

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT, READING COMPREHENSION AND EFL LEARNERS' AUTONOMY

***Fatemeh Alipanahi and Nesa Artishehdar**

Department of English Language, Zanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zanjan Iran

**Author for Correspondence*

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Forty-two intermediate students were selected as the participants of the study based on their performance on the Nelson English Language Test. They were randomly divided into control and experimental groups. Students in both groups took part in a reading pre-test, then during eighteen sessions read passages from Interaction 2 Reading book, and accomplished the exercises following each passage. Every four sessions, the experimental group took a quiz. Based on their performance on quizzes, the participants received a remedial instruction. At the end of the treatment, both groups took part in a reading post-test. To examine the autonomy differences in two groups, the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) was administered to both groups twice before the treatment and after it. Parametric statistics was used to analyze. The results indicated that formative assessment and remedial instruction have a significant effect on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. And level of autonomy. The results of this study could help course book designers, educational planners, material developers, foreign language institutes, teachers, and learners to provide a better context for foreign language learning and improving different language skills.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, EFL Learners'*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is likely to take up a large proportion of the time each student devotes to his/her university work. If students are unable to read and comprehend the key materials of a content area of the course, their ability to learn the skills and concepts of that subject will be severely hindered. Understanding the shapes of the letters and the words is not the whole story. Often the ability of decoding the text into understandable language is considered as being all that is required to be done, but it is only one element of the vast process of reading comprehension. Even when students decode the text effortlessly, moving along through a text and constructing meaning from it is a laborious task. Effective understanding of the decoded text is the most crucial part of the reading process in the educational setting. Many students wrongly believe that speedy reading could improve their ability to comprehend the academic texts. Efficient analysis and comprehension of texts is a complex process which plays a central role in academic success.

Without comprehension, reading is simply following the words which are seen by the reader. The words by themselves have no meaning and while students read for different reasons, the chief goal is to derive some understanding of what the writer is trying to convey and make use of that information – whether for fact gathering, learning a new skill, or even reading for pleasure. That is why reading comprehension is so important. Without this skill, gathering information by the learners can be hindered, and they may not be able to use it to function efficiently (Rivers, 1981).

According to Brown (2007), learning a language is a long and complex undertaking. The whole person is affected as s/he struggles to reach beyond the confines of her/his first language. Total commitment, total involvement, total physical, intellectual, and emotional responses are necessary to successfully learn and acquire the ability to use it in real life situations. Language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programed in a quick do-it-yourself kit.

According to Bachman (1990), Bachman & Palmer (2010), learning cannot be considered apart from teaching and testing. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learners to learn, and

Research Article

setting the conditions for learning. But, the most important aspect of teaching is to ascertain about the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Bachman believes that one possible way for teachers to ascertain students' learning is to use useful tests. Language teachers regularly use tests to help diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, to assess students' progress, and to assist in evaluating students' achievement. As assessment is an integrated part of any instructional situation, teachers use a variety of tests to collect information for their pedagogical purposes.

Fulcher and Davidson (2007) mention that the assessment shifts away from traditional methods and places emphasis on measuring how well students do or do not do. This qualitative assessment focuses on problem-solving, decision-making, analyzing, and interpreting information.

It gives learners information about how they are progressing toward goals and what the next step in the learning process might be.

This type of assessment which is founded on the assumptions of the post-method era of language testing and assessment espouses the view that alternative ways of thinking about learning and assessing learning are needed is broad-based, continuous, authentic, and grounded in knowledge of literacy requiring collaboration on the part of both students and teacher.

The important role of the reading skill in providing input for language learners along with students' lack of proficiency in this skill and their learning autonomy inspired the researcher to find an efficient solution to this problem.

Therefore, she decided to explore whether formative assessment, extracting students' problematic areas in reading and focusing on these weak points, can improve the reading skill of the students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

Participants

This study was conducted with 70 intermediate students learning English at Andishe Bartar Institute in Zanjan, including 29 males and 41 females. For the purpose of homogeneity, prior to research, a Nelson English Language Test (1976) was administered to the population as a proficiency test; 42 students – 16 males and 26 females – whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected as the participants of the study. Then, they were randomly assigned into control and experimental groups each including 21 students. All participants were in the age range of 16 to 20.

Instruments

Following instruments were used to conduct the present study:

1. *Nelson English Language Test (1976)* was used as a tool for homogenizing the participants of the study. The Nelson English Language Test is a battery including 40 separate tests for ten levels of language proficiency which range from beginner to the advanced. The levels are numbered from 050, 100, ..., to 500. Each test consists of 50 items. In the present study a test in intermediate level – 250A – was used.
2. *Preliminary English Test (PET)*: the reading sections of two different versions of PET which provide a practical way of assessing students' level of L₂ reading were used as pre-test and post-test. The reading part of PET is composed of 35 close-ended items that each correct answer to these items receives one point. The time needed for administration of the reading section of PET is about 60 minutes. The students' answer sheets were scored according to the answer key provided by the manual of the test.
3. *Classroom quizzes*: four formative quizzes were used during the treatment only for the experimental group. Quizzes were teacher-made and syllabus-based. Items of the quizzes were in the forms of multiple-choice, true/false, and fill in the blank. The function of these formative quizzes was to assess students' mastery of the objectives of the units (see Appendix A for some examples). These quizzes informed the teacher about what materials need to be reviewed and gave students a sense of accomplishment.

Each quiz lasted about 20 minutes. The teacher corrected and returned them to the students, first session after the quiz. Based on the results obtained from these quizzes, the teacher decided about follow-up

Research Article

remedial instruction and activities which should come subsequently in order for students to learn from the assessment.

4. *Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*: a questionnaire developed by Zhang and Li (2004) was used to measure the learners' autonomy at the end of the study. This questionnaire includes 21 five-point Likert-type items. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha and the acceptable index of 0.89 was revealed (see Appendix B).

5. *Interactions 2 Reading*: In order to teach reading in the class, *Interactions 2 Reading* (Kirn & Hartmann, 2002) book was used as the teaching material for both groups. This book is the low-intermediate to intermediate level of Interactions/Mosaic series.

Procedure

At the first stage, the Nelson English Test was administered to the population, 70 intermediate students learning English at Andishe Bartar Institute in Zanjan, as a proficiency test. According to the results of this test, those students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected to participate in the study, 42 students. The participants were randomly divided into control and experimental groups.

Both control and experimental groups took the reading part of PET as the pre-test which included 35 items and was scored based on the answer key provided by the manual of the test. Moreover, the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) was distributed to the participants. This questionnaire included 21 five-point Likert-type items, and the time allotted for its completion was 10 minutes.

For eighteen sessions, the classes were held three times a week, each session lasting for one hour and a half. Each session started with a warm-up activity which lasted for five minutes. The function of this stage was to make the class ready for learning, also to create rapport relationship between the teacher and the learners. Then, the teacher provided some background information about the materials to be read during that session.

At the next stage, students in both control and experimental groups read a passage from Interaction 2 Reading (Kirn & Hartmann, 2002) book and attempted to accomplish the exercises provided after the passages. The difference was that every four session students in the experimental group had a quiz. These quizzes were administered after the regular class time.

Based on the students' performance on quizzes, they received a follow-up feedback or remedial instruction. To improve students' achievement continuously during the teaching period, the researcher adopted the method of assessment paper review with follow-up remedial work or activities at the end of each formative quiz.

During paper review, the teacher analyzed the performance of the participants. If one, two, or even three of the participants had some problems with a particular point, she attempted to obviate the problematic point through giving oral guidance to individual participants.

When the number of these individual feedbacks was limited, the teacher did not keep the book of them and just wrote the area of individual students' difficulty beside their names to be dealt with later. When the number of the students who made mistakes was more than three, the teacher reviewed the problematic points and strategies needed for comprehension of them in the class.

In the control group, the teacher did not conduct any quizzes and just superficially checked the answers provided for the comprehension questions following the passage in the course book. In the case of observing any wrong answer provided by any of the participants, she just gave the student the correct answer individually.

After finishing the 18th session, the post-test was given to the students in two groups, and its results were compared with those of the pre-test to investigate the effect of formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on the reading comprehension of the students. In addition, the same Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Zhang & Li, 2004) was administered for the second time in 10 minutes.

Design

The present study included pre-test, post-test, control group, and experimental group. Therefore, the design of this study is 'pre-test – post-test control-group design'.

Research Article

This study is also a *quasi-experimental* research as the participants were not randomly selected from among the population. In this study, the type of teaching is the independent variable (with two levels of formative assessment and remedial instruction and no formative assessment and remedial instruction) and the reading comprehension and autonomy of the students are the dependent variables.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by IBM SPSS (v. 22) software. A number of descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted on the data.

The data was analyzed descriptively using mean and standard deviation. The first null hypothesis of the study was investigated through running an ANCOVA. The ANCOVA was run not only to compare the performance of both experimental and control groups after the treatment period but also to show whether post-test differences were due to treatment – formative assessment and remedial instruction – effect or participants' possible variation in the starting point – pre-test. To test the second null hypothesis, the researcher ran an independent samples t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis and Results

The Results of the Nelson English Language Test

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, a Nelson English Language Test was used to homogenize the participants in terms of their language proficiency.

To select the participants, all initial 70 students took part in the Nelson English Language Test, and students whose score was between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected to participate in the main study.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the initial participants' Nelson English Language Test scores.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Initial Participants' Nelson English Language Test Scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nelson English Language Test	70	17	50	35.72	8.978
Valid N (Listwise)	70				

As Table 1 indicates, the mean and standard deviation of the initial participants' Nelson English Language Test scores were 35.72 and 8.978, respectively. From among these initial participants, 42 students whose score were between 27 and 44 were selected.

Descriptive Statistics for Control Group

Table 2 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for the participants in the control group.

Table 2: The Results of the Participants' Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Control Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test in Control Group	21	15	25	19.43	3.155
Post-Test in Control Group	21	19	28	22.62	3.201
Valid N (listwise)	21				

According to Table 2, pre-test mean score for participants in control group was 19.43 with the standard deviation of 3.15. Regarding the post-test, participants' mean score was 22.62 with the standard deviation of 3.20. Figure 1 shows the pre-test scores of participants in control group:

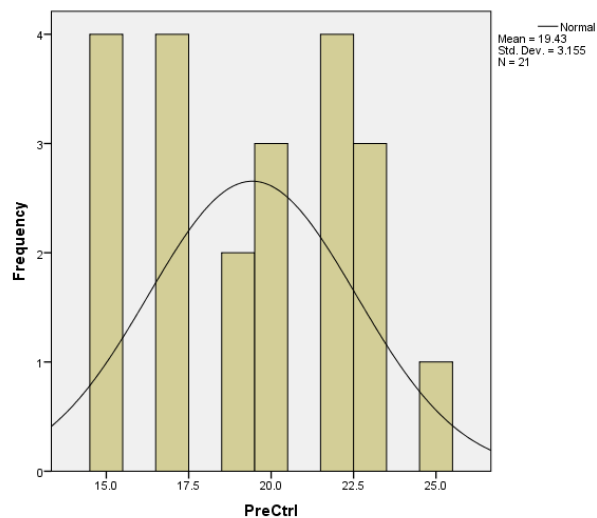


Figure 1: Students' Pre-Test Scores in Control Group

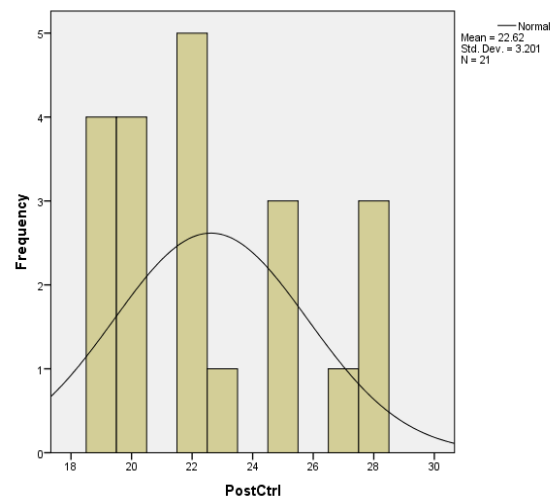


Figure 2: Post-Test Scores of Participants in Control Group

Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Group

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the participants in the experimental group.

Table 3: The Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of participants in Experimental Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test in Experimental Group	21	14	23	19.29	2.610
Post-Test in Experimental Group	21	20	33	26.71	3.552
Valid N (listwise)	21				

As Table 3 illustrates, it was found that students' mean score in pre-test was 19.29 with the standard deviation of 2.61 whereas in the post-test, experimental group revealed a mean score of 26.71 with the standard deviation of 3.55. Figure 3 shows the pre-test scores of participants in experimental group:

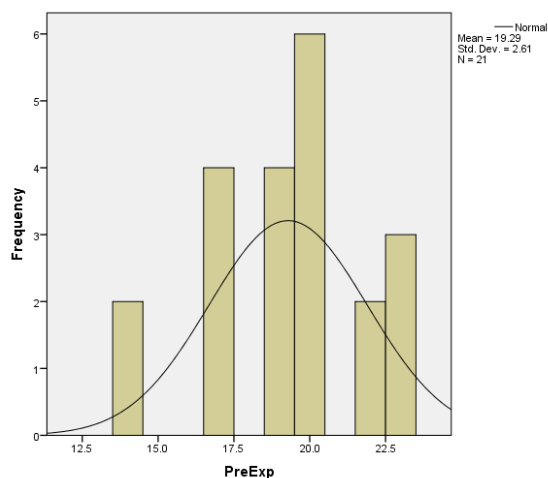


Figure 3. Pre-Test Scores of Participants in Experimental Group

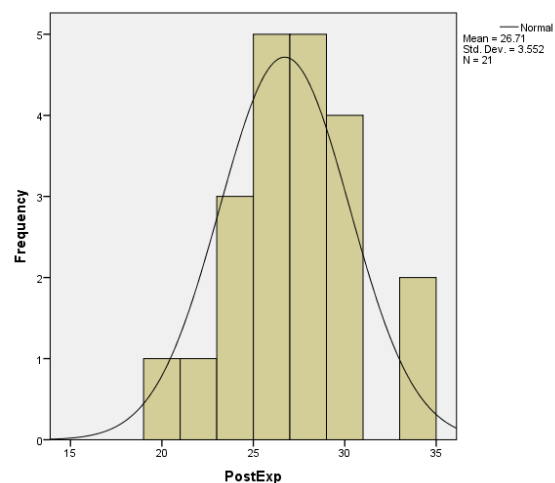


Figure 4. Post-Test Scores of Participants in Experimental Group

Research Article

The Results of Testing the First Research Hypothesis

The first research question of the study aimed to investigate the effect of formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. In order to conduct the ANCOVA, some underlying assumptions must be met. The first assumption is the normality of distribution for each set of scores.

In order to make sure about the normal distribution of the scores in both control and experimental groups, the researcher ran a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on four sets of scores. Table 4 presents the results of this test.

Table 4: One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Control and Experimental Groups

		Pre-Test of Control Group	Pre-Test of Experimental Group	Post-Test of Control Group	Post-Test of Experimental Group
N		21	21	21	21
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	19.43	19.29	22.62	26.71
	Std. Deviation	3.155	2.610	3.201	3.552
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.173	.171	.196	.162
	Positive	.160	.154	.196	.162
	Negative	-.173	-.171	-.129	-.118
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.173	.171	.196	.162
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.099	.112	.075	.159

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

As it is indicated in Table 4, P-value for each set of scores is higher than 0.05, therefore, all sets of scores were normally distributed and the parametric test of ANCOVA could be used.

The second assumption prerequisite for running the ANCOVA is the equality of the variances between groups. The equality of the variances between two groups was checked by Levene's test. Table 5 shows the results of Levene's test of equality of error variances.

Table 5: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.359	1	40	.074

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Pre-Test + Groups

From Table 5, it can be inferred that the underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance for the one-way ANCOVA was also met – as evidenced by $F(1, 40) = 3.359$, $p = 0.074$. That is, $p(0.074) > 0.05$.

The third underlying assumption is that the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e., post-test) and the covariate (i.e., pre-test) should be similar for two groups, the homogeneity of regression lines was checked at the first stage the results of which are presented in Table 6.

Research Article

Table 6: Homogeneity of Regression

Dependent Variable: Post-Test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	468.034 ^a	3	156.011	35.865	.000
Intercept	34.865	1	34.865	8.015	.007
Groups	.559	1	.559	.129	.722
Pre-Test	287.921	1	287.921	66.189	.000
Groups * Pre-Test	1.466	1	1.466	.337	.565
Error	165.299	38	4.350		
Total	26188.000	42			
Corrected Total	633.333	41			

a. R Squared = .739 (Adjusted R Squared = .718)

As it is shown in Table 6, the P-value is equal to 0.565 which is higher than 0.05, so interaction between the independent variable – Formative Assessment followed by Remedial Instruction (FARI) – and covariate – pre-test – is not significant and the assumption of the homogeneity of regression was also accepted. Therefore, the ANCOVA could be performed. Figure 5 shows the liner relationship between covariate and dependent variables.

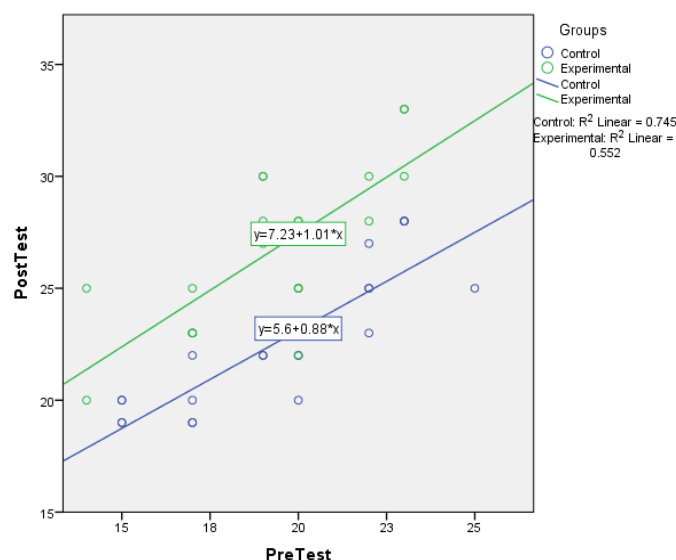


Figure 5: Linear Relationship between Pre-Test and Post-Test of Control and Experimental Groups

Having been ensured by provision of all underlying assumptions, an ANCOVA was conducted to investigate the first null hypothesis of the study. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 7.

Research Article

Table 7: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

Dependent Variable: Post-Test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	466.569 ^a	2	233.284	54.557	.000	.737	
Intercept	38.800	1	38.800	9.074	.005	.189	
Pre-Test	290.474	1	290.474	67.931	.000	.635	
Groups	187.594	1	187.594	43.871	.000	.529	
Error	166.764	39	4.276				
Total	26188.000	42					
Corrected Total	633.333	41					

a. R Squared = .737 (Adjusted R Squared = .723)

As it is shown in Table 7, the first line highlighted shows that the pre-test is significantly related to the post-test ($P < 0.05$) with the magnitude of 0.635. The next line is the indicator of the main effect of the formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on the dependent variable – reading post-test. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant effect of the group, $F(1,39) = 43.871$, $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.529$.

As P-value is less than 0.05, the difference between two groups is significant and the effect of formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on L2 reading skill is clear. Therefore, the first research null hypothesis is rejected, and the answer for the first research question will be 'YES'. That is, formative assessment followed by remedial instruction has a significant effect on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

The Results of the Second Research Hypothesis

The second research hypotheses of the study aimed to explore the difference between the levels of the autonomy of the participants in two groups after treatment. In order to be sure about the equality of the autonomy levels of two groups before the treatment, the researcher ran an independent samples t-test the results of which are presented in Table 8.

Levene's Test for Equal variances revealed a p-value of 0.523 which was more than 0.05. This means that the difference between the variances was not significant, and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first line, the p-value was equal to 0.942 which is higher than 0.05 and indicated that there was not any significant difference between participants in two groups in terms of their autonomy. The 95% confidence interval for the difference between two means is (-1.324, -0.114).

In order to explore the difference between participants in two groups in terms of language learning autonomy after the treatment, the researcher ran an independent samples t-test. Table 9 displays the results of this analysis.

Levene's Test for Equal variances yielded a p-value of 0.070 which was more than 0.05. This means that the difference between the variances was not significant, and the statistics in the first row should be used. In the first line, the p-value was equal to 0.030 which is lower than 0.05 and indicated that there was a significant difference between participants in two groups in terms of their autonomy.

The 95% confidence interval for the difference between two means is (-3.527, -0.187). The mean difference was -1.857, and this means that the learners in the experimental group showed higher level of autonomy than the learners in the control group.

Research Article

Table 8: Autonomy Difference between Two Groups before Treatment

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Autonomy	Equal Variances Assumed	2.618	.523	-1.821	40	.942	-0.002	.012		-1.324	-.114
	Equal Variances not Assumed			-1.821	37.623	.943	-0.002	.012		-1.327	-.111

Table 9: Autonomy Difference between Two Groups after Treatment

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Autonomy	Equal Variances Assumed	3.462	.070	-2.248	40	.030	-1.857	.826		-3.527	-.187
	Equal Variances not Assumed			-2.248	37.575	.031	-1.857	.826		-3.531	-.184

Discussion

The results of the data analysis clearly indicated the significant effect of formative assessment followed by remedial instruction on the reading comprehension and autonomy of the participants. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the use of formative assessment, consisting of frequent, cumulative, and time-restricted quizzes with immediate constructive feedback and remedial instruction had a strong effect on improving the reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL learners which, in turn, allows for

Research Article

continuous readjustment of teaching and learning strategies leading to an improvement of student performance and also gives them higher levels of autonomy.

A number of studies have intended to investigate the effect of formative assessment and remedial instruction on different areas of second and foreign language. Findings of the present study were in line with the findings of Black and William (1998) who concluded that formative assessment and immediate feedback instruction have a significant effect on students' learning. This study also confirms the William *et al.*, (2004) study which indicated that formative assessment provided a deeper and richer description of learners' existing and potential abilities, which enables programs to focus on the personal weaknesses of the students and help accommodate subsequent instructions to learners' existing problems.

The results of students' performance before and after implementation of formative assessment and follow-up instructions in Chun's (2009) study which were analyzed through t-test revealed a significant improvement in students' performance after determining their problems and holding follow-up teaching. The findings of the present study are also parallel to her findings.

Findings of the present study were in line with the findings of Black and William (1998) and Bachman & Palmer (2010) who concluded that formative assessment and immediate feedback instruction has a significant effect on students' learning.

Furthermore, the results of present study support Cheng's (2008) study which indicated that not only remedial instruction improves students' scores, but also the procedure is effective in obtaining information on students' learning potential. Similarly, there are also many other studies (e.g., Peterson & Siadat, 2009) which all acknowledge the positive effect of formative assessment and remedial instruction on different facets of participants' second or foreign language learning which can be a powerful evidence for the constructive effect of focusing on students language deficits. The results of the present study were consistent with the findings of the Peyghambarian *et al.*, (2015) quasi-experimental study which investigated the effect of Online Formative Assessment (OFA) on EFL students' reading comprehension in Mashhad, Iran. The participants of their study were 48 female lower intermediate EFL students who had been assigned to control and treatment groups. They conducted the formative assessment in treatment group by the site itself and assessed the participants in the control group by the teacher. They found that, similar to the present study, participants in treatment group significantly outperformed those in control group.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to find answer for the following research questions:

1. Does formative assessment followed by remedial instruction affect the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Is there any significant difference between autonomy of the learners in the control and that of learners in experimental group after treatment period?

Therefore, two groups of students were selected, and the experimental group underwent the treatment (i.e., formative assessment followed by remedial instruction). The results of the study indicated that in the experimental group in contrast to the control group, there was a considerable improvement in L2 reading comprehension. Although, both groups showed a certain degree of improvement, experimental group outperformed the control group in a statistically significant level, and this became evident when having a closer look at the learners' performance in both groups. As the results of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) indicated, the first null hypothesis of the study has been rejected. Moreover, considering the students' reports about their own autonomy, the experimental group revealed a higher level of autonomy in comparison to the control group. At last, it was concluded that formative assessment can contribute to the improvement of L2 reading comprehension in the Iranian EFL context, and learners can benefit to a large degree from constructive feedback.

Pedagogical Implications

It is evident that assessment – diagnostic, formative, and summative – is a crucial component of education. Hence, it is incumbent upon educators to utilize assessment in an effective manner, keeping in mind the purposes of and principles behind it in particular. It is especially crucial that they investigate and

Research Article

utilize diagnostic and formative assessment, both of which are underused – yet effectual – components of the educational process. This study has provided a basic understanding of the characteristics of formative assessment practiced in an English language institute in Iran.

The present study has shown that a unique combination of formative assessment techniques, along with remedial instruction and readjustment of teaching practices to develop students' reading comprehension and autonomy can substantially improve their performance in English classes. Implementation of this approach does not require a major allocation of financial and material resources by the educational institutions. The best reward for teachers is experiencing their students' success. Success of students is a motivating factor for both students and their instructors. This approach encourages students to work harder to learn more and to inculcate enthusiasm in teachers to continue with their innovative ways. Furthermore, it improves teacher-student interaction which itself may trigger learners' active involvement and motivation. When the syllabus for a course is not based on the learners' needs, and the assessment is only summative, teaching becomes a matter of completing the syllabus, and learning becomes a matter of passing the course, which itself is a waste of time and resources. Formative assessment, a form of assessment for learning (AFL), provides the opportunity for teachers to make appropriate adaptations to meet students' needs; as a result, assessment and consequently learning become goal-oriented and makes the learners more autonomous. Investment in support of instruction and providing training in the use of formative assessment of teaching and learning, as presented in the study, will bear great dividends when students' skills are improved. This research presented an alternative assessment to learning and teaching. It is hoped that our educators and instructors seriously consider its implications.

REFERENCES

- Bachman LF (1990).** *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Bachman LF & Palmer A (2010).** *Language Assessment in Practice. Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics* 10(2).
- Brown HD (2007).** *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th edition), (NY, White Plains: Longman).
- Cheng YC (2008).** *Teaching Effectiveness and Teacher Development: Towards a New Knowledge Base*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Chun LY (2009).** Practice and challenges of school-based formative assessment. *Educational Measurement* 22(4) 26-33.
- Fulcher G & Davidson F (2007).** *Language Testing and Assessment: An Advanced Resource Book*, (USA, New York: Routledge).
- Peterson E & Siadat MV (2009).** Combination of formative and summative assessment instruments in elementary Algebra classes: A prescription for success. *Applied Research in Community College* 16(2) 92-102.
- Peyghambarian F, Fatemi MA and Ashraf H (2015).** On the effect of online formative assessment on Iranian lower intermediate EFL learners reading comprehension. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 4(2) 189-192.
Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.2p.189>.
- William D, Lee C, Harrison C & Black P (2004).** Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education* 11(1) 49-65.
- Zhang X (2008).** The effects of formal schema on reading comprehension – an experiment with Chinese EFL readers. *Computational linguistics and Chinese Language Processing* 13(2) 197 – 214.
- Zhang X & Li XX (2004).** A comparative study on learner autonomy between Chinese students and west European students. *Foreign Language World* 4 15-23.