

The Impact of Oral Retelling and Summary Writing Techniques on Iranian Upper Intermediate EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: *This study was an attempt to find out whether instruction of two strategies of oral retelling and summary writing has any effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. The study was conducted on upper intermediate female students in an English language institute in Iran. To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researcher chose a sample of 120 subjects, which were reduced to 90 homogenous students. Then, the subjects were randomly assigned to two experimental and one control groups. Subjects in these groups were given a pretest at the beginning of the semester. In the following sessions, the students in the oral retelling group were trained in using this strategy along with seven texts, while the students in the other experimental group practiced summary writing strategy with the same texts. At the same time, the students in the control group were taught the same texts using a conventional method. The results of one way ANOVA indicated a significant difference between all these groups. On the other hand, the resultant values of post hoc multiple comparison of means proved that oral retelling strategy has been more effective compared with summary writing and conventional method of teaching the reading comprehension.*

Keywords: *Oral Retelling, Summary Writing, Reading strategy, Conventional method*

1. Introduction

Chastain (1988) considers reading as a process which involves the activation of relevant knowledge and related language skills in order to accomplish an exchange of information from one person to another. Rather than analyzing complex units into small propositions, comprehension process consists of synthesizing simple propositions into larger conceptual units (Bransford & Franks, 1971). Askari and Ahmadian (2011) believe that comprehension is the center of reading. They add that reading comprehension requires making meaning from words when reading. Good readers try to use their experiences and their prior knowledge in order to make sense of the words seen in the text. On the other hand, Meyer, Brandt and Bluth (1980) emphasize that students using text structure to guide their reading show better recall both qualitatively and quantitatively. L2 readers often lack of appropriate cultural schemata, so they

prefer to use formal schemata rather than cultural one, a skeleton on which they build further structures in their construction of meaning (Meyer et al., 1980).

For dealing with various kinds of problems readers are encountered during the comprehension process, Askari and Ahmadian (2011) confirm that active and direct strategy training is a beneficial tool in order to help them. On the other hand, since strategy selection is a deliberate attempt on the part of the reader (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983) before self selection of a strategy by readers, strategy instruction would be a useful tool.

Although it may be challenging for teachers to practice these strategies in the traditional way; it is worthwhile because this kind of teaching is the most effective one. Above all, it is important to mention that after a relatively short time of reading comprehension instruction students become self regulated readers. Explicit strategy instruction as part of the overall curriculum appears to be a promising procedure to get this process off to a good start (Sporer, Brunstein, & Kieschke, 2009).

Two strategies which are the focus of the current study are retelling in oral format and summary writing. Research on the effects of retelling-based reading programs showed that retelling could be considered as an effective tool for helping the readers to maximize their comprehension of the text (Cullinan, Harwood, & Galad, 1983; Gambrell, Koskinen, & Kapinus, 1991). As Lin (2010) stated, during the process of retelling, the students rely on rehearsing the contents and retrieving personal experience.

Summarization strategy can be considered as another useful tool for enhancing students' reading comprehension ability. Oded and Walters (2001) considered the role two strategies of summary writing and listing details play on EFL learners' comprehension ability. As the result of their study showed, the qualitative processing required in selecting the main ideas and organizing them in a summary was expected to lead to greater comprehension. The task of listing details, being an irrelevant or distracting task for overall comprehension, was expected to result in poorer comprehension (Oded & Walters, 2001).

According to Garner (1982), during reading the text, effective summarizers probably streamline the information as successfully as possible. They try to store and retrieve the summaries as new texts whenever it is necessary.

1.1 The Significance of the Study

Unfortunately, many second or foreign language teachers assume the students have mastered reading skills previously. In fact, during the reading courses, the students are tested rather than be trained. Obviously, due to the overwhelming cognitive load of comprehending the texts, most students are confronted a lot of difficulties in deciphering the sentences (De Quiros, 2008).

Therefore, they should be trained those reading strategies that prepare them to overcome those constraints which may affect their performance during the comprehension process.

This study highlighted the important role of using two reading comprehension strategies of retelling in oral format and summary writing on EFL students in general and students studying reading courses in Iran in particular. More importantly, it offers the theoretical basis for the application of these two reading strategies in EFL classrooms.

By doing so, a lot of difficulties students encounter in reading courses especially in university levels in ESP and EAP classes may be solved.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

1.2.1 Oral Retelling Strategy

It is generally acknowledged that there is an important link between oral language and reading comprehension. One aspect of oral language deals with the effect of verbal rehearsal upon text comprehension (Koskinen, Gambrell, Kapinus, & Heathington, 1988).

Starting point for retelling and its effects goes back to memory issue (Lin, 2010). Kintsch (2004) assumed that the reader can grasp the information through the text by accessing his or her prior knowledge and interpreting the texts by retrieving knowledge existing in his or her memory. So according to this model teachers can facilitate comprehension process by providing learning experiences that induce the students to interpret and reconstruct the text during and after his or her reading.

The retelling technique has been used as an instructional tool to improve students' reading comprehension. Some researchers examined the effects of retelling strategy on different aspects of language proficiency and found that there were significant differences in the effects of the retelling technique on kindergarten and elementary school students. For example in some research studies (Morrow, 1985, 1986; Pellegrini & Galad, 1982) when retelling followed listening to stories, kindergarten children significantly improved their ability to recall more story elements, enhanced their sense of story structure, and increased the complexity of their oral language. French (1988) used story retelling as an instructional procedure in the language arts program for approximately eight years and found that elementary school students retained important information after retelling. In addition, retelling significantly increased elementary school students' comprehension of text-based propositions (Gambrell, Koskinen, & Kapinus, 1991; Gambrell, Pfeiffer, & Wilson, 1985). In a comparative study, Gambrell et al. (1991) pointed out that both skilled and less skilled readers who engaged in retelling did better on comprehension tasks after four rounds of retelling practice. More recently, retelling has been used in the United States in the field of content reading. Taken together, these earlier studies

suggested that engaging students in retelling what they have read improve reading comprehension of texts.

In the field of ESL/EFL, retelling is recommended as an instructional tool to increase students' composition ability (Stewig, 1985), improve learners' oral proficiency (Hurley, 1986), and enhance ESL students' writing skills (Hu, 1995).

In an effort, Gambrell et al. (1991) stated that children ought to be exposed to all kinds of good literature and prose, especially since teachers do most of the talking in the classroom. In their study, they emphasized how retelling makes the reader focus on the story as a whole.

Having observed the previous studies related to the effectiveness of retelling strategy, it is confirmed that a few of them have been done in EFL/ESL contexts. The most significant research in this field is that one done by Lin (2010).

This study examined the impact of the retelling technique on English reading comprehension of 126 Chinese students from a Taiwanese university. Sixty five students were assigned to the experimental group and sixty one to the control group. Both groups received the same learning content, but the technique differed; the experimental group had the retelling technique, while the control group had conventional techniques. The results showed that retelling significantly improved the participants' text comprehension at the level of overall meaning. However, retelling did not improve the ability of participants to remember details of expository texts.

1.2.2 Related Research on Summary Writing

In a lot of studies, beneficial effects of summarization strategy over other kinds of strategies have been demonstrated (Bean & Steenwyk, 1984; Cunningham, 1982; Mc Neil & Donant, 1982). In fact, Summarization assignments are among the most commonly used tasks at fostering comprehension of texts written in a second or foreign language. A considerable body of research examining the impact of summary assignments on language learner reading comprehension ability has demonstrated that summarization tasks can greatly enhance reading and understanding of written texts.

Through their study, Rinehart, Stahl and Erickson (1986) reported the direct and indirect effects of a summarization training program on the reading and studying skills of 70 sixth grade students. Their findings confirmed the efficacy of this program. This kind of training improved recall of major information indirectly, and was an effective tool for improving reading and studying skills.

Duke and Pearson (2002) listed a series of strategies work better for effective comprehension. Through this list, summarization was introduced as a strategy not only improves students' ability to summarize the text, but also their overall comprehension of the text content. Thus instruction

in summarization can be considered to meet dual purposes: to improve students' ability to summarize text and to improve their ability to comprehend the text and recall.

According to Kirkland and Saunders (1991), however; summary assignments are highly complex task activities involving various internal and external constraints which can impose an overwhelming cognitive load on text summarizers. As a matter of fact, producing a well-prepared summary requires not only linguistic knowledge, but most importantly, involves specific thinking processes and cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies.

Consequently, in some other studies the beneficial effects of some other strategies such as argument tasks have been demonstrated over summary writing. For example, Wiley and Voss (1999) found that American students who read multiple texts concerning the history of Ireland in order to write arguments gained deeper text comprehension and produced more transformed and integrated essays than did students who read the same texts in order to write summaries. These findings were largely replicated by Naumann, Wechsung, and Krems (2009) with German students reading another set of multiple history texts. Likewise, Le Bigot and Rouet (2007) found that French students instructed to write arguments based on texts about different aspects of social influence produced essays with more transformed information than did students instructed to write summaries about the same topic.

In contrast to such findings, Gil, Braten, Vidal-Abarca, and Stramsa (2010) presented evidence that summary tasks in some instances may be more facilitative than argument tasks. In their experiment on eighty seven first year psychology undergraduate students at a large public university in eastern Spain, they found that Spanish participants who wrote summaries after reading seven texts about climate change obtained higher scores on questionnaires measuring both superficial and deep text comprehension than those who wrote argument essays.

Finally, there are some findings not showing any significant differences between students reading multiple texts in order to construct arguments and students reading in order to summarize information. Thus, in Le Bigot and Rouet (2007) study, it was found that students in the argument task condition performed equally well on a multiple-choice comprehension questionnaire as did students in the summary condition.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The major objective of this study was to make a comparison between the effects of oral retelling and summary writing techniques on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. On the other hand, the researcher verified the effects of each of them with traditional conventional method of teaching reading comprehension.

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the current research addressed the following questions:

Q1) Does oral retelling strategy have any significant effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners compared with conventional method of teaching the reading comprehension?

Q2) Does summary writing strategy have any significant effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners compared with conventional method of teaching the reading comprehension?

Q3) Are there any significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling strategy and those which are summary writing based?

Q4) Are there any significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling strategy, those which are summary writing based, and those which are conventional based?

To find the most reasonable answer to the research questions, the researcher proposed the following null- hypotheses:

H01) Oral retelling strategy has no significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension compared with conventional method.

H02) Summary writing strategy has no significant effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension ability compared with conventional method.

H03) There are no significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling strategy, and those which are summary writing based.

H04) There are no significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling, those which are summary writing based, and those which are conventional based.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

Ninety female students taking upper intermediate level English classes in an English language institute in Iran were selected. The participating students' age range was between 21 and 26, with an overall mean age of 23.5.

2.2 Design

Among several designs, the one which seemed to fit best the purpose of the present research was a quasi-experimental. In the present study there was no random selection, and the subjects were selected according to the results of the CELT test at the beginning of the treatment. Then, they were randomly assigned to three groups; one control and two experimental ones. All these three

groups were taught by the researcher herself. Furthermore, pre and post tests were administered one week before and after the treatment.

2.3 Instrumentation

Teaching Materials: For the first phase of the training which contained teaching of these two strategies, the students were exposed to two passages of comparable length (416 and 422 words) from "Active Skills for Reading: Book 4" by Anderson (2008).

For the second phase of treatment, the subjects were provided with five more passages of comparable length (541-601 words) from the same book in order to practice the strategies at hand by themselves.

Testing Materials: Three testing instruments were used in the present study. The first one was a Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT), administered as a reliable and standard criterion to 120 students in an English language institute in Iran including three sections: structure, 60 items; vocabulary, 70 items; and reading comprehension, 20 items.

The second test for measuring the comprehension ability of the students before applying the treatment was an English reading comprehension pretest designed and administered to these three groups. This test consisted of two English passages of comparable length (571 and 574 words) along with twenty multiple choice items.

The third one was a posttest with two reading texts (536 and 614 words) and above mentioned items of reading comprehension, which was similar to the pretest with the same difficulty level.

Necessary time for each pre and post was 60 minutes for all groups.

2.4. Procedure

In order to conduct the research to verify the research hypotheses, the following steps were taken:

As a primary step, a standard proficiency test (CELT) was administered to 120 subjects in an English language institute in Iran, and those subjects who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as homogeneous ones; 90 students in this study. These 90 students were randomly assigned to two experimental and one control groups. Then, the students took a pretest before receiving any treatment and a posttest after the period of instruction. In fact, pre and post tests were administered one week before and after the intervention program.

Seven passages along with relevant questions in the form of a pamphlet were covered in this course of study, two texts for first step of the treatment that the students were exposed to explicit instruction of the strategies at hand, and five texts for second phase of the treatment that the students were asked to have more practice of the strategies.

At the beginning of first session, the teacher read one text that the students had been provided in their pamphlets, and they were asked to listen to the story retold orally by the teacher. The teacher emphasized the rules that they were required to use in order to make their oral retellings as effective as possible.

In second experimental group, the researcher gave them a definition of summary writing and the participants were informed they should have the rules and guidelines in their mind for providing good and effective summaries.

The same text used for the first group was read for this group, and the teacher modeled this strategy.

At the end of explicit instruction phase, students acquired knowledge about these strategies but still had not applied them to longer reading passages. Now it was time for these two experimental groups to practice the strategies at hand by reading another text in their pamphlets. The teacher helped them with their difficulties, and they received corrective feedbacks on their retellings and summaries by the teacher.

During the course of training, the participants in control group were instructed in reading comprehension of the same texts by the same instructor through conventional method. In other words, the teacher translated the texts, gave the synonyms of new words, and provided them with some examples in order to clarify the meaning of sentences.

Next sessions after the instruction of the strategies, the students went through their pamphlets to cover one passage for each session. At the beginning of each session, the students were required to read a text and retell it orally in first experimental group and write a short summary about 160-180 words in second experimental group. Totally, 7 passages with some multiple choice items were covered during six sessions.

Since the purpose of these classes was not using the rules, but improving reading comprehension ability of the students through using the strategies at hand, there was no reason to correct the students in terms of using all guidelines and rules. In fact, in each session, some students had the opportunity to retell the text and make a summary, and the teacher gave them corrective feedback. While well-expressed retellings and summaries were assigned a score of 3, fair and poor reproductions of texts were scored 2 and 1 respectively. This method of scoring was in terms of how much they were successful in understanding the writer's intention, guessing the main idea of the text, and forming a coherent paragraph.

One week after the last treatment, the students were administered a posttest similar to the pretest with the same difficulty level.

3. Results

3.1 The Normality Test

The first step to decide upon the application of an appropriate statistical test is to test the normality of the collected data. According to the obtained results of Q-Q plots, all the data were distributed normally, so parametric statistic tests were applied to analyze the results.

The following section discusses the results for each research question and tests the null hypotheses.

3.2 Research Question One

Q1) Does oral retelling strategy have any significant effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners compared with conventional method of teaching the reading comprehension?

In order to investigate the effect of treatment on first group a paired t-test is required

		Paired Differences								
		Mea	Std.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Pair	paired t-test for	n	Deviation	of Mean	Lower	Upper				
1	group 1	9.617	5.636	0.728	8.161	11.073	13.217	59	0.00	

Table1. Paired samples t-test

According to Table 1, Sig. value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05. As a result, there is a significant difference between the pre and post test of group one. On the other hand, an independent t-test between oral retelling and control group determines if the means of two groups are significantly different from one another.

Table 2. Independent samples t-test between groups 1 and 3

		Levene's Test							
of Means		of variances							
						95% confidence Interval of			
the Difference		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	MD	Std. Error	
of Lower Upper						(2-tailed)	Difference		
Independent	Equal variances	2.15	0.14	9.35	58	0.00	5.23	0.55	
4.11	6.35	t-test		assumed					
	Equal variances			9.35	53.93	0.00	5.23	0.55	
4.11	6.35								
	not assumed								

As indicated in Table 2, the mean difference between these two groups is 5.23 which is a significant number. Therefore, the difference between these two groups is significant in terms of mean values.

According to Table 2, the value of sig. is 0.14 which is more than 0.05. So first line of the table should be used (equal variances assumed). Additionally, since the research begins with null hypotheses, significant two tailed is applied. Because 0.00 is less than 0.05, the difference between the mean scores of two groups is significant, and the first null hypothesis is rejected.

3.2 Research Question Two

Q2) Does summary writing strategy have any significant effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners compared with conventional method of teaching the reading comprehension?

Another paired t-test between pre and post test of summary writing group is applied in order to explore the effectiveness of this kind of treatment on second experimental group.

Table3. Paired samples t-test

		Paired Differences					
df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Lower	Upper	t
Pair 1	Paired t-test	8.38	4.94	0.63	7.10	9.66	13.12
59	0.00						

for group 2

As shown in Table 3, there is a significant difference between pre and post test of the second group (Sig. =0.00).

On the other hand, an independent t-test determines if there is any significant difference between mean values of two groups.

Table4. Independent samples t-test between groups 2 and 3

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test		
for Equality of Means		F	Sig.	t	df	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
Error	Lower	Upper				Sig.(2-tailed)	MD	Std.
Independent t-test	Equal variances assumed		1.38	0.24	5.70	58	0.00	3.13
	0.54	2.03	4.23					
	Equal variances not assumed				5.70	54.66	0.00	3.13
	2.03	4.23						0.54

Again first line of Table 4 is used for the above mentioned reasons. As shown in Table 4, the Sig. value of 0.00 is an indication of significant difference between second group and third one,

and a reason for rejecting second null hypothesis. Additionally, a comparison is made between t-value which is 5.70 and 2.02 which is the critical value for t at 0.05. Since 5.70 is significantly more than 0.05, there is a significant difference between experimental group two and control group, and the second null hypothesis is rejected again. On the other hand, mean difference between these two groups is 3.13 which is a significant number. Here comes the third reason for rejecting second null hypothesis, and it is concluded that summary writing has been effective on reading comprehension.

3.4 Research Question Three

Q3) Are there any significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling strategy, and those which are summary writing based?

Table5. Independent samples t-test between groups 1 and 2

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances of Means		t-test for Equality						
Difference		95% Confidence Interval the						
Lower	Upper	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	MD	Std. Error
						(2-tailed)	of Difference	
Independent	Equal variances	0.62	0.84	3.37	58	0.001	2.10	0.62
0.85	3.34							
t-test	assumed							
	Equal variances							
	not assumed			3.37	57.95	0.001	2.10	0.62
0.85	3.34							

According to Table 5, there is a significant difference between mean scores of experimental group one and two which is 2.10. It is concluded that group one out performed group two in terms of mean scores, and third null hypothesis is rejected.

On the other hand, t- value for df=58 is 3.37 which is more than 2.02. Therefore, there is a significant difference between these two groups.

3.5 Research Question Four

Q4) Are there any significant differences between the results of the instruction based on oral retelling strategy, those which are summary writing based, and those which are conventional based?

For testing fourth research question, test of homogeneity of variance is required.

Table6. Test of homogeneity of variances

One-Way ANOVA			
Levene Statistic			Sig.
1.087	2	87	0.34

According to Table 6, sig. value is 0.34. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been met. Since a comparison of more than two groups is required, a one way ANOVA is needed. It provides information on whether or not these three groups differ, but no information on the location or source of the difference.

Table7. ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA					
Levene Statistic	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	416.156	2	2.8.078	41.568	0.00
	435.500	87	5.006		
Within Groups	851.656	89			
Total					

As it is revealed, Sig. value in Table 7 is 0.00. Therefore, there is a difference between the mean scores of reading comprehension test, and the fourth null hypothesis is rejected in terms of Sig. value.

For finding out the location of difference and which group is different from other groups, a post hoc multiple comparison test is provided, and these three groups are compared two by two by the use of mean differences.

Table8. Post hoc multiple comparisons

Table8. Dependent Variable: One-Way ANOVA

Tukey HSD

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
group1	group1					
	group2	2.100*	.578	.001	.72	3.48
	group3	5.233*	.578	.000	3.86	6.61
group2	group1	-2.100*	.578	.001	-3.48	-.72
	group2					
	group3	3.133*	.578	.000	1.76	4.51
group3	group1	-5.233*	.578	.000	-6.61	-3.86
	group2	-3.133*	.578	.000	-4.51	-1.76
	group3					

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

According to Table 8, the mean difference of group one and three is 5.23 which proves that group one performed better than group three.

Furthermore, the calculated value of Sig. is 0.00. Since it is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that this kind of difference between group one which used oral retelling and group two which used summary writing is significant.

The comparison of group two and three indicates that there is a significant difference between summary writing group and the group which used conventional method with the Sig. of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. The mean difference of 3.13 indicates better performance of that group which used summary writing.

Additionally, a comparison of group one and two is an indication of superiority of group one over group two with the Sig. of 0.00. The mean difference between oral retelling and summary writing group is 2.100. It indicates the oral retelling group outperformed than the summary writing group. Again fourth null hypothesis is rejected in terms of mean difference value.

4. Discussion of the Results

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of oral retelling and summary writing on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Regarding the research questions, findings of the study illustrated that the use of oral retelling and summarizing has been effective in improving the students' reading comprehension ability.

Regarding the effect of oral retelling on the reading comprehension, contradictory findings have been discussed at length previously where it was mentioned that while a lot of researchers such as Mc Cormick and Cooper (1991) discovered the effectiveness of this strategy on students'

reading comprehension ability, Clanton (2002) reported that in traditional classrooms using the written retelling strategy did not show significant gains over the traditional classrooms without this strategy.

This study supported the studies which have shown that the ability to reconstruct and integrate meaning in student's own word is indeed an important component of L2 reading comprehension. It is also in agreement with Lin's (2010) study that examined the impact of the retelling technique on English reading comprehension for Chinese students. The results showed that retelling significantly improved the participants' text comprehension. It also helped them to distinguish between ideas, and retain a sequence of events. The participants using retelling could distinguish better than control participants between main and supporting ideas. They also performed better in drawing connections between pieces of information introduced at different parts of the text.

Regarding summarization strategy, the present study indicated the effectiveness of this strategy on reading comprehension ability of students. These findings are consistent with those state cognitive strategies such as summarizing enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means and to improve their speaking if it is in oral form and their writing if it is written (Gorjian, Mousavian & Shahramiri, 2011). A considerable body of research examining the impact of summary assignments on language learner reading comprehension ability has demonstrated that summarization tasks can greatly enhance reading and understanding of written texts (Bean & Steenwyk, 1984; Cunningham, 1982; Mc Neil & Donant, 1982). Although these results are not compatible with some previous studies by Kirkland and Saunders (1991) who mentioned summary assignments are highly complex task activities, they are in agreement with findings of Gil et al. (2011) who presented the evidence of getting higher scores of Spanish students who wrote summaries than those who wrote argue essays.

Finally, the multiple comparison of the groups shows that there is a significant difference between the groups which used oral retelling and those which used summarizing in favor of first group with oral retelling strategy.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the differential effects of oral retelling and summary writing on reading comprehension ability of Iranian upper intermediate students. To recapitulate the findings and the conclusion of this study, it can be claimed that there was a statistically meaningful difference between the mean achievements of these groups in favor of the group one which the participants received the oral retelling strategy.

Additionally, the multiple comparisons of mean values presented the evidence that there is a significant difference between those students who received oral retelling and those who exposed to summary writing strategy in favor of oral retelling group. These results give credibility to Zimiles and Kuhns (1976) that suggested that comprehension significantly improved when the

students were asked to retell a story after it was read to them (as cited in Gibson, Gold, & Sgouros, 2003).

6. Pedagogical Implications

The result of the present research can offer pedagogical implications for language teachers, students, and textbook developers. The results also can be beneficial for those teachers who are in search of the most effective strategies for improving students' reading comprehension.

As a matter of fact, most strategies have not been trained in EFL reading classes but they were used as a tool for testing and evaluating the students' reading comprehension ability.

On the other hand, a lot of Iranian teachers doubt the practicality of retelling and summary writing in reading classes. Mostly often the only used method in these classes is the conventional method by which the teacher or the students read the texts, the texts are translated by the teacher, and the students are provided with a list of synonyms. As a matter of fact, the task is not challenging enough to involve the students in complicated processes of reading skill. It is a reasonable response to that group of researchers that explore the inadequacy of students' reading ability in spite of a large amount of reading courses that they are exposed to.

The findings of the present study, however, demonstrate that oral retelling strategy is not only feasible but also much more effective for fostering students' reading comprehension ability than summary writing. It seems beneficial here to remind the language teachers of the following advantages:

Oral retelling strategy results in marked increases in text comprehension.

Giving the students the steps to retell the texts in their own words helps them to integrate and reconstruct the meaning of the original text without looking at the original one. This strategy helps them to reveal not only what they remember, but also what they have understood. So they go beyond the literal meaning and focus on deeper understanding of the text. Accordingly, teachers can facilitate comprehension process by providing learning experiences that induce the students to interpret and reconstruct the text during and after their reading.

Summary assignments improve reading comprehension ability.

By providing the students the steps to summarize the texts as effective as possible, the teachers can help them to view themselves as readers and writers to build knowledge about the forms and functions of reading and writing. Since underlying reading and writing processes are similar, so the teachers should have a combination of writing and reading instruction in their classes. They should help the students to put the main ideas into their own words and improve their writing in reading classes.

The findings of the present study also have a significant implication for learners. The results of this study suggest that not only language learners with reading comprehension problems but also all other students who have difficulty in studying their foreign language academic texts can make use of oral retelling strategy as a comprehension fostering activity.

On the other hand, syllabus designers and textbook writers should include pre and post reading activities and tasks that involve the students in using these strategies.

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