



A Comparative Study of Different Levels of Input on Foreign language Learners' Reading Comprehension: Reading Motivation in Focus

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Abstract

The role and the importance of language input in developing language learning is not questioned. Input that learners receive in the learning process plays a very important role in the language acquisition. Thus, this study tried to compare the effects of different levels of input on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation. To do this study, 54 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners were selected from two intact classes ($n = 27$ each). Then they were randomly divided into two equal groups, namely "i+1" ($n=27$) and "i-1" group ($n=27$). Then, the groups were pretested by a researcher-made reading comprehension test. After carrying out the pre-test, both groups received the treatment. The "i+1" group received reading passages which were higher than the current level, and the "i-1" group received those which were lower their current level. After treatment, a posttest was administered to show the effect of the treatment on the students' reading comprehension. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference between the post-tests of "i+1" and "i-1" groups. Further, the results demonstrated that the "i+1" group significantly outperformed the "i-1" group ($p < .05$) on the post-test. Moreover, the results revealed that "i+1" group's motivation increased after the treatment. The implications of the study propose that interactive type of input is effective to enhance students' language skills.

Keywords: Comprehensible Input, Extensive reading, Foreign language reading anxiety, Input, Reading comprehension, Text difficulty level

Received: 04 May 2019

Accepted: 18 August 2019

Publish: 30 September 2019

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Introduction

All researchers agree that that input is crucial for language learning to occur but they may not have similar perspectives about the way it is used students (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019a). L2 learners need massive amounts of input in the form of listening and reading. In second language acquisition research, input is said to provide opportunities for both incidental intentional learning (Abedi, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019). According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), SLA theories attach different importance to the role of input in the language acquisition process but they all acknowledge the need for language input. In many SLA theories, language input is considered as being a highly essential factor while in other theories it has been given the secondary role. In language learning, input is the language data which the learner is exposed to. It is commonly acknowledged that for second language acquisition to take place there must be two prerequisites: L2 input available to the learners and a set of internal mechanism to account for how L2 data are processed (Basturkmen, 2006; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019b). Thus, it can be concluded that input is of crucial importance for language learning abilities particularly reading.

Reading is “a complex combination of processes” (Chiang, 2015, p. 11) which involves the activation of prior knowledge, the evaluation of the text, and a monitoring of the reader’s own comprehension. Moreover, Reading is one of four important language skills that should be mastered by students. It is one of the ways for getting knowledge that cannot be separated from every learning process and it does not only happen in educational field but also in our daily life (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019a). For getting knowledge and information, people read books, magazines, newspapers, advertisement and etc (Nunan, 2003, p. 68). Reading is a source of learning and enjoyment. It can help students learn a new vocabulary and grammar. It also makes them enjoy the reading. They can learn more and more by reading (Lao & Krashen, 2000; Namaziandost, & Nasri, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2019; Wu, 2012).

In recent years, extensive reading (ER) received special attention as an important way of enhancing foreign language skills (Yamashita, 2013; Shakibaei, Shahamat, & Namaziandost, 2019). Extensive reading generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings (e.g. whole books) for general understanding, with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read than on the language (Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Abedi, Keshmirshakan, & Namaziandost, 2019). The major purpose in ER helps learners to build reading speed and reading fluency. In particular, developing reading speed is important because it helps learners to understand language faster and better (Namaziandost & Ahmadi, 2019; Richards & Schmidt, 2010). ER is for general comprehending in which “the minimum 95% comprehension figure” (Meng, 2009, p. 134) is admissible and the reading velocity is below 100 to 150 words per minute (Mikeladze, 2014; Namaziandost, Rahimi Esfahani, Nasri, & Mirshekaran, 2018). Truly, some studies (e.g., Bell, 2001; Chiang, 2015; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Iwahori, 2008; Leung, 2002; Tanaka, 2007; Nasri, Biria, & Karimi, 2018) have indicated that ER considerably developed foreign language reading comprehension and general proficiency.

One of the crucial sources for providing language input for EFL learners is extensive reading (ER) (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1982; Nasri & Biria, 2017; Tahmasbi, Hashemifardnia, & Namaziandost, 2019). In his input hypothesis, Krashen (1982)

stresses the importance of providing learners a large amount of comprehensible input for acquiring language. On the other hand, Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that ER helps learners to read massive amounts of language at a comfortable level to gain input, build fluency and consolidate language that was previously learned discretely through textbooks. In addition to the comprehensible input (reading materials), the environment for reading is equally essential (Azadi, Biria, & Nasri, 2018, p. 7; Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 36; Ziafar & Namaziandost, 2019, p.7). This way language learners can quickly improve their reading accuracy, reading fluency and build sight words and high-frequency words.

However, a glance to the prior literature reveals that there are rare researches on the effects of these two perspectives (i.e., 'i + 1' and 'i - 1') on EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation. To fill this gap, the present study endeavored to concentrate on this subject by investigating how Krashen's input hypothesis through 'i + 1' and 'i - 1' materials may impress EFL students' reading comprehension and reading motivation.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows (Brantmeier, 2005, p. 52). For many students, reading is presumed as the beneficial dexterity that they can utilize inside and outside the classroom. It is additionally the skill that can preserve the lengthy time. Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing meaning of words, ability to understand meaning of a word from discourse context, ability to follow organization of passage and to identify antecedents and references in it, ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents, ability to identify the main thought of a passage, ability to answer questions answered in a passage, ability to recognize the literary devices or propositional structures used in a passage and determine its tone, to understand the situational mood (agents, objects, temporal and spatial reference points, casual and intentional inflections, etc.) conveyed for assertions, questioning, commanding, refraining etc. and finally ability to determine writer's purpose, intent and point of view, and draw inferences about the writer (discourse-semantics) (Miller, 2008).

Furthermore, Papalia (2004) Reading comprehension is the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written, and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. Comprehension is a "creative, multifaceted process" dependent upon four language skills: phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Grellet, 1981). There are 7 essential skills for reading comprehension: Decoding, Fluency, Vocabulary, Sentence Construction and Cohesion, Reasoning and background knowledge, and Working memory and attention Wood (2005) confirmed that reading comprehension involves two levels of processing, shallow (low-level) processing and deep (high-level) processing. Deep processing involves semantic processing, which happens when we encode the meaning of a word and relate it to similar words. Shallow processing involves structural and phonemic recognition, the processing of sentence and word structure, i.e. first-order logic, and their associated sounds.

Regarding the mentioned points, reading widely is an individual movement which

depends on the students' fondness (Hosseini, Nasri, & Afghari, 2017; Nation, 1997). Extensive reading (ER) boosts reader's reading aptitudes and it is shortsighted to urge EFL students to read better through ER which is enchanting to them (Namaziandost, Nasri, & Rahimi Esfahani, 2019; Nuttal, 2000; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019). The principle objective of an Extensive reading plan is to give a circumstance to students to appreciate reading a foreign language and new real messages quietly at their own velocity and with satisfactory comprehension (Day & Bamford, 1998). "ER is bolstered by Krashen's (1982, 1994) input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis, and delight hypothesis" (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017, p. 6).

ER is an approach to second-language acquisition (Nation, 1997). English language learners read high-interest, accessible texts that enable them to gain fluency, improve comprehension, build vocabulary and read independently (Namaziandost, Abedi, & Nasri, 2019; Nuttal, 2000; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019). The benefits of extensive reading are far-reaching: independent readers become more avid readers, better writers and, ultimately, lifelong readers (Day & Bamford, 1998). Extensive reading is beneficial to all students, not just those who are learning a second language. In finding success in reading, they develop a love of reading. ER is supported by Krashen's (1982, 1994) input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis, and pleasure hypothesis.

Krashen (1982) puts primary importance on the comprehensible input (CI) that language learners are exposed to. Understanding spoken and written language input is seen as the only mechanism that results in the increase of underlying linguistic competence, and language output is not seen as having any effect on learners' ability. Furthermore, Krashen claimed that linguistic competence is only advanced when language is subconsciously acquired, and that conscious learning cannot be used as a source of spontaneous language production. Finally, learning is seen to be heavily dependent on the mood of the learner, with learning being impaired if the learner is under stress or does not want to learn the language. Furthermore, based on Krashen's input hypothesis (1982), If i represents previously acquired linguistic competence and extra-linguistic knowledge, the hypothesis claims that we move from i to $i+1$ by understanding input that contains $i+1$. Extra-linguistic knowledge includes our knowledge of the world and of the situation, that is, the context. The $+1$ represents 'the next increment' of new knowledge or language structure that will be within the learner's capacity to acquire (Hashemifardnia, Namaziandost, & Shafiee, 2018; Huang, 2001). Based on this hypothesis, ER provides a situation for learners to learn a foreign language (Chiang, 2015; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019).

The Input hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language—how second language acquisition takes place (Hashemifardnia, Namaziandost, & Sepehri, 2018; Krashen & Terrell 1983). The Input hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence (Krashen, 2003a). For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to 'Comprehensible Input' that belongs to level 'i + 1'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in

this way that each learner will receive some 'i + 1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

Therefore, based on Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, we acquire language in one way only: when we are exposed to input (written or spoken language) that is comprehensible to us. Comprehensible input is the necessary but also sufficient condition for language acquisition to take place. It requires no effort on the part of the learner (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017; Chiang, 2015; Keshmirshekan, Namaziandost, & Pournorouz, 2019).

In particular, Day and Bamford (1998), recommended an advanced plan which is different from Krashen's (1982) input speculation. In light of this plan, "ER is worthwhile on the off chance that it outfits the learners with information which is to some degree underneath their present degree of capability (i.e., 'I-1')" (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017, p. 4). Additionally, 'I-1' makes a condition for automaticity instructing and broadening an immense sight jargon as opposed to adapting new target structures" (Mikeladze, 2014, p. 5). Truth to be told, 'I-1' is considered as the students' peacefulness zone where they can quickly build their understanding assurance and understanding familiarity (Chiang, 2015; Keshmirshekan, Namaziandost, & Pournorouz, 2019).

All of specialists and educators acknowledged that motivation is an essential factor to upgrade reading comprehension. As showed by Dornyei (2001), the significance of motivation is mind boggling and obscurant in light of the fact that it is made out of different models and speculations. As talked about by Protacio (2012), "reading issues happen halfway because of the way that individuals are not propelled to read in any case" (p. 11). Moley Bandré, and George (2011) clarify that, motivation happens when "learners build up an enthusiasm for and structure a bond with a point that endures past the present moment" (p. 251). Moreover, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000, p.405) propound that "reading motivation is the person's close to home destinations, qualities, and convictions with respect to the themes, procedures, and results of reading ". Thinking about this depiction, one would come to two guideline results: The first is that reading motivation alludes to assembling of different elements of motivation in a mind-boggling course. The second is the sort of organization individuals have over it since they can control, bind together and occupy their motivation to read as far as their confidence, value and destinations (Mirshekaran, Namaziandost, & Nazari, 2018; Wigfield & Tonks, 2004; Keshmirshekan, Namaziandost, & Pournorouz, 2019). "Not exclusively does reading motivation identify with understanding comprehension, yet it likewise identifies with both the measure of reading and learners' understanding accomplishment" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2005, p. 76). Guthrie et al. (2006, p.232) clarify that "reading motivation associates with learners' measure of reading ". For this reason, Guthrie and Wigfield (2005) underline the point of view that "reading motivation is space explicit as it has a place with a status that requires an enthusiastic response specific to an understanding material, and that would transform dependent on the assorted variety of exercises initiating it" (p.89).

Pachtman and Wilson (2006) communicated that it is essential to move learners to read by giving them opportunities to pick their advantage materials. As it were, readers need to read more when they are permitted to pick their reading materials since they should discover that reading is a pleasurable activity. As showed by Hairul, Ahmadi, and Pourhosein (2012), reading motivation is the generous proportion of motivation that students need to center their positive or negative sentiments about reading. For instance,

learners who read for euphoria and using approaches to help their comprehension are incredibly stirred readers. Learners of this sort routinely view reading as a fundamental factor in their every day works out, recognize challenges in the understanding method and are most likely going to be compelling readers.

Earlier inquires about have checked the effects of ER on EFL reading comprehension and jargon learning. Ringer (2001) did a two-semester study on youthful grown-up learners at the rudimentary level in Yemen to think about the effects of ER and concentrated reading on understanding velocity and reading comprehension. This investigation was kept running more than two semesters. The specialist separated learners into two groups: a test group (n = 14) and a control group (n = 12). The trial group got an ER program and read reviewed readers; these learners approached 2000 evaluated readers in the British Council library. Then again, the control group got the serious understanding project, read short entries and filled the assignments. The researcher estimated learners' reading speed by using two understanding tests, and for estimating their reading appreciation he used three different writings with three sorts of inquiries (cloze, numerous decisions, and genuine false). The two groups upgraded both in speed and understanding comprehension, yet the ER program dependent on evaluated readers was considerably more compelling to the improvement of reading speed than the concentrated understanding project. The results of the reading understanding test additionally showed that the students in the broad group got higher scores than learners in the escalated group.

Chiang (2015) inquired about the effects of various content trouble on L2 understanding discernments and understanding comprehension. To give the perfect test to L2 reading, fathomable information theory speculates that choosing content to some degree more troublesome than the understudy's present level will improve understanding observation. Fifty-four first year recruit from one school in focal Taiwan were self-assertively isolated into two groups. Level 3 and level 4 Oxford Graded Readers were given to the students in the 'I - 1' group while learners in the 'I + 1' bunch were furnished with level 5 and level 6. Quantitative information was gathered through the English Placement Test and the Reading Attitudes Survey. Discoveries from the pretest and posttest of the Reading Attitudes Survey recommend that the I-1 group has accomplished altogether in understanding frames of mind, while no distinction in reading disposition was perceived with the I + 1 group. The results furthermore showed that differing hardness levels of reading content didn't fundamentally impact members' reading comprehension.

As of late, Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) inspected the effects of different content trouble levels on unknown dialect understanding uneasiness (FLRA) and reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. To satisfy this goal, 50 basic EFL students were looked over two flawless classes (n = 25 each). One class was considered as 'I + 1' and another as 'I-1'. The members in each class rehearsed broad reading at different degrees of trouble for two semesters. A reading understanding test and the FLRA Scale were directed when the treatment. The results demonstrated that both content trouble levels fundamentally upgraded the members' reading comprehension. In addition, the outcomes uncovered that, the 'I + 1' group's FLRA increased, while that of the 'I - 1' bunch lessened. However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, rare studies, if any, have been carried out on the impacts of

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (i.e., ' $i + 1$ ' and ' $i - 1$ ') on EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation. To reach the purposes of the study, this study attempted to response the following research questions:

RQ1: Are there any significant differences between and within the ' $i + 1$ ' and the ' $i - 1$ ' groups' reading comprehension after implementing the treatment? If so, which group has higher reading comprehension in English?

RQ2: Are there any significant differences between and within the ' $i + 1$ ' and the ' $i - 1$ ' groups' reading motivation after implementing the treatment? If so, which group has higher motivation towards reading in English?

Methodology

Participants

Fifty-four EFL learners (25 males and 29 females) from a private language institute in Ahvaz, Iran, took part in this study. The participants' ages ranged from 16 to 21. American Headway 1 (Soars & Soars, 2010) was the textbook taught to the participants. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) classification, American Headway 2 is appropriate for the B1 level. To ensure the participants' proficiency level, CEFR Headway placement test (2012) was performed to all participants, and their score ranged between 66 and 74, which is equal to B1 level. The participants were chosen from two intact classes. Each class was assigned to a group (i.e., ' $i + 1$ ' or ' $i - 1$ '). The ' $i + 1$ ' group ($n = 27$) read graded readers stories which were beyond their level of proficiency, whereas the ' $i - 1$ ' group ($n = 27$) read graded readers stories which were below their level of proficiency. The participants read graded readers along with their classroom materials. Per week, 35 minutes of class time was devoted to the participants' narration of the novels they had already read.

Instruments

CEFR Headway Placement Test

CEFR Headway placement test is designed to provide a useful tool to estimate the participants' level at which they should begin or continue their English language studies (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017). This test was selected because the participants were studying American Headway. Moreover, the American Headway book, CEFR Headway placement test (2012) and Oxford Bookworm Series (the graded readers in this study) were classified based on CEFR. It could be a big help to determine the probable ' i ' of participants (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017). CEFR Headway placement test (2012) comprised of 100 multiple-choice items with three sections, including 50 vocabulary, 25 grammar and 25 reading comprehension items. The findings were compared with the band score of CEFR Headway placement test

Graded Readers

The reading materials in this study were the Oxford Bookworms Series published by Oxford University Press. The Oxford Bookworms Series classifies books into seven levels. Table 2 indicates the word counts and CEFR levels in the Oxford Bookworms series.

Table 2. Word counts and CEFR levels in the Oxford Bookworms Series

Book levels	Word counts	CEFR levels
Starter	250	A1
Level 1	400	A1/A2
Level 2	700	A2/B1
Level 3	1,000	B1
Level 4	1,400	B1/B2
Level 5	1,800	B2
Level 6	2,500	B2/C1

To make sure what level is appropriate, nine EFL learners at the pre-intermediate level and four EFL teachers were asked to read the Oxford Bookworms Series at various levels. After studying the books, all teachers agreed that for the pre-intermediate level learners, Starter, Level, and Level 2 were really easy, and Levels 4, 5 and 6 were both grammatically and lexically difficult. According to the teachers, Level 3 was considered suitable for the pre-intermediate level. The learners also reported that Level 3 was comprehensible for them. Level 3 equals to levels B1 in CEFR. Therefore, Level 3 was determined as the appropriate level for the participants. Accordingly, the 'i - 1' group was proposed to read Levels 1 and 2 and the 'i + 1' group was suggested to read Levels 4 and 5. The participants were required to read two books at each level throughout the study.

Reading comprehension test

The reading comprehension part of the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE, 2008) was used to measure the participants' reading comprehension ability. This part comprised of three reading passages which include both macro and micro questions, such as the expression of opinion, attitude, purpose, main idea, detail, tone and gist. The reading section of the FCE includes 30 items that should be replied in 30 minutes. This study utilized two equivalent versions of the FCE, one as a pretest and the other as a posttest. A Pearson correlation coefficient between the two equivalent forms of the FCE was calculated as 0.936 which indicated a high reliability between the two versions of the test.

The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)

Another instrument used in the present examination was a changed example of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ). MRQ was extended by Dr. Allan Wigfield and Dr. John Guthrie from University of Maryland in 1997. Wigfield and Guthrie used the MRQ on a group of learners at one mid-Atlantic state school during execution of Concept-Oriented Reading instructing. Factor investigations completed by Wigfield and Guthrie asserted the substance of develop legitimacy which reinforcements eleven components for the all out 53 - thing in this MRQ. There was a positive pertinence of most extreme fragments of reading motivation with low - to significant levels. They furthermore attested that their survey has a dependability go from .43 to .81. In this examination, the specialists had chosen 30 things of the whole 53 things in the survey in light of the fact that exclusively eight parts of all out eleven parts of reading motivation were distinguished to gauge. They are: understanding adequacy, understanding test, understanding interest, understanding contribution,

significance of reading, reading word evasion, social purposes behind reading, and reading for evaluations. MRQ was a five-point Likert scale survey made up of five choices: 1 for 'I emphatically concur', 2 for 'I concur', 3 for 'I don't have the foggiest idea', 4 for 'I dissent', and 5 for 'I unequivocally oppose this idea'. The MRQ was given to members twice, one preceding the treatment and once after the treatment.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Fifty-four pre-intermediate EFL students were taken an interest in this investigation. In the main week, the CEFR Headway arrangement test was performed to determine the members' capability levels. This test also helped the researchers determine the plausible members' 'I.' In the subsequent week, the MRQ and the reading perception test were completed in 80 minutes. In light of the results of the CEFR Headway situation test (2012), the 'I + 1' bunch were allotted to peruse reviewed perusers at Levels 4 and 5, and the 'I - 1' bunch were relegated to peruse Level 1 and Level 2 evaluated stories. There was a little library and book shop in the language organization to furnish the members with the evaluated perusers. It was likewise suggested that on the off chance that they would not discover the book of their advantage, they could discover them from different libraries and book shops outside.

The quantity of pages the members required to peruse was indicated at the start of every week. Toward the finish of every week, 20 minutes of the class was apportioned for their reports. The members were offered time to discuss different parts and the characters of the books, their thoughts regarding the finish of the books, and even gave a few remarks with respect to the books. In the primary semester, the 'I + 1' bunch read two evaluated perusers at Level 4 which were one level past their 'I', and in the subsequent semester, they read two reviewed perusers at Level 5. Then again, in the principal semester, the 'I - 1' bunch read two evaluated perusers at the Level 1 which was two levels beneath their 'I' and in the subsequent semester, they read two reviewed perusers at Level 2 which was one level underneath their 'I.' Finally, following a three-month contribution in this investigation, the discoveries of these two different ways were contrasted and one another. In the most recent seven day stretch of; the members got a prompt posttest. They reacted the MRQ and an equal variant of the reading comprehension test in one session. The methodology resembled the pretest.

Data Analysis

Gathered information through the previously mentioned methodology were investigated by utilizing Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) programming variant 25. Right off the bat, Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was raced to check the typicality of the information. At that point, two free examples t-tests were done to make sense of if there was any huge distinction between the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' bunches as far as reading comprehension and MRQ. Toward the end, two 2 x 2 blended investigation of difference (ANOVAs) were raced to find critical communication impacts among time and group from the reading appreciation test and the MRQ. Moreover, autonomous examples t-tests were rushed to test the straightforward primary effects of group on the pretests and the posttests. Matched examples t-tests were likewise done to further catch up on the basic primary effects of time on MRQ and reading comprehension for the two groups. To demonstrate the pragmatic hugeness, for the majority of the t-tests, impact estimates (Cohen's ds) were registered.

Results and Discussion

The past section incorporated a depiction of the approach which was used to react the exploration inquiries of this investigation, which are revised here for reasons of comfort: (an) Are there any noteworthy contrasts between and inside the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' groups' reading cognizance in the wake of executing the treatment? Provided that this is true, which group has higher reading perception in English? what's more, (b) Are there any huge contrasts between and inside the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' groups' reading motivation in the wake of executing the treatment? Provided that this is true, which group has higher motivation towards reading in English?

Results of Normality Tests

Before conducting any analyses on the pretest and posttest, it was indispensable to read the normality of the distributions. Thus, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was run on the data acquired from the above-mentioned tests. The consequences are presented in Table 1:

Table 3. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Groups' Pretests, Post-tests, and MRQ)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
i+1 pretest	.18	27	.09
i+1 posttest	.16	27	.22
i-1 pretest	.22	27	.07
i-1 posttest	.22	27	.08
i+1 MRQ (Before Treatment)	.17	27	.19
i+1 MRQ (After Treatment)	.22	27	.11
i-1 MRQ (Before Treatment)	.22	27	.81
i-1 MRQ (After Treatment)	.18	27	.22

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The *p* values under the *Sig.* column in Table 3 determine whether the distributions were normal or not. A *p* value greater than .05 shows a normal distribution, while a *p* value lower than .05 demonstrates that the distribution has not been normal. Since all the *p* values in Table 1 were larger than .05, it could be concluded that the distributions of scores for the pretest, posttest, and MRQ obtained from both groups had been normal. It is thus safe to proceed with parametric test (i.e. Independent and Paired samples t-tests and mixed-ANOVA in this case) and make further comparisons between the participating groups. Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations of the participants' scores on the reading comprehension tests and the MR questionnaire before and after the study.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the 'i - 1' and 'i + 1' groups' responses to reading comprehension test and MRQ

	Groups	N	Pretest				Posttest			
			Reading Comprehension		MRQ		Reading Comprehension		MRQ	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	i+1	27	10.33	1.78	53.89	5.66	15.19	2.89	61.39	6.91
	i-1	27	10.18	1.26	52.19	7.16	12.33	1.26	51.38	4.73

To answer the first research question, one mixed 2 x 2 ANOVA with two main factors, time (i.e., reading comprehension pretest and posttest) and group (i.e., 'i + 1' and 'i - 1') was run to examine whether there were significant interaction effects between difficulty levels. Furthermore, independent samples t-tests were run to check the simple main impact of group on the reading comprehension pretest and the posttest, respectively. Finally, paired samples t-tests were done to investigate the simple main impact of time for each group. Tables 5 and 6 shows the results of the mixed ANOVA on the reading comprehension tests.

Table 5. Results of mixed-ANOVA on reading comprehension pretest and posttest with time and group factors

Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
time	248.01	1	248.01	111.36	.000	.71
time *	15.12	1	15.12	7.11	.02	.13
Groups						
Error(time)	111.21	52	2.33			
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	13437.79	1	13437.79	4219.09	.000	.89
Groups	21.64	1	21.64	9.56	.003	.15
Error	121.96	52	1.99			

The results indicated that the main impact of the text difficulty level was not significant [$F(1, 52) = 9.56, p = .003$, partial eta squared = .15], proposing a significant difference in the reading comprehension scores of the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between difficulty level and time [$F(1, 52) = 7.11, p = .021$, partial eta squared = .13], suggesting that over the course of two semesters, the changes in scores from the reading comprehension differed significantly between the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups. There was also significant main impact of time [$F(1, 52) = 7.11, p = .000$, partial eta squared = .89], suggesting a substantial difference in the reading comprehension scores across two periods. Next to a mixed ANOVA, two independent samples t-tests were run as follow-up tests to check the simple major impact of group on the pretest and the posttest, respectively (Table 6).

Table 6. Independent samples t-tests on reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores

	Mean difference	Std. error difference	T	Df	P	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pretest	.15	.33	.41	52	.584	0.11
posttest	2.86	.44	4.22	52	.000	0.96

As Table 6 illustrates, the findings indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups on the pretest ($t = .41$, $p = .584$, $d = 0.11$), showing that both the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups were at a similar baseline prior to the experiment. Moreover, the outcomes show a significant difference between the two groups in their posttests ($t = 4.22$, $p = .000$, $d = 0.96$) after the intervention. Furthermore, paired-samples t-tests were run as follow-up tests to check the simple main impact of time for each group (Table 7).

Table 7. Paired samples t-tests of both groups (reading comprehension pretest and posttest)

	Mean differences	SD	SEM	t	df	p	Cohen's <i>d</i>
i+1	4.86	3.24	.71	8.29	26	.000	1.99
i-1	1.15	1.86	.36	9.40	26	.000	2.36

As illustrated in Table 7, the findings propose that both groups' reading comprehension was significantly progressed at the end of this study ($t = 8.29$, $p = .000$, $d = 1.99$ for the 'i + 1' group's reading comprehension; $t = 9.40$, $p = .000$, $d = 2.36$ for the 'i - 1' group's reading comprehension). That is, the reading comprehension of the 'i - 1' and the 'i + 1' groups significantly enhanced after the intervention of ER. Cohen (1988) expressed that the impact size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.2 is small; 0.5 is moderate; and 0.8 is high. Cohen's effect size values of the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups' paired samples t-tests are $d = 1.99$ and $d = 2.36$ for reading comprehension, respectively, proposing high practical significance. To response the second research question, first, a mixed ANOVA was run to assess the impact of two discriminatory text difficulty levels ('i + 1' vs. 'i - 1') on participants' scores from the MRQ before and after the treatment (Table 8).

Table 8. Results of mixed-ANOVA on MRQ before and after treatment with time and group factors

Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
time	181.21	1	181.21	4.23	.08	.07	
time * Groups	262.51	1	262.51	6.21	.02	.11	
Error(time)	2109.91	52	41.21				
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	

Intercept	319826.11	1	319826.11	17245.91	.000	.89
Groups	711.21	1	711.21	34.01	.000	.41
Error	985.25	52	18.94			

As Table 8 indicated, there was significant interaction between difficulty level and time [$F(1, 52) = 6.21, p = .02$ partial eta squared = .11], suggesting that over the course of the treatment period, the changes in scores from the MRQ differed significantly between the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups. There was no significant main effect of time [$F(1, 52) = 4.23, p = .08$, partial eta squared = .07], proposing no substantial difference in the MRQ scores across the two periods. Moreover, the major impact of the text difficulty level was significant [$F(1, 52) = 34.01, p = .000$, partial eta squared = .41], suggesting a difference in the MRQ scores of the two text difficulty levels. After the mixed ANOVA, two independent samples t-tests were run to check the simple main impact of group on the pretest and the posttest, respectively (Table 9).

Table 9. Independent samples t-tests on MRQ before and after treatment

	Mean difference	Std. error difference	T	Df	P	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pretest	1.71	1.71	1.28	52	.323	0.41
posttest	10.01	1.41	5.98	52	.000	1.87

As Table 9 shows, the findings indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups before the treatment ($t = 1.28, p = .32, d = 0.41$), suggesting that both the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups were at a similar baseline of MR prior to the experiment. The outcomes also show a significant difference between the two groups in their posttests ($t = 5.98, p = .000, d = 1.87$) after the treatment. In other words, the 'i + 1' group was found to have greater increases in their MRQ scores. Furthermore, Cohen's effect size value of the groups' independent t-tests on the posttest is $d = 1.87$ showing high practical significance. Paired-samples t-tests were also conducted as follow-up tests to check the simple main impact of time for each group (Table 10).

Table 10. Paired samples t-tests of both groups (MRQ before and after treatment)

	Mean differences	SD	SEM	t	df	p	Cohen's <i>d</i>
i+1	-7.5	9.21	1.89	-4.126	26	.003	0.98
i-1	.81	9.36	1.81	.809	26	.716	0.21

As represented in Table 10, the discoveries suggest that the 'I + 1' groups' reading motivation was altogether advanced toward the finish of this examination ($t = -4.126, p = .006, d = 0.98$), though the 'I - 1' groups' reading motivation was fundamentally diminished after the mediation ($t = .809, p = .716, d = 0.21$). Cohen's impact size estimations of the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' groups' combined examples t-tests are $d = 0.98$ and $d = 0.21$ for reading motivation, individually) proposing high commonsense importance for the 'I + 1' group and moderate down to earth essentialness for the 'I - 1' group. In rundown, the content trouble altogether influenced the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' members' reading motivation. The discoveries suggest that the 'I + 1' bunch had more prominent increments in their MRQ scores.

In short, the present investigation expected to see in the case of utilizing the i+1 and I-1

could improve the reading comprehension of EFL students, and whether there was a distinction between the students' motivation in such manner or not. The results of the examination demonstrated that this *i+1* fundamentally improved reading perception of the students in the exploratory group; additionally, the motivation of the trial group (*i+1*) was expanded after the treatment. Steady presentation to the information (i.e., reviewed perusers) over the treatment time frame appeared to have importantly affected improving members' reading comprehension. It could be conceivable that steady presentation to composed information encouraged the members' coincidental jargon learning (Mikeladze, 2014; Waring & Takaki, 2003).

The acquired outcomes might be expected the huge job of input which the learners had gotten before they created the language. The understandable input which the learners were exposed to before delivering the language extraordinarily helped the learners to have the option to peruse English all the more effectively. It very well may be concluded that understanding continues the creation.

The researcher saw that the learners were progressively spurred to peruse and comprehend the writings that were increasingly hard for them, they appeared to be interested to know the importance of new words and expressions, thus, they requested that the analyst give the significance of obscure words, expressions, and sentences, and this endeavor prompted their achievement in reading comprehension.

All the more altogether, in view of the examination made between two groups of fluctuating content trouble, the *i+1* group performed better in reading comprehension and increased better outcomes toward the finish of the investigation. This finding is in accordance with Krashen's (1982) input theory. As indicated by Krashen (1982), it was relied upon to watch the improvement of reading cognizance just in the '*I + 1*' group. Hence, the comparable advancement in the '*I - 1*' group's reading comprehension appears to be suspicious. The consequences of factual examination acknowledged such a thought and appeared, that reading the '*I - 1*' materials didn't improve members' reading comprehension. This finding is conversely with Chiang's (2015) explore in which the '*I - 1*' group's reading comprehension was created. The outcomes can be because of utilizing '*I + 1*' materials which gave a circumstance to members to grow their reading safe place where they had the chance to develop their understanding certainty and build up an enormous sight jargon instead of adapting new phonetic components (Day & Bamford, 1998).

This study is upheld by Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) who found the viability of various content trouble levels on FLRA and reading appreciation of EFL students. The last discoveries revealed that both content trouble levels altogether upgraded the members' reading comprehension. The results also uncovered that, the '*i+ 1*' groups's FLRA upgraded, while that of the '*I - 1*' bunch diminished.

The outcomes of this investigation additionally uncovered that there was critical impact of time recommending generous contrast in the reading appreciation scores crosswise over two periods. Be that as it may, in regards to the next past investigations, time may be less critical in influencing members' reading comprehension. Regardless of whether the hour of intercession was two months (Mason & Krashen, 1997), five months (Tanaka, 2007) or even one year (Chiang, 2015), reading perception expanded. It may

be conceivable to recognize increasingly clear contrasts in reading cognizance between the two groups if the span of cooperation in ER could be expanded.

To summarize, the beneficial outcome of i+1 saw in this investigation can be credited to the imperative job of conceivable language information furnishing students with etymological information that they can get it. In the field of SLA, there is a copy analogy about language information proposed by VanPatten (2003) "input is to language procurement what gas is to a vehicle". There is language input that is superior to other information, much the same as there is high octane gas that is superior to anything low-octane gas. The "better contribution" here is fathomable and significance bearing. The more understandable and significance – bearing the info is, the more probable it will be transformed into admission that students can disguise into their intellectual frameworks.

Rather than the basic conviction that simple materials may expand the motivation of EFL students, this examination demonstrated that the more troublesome materials could build Iranian EFL students' motivation towards understanding English. It very well may be guaranteed that troublesome materials have revelation nature, implying that, students need to find and see new things. Likewise, students may don't have significantly more motivation to adapt simple and common materials without rich substance. These outcomes are compatible with previous investigation (Chiang, 2015; Tanaka, 2007). Consistent offering to the information (i.e., i+1) over occasions seems to have significantly affected building up students' reading comprehension.

Conclusion

This examination analyzed the impacts of i+1 and I-1 materials on Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension and reading motivation. The discoveries uncovered that i+1 group outflanked the I-1 groups. i+1 material expanded reading comprehension and reading motivation of the members. Also, it tends to be reasoned that the materials of EFL English course readings ought to be one level higher than the present degree of the students to propel and challenge them. This investigation reaches the resolution that the information speculation of Krashen (1982) "students progress in their insight into the language when they fathom language input that is somewhat further developed than their present level" is legitimate.

The other end which can be drawn from this investigation is the significance of the EFL students' motivation. The motivation of the students ought to be expanded to learn English language all the more effectively since motivation coordinates conduct toward specific objectives, it will enlarge students' time on undertaking and is moreover a pivotal factor having impact on their learning and advancement. Motivation supports subjective preparing. Motivation indicates whether an understudy will seek after an assignment (even a troublesome one) with energy or a dreary mentality. Thus, it is critical to perceive viewpoints that cultivate inward motivation in English language learning.

This study gives a few ramifications to instructors who are keen on utilizing ER in their classes. Instructors can take advantage of the 'I + 1' or the 'I - 1' in ER as a valuable action in English courses. This investigation proposes that ER is successful in improving EFL students' reading comprehension, and supportive in upgrading jargon, sentence structure and reading speed paying little attention to the degree of materials students pick. This examination demonstrates whether the students pick simpler or

harder ER materials, they acquire or less comparable outcomes in reading comprehension. As per this investigation, picking books dependent on the members' very own advantages can urge them to anxiously partake in ER program. In a perfect world, educators ought to consider the estimation of self-chose materials as a key to a fruitful execution of ER.

There are, however, a few restrictions in the study. To start with, there were 54 members in the present examination. So as to acquire proof about the impact of content trouble on members' FLRM and reading comprehension, more members are suggested. Second, absence of irregular testing was one of the impediments of the examination. Arbitrary examining will give progressively solid proof with the impacts of content trouble on FLRM and reading comprehension. It is prescribed to welcome bigger examples of students so as to give a chance to choosing them arbitrarily. Third, future research can be duplicated in ESL settings. Fourth, in the present examination, members read four books. Future research needs to give a major load of books and furthermore request that members read more to augment the impacts of ER. Fifth, future research can concentrate on the impacts of the 'I + 1' and the 'I - 1' theories on different regions of language learning like sentence structure. At last, time duty is significant for ER to be sensibly effective; this investigation went on for a quarter of a year which may not be sufficient for full advantages of ER. Future examinations can increase better outcomes if students take an interest in ER program for a more drawn out time.

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