ISSN: 2663-5798 || Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing

الإصدار التاسع – العدد التاسع والثمانون
تاريخ الإصدار: 2 – آذار – 2026م
www.ajsp.net

"Strengthening Oral Language in Grade Two EFL Students and Its Influence on Reading Comprehension in Grade Three"

Researcher:

Abeer A. Salhab

[1]Beirut Arab University, Department of English Language and Literature, P.O. Box 11-50-20, 11072809 Riad El Solh, Beirut, Lebanon.

ISSN: 2663-5798 || Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing

الإصدار التاسع – العدد التاسع والثمانون
تاريخ الإصدار: 2 – آذار – 2026م
www.ajsp.net

Abstract:

This study investigates the effect of oral language focusing on vocabulary enhancement on English reading achievement among Grades 2 and 3 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in Lebanon. Many EFL learners struggle with reading comprehension based on both formal and informal classroom observations and school-based assessments. These difficulties are often linked to oral language deficits stemming from limited exposure to English. Recognizing the critical role of oral language in supporting comprehension, the study examines whether increasing vocabulary knowledge through oral stories can address this gap and improve reading outcomes for students in elementary grades. A sample of 443 Arabic-speaking Grade 2 students from four private schools participated in the study. The experimental group (initially 220 students, reduced to 184 in Grade 3) received an 18-week oral language program, including 8 weeks of instruction in Grade 2 and 10 weeks in Grade 3. The oral stories focused on vocabulary development using structured activities. The control group (223 students) continued with the standard curriculum. Three vocabulary assessments, and two reading comprehension tests were performed for both groups. A comparative analysis was performed through graphical examination of score distributions. The study found a difference between the control and experimental groups concerning vocabulary. The results underscore the importance of boosting vocabulary through oral language programs and integrating them into EFL instruction in elementary grades to help support long-term reading success.

Keywords: oral language, reading comprehension, vocabulary, EFL students

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that supports both academic achievement and professional success, and it plays a crucial role in attaining personal and social fulfillment (Snow, 2002). It is broadly defined as the ability to make sense of written text. Scholars such as Snow (2002), Perfetti et al. (2005), and Shanahan et al. (2010) describe reading comprehension as a dynamic process that involves extracting meaning from written material while simultaneously constructing meaning through active engagement and interaction between the reader and the text.

As a multifaceted and complex cognitive activity, reading comprehension goes beyond understanding the literal meaning to include interpreting the author's implicit messages. This sophisticated process requires the integration of a wide range of linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective skills that work together to support the reader's ability to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate written texts (Shaaban, 2006; Kendeou et al., 2009; Kim, 2015; Ghaith, 2018; Spencer & Wagner, 2018; Nation, 2019; Spencer et al., 2020; Kim et al. 2025).

As a result, researchers have endeavored to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the processes and skills involved in reading comprehension. Among the most common linguistic and cognitive abilities required for successful reading comprehension are phonological awareness, decoding, reading fluency, syntactic and sematic knowledge, text structure, verbal working memory, inference making, comprehension monitoring, background knowledge, etc. (National Reading Panel, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010; Duke et al., 2021).

Recent findings have revealed the crucial role of oral language proficiency in reading comprehension (Miller et al., 2006; Kendeou et al., 2009; Geva & Farnia, 2012; Catts et al., 2015; Foorman et al., 2015; LARRC, 2017; Hulme et al., 2018; Lervåg et al., 2018; Hjetland et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2021, 2022; Goodrich et al., 2023). Several studies have highlighted a causal relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension (Clarke et al., 2010; LARRC et al., 2019; Proctor et al., 2020). This finding is in line with many researches (e.g., Catts et al., 2006; Elwér et al., 2013) that have proved that children with poor oral language in KGs have had weaknesses in reading comprehension skills in primary classes. Oral language or oral comprehension encompasses many linguistic skills, such as syntax, vocabulary, background knowledge, narrative processes, text type, inference making, and listening comprehension.

The contribution of oral language to reading comprehension differs among native speakers of English, second language learners, and learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), which is the context of the current article. Few studies have investigated the influence of oral language skills on reading comprehension in an EFL context such as Lebanon. A considerable number of EFL Lebanese students have relatively poor oral proficiency because of their limited exposure to the English language outside the classroom. This weakness in English oral comprehension may be a precursor for reading comprehension deficits in elementary and even intermediate grades.

For EFL Lebanese students, there is scarcity of research that has studied the relationship between English oral language and reading comprehension. Hence, this study aims to select a sample of Grade 2 EFL students from private Lebanese schools who exhibit underdeveloped oral language skills in English. It targets at checking the extent to which enhancing the English oral skills of second graders might ensure better reading achievement in Grade 3 after the implementation of an oral program.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the Lebanese EFL context, rare attention has been given to the role of oral language skills in shaping reading comprehension outcomes. Although English instruction begins as early as preschool and kindergarten, many Lebanese students demonstrate relatively weak oral proficiency due to their limited exposure to English outside the classroom. This oral language deficit may contribute to difficulties in reading comprehension that persist into the elementary and even intermediate grades.

A central concern is whether missed opportunities to establish strong oral foundations in the preschool and KG years can be compensated for through targeted oral language development during the early elementary grades. Specifically, this study explores whether enhancing oral skills in Grade 2 can mitigate earlier gaps in oral comprehension and, in turn, positively influence reading comprehension by Grade 3. Addressing this problem requires the design and implementation of an effective oral enhancement aimed at strengthening oral proficiency as a pathway to improving reading achievement.

3. Purpose

This study investigates whether strengthening young students' oral skills in the early grades contributes to better reading comprehension by Grade 3. These students had previously shown poor oral language skills kindergarten as observed in classroom settings and from school assessments. The present research checks the effectiveness of providing rich, systematic instruction in oral language with particular emphasis on vocabulary knowledge as a key component of oral proficiency. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of improved oral skills on the reading comprehension achievement of Grade 3 students.

4. Significance

This study contributes to a shift in an academic instruction by focusing on a balanced language program that provides more opportunities for oral proficiency at early grades to improve reading comprehension achievement at upper grade levels. The results of the study suggest that instructors, educators, and curriculum designers choose a language program that increases oral vocabulary for EFL students to attain successful reading comprehension.

5. Theoretical Background

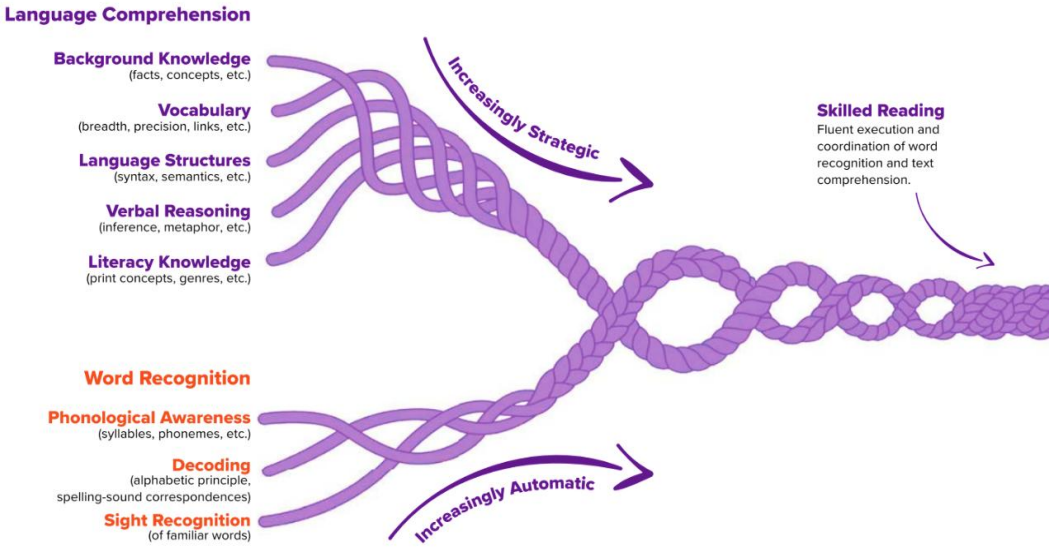
Many reading comprehension theories and models, such as bottom-up theory, top-down theory, schema theory, interactive theory, and the simple view of reading (SVR) model (Shanahan et al., 2010; Spencer & Wagner, 2018; Spencer et al. 2020), have been developed to address the complex processes and relationships involved in comprehension.

The SVR model is the most relevant to the context of the current research. It provides a direct comprehensible explanation for reading comprehension (Hoover & Gough, 1990). According to this model, reading comprehension (RC) is the product of two main constituents: decoding (D) and linguistic comprehension (LC). Numerically, RC = D × LC (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001; Perfetti et al., 2005; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). Hence, both components decoding and linguistic comprehension enable readers to comprehend texts.

Decoding refers to the ability to identify and read words in a text accurately. It encompasses letter recognition, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, and sight word knowledge (Scarborough, 2001; Shanahan et al., 2010). From the SVR perspective, linguistic comprehension is the ability to understand spoken language.

Scarborough (2001) interpreted the SVR model and developed the idea of the reading rope, which is composed of two strands: word recognition and language comprehension (**Figure 1**). According to Scarborough's Reading Rope, language comprehension of oral texts includes vocabulary, language structures (e.g., syntax), verbal reasoning (e.g., inference), background knowledge (e.g., concepts), and literacy knowledge (e.g., print concepts or genres). Word recognition encompasses phonological awareness, decoding (alphabet; letter–sound connection), and sight recognition. The two strands of the reading rope are woven to obtain a skilled reader.

Figure 1 Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)



Oral language or listening comprehension, as referred to in many studies, encompasses vocabulary knowledge. Research has shown that vocabulary is a fundamental component of oral language that includes both receptive and expressive vocabulary (Clarke et al., 2010; Kim, 2015, 2017; Lervåg et al., 2018). Therefore, whenever oral language or listening comprehension is assessed, it includes some form of vocabulary measures (e.g., Catts et al., 2015; LARRC & Chiu, 2018).

Researchers have extensively studied the connection between vocabulary and reading comprehension among native speakers and second- and foreign-language learners of English (Geva & Farnia, 2012; Proctor et al., 2020; Lee & Lee, 2023). They reported that vocabulary uniquely contributes to understanding text beyond basic word recognition and is a strong predictor of reading comprehension. In fact, vocabulary has been shown to be strongly correlated with reading comprehension on the basis of the assumption that children who do not know the meaning of words in text have difficulty understanding what they read (Ouellette & Beers, 2010). Previous findings have shown how poor reading comprehension in children is linked to semantic weaknesses (Nation & Snowling, 2000, 2004).

Vocabulary knowledge of the foreign language (FL), a subcomponent of the oral construct, is strongly correlated with reading comprehension (Schmitt et al., 2011). A study based on the SVR model by Sparks and Patton (2016) underscored the noteworthy contribution that FL vocabulary played in FL reading. Other studies on Grade 3 school students have shown that vocabulary adds unique variance to reading comprehension (e.g., Senechal et al., 2006).

Concerning the connection of vocabulary with reading and listening comprehension by second and foreign learners, Zhang and Zhang (2022) carried out a significant meta-analysis that incorporated 116 individual studies, including a sample of nearly 21,000 learners. A total of 110 studies addressed reading comprehension, 68 in a second-language setting and 48 in a foreign setting. The most noteworthy finding was that vocabulary (in depth and breadth) had a moderately high correlation ($r = 0.57$) with reading comprehension The research also concluded that vocabulary knowledge highly influenced second- and foreign-language comprehension across various age groups.

6. Methodology

6.1 Design and Oral Program

An experimental study was conducted to empirically investigate the effectiveness of an oral enhancement on reading comprehension by comparing an experimental group (receiving the additional oral material) with a control group (not receiving any additional material). Eight Grade 2 sections were randomly selected from a total of 30 available sections across four private schools (two sections from each school) to participate in the experimental group. Each section included approximately 30 students. These students were exposed to listening stories added to the mainstream reading program that was modified to accommodate the implementation of these oral stories. In contrast, eight additional Grade 2 sections from

the 30 available sections were selected to form the control group, which continued with the mainstream reading program without any supplementary instructional changes (**Figure 2**).

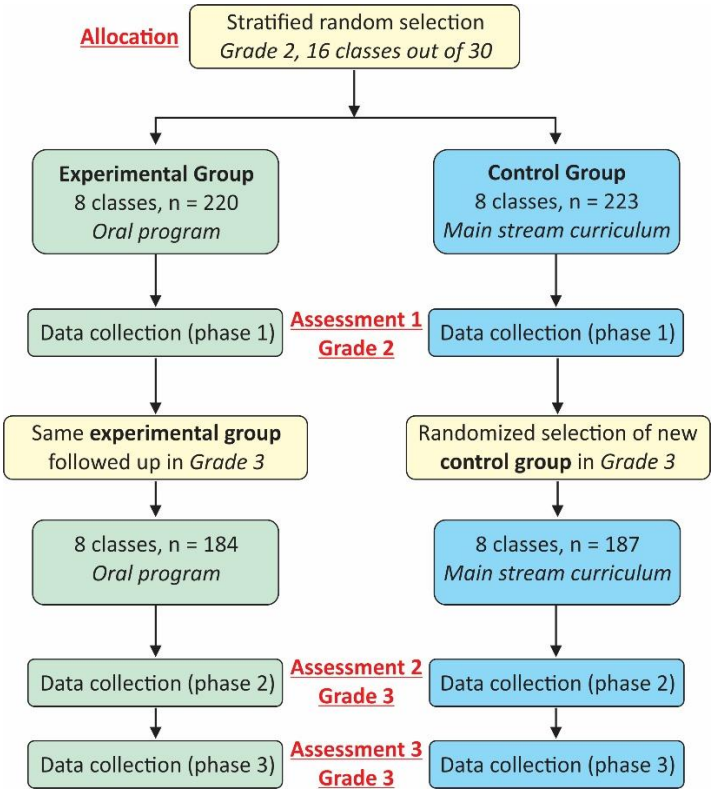


Figure 2 Flow of Participants Selection in the Oral Program

In fact, the study employed a stratified random sampling approach, as sections were randomly selected from each of four participating schools. The selected sections were then allocated into either the experimental group, which received the oral material, or the control group, which followed the mainstream curriculum. The overall study design was a randomized controlled trial.

The control group's program emphasized traditional approaches to reading instruction, primarily focusing on students' comprehension of written stories through conventional, text-based lessons with limited interactivity. This method reflected a standard instructional model centered on silent reading, teacher questioning, and written exercises. Meanwhile, the experimental group followed the same mainstream curriculum but with a key modification, a portion of their regular reading lessons was replaced with 8 listening stories. These stories introduced more interactive, engaging and auditory-rich experiences, allowing students to listen to stories read by teachers. They were accompanied with activities designed to enhance vocabulary development.

The same participants in the experimental group were promoted from Grade 2 to 3 and continued to receive the oral addition for 10 more weeks; however, a new control group in Grade 3 was formed. The program lasted for 18 weeks over two academic years starting in March 2023, when the experimental group was initially in Grade 2, until April 2024, when the same group moved to Grade 3 (**Figure 3**). The oral material was covered over three semesters. These semesters were divided into 3 phases: (1) the first phase involved an 8-week period for the experimental group in Grade 2, (2) the second phase comprised a 5-week interference for the same experimental group in the first semester of the second academic year of Grade 3, and (3) the last phase continued with the oral program for 5 more weeks for the same participants in the second semester of Grade 3.

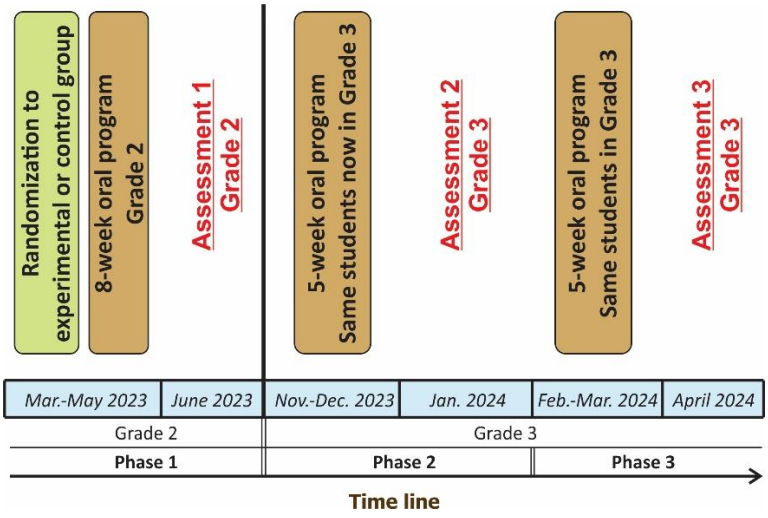


Figure 3 Time Line of the Oral Program

The oral program was added to the mainstream English language curriculum and designed specifically for the experimental group. It encompasses stories of appropriate Lexile level. They were carefully selected based on their level of interest and rich vocabulary. Such stories opened the chance to focus on vocabulary instruction. The stories had varied content and offered learners rich English language vocabulary because they were characterized by new concepts that widened vocabulary knowledge. The program was supplemented with instructional guides including strategies and steps, and vocabulary activities. Key vocabulary words and expressions were emphasized in every story (**Table 1**). At the end of each story, students were supposed to retell it using new key words.

Table 1 Names of Selected Stories of the Oral Program in Grades 2 and 3

Number of Stories	Story Title	Grade
Phase One: 8 stories	1. Staying Warm in Winter (Lexile 500) 2. Splash, Waddle, and Swim (Lexile 520) 3. Time to Plant (Lexile 450) 4. The Great Onion Search (Lexile 410) 5. Listen! (480) 6. Wrapped with Love (Lexile 410) 7. Use Your Words (Lexile 470) 8. Ready for the Beach (Lexile 400)	2 (3rd semester of the 1st academic year)
Phase Two: 5 stories	1. Little Bunny Can (Lexile 500) 2. Pass it On (Lexile 450) 3. Grocery Store Helpers (Lexile 480) 4. Cock-a-Doodle Whisper (Lexile 480) 5. Belly Flops and Gutter Balls (Lexile 520)	3 (1st semester of the 2nd academic year)
Phase Three: 5 stories	1. Learning the Words ((Lexile 520) 2. Mike Gets a Library Card (Lexile 470) 3. A Not-So-Helpful Goose (Lexile 500) 4. 100 Things (Lexile 510) 5. The Poster Contest (Lexile 500)	3 (2nd semester of the 2nd academic year)

6.2 Vocabulary Assessment

Vocabulary was assessed via story retelling. The participants listened to a story assigned for assessment and were expected to use a list of key words to express the main events of this story. The lists of keywords were set for the three assessed stories. Scoring was based on the number of key words used during the retelling assessment. This assessment shows both expressive vocabulary and vocabulary depth because it reflects the ability of the assessor to know not only the meaning of the key words but also to remember and use them correctly to express a story event.

The expressive vocabulary was part of the retelling, and the participants were supposed to use a specified number of key vocabulary words during the retelling. Scores from 1 to 3 were awarded depending on the number of vocabulary words used from the list for each story (1 for beginning, 2 for developing, and 3 for proficient). Below is an example of a vocabulary list with a scoring rubric for "Time to Celebrate", a story used in the third retelling. The student would score:

a. 1: when saying only the basic words (party-prepare-color-sign-help-cake-change clothes-get ready-everyone smiled)
b. 2: when saying most of the vocabulary words (party-prepare-color-sign-help-cake- change clothes-get ready-everyone smiled - graduate- food and decorations-blue and yellow-arrange the plates- snap a photo –put the cap)
c. 3: when saying almost all the keywords (party-prepare-color-sign-help-cake- change clothes-get ready- everyone smiled -graduate - food and decorations-blue and yellow-arrange the plates, napkins and forks around the cake- snap a photo –put the cap - graduation day- excited-watched everyone scurry around-congratulation-finished preparing-plopped the cap- off they went)

6.3 Reading Comprehension Assessment

Two reading comprehension assessments were customized, each consisting of a narrative passage that was appropriate for the length and Lexile level of Grade 3. The first text was Lexile 400, and the second text was 500. The reading comprehension tests were examined and evaluated by experts in English language teaching.

The tests included multiple choice and open-ended questions. The comprehension questions were sequenced in terms of difficulty, and they assessed students' ability to answer direct and inferential questions about the narrative text. The first reading comprehension test included 11 items: nine multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. Similarly, the second test included 12 items: ten multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions.

6.4 Comparative Analysis

To compare the performance of the control and experimental groups, a comparative analysis approach was conducted using Violin plots. These combine features of boxplots and kernel density plots, allowing for a detailed depiction of not only summary statistics (notably the median, interquartile range, and potential outliers) but also the full probability density of each variable (**Figure 4**).

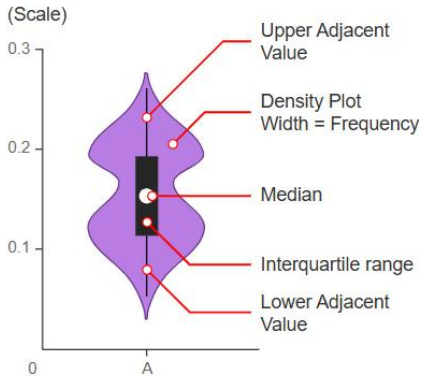


Figure 4 Anatomy of a Violin Plot

By illustrating the shape of the distribution, violin plots can reveal the differences in central tendency, variability, and distribution symmetry between groups (Hintze & Nelson, 1998). This visual comparison is valuable for understanding differences between groups, identifying anomalies, and assessing the degree of overlap in their performance.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Grade 2 Expressive Vocabulary Assessment

The aim of the study is to examine the effects of the oral language, measured by vocabulary knowledge on the reading comprehension of Grade 3 participants. Expressive vocabulary was assessed on the basis of the key word's students used via their retelling. This refers to the measurement of how well students use words to express story events verbally. The first

vocabulary assessment involved students retelling a story, and their vocabulary use was scored out of 3. The mean values of the expressive vocabulary scores of the first retelling assessment of Grade 2 control versus experimental groups were higher for the experimental group (**Table 2**). This means that the students in the experimental group used wider and more vocabulary in their retelling than did the students in the control group.

Table 2 Comparison of Expressive Vocabulary Assessment Scores at the First Retelling between Grade 2 Control and Experimental Groups

Group Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	1.68	0.736	223
Experimental	1.95	0.723	220

The violin plot (**Figure 5**) compares expressive vocabulary scores between the control and experimental groups of Grade 2 students after 8 weeks of oral language teaching. The scores are spread from 0 to 3, with a peak around 2. In the control group, there was more variation in the scores which meant wider distribution. A few students likely scored low (around 0 or 1). The control group included lower a broader range. However, in the experimental group, the distribution was more centered around 2–3. The curve was slightly more symmetrical and narrower, showing greater consistency. Fewer students scored very low. This group was more consistent and showed less variability. The oral stories may have helped stabilize or slightly enhance expressive vocabulary, especially by reducing the number of students with lower scores.

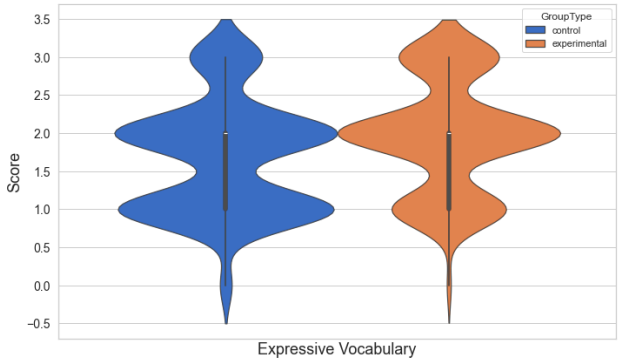


Figure 5 A Violin Plot Comparing Density, Spread, and Central Tendency of the First Expressive Vocabulary Scores of Grades 2 Control and Experimental Groups

7.2 Grade 3 Expressive Vocabulary

After 5 weeks of implementing the oral program, the experimental group completed a second retelling assessment involving 184 students at the end of the first semester of Grade 3. This group had been in the program since Grade 2 and had received 8 weeks of oral enhancement by then. The same assessment was also performed for the control group of 187 students. Expressive vocabulary was assessed through story retelling, which evaluated the use of story vocabulary to express events orally.

The mean values of the expressive vocabulary scores of the second retelling assessment of Grade 3 control versus experimental groups were higher than those of the experimental group (**Table 3**). This means that the third graders in the experimental group used broader vocabulary words in their retelling assessment than their counterparts in the control group did.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Comparison of Expressive Vocabulary Assessment Scores at Second Retelling between Grade 3 Control and Grade 3 Experimental Group

Group Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	1.51	0.773	187
Experimental	1.70	0.798	184

The violin plot shows the distribution of expressive vocabulary scores for Grade 3 students on the second story retelling, comparing control and experimental groups (**Figure 6**). The distributions had several peaks, which indicated subgroups or clustering of scores within each group. Both groups showed a score range from 0 to 3. The bulk of scores (denser areas) for the control group was clustered around 1, suggesting that most students performed within this range. There were some low outliers near 0 and fewer high scores at 3, which means most students did not achieve the top score. In the experimental group, students' scores centered around 1 and 2. Some students achieved high scores at 3. More students in the experimental group got a score of 2 and 3 on expressive vocabulary during the second retell than the control group did.

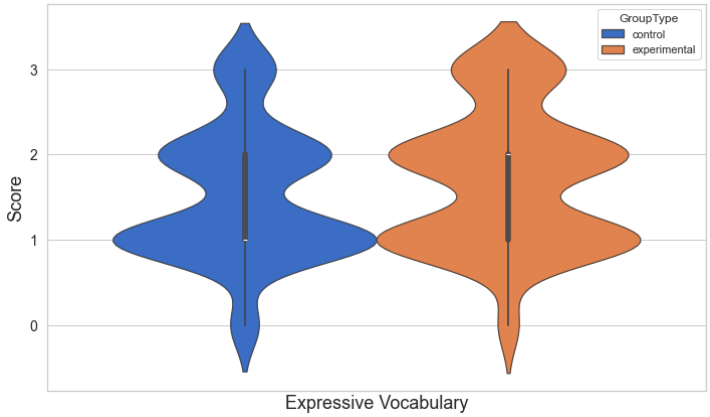


Figure 6 A Violin Plot Comparing Density, Spread, and Central Tendency of the Second Expressive Vocabulary Scores of Grades 3 Control and Experimental Groups

Additionally, expressive vocabulary performance in the third retelling assessment for Grade 3 was evaluated at the end of the second semester, following 18 weeks of teaching oral stories for the experimental group. The descriptive results showed that the experimental group achieved higher mean scores than the control group (**Table 4**) reinforcing the conclusion that the oral program contributed positively to students' expressive vocabulary development.

Table 4 Comparison of Expressive Vocabulary Assessment Scores at Third Retelling between Grade 3 Control and Experimental Groups

Group Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	1.60	0.759	187
Experimental	1.85	0.750	184

The violin plot below represents the expressive vocabulary scores of Grade 3 students during the third retell, comparing the control group (blue) and the experimental group (orange) (**Figure 7**). The distributions of scores were different between the groups. The general tendency of the control group was around score 1 (which is their median), indicating some lower-performing students. Yet, the experimental group showed high density around the score 2 (which is their median), meaning that most students were scoring above the middle range. In addition, the experimental group had more spread with a noticeable bump at score 3, designating that some students were performing higher.

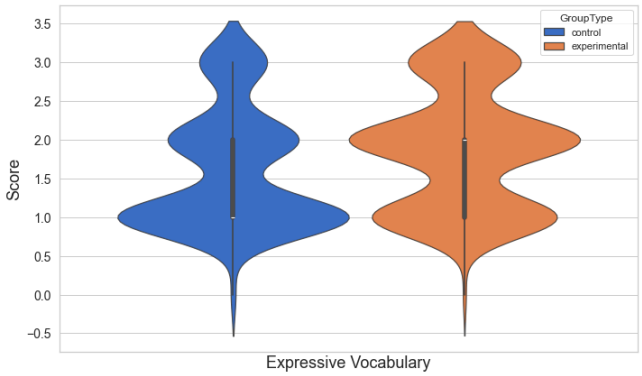


Figure 7 A Violin Plot Comparing Density, Spread, and Central Tendency of the Third Expressive Vocabulary Scores of Grades 3 Control and Experimental Groups

7.3 First Reading Comprehension Grade 3

The first reading assessment was performed on Grade 3 students at the end of the first semester after completing thirteen oral stories. Scores for both groups ranged from 0 to 6, yet the control group displayed greater spread and density in the lower score range (2–5), suggesting more variability and a higher proportion of students struggling with comprehension (**Figure 8**). In contrast, the experimental group showed a noticeable upward shift, with a higher median and a larger cluster of students achieving scores near the upper end of the scale. This pattern indicates stronger overall performance among students exposed to the oral program.

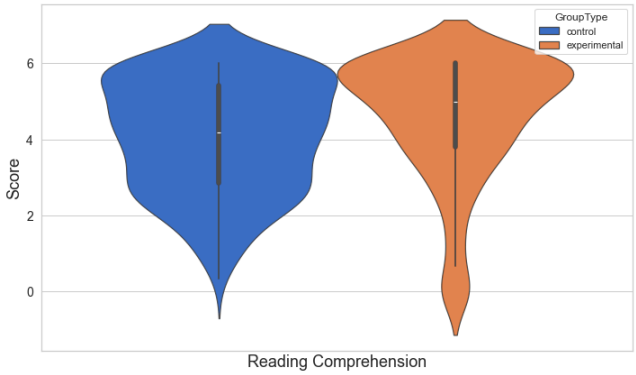


Figure 8 A Violin Plot Comparing Density, Spread, and Central Tendency of the First Reading Comprehension Scores of Grades 3 Control and Experimental Groups

7.4 Grade 3 Second Reading Comprehension

The second reading comprehension assessment for third-grade students was conducted at the end of the study. The results closely mirrored those of the first assessment, where the Grade 3 experimental group outperformed the control group.

The violin plot (**Figure 9**) shows that the distribution of scores of the second reading comprehension assessment performed by the experimental and the control group Grade 3 students. Both groups had scores ranging from 0 to 5. The experimental group had a wider and more even distribution of scores from 2 to 5. Distribution skewed higher, with a larger proportion of students scoring 3–5. The plot showed less density below score 2, meaning fewer low-performing students.

The control group showed more density at lower scores (1–3) and a sharper drop-off above 4. Fewer students reached high scores (4–5). The results suggest greater comprehension strength and higher scores among the experimental group.

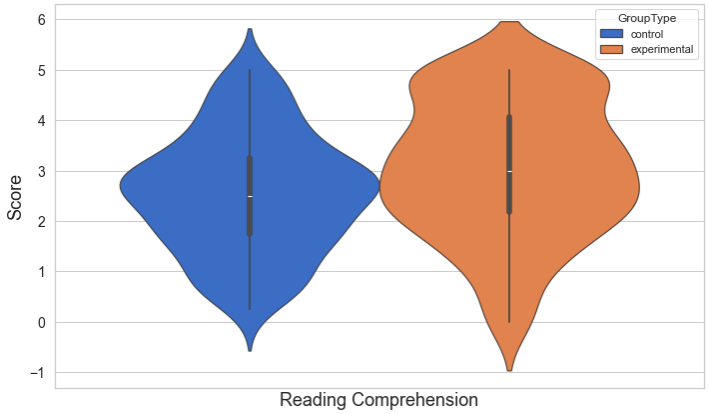


Figure 9 A Violin Plot Comparing Density, Spread, and Central Tendency of the Second Reading Comprehension Scores of Grades 3 Control and Experimental Groups

8. Conclusions

8.1 Key Findings

The results revealed that the experimental group had greater density near the higher scores, whereas the control group had more density in the lower scoring range. Additionally, the distribution of scores increased in consistency, suggesting reduced variability among the students in the experimental group.

This research confirms that strong oral language skills represented by vocabulary are crucial for EFL children to become successful readers. The experimental group that received systematic oral instruction consistently outperformed the control group. This study reveals that oral stories accompanied by vocabulary activities play a substantial role in increasing general language skills and has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension. The findings focus on how vocabulary knowledge highly predict the reading achievements of Grade 2 and 3 EFL students.

Based on the analysis and key findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance literacy instruction and address the identified gaps. These suggestions aim to support educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in implementing more effective strategies that align with students' diverse needs and learning contexts. The following recommendations are intended to promote meaningful improvements in literacy outcomes for EFL students.

8.2 Recommendations for Teachers and Educators

1. The integration of an oral program within the English Language curriculum at schools is recommended. Teachers, stakeholders, and education curriculum designers should provide heavy instruction in oral vocabulary to nurture EFL oral skills.
2. Because early risk factors and the negative impact of oral difficulties on later reading comprehension success are now understood in this study, an emphasis on preventing oral deficits in young children, even as early as preschool, is recommended. The focus on oral language prompts educators and researchers in early childhood and elementary settings to investigate various literacy oral instructional practices. This study stresses the importance of improving oral proficiency at an early age. Programs that integrate structured oral language activities should be introduced in KGs and Grades 1 and 2. Oral language sessions help build vocabulary, grammar, and fluency.
3. The effectiveness of the common practice of listening to a storybook was validated in this research. The study confirmed the efficacy of incorporating interesting oral stories as part of the curriculum. EFL teachers should choose high-quality attractive stories that promote expressive language development, and they can design vocabulary-building tasks about key words to strengthen vocabulary. They can integrate a range of vocabulary activities. This rigorous design of the content and implementation of oral in elementary classes can help overcome main oral comprehension and production deficits.
4. Teachers' professional development, which focuses on vocabulary instruction is recommended. Training teachers in EFL oral language is important because effective implementation requires that teachers be well prepared to deliver strong vocabulary knowledge. Teachers should consistently use grammatically correct English and avoid oversimplifying language.

8.3 Recommendations for Improving Reading for Coordinators and Teachers

1. Understanding the role of oral language and its relation to reading achievement calls for early assessments of oral skills to identify children who are at risk for difficulties in reading comprehension at the upper grade level. Thus, early identification of oral deficits helps in the design of proper oral material in kindergarten and primary classes. Because oral language is a main predictor of reading achievement, formative ongoing assessments that assess oral language progress can be implemented to monitor student progress and inform instruction. Hence, interventions are needed to address all the gaps in oral comprehension and production. Oral skills are best developed at the initial stages of learning the English language. Therefore, a curriculum that focuses on both building and assessing oral language at an early age is needed to address the deficits of EFL students in reading comprehension.
2. Given the significant role of vocabulary in predicting reading comprehension success, enhancing vocabulary knowledge in elementary classes through oral books is important since vocabulary could serve as an early indicator for identifying students who might struggle with reading comprehension later on. Explicit vocabulary instruction can be offered by teachers. They can introduce new vocabulary in context and provide child-friendly definitions, as we did in this study. They can also teach vocabulary through oral activities.

References:

Cain, K., & Oakhill, J. (1999). Inference making ability and its relation to comprehension failure in young children. Reading and Writing, 11, 489–503. https://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1008084120205.

Catts, H.W., Adlof, S., & Weismer, S.E. (2006). Language deficits in poor comprehenders: A case for the simple view of reading. Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 49, 278–293. https://dx.doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2006/023).

Catts, H.W., Herrera, S., Nielsen, D.C., & Bridges, M.S. (2015). Early prediction of reading comprehension within the simple view framework. Read Writ, 28:1407–1425. https://dx.doi.org/110.1007/s11145-015-9576-x .

Clarke, P. J., Snowling, M. J., Truelove, E., & Hulme, C. (2010). Ameliorating children's reading comprehension difficulties: A randomized controlled trial. Psychological Science, 21(8), 1106–1116. https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797610375449.

Duke, N.K., Ward, A.E., & Pearson, P.D., (2021). The science of reading comprehension instruction. The Reading Teacher, 74 (6), 663–672. https://dx..doi:10.1002/trtr.1993.

Elwér, Å., Keenan, J. M., Olson, R. K., Byrne, B., & Samuelsson, S. (2013). Longitudinal stability and predictors of poor oral comprehenders and poor decoders. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 115, 497–516. https://doi:10.1016/j.jecp.2012.12.001.

Foorman, B. R., Koon, S., Petscher, Y., Mitchell, A., & Truckenmiller, A. (2015). Examining general and specific factors in the dimensionality of oral language and reading in 4th–10th grades. Journal of Educational Psychology, 107, 884–899. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000026.

García, J.R., & Cain, K. (2014). Decoding and reading comprehension: A meta-analysis to identify which reader and assessment characteristics influence the strength of the relationship in English. Review of Educational Research, 84(1), 74–111. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313499616.

Geva, E., & Farnia, F. (2012). Developmental changes in the nature of language proficiency and reading fluency paint a more complex view of reading comprehension in ELL and EL1. Reading and Writing, 25(8), 1819–1845. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-011-9333-8.

Ghaith, G. (2018). English as a second/foreign language reading comprehension: A framework for curriculum and instruction. TESL Reporter, 50(2), 1-17. http://ojs-dev.byuh.edu/index.php/Issue1/article/view/974/927.

Goodrich, J.M., Fitton, L., & Thayer, L., (2023). Relations between oral language skills and English reading achievement among Spanish–English bilingual children: a quantile regression analysis. Annals of Dyslexia, 73, 6–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-022-00257-1.

Hintze, J. L., & Nelson, R. D. (1998). Violin Plots: A Box Plot-Density Trace Synergism. The American Statistician, 52(2), 181–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.1998.10480559 .

Hjetland, H. N., Lervåg, A., Lyster, S. A. H., Hagtvet, B. E., Hulme, C., & Melby-Lervåg, M. (2019). Pathways to reading comprehension: A longitudinal study from 4 to 9 years of age. Journal of Educational Psychology, 111, 751–763. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000321.

Hoover, W. A., & Gough, P. B. (1990). The simple view of reading. Reading and Writing, 2, 127–160.

Huang, B., Bedore, L., Niu, L., Wang, Y., & Wicha, N. (2021). The contributions of oral language to English reading outcomes among young bilingual students in the United States. International Journal of Bilingualism, 25 (1), 40-57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006920938136 .

Huang, B., Bedore, L., Ramirez. R., & Wicha, N. (2022). Contributions of oral narrative skills to English reading in Spanish–English Latino/a dual language learners. Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 65, 653–671. https://doi.org/10.1044/2021_JSLHR-21-00105.

Hulme, C., Lervåg, A., & Melby-Lervåg, M. (2018). Unpicking the developmental relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension: It's simple, but complex. Child Development, 89, 1821 –1838. https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12861.

Kendeou, P., Van den Broek, P., White, M.J., & Lynch, J.S. (2009). Predicting reading comprehension in early elementary school: The independent contributions of oral language and decoding skills. Journal of Educational Psychology, 101, 765–778. https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015956.

Kim, Y. S. (2015). Language and cognitive predictors of text comprehension: Evidence from multivariate analysis. Child Development, 86, 128–144. https://doi.org/10. 1111/cdev.12293.

Kim, Y. S., Harris, K. R., Goldstone, R., Camping, A., & Graham S. (2025). The Science of Teaching Reading is Incomplete without the Science of Writing: A Randomized Control Trial of Integrated Teaching of Reading and Writing, Scientific Studies of Reading, 29(1), 32-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2024.2380272.

Language and Reading Research Consortium (LARRC). (2017). Oral language and listening comprehension: Same or different constructs? Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 60(5), 1273–84. https://doi.org/10.1044/2017_JSLHR-L-16-0039.

Language and Reading Research Consortium (LARRC), & Chiu, Y.D. (2018). The simple view of reading across development: Prediction of grade 3 reading comprehension from prekindergarten skills. Remedial and Special Education, 39(5), 289–303. https://doi.org/10.1177/07419 32518762055.

Language and Reading Research Consortium (LARRC), Jiang, H., & Logan, J. (2019). Improving reading comprehension in the primary grades: Mediated effects of a language-focused classroom intervention. Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 62(8), 2812–2828. https://doi.org/10.1044/2019JSLHR-L19-0015.

Lee, H., & Lee, G.H. (2023). Extending the simple View of Reading in second and foreign language learning: A meta-analytic structural equation modeling approach. Review of Educational Research, 55 (10), 1-34. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543231186605.

Lervåg, A., Hulme, C., & Melby-Lervåg, M. (2018). Unpicking the developmental relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension: It's simple, but complex. Child Development, 89(5), 1821–1838. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12861.

Miller, J. F., Heilmann, J., Nockerts, A., Iglesias, A., Fabiano, L., & Francis, D., F. (2006). Oral Language and Reading in Bilingual Children. Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 21(1), 30–43.

Nation, K. (2019). Children's reading difficulties, language, and reflections on the simple view of reading. Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties, 24 (1), 47–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2019.1609272.

Nation, K., & Snowling, M.J. (2000). Factors influencing syntactic awareness skills in normal readers and poor comprehenders. Applied Psycholinguistics, 21, 229–241.

Nation, K., & Snowling, M.J. (2004). Beyond phonological skills: Broader language skills contribute to the development of reading. Journal of Research in Reading, 27, 342–356. https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2004.00238.x.

National Reading Panel (2000). Teaching children to read: An evidence- based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Ouellette, G.P., & Beers, A. (2010). A not-so-simple view of reading: how oral vocabulary and visual-word recognition complicate the story. Read Writ, 23, 189–208. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-008-9159-1.

Perfetti, C., & Stafura, J. (2014). Word knowledge in a theory of reading comprehension. Scientific Studies of Reading, 18, 22–37. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2013.827687.

Perfetti, C.A., Landi, N., & Oakhill, J. (2005). The acquisition of reading comprehension skill. In M. J. Snowling & C. Hulme (Eds.), The science of reading: A handbook (pp. 227–247). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Proctor, C. P., Silverman, R. D., Harring, J. R., Jones, R. L., & Hartranft, A. M. (2020). Teaching bilingual learners: Effects of a language-based reading intervention on academic language and reading comprehension in grades 4 and 5. Reading Research Quarterly, 55(1), 95–122. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.258 .

Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. B. Neuman and D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook of early literacy research (pp. 97–110). New York: Guilford Press.

Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., & Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. Modern Language Journal, 95(1), 26–43. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01146.x.

Senechal, M., Ouellette, G., & Rodney, D. (2006). The misunderstood giant: On the predictive role of early vocabulary to future reading. In S. B. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook of early literacy research (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Shaaban, K., (2006). An initial study of the effects of cooperative learning on reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation to read. Reading Psychology, 27:377–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702710600846613.

Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade: A practice guide (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from whatworks.ed.gov/publications/practice guides.

Snow, C. (2002). Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Sparks, R. L., & Patton, J. (2016). Examining the simple view of reading model for united states high school Spanish students. Hispania, 99(1), 17–33. https://www. jstor.org/stable/44112823.

Spencer, M., & Wagner, R.K. (2018). The comprehension problems of children with poor reading comprehension despite adequate decoding: A meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 88 (3), 366–400. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317749187.

Spencer, T. D., & Petersen, D. B. (2020). Narrative intervention: Principles to practice. Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 51(4), 1081–1096. https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_LSHSS-20-00015.

Spencer, M., Richmond, M.C., & Cutting, L.E. (2020). Considering the role of executive function in reading comprehension: A structural equation modeling approach. Scientific Studies of Reading, 24(3), 179-199, https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2019.1643868 .

Zhang, S., & Zhang, X. (2022). The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and L2 reading/listening comprehension: A meta-analysis. Language Teaching Research, 26(4), 696–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820913998.

ISSN: 2663-5798 || Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing

الإصدار التاسع – العدد التاسع والثمانون
تاريخ الإصدار: 2 – آذار – 2026م
www.ajsp.net

"تعزيز اللغة الشفوية لدى تلامذة الصف الثاني في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأثره في فهم المقروء لدى تلامذة الصف الثالث"

إعداد الباحثة:

عبير ع. سلهب

جامعة بيروت العربية، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، ص.ب. 11-50-20، الرمز البريدي 11072809، رياض الصلح، بيروت، لبنان.

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة أثر اللغة الشفوية، مع التركيز على تنمية المفردات، في التحصيل القرائي باللغة الإنجليزية لدى تلامذة الصفين الثاني والثالث من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في لبنان. يعاني العديد من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من صعوبات في فهم المقروء، وذلك استنادًا إلى الملاحظات الصفية الرسمية وغير الرسمية والتقييمات المدرسية. وغالبًا ما ترتبط هذه الصعوبات بنقص في مهارات اللغة الشفوية ناتج عن محدودية التعرض للغة الإنجليزية. وانطلاقًا من الدور المحوري للغة الشفوية في دعم الفهم القرائي، تبحث هذه الدراسة في مدى قدرة تنمية المفردات من خلال القصص الشفوية على سد هذه الفجوة وتحسين نتائج القراءة لدى تلامذة المرحلة الابتدائية.

شارك في الدراسة عيّنة مكوّنة من 443 تلميذًا ناطقين بالعربية من الصف الثاني من أربع مدارس خاصة. تلقّت المجموعة التجريبية (220 تلميذًا في البداية، ثم انخفض العدد إلى 184 في الصف الثالث) برنامجًا لتنمية اللغة الشفوية لمدة 18 أسبوعًا، شمل 8 أسابيع في الصف الثاني و10 أسابيع في الصف الثالث. وركّزت القصص الشفوية على تنمية المفردات من خلال أنشطة منظّمة. أمّا المجموعة الضابطة (223 تلميذًا) فقد تابعت المنهاج الدراسي المعتاد.

تم تطبيق ثلاثة اختبارات للمفردات واختبارين لفهم المقروء على المجموعتين. وأُجري تحليل مقارن من خلال الفحص البياني لتوزيع الدرجات. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فرق بين المجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية في مستوى المفردات. وتؤكد النتائج أهمية تعزيز المفردات من خلال برامج اللغة الشفوية ودمجها في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الصفوف الابتدائية، لدعم النجاح القرائي على المدى الطويل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الشفوية، فهم المقروء، المفردات، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.