Utilizing the Lexical- Density Approach to Enhance EFL Prospective Teachers' Academic Reading and Motivation to Read at the Faculty of Specific Education

Neveen Hassan Mahmoud

An English instructor

Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University, Egypt

Email: Nevhelal@gmail.com

Supervisors

Dr. Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim

Professor of TEFL, Zagazig University, Egypt

Dr.Amina Ahmed Marzouk

Lecturer of TEFL, Zagazig University, Egypt

Abstract

The current study aimed at improving EFL academic reading skills and motivation to read of English prospective teachers at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University utilizing the lexical- density approach. The study adopted the pre-/ post experimental two- groups design. The 60 participants of the study were prospective enrolled in the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University in the academic Year 2021/2022. They were taught utilizing the lexical-density approach. Academic reading test and motivation to read scale were designed to be the instruments of the study. The test was pre- and post- administered to the groups. Findings showed that the lexical- density approach improved students' academic reading and motivation to read. Thus, it is recommended to utilize the lexical- density approach as a new educational paradigm in developing EFL students' academic reading skills and motivation to read.

Keywords: EFL academic reading, motivation to read, lexical- density approach, Egypt

2006

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of academic reading is indicated in Alyousef (2005, p.147) as follows: building knowledge of language which facilitates reading ability, building schematic knowledge, the ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (i.e. skimming, scanning), developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English, taking a critical stance to the contents of the text.

Motivation is derived from the Latin word movere, meaning to move. Motivation can be broadly defined as the forces acting on or within a person that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of goal directed, voluntary effort (Gale, 2009).Motivation can be divided into integrated and instrumental motivation. The integrated motivation means learning the language with the intention of participating in the culture of its people. On the other hand, instrumental motivation suggests and implies that a learner learns the language in support of a purpose relating to occupation or further useful motive. These two types of motivation can affect and control the procedure and outcome of learning (Mahadi, 2012). Motivation can also be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence while extrinsic motivation is defined as doing an activity simply for the enjoyment of the activity itself, rather than its instrumental value (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The lexical density approach puts vocabulary in a central role in language acquisition (Lewis, 2000). This approach relies crucially on the concept of the learner's corpus (Willis, 1994). It focuses on developing learners' proficiency with words and word combinations. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to produce lexical phrases as chunks and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993). This approach gives more importance to vocabulary than grammar. In lexical density approach, classroom activities focus on identifying the putting together the ready-made language which fits the appropriate situation (called "chunking") (Grace, 2006).

1.2 Content of the problem

The problem of the current study could be stated in the poor performance of academic reading and motivation to read of the third year students enrolled in the English section at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University. This problem was proved by the results of the pilot study conducted by the researcher to assess the students' level. It was noted that the majority of the students were not able to infer the meaning between the lines. Additionally they could not reach

2007

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

comprehension beyond what is explicitly stated in the text. Thus, in order to overcome the problem, the current study suggested the use of lexical-density approach to develop academic reading skills and motivation to read.

1.3 Statement of the problem

To investigate this problem, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the EFL academic reading skills required for third year students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University?

2. What are the features of a program based on lexical density approach for third year students at the Faculty of Specific Education?

3. What is the effect of a program based on lexical density approach for developing academic reading and motivation to read among third year students at the Faculty of Specific Education?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Academic reading

Reading academic texts deals with ideas and concepts related to subjects which are studied at college or higher education in general. It relates directly with the specification of other subjects, and it depends basically on what students read, how to read it, and what students are expected to do. Noor (2006, p.66) pointed out that in any academic or higher learning context, reading is perceived as the most prominent academic skill for university students. It is through reading that these learners will learn new information and are able to synthesize, evaluate and interpret to learn more about their subject matter.

The ability to read academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that university students of English as a foreign language need to acquire. It should be noted that for the most part, reading instruction in the university courses tends to focus on text processing, on the reader's understanding of the language of the text. (Levine, Ferenz & Reves, 2000, p.1).

According to Alyousef (2005), Mohd. (2006), and Hellekjær (2009), academic reading importance are concluded as follows: learners can build knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability; learners can build schematic knowledge; learners can have the ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose; learners can develop an awareness of the structure of written texts in English; learners can take a critical stance to the contents of the texts; learners will

2008

learn new information and are able to synthesize, evaluate, and interpret to learn more about their subject matter; and it is the active creation of meaning in an interactive process between information in a text and the reader's knowledge.

2.2 **Motivation to read**

Thohir (2017:1) defined motivation as" some internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something and to achieve success; someone needs to be motivated". Brown (2001:72) defined motivation as" the extent to which someone makes choices about goals to pursue and the effort he /she will devote to that pursuit". Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, Alwi and Mat (2017: 1) defined motivation as" the force that encourages students to face all the tough and challenged circumstances".

It can usually be seen that university teachers regret that their students do not read much, that they seem to be unmotivated, especially in reading texts of their discipline. This is described as a "lack of motivation" and is one of the variables that could explain their "reading behaviour" (in terms of Díaz & Gámez, 2003) and an essential determinant of success or failure when university readers access certain texts. As Muñoz et al. (2016) point out, the reading motivation of academic texts is a phenomenon that has not been sufficiently explored.

2.3 The lexical-density approach

Lexical density approach is a linguistic terminology used to define statistical measures that calculate the lexical richness of texts. Sari (2016, p. 31) mentions that the level of lexical density presented in the English texts plays a significant role to the students' understanding. In addition, it is a technique used to assess students' overall progress within their learning (Daller, van Hout & Treffers-Daller, 2003). Johansson (2008, p. 65) stated that "lexical density Getsempena English Education Journal (GEEJ) Vol.7 No.2 Nov. 2020 |257 is the term which is most often used for describing the proportion of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) to the total number of words". This is in line with the concept mentioned by Vera et al., (2016), who say, "lexical density refers to the quantity of content vocabulary present in a text". Lexical density itself is included in the lexical richness. Šišková (2012, p. 26) suggests that there are three categories of the lexical richness, namely lexical diversity (the measurement of the total different words employed in the text), lexical sophistication (the measurement of the high level words employed in the text), and lexical density (the amount of content words presented in the text).

2009

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants of the Study

A sample of third year students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University during the second term of the academic year 2021-2022 (N=60).

3.2 Instruments of the Study

1. A checklist of EFL academic reading skills (prepared by the researcher).

2. A motivation to read scale to evaluate motivation to read beliefs.

3. Two equivalent forms of EFL academic reading skills: one was used a pre-test and the other as a post-test (prepared by the researcher).

4. RESULTS

The first hypothesis

This hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the controlled group in the post testing of academic reading skills.

To validate this hypothesis t.test is used. The following table shows this:

Table (10) t.test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post testing of academic reading skills as whole.

Skills	Groups	N	means	Standard deviation	Main difference	Error difference	t.value	Sig
Lexical comprehension	Cont.post Ex.post	30 30	3.46 6.70	1.41 1.72	3.23	.406	7.95	.01
Word frequency	Con.post Ex.post	30 30	3.01 6.73	1.82 1.57	3.36	.440	8.25	.01
Critical reading	Con.post Ex.post	30 30	3.10 6.73	1.7 1.76	3.76	.377	8.25	.01
Evaluative response	Con.post Ex.post	30 30	17.80 12.80	6.100 1.35	4.10	.440	9.31	.01
Exploratory rotation	Con.post Ex.post	30 30	15.20 11.30	5.18 1.30	4.10	.440	8.80	.01
Reflective action	Con.post Ex.post	30 30	6.90 1.75	1.99 1.77	3.78	.388	9.80	.01
Total	Con.post	30	27.53	8.18	44.23	1.43	10.20	.01

2010

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

skills	Ex.post	30	12.80	4.82				

It is clear from this table that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post test of academic reading skills. The difference is in favor of the experimental group. The level of significance is .01 which indicates the effectiveness of lexical density program in developing the students' academic reading skills.

The second hypothesis

This hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post testing of the academic reading skills.

To validate this hypothesis, t. test is used. The following table shows this:

Table (11) t. test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post test of the academic reading skills.

Skill	Groups	No	Means	Standard deviation	Main difference	T-value	sign	Effect size
Lexical comprehension	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	1.8667 3.333	1.2793 1.9334	29	5.809	.01	.54
Word frequency	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	1.0667 3.6667	1.9325 7.5810	29	10.140	.01	.78
Critical reading	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	.7333 1.200	1.22900 1.24291	29	8.266	.01	.70
Evaluative response	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	.833 3.2333	1.2887 1.50134	29	6.327	.01	.58
Exploratory rotation	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	1009 2.2667	.3051 1.31131	29	8.683	.01	.72
Reflective action	Exp.pre Exp.post	30 30	10.0 2.8667	.30513 1.3829	29	10.591	.01	.75

It is clear from this table that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post applications of the academic reading skill test. The difference is in favor of the post treatment. The level of significance is .01 and the effect size is between 54 to 78 which indicates the effectiveness of the training program in improving the students' academic reading skills.

2011

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

Utilizing the Lexical- Density Approach to Enhance EFL Prospective Teachers' Academic Reading and Motivation to Read at the Faculty of Specific Education

Section A-Research paper
ISSN 2063-5346

The third hypothesis

This hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in every academic reading skill in the post application of the test.

To validate this hypothesis, t. test is used to calculate the difference, the following table shows this:

Table (12) t. test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- post test of academic reading skills (first skill)

Literal comprehension

Skill	Group	No	means	S.D	t.value	Df	Sig
Literal comprehension	Exp.pre	30	79.1667	5.41718	22.551	61	0.01
	Exp.post	30	109.337	5.1887			

It is clear from this table that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- post applications of the academic reading skills. The level of significant is .01which indicates the effectiveness of the training program in developing the literal comprehension skills of the students.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study revealed that the students improved in the whole academic reading skills in the post treatment compared with the pre-treatment. At the same time, they improved in each of the academic reading skill. This improvement may be attributed to the fact that the lexical density as an aspect of the lexical approach provided the students with opportunity practice lexis based instruction in which the students do not need to learn individual words, but also how to fit together from lexical item thence contrary to the traditional view of dividing language into grammar and vocabulary, lexical -based instruction highlighted the importance of linguistic patterns or analyzed chunks that are stored and retrieved from the memory as whole and serve particular reading as functions. The students are exposed to all types of texts with different degrees of density to be able to read the academic texts with high rate of pre-fictitious. This result is consistent with (Mizutani et al 2016).

The results also revealed that the students improved in the high levels of academic reading skills. Critical and evaluative are in the post treatment. This may

2012

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

be due to the fact that the training program was extensively rich with all types of lexical density especially the formulaic sequence. This aspect of lexical density paved the way for the students to use or apply a diverse category of language forms, words and fabricated patterns. Fulfilling a variety of functions in the text, the case which managed them to literacy analysise the text and criticize it. At the same time, the formulaic sequence included in the texts helped the students to practice generation of analysis based on the formulaic construction available in the text. The result is consistent with Hill (2000).

The results also revealed that the students' improvement of high academic reading skill went one by one with the initial reading skills of academic reading which include literal comprehension and word frequency. The improvement may be due to the extensive and intensive practice of the training program which focused on the interaction of the students with the text and the interaction of the students with each other via text. This might help them and might enable them to practice more accurate and precise academic reading skills based texts and improve the sub-skills too.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that: the lexical density approach should be effective way for developing the students' academic reading skills sub-squinty, the following conclusions can be made:

-practicing the lexical density need mastery of some literary text analysis conputerces.

-the students- centered classroom encourages the students be independent and think of themselves instead of rely on the teacher's spoon heading knowledge.

-the use of different models of content words and function words as an aspect of lexical density helped the students the academic text with success.

-the variety of the texts presented to the students helped them to search for the message of the text and concern their own ideas and concepts related to the text.

-the activities practices allowed the students and gave them the opportunity to work independently in recognizing the content words and function words.

2013

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

-the extensive training in the content words and function words supported the students in discovering some factors which affect the function and content words such as the syntactic status of the word in the context.

-the training also helped the students to differentiate between word frequency and had categories of words.

-the training enabled the students also to analyze the language used and they have to criticize them.

-the students shared their responses supported by logic or evidence from the text.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the previous discussion and conclusion, it can be recommended that:

-enhancing the students' academic reading skills need a lot studies on the qualitative analysis of the academic text.

-the students must be exposed to extensive training in the literacy text analysis to improve their academic reading skills.

-the students must be trained on have to use different text modes to improve their academic reading skills.

-the students must be exposed to soft more programs to be able to deal with long texts.

-the students must be trained in examining lexical features and academic vocabulary use in the text based analytical texts.

-texts used for academic reading must be presented through different visualization techniques to facilitate the academic reading proficiencies.

8. REFERENCES

Al-Yousef, HY, (2005). Alkaline surfactant polymer formulation for carbonate reservoirs. *Petroleum science and technology* , *23* (5-6), 723-746

2014

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

Gale (2009). Motivation and motivation theory. Retrieved from: www.encyclopedia.com

Gopalan, V., Bakar, J. A. A., Zulkifli, A. N., Alwi, A., & Mat, R. C. (2017, October). A review of the motivation theories in learning. In *Aip conference proceedings* (Vol. 1891, No. 1, p. 020043). AIP Publishing LLC.

Grace, G.(2006). Teenagers and adults using the lexical approach in task based learning. In English, British Council.

Hellekjær, G. O. (2009). Academic English Reading Proficiency at the University Level: A Norwegian Case Study. *Reading in a foreign Language*, *21*(2), 198-222.

Levine, A., Ferenz, O., & Reves, T. (2000). EFL academic reading and modern technology: How can we turn our students into independent critical readers. *Tesl-Ej*, *4*(4), 1-9.

Lewis, M. (1993). *The lexical approach* (Vol. 1, p. 993). Hove: Language teaching publications Nattinger, JR, & DeCarrico, JS (1992). *Lexical phrases and language teaching* . Oxford University Press.

Lewis, M. (2000). Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach (Vol. 244). M. Lewis (Ed.). Hove: Language Teaching Publications.

Mahadi, T. (2012). Motivation, its Types, and its impact in language learning, International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3 (24).Retrieved from: ijbssnet.com/journals /

Ryan, R. & Deci, E. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: Classic definations and New directions, Educational Psychology, 25(3). Retrieved from: www.idealibrary.com.

2015

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

Thohir, L. (2017). Motivation in a foreign language teaching and learning. *Vision: Journal for language and foreign language learning*, *6*(1), 20-29.

Díaz, J., & Gámez, E. (2003). Hábitos lectores y motivación entre estudiantes universitarios. *Revista Electrónica de Motivación y Emoción*, *6*(13), 14-15.

Muñoz, C., Valenzuela, J., Avendaño, C., & Núñez, C. (2016). Improvement in Academic Reading Motivation: Motivated Students Perspective Mejora en la motivación por la Lectura Académica: la mirada de estudiantes motivados. *Ocnos*, *15*, 52-68.

Sari, D. (2016). MEASURING QUALITY OF READING MATERIALS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK: THE USE OF LEXICAL DENSITY METHOD IN ASSESSING COMPLEXITY OF READING MATERIALS OF INDONESIA'S CURRICULUM–13 (K13) ENGLISH TEXTBOOK Dian Sari. *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, *1* (2), 30-39.

Daller, H., Van Hout, R., & Treffers-Daller, J. (2003). Lexical richness in the spontaneous speech of bilinguals. *Applied linguistics*, *24* (2), 197-222.

Johansson, V. (2008). Lexical diversity and lexical density in speech and writing: A developmental perspective. Lund Working Papers in Linguistics, 61–79.

Šišková, Z. (2012). Lexical richness in EFL students' narratives. *Language Studies Working Papers*, *4*, 26-36.

Mizutani, C., Valenzuela, J., Avendaño, C., & Núñez, C. (2016). Improvement in Academic Reading Motivation: Motivated Students Perspective Mejora

2016

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017

en la motivación por la Lectura Académica: la mirada de estudiantes motivados. *Ocnos*, *15*, 52-68.

Hill,J. (2000). Revising priorities: From Grammatical Failure to Collocational Success. In M. Lewis (Ed.)., Teaching collocation: further development in the lexical approach (PP.47-69). England: Language Teaching Publications.

2017

Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023, 12 (Special Issue7), 2006-2017