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Interest-based Language Teaching: Enhancing Students' Interest and Achievement in L2 Reading

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ABSTRACT

This study reports the findings of the research conducted on the effects of Interest-Based Language Teaching (IBLT) on Persian students' interest in L2 learning, and their achievement in reading comprehension. With the aim of improving L2 learning in the university level, the study investigated whether selecting instructional materials based on learners' interest areas could impact their interest in language learning. Furthermore, it examined whether selecting instructional materials based on interest would have any influence on learners' performance in L2 reading. It also examined any significant differences between the learners with high and low L2 reading levels in terms of interest. The participants were sixty first-year nursing students in a nursing college. Both questionnaires and tests were employed to collect the data. The collected data were closely examined and analyzed using independent-samples t-test. The results revealed that (1) personalizing the materials could make a significant contribution to the development and enhancement of students' interest level in L2 learning; (2) selecting the instructional materials based on learners' interest areas could improve their performance in L2 reading comprehension; and (3) in using IBLT, there was no significant difference between learners with different levels of reading proficiency in learning the course materials.

Keywords: Interest-Based Language Teaching (IBLT); student interest in L2 learning; personalizing instructional materials; L2 reading

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Introduction

Interest plays a vital role in education and particularly in second or foreign language learning. It is defined as “heightened attention and emotional engagement that emerges when a person has a positive interaction with a content area or a task” (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 112). Some experts (e.g., Renninger, 2000; Schraw & Lehman, 2001) in educational research have primarily focused on two types of interest: situational and individual interest. Hidi (1990) defines situational interest as the focused attention and the affective reaction triggered in the moment by environmental stimuli, which may or may not last over time. Such interest is thought to be context-specific and of short-term value. On the other hand, the individual interest refers to a person’s relatively enduring predisposition to reengage in particular content over time (Renninger, 2000). This type of interest is believed to be topic-specific and have long-lasting personal value. It is related to a person’s previous knowledge and experiences. A third type of interest known as the topic interest is introduced (Ainley, Hidi & Berndorff, 2002) which is assumed to be a learner’s level of interest when a specific topic is studied. It is defined by Schiefel (1991) as a form of individual interest which is in contrast with the situational or text-based interest.

Hidi and Renninger (2006) describe the interest development across four phases. In phase one, situational interest is triggered by the environmental phenomena; in phase two, it is maintained, either because the individual finds the environment to be enjoyable or perceives that the learning task has value; in the third phase, the interest that is maintained becomes an emerging individual interest, which then in phase four matures into a well-developed individual interest.

Recent developments in the field of language teaching have led to renewed attention to the role of interest in language teaching. Interest can supposedly result in learners' more interaction and increase their concentration and motivation to learn. Tobias (1994) emphasizes the importance of studying the impact of interest on learning and retention and believes that affective factors such as interest and their complexities need to be investigated closely, and the findings on how to optimize their effect on learning seem to be very helpful. Interest is an enduring characteristic of adults, and it can be efficient for educators to apply interesting materials and methods in their teaching (Schiefel, 1991). Eidswick (2010), too, insists on the importance of interest in learning and suggests that teachers should attempt to use attractive topics aiming to design interesting classroom activities.

Some educational experts (e.g., Heilman, Collins-Thompson, Callan, Eskenazi, Juffs, & Wilson, 2010; Walkington, 2013) believe that IBLT has the power to contribute to raising students' interest. Therefore, as Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) state, schools and teachers are expected to seek ways to contribute to increase student interest and improve achievement. In fact, it is imagined that an instruction which is more reactive to learners' individual or group traits can lead to more effective results. Consistently, Hidi (1990) maintains that interest focus can often result in a better strategy use, facilitate inference, and lead to better comprehension and retrieval of information. Nevertheless, a review of the literature shows that a limited number of studies (Amiryousefi, 2016; Ebrahimi & Javanbakht, 2015; Sadeghpour, 2013) have examined the role of interest in L2 or EFL learners' learning experience compared to other areas of language learning. The focus of these studies has mostly been on seeing whether interest has an impact on students' learning.

Recently, however, there is a growing focus on how factors creating interest may develop in language teaching contexts; in other words, there has been a dramatic increase in the ways in which interest may be sparked in language learning situation (Ainley *et al.*, 2002; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Hoffmann, 2002; Renninger & Hidi, 2002; Schraw & Lehman, 2001). The reason why the present study has focused on reading is that it is a skill

which is officially the focus of teaching English. Therefore, this study seeks to highlight the key role that IBLT may have in creating or enhancing learners' interest and motivation. Furthermore, the study tries to examine the impact of such material selection on learners' achievement in L2 reading and probably the positive or negative relation that may exist between the interest and language proficiency.

Review of Literature

A considerable amount of literature (e.g., Amjah, 2014; Celik, 2010; Ebbers, 2011; Ebrahimi & Javanbakht, 2015; Manzano, 2018; Sadeghpour, 2013; Schraw & Lehman, 2001) has been published on the use of interesting and useful materials in L2 or Foreign Language (FL) teaching. The topic has often been discussed under the terms 'interest,' 'motivation,' 'authenticity,' 'relevance,' or 'awareness.' Much of the current literature on the role of interest in learning (e.g., Ainley *et al.*, 2002; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Hoffmann, 2002; Renninger & Hidi, 2002; Schraw & Lehman, 2000; Walkington, 2013, 2014; Young, 2005) has been conducted more mainly in the field of education than language teaching/learning. It has been argued by some researchers (e.g., Amjah, 2014; Ebbers, 2011) that interest can serve to stimulate learners in any subject area because when students are interested in what they learn, they tend to be focused and attentive. The situational interest has been shown to positively influence the cognitive performance such as students' performance in learning (Hidi, 1990; Young, 2005). In addition, it has been shown to narrow the inference (McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad & Bourg, 2000), focus attention (Hidi, 1990; McDaniel *et al.*, 2000), and enable integration of information with the prior knowledge (Kintsch, 1986). Renninger and Wozniak (1985) argue that individual interest positively affects attention, recognition, and recall. In a similar vein, Renninger and Hidi (2002) believe that such interest can improve learners' persistence and effort in their learning.

The studies conducted on the effect of interest on language learning have mostly revealed its leading role in the improvement of the process. The findings of the research by Schiefele and Krapp (1996) disclosed that topic interest significantly influenced the recall of idea units and high-level information. Based on their report, topic interest caused the amount of what learners recalled to increase, and led to a deeper comprehension of the texts. Eidswick (2010) examined the role of interest and prior knowledge in relation to reading comprehension. The study results revealed significantly higher scores for the high interest and high prior knowledge text. Also, a study by Magliano, Durik, and Holt (2011) revealed that topic interest affected learners' performance in a standardized text. As a result, the increase of engagement with the text and the presence of interest led to better comprehension by facilitating the processes that supported comprehension. Similarly, Ainley *et al.* (2002) investigated how individual and situational interest factors contributed to the topic interest and text learning. The results of their study showed that topic interest was related to affective response; affect was connected with persistence; and persistence with learning. Celik (2010) reported the results of an action research conducted in an ELT classroom in a high school in Turkey to examine the effects of IBLT on intrinsic motivation and language production. The results showed that IBLT had the potential to produce intrinsic motivation, and, therefore increase participation in classroom activities, improve cognitive involvement, and produce quality learner output in writing. Ebrahimi and Javanbakht (2015) investigated the effect of topic interest on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. The results of their study, too, demonstrated that interest had a significant influence on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

The interest-based teaching has been the focus of research in some other subject areas, as well. In mathematics, for instance, Walkington and Sherman (2013) studied the impact of interest-based

learning on students' performance. Their study showed that interest-based interventions could mediate students' situational understanding of mathematical relationships in story problems, fostering critical connections between personalized scenarios. Simsek and Kakir (2009) studied the effect of personalization of mathematical word problems on the achievement of Turkish students. They found no significant difference between learners who were taught through personalized or non-personalized materials, nor between the interest and gender through personalized and non-personalized problems. It is worth mentioning that interest has been more widely studied in association with L1 learning than with L2, where the results mostly disclose the positive influence of interest on reading. For example, Lee and Pulido (2017) argue that previous L1 empirical studies have reported strong effects of topic interest on reading comprehension, sometimes with the effects of this factor being mediated by other individual difference factors, such as language proficiency and even gender.

There are, however, some studies showing that creating interest in pedagogical context cannot necessarily promote learning. Clark and Mayer (2003), for instance, criticize adding irrelevant materials like background music to class materials because they may distract learners. Harp and Mayer (1998) maintain that such unessential materials that are often labeled as "seductive details," can have negative effects on learning even if they may increase learners' interest. Flowerday, Schraw, and Stevens (2004) reported no statistically reliable association with learning from the text for either choice or personal interest in a lab study on reading engagement, attitude, and learning. The main finding of a study by Reber, Hetland, Chen, Norman and Kobbeltvedt (2009) was that the example choice affects interest and probably attention, but not learning. However, referring to Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) they discuss that example choice can enhance student interest, which is at the core of motivating students to learn and to stay in the school. Sadeghpour (2013) found that topic interest did not significantly influence immediate and delayed recall of readings for Iranian EFL advanced-level learners. The results also revealed an interaction of gender and interest in the effect that they had on immediate recall of readers; female participants could recall more of the more interesting texts. As the existing literature on the possible effects of IBLT or interest on L2 learning and the way in which interest is developed in L2 learning settings seems to be somehow fragmented (Al-Nafisah & Abdulgader Al-Shorman, 2011; Linnenbrink-Garcia, Durik, Conley, Barron, Tauer, Karabenick & Harackiewicz, 2010), this area requires to be closely investigated.

Research Questions

Considering the related literature, and to shed light on some unclear areas regarding the use of IBLT to improve L2 learning, this study addressed the following three questions:

1. Does IBLT improve learners' interest in L2 learning?
2. Does IBLT have an impact on learners' performance in L2 reading?
3. In the interest-based teaching, is there any difference between learners of high reading proficiency and those of low reading proficiency in their achievement in L2 reading?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study included 60 (28 male & 32 female) university students from a nursing college in Abhar, Iran. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 36; however, most

of them were between 19 to 20, leaving a limited number in the higher ages. The participants were in their first year of college studying the 'General English' course. The data were collected in 2016 Fall Semester.

Procedure

The participants were randomly divided into two groups (experimental and control) -each with thirty students. To ensure the homogeneity of participants regarding the reading proficiency, an Oxford Placement test for reading comprehension was administered. The results showed that the experimental and control groups were homogeneous regarding their reading proficiency.

The experimental group took the 'Reading Interest Survey' in the form of a questionnaire which aimed to identify their interest areas. Using the survey, the level of interest of the students in the experimental group as to each of the 5 general topics of the course book, *Cause and Effect*, was determined. The results revealed that the students were most interested in the topic, 'health,' which was the last section in the textbook, with five lessons around the topic. After that, all learners were taught five units by the same teacher in separate classes. For the experimental group, the lessons were selected and taught based on the students' interest. On the other hand, for the control group the units were taught as listed in the book, that is, the teacher did not impose any changes in the order of teaching the lessons. To avoid the possibility of having different results because of teaching different texts, prior to teaching, the selected texts were judged by four EFL experts. They agreed that the materials were mainly at the same level of difficulty.

In the last session, the participants' interest level in the L2 learning setting was determined using the Weber, Martin, and Cayanus's (2005) interest scale, known as the "Learner Empowerment Scale" (LES). The Persian-translated versions of the scale were provided for the participants so as to remove any problems in understanding its items. In addition, all participants took an achievement test in the final session. The aim of the test was to find any probable differences between the participants in terms of learning the course materials when teaching was interest based.

Instrumentation

The data, used in this study, were collected through the following tests and scales.

The Oxford Placement Test

The Oxford Placement Test is a generic and standardized test frequently used to determine the test takers' reading level. In this study, it adapted to the participants' ability level, and presented them with 20 items that were at their appropriate level of difficulty. The test was actually used to ascertain the participants' homogeneity concerning their reading proficiency.

The Language Achievement Test

This 36-item test, developed on the taught materials, was used to measure the students' achievement of the course materials. The test reliability was examined by the researcher using the test scores of the present study. The scores showed a high level of internal consistency reliability ($\alpha=0.894$) for the test. The validity was verified using expert judgment.

The Reading Interest Survey

This survey form was employed to identify the participants' interest areas. It was to allow the researcher to determine the interest level of the participants, and provide readings tailored to the students' topical interest. The scale comprised five general topics included in the textbook along with the lesson titles that were used in a survey form to find the learners' interest to each topic area. To develop this scale, the form and template of the Reading Interest Survey by Heilman, *et al.* (2010) were exploited. The scale was reviewed by four experts in L2 teaching research. They confirmed it as valid and appropriate to be used for the purpose of the study.

The results of the survey showed that the lowest mean (2.76) was for the topic of 'world issues,' but the highest (3.8) for 'health.' This revealed that the students in the experimental group were more interested in the topic, 'health,' which was the last section in the textbook.

The Learner Empowerment Scale (LES)

This scale, developed by Weber *et al.* (2005), was used to examine the students' interest level. The LES is an 18-item instrument containing three subscales to measure students' perceptions of the meaningfulness, impact and competence. Weber *et al.* (2005) identify these subscales as the dimensions of student interest. The scale reliability level was 0.91. Besides, its reliability and validity with Iranian EFL learners had been verified by Amiryousefi (2016). This survey was employed to explore the possible differences between the learners concerning their interest changes.

Results

The first research question involved how well selecting materials based on learners' interest areas impacts their interest in L2 learning setting. To answer this question, the data obtained from the Learner Empowerment Scale (LES) were analyzed. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics related to LES.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics Related to LES

	N	Mean	Std.	Std. error means
Experimental group (G1)	30	3.95	0.34965	0.6384
Control group (G2)	30	3.56	0.3949	0.0721

As shown in Table 1, the mean score for the experimental group was 3.95, which was higher than the mean score for the control group, 3.56. To examine the significance of the difference, an independent samples t-test was used. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2
Independent Samples T-Test for LES

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	0.15	0.7	4.019	58	0.00
Equal variances not assumed			4.019	57.161	0.00

Note: LES= Learner Empowerment Scale

As shown in Table 2, the level of significance in Levene's test was 0.7, which was higher than 0.05 suggesting no significant difference between the score variance of the two groups. Thus, the test for equality of means was conducted on the achievement test scores. The level of significance was 0.00, lower than 0.05, indicating a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. The difference showed that the experimental group had experienced a higher level of student interest as a result of interest-based teaching.

The second research question addressed whether personalizing instructional materials based on learners' interest could predict their learning the course materials. To provide an answer, the achievement test mean scores were compared. The descriptive statistics related to the achievement test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics Related Achievement Test

Tests or Scales	N	Mean	SD	K-S	Sig.
Achievement test (G1)	30	17.1	1.688	1.149	0.143
Achievement test (G2)	30	15.566	3.126	1.061	0.205

To ascertain the significance of the difference observed between the mean scores, the test for equality of variances was conducted on the achievement test scores of the two groups, followed by the test for equality of means. The results related to the achievement test are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-Test for the Achievement Test

	Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	6.928	0.011	2.364	58	0.021
Equal variances not assumed			2.364	44.599	0.023

As shown in Table 4, the level of significance in Levene's test was 0.01, which was less than 0.05 suggesting a significant difference between the variances of the scores. Thus, the level of significance of independent samples test with equal variances not assumed was used for analysis. It was 0.02, which was less than 0.05. Thus, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the achievement test. Simply stated, the experimental group had performed significantly better than the control group in learning the course materials.

The third research question sought to find whether there was any significant difference in terms of the interest between the learners with higher and lower L2 reading proficiency in learning the course materials. The initial requirement was to divide the participants in the experimental group into two groups, learners of high reading proficiency and those of low reading proficiency. The learners' early reading proficiency test scores were used for this purpose. Based on this division, 16 students, scoring higher than the measure line, were identified as higher-level learners and 14 others as the lower-level ones. The achievement test scores of the identified learners in the two groups were sorted out separately. The means of these scores were considered for analysis. The descriptive results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of the Achievement Test for Learners of Different Reading Proficiency

	N	Mean	Std.	Std. error means
Learners with higher L2 reading	16	17.178	1.833	0.410
Learners with lower L2 reading	14	17	1.568	0.435

For further analysis, the test for equality of variances was first conducted on the achievement test scores of the two groups. The test was then followed by the t-test for equality of means. Table 6 shows the related results.

Table 6
Independent Samples T-Test for the Achievement Test for Learners of Different Reading Proficiency

	Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	1.027	0.32	-0.925	28	0.363
Equal variances not assumed			-0.975	27.306	0.338

As seen in Table 6, the level of significance in Levene's test for equality of variances was higher than 0.05, indicating a lack of significant difference between the variances of the scores. Thus, the level of significance with unequal variances was used for analysis. It was higher than 0.05, implying that there was no significant difference between the groups' means in the achievement test.

Discussion

This study set out with the aim of examining the impact of IBLT on L2/FL learning. The study was designed to follow three objectives. An initial objective of the project was to determine the effect of the interest-based selection of instructional materials on the development of interest in an L2 learning situation. In addition, the study sought to uncover whether interest-based language teaching can assist learners in learning the materials. Moreover, it inquired whether there were significant differences between language learners with different L2 reading levels in their achievement in L2 reading, when the materials were interest-based.

With respect to the first research question, it was found that IBLT can improve learners' situational interest in their L2 learning experience. The results can cast support to the earlier findings (Celik, 2010; Eddy-U, 2015; Mazer, 2013; Walkington, Sherman & Howell, 2014; Weber *et al.*, 2005) supporting the role of interest as a strong factor in language learning by providing learners with heightened attention and desire which in turn could lead to more learning. A possible explanation for the improvement in the students' interest level may be that when the instructional materials are interest-based, the learners become more willing and attentive in their learning. Due to such feelings of readiness which make the class more appealing, learners get involved in the attempt to learn the assigned materials (Heilman *et al.*, 2010; Lee & Pulido, 2017; Reber *et al.*, 2009; Walkington, 2013). The results, hence, suggest the need for the instructional materials to be selected and arranged to involve topics and tasks associated with the learners' interest areas. The results also suggest the need for the material developers and teachers to provide language learners with materials that assist them to eagerly maintain their effort to learn

with a heightened interest level. Therefore, with an increased level of interest, as the results of this study disclose, learners are more likely to be highly motivated, interested and attentive. It is imagined that such a state of attentiveness can contribute to their learning of prescribed or required instructional materials. This view is consistent with the argument that interest can influence students' motivation for learning, involvement with the learning tasks, and educational achievement (Amiryousefi, 2016; Dörnyei, 2014; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011; Mazer, 2013). As a consequence, such an involvement is thought to be assisting learners in their effort to learn in a highly positive affective state.

The second question of the study sought to determine if IBLT could improve learners' L2 reading. The results indicate that IBLT assists L2 learners in L2 reading. These results are, to some extent, in contrast with the conclusions reached in some other investigations, such as the study by Sadeghpour (2013) who found no significant influence of interest on immediate recall and delayed recall of readings for Iranian EFL learners. Similarly, the results seem inconsistent with the findings of the studies by Carrell and Wise (1998) and Joh (2006) who reported no significant impact of topic interest on the learners' L2 reading comprehension, whereas the results of the present study showed an improvement in learning as a result of using the interest-based teaching.

The findings of the current study generally give support to the idea of Eddy-U (2015) and Myers and Claus (2012) who argue that learning in L2 settings is influenced by some immediate and situational factors such as the role of the class atmosphere, classmates, and teachers (Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016). The results further seem to be in agreement with Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) involvement load hypothesis, because they confirm the role of motivational and cognitive factors in improving L2 vocabulary learning and reading. Concerning the role of interest in improving learners' performance in text reading in L2 class, the results are also in line with those of previous studies (Ebrahimi & Javanbakht, 2015; Eidswick, 2010; Magliano *et al.*, 2011; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996). The results of the current study are likely to be related to the idea that situational interest improves learners' performance by providing them with higher motivation and attention in the L2 class which can possibly facilitate learning (Ebberts, 2011; Hidi, 1990; McDaniel *et al.*, 2000). The results may be justified by the argument that interest can help boost class dynamics, because learners may come to see that heightened level of interest and, as a consequence, enhanced motivation assists them to stay in a state of attentiveness which can further change their learning to be more efficient (Celik, 2010; Hidi, 2001; Renninger & Hidi, 2002). Besides the heightened attention, the results of the present study can be justified by the respect learners may experience because of the change they encounter in the material selection, which may sound as a more efficient trend than the one previously used. This can result in the emergence of a feeling of importance and significance in learners, hence enhancing their struggle to learn more. This view seems to be consistent with the idea of Hidi and Renninger (2006) who believe that interest is described by learners' feeling of self-efficacy and their setting goals. The improvement seen in the performance of the learners in L2 reading can possibly go back to the novelty or surprise they possibly feel. The learners, in other words, seem to be used to a customary procedure of teaching where changes rarely take place because of varied reasons like the lack of permission for teachers by teaching officials, or the policies of the educational system (Guya, & Izadi, 2002). In most cases, language learners in this country do not face novelties (new techniques, methods, strategies) in their learning experience in terms of tasks, materials, syllabuses, and teachers.

The improvement that appeared in the learning outcome as a result of the heightened situational interest level can also be explained by the idea that the attention and desire resulting from such increase in interest can possibly bring about facilitated learning for EFL learners. To put it simply, learners usually learn more readily when they are intrinsically motivated to learn (Celik, 2009; Stevens, 1980) because it appears that they consider the context to be consecutively stimulating.

Learners, when filled with a higher interest level in an L2 class, come up with successful learning as a result of being more attentive and respectful to some immediate elements in the teaching context, such as the teacher, materials, and classmates. Furthermore, it seems that a heightened interest level could motivate the learners to struggle more in their learning. Consequently, with a higher level of interest, learners also tend to be more diligent and effortful in their learning.

Lastly, the results of the current study did not detect any evidence for significant changes across learners of different L2 reading proficiency levels when the teaching became interest-based. In other words, the results illustrated no significant interaction between interest and L2 reading proficiency. This may indicate that the effect of IBLT on L2 reading stays stable across learners with high and low levels of L2 reading proficiency, because interest seems to have worked similarly for all learners. The absence of such interaction may be related to the students having some similarities such as majoring in the same field, coming from the same region and having nearly the same age. The results are less likely to be supported because as Lee and Pulido (2017) maintain, there is a lack of empirical L2 research examining the nature of the interaction between the variables of topic interest, L2 proficiency and vocabulary learning through reading. Clearly, the results suggest that when learners with high and low L2 reading ability experience interest-based materials, they have a similar performance in their learning. However, the results are supported by some previous studies (e.g., Lee & Pulido, 2017; Stevens, 1980) which focus on the role of interest both in L1 and L2 learning and confirm a lack of significant interaction of interest and L2 reading proficiency. In the meantime, the findings differ from the results revealed in a few studies (Bray & Barron, 2004; Stevens, 1980; Walker, Noland & Greenshields, 1979) which reported that lower and higher proficiency learners performed differently in comprehending the texts involving different levels of interest. They are also inconsistent with the findings of Endo's (2010) L1 research, indicating that topic interest significantly affected higher proficiency students' vocabulary gain, while it had no effect on lower proficiency students' gain. Consequently, further research is certainly required to be conducted to show more concrete and precise results concerning the relation among student interest level, L2 reading proficiency, and learners' performance in different aspects of L2 learning.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to determine the effect of IBLT in generating learners' interest in L2 learning. The second aim of this study was to investigate the effects of learners' interest on L2 reading. Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that IBLT has positive effects in L2 learning and leads to interest development for the learners in L2 learning situation. It also revealed that IBLT can improve learners' performance in L2 reading comprehension. Furthermore, the current research showed that there was no interaction between interest and L2 reading proficiency in L2 reading.

In general, therefore, it seems that IBLT has the potential to improve the direction and nature of L2 learning through enhancing learners' interest and providing opportunities for more customized, controlled and desired learning. Taken together, based on the results, there could be some implications for the field of L2/FL teaching. It is highly suggested that language learners' interest level should be considered as an effective variable, which could act as a force that can positively assist language learners in their learning tasks. Therefore, schools, teachers, syllabus designers and other decision makers in language teaching or education should seek to discover and employ the ways that can enhance student interest in L2 learning situations. Also, learners' individual or group traits should be closely considered by using more personalized and interesting instructional materials. With the rapid growth in technology these days, it will not be difficult to select instructional materials based on learners' interest. It is worth suggesting that teachers should

notice the efficiency of their support given to learners in triggering interest in language learning settings (Hidi, 2001; Renninger & Hidi, 2002; Schraw & Lehman, 2001). Furthermore, considering the key role of heightened interest in L2 learning, decision makers in language teaching profession are suggested to provide learners with instructional materials that can enrich their interest in the L2 learning settings. In reaching this goal, language teachers' impressive potential in contributing to the selection of instructional materials, and particularly their serious role in the implementation of the designed syllabuses should be fully taken into account.

Further research is required to establish the crucial role interest can have in language learning. Further investigation is needed to determine the effects of IBLT in other areas and skills of L2/FL teaching. Also, more studies are needed to investigate possible differences between learners concerning their gender. In addition, it is required to study the factors triggering interest in L2/FL learning situations, because student interest is a complex and multi-dimensional construct (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Schraw & Lehman, 2001). Hence, research into the factors generating such construct can assist the field experts, material developers and teachers in promoting it in L2 learning settings, which can help improve L2/FL learning.

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