

Reflections on Reading Studies done by M.A Students at Al- University During 2006-2014

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper was to reflect upon the results of a pool of research done on reading education by the master's degree students (M.A) at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the years of 200-20014. The paper surveyed twenty-nine theses done in this field. The findings indicated that the content of these studies varied between reading education alone and reading connection to other language skills with the majority of studies are focusing particularly on reading connection to vocabulary. Findings also indicated that female students conducted the majority of studies on reading. Where supervision is concerned, most supervisors were male professors. The paper explained the discrepancy of male -female authors and male -female supervisors. In the light of these findings, the researcher provided some recommendations to be considered in related future research in Saudi Arabia.

Key words: reflections, Reading, language skills

Introduction

In the present paper, the author is trying to reflect upon the research findings of the master's degree (M.A) students' studies on Reading skill in the English Language Department of College of Languages and Translation at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University between the years of 2006-2014. The researcher reviewed all the 29 studies in an attempt to highlight specific areas of the research done on reading by the master's degree students in linguistics.

Quantitative and qualitative descriptions were used to analyze the studies. The quantitative method was carried out to shed light on the content of the studies based on certain categories pertinent to the topic presented in the studies. Data on the gender of author and the supervisor of each study, the number of theses defended per year from 2006 to 2014 were also analyzed. The quantitative method was employed to provide reflections on the findings of these studies to show how Saudi researchers approached reading as an English language skill, and what implications for EFL learners and teachers were presented to benefit the Saudi educational institutions concerned in teaching English.

Literature Review

The research trend taken by the M.A students at Al-Imam University has given an ample focus to research on reading since the beginning of the M.A program in linguistics at College of Languages and Translation. This group of pioneering scholars has come to the realization of the importance of reading education in Saudi schools concerned in teaching English as a foreign language. More significantly, the Saudi M.A researchers have yielded support for their reading research from the international community of researchers in the field of reading education. For example, Demiröz (2010) views reading is a complex activity as readers of a native language or a foreign language approach this particular skill as a process that involves cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and social processes. The Saudi M.A. students' research yields consolidation from Singhal (2001) and Demiröz (2008) who argue that the L2 readers employ different strategies that activate their prior knowledge about the reading text and connect their current information to reach desirable levels of reading comprehension.

Much of the research content reviewed in the present study gives an ample focus to reading strategies. Like Afflerbach et al. (2008), Saudi M.A. researchers Al-Twajjri (2007), Al-Eidi (2011), Al-Khaleefah (2011) and Ameer (2014) explored reading strategies attempted by the reader's efforts to understand and construct the target meaning of the text.

Similarly, Hosenfeld (1977) reveals in a study that successful readers employ specific strategies while reading; they "read in broad phrases, skip words that are seen unimportant, and has a positive self-concept about what to read and comprehend" (p. 120). In a same manner, the author of the current paper has found much of the content of the researcher done on reading education by the M.A students has given a lot of emphasis to reading strategies and their impact on reading comprehension (Al-Eid, 2011; Dawood, 2011; Al-Shammari, 2012; Al-Sanad, 2014). The Saudi M.A scholars, similar to Block (1986), have concluded that successful readers were more able to integrate different reading strategies than their peers who lacked strategies integration.

The content of studies presented in the current paper falls within the Saudi context of English education, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) in (Alrabai, 2014), stated that "the Saudi government has reached the realization of the significance of English along with other language skills, among of which reading, in students success in communication and performance in other subject areas. Thus, they maintained, "the government has made English a mandatory subject in schools and universities regardless to the social, cultural and religious constraints" (p. 227).

The current study reflected on the reading research of Saudi M. Students, of which a significant part gave special emphasis to reading strategies employed by Saudi teachers in reading classrooms. The reviewed studies brought solid evidence that supports the international and Saudi research with the focus on the importance of reading to the success of students, and the significance of strategies enhanced by the reading teachers and employed effectively by the Saudi learners of English.

Methodology

The study aims at analyzing the content of the reading studies conducted by Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University M.A English major students during 2006-2014. Furthermore, the current paper attempts to explore the focus of each study content with regard to reading and its connection to other language skills. A special focus of this paper also aims to reflect on reading studies done by the M.A students with regard to gender of authors (male, female) and gender of the supervisors to give a statistical account to the number of studies and the nature of research done in this particular area of research during the indicated period.

Research Questions

More specifically the study attempted to answer the following two questions:

- To what extent did the studies vary in numbers with respect to authors, supervisors and manuscripts from year to year?
- To what extent did the studies vary in their content genres?

Material and sample

The material included all the studies conducted on reading by 29 M.A students enrolled in the M.A program of linguistics between 2006 and 2014 at College of Languages and Translation of Al- Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Data Collection

The researcher contacted the graduate office at College of Languages and Translation requesting them to provide him with an access to the research done by the linguistics M.A students at College of Languages and Translation since the very beginning of the M.A program in 2006. The purpose of the study was explained to office staff who were in charge of keeping the hard and soft copies of each study done in the program. The office staff, in their turn, forward the researcher's request to the College Dean who generously approved the release of all information needed to accomplish this research.

The M.A students' research in all areas of linguistics was fortunately saved into a soft copy at the graduate office in one file. The researcher was able to pull out all the research studies available in the graduate office's file.

The researcher went over all the research studies in the file manually and started to sort out the studies related to the purpose of the study, the reading studies. Through the manual process of search in soft copy, the researcher was able to pull out 24 studies related to reading research. To ensure that no study related to reading was missed, the researcher used Microsoft Office search command to find out if any study was left. It was turned out there were five more studies that were missed. The Microsoft search command was repeated several times until the researcher settled on 29 studies related to reading research.

The next step was to sort out the reading studies according to content, year of publication, author's gender and supervisor's gender.

Data Analysis

The researcher adopted a qualitative method to identify the content of the reading studies and to put them into categories as shown in the findings of the study in the next section. After categorizing the studies according to content, the researcher provided an overview for each study or a group of studies to find out if they share the same content, followed by the researcher reflections under a title called *hotspots*.

Descriptive statistics was used as an integral component of quantitative to provide an account for differences in the gender of authorship, gender of supervisor- ship and number of publications per year from 2006 to 2014

Findings

Quantitative Description Findings

This section provides statistical description to the target studies based on the following areas as shown in Table 1: types of content, author gender, supervisor gender, and number of studies defended per year.

Table 1. Content Analysis of Reading Studies

Content	N=29	Actual No. per category	Percentage
RDG	29	10	34.48
RDG& other Language skills	29	11	37.93
RDG and Attitudes	29	1	3.45
RDG other influential factors	29	3	10.34
RDG & TECH	29	4	13.79
Total			100.00
Author Gender	N=29		
Male Author	29	6	20.69
Female Author	29	23	79.31
Total			100.00
Supervisor Gender	N=29		
Male Supervisor	29	28	96.55
Female Supervisor	29	1	3.45
Total			100.00
Year of Publication	N=29		
2006	29	1	3.45
2007	29	2	6.90
2008	29	1	3.45
2009	29	0	0.00

2010	29	0	0.00
2011	29	13	44.83
2012	29	4	13.79
2013	29	3	10.34
2014	29	5	17.24
Total			100.00

As shown in Table (1), which provided quantitative analysis to the body of research, there were twenty-nine studies conducted on reading between the years 2006 and 2014. Ten studies (34.48%) were conducted on reading alone without connecting it to other languages skills. Eleven studies (37.97%) were about reading in connection with other languages arts, one study (3.45%) was on attitudes about reading, and three studies (10.34%) investigated influential factors affecting reading instruction such as braining storming techniques, using illustrations and integrating journalist texts. Finally, four studies (13.79%) were highlighting the relationship between technology and reading improvement.

Interestingly, among the eleven studies investigating reading connection to other language arts skills, there were eight of them about reading- vocabulary connection, one study was about reading- writing connection, one study was on reading -grammar connection, and finally one study connected reading to the communicative skill “speaking” (Table 2. Appendix A).

Among the 29 nine studies done during the period between 2006 and 2014, table 1 also indicated that there were 23 female master’s degree authors (79.31%), while there were six male master’s degree authors (20.69%). Contrary to this finding, the number of male professors supervising the students’ works was tremendously exceeding the female supervisors; there were 28 male supervisors (96.55%), while there was one female instructor (3.45%) who took the advisory task with one female M.A student.

The number of defended theses was varying from a year to another. Table 1 indicated there were thirteen theses accomplished in 2011 (44.83%), while there were no theses defended in 2009 and 2010, respectively. For the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 the number of defended theses was low and ranging between one or two studies per year.

The charts below provide a further presentation to the data shown in table 1:

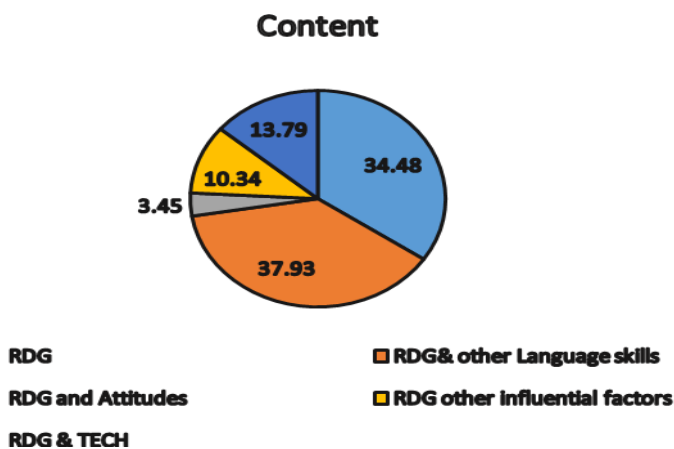


Figure 1. Content of Reading master’s degree Theses

The chart in figure 1 shows that the largest number of studies content is on reading and its connection to other languages arts (37.93%). The second largest number (34.48%) is the content related to reading and technology. Other content types receive the lowest portion on the chart.

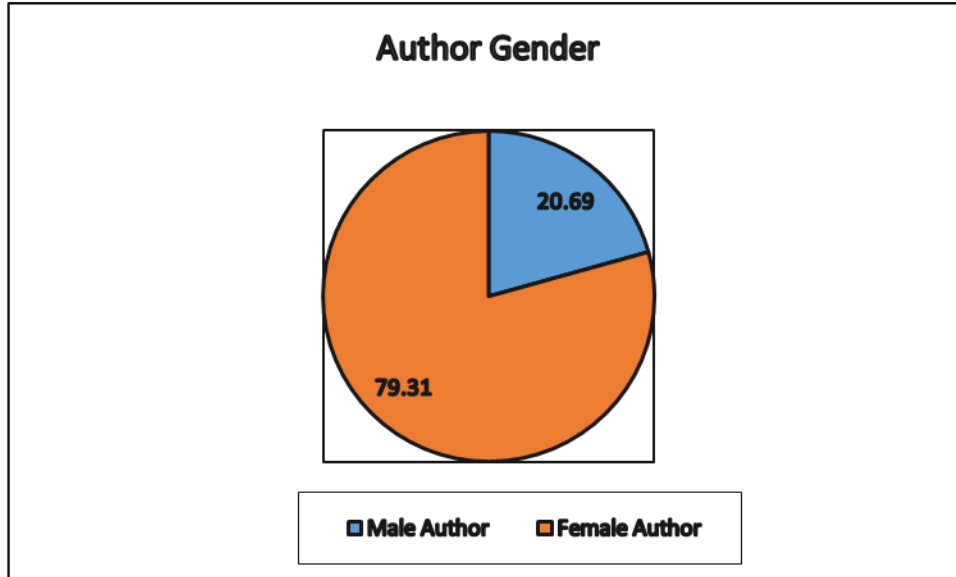


Figure 2. Author Gender of master’s degree Theses

The chart in figure 2 shows that the largest number of female authors represents the largest portion of the chart (79.31), while male authors occupy the smallest number (20.69).

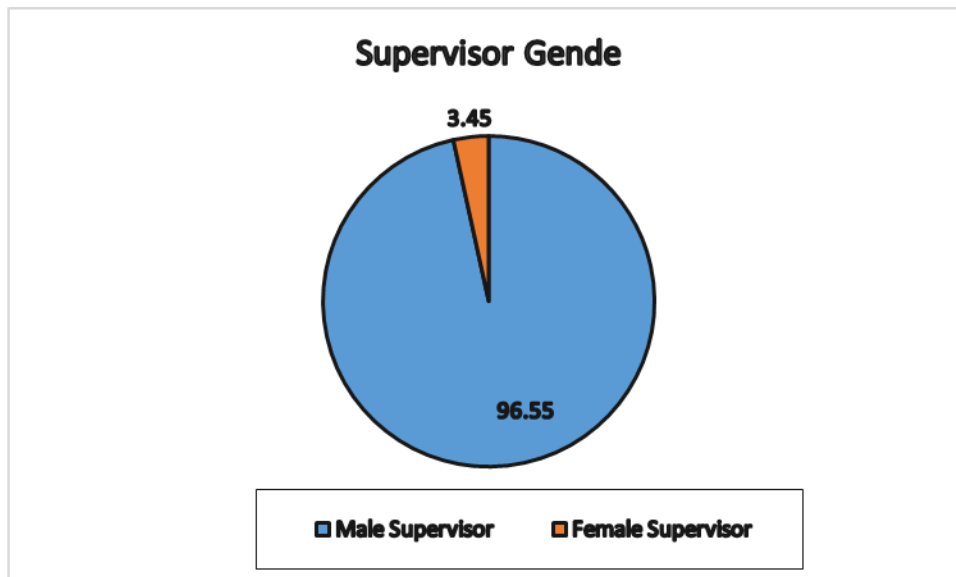


Figure 3. Supervisor Gender of master’s degree Theses

The chart in figure 3 shows that the largest number of male supervisors represents the largest portion of the chart (96.55), while female supervisors have the smallest part (3.45).

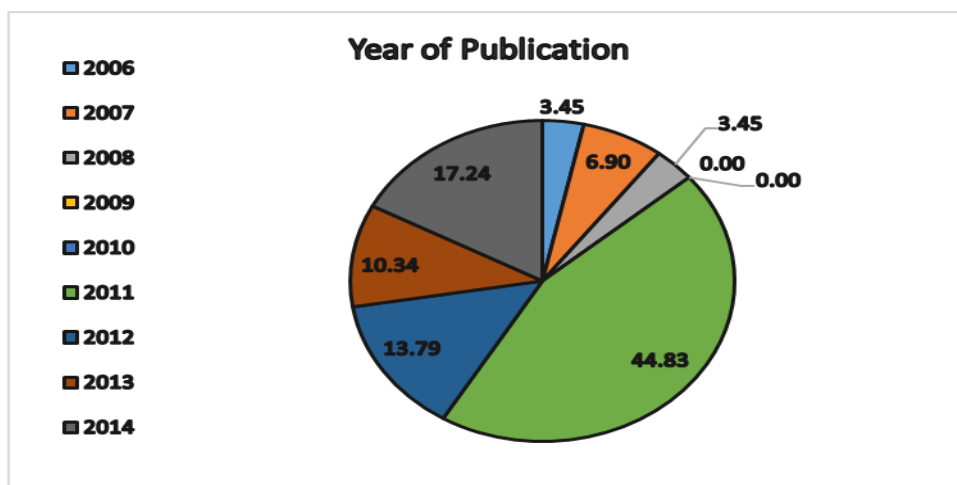


Figure 4. Number of M.A Theses Published per Year

The chart in Figure 4 shows that the largest number of reading theses was defended in 2011 (44.83%). The second largest number (17.24%) was defended in 2014. The third largest number of completed theses was in 2012 (13.79%). The other years received the lowest portion on the chart.

Findings of Qualitative content analysis

This section presents the finding of qualitative content analysis in tables 2, 3, and 4 by pointing out each study’s author, title, subject’s procedures and conclusions. The main purpose of this content analysis is to answer the second question “To what extent did the studies vary in their content genres?”, and to indicated whether the studies content was focusing on reading solely or on its connection to other languages arts skills or/and to other subject matters.

Table 2. Studies done on reading alone without connecting it to other language skills

Author	Study title briefly	Study subjects	Study conclusions
1. Al-Twajri (2007)	The effectiveness of the text structure on EFL Saudi readers’ ability to recall more information from the assigned reading texts	The participants were 30 Saudi female university students classified into successful and unsuccessful readers.	- Successful readers’ superior recall was due to their use of text structure, which resulted in more recall from organized passages. - The researcher’s main conclusion was that there was a high correlation between the tight high organization of the text and the increased reading ability of EFL Saudi learners.
2. Al-Ghamdi (2007)	The attitudes of EFL Saudi readers toward extensive reading	A group of first-year Saudi female students toward reading extensively.	- Participants had positive attitudes toward extensive reading when using simplified materials. - The study concluded that extensive reading helped the participants

			improve their L2 reading speed.
3.Al-Eidi (2011)	The impact of intensive and extensive reading on reading speed and comprehension	Fifty Saudi female freshmen students majoring in English at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University	- The study main conclusion was that extensive reading was found to be more efficient than intensive reading was.
4.Al-Jahlaan (2011)	The role of the zone of proximal development in developing EFL female learners' reading comprehension	Female participants who were put into an experimental and a control group took part in the study.	- The researcher's main conclusion was that the ZPD improved students' reading comprehension in the experimental group.
5.Al-Khaleefah (2011)	How eye tracking could enhance orthographic reading problems	A group of 23 students participated in the study.	- Eye tracking identified students' areas of weakness when reading English text resulting from L1 transfer of reading techniques.
6.Al-Mheidib (2012)	Improving the reading ability of EFL Saudi learners through pre-reading activities	A group of first-year English-major students attending Al-Imam University.	- The study main conclusion highlighted the advantages of pre-reading activities in increasing readers' schemata and comprehension of the target text.
7.Ameer (2014)	KWL-Plus as a Meta-Cognitive strategy to improve the reading skill	A group of college students majoring in English at Prince Nasser Secondary School.	The application of the K-W-L plus strategy was effective English reading classrooms of Saudi college students.
8.Al-Sweelim (2014)	Cognitive comprehension questions in two levels of Tapestry Reading Series	A group of first year students at English Language and Literature Department in AL-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.	- The conclusion was that the two textbooks had low representation of high-level comprehension questions.
9.Al-Shammary (2014)	The influence of schema theory on reading comprehension	A group of third year students at Ibn Khaldon High School in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.	Schema theory proved effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension.
10.Al-Rahmani (2014)	The influence of schema on EFL reading comprehension	A group of Saudi Secondary Stage Students in the city of Jeddah	Reading abilities of the Saudi students improved due to the use of schema as a reading strategy

Table (2) reveals that the content of the ten studies listed has given a prominent focus to reading comprehension without connecting reading to other languages arts skills. Interestingly, two studies out of the ten were conducted on the influence of schema theory on improving reading comprehension of Saudi high school students in the year 2014. However, the two studies locations and samples were different; Al-Shammary (2014) conducted his study on a group of high school students in Riyadh city, while Al-Rahmani

(2014) performed his study on a similar group of students in the city of Jeddah. The two cities are located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The findings in table two show that the two researchers almost attained the same results that schema theory was significantly influential on reading comprehension in a positive manner. The table also shows that all the ten studies have used specific materials or strategies that to improve reading comprehension. It is evident from the conclusions of the study that all the materials or strategies used affected reading comprehension to Saudi EFL students positively.

Table 3. Studies done on reading in connection with other languages arts

Author	Study title briefly & Subjects	Material and procedures	Study conclusions
1- Al-Ahmed (2006)	Title: The influence of content area reading on EFL writing performance Subjects: The participants of the study were level 2 female students majoring in English at Al-Imam University.	The subjects were place in two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was treated with an extensive content area reading material. The researcher collected the data by using three types of instruments: weekly writings, pre-and post-test, and a short survey.	- Contend area reading significantly affected Saudi EFL writers' performance. - Study participants showed positive attitudes toward integrating reading with writing in their composition classroom.
2- Al-Othmaan, (2008)	Title: Vocabulary Repertoire Enhancement and Reading Comprehension Improvement Subjects: Ten students studying in an intensive course at Al-Imam University participated in the study.	The subjects were randomly divided to an experimental and control groups. The experimental group underwent an independent intensive online vocabulary learning over 6 weeks. Tests and interviews were the main instruments for data collection besides note taking.	Findings demonstrated positive correlation between the development of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension due to the technique used.
3- Al-Fahad (2011)	Title: Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reading Outcomes Subjects: Nine students majoring in English at Al-Imam University were selected to answer a variety of interview questions	The participants were asked to answer two types of questions: some were related to background information, such as how much time they spend outside of class working on vocabulary activities, and others about their vocabulary learning strategies and reading habits.	Findings showed that the participants employed some shared vocabulary learning strategies that improved their reading comprehend level.
4- Al-Saloum, (2011)	Title: Effects of Extensive Reading on Vocabulary Knowledge	The subjects were placed in two groups: the first one (Experimental) was exposed to	The results showed experimental group made better gains on the reading

	and Reading Speed Subjects: One hundred twenty seven first-year Saudi female university students participated in the study.	an extensive reading approach, while the other one (control) was exposed to an intensive reading approach. Pre & post-tests were also used to collect the data.	speed post- tests than the control group did.
5- Al-Qahtani (2011)	Title: Learning EFL Vocabulary through Extensive Reading Subjects: Sixteen female freshmen university students responded to the study instrument.	The participants were asked to read three graded readers, every week and submit a summary of it as a follow-up activity. After the treatment, they took a post-test that was used first as a pretest in order to measure their progress on reading and vocabulary.	The findings showed that 14 out of the 16 participants scored higher on the post-test on both vocabulary and reading than on the pre-test. The conclusion was them made that the two skills are interrelated and help enhancement of each other reciprocally.
6- Al-Otaibi (2011)	Title: Acquiring Vocabulary through the Extensive Reading of Graded Readers Subjects: Fifty female students in a secondary school in Riyadh studying in the third grade were involved.	The subjects were assigned in two groups, an extensive reading group treated with a large amount of vocabulary through the extensive reading for two months, and a control group who did not receive any extensive reading. Two tests , a pre-test and a post-test were administered to measure the students' progress.	The findings showed significant differences of the participants' scores on the pre& posttests in favor of the experimental group.
7- Al-Awaad (2011)	Title: Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition through Reading Subjects: 56 female third grade intermediate students participated in this study.	The participants were assigned into two groups: a control group, and an experimental group. The experimental group participants were asked to read silently and with no teacher interference, while the control group was taught vocabulary in the conventional method.	The results of the tests revealed positive vocabulary acquisition and retention in favor of the experimental group due to the reading treatment.
8- Al-Adaghiri (2012)	Title: the effectiveness of reading on grammar mastery Subjects: Eighteen freshman female students signing in an English Diploma program at Princess Nora University	The participants were assigned into two groups: a control group, and an experimental group. Teachers assigned to the experimental group a reading material that highlighted hot- spot of grammatical issues, while the control group received no treatment	Students participating in the study showed positive attitudes toward integrating reading instruction into grammar education as reading improved their grammar performance.

9- Al-Shamaly (2012)	<p>Title: The connection between teaching reading and building the students' communicative competence</p> <p>Subjects: Twenty freshman female students majoring in English participated in the study.</p>	The researcher distributed the subjects in an experimental and control group. The participants in the experimental group received reading instruction in specific techniques that enhance communication. Whereas, students in the control group were taught reading in traditional classroom methods	Students improved their speaking and oral skills while practicing reading activities based on the communicative approach such discussing main ideas, expressing meanings extracted from the text, commenting on author's ideas and pointing out themes expressed in the text.
10- Al-Heidan (2013)	<p>Title: The Effects of Morphology Awareness on Students' Reading Comprehension Skills</p> <p>Subjects: Fifty-eight first-grade female Saudi students in a secondary school participated in this study.</p>	The subjects were in an experimental group who were taught with a morphemic analysis, while the control group attended their usual reading comprehension classes.	The results show a strong positive correlation between morphological awareness and the improvement of the students' Reading Comprehension skills in the post-assessment.
11- Al-Mahmoud (2013)	<p>Title: The Impact of Task-based Reading on Enhancing Vocabulary Learning</p> <p>Subjects: The sample of the study consisted of 60 third intermediate Saudi female students at 15th school in Riyadh city.</p>	Thirty students were for the experimental group and 30 for the control group. The researcher taught the experimental group using strategies based on the task-based approach. The control group received regular instruction which relied heavily on traditional methods of teaching	The results revealed improvement in vocabulary achievement on the posttest in favor of the experimental group. It was noted also that the experimental group showed positive reactions towards the reading tasks, classroom activities and homework assignments based on the task-based reading approach.

Table (3) showed there were eleven studies done on reading in connection with other language arts namely, reading with vocabulary, writing, grammar and communication (speaking). According to table (3), eight out of the eleven studies investigated reading and vocabulary connection (Al-Othmaan, 2008; Al-Fahad, 2011; Al-Saloum, 2011; Al-Qahtani, 2011; Al-Otaibi, 2011; Al-Awaad, 2011; Al-Heidan, 2013; Al-Mahmoud, 2013). The studies' participants ranged from the very last year of high school to freshmen university students. The studies used the experimental design where participants' distribution was in experiment and control groups, except for study 3, which used no treatment, but a questionnaire. For data collection, pre-posttest were administered prior to and post the treatment. The studies used intensive vocabulary programs or extensive reading programs to explore the effectiveness of the connection between the two skills on students' performance on both vocabulary acquisition and learning to read and comprehend. The results were significantly positive in favor of the treatment group- a fact that

reflects the strong connectivity between reading progress and the other language skills, mainly vocabulary.

Table 4. Studies done on reading and other subject matters

Author	Study title briefly & Subjects	Material and procedures	Study conclusions
1. Al-Rubei (2011)	Title: Exploring the Attitudes and Beliefs of KFU Female Students towards Reading Online Extensively Subjects: The participants were 30 females majoring in EFL at King Faisal University.	The study used a questionnaire accompanied by an interview.	The results indicated that EFL students at KFU had generally positive attitudes toward the use of electronic texts in reading online extensively at their free time.
2. Al-Eid (2011)	Title: EFL Teachers' Perspective Toward Using the Internet to Improve Students' Reading Skills at the Secondary Stage Subjects: Thirty EFL teachers were randomly selected from six private and public schools to participate in this study.	The researcher used a questionnaire as a tool to collect data about using the internet.	Teachers' responses to the questionnaire items indicated that the Internet could contribute significantly to developing Saudi EFL students' reading skills.
3. Dawood (2011)	Title: The Impact of Using MS-PowerPoint on Teaching Reading Comprehension for EFL; Saudi Secondary School Students Subjects: A group of EFL secondary school male students was used as participants in the study.	Three instruments were used; students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire and post-test.	The results indicated The researcher stated that MS-PowerPoint is one of the rich software that provides teachers with many possibilities to create and present more interesting, interactive and effective reading classes.
4. Al-Shammary (2012)	Title: The Effects of Cooperative Learning through Social Networking Websites on Saudi EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary Acquisition and Motivation to Read Subjects: Thirty-three	A pre-posttest design was used to measure the development in reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and a pre-post treatment questionnaire to measure the learners' motivation to read.	The findings of the study revealed a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition

	female students participated in the study during their first year in English college.		
5. Al-Sanad (2014)	<p>Title: The Effect of Email Key-pal Project on the Enhancement of the Writing and Reading Skills of EFL Elementary School Children in Saudi Arabia</p> <p>Subjects: 10 pupils studying at a girls' school in Saudi Arabia participated in an email project with partners from a Muslim school in Canada.</p>	The sample was pre- and post-tested on their reading and writing skills. Besides, a questionnaire and interviews were used with the study participants.	The results indicate that the Key-pal project helped the participating pupils improve their reading and writing skills significantly more than the pupils who did not participate over this term. In addition, the results from interviews and questionnaire indicated that the pupils enjoyed the project.
6. Al-Yahaya (2011)	<p>Title: Hyphenation: Organizing News Headlines for Improved Comprehension. Does it Work?</p> <p>Subjects: A group of adult Saudi readers participated in the study.</p>	The researcher examined the readers' understanding when reading unhyphenated prenominal modifiers in news headlines and compared it with their understanding of the same headlines that had been hyphenated.	The results indicated that hyphen usage in news headlines was essential to clarify ambiguous sentence structures and contributed to a better understanding of news headlines.
7. Al-Tureiqi (2011)	<p>Title: The effect of using illustrations on the reading comprehension of EFL Saudi beginner students</p> <p>Subjects: Forty 7th grade students participated in the study.</p>	Pre- and post-tests were used to collect data for the experimental and control group.	Data analysis showed that illustrations had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. Further, the students in the experimental group were highly motivated and active in the class while the control group students were acting normally.
8. Al-Sultan (2013)	<p>Title: The impact of Using Brain-Based Learning on EFL students Reading Comprehension</p> <p>Subjects: The study sample consisted of female English major students studying in The Collage of Arts at King Faisal University in Al-Hassa,</p>	Pre- and post-tests were used to collect data for the experimental and control group.	The findings of this study confirmed that the students who were taught reading comprehension using (BBL) achieved higher scores than the students who were taught by the traditional method.

Table (4) shows that the first five studies have attempted to explore the relationship between reading improvement and the integration of technology. The five scholars tried to explore the effectiveness of using the different technologies such power point and key-pal projects on EFL Saudi students' improvement in reading. Although the studies were conducted at different times, in different academic institutions, and with different school levels of participants ranging from five elementary graders, secondary graders, to university freshman students, they all had almost the same purpose and used similar instruments were used of data collection. Obviously, the one goal of these studies was how integrating technology into reading classes could effectively contribute to reading improvement of Saudi learners of English as a second language. Interestingly, the research instruments used by the four studies were either questionnaires if the study sample was schoolteachers or pre/post-tests & questionnaires if the sample was students.

The table also shows that study six attempts to explore the effect of journalistic texts represented in hyphenated news headlines on EFL Saudi-readers' comprehension. This study presents a new trend in teaching reading comprehension through integrating journalistic texts related to a particular structure of newspapers headlines. Reading news headlines may constitute a major obstacle that may place a challenge on the readers' comprehension. The researcher pointed out Hyphenated and unhyphenated headlines had a varying influence on participants' reading comprehension. Study number (7), according to the table above, examined the effect of using illustrations on EFL7th grade students' reading comprehension. The study indicated that the young readers scored better in reading in English classes and in other content area classes when receiving reading education with pictures and illustrations. Finally, the last study in the table examined the impact of brain-based learning (BBL) on reading comprehension. The researcher of this study concluded that using (BBL) strategy was superior to traditional methods of teaching reading comprehension as revealed in student's grades on the posttests.

Discussion

Discussion of Quantitative Description

The 29 reviewed studies on reading in this paper indicated that there were 23 female master's degree (M.A) authors (79.31%), while there were six male M.A authors (20.69%), see table (1). Contrary to this finding, the number of male professors supervising the students works was tremendously exceeding the female supervisors; There were 28 male supervisors (96.55%), while there was one female instructor (3.45%) taking the advisory task with one female M.A student.

The body of reading research investigated by the current study indicated that the highest percentages belonged to M.A female authors (79.31%), at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, while the male authors' percentages represented only (20.69%). The possible interpretation for these results is that, the Saudi male students pursue their graduate studies in an English native-speaking country such as the United States of America or the United Kingdom, through scholarship programs funded by the Saudi higher education authorities. Whereas, Saudi female students choose to pursue their graduate studies in local higher education Saudi

institutions. Up to the researcher knowledge, scholarship programs are equally open for male and female students. However, female students are likely more inclined to study locally. The explanation for this tendency is that the Saudi society belongs to a conservative culture where male students have more freedom to study in a foreign country, while female students go through society and cultural restrictions that lessen their opportunities to study abroad.

In contrast, the supervision of M.A theses was dominant by male instructors. (95.55), while the female supervision received a very low percentage (3.45%). Up to the knowledge of this paper author, Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University gives an equal opportunity to female-male supervision. However, the graduate school at the university places specific rules and regulations on M.A theses supervision such the r academic rank of the supervisor as an assistant professor, an associate professor or a full professor. Besides, other supervision requirements may exist such the number of research studies published by the supervisor. The English department at the university, for example, requires the thesis supervisor to publish at least two research studies within the field of the supervised work. Accordingly, the low participation of female supervision can be mainly attributed to the graduate school and the English department regulations.

The current study also showed the highest percentages of defended theses were during the years of 2011 (44.83%), 2014, (17.24%), 2012 (13.79%, and 2013 (10.34), respectively. Whilst, the years 2006 through 2010 received the lowest portion of defended M.A theses. The researcher of this current paper must note that the years of 2006-2010 were the M.A English program development years at the English department of the university. Therefore, the M.A English program did not attract big numbers of M.A students during these years. On the other hand, the years of 2011-2014 represent the maturity and the growth of the English M.A program at the English department. Consequently, these years experienced more enrollment of M.A students in the English program.

Discussion of Qualitative Description

The current study showed there was a high volume of reading studies done by Al-Imam University M.A students on EFL Saudi learners of English during the years of 2006-2014. The content related to reading and other languages arts was (37.93%), reading and technology was (34.48%), while the other content types receive the lowest percentages as explained earlier.

Obviously, this high research volume may reflect the scholars' awareness of the significance of reading instruction in enhancing EFL Saudi students' need to learn reading in connection to other language skills.

The high volume of studies done on reading by the A.M students at Al-Imam University, and the emphasis of such research given to reading instruction finds its justification from other scholars around the world. Pritchard and O'Hara (2008) indicated that EFL Spanish students learn reading strategies not only to help them in reading comprehension, but also to help them in learning other language arts and skills such as vocabulary and spelling. Anderson (1991) confirmed that successful students in reading comprehension and other language skills are those who apply reading strategies successfully in their academic life. Gooden, et.al (2007) consolidate the findings of the fore-mentioned researchers in that reading comprehension significantly improved students' performance in only in English, but in other school domains.

Erawati (2012) confirmed that reading along with its strategies and techniques affects students' competency not reading for comprehension, but contributes to read effectively in other content areas textbook. Fogarty (1994) suggested that reading education provides students with opportunities to apply a wide variance of metacognitive strategies that help them think about thinking in reading classrooms and other school subjects. Therefore, reading teachers should work toward guiding their students to become more strategic thinkers through teaching reading strategies to enhance their success in their real life. Hamdan, (2010) pointed out reading can create a successful community of learners in many aspects of daily life through learning read. However, the research studies conducted by the M.A students in the English program at Imam University have almost neglected reading in connection with some other areas of languages skills such as speaking, listening and spelling. The other language skills such as writing was existed in only one study (Al-Ahmed, 2006). This low representation can be attributed to either the student's -supervisor's research interest, or researchers' disorientation toward the importance of reading connection with the other language skills ignored in the volume of research presented in this paper. Consequently, the author of this paper recommends that M.A students at Imam University should conduct further studies on reading and its connection to other language skills. Researcher advisors, in a similar manner, should reinforce their students' tendency toward integration of reading with other language areas and skills.

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Appendix (A)

Table 2. Total Analysis for Dissertations’ Content, Author Gender, Advisor Gender, and Year of Publication

	Title	Author	Supervisor	Year	Content	Auth. gender	Sup. Gender
1	Reading and Writing Connection: The Influence of Content-Area Reading on EFL Writing Performance	Lamia Al-Ahmed	Dr. Khalid Alshabbi	2006	RDGA& WRIT	F	M
2	The Role of Text and Reader in Reading Expository Texts	Thara Al-Twejri	Dr. Ali Al-Rajhi	2007	RDG	F	M
3	Extensive Reading in Language Learning : Exploring the Attitudes of Saudi Female Students Using Simplified Texts	Aishah Al-Ghamdi	Dr. Saad Al-Shwailikh	2007	RDG	F	M
4	The Role of EFL Teachers on Vocabulary Repetition Enhancement and Reading Comprehension Improvement	Anas Al-Ghamdi	Dr. Saad Al-Shwailikh	2008	VOC&RDG	F	M
5	Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Reading Outcomes	Michele Al-Fahad	Dr. Mohammed Al-Abyadh	2011	VOC&RDG	F	M
6	The Effects of Extensive Reading on Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Speed among Saudi Female University Students	Munira Al-Ghamdi	Dr. Faisal Al-Shamir	2011	RDGA&VOC	F	M
7	The Impact of Using MS-PowerPoint on Teaching Reading Comprehension for EFL Saudi Secondary School Students	Mohammed Dawood	Abd Al- Hamed Elweh	2011	TRCH&RDG	M	M
8	Hyphenation: Expanding Your Skillset for Improved Comprehension. Does it Work?	Sahar Al-Yakoub	Dr. Ahmed Alshayyan	2011	Method RDG	F	M
9	The Impact of Extensive and Intensive Reading on Reading Speed and Comprehension of Saudi Female College EFL Students	Mariam Al-Eid	Dr. Abdel Salam Al-Shalabi	2011	RDG	F	M
10	The effect of using illustrated on the reading comprehension EFL Saudi beginner students	Fahad Al-Tawaji	Dr. Nayef Al-Sha'a	2011	Illustration& RDG	M	M
11	Learning EFL Vocabulary through Extensive Reading	Dahad Al-Qubani	Dr. Rafig Alamed	2011	VOC&RDG	F	M
12	EFL Teachers' Perceptions Toward Using the Internet to Improve Students' Reading Skills at the Secondary Stage	Yousef Al-Eid	Dr. Rafig Alamed	2011	TRCH and RDG	M	M
13	The Role of the Zone of Proximal Development in Developing EFL Female Learners' Reading Comprehension	Ashwaq Al-Salman	Dr. Rafig Alamed	2011	RDG	F	M
14	Exploring the Attitudes and Beliefs of EFL Female Students towards Reading Online Extensively	Sarah Al-Eshel	Dr. Othman Al-Samad	2011	Attitudes & RDG	F	M
15	Acquiring Vocabulary through the Extensive Reading of Graded Readers	Fadia Al-Mahdi	Dr. Othman Al-Samad	2011	VOC&RDG	F	M
16	Eye Tracking as a Tool to Investigate Orthographic Reading Problems	Ehsan Al-Eshwailikh	Dr. Ali Al-Rajhi	2011	RDG	F	M
17	Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition through Reading	Sahar Al-Awad	Dr. Nayef Al-Sha'a	2011	VOC&RDG	F	M
18	The Role of Reading in Facilitating EFL Learners' Grammar Mastery	Ashwaq Al-Adghifi	Dr. Othman Al-Samad	2012	RDGA&GRM	F	M
19	The Effects of Cooperative Learning through Social Networking Websites on Saudi EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary Acquisition and Motivation to Read	Mehar Al-Shayyan	Dr. Mohammed Al-Abyadh	2012	TRCH&RDG	F	M
20	Acquiring Communicative Competence in the Reading Classroom	Munira Al-Ghamdi	Dr. Rafig Alamed	2012	RDGA, Communicat.	F	M
21	Implementing Pre-Reading Activities in Teaching English	Hanan Al-Mishdi	Dr. Mohammed Al-Abyadh	2012	RDG	F	M
22	The Effects of Morphology Awareness on Students' Reading Comprehension Skills in Saudi Female Secondary	Dahad Al-Shidan	Dr. Khalid Alawit	2013	VOC&RDG	F	F
23	The Impact of Using Brain-Based Learning on EFL students Reading Comprehension	Hanan Al-Sultan	Dr. Mohammed Al-Salman	2013	Brain Storming & RDG	F	M
24	The Impact of Task-based Reading on Enhancing Vocabulary Learning	Mehar Al-Mhammad (M)	Dr. Ali Al-Rajhi	2013	RDGA&VOC	M	M
25	Using KWL-Plus as a Meta-Cognitive Strategy to Improve Reading and Writing Skills in Saudi Secondary School English Classrooms	Yousef Amour	Dr. Mohammed Hamdan	2014	RDG	M	M
26	The Cognitive Levels of the Comprehension Questions in Tapestry Reading 1 and 2, Middle East Edition: A content Analysis	Lina Al-Sweilin	Dr. Nasser Fadhil	2014	RDG	F	M
27	The Effect of Small Group Project on the Enhancement of the Writing and Reading Skills of EFL Elementary School Children in Saudi Arabia.	Mehar Al-Samad	Dr. Othman Al-Samad	2014	TRCH&RDG	F	M
28	The Role of Schema Theory in Improving Saudi EFL Students' Reading Comprehension	Anas Al-Shayyan	Dr. Rafig Alamed	2014	RDG	F	M
29	Influence of Schema on EFL Reading Comprehension of Saudi Secondary Stage Students	Abdullah Al-Salman	Dr. Abdel-Aziz Alshidi	2014	RDG	M	M