

# Using Dogme ELT in Reading Classes<sup>1</sup>

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Received: 2019-05-25 | Revised: 2019-09-23 | Accepted: 2019-10-07

## Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of Dogme ELT on EFL learners' reading comprehension. Accordingly, 60 upper-intermediate female and male EFL learners were selected from among a total number of 92 through their performance on a piloted sample First Certificate in English (FCE) test. Based on the results, the students were randomly assigned to an experimental and control group with 30 participants in each. Both groups underwent the same amount of teaching time which comprised teaching reading comprehension based on Dogme ELT for the first group and teaching reading comprehension based on the general guidelines of the language school for the control group. A posttest (another sample FCE reading comprehension) was administered at the end of the treatment to both groups and their mean scores on the test were compared through an independent samples t-test. The result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, thereby demonstrating that the learners in the experimental group benefited significantly more than those in the control group in terms of improving their reading comprehension. In other words, Dogme ELT proved beneficial for teaching reading. Based on the findings of this study which reaffirm the results of similar studies in other countries, there seems to be ample evidence supporting the promotion and application of Dogme ELT in reading classes in the Iranian context.

**Keywords:** ELT, Innovative Methods, Dogme ELT, Reading, Course books

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<sup>1</sup> DOI: [10.22051/lghor.2019.26347.1127](https://doi.org/10.22051/lghor.2019.26347.1127)

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## Introduction

Reading comprehension is incontrovertibly a major goal in ELT, and many EFL learners focus on this skill in the learning process (Harmer, 2009; Liu, 2010; van den Broek & Espin, 2012; Yusuf, 2011). There is of course a multitude of definitions for this skill in the literature conceptualizing it from varying perspectives, all the way from a process-based to a product-based activity (Lee & Pulido, 2017; Zhao, Guo, & Dynia, 2013). Amidst this lack of unanimity, Ur (2006) perhaps provides a very comprehensive and clear-cut definition by describing reading as constructing meaning from a written text. It is thus this construction of meaning which turns this skill into a significantly difficult undertaking (Richards, 2015).

No wonder then that the discipline of English language teaching (ELT), which has hosted the rise and fall of many methods and approaches throughout its history, has never lost its focus on finding innovative and efficient procedures to facilitate and enhance learners' reading comprehension (Atai, Hashemi, & Nejadghanbar, 2018; Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Modi, 2012). One such innovation in the first year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was the introduction of Dogme ELT which won the British Council's ELT Award for Innovation in 2010. The name was adopted by Thornbury (2000) from the movement in the film industry in the 1990s known as Dogme 95, a group of Danish filmmakers (headed by Lars von Trier) whose purpose was to relieve cinema of an obsessive worry over technique and thus conceptually regenerate the industry. To this end, Thornbury criticized the over-dependence on resources in ELT classrooms where "real communication is buried under an avalanche of photocopies" (p. 2).

Indubitably, Dogme ELT – like all other pedagogical movements – is not at all exclusively engendered by a single person at a specific point of history. Quite the contrary, Dogme ELT is architected upon a rich tradition of alternative, progressive, critical, and humanistic educational theory fully embracing postmethod elements and focusing on the social nature of learning and the social aims for which languages are used. Hence, conceptualizations such as Freire's (1973) critical pedagogy, Ashton-Warner's (1963) language experience approach, the propositions of Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1995) on critical discourse analysis and language awareness, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Raymond, 2000), and Bruner's scaffolding (Sawyer, 2006) are very much traceable in Dogme thinking, not to mention the applications of task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007), whole language learning (Goodman, 1982), and an overall constructivist approach (Piaget, 1967) combined with Stevick's (1980) idealization of humanistic psychology toward learning. To this end, Dogme maintains an innovatively eclectic perspective towards classroom interaction, learning opportunities, and the social character of the language classroom as well as learner autonomy (Bryndal, 2014; Meddings & Thornbury, 2009; Thornbury, 2009).

Being a relatively newly proposed approach which was introduced at the turn of the millennium compared to the majority of innovations which date back to the years prior to its emergence, Dogme ELT has yet to be exhausted in

terms of empirical investigation and thus only a minimal number of such studies are currently available. One study conducted by Worth (2012) on learners' perspective toward Dogme ELT demonstrated that the researcher as the teacher grew a strong bond with the students by knowing their concerns and allowing them to have a voice in the class, while Xerri (2012) concluded that, although due to the strict syllabus of prospective examination he could not adhere to Dogme abundantly, the approach was applied as a means of counterbalancing the existing assessment-focused method. Ghazal and Singh (2014) investigated Dogme ELT in their native India and concluded that Dogme would be of great success in their context considering its precepts. Finally, Chappell (2014) demonstrated "the importance of teachers being aware of the types of talk occurring in their lessons, which they should be strategically managing" (p. 11).

With the ongoing need to improve reading courses all around the world in this ever-growing ecology of information and communication technology where reading and writing are becoming more and more indispensable (Kendeou, McMaster, & Christ, 2016; Saggion, 2017), and also because (to the best of the researchers' knowledge), Dogme ELT has yet to be explored in the Iranian context of teaching reading, the researchers felt a justifiable need to investigate this innovative approach in Iran. To this end, and in line with what was discussed above, the present study was conducted to test the following research question:

- Does Does Dogme ELT have any significant impact on EFL learners' reading comprehension?

## **Review of the Related Literature**

### ***Reading Comprehension***

Reading is an internal, mental process which cannot be studied directly (Chen, 2018; Zhou, 2008). In effect, this skill may be regarded as a communication mode between readers and writers since reading is actually the process of realizing and interpreting written material which enables the reader and the writer to interact with one another (Hardy, 2016; Sheng, 2000).

Thorndike's well-quoted elaboration in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (as cited in Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 1998) argues that, from an organization and analysis approach, reading is a mode of thinking which includes learning, reflection, judgment, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, selection, and inference. Reading, in its broad sense, is defined as "a combination of text input, appropriate cognitive processes, and the information that we already know" (Grabe, as cited in Nazari & Bagheri, 2014, p. 40).

In order to fully understand a selection of reading texts, a reader should be able to use the information to infer and read both critically and creatively, which means perceiving the figurative language, determining the author's aim, evaluating the presented ideas, and employing the ideas to actual conditions (Roe, Smith, & Burns, 2005). To this end, an intricate interaction of different

strategies and cognitive processes allows the reader to construct a mental representation of the written text (van den Broek & Espin, 2012).

Moreover, Grabe (2009) stated that the level of the comprehension of a text is under the influence of readers' success in interacting with the text, and the reading process engages readers in a series of stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Readers who simply comprehend texts on familiar topics, however, are less successful at comprehending texts on unfamiliar topics (Richards, 2006). This happens as the interpretations readers construct with texts beyond mere comprehension as well as the types of texts they read are affected by their life experiences and personality styles (Marashi & Mehdizadeh, 2018). More specifically, comprehension transcends mere reliance upon language processes including basic reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, sensitivity to text structure, and reading between the lines (Cain & Oakhill, 2009); quite the contrary, reading depends also on the reader's personality such as prior knowledge, working memory, and of course personality (Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2005).

Accordingly, this is how reading could be regarded as "an interactive process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency (Celce-Murcia, as cited in Rashtchi & Moazezi Fardi Moghadam, 2011, p. 162). Moreover, as readers search the existing background knowledge (sociocultural, cognitive, and linguistic), they evaluate its relevance to the available text and also utilize the discovered meanings and relationships to engage with the text (Kucer, 2005).

A brief glance at the literature of both the theorization and praxis of teaching/learning of the reading skill is vividly indicative of the continual discrepancies over the nature of reading as a psycholinguistic process and its pedagogy (Dube, Dorval, & Bessette, 2013; Tanaka, 2017). Consequently, ongoing research into this domain remains very much warranted.

### ***Dogme ELT***

The Dogme approach identifies learners themselves as the prime source of all classroom materials with learning being flourished by the experiences, beliefs, desires, and knowledge of the people in the classroom (Thornbury, 2001). This approach consists of three core precepts: teaching which is "conversation-driven, focuses on emergent language, and is materials-light" (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009, p. 8).

The first precept, i.e. conversation-driven, shows the key role of conversation in language learning but not the "quasi-communicative content of most communicative course books which diminishes the unplanned nature of real conversation" (Meddings & Thornbury 2009, p. 10). Dogme ELT focuses on language which, based on Corbett (2003) and Thornbury (2005), is not exclusively transactional, but also interactional, containing social elements such as greetings, and casual conversations which promote socialization and scaffold learn-

ing (Meddings & Thornbury). Besides, this precept shares many qualities with task-based language teaching where the teaching-learning sequence begins with fluency activity and learners' productions shape the raw material for the upcoming language-focused work (Meddings & Thornbury, 2001).

Regarding the second precept – focusing on emergent language – it is argued that learners' productions would form the “content and objectives of the language course” which is emerged from the conversational interactions among students (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009, p. 18). This is indeed pertinent to the concepts of communicative language teaching, specifically the tenet advocated by Allwright (as cited in Xerri, 2012, p. 3), “If the language teachers' management activities are directed exclusively at involving the learners in solving communication problems in the target language, then language learning will take care of itself”. This Dogme precept is of course very much reminiscent of Long's (1990) focus on form approach where a teacher's job is to direct learners' attention to the emergent language so that their natural learning capabilities would be activated (Thornbury, 2005) and “language – rather than being acquired – will emerge” (Meddings & Thornbury, p. 16).

The third precept or the materials-light concept of Dogme ELT is in line with the notion of supporting a teaching which frees the teacher from a sense of reliance on course books and technology. In fact, the teacher “frees the learning space for the kind of interactive, talk-mediated learning opportunities that are so crucial for language development” (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009, p. 12) by focusing less on the materials that do not support the formation of a local discourse community.

While being centered on the notion that students and teachers collaboratively create learning, Dogme does not rule out the use of materials (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009). The main challenge, however, is that many standard textbooks contain texts which do not engage learners cognitively or affectively (Meddings & Thornbury, 2001). As Grady (1997) and Kramsch (2000) have stated, textbooks are materialistic, showing all kinds of issues and discourse as they do not want learners to go beyond and to be involved in the learning process. Thence, the precepts of Dogme ELT and the materials-light notion in particular are perhaps very much steered toward texts which are presented as reading comprehension tasks in coursebooks (Meddings & Thornbury, 2002).

In line with Harmer's (2009) conceptualization, Dogme ELT asserts that coursebooks have texts with cultural and educational values embedded in them that are possibly not so much related to the needs of the learners, especially in EFL contexts (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009). Dogme ELT views reading texts in coursebooks as a “stimuli for production and data for contextualized language focus” (Thornbury, 2005, p. 2) and students should learn to cover the values the texts have by looking at the content of reading comprehension texts critically and to add their own linguistic and cultural viewpoints to the texts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) so that they acquire more “local texts” (Gray, as cited in Meddings & Thornbury, p. 13).

Generally speaking, Dogme ELT proposes a critical view toward the current theorization and practice of ELT and the efficiency of the methods in teaching the various language skills including reading comprehension (Thornbury, 2009). This stance is perhaps prompted by the fact that a multitude of studies in the last four decades or so indicates EFL learners' problems in reading (e.g., Brantmeier, 2003; Hudson, 1982; Johnson, 1981; Young, 2000; Young & Oxford, 1997).

To conclude, as stated earlier in the introduction section, Dogme ELT is founded upon a conglomeration of a myriad of alterative and even revolutionary ideas such as Ashton-Warner's (1963) advocacy for the entire abandonment of the textbook. The very fact that such views have been recurrently spawned throughout the decades is per se synonymous with the need and trend of constantly revisiting the essence and application of the textbook, which serves as an underlying Dogme ELT principle.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The participants of the present study were 60 adult EFL learners within the age range of 18-35 years. The sample included 24 male and 36 female learners at the upper-intermediate level of English language proficiency studying at a private language school in Tehran. These participants, who had been studying English in the same establishment for at least three years (from elementary to upper-intermediate levels), were chosen non-randomly based on convenient sampling from among 92 upper-intermediate students with respect to their performance on a language proficiency test (described below).

The test was first piloted among 30 students with similar L2 proficiency to check the reliability and item analysis of the test. Moreover, for scoring the speaking and writing sections of the First Certificate in English (FCE), both researchers participated as the raters, and a high inter-rater reliability was obtained ( $r = 0.831$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  for the speaking section and  $r = 0.901$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  for the writing section).

### ***Instrumentations and Materials***

#### ***Sample FCE test***

As explained earlier, a sample FCE was used to make sure that the participants were homogeneous in terms of their English language proficiency at the outset. The test consisted of five papers, comprising the four skills of reading (35 items), writing (two tasks), listening (30 items), use of English (42 items) and speaking (four parts). The rating scale used to rate the FCE was based on the Cambridge General Mark Schemes for this exam. The piloting of the test demonstrated a reliability of 0.92, while the item analysis that followed proved

that five items were malfunctioning and had to be removed, leaving 102 items for the final version

### *Reading comprehension posttest*

The reading comprehension section of another sample FCE which consisted of 35 questions was given to both control and experimental groups as the posttest following the course. The test was piloted first and its reliability stood at 0.72.

### *Teaching materials*

Eight reading comprehension texts were the main instructional materials used in both groups. The first four reading texts of the control and experimental groups were chosen from the books *Mosaic 2* (Wegmann & Knezevic, 2002) and *Inside Reading 3* (Robin, 2009) and were given in the form of copies to them. Moreover, the second set of four texts of the control group was selected from the same materials through the choice of students themselves during class discussions. Besides, to completely fulfill a Dogme-based approach during the treatment, the second set of the four texts of the experimental group was selected through the collaboration of the students and the teacher (one of the researchers) from different reading books, the Internet, and magazines.

### **Procedure**

Once the 60 participants were selected through the procedure described above and the two control and experimental groups were in place, the study commenced. Both groups underwent the same amount of instruction by the same teacher (one of the researchers) using the same materials throughout a 19-session course of general English, each of which lasted 90 minutes. As the whole syllabus of the language school had to be covered during this period, a total of eight sessions of one hour was allocated to reading in both groups. Eight reading comprehension texts were used for both groups, but there were two differences: first in the selection of the materials and second in the manner of presentation.

As stated earlier, the first four reading comprehension texts of the control and experimental groups were the same, chosen from the books *Mosaic 2* and *Inside Reading 3* by the teacher. The teacher became aware of the learners' interest through conversations and discussions in the classes during the first session. Accordingly, the other four texts of both groups were chosen by the students but with different procedures and approaches in the selection.

In the control group, teaching the reading comprehension texts was according to the general guidelines of the language school. The pre-reading activity was brainstorming during which the participants predicted the content based

on the pictures or titles. Subsequently, there were discussions on the topic followed by sharing ideas in the class.

The while-reading activity was reading silently and then reading aloud both by the teacher and the students. The students were asked to read either the whole text or just a paragraph of it silently and share their summaries with each other. When they read just some parts of the text, a jigsaw task was performed by completing their classmates' sections. Then, they were asked to read their own parts or a part of the text aloud to check the pronunciation of the words.

Next, the teacher read the text aloud and checked if the students remembered the vocabularies which were taught in the previous session(s). Although the students were free to use dictionaries in the class, the difficult structures or vocabularies were later checked and taught as well. Finally, the post-reading activity which was asking comprehension questions and summarizing the whole text by the students for the upcoming session was conducted.

The four reading texts of the experimental group were chosen based on the underlying three precepts of Dogme ELT (as described earlier) from different reading books, the Internet, and magazines. To begin the process, a short middle part of a text was given to the students; this is very much congruous with the materials-light paradigm. Next, the text type was discussed in the class, the students discussed what might have preceded the events or paragraphs, formulated ideas on the whole concept of the text, and even guessed a title for it; this activity was compatible with the conversation-driven precept. Subsequently, the complete original text was handed to them and they had time to check their ideas with the original text and discuss – together with the teacher – the differences, vocabularies, or any other important feature. These activities are all attempts to fulfill the precept of focusing on emergent language as they provide the learners with the opportunity to try to use their own language, i.e. allow their language to emerge. The above activity was performed by giving just the title and the summary of the text to the students. The discussion part was similar to the process in the control group but the learners were asked to write the text before seeing the original text and next compared the language features of the original text which were different from their own versions.

The above three subsequent techniques employed are recommended by Meddings and Thornbury (2009) as sample activities to ensure the application of the three precepts and are indeed effective in practice since without necessarily using an entire text – which may be too long for learners and thus disengaging/boring for them – an excerpt could be used. This excerpt selection makes the next task, i.e. asking the students to start conversations on the text, much less burdensome since the teacher does not need to design certain questions which could appeal to and motivate everyone to speak. Rather, all that s/he needs to do is ask the universally inevitable question of what probably preceded and succeeded that selected excerpt. In other words, through effectively raising the learners' curiosity regarding what came before and after the paragraph they read, the teacher is able to initiate conversations in the class



immediately. Another advantage of these techniques which are again very much in line with Dogme teaching philosophy is that giving only an excerpt and asking the learners to imagine the bigger picture stimulates their creativity. This is especially true as, in many cases, learners would come up with different conceptualizations. Naturally, these creative exchanges would most probably boost their engagement with the reading process.

As a different activity, the teacher went straight to the text and a few questions such as “What kind of a text is this? Where would you find it? Who is it addressing? What is its function? Do you agree with the underlying idea?” were discussed in the class which engaged the learners with the text. This engagement was of course emphasized with an explicit sense of criticality. In other words, the learners were encouraged to contemplate the above questions – which is recommended by many credible texts (e.g., Hedge, 2008) as strategies for critical reading – and not merely *answering* the questions. This exercise was meant to promote the indispensable critical pedagogy component of Dogme ELT aimed at raising awareness of the ideological load of texts and encouraging learners to not necessarily agree with the power structure represented often covertly in texts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995). For instance, one text used in the class was about the hype going around the world in 2012 that, according to Nostradamus’s prediction, the world would experience catastrophic events by the end of the year. Through the discussions in class, the teacher moved drastically away from the routine reading class procedure of presenting a text and working on the lexical and grammatical points of this *accepted* text. Rather, through adopting Spolsky’s (as cited in Hedge) approach of *resisting* a text, she encouraged the learners to think critically and in their own words provide their view on the probable causes of such false news and, very importantly, think about those who benefitted from them financially. Furthermore, they were asked to think how they themselves were influenced by the media and publicity in their everyday lives.

Subsequently, the text was treated first as a vehicle of information so that the students made a mental schema of the content. This involved explaining the unfamiliar words of the text. The text was then treated as a linguistic object with focus on its grammatical forms and organization; the students found this to be interesting and novel. Next, the students attempted to reconstruct the text (or part of it) in groups or pairs before comparing it with the original. The teacher helped them by extracting the keywords of the text on the board. As the last step, the students were asked to read their texts aloud.

The procedure of choosing the second set of four texts was as follows: First of all, the readings should have borne a real purpose for everyone so that, while doing different tasks in the class, different discussions could be held about the students’ concerns or interests. For example, the most interesting TV program, website, newspaper article, and headline were selected based on the talks in the class. A text was brought by a student who was chosen by his/her classmates in the previous session. From the conversations, the students needed to find information and so they accessed the material to find answers and com-

plete the information. All this was again performed in the spirit of raising critical reading among the students through encouraging dynamic discussions and living up to the spirit of being able to choose the materials themselves in class with the assistance of the teacher, who performed the role of a facilitator in this regard, and not relying on external third parties to *feed* on to them the materials. This, in a sense, is very much representative of Kumaravadivelu's (2006) *liberatory* essence inspired by Freire (1973). At the end of the treatment, both the control and experimental groups sat for the same posttest detailed earlier.

## Results

### *Participant Selection*

#### *Descriptive statistics of the proficiency test*

Following its piloting, the sample FCE was administered to 92 students. As Table 1 shows, the mean and standard deviation of the scores stood at 108.17 and 32.371, respectively.

**Table 1.**  
*Descriptive Statistics of the FCE Administration*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FCE Administration	92	45	172	108.17	32.37
Valid N (listwise)	92				

The reliability of the test in this actual administration for the homogenization of the participants stood at 0.925.

### *Dividing the Participants into Two Groups*

The 60 learners whose total scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean on the test were selected as the main participants and randomly assigned into two control and experimental groups with 30 in each. Prior to the treatment, to ensure that the two groups displayed no significant difference in terms of the dependent variable, i.e. reading comprehension, a comparison of the means of the two groups on the reading section of the FCE had to be conducted.

The descriptive statistics of the scores of the two groups appear in Table 2. The difference between the means of the two groups was negligible (22.03 vs. 22.13). Nevertheless, it was imperative to run an independent samples *t*-test.

With the two samples representing the normality of the distribution of their scores ( $0.165 / 0.427 = 0.386$  and  $0.356 / 0.427 = 0.834$ ), running the test was legitimized.

**Table 2.***Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Reading Section of the FCE Prior to the Treatment*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Exp Group	30	15	30	22.13	4.652	.165	.427
Cont Group	30	13	31	22.03	3.774	.356	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30						

**Table 3.***Independent Samples t-Test of the Two Groups' Mean Scores on the Reading Section of the FCE*

	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	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.303	.584	.217	58	.829	.35000	1.60923	-2.87	3.571
Equal variances not assumed			.217	57.5	.829	.35000	1.60923	-2.87	3.571

Table 3 above includes the results of the *t*-test run between the mean scores of the two groups on the reading section of the proficiency test. With the *F* value of 0.303 at the significance level of 0.584 being greater than 0.05, the variance between the two groups was not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances are reported here. The results ( $t = 0.217$ ,  $p = 0.829 > 0.05$ ) indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the outset. Hence, the researchers rested assured that the two groups manifested no significant difference in their reading comprehension ability prior to the treatment.

### **Posttest**

Once the treatment in each group was over, the piloted reading posttest was administered. Table 4 contains the group statistics for this administration with the mean and standard deviation of the experimental group standing at 25.30 and 4.62, respectively, while the control group's mean was 23.17 and standard deviation equaled 3.48.

**Table 4.**  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Posttest*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Exp Group	30	17	34	25.30	4.602	.062	.427
Cont Group	30	14	31	23.17	3.485	.060	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30						

### **Testing the Hypothesis**

To test the null hypothesis, the researchers conducted an independent samples *t*-test. Prior to that, the normality of the distribution of scores was checked ( $0.60 / 0.427 = 0.014$  and  $0.62 / 0.427 = 0.014$ ).

**Table 5.**  
*Independent Samples *t*-Test of the Two Groups' Mean Scores on the Posttest*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.087	.769	2.060	58	.034	1.86667	.90596	.053	3.680
Equal variances not assumed			2.060	57.8	.044	1.86667	.90596	.053	3.680

Based on Table 5, with the *F* value of 0.087 at the significance level of 0.769 being greater than 0.05, the Levene's test indicated that the variances between the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances are reported here. As demonstrated in Table 5 ( $t = 2.060$ ,  $p = 0.034 < 0.05$ ), there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest.

Thus, by virtue of the means of the two groups, it is evident that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Following the rejection of the null hypothesis, the researchers were interested to know how much of the obtained difference could be explained by the variation in the two levels of the

independent variable. To determine the strength of the findings, that is, to evaluate the stability of the research findings across samples, effect size was also estimated to be 0.53. According to Cohen (1988), this is a moderate effect size. Therefore, the findings of the study could be moderately generalized.

## Discussion

In line with the findings of previous studies establishing the advantageousness of Dogme ELT in different contexts (e.g., Ghazal & Singh, 2014; Worth, 2102; Xerri, 2102), this study too indicated that adopting Dogme ELT for teaching enabled students to engage fully in the learning process. Moreover, applying the precepts of Dogme ELT in teaching reading comprehension as the main focus of this study revealed a positive effect of the approach. As Meddings and Thornbury (2001) noted and as reconsolidated in this study, some of the merits of Dogme ELT are that it intensifies interactivity between the teacher and learners, thus helping students to be critical users of texts and also providing space for learners' voice.

Furthermore, the researchers gathered from the experimental group that when texts used in classes were relevant for them in both learning and using the context, and they were much more stimulating and meaningful for them. Moreover, accepting that the learners' beliefs, knowledge, experiences, concerns, and desires are perhaps valid content in the language classroom may give learners the opportunity to activate their inherent learning capacities. Also, as Meddings and Thornbury (2009) claimed, the materials-light approach moves learners toward being autonomous and dynamic; indeed, quite a number of the learners in the experimental group reported to the teacher that they had started reading extensively for pleasure, resulting in breaking the barriers of reading in English and, as Elley and Mangubhai (as cited in Nation & Macalister, 2010) mentioned, they managed to improve their reading comprehension skills.

Finally, a point applied to both groups which the researchers deem noteworthy here is what Guthrie and Humenick (2004) have stated on motivation-supporting practices; students' who were given choice of texts performed much better than those without this choice. The researchers observed the necessity of providing the opportunity for learners to actively opt for the reading comprehension materials which were going to be taught in classes, while the learners who used imported materials were not always motivated during the process of doing different tasks. However, it was vivid that when there was a choice provided, learning was enhanced in both groups.

## Conclusion

The results of this study were well in favor of using Dogme ELT in reading classes. To introduce this approach within ELT reading programs (or mainstream it

in contexts where it already exists), teacher training centers and institutions need to familiarize teachers with the approach.

Teachers could become familiar with the processes of Dogme ELT in reading. Through conversations and discussions in the classes, specific topics related to the raised issues could be chosen as the title of reading comprehension texts for the upcoming sessions and one of the learners would bring copies of a text on the topic extracted from different magazines, the Internet, and books for the whole class. Teachers can of course do the discussions beforehand and ask various questions to lead learners to come up with appropriate topics.

Furthermore, to facilitate the text finding process for learners, teachers could help supply sources of texts such as magazines, articles, and books in order to save time and assure the quality of the chosen ones. The key factor is opting for topics which are interesting for learners; such topics could be determined by allowing the learners to express their ideas and be in charge of the selection.

Interestingly, it was not just the students in the experimental group who benefitted more. At a more personal level experienced by the teacher, the process of teaching English through a social and dialogic procedure also increased the teacher's own awareness of conversations held in the classes and that learning can be mediated through talk, particularly one which is scaffolded by the teacher. Hence, the teacher was also a beneficiary of Dogme ELT in this particular study. Obviously, at this stage and with no further hard evidence at hand in the literature, this is by no means a claim on the side of the researchers and merely a statement of personal experience which requires substantiation. Hence, interested researchers could study the impact of Dogme ELT praxis on English teachers' professional development and general improvement.

In addition to teachers, syllabus designers and materials developers may need to familiarize learners with Dogme ELT with its effort to elude over-reliance on the textbooks and prefabricated materials; accordingly, their focus could shift to the learners' needs and communications held in classes. It is thus recommended that more malleable tasks and structures should be applied in a lesson in which students would be included in the design of the tasks and thus their learning would be enhanced. This would deter the teachers from being the monological voice in classes and facilitate the students' learning through constructing their own knowledge and thinking about various choices and alternatives possible.

In conclusion, this study was conducted under the limitation of age and sex in that the participants were only adults and the number of male and female learners was not equal. In order to ascertain whether the aforementioned variables bore an intervening effect in the course of this study and the results, the researchers suggest a replication of the study among EFL learners from other age groups and with an equal sex distribution.

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## Appendix

### Dogme ELT Handbook

Dogme language teaching is considered to be both a methodology and a movement. Dogme is a communicative approach to language teaching that encourages teaching without published textbooks and focuses instead on conversational communication among learners and the teacher. Dogme has 10 key principles:

1. **Interactivity:** The most direct route to learning is to be found in the interactivity between teachers and students and amongst the students themselves.
2. **Engagement:** Students are most engaged by the content they have created themselves.
3. **Dialogic processes:** Learning is social and dialogic, where knowledge is co-constructed.
4. **Scaffolded conversations:** Learning takes place through conversations, where the learner and teacher co-construct knowledge and skills.
5. **Emergence:** Language and grammar emerge from the learning process.
6. **Affordances:** The teacher's role is to optimize language learning affordances through directing attention to emergent language.
7. **Voice:** The learner's voice is given recognition along with the learner's beliefs and knowledge.
8. **Empowerment:** Students and teachers are empowered by freeing the classroom of published materials and textbooks.
9. **Relevance:** Materials (e.g. texts, audios, and videos) should have relevance for the learners
10. **Critical use:** Teachers and students should use published materials and textbooks in a critical way that recognizes their cultural and ideological biases.

### Merits

1. More freedom for teachers and students to conceptualize and implement more appropriate materials.
2. Students are most engaged by contents they have created themselves
3. Learners follow their own pace of learning assisted by the teacher through scaffolding.
4. Learners are freed from the ideological load inherent in textbooks generally published in the West and commercialized all over the world.
5. Dogme gives teachers and learners the possibility to free themselves from the models of teaching and learning imposed by textbook writers.
6. Conversations provide the opportunity for learners to analyze, internalize, and practice language.
7. Communication is central in the Dogme approach.