennedy and Levy (2009), learners received messages in familiar contexts by SMS to their smartphones about nine times per week. The findings in these two studies revealed that the subjects memorized the new vocabularies in the messages, which were very helpful for vocabulary learning, though some of the learners claimed that the messages were too quick to read and then comprehend. To learn about the different learning methods and their effectiveness, there were three groups: the participants who received e-mail mini-lessons, the participants who accessed the same resources via internet browsers designed for smartphones, and finally the participants who received paper materials. In conclusion, the results of their studies showed that the learners who participated via e-mail earned better scores than other two groups.

The vocabulary learning by mobile in Lu's (2008) findings gain better scores while she implemented the mobile phone for experimental group for her study, the participants were conducted to two different word learning assignments. There were 15 students who used smartphones for learning vocabularies and another 15 students used printed books for the same vocabularies were given to mobile group. Each separate group memorized 14 words during one week. The posttest score results revealed that the

smartphone groups obtained better scores on vocabulary acquisition than the paper-based materials group.

A comparative study on the effectiveness of vocabulary learning through smartphones and e-mail was also carried out by (Thornton and Houser, 2005). The study results indicated that smartphone learners gained more vocabulary than both the paper materials group and the e-mail group. The researchers also observed that the use of “smartphones can attract student’s interest and deliver study opportunities in helping them acquire new vocabulary” (p.226). The same findings on examining a comparative study by using these two different vocabulary learning methods were found by Başıoğlu and Akdemir (2010) in which the experimental group integrated vocabulary activities on students’ mobile devices to learn unfamiliar words, and the control group studied the same vocabulary on paper flashcards. The study lasted six weeks for both groups. The results showed that “learning vocabulary programs working on smartphones improved students’ vocabulary acquisition comparing to traditional vocabulary learning tool” (p.6).

2.10 Using mobile platforms for learning

Various studies and discussions on technological devices have favored the use of smartphone devices in learning language environment and the attitudes and skills of the language learner in a positive way. According to Koole’s (2009) study on the FRAME (Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education) model, she suggests that smartphone learning happens in an interaction between the learner and the device. Thanks to new technology, the device works as the learning bridge between the learner and the activities. She also states that it is essential to evaluate mobile unique qualifications such as physical appearance (e.g. size and weight), other features like input capabilities (e.g. keypad or touchpad), output capabilities (e.g. screen size and audio working mechanics), processor suggests that mobile users’ skills also play an important role in learning vocabulary in the target language. Mobile learning experience and background knowledge, as well as feelings towards vocabulary activities, will have a positive or negative impact on the way in which learners involve themselves with mobile-based assignments for learning a second language.

Moreover, with regard to psychological aspects, learning happens when there is a comfortable learning environment for learners, and it is important for learners' feelings to embrace the learning process with interest. Learning difficulties with mobile phones have also been investigated by researchers like Wang and Higgins (2008), who conducted research on whether students feel that the mobile learning process is advantageous to their learning outcomes; In addition those learners, in Stockwell's (2008) study, for instance, he wrote that the mobile phone was "not an instrument for studying" and that they "couldn't get into study mode with the mobile" (p. 260).

This view of the difficulties with smartphone devices as learning instruments is one that can be overcome if smartphones are to enter classical learning settings. Yet, there might be an issue that finally diminishes the obstacles by itself by recognizing smartphones as very effective and active learning instruments for L2 learners and widespread for the entire world, although many instructors may have a bad impression of using mobiles for the formal learning process. But smartphones have flexible portability and accessibility for today's classrooms which means these devices can be accepted as supplemental learning instruments if school administrators and teachers take them as essential and advantageous learning devices for both offline and online materials. In the past, mobiles are used to be the distracting busy tools for students. Teachers believe that mobile devices are obstacles to the learning process in the classroom, particularly due to students' mobile ring tones, cheating e-mails, texting, and tweeting (Trilling and Fadel (2009). Now, it has been observed that personal computers are used by everyone, and in the spirit of "digital natives" as stated by Prensky (2001), there are learners who perceive learning through technology devices like computers are as more accepted than through paper materials" (P.67).

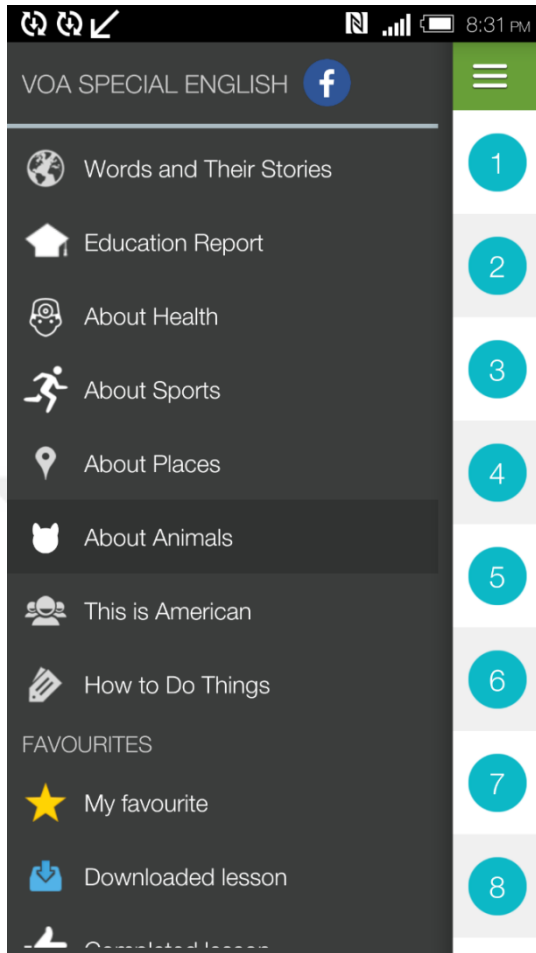


Figure 2. *The interface of the VOA Mobile Application and its Features and Categories for reading Activities*

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the research methods and procedures, such as the purpose, research questions, variables, and participants used in this study. It also gives evidence about the participants, materials, research instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of data statistics.

This study examined with how employing an extensive reading program (ERP) through the mobile application program Voice of America (VOA) can change the attitude of EFL students toward reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge at ISHIK University. In other words, what kind of ERP is effective for the aim of changing students' attitudes toward ER and vocabulary acquisition through reading in second language learning? For the purpose of the experimental research studies, two questions are addressed: 1) what are students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language at ISHIK University? and 2) Does extensive reading through the VOA mobile program lead to L2 vocabulary acquisition?

3.2 Philosophical Paradigm

A philosophical paradigm is a “theoretical belief informing the methodology and thus providing the context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” Crotty (1998) Philosophical perspectives or paradigms (worldviews or sets of basic beliefs) can be divided into two essential types: *positivism* and *constructionism*, as shown below (P.3.).

- *Positivism*

The notion of science and its challenges is to find out the true nature of reality and how it “truly” functions. According to Guba (2000), “the basic belief system of positivism is rooted in a *realist* ontology, that is, the belief that there exists a reality *out there*, driven by immutable natural laws and the most important objective of any scientific field is to predict and control natural phenomena” (p.19-20).

- (a) To oblige the **realist ontology**, the positivist is constrained to practice an *objectivist* epistemology. “If there is a real world operating according to natural laws, then the explorer has to behave in ways that put questions directly to nature and allow nature to answer back directly. It is also described in the form of time- and context-free generalization. Some of these latter generalizations take the form of cause-effect laws” (Guba, 2000, P.20).
- (b) **Epistemology: Dualist/objectivist** – “it is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture. Values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes” ” (Guba, 2000, P.20).
- (c) **Methodology: Experimental/manipulative** – questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subjected to empirical tests (falsification) under carefully controlled conditions” (Guba, 2000, P.20-21).

- **Constructionism**

This is the notion that all “knowledge is based on human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p.42). *Constructionism*, also known as interpretivism, “believes that human social action is inherently meaningful. To understand a particular social action (e.g. teaching, friendship, voting), the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action” Fay (1996) cited in Schwandt, 2000 p.19).

3.2.1 Designing and selecting the paradigm. From these theoretical perspectives, I selected paradigms or stances that are used to understand the world of language ability Lynch (2003) and ER, the language program as depicted in Figure 3.

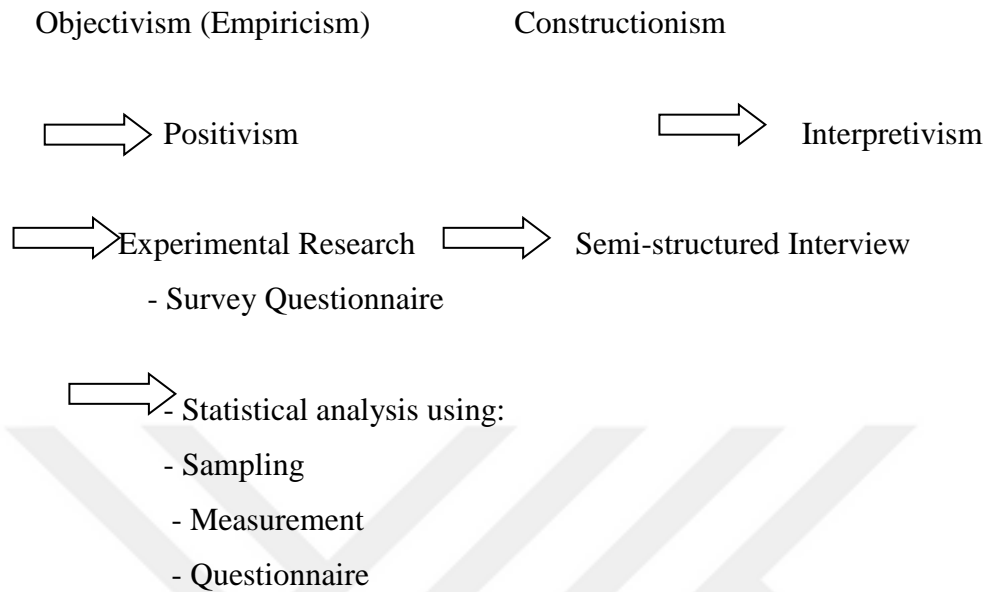


Figure 3. *Objectivism (Empiricism) Constructionism.* From “*Extensive Reading; Its Effects on EFL Thai Students’ Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency and Attitudes,* K. Tamrackitun (2010, p.54.).

From the first column on the left in Figure 3 above, five elements are shown. “Objectivism refers to epistemology while positivism refers to theoretical perspective. Experimental and survey research relate to methodology, whereas statistical analysis, sampling, or interviewing represent methods of study. In the second column on the right, constructionism refers to epistemology and interpretivism refers to a theoretical perspective, whereas interviewing represents a method of study” Tamrackitun (2010, p.54.).

To gain knowledge about the *constructionism* theory, I supplied an independent existence and stand meaning find the meaning that already exists in them Baliki (2007). Through a positivist lens which described that knowledge can be improved on vigilant measurement of the goal of reality that available “out there” in the globe. Furthermore, there are laws or theories that govern the world, and these need to be tested or verified so that we can understand the world. Thus, “the accepted approach to research in the view of the positivist is that a researcher begins with a theory, collects data that either

support or refute the theory, and then makes necessary revisions before additional tests are conducted” Creswell (2003, p.7).

With respect to constructionism, the interpretivist sees the relationship which involves aspects of the social world, such as languages, as not being external and independent of our attempts to understand them. This theory shows that reality is reliant on human attempts to know it; through interaction of participants in the research process, the social construction must be understood subjectively (Lynch, 2003, P.377). Therefore, in this present study, I implemented an experimental research design by using an attitude questionnaire, pre- and post-tests, and a semi-structured interview. The interpretivist paradigm was used, as it is directly engaged with implementing the program and a socially interpreted in order to learn the practical phenomena while teaching the ERP through both the mobile application program and printed materials were conducted in this study.

3.3 Research Design

Researchers and practitioners tend to use qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies to examine their studies, depending on the purpose of the research. After surveying the area of language learning and teaching the English language to different levels in both academic and non-academic settings, and taking into consideration the aim of the current study, which is to answer the research questions, a mixed method research design was the most suitable approach to gain the most dependable evidence. Therefore, the data for this study was collected through quantitative (questionnaire, pre- and post-test) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) research instruments.

3.4 Setting

The study was conducted at ISHIK University in Erbil City, Iraq, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching (ELT) department, during the fall semester of the 2014-2016 academic year. The private ISHIK University has its own study program based on an English language curriculum with several departments: Pharmacy, Engineering, Accounting, Management, Banking, English and Turkish Languages. ISHIK University is following some Turkish Universities in implementing a prep school, as first-year students must pass the general English language proficiency exam to

attend their majors in the first academic year. Otherwise, they have to study for at least one year in the prep school to improve their English. This new education system was implemented and submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education in 2011 with the aim of standardizing the education system.

3.5 Participants

The participants in this study were 48 first-year Kurdish EFL university students registered in their first reading course during the fall term of the 2015-2016 academic year and they were randomly selected out of 100 students. They were aged between 18-22 years. Of these, 27 were male and 21 were female. All of the participants were majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Faculty of Education at ISHIK University in Erbil city. The participants were taught English as a foreign language at the prep school for one year prior to their admission to the college. The participants were heterogeneous, come from Iraq and Turkey, and they have different cultural and educational backgrounds.

I decided to carry out the experiment with first-year students in their first semester at ISHIK University, Faculty of Education in English Language Teaching (ELT). The subjects enrolled in ELT department have already completed the prep school during summer. The focus of reading course at ISHIK University is to teach students reading skills such as identifying topics and topic sentences, understanding main ideas, writing summaries, and outlining.

To carry out the experiment, I decided to run the regular reading classes in order to introduce the ER program (the treatment) as part of the reading course. I took the teacher's role in the reading course, asking the faculty to teach in order to apply the ERP through the mobile application learning program VOA for the experimental group and graded reader materials for the control group. The reading classes were held at the English Language Teaching department and the experiment was successfully conducted in these classes. The following sections are described in detail of the procedures to fulfill the current experiment.

3.6 Procedure

3.6.1 Type of sampling. The participants were 48 first-year Kurdish university students: 27 males and 21 females enrolled in two groups receiving two different treatments during their regular reading classes, which they studied in the Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching department at ISHIK University. I randomly assigned the first group as the “experimental group” and the second group as the “control group”.

1. Experimental Group: The experimental group (*Reading through VOA mobile application*) received ERP treatment (i.e. practiced reading extensively), reading approximately five articles or more of their interest in different categories, accompanied by vocabulary enhancement activities for each week.

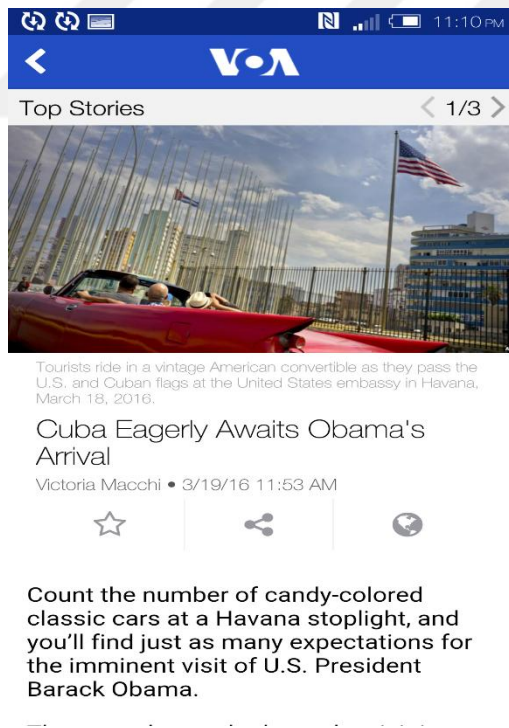


Figure 4. The interface of VOA and Individual Reading Activities.

2. **Control Group:** The control group received graded reader materials from Macmillan, Oxford, and Penguin Readers. They sometimes read in the classroom and mostly outside of the classroom. They also read about one or two books during a week and they usually choose a book of their interest, accompanied by vocabulary enhancement activities for each week.

Both groups were given class time to read inside the classroom on their smartphones (for experimental group) and on printed materials (control group). They were also encouraged to continue practicing extensive reading outside class hours. The experiment took place four days per week over eight weeks during the first semester.

3.6.2 Data collection instruments. In this study, different methods were used to obtain data. The instrumentation of the current investigation consisted of three basic measures. First, an attitude questionnaire was arranged and used to examine the students' attitudes and beliefs about extensive reading. The second tool was a semi-structured interview to obtain more authentic data. The third measurement was a vocabulary levels tests (VLT), originally designed by Nation (1990), which was implemented to evaluate the students' vocabulary knowledge at four different word frequency levels. The below are the explanation of each instrument.

3.6.2.1 The questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared by modifying selected items from previous studies (Alshwairkh, et al, 2003) in order to define students' attitudes and beliefs towards L2 reading and learning vocabulary through extensive reading, on both the mobile application program VOA and with printed materials. The questionnaire was modified to fulfill the objectives of the study.

At the beginning of this study, the pre-questionnaire was given to both groups to learn about the participants' attitudes toward L2 reading. After conducting the implementation (ERP) for reading lessons, other items (13 through 18) were added to the post-questionnaire for the experimental group only in order to collect data about these students' attitudes toward the ERP they received on the mobile application program VOA.

The questionnaire items in this study fall into the closed questions category, where the participant has to select only one of these choices: “strongly disagree/ disagree/ undecided/ agree/ strongly agree”. Thus, the questionnaire is one of the important tools designed to gather information about students’ attitudes toward extensive reading.

After the adaptation of the questionnaire, it was translated into the Kurdish language, which is the participants’ first language. This was done to confirm participants’ understanding of the items on the questionnaire and provide reliable outcomes of what they think. As an English-Kurdish translator, I first translated the adapted questionnaire into Kurdish to help the students understand the meaning. After that, I communicated with five sworn expert translators at the Ministry of Justice who approved and confirmed the Kurdish translation.

3.6.2.2. The semi-structured interview. The purpose of the semi-structured interview conducted was to confirm the reliability of the results and the validity of the questions asked in the questionnaire. Fifteen students (8 males and 7 females) were selected randomly and asked some face-to-face questions to understand their learning experience through mobile (see appendix E) application programs, and to see whether implementing such a program changed their learning attitude toward second language learning. In the experimental group, students’ reading comprehension of the texts from the VOA mobile application was also evaluated. A 10- to 15-minute interview was carried out with 15 volunteer participants at the end of this study.

3.6.2.3 The VLT. This study also conducted a pre-test and post-test to measure the participants’ vocabulary knowledge during an eight-week teaching period for ERP. The test was obtained from Alshwairkh, (2004) of the vocabulary levels test Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001) (see appendix B). The data from VLT was analyzed through Man- Whitney Test.

The vocabulary levels test (Nation, 1990) is the most popular and recognized test freely available to researchers. The original VLT (Nation, 1990) contains 90 items divided into five frequency levels, where each level contains a group of 18 words. The

test is designed to measure the breadth of vocabulary knowledge. An example of an item from the first section (2000 word level) of the VLT is provided below:

1. *Actor*
2. *Pen* _____ *part of a house*
3. *Horse* _____ *animal with four legs*
4. *Agree* _____ *to have the same believe. Shoe*
6. *Wall*

The VLT is considered both discrete and selective. Read and Chapelle (2001) explained the VLT as a “context-independent test that tests vocabulary in isolation without a reference to linguistic context. It is also selective, as it focuses on certain vocabulary items. Thus authors call the VLT a trait definition test, i.e. it assesses whether the learners know the words in the test or not. The VLT is a test of passive and receptive vocabulary. It measures even the slightest knowledge of a word meaning, or what (Nation, 2001) calls “partial knowledge of words” (p.21).

In this study, only the 2,000-, 3,000-, and 5,000-word levels and the academic vocabulary from the VOA wordbook (2011) were tested. The 2,000-word and academic vocabulary levels, according to (Nation , 2001), “they may cover 90% of the vocabulary of authentic English texts and the academic vocabulary items that are important as they are common to most academic texts and it also makes possible for teachers to help their students acquire them” (p.189-191). The 3,000-word level was included as the threshold for reading unsimplified English texts Laufer (1997), and a prerequisite for successful communication (Nation, 2001)

3.6.3 Extensive reading program. After receiving approval from the University’s Faculty of Education, I planned to implement an ER program with the mobile application learning program (VOA) and printed graded reader materials. The ER program has some formal procedure: implementing the ER program, reading materials, reading levels, amount of reading, obtaining the reading resources, *and monitoring and evaluating the ER*. The following descriptions include all tasks.

3.6.3.1 Implementing the ER program. According to (Day and Bamford, 1998), extensive reading can be included in a second language curriculum in at least four broad ways:

- a- as a separate, stand-alone course
- b- as part of an existing reading course
- c- as a non-credit addition to an existing course
- d- as an extracurricular activity

After discussing the four possibilities with administrators in the English Language Teaching (ELT) and taking into consideration the particular circumstances of ISHIK University, it was decided that the most appropriate way to integrate the ER program was to make it part of an existing reading course in 2015-2016 academic year.

3.6.3.2 What should students read? In the experimental group; students read on their mobile smartphones and downloaded the mobile English learning application VOA. Since most language learners have different levels, they can find different types of reading topics such as daily news, science, education, sports, health, politics, culture, American stories, etc. In the control group, students can get various available books and stories of different levels at the library, from beginners upward. These books include classic works of literature adapted from the originals for second language students. These materials are attractive, interesting, and of appropriate levels.

3.6.3.3 Obtaining the reading material. For the experimental group, students did not face difficulties with finding different and enjoyable articles to read since they could easily search for and find their reading interests on the VOA mobile application program. For the control group, students only read through printed materials, as an extensive reading program requires as many titles as possible in order to give students as many options as possible. There were hundreds of simplified books that students would understand and enjoy and they borrow them at the library.

3.6.3.4 Library. For the experimental group, the library was not needed as students read silently in places of their own choosing in the classroom and even outside the classroom whenever and wherever they prefer, due to mobility and the available network service inside the campus. For the control group, I set up an extensive reading library in each reading classroom. Students also were free where to read while having their own selected books.

3.6.3.5 Reading levels for both groups. The VOA mobile application program has many possible features for learning American English. Learners can tab to different levels (level one, level two, and level three), and they can select reading articles from these different levels according to their language proficiency and the topic they would like to read about.

In the control group, students, are given graded readers materials which the topics and titles of the books are usually shown from the cover to know about reading levels as usually these books have six levels.; from beginners upwards. Each level is marked with a certain color. The books often consist of classic works of literature adapted from the originals for L2 learners. I helped students find the reading level at which they could read comfortably and fluently.

I also guided the experimental group learners on how to use the VOA program on their mobile devices, and showed the program and its features so that the students could manage the articles and other categories. At the same time, I also guided students from control group to borrow printed books (graded reader's materials) on the library shelves according to interest and reading levels.

3.6.3.6 Defining extensive reading. At the beginning of the first reading lesson, the program of ER was presented in the classroom during the first week of implementing the program. I first asked the students about their past experiences with reading both in first and second language. In the first lecture, the ERPs for both groups were explained in a regular teaching lesson plan (see appendix D).

I started by explaining what extensive reading is, comparing it with intensive reading, and discussed why they were being asked to do it. Then I explained how

students can read extensively while choosing their own interests. Students were also told not to use dictionaries since they did not need to understand every single word and only needed a general understanding of what they read. For experimental group, I explained that students could take advantage of their free time and use their mobile devices not only for checking their social networks, e-mails, and chat rooms, but also for reading whatever topic or text they would like to read about and learn from in order to benefit from the program.

3.6.4 The Experiment Period (First Week). *Pre-Test and Pre-Questionnaire*

After receiving confirmation from the University dean's office to teach two first-year groups at the Faculty of Education in the English Language Teaching (ELT) department in order to implement the ER program through both VOA for the experimental group and graded reader materials for the control group, I made sure that I was ready to incorporate the ER program into the reading classes.

In first week, I met the students in the two groups at the time and on the days scheduled for each group (four meetings per week).

3.6.4.1 Administration of Pre-test and questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire and the pre- test (VLT) were administrated to the participants for both groups in second meeting of the first week before start implementing the program. Students were asked to answer the items in the questionnaire in order to assure that the students' performances on the test and responses were not affected by any extraneous factors. In addition to that, the ethics of research, the students were told that they were part of an experiment for an MA thesis.

The two instruments (the pre-questionnaire and the pre- test) were administrated with my proposed administration time of 70 minutes: 20 minutes for the questionnaire and 50 minutes for the vocabulary test.

The questionnaire papers were collected and after that students were given the vocabulary test. Students received the pre-test and were asked whether they felt comfortable and relaxed to do the pre-test. This was done so as to avoid external issues that could affect the results or participants' comfort.

3.6.4.2 The experiment: weeks 1-8.At the beginning of implementing the ERP program, students in the experimental group were introduced to the mobile application learning program VOA, which they downloaded on their mobile phones for Android and IOS (See 3.4.1.2. for a detailed description of this meeting). In the experimental group, students were provided with careful orientation and guidance on how to download and use the program with its portability and accessibility.

For the control group, I also explained the importance of the ER program through reading graded readers and how to choose books from different levels.

Other needed instructions about ER for both groups were explained, for example to avoid overusing dictionaries and to stop reading if the text or article on VOA or the books are too difficult or uninteresting. Students were assured that there would be no pass or fail in their academic study, since the main purpose of this program was to enjoy reading as much as possible. Both groups were told that each student should read for as much time as they have, whenever and whatever they want to read.

3.6.4.3 The finalizing week (post-test, post-questionnaire, and semi-structured interview). After adapting the ER program successfully in both groups for 8 weeks, the same VLT was administrated as a post-test. It was given to the subjects in the experimental and control groups at the end of this study. The pre-questionnaire was given to the two groups at the beginning, now it was again administrated as a post-questionnaire, but in order to investigate the subjects' attitudes toward the ER program in the experimental group, some other questions (items 13-18) related to VOA were added to the post-questionnaire (there were not included in the pre-questionnaire). Similarly, since the VOA mobile program was not implemented in the control group, the extra questions were excluded from the control group's post-questionnaire as well.

The semi-structured interview was conducted with a mixture of questions with predefined answers as well as those where the interviewees were free to say whatever they liked (see appendix E). "One advantage of an interview over a questionnaire is that interaction with the students can improve the chances that the information elicited is

accurate and complete, Gradman and Hanania (1991. P.181). “The main purpose of the interview is to ask the informants to clarify questions of attitudes Færch and Haastrup (1984) and to learn more about their attitudes toward reading English extensively” (P.120). A 7- to 10-minute interview was carried out with 12 participants (7 males and 5 females), as they volunteered and were randomly selected outside the classroom at the end of the ER program.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the data was collected from 48 Kurdish EFL first-year students studying at ISHIK University in Erbil city. This data was obtained by using basic descriptive statistics, i.e. mean scores, standard deviations, percentages, content analysis.

This section describes the data analysis procedure applied in this research.

To answer the first question of this study, data was collected through the attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews. The results gained from the questionnaires were analyzed statistically via SPSS (version 20.0). Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to analyze and report the collected data. In addition, for the purpose of supporting the data collected from the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was carried out with 15 students. This method helped me to learn more about human behavior, as our beliefs, attitudes, values, and opinions are often shown in communication, especially when talking face-to-face Fraenkel and Wallen (2001). The results were analyzed through content analysis.

As for the second research question about vocabulary gains after implementing the VOA mobile application program, and graded readers materials, students' vocabulary knowledge was investigated through the vocabulary level test (VLT). The test was given at the beginning and the end of this study to compare the results before and after implementing the program. The results of the VLT were analyzed through Man- Whitney Test and standard deviation and mean scores, which were given according to the scale of correction and grading (**2,000 word level, 3,000 word level, 5,000 word level and academic word level**).

Table 1

Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Procedures

Research Question	Data Collection Instrument	Data Analysis
The below questions were addressed in this study:	Likert Scale attitude questionnaire	Descriptive statistics (Data number, , percentage, mean and s.deviation)
1. What are students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language?	Semi-structured interviews with students	Content analysis
2. Does extensive reading through the VOA mobile program lead to L2 vocabulary acquisition?	VLT test (pre- and post-test)	Descriptive statistics (Data number, percentage, mean and s.deviation and Mann-Whitney Test)

3.8 Limitation of the Study

To confess that the sample size of participants was not enough, and an eight-week teaching period for the ERP was a short time. These facts may have reduced the chance to find out students' learning development in reading comprehension. Though quantitative data were examined in this study (data were gained from the questionnaire and VLT tests), more reliable data was also collected qualitatively by using interviews.

In addition to this, there are other variables in ER which they cannot be controlled for example the VLT test was multiple choice question format. According to Dupuy and Krashen (1993), there are many reasons that this test may not be the most applicable test for evaluating vocabulary gains from exposure to extensive reading texts. It is clear that the multiple choice is very limited and other lexical access speed gains, recognizing patterns, collocations are ignored by this kind of question technique.

Another issue which relates to controlling the group also limits the explanation of the findings. Despite instructing the participants not to use dictionary apps on their mobile devices and paper-based dictionaries to look for unfamiliar words while reading,

there was no control over the use of such dictionaries because students read outside of the classroom as one of objectives of the program. In spite of this limitation, the present study is essential in the field of English language teaching as it gives another alternative to English language teachers to use technology tools. Students cannot be forced not to use their mobile devices as one of their personal and social needs, so there is a better alternative to keep students busy with their mobile phones for learning purposes.



Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Overview

In the following analysis, the results of the participants' attitudes in questionnaires are presented first, followed by the semi-structured interviews and reading comprehension tests (VLT).

4.2 Findings of Research Questions

After implementing the VOA mobile application for the experimental group only, students' attitudes and vocabulary size were analyzed through statistical measurements for both research questions. The following are the research question findings.

4.2.1 Findings of research question 1. The findings for the first research question show positive effects of the ERP on EFL students' reading comprehension, and provide certain evidence of reading improvement together with a positive attitude towards the VOA mobile application program for extensive reading. The following are the findings of the pre- and post-questionnaire and semi-structured interviews given in this study.

4.2.1.1 Findings of the pre- questionnaire. The students' attitudes toward the ERP among both the mobile application program users (experimental group) and graded reader users (control group) were examined by analyzing the attitude questionnaire administered at the beginning and the end of this study in order to see whether their attitudes about ER changed positively or negatively. In this presentation of the results, the quantitative descriptive data is presented first, followed by the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews in order to gain more information on students' feelings about the ERP.

In order to answer the first question, "What are students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language at ISHIK University?" the data findings were reported in descriptive statistics through means, standard deviation, and percentages, for each separate phrase. I followed the below criterion in answering this question:

To identify the length of the 5-point Likert- scale (the minimum and the maximum), the range was calculated ($5 - 1 = 4$). The questionnaire was tested on the basis of a questionnaire which contains 12 items (pre-questionnaire) for both groups and six more items (post-questionnaire) for the experimental group only, to measure students' attitudes after implementing the mobile application program for ER.

The five- point likert scale question mode were answered by the by choosing “strongly disagree” which equals 1 point, “disagree” for 2 points, “undecided” for 3 points, “agree” for 4 points, or “strongly agree” for 5 points. The range was then divided by the greatest value to obtain the length of the cell ($4 / 5 = 0.80$). After that, the least value in the scale was added (the scale began with number one) to identify the maximum of this cell.

The length of the cells is shown in (Table 2) by the distribution of the cells' length according to the 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 2
The Range of Agreement with the Relevant Values

The range of agreement	Value of the mean
Strongly disagree	<1.80
Disagree	From 1.80 to <2.60
Undecided	From 2.60 to <3.40
Agree	From 3.40 to <4.20
Strongly agree	From 4.20 to 5

Table 2 shows the range of agreement with the relevant values. To regulate the strength of the value of the mean, if the score of the mean was between 4.20 and 5, it showed a “strongly agree” degree from the participants' points of view. A mean score between 3.40 and <4.20 implied an “agree” degree from the participants' points of view. A mean score between 2.60 and <3.40 indicated neutral agreement, while between 1.80 and <2.60 indicated “disagree” and <1.80 indicated “strongly disagree”.

Table 3

Provides Details of the Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Pre-questionnaire Responses

Q No.	Questionnaire Items	Control Group		Experimental Group	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1.	I enjoy listening to someone read aloud.	3.56	1.10	3.24	1.05
2.	I like to talk about ideas and information after I have read something.	3.92	0.75	3.64	0.95
3.	I find extensive reading personally rewarding.	3.2	0.79	3.24	1.13
4.	Learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language.	3.08	1.19	3.32	1.18
5.	ER helped me read an English article or book in my main areas of interests for general information.	3.44	0.96	3.28	1.31
6.	I don't know many English words.	2.88	1.18	2.84	1.07
7.	Reading courses help me to learn new vocabulary.	2.84	1.38	3.2	1.38
8.	I avoid reading texts when I feel that they contain difficult words.	3.28	1.20	2.88	1.09
9.	I find reading frustrating when texts contain many new words.	2.76	1.09	3.44	1.19
10.	I regard vocabulary as one of the most important factors in language learning.	2.88	1.06	3.56	0.92
11.	New vocabularies in ERP helped me bring out more prior knowledge into reading comprehension.	2.56	1.31	3.12	0.97
12.	Reading courses help me to learn new vocabulary.	2.56	1.31	3.12	0.97

As reported by the mean scores shown in Table 3, the first item in the pre-questionnaire recorded nearly equal distribution of students' agreement about enjoying listening to someone read aloud in both groups. Pointedly, while 71.97% of students in the control group agreed on the item, 64.8 % agreed in the experimental group. In the

second item stating that students talk about ideas and information after reading something, most of the students (74.2%) agreed in the control group and 72.8% agreed in the experimental group, which means a high level of agreement is reported and the groups have a similar score distribution. In third item, mean scores and percentages revealed that reading is personally rewarding among students since a high level of agreement is reported, with 64% (M=3.2) in the control group and 64.8% (M=3.24) in the experimental group. This shows almost identical responses.

Moreover, in the fourth item stating that learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language, the result the for control group is 52% (M=2.6) and for the experimental group it is 64% (M=3.2), which means more than half of the students in the control group agreed while the positive response in the experimental group was higher. Furthermore, mean scores and percentages show that students' responses that learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language is medium based on the results in the control group (61.6%) (M=3.08) and the experimental group (66.4%) (M=3.32).

Accordingly, students' ratings of the fifth item, which is about whether ER helped students read an English article or books in their main areas of interests for general information, were positive. The percentage of the control group is 68.8% (M=3.44) and for the experimental group it is 65.6% (M=3.28). Lastly, in answering the sixth item regarding knowing vocabulary, students showed almost the same mean scores: 56.8% (M=2.84) for the control group and 57.6% (M=2.88) for the experimental group.

Consequently, all of the above-mentioned results are related to general L2 reading attitudes in the second language. The results indicate that the students' rating responses to the questions for items 1 through 6 are comparable in both the control and experimental groups, and their answers are almost equal before implementing the ERP.

In addition, Table 2 includes six more items (7 through 12) in the pre-questionnaire related to learning and the importance of L2 vocabulary for students. Item 7 asks if students believe that reading courses help them to learn new vocabulary. Based

on their answers in the pre-questionnaire, the score of control group is 56.8% (M=2.84) and for the experimental group it is 64% (M=3.2).

Moreover, the question in item 8 revealed that students answered negatively, especially in the control group, saying they avoid reading texts when they feel that the texts contain difficult words. This is shown in both the percentage and mean score in the control group (65.6%) (M=3.28) and in the experimental group (57.6%) (M=2.88).

Furthermore, in item 9, the results are (55.2%) (M=2.76) for the control group and (68.8%) (M=3.44) for the experimental group. These results refer to students' low level of agreement in the control group regarding finding reading frustrating when texts contain many new words. For item 10, the findings in the experimental group recorded a very high level of agreement (71.2%) (M=3.56) in asking the question of whether vocabulary is one of the most important factors in language learning, compared to the control group results (57.6%) (M=2.88). Furthermore, item 11 asked whether new vocabulary in the ERP helped students bring out more prior knowledge into reading comprehension, and the mean scores showed almost equal agreement for the control group (51%) (M=2.56) and the experimental group (62.4%) (M=3.12). In the final item which is about reading courses helped students to learn new vocabularies. Students in control group scored (51.2%) (M= 2.56) means students are fairly agree and higher level of agreement is reported in experimental group (62.4%) (M=3.12).

The results of items 7 through 12, which are related to learning vocabulary, showed almost equal distribution of students' agreement in both groups before implementing the ERP for learning vocabulary in the target language.

4.2.1.2 Results of immediate post-questionnaire. After implementing the ERP through the VOA mobile application for the experimental group, students' general reading comprehension increased as they were asked in items 1 through 16, and they showed a positive attitude towards reading in L2 with mean scores results (80%).

Table 4.1

Provides Details of the Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Post-questionnaire Responses

Q No.	Questionnaire Items	Experimental Group	
		Mean	S.D.
1.	I enjoy listening to someone read aloud.	3.88	0.97
2.	I like to talk about ideas and information after I have read something.	4	0.65
3.	I find extensive reading personally rewarding.	3.68	1.07
4.	I read for enjoyment if I can choose what I want to read.	4.16	0.55
5.	Learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language.	4.52	0.71
6.	ER helped me read an English article or book in my main areas of interests for general information.	4	0.91

In this analysis as shown in Table 4.1, the post-questionnaire was analyzed to measure students' experience in second language general reading (items 1-6). The mean scores on items 1 through 6 revealed a high level of agreement, with 80.5% of students responding positively after implementing the ERP through the VOA mobile application program. Table 4.1 above reveals the average of all participating students' ratings for each item in the post-questionnaire.

4.2.1.3 Findings of the experimental group delayed post-questionnaire. The results in items 7 through 12 in the post-questionnaire examine the students' vocabulary knowledge in L2 by analyzing the attitude questionnaire administered to the experimental group. In this presentation of the findings, the mean scores for each item are presented as described in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Provides Details of the Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Post-questionnaire Responses

Q No.	Questionnaire Items	Experimental Group	
		Mean	SD
7.	I don't know many English words.	4.16	0.62
8.	Reading courses help me to learn new vocabulary.	4.16	0.37
9.	I avoid reading texts when I feel that they contain difficult words.	4.44	1.00
10.	I find reading frustrating when texts contain many new words.	1.68	1.11
11.	I regard vocabulary as one of the most important factors in language learning.	4	0.87
12.	New vocabularies in ERP helped me bring out more prior knowledge into reading comprehension.	3.96	0.97

Table 4.2 gives the results of students' positive attitudes toward ER by analyzing the attitude questionnaire administered at the end of this study. In this statistic analysis, the post-questionnaire was examined to measure students' attitude of the necessity of vocabulary in reading in L2 (items 7 through 12). The mean scores for each item are shown in Table 3.2, which revealed a high level of agreement with 82.88 % of students responding positively after implementing the

ERP through the VOA mobile application program. This indicates that students' attitudes about vocabulary learning increased through exposure to the VOA ERP.



4.2.1.4 Findings of experimental group post-questionnaire. The results for items 13 through 18 in the post-questionnaire examine students' attitudes toward using the VOA mobile application for reading activities in the second language. by analyzing the post questionnaire on the basis of the items (13-18) to measure student's attitude at the end for experimental group only, the results were shown in the table below, the mean scores for each item are reported, as students held positive attitudes toward using mobile devices for learning the second language.

Table 4.3

The Descriptive Statistics for Items 13-18 in the Post-questionnaire

Q No.	Questionnaire Items	Experimental Group	
		Mean	SD
13.	I enjoy reading through VOA mobile app.	3.76	1.09
14.	I feel my ability to read in English gets better through mobile.	4.2	0.76
15.	When I enjoy a particular article, I try to find more texts in the same app (VOA).	3.88	1.33
16.	I find reading through mobile is easier than reading from books.	3.64	1.58
17.	Reading is boring by mobile apps.	1.88	0.78
18.	According to my experience, I think reading through VOA mobile app is an effective means of learning English.	4.08	0.76

In this analysis, the post-questionnaire was analyzed to measure the participants' attitudes about reading on mobile devices. The responses of the post-questionnaire showed that the experimental group gained a high level of agreement in mean scores (83.46%) for items (13-18) comparing to control group questionnaire results while they read through graded reader's materials with the statistical mean scores (61.7%) for items (1-12). According to the results shown in Table 4.3, the post

questionnaire answered the first research question to reveal participants' attitudes toward using the mobile VOA program for ER, which is the most important value of this study while the VOA was only integrating to the experimental group. Students' ratings for each item gained a high level of agreement based on the strong evidence in the measurement of mean scores in the post-questionnaire compared to the same items asked in the pre-questionnaire.

4.2.1.5 Findings of semi-structured interviews. To complement the quantitative findings gathered by the questionnaire and obtain accurate results about implementing the mobile application program for extensive reading, semi-structured interviews were managed with 15 students at the end of this study to provide qualitative evidence about the students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA mobile application program in the ERP. In this study 15 students (8 males and 7 females) from the experimental group were interviewed to give their own views and they were chosen randomly. The interviewees volunteered by filling out and signing the consent form to be interviewed (see appendix F). Each interview took approximately 7 to 10 minutes. The following questions were asked and then analyzed through content analysis as described below.

In the first interview question, the students were asked about their attitude of using their mobile devices for extensive reading in the second language. Eleven out of 15 students (74%) stated that using mobile devices for reading activities helped them to enjoy reading more than ever before. To confirm students' answers with positive or negative replies, I specified their answers with the phrases and words with numbers (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) most often used to describe technology gadgets' positive qualifications, such as: (3) *easy to read*, (2) *modern life style technique to read*, (4) *free available texts* and (4) *choosing diverse topics or texts upon user's personal interest what he/she likes to read*. *Boring* (2), *eye tiring* (1) and *small font* answers were featured for the negative part (as shown in Table 5). Students also stated that using mobile phones for reading can be the most effective learning tool. In relation to these points, students made the following comments:

Since our reading lesson through mobile application started, I personally enjoyed the first articles shown by the teacher in the classroom as there was the text and the audio clip as well and then it gave a lot of different text choices to read such as sports, health, technology and other news reports (student #1).

The best thing about using mobile for learning English language, nowadays, everyone has mobile for almost all life needs for communicating, surfing on internet, taking photos, listening to music or even for learning a language. I assume VOA motivated me to pick up more words and read much more than I did before. Every night, before going to sleep, I read at least one text (student #2)

Table 5

The Word Analysis Results of the First Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

Question One					
<u>Positive</u>	F	%	<u>Negative</u>	F	%
easy to read	2	13.33	boring	2	13.33
modern life style technique to read	3	20	eye tiring	1	6.66
free available texts	4	26.66	small font	1	6.66
choosing diverse topics	2	13.33			
Total	11	74%		4	26%

To ensure availability of diverse topics and various subjects in the VOA program, in the second interview question, the students were asked about their concerns regarding finding different topics and articles which are available for users as the most important characteristic for extensive reading; students read what they like to read as self-selection of reading texts is the main basis of extensive reading. As a new application program for learning English, VOA provides various topics and texts for its users to read. The results showed that Eighty-seven percent of student participants said they found interesting topics on VOA. To complement their responses, they used some common words and phrases such as *enjoying different topics* (5), *exciting world news* (2), *engaging texts* (3), and *easy to understand* (1). 13% of the students said they did not read it much with no answer (1) as number (1)

was represented for the least answer score grade. The following are students' comments about using mobile devices for learning purposes.

I have never used my mobile for learning foreign language due to my unaware of the advantages of today's smart phone features but when I learnt about the VOA program now I often read a text about different topics which are available on the program. Once I read a topic, there are yet other interesting articles that drag me to read more to get more knowledge (student #3).

Table 6

The Word Analysis Results of the Second Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

	Question Two					
	<u>Like</u>	F	%	<u>Dislike</u>	F	%
Enjoying different topics		5	33.33	No	2	13.33
Exciting world news		4	26.66			
Engaging texts		3	20			
Easy to understand		1	6.66			
Total		13	87		2	13

The findings from participants' responses (see Table 6) showed that smartphones can be a supportive learning tool for the learning and teaching process that provides intensive knowledge and supports anyone who wants to learn the target language. The most frequently used phrases and words were analyzed with percentages: *enjoying different topics* (33%), *exciting world news* (26%), *engaging texts* (20%), and *easy to understand* (6%). 13% of students said they did not read it much with no answer (6%) with the least answer score grade.

After exposing students to mobile devices in the classroom for reading, they believed that reading through VOA as part of an everyday routine can help improve their reading comprehension skills, thus increasing their interest to read in the L2. The following comment by one of the students reveals their ideas about VOA or mobile device use in reading classes:

At using mobile for learning English provides me independence and flexibility to spend more time on the topics that I read through VOA. As the text is easy to read and very knowledgeable to my general information in topics that I read and it will finally increase my interest to read more. So it really helps me to develop my reading comprehension (student #4).

Table 7

The Word Analysis Results of the Third Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

Question Three	
<u>Answer</u>	F
<i>Supportive</i> (4), (3), and	4
<i>Beneficial</i>	3
<i>Easy to learn English</i>	3
Good	3
Yes	2
Total	15
	% 100

The results of the answers to the 3rd interview question (see Table 7) showed that 100% of the participants found that VOA was very useful for learning the second language, and they had no comprehension problems. To assist their responses, they used some constant words and phrases such as *supportive* (4), *beneficial* (3), *good* (3), and *easy to learn English* (3). Furthermore, there were two students who did not give an answer for justification of their answers, which also supports the positive results, but with the least answer score grade.

To learn about the participants' general understanding of various available readings in VOA subject categories (science, health, sports, education, economy, and agriculture), participants were asked in the 4th question whether they believed that they gained better reading skills by reading articles on VOA. Almost all of the students replied *yes* to this question, expressing that they were able to comprehend a text through using cognitive skills via different reading strategies such as scanning,

skimming, predicting, thinking aloud, using text structure, summarizing, and questioning. Students use these strategies while they read a text in order to understand the text's main meaning, which helps them to become fluent in the target language. Some students made the following comments:

Yes I do, because when I read texts through my mobile screen regularly, now it easily helps to learn how to scan a text in a quick way and then comprehend it to my general understanding about what I read in the text. In this way, I felt really satisfied with this user friendly program for taking reading lessons (student #5).

I do believe that my understanding in reading a text getting better with using reading strategies. Once I ask myself what I have read proves my thinking skills to understand the whole text even though there words I don't understand in the text sometimes (student #6).

Table 8

The Word Analysis Results of the Fourth Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

Question Four	
<u>Answer</u>	F
Feeling satisfied	4
Improved my reading skills	5
Increased my passion for reading	2
Comprehend my understanding	2
Yes	15

The findings for understanding whether the students believed that VOA improved their general reading skills in the target language are shown in Table 8. All of the students stated that they had improvement in reading because of VOA, while the most frequent answers gathered from the students were: *feeling satisfied* (4), *improved my reading skills* (5), *increased my passion for reading* (2), and *comprehend my understanding*.

When asked in the fifth question about their preferences to discuss and talk about the articles they read in VOA and how they felt about VOA, most of the participants revealed their interest to talk about topics they read by sharing new words and phrases in English they had learned from the articles in VOA. Fifteen students answered *yes*, as they showed their great interest to talk about what they had comprehended in the English language in the articles. In the following comments a student stated:

A very useful part about VOA is, integrating with the variety of everyday life texts available in the program which can be interesting to discuss among others when the conversation comes up about a topic. When I read a text, I try to learn all the new words and phrases then I can use them to talk about with my colleagues, in this way, I often prepare myself for conversations (student #7)

Table 9

The Word Analysis Results of the Fifth Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

The Positive Part	The Negative Part
Desire to talk	No
Share knowledge	Hardly ever talk about it
Learn more about American culture	Difficult to discuss
Increase confidence to talk	
Helpful for speaking	
Improve knowledge	
Gives general information	
Make you satisfied with learning	
Easy to speak after reading	
Enjoyable for conversation	
Learning new vocabulary	
Helpful for reading skills	
12 (yes)	3 (No)

The results in Table 9 reveal participants' positive attitudes toward enjoying and sharing in discussions after what they had read in the VOA program. Twelve students answered *yes* to this question and showed their improvement with positive

words and phrases such as: *having desire to talk about the topic, share knowledge, helpful for reading passages, learning new vocabularies, helpful for reading skills, and enjoyable for discussion*. Only three students answered *no* to this question by stating: *hard to discuss* and *don't like to talk about it*.

Moreover, when students were asked whether they read more texts after reading an interesting topic or article on VOA, the students showed their positive feelings about reading more on VOA after they were assigned reading through mobile devices. They claimed that the texts or articles they read on VOA cannot be found in a printed book, citing examples such as everyday news, the newest information about health and technology, or other important daily happenings around the world. The students stated that using mobile devices for learning English not only taught them to read, but also opened their eyes and made them like learning English by reading texts. As presented from this data, students believed that ER through VOA could serve as a catalyst to learning English faster.

I can learn about the world through VOA. It is like navigation for me to track what's happening around the world and what are new discoveries in science and other important events which makes me to check VOA at least every 6 hours to read what is in the news. All these information builds my confidence to read more and learn more (student #8).

In my free time, I really don't have a motivation to read books, but when I connect my mobile with internet access, the program notifies me with latest news and I directly check it out to choose favorite articles that I'm interested in reading from VOA. Through this activity, I read more texts and learn new words from topic that I'm reading (student #9).

Students were also asked about their most comfortable places to read on their mobile devices, when they read according to their free time, and where the best place to enjoy their reading was. The table below reveals their most preferred answers.

Table 10

The Word Analysis Results of the Sixth Question in the Students' Semi-structured Interview

Question six					
<u>Positive</u>	F	%	<u>Negative</u>	F	Total
Enjoyable	3	20	Boring	2	13.33
Involving	2	13.33	Difficult	2	13.33
Forget about time spending	2	13.33			
Build confidence	2	13.33			
Motivation to read	2	13.33			
Total	11	74		4	26

The results for this question were gathered through positive and negative phrases and words to represent students' responses toward reading more texts on VOA after they had already read one before. Most of the students (74%) answered *yes* to this question, and four students (26%) said *no* (see Table 10). While *enjoyable* (20%), *involving* (13%), *forget about time spending* (13%), *build confidence* (13%), and *motivation to read* (13%) are the phrases for positive part, *boring* (13%) and *difficult to read by mobile* (1%) were significant answers in the negative part.

Additionally, when I asked the students from which they read articles or texts from mobiles when they were at college, at home or any public places. 13 students replied that they benefitted from VOA mobile application program for reading different topics everywhere while they could download the texts with audio files including the text and play it back offline (while often they didn't have internet access due to internet connection restrictions) as one of the accessible trends of this application. This confirms that an ERP on mobile devices can attract students' attention to engage in learning the target language no matter where they are. The following statement from a student proves this.

In my free time, I often read texts in my mobile outside of classroom as I feel less stressed and I would like to enjoy spending my free time with reading texts in order to validate an English environment with my friend, other people

around me. It is useful to establish a strategy to speak better and be more engaged in English language outside of formal lesson in the target language. Once I read a text, it is easy for me to speak with friends outside of classroom and finally I will be able to communicate with others without anxiety or shyness (student #9).

Lastly, to learn about students' awareness of their vocabulary learning by using smartphones as a multi-functional reading support tool, the students were asked whether they learned vocabulary through VOA. The findings showed that students provided positive answers (100%) for this question, and they described the program with phrases such as: *helpful, remember learnt words, memorize new words, understand the text easily, and learn synonyms* (see Table 11). Some comments from students are given below:

After downloading the VOA program, now I have more exposure to the common words that I need them to speak English. Every day, when I am on my way to the college and even on my way back home, I often check my saved vocabulary list that I have found through VOA. Before I had learnt words that were written on papers but because I didn't always carry them with myself besides, I didn't have such a chance to review the words like I do now through my mobile (student #10).

Using mobile phones for learning new words is very effective for learning English as myself I don't usually have the habit to bring my vocabulary copybook with myself, but I can carry my mobile wherever and whenever I go. And I also review the new words during my leisure time (student #11).

Table 11

The Word Analysis Results of the Eighth Question in the Students' Semi-Structured Interview

Question eight	
<u>Answers</u>	F
Helping me	2
Learns new vocabulary	5
Remember learned words	3
Memorize more words	1
Understand the texts easily	2
Learn synonyms	2
Yes	15

In summary, the results gained both from the attitude questionnaire and the semi-structured indicated students' positive attitudes toward the use of mobile devices for ER. The experimental group claimed that using mobile devices for learning the target language can be an effective means to enjoy learning with personal interest, or to "read what you like to read". The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with participants in the experimental group demonstrated parallel results with the pre- and post-questionnaire in relation to the first research question about students' attitudes toward using mobile devices for ER.

4.2.2 Findings of research question 2

The findings for the second research question concern whether the VOA mobile program for extensive reading leads to L2 vocabulary acquisition. The results showed better scores on the VLT post-test after conducting the ERP, which provides certain evidence of vocabulary learning. The following are the results of the pre- and post-VLTs reported in this study.

4.2.2.1 The findings of VLT tests. The results on the VLT tests were determined according to the grading scale with the following scores: **2,000 – word level** - score 30 points, **3,000 – word level** - 30 points, **5,000 – word level**- 30 points, and **Academic word level**- 30 points. Total score - 120 points. The second question was "Does extensive reading through the VOA mobile program lead to L2 vocabulary acquisition?" To respond this second research question, we should divide the question into the following sub-questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences between the moderate marks of the experimental group and the control group in the pre-measurement of the students' achievement at the 2,000-word level, 3,000-word level, 5,000-word level, and academic word level?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the moderate marks of the experimental group and the control group in the post-measurement of the students' achievement at the 2,000-word level, 3,000-word level, 5,000-word level, and academic word level?

3. Are there any statistically significant differences between the moderate marks of the experimental group and the control group in the pre- and post-measurements of the students' achievement at the 2,000-word level, 3,000-word level, 5,000-word level, and academic word level?

To respond the first sub-question, the mean and the standard deviation of the pre-test for the experimental and control groups were extracted as shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Results of the Pre-test for the Experimental and Control Groups

Test	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig
2,000 words	Control	23	20.78	4.379	25.00	276.000	-.238	.812
	Experimental	25	20.40	5.590	24.04			
3,000 words	Control	23	15.22	3.437	22.59	243.500	-.913	.361
	Experimental	25	16.32	5.289	26.26			
5,000 words	Control	23	9.78	4.056	21.26	213.000	-	.123
	Experimental	25	11.68	3.794	27.48			
Academic words	Control	23	8.09	3.489	25.83	257.000	-.633	.527
	Experimental	25	7.32	2.719	23.28			
Total score	Control	23	53.87	10.889	23.52	265.000	-.465	.642
	Experimental	25	55.72	14.550	25.40			

Table 12 reveals that there are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups by using a Non-Parametric Mann-Whitney Test. The P-value of total score is 0.642, which is greater than the significance level of

0.05 in the pre-test which indicates the equivalence of the two groups in all levels before the treatment was implemented. This revealed that the respondents had almost near vocabulary knowledge before conducting the treatment with both the VOA mobile application and graded reader materials.

To answer the second sub-question, the standard deviation and the mean were calculated for both the control and experimental groups in the post-test in all levels as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Results of the Post Academic Achievement Test for the Experimental and Control Groups

<i>Test</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Performance</i>
2,000 words	Control	23	22.09	4.022	21.04	208.000	-	.099	7.56%
	Experimental	25	23.76	3.929	27.68				
3,000 words	Control	23	17.74	3.583	19.43	171.000	-	.016	17.02%
	Experimental	25	20.76	4.186	29.16				
5,000 words	Control	23	10.87	4.526	17.78	133.000	-	.001	41.31%
	Experimental	25	15.36	4.434	30.68				
Academic words	Control	23	10.22	4.000	17.52	127.000	-	.001	47.55%
	Experimental	25	15.08	4.941	30.92				
Total Score	Control	23	60.91	11.453	16.93	113.500	-	.000	23.07%
	Experimental	25	74.96	13.312	31.46				

The difference is significant at 0.05 (*p >0.05)

Table 13 shows statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups using a Non-Parametric Mann-Whitney U Test. For two independent groups at the significance level of 0.05 in the post academic achievement test (post-test) in favor of the experimental group in all levels except the 2,000-word level which has significant differences at level 0.1 between the control and experimental groups.

To answer the third sub-question, a comparison was made between the standard deviation and the mean for the experimental and control groups in the pre and post academic as shown in Table 13, which indicates that the experimental group performed better than the control group on the post-test.

Table 14

Results of the Pre & Post Academic Test for the Experimental and Control Groups

Test	Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Ranks	Mean Rank	Z	Sig.
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
2,000 words	Control	20.78	4.379	22.09	4.022	3 ^a	10	-2.835	.005
						17 ^b	10.59		
					3 ^c				
	Experimental	20.40	5.590	23.76	3.929	1 ^a	2		
					21 ^b	11.95			
					3 ^c				
3,000 words	Control	15.22	3.437	17.74	3.583	0 ^a	0	-3.946	.000
						20 ^b	10.50		
					3 ^c				
	Experimental	16.32	5.289	20.76	4.186	0 ^a	0		
					25 ^b	13			
					0 ^c				
5,000 words	Control	9.78	4.056	10.87	4.526	3 ^a	12.33	-2.596	.009
						17 ^b	10.18		
					3 ^c				
	Experimental	11.68	3.794	15.36	3.434	1 ^a	1		
					22 ^b	12.5			
					2 ^c				
Academic words	Control	8.09	3.489	10.22	4.00	2 ^a	4	-3.652	.000
						18 ^b	11.22		
					3 ^c				
	Experimental	7.32	2.719	15.08	4.491	0 ^a	0		
					25 ^b	13			
					0 ^c				
Total score	Control	53.87	10.889	60.91	11.453	1 ^a	1	-3.987	.000
						20 ^b	11.50		
					2 ^c				
	Experimental	55.72	14.550	74.96	13.312	0 ^a	0		
					25 ^b	13			
					0 ^c				

a. Negative Rank (Post-Test < Pre-Test)

b. Positive Rank (Post-Test > Pre-Test)

c. Ties (Post-Test = Pre-Test)

There are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test at the significance level of 0.05 for both the control and experimental groups using a Non-Parametric Wilcoxon Test. It is observed that the development of the VLT results for the experimental group is greater than the control group as shown in Figure 5, which represents box plots of the post-test for the experimental and control groups. In responding at the 2,000-word level, students in the control group scored $M=20.78$ on the pre-test, and after conducting the ERP, they gained higher scores ($M=22.09$). In the experimental group, the students' results were $M=20.40$ for the pre-test and $M=23.76$ for the post-test. Furthermore, in answering at the 3,000-word level, the participants in the control group scored $M=15.22$ on the pre-test and gained higher scores on the post-test ($M=17.74$). Similarly, in the experimental group, the participants earned better scores on the pre-test ($M=16.32$) and the post-test ($M=20.76$). Moreover, the 5,000-word level also showed high scores for both groups on the post-test, with mean score ratings of $M=16.32$ for the pre-test and $M=10.87$ for the post-test in the control group. But in the experimental group, the mean scores were $M=11.68$ for the pre-test and $M=15.36$ for the post-test. Finally, the academic word level again revealed high scores in both groups: $M=8.09$ in the control group for the pre-test and $M=10.22$ for the post-test, while better scores were reported in the experimental group for the pre-test ($M=7.32$) and the post-test ($M=15.08$).

To conclude, the statistical findings show the effective use of an ERP in reading classes in an EFL context to learn the second/foreign language, but surprisingly, the mean scores in the experimental group using VOA for reading in the target language showed higher scores in enhancing students' vocabulary size. Thus, based on the results (see Table 14), the participants' performance in the experimental group improved more than that of the participants in the control group. Furthermore, the results indicate that reading on mobile devices can provide more input, as it increases students' opportunities to be exposed to words learned before and broadens some of their existing vocabulary knowledge, including the new vocabulary they have learned through the ERP.

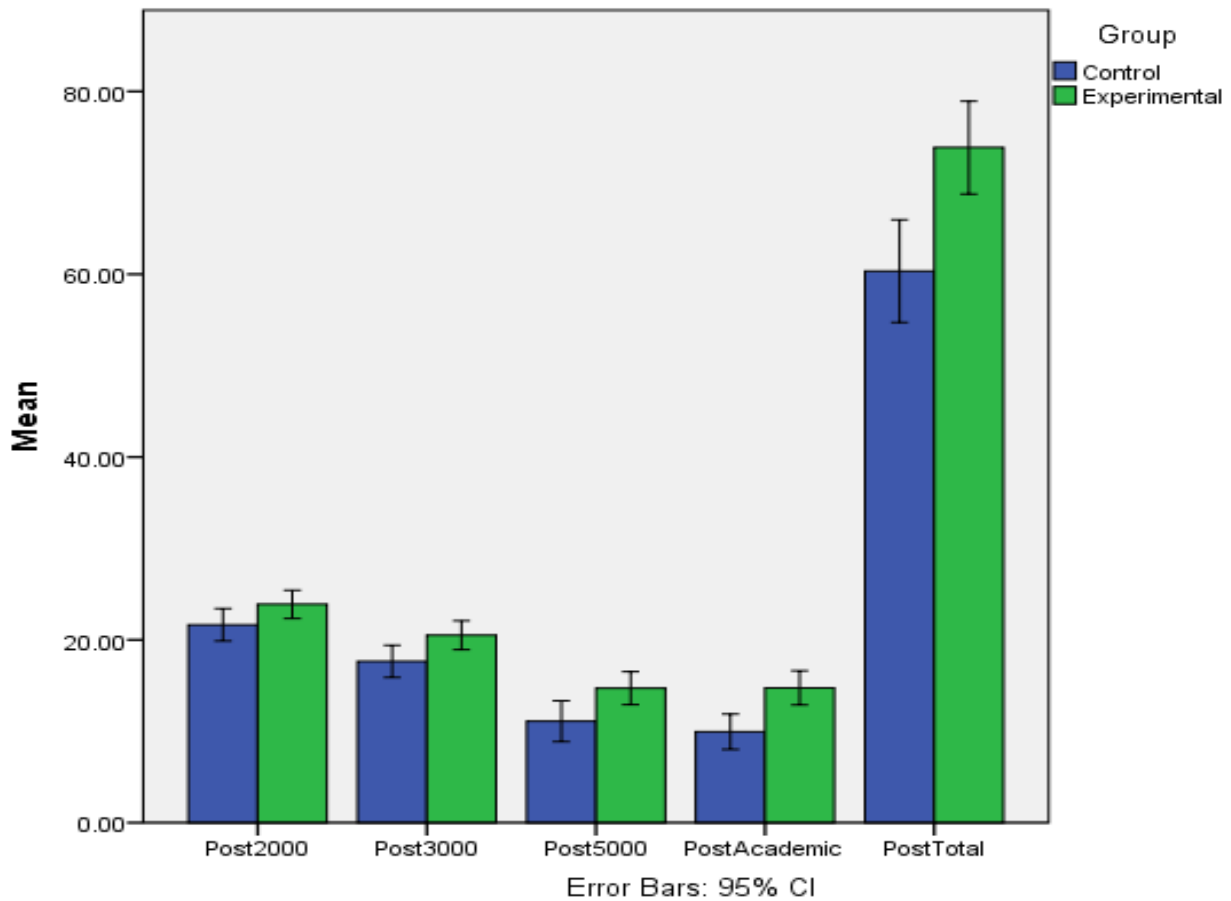


Figure 5. Comparison of Variables between Control and Experimental Groups

4.3 Summary

This chapter shows both analytical and descriptive explanations of ERP and the effect of using mobile phones for learning in today’s globalization era. Students’ attitudes towards the use of the smartphone application VOA for ERP were positive; in addition, students had positive feelings towards reading on mobile devices rather than reading paperback books. Students also earned higher scores on the VLT post-test than the control group, which was only taught with graded readers. In addition, it is also indicated that students believe that using smartphones for reading purposes increased their willingness to learn and study the English language with joy and desire.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings of Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' attitudes towards using the mobile application program Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) for reading in the target language, and also to examine whether extensive reading through VOA leads to vocabulary improvement. The data in this study was collected both quantitatively and qualitatively, which consisted of using three data collection instruments: an attitude questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and a vocabulary level test (VLT) for both the pre-and post-test.

5.1.1 Discussion of findings RQ1: what are students' attitudes towards the use of the VOA, SE mobile application program for reading in the target language? The first research question attempted to investigate the attitudes of first-year EFL students at ISHIK University toward using the smartphone application program VOA for extensive reading. To identify attitudes about using mobile devices for reading texts and articles, the data was collected through the questionnaire and then analyzed using descriptive statistics. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to obtain further precise evidence about events, descriptions, comments, and students' behavior. More importantly, data consistencies and differences were examined in the VLT results for pre- and post-tests. The answers of the participants were analyzed inductively.

According to the data gathered from the questionnaire, the VOA mobile application program for extensive reading was perceived by EFL students as one of today's most essential mobile application program for learning a foreign language in an EFL teaching setting. The data findings from the questionnaire also answered the research question by highlighting that students have positive attitudes about the ERP using mobile devices. The same results were found in Liang Ting's (2013) study, as he found that mobile learning enables students to interact and embrace experiences in both physical and social settings, and makes learning more enjoyable, as shown by positive results in the attitude questionnaire for reading texts in a foreign language. There is another similar finding by Monika (2015), whose study results revealed that mobile technologies have the potential to provide positive learning experiences to

learners as they engage in learning activities outside the classroom, at any time and in any location.

The questionnaire was conducted to learn about the learners' attitudes toward the ERP using graded reader materials for the control group and the VOA mobile application for the experimental group. The findings offer that 68% of the participants in this class had positive attitudes towards reading on mobile phones. In addition, the positive results indicate that reading on mobile screens increases modern e-readers' desire to embrace learning the target language. This result is in line with Koch's (2006) statement about extensive reading on screen devices as reading for pleasure where learners were allowed to choose reading texts which suited their interest. To support the effectiveness of extensive reading, it can be seen that the participants had positive attitude on using mobile devices for learning the second language because they were able to choose texts based on their interests and read more texts since they enjoyed the first one.

According to the results from Participants' attitudes towards ER and significantly through mobiles had gained higher scores in each item in the questionnaire. It can be assured that the participants' interest and desire to read on mobile devices increased compared to reading printed materials. The leading reason behind comparable results is that learners nowadays have different learning environments and social factors that push them to use various tools for gaining knowledge, and these learners energize their learning abilities with new technological devices. Hung (2011) states that "[S]tudents today interact with multimodal texts that are different from traditional linear printed texts in that meanings are conveyed through a combination of modes, such as written words, spoken language, still pictures, and moving images" (p.12).

By the same token, using mobile devices for reading can develop not only reading skills, but also language proficiency skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. (Krashen, 2004b) states that those who spend their free time on reading activities show better improvement in reading, grammar, vocabulary, and writing.

Supporting the quantitative findings obtained from the post attitude questionnaire, the qualitative results gained through the semi-structured interviews indicated that participants in the experimental group benefitted from mobile device learning approaches while reading a great deal of texts for pleasure and engaging in recreational activities on VOA.

The interview with 15 students confirmed that their view of reading comprehension was gained a positive effect towards learning the second language. They understood the topics they read and enjoyed the diversity of reading articles. Some of the interviewees found the VOA application program was a bit hard to learn how to use and difficult to read at the beginning of implementing the program, but after a period of time, most had increased their desire to read quicker, loved the program more and preferred to continue involving in the program as the learners can choose when, where and what title of the topic they wanted to read in the VOA program.

The interview findings showed that most of the subjects indicated satisfactory attitudes toward ER and reading English texts in VOA. They also reported increased self-confidence in learning the target language through participating in the ERP by using their mobile smartphones for learning purposes, which is consistent with the interview answers in this study.

The findings in this study are parallel to those research studies found by Zurita and Nussbaum (2004) and Lan, Sung, and Chang (2007). These two studies observe that smartphones can assist students to develop their learning assignments in English language lessons. The findings also prove Sun's (2003) findings, as the same results were indicated with Taiwanese EFL learners who participated in an online ERP. The subjects gained a high level of reading capabilities and formed a positive feeling towards the reading program. Moreover, the findings in this study are also similar to the results gathered by Lan, et al. (2012), when participants' pre- and post-test scores revealed significant differences on the same reading comprehension tests in the MCER (Mobile Cooperative Electronic Reading) system. Additionally, other findings on students' attitudes toward using mobile phones for reading in a foreign language discovered positive results in reading and grammar ability among EFL university students Wang and Smith (2013), as the learners read various types of topics according to their own interests, such as entertaining stories, sports, jokes, and daily news.

5.1.2 Discussion of Findings of RQ 2: does extensive reading through the VOA mobile program lead to L2 vocabulary acquisition? For the second research question concerning vocabulary gains through the use of mobile devices in L2, a VLT (as a pre- and post-test) was utilized for gathering data. Based on the data analysis, there were significant differences in the test score results between the experimental group and the control group.

According to the mean scores and standard deviation on the pre-test and the post-test, in all word group levels, there were statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test at the significance level of 0.05 for the experimental group and the control group. For example, the results at the 2,000-word level revealed that the mean scores between the post-test within the experimental group (22.09) was greater than the mean scores between the post-test within the control group (20.78), in favor of the post-test (see Table 14). Therefore, it follows that students are more accustomed to learning vocabulary using mobile devices for ER than with graded readers.

In the experimental group, the progress in earning higher scores on the post-test might be the outcome of the improvement of vocabulary knowledge, since the students showed their interest and positive feelings toward the ease of using mobile devices for reading in the second/ foreign language.

Overall, the study findings confirm, as already shown, that an ERP approach using mobile devices can have an essential role in improving learners' second language reading abilities for today's human technology addicts. Smartphone users can keep using their mobile devices not only for phone calls, sending and receiving texts, taking photos, and chatting, but now they can also benefit for their own learning purposes as well. These advantageous are the most popular and stress free technique to accomplish learning language possibilities that is to read a great deal on their mobiles. Similar findings were also indicated in other studies (Chen & Chung, 2008; Hu, 2013; Lu, 2008; Stockwell, 2010), as these research results suggested that smartphones could provide a substitute source for learning vocabulary in the target language. Furthermore, in another study (Lu, 2008), students were asked to learn two groups of words using a traditional method (learning vocabulary on paper), or mobile phone text messages. The findings revealed that the students who used their mobile phones showed a better understanding of the words than those who were studied the vocabularies on traditional method which was paper based approach.

5.2 Conclusions

To conclude, the objective of this study was to explore the usefulness of using two different extensive reading programs; mobile devices as newly applicable learning instrument and graded reader's materials as traditional learning method in EFL classrooms and to learn about first-year Kurdish EFL College students' attitudes towards extensive reading and to assess their vocabulary knowledge in the target language. Accordingly, the study focused on the EFL students' attitudes and improving their vocabulary acquisition after implementing VOA mobile application program for experimental group and graded readers' materials for control group.

Depend on the study findings, both groups changed their attitudes towards reading in the target language positively and gained more vocabulary size, but the statistical and interview results showed better scores and higher level of agreement in experimental group using VOA comparing to graded reader's materials in control group while there are some reasons for VOA's popularity among students that smartphones can be an effective learning device for learning the target language due to two main reasons (1) diversity of choosing various articles: as one of the most sophisticated trends of the VOA program, readers can choose whatever they would like to read in different categories; (2) saving texts for later reading (offline): as students read an interesting topic they can download and read it later.

All in all, the results indicate that mobile smartphones were quite helpful in adding new aspects to learning activities and teaching techniques, because of the personal and portable nature of the devices. The idea of using mobile devices for learning could shed new light on how to form new possibilities for learners to discover their own learning autonomy to develop their language skills. Thanks to mobile technologies, this study can take a new step by differentiating the effects of using mobile phones for extensive reading.

5.3 Recommendations

The present study was conducted at a private university in Iraq. Therefore, a greater sample from more than one institution might give more representative results about ERPs that use mobile devices, graded reader materials, and students' attitudes toward using both mobiles and paper books for their learning strategies. Furthermore, this study focused on Kurdish EFL students; it can be interesting for future studies to experiment on students studying English in different countries, observing their attitudes toward using mobile programs. Last but not least, a study can be conducted with focuses on different levels of students applying an ERP through mobile phones and how learning is personalized based on instruction.

By the same token, more research should also be done so that administrators and policy makers support that it is necessary to implement mobile devices in modern technology-oriented classrooms as an effective learning tool to support to language teachers and learners.

5.4 Pedagogical Implementations

The findings in this study reveal positive attitudes toward ERP in the target language and more vocabulary knowledge by VOA mobile application program. I personally claim that this approach may increase student's learning abilities in the target language. Language curriculum designers, linguists and teachers may consider the following suggestions for increasing student's learning language approach with new technology, mobile as an example.

As it is mentioned before that VOA is an American radio and website, and currently mobile application program for both android and IOS mobile software systems is available providing learning English language around of the world. It is a cost-free tool for reading and listening. It is a source of daily news and information for millions of English learners worldwide. The VOA broadcasting program in both radio and mobile application provides various ever day life communications such as formal and informal conversations, leisure activities, university campus life related settings, student-teacher conversations, asking and answering prices in shopping centers, work environments, social events at birthday parties and ceremonies, dining at restaurants, and holiday setting discussion such as Thanksgiving, Christmas,

parades, and Halloween, and finally sports and political events. All these above topics related life communication can be implemented in the real classroom for ER in the target language effectively and engage students with the authentic situations that happen with everyday life communications.

Furthermore, findings also revealed that students imitated the same pronunciation during listening the VOA audio files within the reading activities. I affirm that this may increase their English-speaking abilities. Thus, students will not have problems with pronouncing the words in English.

In addition to that, the results in attitude questionnaire revealed that students had positive feelings towards reading by mobile devices and they provided the experience of autonomous reading in the targeted language anytime and anywhere. I assert that this may allow their English language learning to be personalized. Language expertise and curriculum designers may integrate mobile devices into classroom teaching activities with other instruction topics such as causal conversation in college cafeteria, shopping malls, and various locations on and off campus. Thus, students take ownership of their learning, which make them more engaged about learning the target language.

In terms of vocabulary gains presented in the results of VLT posttest, mobile phones as newly fresh learning tool to transfer language learning with technology, gives autonomous learning approach to learners to take benefit of their own smartphones not only for making phone calls or chatting but also for increasing their interest to learn more words.

However, other technology limitation issues need to be considered in relation to the pedagogical use. First, to continuously update the mobile readers with latest information in the VOA program, e- readers need to connect their mobiles with WIFI to have internet connection in order to have more vocabulary with new texts or articles the program uploads every day. As student often have difficulties with the internet connection in the region due to low quality of internet service provider companies. It sometimes could be irritating and distracting, which perhaps discouraging instead of motivating in learning process.

Finally, mobile phones can be used as an alternative method of traditional vocabulary learning such as vocabulary notebooks, heavy books and dictionaries. It

is quite certain that learning with mobiles can bring easiness and convenience as the newly technology devices can provide for the learning process anywhere and anytime as VOA, mobile devices can efficiently facilitate vocabulary learning through diverse topics and texts. However, the weakness of technology gadgets decrease the possibilities in learning outcomes, specifically, when talking about the mobile function system and more importantly lack of multiple ways of interaction between a learner and the technology.



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APPENDICES

A. Pre Attitude Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am a MA student in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey. At present, I am in the process of conducting a research project in part of completing my MA program. My research study is entitled; *The effect of mobile application Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) to Extensive Reading(ER) to improve student's reading comprehension.*

This questionnaire was adapted and selected from previous studies (Doctorow et al., 2003) and (Alshwairkh, 2004; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Alshamrani, 2003) to fulfill the objectives of the study. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out the students' attitudes towards the use of VOA mobile application program and Graded Reader's materials and learning vocabulary through extensive reading in the target language. To evaluate the success of the program, your feedback here is needed. Please response to the following questions honestly.

Sangar S. Hamad

Instructor; GASHA Institute

MA Student, Bahcesehir University

Sangar85us@gmail.com

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions thoughtfully.

Name----- Faculty.....

Major: -----Grade-----

- Date_____

Sex: Male Female:

1. How long have you been studying English? 0-3 4-6 7-9 10-12
13-15 16-18.

2. Please circle the appropriate response to the following statements.

3. Rate the response according to the level of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and DN.

4. 1 is the least strong while 5 is the most agree which you can select only of these choices below:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I enjoy listening to someone read aloud	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like to talk about ideas and information after I have read something	1	2	3	4	5
3. I find extensive reading personally rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read for enjoyment if I can choose what I want to read	1	2	3	4	5
5. Learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
6. I don't know many English words	1	2	3	4	5
7. Reading courses help me to learn new vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I avoid reading texts when I feel that they contain difficult words.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I find reading frustrating when texts contain many new words.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I regard vocabulary as one of the most important factors in language learning	1	2	3	4	5
11. New vocabularies in ERP helped me bring out more prior knowledge into reading comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I find reading through mobile is easier than reading from books	1	2	3	4	5

B. Vocabulary Levels Test: Version 1 (Pre- posttest)

The Vocabulary Levels Test: Version 1 (Schmitt, 2000; Schmitt et al., 2001). This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

1. Actor
2. pen _____ part of a house
3. horse _____ animal with four legs
4. agree _____ to have the same believe
5. shoe
6. wall

You answer it in the following way.

1. business
2. clock ___6___ part of a house
3. horse ___3___ animal with four legs
4. agree ___4___ to have the same believe
5. shoe
6. wall

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. In the example above, these words are actor, pen, and shoe. If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, do not guess. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

Section I (The 2,000 – word level)

1. apologize
2. dust _____ the way someone or an animal acts
3. operation _____ winning
4. row _____ to express a regret for a mistake
5. behavior
6. victory

1. belong
2. crop _____ heat
3. flesh _____ meat
4. salary _____ money paid regularly for doing a job
5. secret
6. temperature

1. cap
2. education _____ teaching and learning
3. journey _____ numbers to measure with
4. parent _____ going to a far place
5. scale
6. trick

1. attack
2. charm _____ gold and silver
3. lack _____ pleasing quality
4. pen _____ not having something
5. shadow
6. treasure

1. campaign
2. factory _____ competition by opposing candidates
3. factory _____ a lot of money
4. pupil _____ person who is studying
5. sacrifice
6. wealth

1. adopt
2. climb _____ go up
3. examine _____ look at closely
4. pour _____ be on every side
5. satisfy
6. surround

1. bake
2. connect _____ join together
3. inquire _____ walk without purpose
4. limit _____ ask someone for information
5. recognize
6. wander

1. burst
2. concern _____ break open
3. deliver _____ make better
4. fold _____ take something to someone
5. improve
6. urge

1. original
2. private _____ first
3. royal _____ not public
4. slow _____ all added together
5. sorry
6. total

1. brave
2. electric _____ commonly done
3. film _____ to run after someone
4. chase _____ having no fear
5. local
6. usual

Section II: The 3,000 – word level

1. belt
2. climate _____ idea
3. executive _____ inner surface of your hand
4. notion _____ strip of leather worn around the waist
5. palm
6. victim

1. acid
2. bishop _____ cold feeling
3. chill _____ farm animal
4. ox _____ organization or framework
5. ridge
6. structure

1. professional
2. charity _____ long seat
3. jar _____ help the poor
4. mate _____ part of a country
5. mirror
6. province

1. boot
2. advice _____ army officer
3. lieutenant _____ a kind of stone
4. marble _____ tube through which blood flows
5. phrase
6. vein

1. apartment
2. candle _____ a place to live
3. draft _____ chance of something happening
4. horror _____ first rough form of something written
5. prospect
6. timber

1. betray
2. dispose _____ frighten
3. alert _____ say publicly
4. injure _____ hurt seriously
5. proclaim
6. scarce

1. encounter
2. illustrate _____ meet
3. inspire _____ beg for help
4. plead _____ close completely
5. seal
6. shift

1. assist
2. bother _____ help
3. condemn _____ cut neatly
4. announce _____ spin around quickly
5. trim
6. whirl

1. annual
2. concealed _____ wild
3. definite _____ clear and certain
4. anniversary _____ happening once a year
5. previous
6. savage

1. dim
2. junior _____ strange
3. odd _____ wonderful
4. maternal _____ not clearly lit
5. weary
6. magnificent

Section III: The 5,000 – word level

1. balloon
2. federation _____ bucket
3. novelty _____ unusual interesting thing
4. pail _____ rubber bag that is filled with air
5. veteran
6. ward

1. alcohol
2. apron _____ stage of development
3. hip _____ state of untidiness or dirtiness
4. lure _____ cloth worn in front to protect yourclothes
5. mess
6. phase

1. apparatus
2. compliment _____ expression of admiration
3. ledge _____ set of instruments or machinery
4. revenue _____ money received by the government
5. tax
6. tile

1. bulb
2. document _____ female horse
3. legion _____ large group of soldiers or people
4. mare _____ a paper that provides information
5. pulse
6. tube

1. concrete
2. era _____ circular shape
3. fiber _____ top of a mountain
4. loop _____ a long period of time
5. plank
6. convention

1. blend
2. devise _____ mix together
3. coalition _____ plan or invent
4. lease _____ groups organized together
5. plague
6. reject

1. abolish
2. drip _____ bring to an end by law
3. insert _____ guess about the future
4. predict _____ calm or comfort someone
5. soothe
6. thrive

1. bleed
2. collapse _____ one who often supports tradition
3. precede _____ fall down suddenly
4. rejecter _____ move with quick steps and jumps
5. skip
6. conservative

1. casual
2. desolate _____ sweet - smelling
3. fragrant _____ only one of its kind
4. radical _____ empty land
5. unique
6. wholesome

1. gloomy
2. gross _____ shortage of income
3. infinite _____ dark or sad
4. limp _____ without end
5. dissident
6. deficit

Section IV: Academic words

1. ethnic
2. labor _____ work
3. percent _____ part of 100
4. principle _____ general idea used to guide one's action
5. source
6. survey

1. element
2. fund _____ money for a special purpose
3. steam _____ skilled way of doing something
4. technique _____ change from liquid to gas
5. proportion
6. evaporate

1. investigation
2. enforcement _____ total
3. parameter _____ agreement or permission
4. consent _____ trying to find information about
5. sum something
6. fierce

1. sabotage
2. float _____ an act against others
3. influx _____ subject of discussion
4. topic _____ on water
5. incidence
6. perspective

1. colleague
2. erosion _____ actions against the law
3. format _____ wearing away gradually
4. panel _____ shape or size of something
5. inclination
6. violation

1. achieve
2. conceive _____ change
3. grant _____ connect together
4. link _____ finish successfully
5. modify
6. offset

1. convert
2. design _____ keep out
3. exclude _____ stay alive
4. facilitate _____ change from one thing into another
5. indicate
6. hostile

1. anticipate
2. compile _____ control something skillfully
3. convince _____ expect something will happen
4. denote _____ produce books and newspapers
5. manipulate
6. publish

1. equivalent
2. financial _____ rise in prices
3. forthcoming _____ concerning sight
4. inflation _____ concerning money
5. random
6. visual

1. alternative
2. ambiguous _____ last or most important
3. empirical _____ something different that can be chosen
4. overthrow _____ to remove from power
5. defeat
6. ultimate

C. Post Attitude Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am a MA student in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey. At present, I am in the process of conducting a research project in part of completing my MA program. My research study is entitled; *The effect of mobile application Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) to Extensive Reading(ER) to improve student's reading comprehension.*

This questionnaire was adapted and selected from previous studies (Doctorow et al., 2003) and (Alshwairkh, 2004; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Alshamrani, 2003) to fulfill the objectives of the study. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out the students' attitudes towards the use of VOA mobile application program and Graded Reader's materials and learning vocabulary through extensive reading in the target language. To evaluate the success of the program, your feedback here is needed. Please response to the following questions honestly.

Sangar S. Hamad
Instructor, GASHA Institute
MA Student, Bahcesehir University
Sangar85us@gmail.com

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions thoughtfully.

Name-----Faculty.....

Major: -----Grade-----

Date_____

Sex: Male Female:

5. How long have you been studying English? 0-3 4-6 7-9 10-12
13-15 16-18.

6. Please circle the appropriate response to the following statements.

7. Rate the response according to the level of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and DN.

8. 1 is the least strong while 5 is the most agree which you can select only of these choices below:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

1. I enjoy listening to someone read aloud	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like to talk about ideas and information after I have read something	1	2	3	4	5
3. I find extensive reading personally rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read for enjoyment if I can choose what I want to read	1	2	3	4	5
5. Learning to read English is an important skill for developing proficiency in a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
6. ER helped me read an English article or book in my main areas of interests for general information	1	2	3	4	5
7. I don't know many English words	1	2	3	4	5
8. Reading courses help me to learn new vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I avoid reading texts when I feel that they contain difficult words.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I find reading frustrating when texts contain many new words.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regard vocabulary as one of the most important factors in language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
12. New vocabularies in ERP helped me bring out more prior knowledge into reading comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I enjoy reading through VOA mobile app	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel my ability to read in English gets better through mobile.	1	2	3	4	5
15. When I enjoy a particular article, I try to find more texts in the same app (VOA)	1	2	3	4	5
16. I find reading through mobile is easier than reading from books	1	2	3	4	5
17. Reading is boring by mobile apps	1	2	3	4	5
18. According to my experience, I think reading through VOA mobile app is an effective means of learning English	1	2	3	4	5

D. Lesson Plan

ISHIK UNIVERSITY

EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM

1st year

Lesson plan

Date: 28th October 2015 (1st Class Meeting)

Instructor: Sangar Hamad

Level: pre-intermediate

Time: 45

Methods and Approaches: Communicative Language Learning, Task- based Approach, Top-down Approach.

Techniques: brainstorm, discussing, pair-work, information gap activities.

Materials: Video projector, worksheets, computer, Mobile App (VOA), authentic materials.

Language point: Extensive Reading through mobile application VOA special English

Overall Objectives:

- To develop reading strategies before, during, and after reading
- Students give their personal ideas about the topic
- To practise already gained language skills through reading extensively
- To use Technology well in a global society
- To promote life-long learning

Behavioural Objectives (The outcomes):

Students:

- will be able to use related vocabulary in meaningful context
- will be able to improve reading skills: fluency and speed
- will be able to deal with a problem they might be come across in real life by using the target language,
- will be able to improve speaking and listening skills while reading on VOA mobile application,

PROCEDURE: Warm-up:5'

Teacher greets the classroom and introduces the VOA special English program provided both by online mobile application. Extensive Reading (ER), will be explained and students will brainstorm about the topic and a brief presentation about the benefits of ER will be presented.

The teacher asks some questions about VOA, SE program

1. Have you ever heard VOA online education program?
2. Do you find this learning application interesting?

Pre- reading stage:

Introducing Extensive Reading:

Today I am going to introduce a new way of reading that can improve not only reading skills but also other English skills of speaking, listening and/or writing. That is extensive reading. Have you ever heard the term before? Do you know what extensive reading is? Does it work out for your learning? What are its benefits? Extensive reading is reading for fun or pleasure. That is, you just read what really interests you. Therefore, in this lesson, I will help you better understand this type of reading.

.....

Reading Stage:

Activity 1: Selecting an article from VOA, SE

1. Ask students to choose one of their interesting topics in the program
2. Play the audio text and students listen and read the article at the same time.
3. After reading it, students (Group3) will ask each other what was the topic about?

Activity 2:

1. Ask students to work in group of three to talk about their reading experiences
2. Ask students take notes over reading experiences shared from their classmates.
3. Students learn new vocabularies and phrases through reading the new articles and they make some sentence activities in the worksheet.
4. Ss give more examples about the new words they have just learned from the text.

Activity 3: closing and home assignment

1. Encourage Ss to further browse suggested reading topics on VOA.
2. Ask Ss to choose a story of their interest to read.
3. Encourage Ss to discuss new stories and vocabularies for next lecture

Example questions:

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR EXTENSIVE READING!

1. How much do you like reading in your first language?
2. How much do you like reading in English?
3. What difficulties do you have with reading in English?
4. How much time do you spend each week reading for pleasure?
5. What makes a book a good book?
6. What kind(s) of books/stories/websites do you enjoy reading most?
7. Tell about a good book you have recently read?
8. What is the best book you have read in Turkish and in English?

Words	<i>Sentences</i>
1. With all my heart	
2. A heart to- heart discussion	
3. Lose my heart	
4. Touch the heart	
5. Break the heart	
6. Chicken- hearted	

E. Semi- Structured Interview Questions

Q1: what is your opinion for using mobile for reading in second language?

Q2: Do you find various topics and texts in VOA?

Q3: How do you find VOA mobile application is helpful for ER?

Q4: Do you believe your reading skills getting better through reading articles in VOA?

Q5: As a reader, do you like to discuss and talk about a text you read in VOA? How?

Q6: Do you read more texts after you enjoyed reading of a favorite topic in VOA?

Q7: Where do you often read articles in VOA? at home, at college or somewhere else?

Q8: Do you pick up vocabularies when reading texts in your mobile? How do you do it?

**F. Consent Form for Experimental group Groups (semi-structured
interview)**

I agree to participate in a research project being conducted by Mr. Sangar S. Hamad, a MA student from Bacesehir University in Turkey. I understand that the purpose of this research project is to investigate extensive reading under the title; *The effect of mobile application Voice of America, Special English (VOA, SE) to Extensive Reading to improve student's reading comprehension* for ISHIK university students studying English in English language department in the academic year 2015.

I understand that my participation will involve recording my voice through asking some questions about reading experience through VOA mobile application. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that my name will not be revealed in any reports or presentations.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.

I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT UNDER THE CONDITIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Participant Name: _____

(Please write clearly)

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

G. Curriculum Vitae

SANGAR SALEH HAMAD

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Surname, Name: Hamad, Sangar
- Nationality: Kurdish
- Date / Place of Birth: August 08, 1985 / Erbil-Iraq
- Marital status: Single
- Mobile Phone: 00964 750 4862679
- E-mail: sangar85us@gmail.com

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- (Sep 2015-...): Bahcesehir University, MA in TEFL, Istanbul
- (2005-2009): Salahaddin University, College of Languages, English language and Literature
- (2002-2005): Kurdistan High School, Erbil
- (1986-2000): Zanin Primary and Secondary School, Erbil

EXPERIENCE

- Feb 2013 – present: English language Instructor, **GASHA Institute**
- Sep 2012 – Jan 2014: English Language Trainer, **European Technology and Training Center- German NGO**
- October 2011- Apr 2012: English Translator, **SETEC water Supply Co.**
- Sep 2010- Dec 2010: English Language Instructor, **Tan Language Center**

PUBLICATIONS, CERTIFICATES, CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

- May 2016: **VESAL ELT Conference** - Hamad, S. (2016) making request strategies by Kurdish migrants, non native speakers and British native speakers. *ELT Research Journal*, -----.
- March 2013: **English language pedagogy in Salahaddin University** – Enhancing Learning in English language department

- December 2012: **International Academic of personal Training and Leadership Development.**

SKILLS

- Computer-Related Skills: MS Office Tools, Internet & Microsoft Operating Systems.
- Foreign Languages (Oral & Written): English: Advanced, Turkish: Pre-intermediate, Arabic: Pre-intermediate.
- Social Skills: Extensive communicative, organizational and interpersonal skills
- Interests: Soccer, Basketball, Travelling, Reading.
- Job-related Skills: Education management, task-based teaching, assessment and evaluation, active teaching techniques, effective communication strategies.