

Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Reading Comprehension and Reading Motivation: i+1 versus i-1

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Abstract

This study attempted to compare the effects of input with various hardness levels on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation. To this end, 62 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were chosen among 108 students through administering an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). The selected participants were randomly assigned to two equal groups, namely "i+1" (n=31) and "i-1" group (n=31). Then, the groups were pretested by a researcher-made reading comprehension test. After carrying out pre-tested, the treatment was practiced on the both groups. The participants in "i+1" group received reading passages beyond the current level, on the other hand, the "i-1" group received those reading passages which were below their current level. After the instruction ended, a modified version of pre-test was conducted as posttest to determine the impacts of the treatment on the students' reading comprehension. The obtained results showed that there was a significant difference between the post-tests of "i+1" and "i-1" groups. The findings showed that the "i+1" group significantly outperformed the "i-1" group ($p < .05$) on the post-test. Moreover, the findings indicated that "i+1" group's motivation increased after the treatment. The implications of the study suggest that interactive type of input is beneficial to develop students' language skills.

Keywords: Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Input, Comprehensible Input, Text difficulty level, Reading comprehension

1. Introduction

There is a consensus of agreement among the researcher that input is vital for language learning to come about but they may not have analogous opinions about the way it is utilized by learners (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Input may be operationally described as "oral and/or written corpus of target language to which second language (L2) learners are subjected via different sources, and is perceived by them as language input" (Kumaravadelu, 2006, p. 26). According to Ellis (2012), input-based instruction "includes the utilization of the input that learners are

presented to or are needed to process” (p. 285). In this procedure, through presentation to language input, if students discover the way language works or the way language is rehearsed in workplace, or handicraft target condition, learning will be occurred (Basturkmen, 2006). Thus, it can be deduced that input is of fundamental significance for language learning abilities particularly reading.

Reading is seen as “an essential expertise for EFL learners to enhance their language ability” (Chiang, 2015, p. 11). Reading is characterized as “a fluent process of readers joining information from a text and their own background knowledge to fabricate meaning” (Nunan, 2003, p. 68). It gives chances to foreign language learners to be presented to English in circumstances that language input is entirely restricted (Lao & Krashen, 2000; Wu, 2012).

One of the best bountiful sources for providing language input for EFL learners is through extensive reading (ER) (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1982). As indicated by Krashen (1982), the input to which learners are presented ought to be a little above their current level of competence, ‘i + 1,’ in which ‘i’ alludes to the present language capacity of learner, though ‘1’ alludes to the input that is somewhat above the learners’ present language ability. On the other hand, Day and Bamford (1998) suggested a diverse model on the hardness level of the input. Based on this hypothesis, “ER is efficacious if it furnishes students with input which is marginally beneath their current level of competence (i.e., ‘i-1’)” (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 36). This way language learners can swiftly develop their reading certainty, reading fluency and construct sight words and high-frequency words.

However, a glance to the prior literature divulges that there are rare studies on the impacts of these two viewpoints (i.e., ‘i + 1’ and ‘i - 1’) on EFL learners’ reading comprehension and reading motivation. To cover the extant gap, the current study tried to focus on this theme by inspecting how Krashen’s input hypothesis through ‘i + 1’ and ‘i - 1’ materials may impress EFL students’ reading comprehension and reading motivation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension has been defined by researcher as "a critical part of the multifarious interplay of mechanisms involved in L2 reading" (Brantmeier, 2005, p. 52). For many students, reading is presumed as the beneficial dexterity that they can utilize inside and outside the classroom. It is additionally the skill that can preserve the lengthy time. According to Allen and Valette (1999), “reading is not only allotting foreign language sounds to the written words, but also the comprehension of what is written” (p. 249). Miller (2008) characterized "Reading

comprehension as the ability to comprehend or to get meaning from any kind of written materials” (p. 8).

Furthermore, Papalia (2004) believed that reading comprehension in prevalent utilization and more particularly in referral to training and psychology has approximately identical meaning as comprehending the message of the text. Grellet (1981) guaranteed that "reading comprehension is getting written text means extricating the needed information from it as effectively as feasible" (p. 3). Grellet additionally believed that “reading comprehension is not sufficient to comprehend the epitome of the text but further voluminous information is indispensable too” (p. 13).

Wood (2005) confirmed reading included understanding meaning from the written words. Janzen (1996) declared that “reading comprehension as the capacity to learn lexical data (i.e., semantic data at the word level and infer sentences and discourse elucidations but reading on graphic regarding development touching through the eye” (p. 8). Webster's Collegiate Dictionary considered reading comprehension as "the valence of mind to see and comprehend the meaning imparted by the content."

Regarding the mentioned points, reading widely is an individual movement which depends on the students' fondness (Nation, 1997). Extensive reading (ER) boosts reader's reading aptitudes and it is shortsighted to urge EFL students to peruse better through ER which is enchanting to them (Nuttal, 2000). The principle objective of an Extensive reading plan is to give a circumstance to students to appreciate reading a foreign language and new real messages quietly at their own velocity and with satisfactory comprehension (Day & Bamford, 1998). “ER is bolstered by Krashen's (1982, 1994) input hypothesis, affective filter hypothesis, and delight hypothesis” (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017, p. 6).

2.2. Krashen's Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis directs the question of how we get language. This speculation expresses that we obtain (not learn) language by comprehending input that is a little past our current level of procured capability (Krashen & Terrell 1983). This has been lately declared perspicuously by Krashen (2003a): “we procure language in just one way: when we comprehend messages; that is, when we acquire “comprehensible input”” (p. 4). This potent allegation is rehased in different spots where Krashen expresses that ‘comprehending inputs is the main way language is obtained’ and that ‘there is no individual variety in the key procedure of language procurement’ (Krashen 2003a, p. 4). Consequently, Krashen frequently utilizes the term ‘comprehension hypothesis’ (2003a) to allude to the Input Hypothesis, contending that ‘perception’ is a superior depiction as only input is not sufficient; it must be comprehended.

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Thus, based on Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, adequate presentation to understandable input is essential for language students to learn language. In light of this speculation, the input to which students are uncovered ought to be a little past their current level of language ability, i.e., 'i + 1'. Considering Krashen's perspective, when learners constantly and repeatedly confront and concentrate on an expansive quantity of input which is a little higher than their level of capability, they inchmeal obtain the structures. Krashen's input hypotheses have motivated different universities and institutions to accomplish researches and studies in ER and utilize ER programs in teaching TEFL (Chiang, 2015).

Day and Bamford (1998), in particular, suggested a modern scheme which is diverse from Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis. Based on this scheme, "ER is advantageous if it furnishes the students with input which is somewhat beneath their current level of competence (i.e., 'i-1')" (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017, p. 4). Moreover, "'i-1' creates a condition for automaticity educating and extending a huge sight vocabulary rather than learning new target structures" (Mikeladze, 2014, p. 5). Truth to be told, 'i-1' is considered as the learners' tranquility zone where they can rapidly construct their reading certainty and reading fluency (Chiang, 2015).

2.3. Reading Motivation

All of researcher and teachers accepted that motivation is a basic factor to enhance reading comprehension. As indicated by Dornyei (2001), the meaning of motivation is very intricate and obscurant because it is made out of various models and hypotheses. As discussed by Protacio (2012), "reading problems occur partly due to the fact that people are not motivated to read in the first place" (p. 11). Moley Bandré, and George (2011) explain that, motivation happens when "students develop an interest in and form a bond with a topic that lasts beyond the short term" (p. 251). Furthermore, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000, p.405) propound that "reading motivation is the individual's personal objectives, values, and beliefs regarding the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading". Considering this delineation, one would come to two principle consequences: The first is that reading motivation refers to putting together of various dimensions of motivation in an intricate route. The second is the type of agency people have over it since they can manipulate, unify and divert their motivation to read in terms of their credence, worthiness and objectives (Wigfield & Tonks, 2004). "Not only does reading motivation relate to reading comprehension, but it also relates to both the amount of reading and students' reading achievement" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2005, p. 76). Guthrie et al. (2006, p.232) elucidate that "reading motivation correlates with students' amount of reading". For this purpose, Guthrie and Wigfield (2005) emphasize the perspective that "reading motivation is domain-specific as it belongs to a status that necessitates an emotional reaction particular to a reading material, and that would metamorphose based on the diversity of activities inaugurating it" (p.89).

2.4. Empirical Backgrounds

Chiang (2015) researched the impacts of different text difficulty on L2 reading perceptions and reading comprehension. To give the ideal test to L2 reading, comprehensible input hypothesis hypothesizes that selecting text somewhat more difficult than the student's present level will improve reading perception. Fifty-four freshman from one college in central Taiwan were arbitrarily separated into two groups. Level 3 and level 4 Oxford Graded Readers were given to the learners in the 'i - 1' group while students in the 'i + 1' group were equipped with level 5 and level 6. Quantitative data were collected through the English Placement Test and the Reading Attitudes Survey. Findings from the pretest and posttest of the Reading Attitudes Survey propose that the i-1 group has achieved significantly in reading attitudes, while no difference in reading attitude was recognized with the i + 1 group. The outcomes additionally indicated that diverse hardness levels of reading text did not significantly influence participants' reading comprehension.

Bayat and Pomplun (2016) aimed to indicate how several eye-tracking features within reading are influenced by different primary agents, as individual discrepancies, the hardness level of the text, and the topic of the text. To this end, they directed an eye-following experiment with 21 participants who read six sections with various points. For each topic, metamorphosis in three factors were assessed: the mediocre obsession term, the student estimate, and the normal rapidity of reading. The Flesch reading ease score was utilized as a measurement for the hardness level of the content. Examination of difference is utilized as a part of request to break down determinant factors related with content attributes, containing the difficulty level and the point of the content. The findings showed that during the reading of entries with comparable difficulty levels, the point of the content has no noteworthy impact on mediocre obsession span and mediocre understudy estimate, though a critical effect overall speed of reading is watched. Additionally, individual properties have a primary effect on eye-movement demeanor.

Recently, Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) examined the impacts of various text difficulty levels on foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) and reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. To fulfil this objective, 50 elementary EFL learners were chosen from two intact classes ($n = 25$ each). One class was considered as 'i + 1' and another as 'i-1'. The participants in each class practiced extensive reading at diverse levels of difficulty for two semesters. A reading comprehension test and the FLRA Scale were administered before and after the treatment. The outcomes indicated that both text difficulty levels significantly enhanced the participants' reading comprehension. Moreover, the results revealed that, the 'i + 1' group's FLRA augmented, while that of the 'i - 1' group diminished.

However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, rare studies, if any, have been carried out on the impacts of Krashen's Input Hypothesis (i.e., ' $i + 1$ ' and ' $i - 1$ ') on EFL learners' reading comprehension and reading motivation. To reach the purposes of the study, this study attempted to response the following research questions:

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

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

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 62 Iranian students between the ages of 13 and 16 years old. They were selected among 108 students from a private English Language Institute. All of them were at upper-intermediate level of proficiency in English regarding their performance on an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). All the participants were male and native speakers of Persian. The selected participants were randomly divided into two equal groups; one experimental group ($i+1$) and one control group ($i-1$).

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

The first instrument which was used in the current study to homogenize the participants was the OQPT. It assisted the researcher to have a premiere realization of what level (i.e., elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate) their participants were at. This test has 60 multiple-choice items and based on it the learners whose scores were between 40 and 47 were upper-intermediate and were regarded as the target participants of the current research.

3.2.2 Pretest

The second instrument was an extensive/intensive reading pre-test. To understand the current participants' reading comprehension level, a researcher-made pre-test was administered based on the students' materials which were *New Headway, Upper-Intermediate (B2), Fourth Edition* by Liz and Soars (2011) and *Select Readings, Second Edition* by Lee and Gundersen (2003). Six passages from the mentioned materials were selected. Then based on the selected passages, a reading comprehension test of 40 objective items including multiple-choice and true or false items was constructed. Each item received 0.5 point and there was no penalty for false

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responses. The validity of the pre-test was confirmed by a panel of English experts. It was piloted on a similar group (26 students) from another institute. It should be mentioned that the reliability indexes of the pre-test were calculated through KR-21 formula ($r=0.898$).

3.2.3 Posttest

The third instrument which was applied in the current study was a researcher-made reading comprehension post-test- the reclaimed exemplar of the pre-test. All specifications of the post-test were similar to the pre-test regarding types and the number of items. Of course, there was a slight discrepancy among pre and post-tests- the sequence of the questions and options was remodeled to prevent the probabilistic reminiscence of pre-test answers. This test was regarded valid and reliable since it was the modified version of the pre-test. The post-test was administered to check the impacts of the different types of input, i.e., $i+1$ and $i-1$ on the participants' reading comprehension.

3.3.4 The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)

Another instrument utilized in the present study was a modified sample of *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)*. MRQ was expanded by Dr. Allan Wigfield and Dr. John Guthrie from University of Maryland in 1997. In this research, the researcher had selected 30 items of the entire 53 items in the questionnaire because solely eight aspects of total eleven aspects of reading motivation were identified to measure. They are: reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, reading word avoidance, social reasons for reading, and reading for grades. MRQ was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire made up of five options: 1 for 'I strongly agree', 2 for 'I agree', 3 for 'I don't know', 4 for 'I disagree', and 5 for 'I strongly disagree'. The MRQ was given to participants twice, one before the treatment and once after the treatment.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

In the first step OQPT was given to 108 Iranian EFL learners. Based on their execution in the OQPT, 62 intermediates were picked out for the target participants of the study. After that, the selected participants were randomly assigned to two equal groups- one experimental group ($i+1$) and one control group ($i-1$). Afterwards, the researcher gave the reading comprehension pre-test and MRQ; then he applied the treatment. The researcher taught the experimental group ($i+1$) by giving them the input which was a bit above their present level. As the participants of $i+1$ group were at the upper-intermediate level, the researcher during the treatment sessions, provided them with the reading passages which were a little above their current level, i.e., passages near to advance level. On the other hand, the participants in the control group ($i-1$), received the inputs, i.e., reading passages which were a little below their current level, that were, passages near to

intermediate level. The treatment lasted 15 sessions; at the end, the researcher administered the reading comprehension post-test and the MRQ to figure out the impacts of the utilizing i+1 and i-1 on the respondents' reading comprehension improvement and reading motivation.

3.6 Data Analysis

Collected data through the aforesaid procedures were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 25. Firstly, Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was run to check the normality of the data. Then, paired and an independent samples t-tests were used to assess the impacts of the different inputs on the participants' reading comprehension and reading motivation.

4. Results and Discussion

The previous section included a delineation of the methodology which was utilized to respond the research questions of this study, which are rewritten here for reasons of convenience: (a) Are there any significant differences between and within the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups' reading comprehension after implementing the treatment? If so, which group has higher reading comprehension in English? and (b) Are there any significant differences between and within the 'i + 1' and the 'i - 1' groups' reading motivation after implementing the treatment? If so, which group has higher motivation towards reading in English?

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

Table 1. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Groups' Pre and Post-tests)

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
I+1 pre	.149	31	.078
I+1 post	.141	31	.117
i-1 pre	.172	31	.060
i-1 post	.141	31	.118

The *p* values under the *Sig.* column in Table 1 determine whether the distributions were normal or not. A *p* value greater than .05 shows a normal distribution, while a *p* value lower than .05 demonstrates that the distribution has not been normal. Since all the *p* values in Table 1 were larger than .05, it could be concluded that the distributions of scores for the pretest and posttest obtained from both groups had been normal. It is thus safe to proceed with parametric test (i.e.

Independent and Paired samples *t*-tests in this case) and make further comparisons between the participating groups.

To find a response to the first research question, the pretest and posttest scores of the learners in the both groups were compared by means of an independent-samples *t* test:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Comparing Pretest Scores of the i+1 and i-1 groups

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	i+1	31	12.1129	1.24973	.22446
	i-1	31	12.5484	1.36232	.24468

It could be observed in Table 2 that the performance of both groups in pretest was almost equal. In order to get surer about any possible difference between the pretest of both groups, the following *t* test table had to be checked:

Table 3. Independent Samples *t*-Test (Pre-test of both groups)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.5	.449	-1.312	60	.195	-.43548	.33204
	Equal variances not assumed	81		-1.312	59.559	.195	-.43548	.33204

Based on table 3, the *Sig.* (.195) is higher than the .05 with *df*=60, so the difference between the pre-test of i+1 and i-1 groups is not significant at ($p < 0.05$). Both groups got almost the same reading comprehension scores in the pre-test.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Post-test Scores of the i+1 and i-1 groups

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	i+1	31	15.5484	1.11321	.19994
	i-1	31	13.2258	1.56439	.28097

In Table 4, it could be found that the post-test mean score of the i+1 group ($M = 15.5484$) was larger than the post-test mean score of the i-1 group ($M = 13.2258$). To find out whether this

difference was a statistically significant one or not, the researcher had to look down the *Sig.* column in Table 3:

Table 5. Independent Samples t-Test (Posttest of both groups)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	3.747	.058	6.735	60	.000	2.32258	.34485
	Equal variances not assumed			6.735	54.182	.000	2.32258	.34485

In Table 5, the *p* value under the *Sig.* (2-tailed) column was found to be less than the significance level ($.000 < .05$), which means that there was a statistically significant difference between the two sets of scores. Accordingly, it could be concluded that the scores for the *i+* group ($M = 15.5484$) were significantly higher than the scores for the *i-1* group ($M = 13.2258$). In other words, the *i+1* material was shown to be a useful resource for enriching the reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL learners.

The second research question of the study intended to find out: whether there any significant differences between and within the '*i + 1*' and the '*i - 1*' groups' reading motivation after implementing the treatment. If so, which group has higher motivation towards reading in English? To find an answer to this research question, A 33-item questionnaire was utilized to find a response to this research question. It should be mentioned once again that questionnaire was given to both groups twice; one before the treatment and once after the treatment. The results obtained from the questionnaire are shown as follows.

Table 6. Normality Test for the Scores of the MRQ

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
i+1 Questionnaire. Pre		.192	31	.005
i+1 Questionnaire. Post		.249	31	.000
i-1 Questionnaire. Pre		.259	31	.000
i-1 Questionnaire. Post		.167	31	.027

In Table 6, the *Sig.* value under the Kolmogorov-Smirnov part of the table revealed a value higher than .05, which shows that the distribution of scores was normal.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics (Questionnaire of Both Groups before the Treatment)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MRQ. Pre	i+1	31	48.8710	6.01521	1.08036
	i-1	31	50.3226	6.18270	1.11045

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire before the treatment. The mean scores of both groups seem very equal; the mean of the i-1 group is 50.3226 and the mean of i+1 group is 48.8710. It implies that both groups had the same motivation before receiving the treatment.

Table 8. Independent Samples t-test (Questionnaire of Both Groups before the Treatment)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference
MRQ. Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.006	.938	-.937	60	.353	-1.45161
	Equal variances not assumed			-.937	59.955	.353	-1.45161

Based in the information presented in Table 8., there was not a statistically significant difference in the *Questionnaire* test scores for i+ group ($M = 48.8710$, $SD = 6.01521$) and i-1 group ($M = 50.3226$, $SD = 6.18270$), $p = .353$ (two-tailed). This conclusion was made since the p value was larger than the significance level ($p > .05$). Hence, it could be inferred that the learners in the two groups were at the same level of motivation before the treatment.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics (Questionnaire of Both Groups after the Treatment)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MRQ. Post	i+1	31	58.2258	6.13031	1.10104
	i-1	31	51.4516	7.43792	1.33589

Table 9 indicates the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire after the treatment. The mean scores of both groups seem very different; the mean of the i-1 group is 51.4516 and the mean of i+1 group is 63.2258. It means that the i+1 group had better scores after the treatment.

Table 10. Independent Samples t-test (Questionnaire of Both Groups after the Treatment)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
MRQ. Posttest	Equal variances assumed	.823	.368	3.913	60	.000	6.77419	1.73115
	Equal variances not assumed			3.913	57.889	.000	6.77419	1.73115

Table 10 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the motivation scores of the $i+1$ group and $i-1$ group after the treatment since the p value under the *Sig.* column was less than the level of significance (i.e., $.00 < .05$). Thus, it can be deduced that the experimental group, did welcome using $i+1$ for reading comprehension. On the other hand, the $i+1$ group improved their motivation after the treatment.

In summary, the present study aimed to see whether using the $i+1$ and $i-1$ could improve the reading comprehension of EFL learners, and whether there was a difference between the learners' motivation in this regard or not. The outcomes of the study indicated that this $i+1$ significantly improved reading comprehension of the learners in the $i+1$ group; moreover, the motivation of the experimental group ($i+1$) was increased after the treatment.

The obtained results may be due the significant role of inputs which the students had received before they produced the language. The comprehensible inputs which the students were subjected to before producing the language greatly helped the students to be able to read English more efficiently. It can be deduced that comprehension proceeds the production.

Students of the experimental group had improvement on the post-test thanks to the treatment they had received. The researcher found that the classes were more challenging and the students were more involved in learning to understand the reading texts. The improvement of the students can be attributed to the ' $i + 1$ ' reading texts as Krashen (1982) states input which is somewhat above the present level of competence of the language learner can be conducive to learning. If i is the language learner's current level of competence in the foreign language, then $i+1$ is the following prompt advance along the improvement continuum. Accordingly, if the objective is to help the language student advance in their task, it is basic to furnish the learner with comprehensible input [$i + 1$].

The researcher observed that the students were more motivated to read and understand the texts that were more difficult for them, they seemed curious to know the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases, consequently, they asked the researcher to provide the meaning of unknown words, phrases, and sentences, and this attempt led to their success in reading comprehension.

This study is supported by Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) who discovered the effectiveness of different text difficulty levels on FLRA and reading comprehension of EFL learners. The final findings uncovered that both text difficulty levels significantly enhanced the participants' reading comprehension. The outcomes additionally revealed that, the 'i+ 1' group's FLRA enhanced, while that of the 'i - 1' group lessened.

The results of this study are in contrast with Chiang (2015) who researched the impacts of different text difficulty on L2 reading perceptions and reading comprehension. Chiang concluded that i-1 group has performed significantly in reading attitudes, whereas no difference in reading attitude was specified with the i + 1 group. Moreover, findings of Chiang' study also indicated that diverse difficulty levels of reading text did not significantly influence participants' reading comprehension.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the positive effect of i+1 viewed in this study can be ascribed to the vital role of comprehensible language input providing learners with linguistic data that they are able to understand. In the field of SLA, there is a mimic metaphor about language input proposed by VanPattn (2003) "input is to language acquisition what gas is to a car". There is language input that is better than other input, just like there is high octane gas that is better than low-octane gas. The "better input" here is comprehensible and meaning bearing. The more comprehensible and meaning –bearing the input is, the more likely it will be turned into intake that learners are able to internalize into their cognitive systems.

In contrast to the common belief that easy materials may increase the motivation of EFL learners, this study proved that the more difficult materials could increase Iranian EFL learners' motivation towards reading English. It can be claimed that difficult materials have discovery nature, meaning that, students want to discover and understand new things. In addition, students may do not have much more motivation to learn easy and ordinary materials without rich content. These results are congruent with former study (Chiang, 2015; Tanaka, 2007). Constant offering to the input (i.e., i+1) over times appears to have had a significant impact on developing learners' reading comprehension.

The other conclusion which can be drawn from this study is the importance of the EFL learners' motivation. The motivation of the students should be increased to learn English language more easily since motivation directs behavior toward particular goals, it will augment students' time on task and is additionally a momentous factor having effect on their learning and development. Motivation boosts cognitive processing. Motivation specifies whether a student will pursue a task (even a difficult one) with enthusiasm or a lackluster attitude. So, it is important to recognize aspects that foster internal motivation in English language learning.

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