The Importance of Paired Texts and Text-Type Order on Korean EFL Students’ Reading Comprehension

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It is apparent that extensive reading and print exposure is important in enhancing reading comprehension. This study further investigates how much text type impacts reading comprehension by examining the relationship between reading comprehension, paired texts, and text type order. Thirty-eight Korean EFL high school students read two paired texts in different orders and then took a reading comprehension test. The text-types used were expository and narrative, and the purpose of the study was to analyse if there was an effect on text type order and reading comprehension. This study also sought to find if there was a gender effect for the different text-types. The findings indicate that text type order does have an impact on reading comprehension and that reading a narrative text prior to an expository text improves students’ reading comprehension.

I. INTRODUCTION

Exposure to text is necessary for reading comprehension (Stanovich et al., 1996). Thus, reading of vast amounts of texts should have a positive impact on one’s reading ability. A large number of studies have found that extensive reading (i.e. reading large quantities of texts) has a positive impact on readers’ reading ability (Abdellah, 2013; Chen et al., 2013; Lemmer, 2006; Morgado, 2009; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011). Echols et al. (1996) points out that, “print exposure [extensive reading] can account for individual differences in cognitive growth in the verbal domain” (as cited in Grabe, 2009, p. 316). Since exposure to text has a positive effect on reading ability,
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Reading Comprehension

Before defining the different text types, it is important to first discuss what constitutes as reading comprehension. Grabe (2009) explains that, “[c]omprehending a text, or main-idea comprehension, requires the ability to identify main ideas in the text, integrate them into a text model of reading, and develop an appropriate situation model of reader interpretation” (p. 198). In the past, the simple model of reading was considered to be the key to understanding reading comprehension which focused on the importance of decoding skills and comprehension (Gough and Turner 1986, p. 9). However,
identifying a student’s ability to read and comprehend a text is much more complex.

One important thing to note when talking about comprehension is that there are different purposes for reading. Students could be reading to search for information, to have a quick understanding, to learn, to integrate information, to evaluate, critique and use information, or for general comprehension. These various purposes have an impact on the strategies used when the reader is comprehending the text. For example, if someone is reading to search for information they will scan and skim the material to find the key points quickly (Grabe 2009, p. 8). If a reader is reading to learn they will be expected to find, remember, and recall the main ideas in the text and often the reader will organize the content and connect it to their prior knowledge (Grabe 2009, p. 9). On the other hand, someone reading for general comprehension is usually reading for their own interest, and comprehension often occurs automatically (Grabe 2009, p. 10). It is important for researchers to consider what purpose their participants are reading for.

In addition to reading purpose, it is important to know that reading requires a variety of skills. In order to comprehend a text the reader needs to possess a combination of both lower-level and higher-level processing skills. Lower-level processes include working memory, word recognition, syntactic parsing, and meaning encoding, which when automatized become crucial to fluent reading (Grabe 2009, p. 21). Lower-level processing is related to bottom-up approaches. Carroll (1964) defines bottom-up as “...the activity of reconstructing... a reasonable spoken message from a printed text, and making meaning responses to the reconstructed message that would parallel those that would be made to the spoken message” (as cited in Hudson 2007, p. 34). Essentially, it means that through using lower-level skills such as phonics and word recognition the reader slowly pieces together information building up to an overall understanding of the words on the page. Higher-level processes include text-model formation, situation-model building, inferencing, executive control processing, and strategic processing (Grabe 2009, p. 21). These processes usually incorporate top-down comprehension strategies. Top-down strategies include predicting, sampling, confirming, and correcting (Hudson 2007, p. 37). Essentially, readers “use
their knowledge of syntax and semantics to reduce their dependence on the print and phonics of the texts” (Hudson 2007, p. 37). Thus, they use their prior knowledge to make guesses and navigate through the reading. Younger learners often use the bottom–up method for comprehension due to their limited set of background knowledge and experience. Thus, they start from the basics of the texts and move upwards. However, older learners are able to use top–down since they can use their background knowledge to comprehend the material (Grabe 2009, p. 57). Since this study focuses on older learners (Korean high-school students), it is important to elaborate on some of the higher–level processes.

The text model process is when the reader is continuously connecting the information in the text and creating a network of ideas (Grabe 2009, p. 40). Some of the processes include, “linkages into a network, overlap of elements, suppression of less important information, simple inferencing, and summary restructuring” (Grabe 2009, p. 42). Thus, the reader is trying to understand the text in itself. After understanding the text, the reader will then build a situation model of interpretation (Grabe 2009, p. 43). As Singer and Leon (2007) define it, “the situational model refers to the understander’s representation of the circumstances to which a discourse refers” (as cited in Grabe 2009, p. 43). In other words, it is the reader’s ability to interpret the text using past experiences and knowledge. In the case of L2 learners they will often switch to the situational model rather than the text model if the text is too difficult or contrary to the reader’s existing knowledge (Grabe 2009, p. 49). Thus when researching comprehension it is important to choose texts that are of the appropriate reading level. Some reading strategies that can be used for comprehension are summarizing, forming questions, answering questions and elaborative interrogation, activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, using text–structure awareness, graphic organizers, and inferencing (Grabe 2009, p. 209–213).

To summarize, students, especially L2, need to have a strong combination of both lower and higher–level skills in order to master reading. The purpose of reading also has an impact on what methods students use. Exposure to text is crucial to developing strong skills (Grabe 2009, p. 57). However, not just exposure, but also the type of text being read will have a
huge impact on main idea comprehension.

2. Text–Types and Their Differences

The two text–types this paper will be referring to are narrative (fiction) and expository (nonfiction). As mentioned previously, when it comes to reading comprehension, schema, vocabulary, and the reader’s motivation all contribute (Abdellah, 2013; Chen et al., 2013; Garcia, 2003; Lemmer, 2006; Morgado, 2009; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011; Snow, 2002). However, there are differences between expository and narrative texts in terms of these influences, as well as in terms of content, purpose, and the reader’s ability to comprehend the given text. Grabe (2009) notes that, “research has shown that expository and narrative texts impose different types of demands on readers” (p. 11). First, each text has different functions and features. According to Grabe (2009), narrative texts contain, “narrative settings and appropriate descriptions, conflicts, episodes, and conclusions. [Readers] expect much of the text development will be motivated by causal sequences, episodes following a time sequence, and many required interpretive inferences” (p. 249). Unlike narrative texts, expository texts are, “less bound by background knowledge and personal experience” and are “used to introduce new information” (Grabe, 2009, p. 250). Past studies have found that students are more familiar with narrative text structures since they are often exposed to this text type from a young age (Duke & Pearson, 2002). As a result it would be logical that students would have a better understanding of narrative texts rather than expository.

In addition to the different purposes of the two text–types, they have also been found to contain different vocabulary (Gardner, 2004; Hwang, 2010). This is important since vocabulary has been found to be a strong indicator of reading comprehension (Chen et al., 2013; Morgado, 2009; Stanovich et al., 1996). In Gardner’s study (2004), narrative texts were found to have more general high frequency words than expository texts and expository texts were found to contain more specialized words than narrative texts. This finding could suggest that for general English language learning, narrative texts could be more beneficial, and expository texts could be more beneficial
for English learning for specific purposes. Many studies have found that narrative texts tend to be easier for readers because they are less lexically challenging than expository texts (Best, Floyd & McNamara, 2008; Coté, Goldman, & Saul, 1998; Gardner, 2004; Nation & Waring, 1997; Saenz, & Fuchs, 2002). For adults, this narrative ease might be attributed to the fact that adults tend to have a strong understanding of narrative text structure (Duke & Pearson, 2002). However, in Caswell and Duke’s study (1998), it was found that expository texts were less challenging for readers. This difference might be attributed to the different skills needed to read texts. In Best, Floyd and McNamara’s study (2008), differences were found between the skills the participants used when reading the different text-types. These differences determined the reading comprehension results (2008). The reading comprehension results for the narrative text were influenced by the participants’ decoding skills, whereas the expository text results were influenced by the reader’s schema (Best, Floyd, & McNamara, 2008). As mentioned previously, schema positively contributes to reading comprehension (Best, Floyd, & McNamara, 2008). Moss (2014) suggests that expository texts can help build schema, which can help improve comprehension. Although it appears that, in general, narrative texts are easier to comprehend, other studies have found the opposite. Thus, each text type has different strengths and is beneficial in different ways, thus making them both important for enhancing reading comprehension.

One factor that tends to influence reading comprehension is reader attitude and motivation (Schiefele, 1996, 1999). Grabe (2009) notes that, “motivationally, it is well known that stories [narrative texts] have greater potential to captivate and involve the reader in situations and conflicts that resonate with the reader’s interests. Expository prose engages readers with examples, facts, details, and graphics, but such an array of details can often overwhelm poorer readers with information overload” (p. 250). In terms of motivation and text type, there have been contrasting findings. Some studies have found that students are more motivated by expository texts (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Duke, 2010). However, Mott et al. (1999) believe that narrative texts have great potential for developing the reader’s intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, reading narrative texts has been found to motivate readers to
do further individual research on the topic being covered (Allen, 2000; Bomer, 2011). In Edmunds and Bauserman’s study (2006), they found that depending on the text type different factors affected the reader’s motivation. For narrative texts, personal interests and the book’s characteristics were found to be most influential to readers’ motivation. As for expository texts, motivation was based on knowledge and personal interests (Edmunds & Bauserman 2006). Thus, there are differences between readers’ reasons and motivation for reading narrative and expository texts that could also influence readers’ reading comprehension.

Another factor that might contribute to the differences in reading comprehension between the two text-types is gender. There has been debate and contradicting findings about the gender differences between expository and narrative texts. One of the general findings is that girls tend to have more exposure to and enjoy fiction more than boys (Tepper, 2000) and boys tend to read more and to prefer expository texts (Barrs & Pidgeon, 1994; Moss, 1998; Young & Brozo, 2001). Caswell and Duke (1998) studied male participants and found that expository texts were easier for them to comprehend. Unfortunately, the study did not examine female participants giving no comparison to analyse. Another study by Coles and Hall (2002) found that both girls and boys were more likely to read narrative texts than expository texts, which contradicts past findings supporting the male preference of expository text. Furthermore, other studies found that for children there is almost no gender difference at all, and that the text type preference varies, depending on the individual (Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish & Shapiro, 2007; Kletzien, 1999). Thus, the relationship between gender and text type is unclear and should be researched further.

In conclusion, there are differences between text-types in terms of motivation, content, gender and reading comprehension. As a result, not only extensive reading, but also choosing appropriate texts, has an important impact on one’s reading ability. In some situations, either narrative or expository texts could be more beneficial to the reader. However, they both have different strengths and weaknesses and are both important for reading comprehension. As a result, paired-texts instruction and paired-texts reading may be an ideal solution for enhancing the readers’ comprehension.
3. Paired Texts and Reading Comprehension

Reading of either expository or narrative texts has been found to have different benefits and effects on reading comprehension. Thus, both text-types have their own important features and neither should be excluded in teaching and reading practice. As Coombs (2013) explains, “...rather than positioning these texts as competitors in the classroom, teachers and librarians should seek out ways to use these texts in complementary ways, harnessing their symbiotic potential to support student learning” (p. 14). The above paragraphs also highlighted the importance of schema, vocabulary, and motivation for reading comprehension. Soalt (2005) mentions that all of these three things can be, “improved by teaching units of study that contain fictional and informational books on the same topic” (p. 680). Paired texts would seem to be a logical step toward strengthened reading comprehension.

According to Camp (2000), “paired texts [also known as texts sets or twin texts] is when you pair two texts [narrative and expository, expository and expository, etc.] about or related to the same topic” (p.400). Frye, Trathen, and Wilson(2009) stated that, “Pairing fiction and nonfiction is an effective method of enhancing students’ reading comprehension, boosting students’ interest and engagement, and expanding their knowledge and imagination” (p. 16).

Previous studies have found that reading fiction and nonfiction books improves reading proficiency (Camargo 2006; Taberski 2001; Walter & Fahler 2008). Thus, even if the different texts types are not on a related topic, they can still help facilitate proficiency. The study of paired texts is still new, but many scholars are beginning to contribute to this topic, and have found a positive relationship between paired text reading and reading comprehension. Reading paired texts has been found to help increase content knowledge as well as critical thinking (Taberski, 2001; Walter & Fahler 2008). Text-types (expository and narrative) also have effects on one another. Short’s study (1992) found that when using paired texts one text type can help learners to understand the other. As a result, the order of text type reading could have an important impact on reading comprehension. Although there has yet to be much research on this topic, it could have
important implications for teaching practice and should be investigated further.

4. Paired Texts and Text Type Order

One option is to teach expository texts prior to narrative texts. Moss’ study (2014) found that expository texts can help build schema and, since schema is important for reading comprehension, expository texts could be taught prior to narrative texts to activate background knowledge. With schema activated, the reader may be able to read the narrative text with more ease, so reading expository first could be more beneficial for reading comprehension. Grabe (2009) also mentions that an expository text: “is used to introduce new information” (p. 250). Thus, reading or teaching expository texts first could be a logical order to best enhance reading comprehension. One study that examined both text orders did not find any significant results for either pairing (Soomi, 2011). However, this study examined advanced high school students attending a foreign language high school. Thus their advanced English level might have caused a ceiling effect. Other than this study there has not been much research into these text type order pairings and further studies need to be conducted.

Expository texts could be used to introduce information prior to reading narrative texts. However, this may have a negative impact on lower level readers, since the information could, “overwhelm poorer readers with information overload” (Grabe, 2009, p. 250). Thus, since narrative is more familiar to readers (Duke & Pearson, 2002), it might make sense for readers to be introduced to the topic with an easier text prior to reading a more difficult expository text. A study by Abdellah (2013) supports the reading of narrative followed by expository texts to enhance comprehension. Although the study was not specifically on paired texts, Abdellah’s study (2013) looked at Saudi L2 ESL students who read extensively (mostly fiction) and it was found that these students had better comprehension when also reading expository texts. There was no mention of the opposite order effect. Two other studies, both on Korean EFL students, also found that when measuring text order, narrative followed by expository was more beneficial for students’
reading comprehension (Choi, 2012; Kim, 2011). Thus, according to these studies, narrative texts should be read prior to expository texts to produce the best effect.

Contrarily, one recent study on Korean high school EFL learners’ found that there were no significant differences when reading narrative prior to expository (Ahn 2015). However, Ahn’s study looked at expository and expository text pairing and narrative and expository text pairing. Thus, the study did not examine if there was any effect for the opposite order (expository followed by narrative), which might have yielded some results.

There have not been many studies done on the order of paired text instruction or reading, despite the fact that paired texts have been found to enhance reading comprehension and that many differences have been found between text-types. Reading expository texts prior to narrative texts has hardly been explored at all. However, other studies and scholars suggest that this order might have a positive impact on reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009; Moss, 2014). Additionally, few studies have supported the opposite pairing (narrative followed by expository) (Abdellah, 2013; Choi, 2012; Kim, 2011). One of the only studies that examined both text type orders failed to find any significant results between the two groups (Ahn 2015). Thus, due to the lack of research and the contradicting results, further studies need to be conducted on this topic.

The present study attempted to understand the relationship between text type order and reading comprehension of Korean EFL students as well as check for any gender effect. More specifically this study sought answers to the following three questions:

1) Do text-types have an impact on Korean EFL high school students’ reading comprehension in English?

2) Does the order of reading different text-types on the same topic have an impact on the students’ reading comprehension? If so, which has a stronger positive influence?

3) Is there any relationship between gender and reading comprehension of text-types?
III. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The final participant size was 38 Korean agricultural high school EFL students who were in their second year. The size of the participants was reduced in order to balance the reading comprehension level of the students. Two classes were examined with a total of 19 male and 19 female students, who had an average age of 17. Each class had 19 students and was gender balanced (class one had 10 female and 9 male students and class two had 9 female and 10 male students). These two classes were chosen because of the balance between female and male students. The balance of male to female students was important to have to test for a gender effect. The students’ English level was lower than the average Korean EFL high school students’. This is because the students were attending a specialized agricultural school. Most students at this school do not prepare for the Korean college entrance exam, and thus English is not as emphasized in the school system. However, the school did have an exchange program and the students were learning English for this purpose. This study investigated a lower level English group so that the texts would not be too easy, in order to avoid a possible ceiling effect (Soomi 2011). In one week the students receive two English classes that are 50 minutes long. One class was being taught by a native Korean speaker and the other by a native English teacher. The students’ English reading textbook had a balance of expository and narrative readings. However, they were often not on paired topics.

2. Procedure

Treatment. In order to test if there was a difference between text type order and reading comprehension, students were given two texts (one expository and one narrative) to read in different orders. The first class was given the expository text followed by the narrative text, and the second class received the opposite treatment. The students were given 10 minutes per reading and the texts were taken away after the allotted time. After the
20 minutes were given for reading, the students were given 15 minutes to write the multiple-choice reading comprehension exam.

**Texts.** Two paired-text sets were chosen on the topic of “pocket parks. When asked, no one reported having prior knowledge about this topic. A sample of readings from the class textbook was taken to get an average Flesch–Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 4.9 and a Reading Ease Level of 83. Based on teacher feedback, two texts that were Flesch–Kincaid Reading Grade Level 3.9 were used. The narrative text, “A Park for Tiny”, was a slightly lower level text than the expository text, “Pocket Parks”, so the text was edited to increase the readability score. The narrative text was 375 words and had a reading ease of 85.4. The expository text was 317 words and had a reading ease of 84. Both texts had images removed to prevent additional factors from influencing the students’ reading comprehension. As a result, the expository text had more words added in order to explain events that might not be clear without the photos. After the texts had been edited, other researchers in the reading comprehension field reviewed them. The two texts were taken from the site Reading A–Z’s paired text section (Reading A–Z, 2015).

**Pre Evaluation.** In insuring that these two classes’ English proficiency level was not significantly different, their latest English exam scores were used. When running the t-test it was found that the students had no significant differences. The two classes’ average score on their latest English exam was 67%.

**Post Evaluation.** After reading the two texts, the students were given a 15 question multiple-choice test. The test was separated into three sections: 5 questions for the narrative text, 5 questions for the expository text, and 5 questions about the topic of pocket parks in general. Students had 20 minutes to complete the test (approximately 6.5 minutes per section). 10 questions were taken from the Reading A–Z website about each individual text (Reading A–Z, 2015) and 5 questions were created about pocket parks in general to test main idea comprehension. The questions were reviewed by
other researchers in the reading comprehension field.

3. Measurement Instrument

A 15 question multiple choice test was administered to students after the two readings. This test was divided into three sections: narrative comprehension, expository comprehension, and overall comprehension. Each section had a total of five multiple choice items with three options each. As mentioned previously, the students were asked if they had prior knowledge on the topic of pocket parks. Since students claimed to not have knowledge on the topic it can be assumed that readers were most likely reading to learn. Reading to learn often uses higher-level processes in order to identify the main ideas of the text (Grabe 2009, p.9). Thus, the test was identifying whether or not the reader possessed main idea comprehension. The idea was that the first reading would provide knowledge on the topic and the second reading would work to activate the prior knowledge and improve the recall of information (Grabe 2009, pg. 210). Cronbach’s alpha was conducted to calculate the reliability of the reading comprehension test. The reliability of the test questions was .72 for the three test items.

**Figure 1. Narrative Test Sample**

1) What’s the problem in “A Pocket Park For Tiny”?
   A) April and Jesse have no place to play with their dog.
   B) April and Jesse always fight with each other over the dog.
   C) April and Jesse do not like their neighborhood.

Due to the nature of narrative texts, the questions focused on identifying main actions and events in the story. Students were expected to be able to find items such as the overall “problem” in the narrative (see Figure 1).

**Figure 2. Expository Test Sample**

4) The lights at the “Riverfront Pocket Park”:
For the expository reading, students were taught about different pocket parks in the United States and told about each one’s features. The students were then tested on whether or not they could recall the main feature of each park (see Figure 2).

**Figure 3. Overall Comprehension Test Sample**

1) What is the main idea of a pocket park?
   A) Pocket parks are toys that fit in a child’s pocket.
   B) Pocket parks are small parks.
   C) Pocket parks are places where people park cars.

Lastly, the final test evaluated whether or not the students were able to identify the overall points from each text. For example, since each test was on the topic of pocket parks the reader would have to identify what a pocket park is (see Figure 3).

In order to prevent language problems from interfering with the student’s comprehension, difficult vocabulary was provided with a Korean translation. The teachers of the participants identified words that they believed would be too challenging and then a bilingual Korean native speaker provided translations. For example “setting” was translated to “배경(사건의 장소).” As mentioned previously, when the text is too difficult, readers tend to rely on assumptions based on their prior experiences rather than understanding the text itself (Grabe 2009, p. 49). Since the reader was learning about a new topic it was important that they relied on the text, which is why the definitions were provided.
IV. RESULTS

1. Overall Findings

When examining the overall scores, it is clear that students on average scored higher for the narrative comprehension question (3.689) and topic specific comprehension questions (3.132) (Table 1). The participants scored almost a full point lower on the expository questions (2.658), meaning they had better comprehension for narrative than expository texts. Although the results were not statistically significant, there is an apparent difference between the performances on the two text-types. This finding complements prior studies that found narrative to have more reading ease (Gardner, 2004; Nation & Waring, 1997; Coté, Goldman, & Saul, 1998; Saenz, & Fuchs, 2002; Best, Floyd, & McNamara, 2008).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Type</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.684</td>
<td>1.0162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expository</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.658</td>
<td>1.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.132</td>
<td>1.3187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Reading Order and Reading Comprehension

The two participant groups had no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores for the narrative questions (group 1: 3.6, t = -.53; group 2: 3.8, t = -.538) (Table 2). Group two had a slightly higher score (approximately 2% higher). However, there was a significant difference found (*p<.05) for the expository results. Group two (narrative followed by expository) performed better than group one (expository followed by narrative) on the expository comprehension questions (group 1: 2.3, t = -2.08*; group 2: 3.06, t = -2.09*). This means that group two scored 15% higher than group one on the expository comprehension questions. Similar to some prior studies, reading narrative first does have a positive effect on expository comprehension (Abdellah, 2013; Kim, 2011; Choi, 2012). The final
test questions on overall topic reading comprehension showed some subtle differences. Group one scored higher than group two (group 1: 3.35, \( t = 1.08 \); group 2: 2.89, \( t = 1.07 \)) by approximately 10%. Although this result was not found to be statistically significant, it would suggest that reading expository first might help with topic specific knowledge and schema. This supports Moss' (2014) finding that expository texts build schema and that could have helped with the topic specific comprehension questions.

Table 2. Reading Order & Reading Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.0954</td>
<td>-.533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                  | 2     | 3.778 | .9428   | -.538 *
| Expository       | 1     | 2.3   | 1.1743  | -2.077* |
|                  | 2     | 3.056 | 1.0556  | -2.089* |
| General Knowledge| 1     | 3.35  | 1.2258  | 1.079 |
|                  | 2     | 2.889 | 1.4096  | 1.071 |

\*p<.05

3. Text Type, Gender and Reading Comprehension

Unlike past studies, there was very little difference found between genders amongst all three of the reading comprehension test sections. For the narrative text comprehension questions, males scored slightly higher than the female participants (female: 3.58, \( t = -.633 \); male: 3.79, \( t = -.633 \)) (Table 3). Thus, males scored approximately 5% higher than females on the narrative section of the test. However, past studies have found that females tend to be more knowledgeable about narrative texts than males (Tepper, 2000). The expository comprehension results showed almost no difference between the male and female participants (female: 2.63, \( t = -.137 \); male: 2.68, \( t = -.137 \)). This is also different than expected, since males are usually associated with having a higher understanding of expository texts (Barrs & Pidgeon, 1994; Moss, 1998; Young & Brozo, 2001; Caswell &
Duke, 1998) Lastly, the general knowledge results showed that female participants scored slightly higher than males (female: 3.26, \( t = .61 \); male: 3, \( t = .61 \)). To be exact, the female participants scored approximately 5% higher than the male participants. Overall, none of the results turned out to be significant. This could be attributed to the small sample size, or the specific group of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.632</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.291</td>
<td>.610</td>
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</table>

VI. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to find the effects of paired-text type order on reading comprehension, as well as which text type was easier to comprehend for Korean EFL learners. The final question sought to discover whether there was a gender effect between text-types and the participants’ performance on the comprehension test. The text-types being evaluated were expository (information) and narrative (fiction). This study’s main findings were: (1) overall, the Korean EFL high school students scored higher on the narrative section of the reading comprehension test; (2) reading narrative prior to expository texts resulted in significantly higher scores for the expository reading comprehension section; (3) There was no gender effect found between the two text-types.

The first question tried to evaluate whether text-types have an impact on Korean EFL high school students’ reading comprehension in English. This study’s finding was that there does seem to be a difference. A large majority
of participants scored highest on the narrative reading comprehension questions, followed by the overall comprehension questions, and then the expository. Thus, this study found that narrative texts appear to be easier to comprehend than expository texts. It is logical that there would be a difference found between the text-types since they are so different in their structure and purposes (Grabe, 2009). Additionally, past studies have found complementary evidence that the narrative structure is easy and familiar to learners (Best, Floyd, & McNamara, 2008; Cote, Goldman, & Saul, 1998; Gardner, 2004; Nation & Waring, 1997; Saenz, & Fuchs, 2002). The overall comprehension questions have the second highest score. Paired texts have been proven to increase comprehension, and thus it makes sense that the overall comprehension would be one of the highest scores (Taberski, 2001; Walter & Fahler 2008). For future studies, an extra control group without paired texts could be added to test for a difference in the final overall comprehension score.

The second question this study sought to answer was whether the order of reading text-types on the same topic had an impact on the students’ reading comprehension. One of the results was found to be significant, which was that reading narrative prior to expository texts helped to improved expository text comprehension. Group two scored 15% higher on expository comprehension than group one, which shows that text type order may have an impact. The same group also scored slightly higher on the narrative comprehension section as well. Narrative is usually more familiar and easier to read and thus may have helped the readers prepare for the expository text, resulting in the higher scores (Best, Floyd, & McNamara, 2008; Coté, Goldman, & Saul, 1998; Gardner, 2004; Nation & Waring, 1997; Saenz, & Fuchs, 2002). Past studies have also found that reading narrative prior to expository texts helps to increase reading comprehension (Abdellah, 2013; Choi, 2012; Kim, 2011).

The final question looked at the relationship between gender and reading comprehension of text-types. This study did not find any significant differences between gender and text-types. Both male and female students scored near identically on each section of the comprehension test. Past studies on gender and text type have found a variety of contradicting
findings. Many studies suggest that girls tend to prefer and excel at narrative texts, whereas, boys succeed more with expository texts (Barrs & Pidgeon, 1994; Caswell & Duke, 1998; Tepper, 2000; Moss, 1998; Young & Brozo, 2001). Another study found that both genders have better comprehension of narrative texts (Coles & Hall, 2002), which was also found to be true for this study. Finally, other researchers found that there is almost no difference between text type and gender at all (Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish & Shapiro, 2007; Kletzien, 1999). Despite not finding a difference in this study, the gender effect should still be considered and evaluated in future research. The lack of results in this study may be due to the small sample size.

While print exposure is important for reading comprehension, text type also plays an important role. Extensive reading has many positive benefits (Abdellah, 2013; Al-homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Chen et al., 2013; Lemmer, 2006; Morgado, 2009; Nakanishi & Ueda, 2011). However, the types of texts used, also needs to be taken into account to help maximize students’ reading ability and growth. Each text type is different in structure and purpose (Grabe, 2009), but are both equally important, thus paired texts instruction and reading is a great solution. Past findings show that paired texts help improve reading comprehension (Taberski, 2001; Walter & Fahler 2008). This study and other past studies have also proven that text order does have an impact (Adellah, 2013; Choi, 2012; Kim, 2011).

Overall, this study complements Abdellah (2013), Kim (2011) and Choi’s (2012) past findings that reading narrative texts prior to expository does help students’ reading comprehension. Text-types and reading order do have an impact on students’ learning and comprehension and thus it will be important to factor this into future teaching practice. However, there have still been few studies on this topic and further research is still needed.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX

1. Narrative Text: "A Park For Tiny"

April and her brother, Jesse, lived in the city. April’s mom gave her a puppy named Tiny for her birthday present one year. April and Jesse wanted to play outside with their new dog. But, unfortunately, they had no place that they could bring him and so they asked their mom what to do.

“The city owns the empty lot across the street,” Mom said. “Let’s ask them if we could build a pocket park there.”

“What kind of pocket has a park?” Jesse asked. He pulled a penny out of his pocket and looked confused. “No park here,” he said.

“A pocket park is a small park that can be found in cities,” Mom explained. April and Jesse thought a pocket park was a great idea for their new dog.

“But before we begin, our neighbors need to sign an agreement paper,” Mom said.

“They need to state that they want the park, too.”

“We’ll take that with us when we go to city hall,” April said.

April, Jesse, and their Mom talked to their neighbors. Luckily, everyone agreed to signed the agreement paper. Then, Mom, April and Jessie went to city hall.

They showed a staff member the pocket park agreement paper. Mom had to fill out some other papers, as well.

“Now we have to wait for the permit before we can build the park,” Mom said. “We need the city’s approval.” They waited, and a few weeks later it arrived.

“Let’s build a pocket park!” April and Jesse yelled excitedly.

“How about asking the neighborhood to help out,” Mom replied.

April, Jesse, and their Mom talked to their neighbors again, requesting their help, and they all agreed.

The next weekend, the whole neighborhood met at the empty lot. They picked up trash and pulled weeds to make the place clean and new. They planted grass and flowers. Lots of neighbors made donations, too. Mr. Martin donated a nice bench, Mrs. Lee donated a fountain and April and Jesse painted a picture on the wall.

Everyone was very tired when it was done. They had a little party in the pocket park and the neighborhood became happier because of the new park. Even Tiny made new friends.

2. Expository Text: "Pocket Parks"

Some cities don’t have space to build big, grassy parks for people to enjoy. That’s why they build pocket parks instead.

A pocket park is like a regular park, only it is smaller. A pocket park can take up a city block. It can also be as small as a parking space.

An empty lot is a great place to build a pocket park in a city. It can take many workers to build one because
it is a lot of work.

People who live close by can help, too. They can plant flowers or trees. They can paint pictures or make donations. They can also help keep the park clean and safe. Every pocket park is different.

There are lots of different pocket parks in the USA.

Some pocket parks have nice art. At the “24th Street Mini-Pocket Park” there is lots of colorful art to see. It has a swing to play on, too. At “Riverfront Pocket Park” people decorated the pocket park with many lights. They all twinkle at night and are beautiful. An artist made a statue for the “Harriet Tubman Memorial Park”. It reminds people of someone important. Someone painted a big snake and turtle in the “Marsh Pocket Park”. They look as if they would be fun to play on.

Other pocket parks make us think of nature. At “Palet Park” there is a beautiful waterfall at the back. It also has many places for people to sit down and relax. The “Laurie M. Illumination Park” is a pocket park that has grass and a large pond. People can come here and think. Waterfall garden park is a tiny pocket park that is almost hidden in trees. People can relax and listen to the waterfall. The waterfall sound is calming.

Pocket parks can be found all over the USA. They are a great place for people to enjoy.

3. Comprehension Test: “Pocket Parks”

Reading Comprehension Quiz

학생들은 서술형 문제에 한국어로 작성할 수 있습니다.

성명: __________________________
나이(한국나이): ________________
반: __________________________
학번: __________________________
성별: 남 / 여

“A Pocket Park For Tiny” Reading:

1) What’s the problem in “A Pocket Park For Tiny”?  
   A) April and Jesse have no place to play with their dog.  
   B) April and Jesse always fight with each other over the dog.  
   C) April and Jesse do not like their neighborhood.

2) How are April and Jesse similar?  
   A) They like to sing songs.  
   B) They are both girls.  
   C) They want to help Tiny.

3) What is the effect of building a pocket park in the city?  
   A) The neighbors are tired and angry.  
   B) All the children get dogs.  
   C) The neighborhood is happier.

4) What is the main setting of this story?  
   A) a city neighborhood.  
   B) a cityhall.  
   C) a pet store.

5) After they built the park the people:  
   A) Complained.

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B) Went home.
C) Had a little party.

"Pocket Parks" Reading:

1) One of the parks has a waterfall. The waterfall sound is:
   A) Loud and annoying.
   B) Calming.
   C) Very quiet.

2) At "24th Street Mini-Pocket Park" the art is:
   A) Colorful.
   B) Really small.
   C) There is no art.

3) The statue at the "Harriet Tubman Memorial Park" has what effect on people?
   A) It causes people to remember someone important.
   B) It causes people to think that they are someone else.
   C) It causes people to start singing a certain song.

4) The lights at the "Riverfront Pocket Park":
   A) Are relaxing
   B) Make people sleepy.
   C) Twinkle at night.

5) At the "Marsh Pocket Park" someone painted a big snake and turtle. The big snake and turtle look like they would be:
   A) Dangerous to play with.
   B) Fun to play on.
   C) Good to take pictures with.

Pocket Parks:

1) What is the main idea of a pocket park?
   A) Pocket parks are toys that fit in a child's pocket.
   B) Pocket parks are small parks.
   C) Pocket parks are places where people park cars.

2) How is a pocket park different from a regular park?
   A) A pocket park has trees and plants.
   B) A pocket park is much smaller.
   C) A pocket park has places to sit.

3) Who makes a pocket park?
   A) The president makes the pocket park.
   B) The city hall makes the pocket park.
   C) The people living in the neighborhood make the pocket park.

4) Where can people build a pocket park?
   A) In an empty lot.
   B) In a basement.
   C) At a church.

5) What does the word donate mean?
   A) To keep hidden.
   B) To give as a gift.
   C) To find by luck.

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