
**A Proposed Program Based on
Constructivist Teaching Approach Utilizing
Authentic Materials for Developing Writing skills
for Preparatory Students**

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Abstract:

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of using a proposed program based on constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials for developing writing skills for 1st year preparatory students. Participants consisted of thirty first preparatory students at (Al Wafaa institutes) female preparatory school in Helwaan city. Instruments encompassed a questionnaire of students' needs analysis with a checklist of writing skills. The proposed program combined with techniques of (CAAM) such as team-work, cooperative learning, and surfing internet with using the main strategies of (CAAM) as; discussion, brainstorming, note-taking, problem-based learning, solving problem, and collaborative learning. Students' writing performance was assessed using pre-post writing test with paired samples t-test, and then Cohen d formula was applied to calculate the effect size. Results showed a statistically significant difference at (0.01) level between means of scores of the pre and post administration of the writing performance test in the overall writing performance and regarding to the following skills, which are arranged according to

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the progression of each sub skill, in writing; Generating details & outcomes, using sentences with a lot of correct vocabulary, Employing varied ideas & facts, Sentences with a lot of correct vocab & spelling, Brainstorming main ideas & details, correct grammar, coherence tools & punctuation marks, and organizing ideas in introduction, body& conclusion. For instance, the current study recommends implementing authentic materials into writing activities for preparatory students in order to a greater emphasis on writing skills in parallel with reading, speaking and listening skills within EFL courses and modules of preparatory scholars by curriculum designers and developers.

Key words: Constructivist Approach, Authentic Materials, Female preparatory students.

برنامج مقترح قائم على التدريس البنائي باستخدام مواد أصيلة

لتنمية مهارات الكتابة لدى طلبة المرحلة الإعدادية

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استخدام برنامج مقترح قائم على المدخل البنائي واستخدام مواد تعليمية أصيلة في تنمية مهارات الكتابة لدى طالبات الصف الأول الإعدادي. تكونت عينة الدراسة من ثلاثين بمدرسة (معاهد الوفاء) الإعدادية للبنات بمدينة حلوان. وتضمنت الأدوات استبانة تحليل احتياجات الطالبات وقائمة مراجعة مهارات الكتابة. وتم دمج البرنامج المقترح مع تقنيات (CAAM) مثل العمل الجماعي والتعلم التعاوني وتصفح الإنترنت باستخدام الاستراتيجيات الرئيسية لـ (CAAM) وهي؛ المناقشة والعصف الذهني وتدوين الملاحظات والتعلم القائم على المشكلات وحل المشكلات والتعلم التعاوني. وتم تقييم أداء الطلاب في الكتابة باستخدام اختبار الكتابة قبل وبعد التطبيق، واستخدم اختبار t للعينات المرتبطة لقياس الفرق، ومعادلة كوهين د لحساب حجم التأثير.

أظهرت النتائج وجود فرق ذي دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى (0.01) بين متوسط درجات الاختبار القبلي والبعدي لأداء الكتابة في الأداء الكتابي العام، وفيما يتعلق بالمهارات تم ترتيبها وفقاً لتقدم كل مهارة فرعية: الكتابة؛ توليد التفاصيل والنتائج، استخدام الجمل مع الكثير من المفردات الصحيحة، توظيف الأفكار والحقائق المتنوعة، الجمل مع الكثير من المفردات والتهجئة الصحيحة، العصف الذهني للأفكار الرئيسية والتفاصيل، القواعد الصحيحة، وأدوات التماسك وعلامات الترقيم، وتنظيم الأفكار في المقدمة والمتن والخاتمة. توصي الدراسة الحالية لاستخدام المواد التعليمية الأصيلة في أنشطة الكتابة للطلاب من أجل التركيز بشكل أكبر على مهارات الكتابة بالتوازي مع مهارات القراءة والتحدث والاستماع .

الكلمات المفتاحية: مدخل التدريس البنائي ، المواد الأصيلة ، مهارات الكتابة، تلميذات المرحلة الإعدادية.

Introduction:

In the realm of education, the development of reading skill is central to academic success and cognitive growth. It is essential to find effective methods to nurture this skills. Constructivism “the cognitive paradigms” emphasizes the role of learners as active participants in dealing with texts of reading. It is the best way of comprehending knowledge based on learner’s own experiences, interaction, and reflection. It encourages learners to improve their cognitive ability progressively and build their understanding by connecting new knowledge to their existing cognitive structures. Also, authentic materials "newspapers, movies, song lyrics" that are not specifically designed for instruction, are used as key instructional means. They achieve the synergy between the real world, the school environment and activity concepts associated with it, serve to bring it into widespread use and acceptance as a constructivist instructional design concept. These dynamic processes are particularly significant in the development of literacy skills, where reading is not merely technical tasks but complex, interactive processes that engage critical thinking, problem-solving, and meaning-making.

Teaching EFL at prep schools in Egypt is still suffering from the deep defects of traditional lecturing system. (Broughton et al 994, p. 22; Scrivener, 2011, pp, 16, 17; Wahab, 2017) asserted that a typical feature of traditional methodology is teaching with deeply teacher-dominated that breaks course content into sequenced components which are presented to students through lecturing and route exercises. Accordingly, the absence of group work/project, teachers disregarding students’ preference, presenting many other negatives and although some reforming attempts have been made to change the content and design of textbooks, the methodologies and approaches employed in teaching have stayed irrelevant to those changes. The aforesaid traditional teaching encourages knowledge transmission to students without visualizing or contextualizing it; it does not approach knowledge in a critical way and does not allow students to make contestation with the information dictated to them.

Accordingly, writing lessons are conducted in a relatively monotonous way which in turn led to make EFL learners passive writers; poor at using their higher levels of thinking in writing appropriately, and having poor skills in constructing meaning. So, in our public schools in Egypt English is taught as a foreign language from primary

stage for 6 years and then in preparatory stage for three years, but unfortunately, they still have no ability to comprehend reading or construct perfect meaning or use English inside or outside the classroom. This may due to the curriculum that focuses on teaching/learning EFL writing as only answering the related exercises of lessons, monthly assessment, and the final exams. Also, teachers do not give much time for reading and writing activities and the class period does not give enough time for a student to practice reading and writing skills. In return, students are not trained to practice reading and acquiring vocabulary and expressions that can be used to construct their own meaning.

Unlike traditional instruction, constructivism often refers to student-centered, interactive, and meaning based classroom procedures. Wang (2014) maintained that constructivism supports the claim that in writing classes, teachers should use appropriate teaching methods so as to activate students' prior knowledge and direct students to establish the connection between the old and new knowledge and come to the conclusions on their own instead of being told. Knowledge construction is not extracted directly from the text; instead, it is based on students' existing information, knowledge, emotion, experience and cultural background. As a result, this study is trying to propose a program for developing preparatory stage students' writing performance through achieving these two goals "improving EFL students' performance in writing through synthesizing information from writing and link it with their prior knowledge in order to comprehend the texts and construct their own meaning. As well, utilizing constructivist and authentic materials approach (CAMA) as a way to foster students' learning styles and communicative competencies.

Besides, Qura, (2001) indicated that constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials CAMA focuses on some factors as students' previous experiences, culture and authentic materials. CAMA is a practical approach and enhances teaching writing in authentic material classrooms through applying flexible strategies "self-learning, collaborative-learning and other learning strategies that support scaffolding teaching both skills and help these skills to be used in social cultural perspectives. Besides, providing students with cultural context of the actual use of authentic language that help students improve their communication skills and directly reflect the related culture of the language.

The Problem:

In Egypt, in all the stages of education, EL is taught only as a subject in EFL classrooms, but, students still do not seem to use it inside/outside the classroom, reflecting their weakness in writing, lack of motivation and lack of participation in class activities in English. At the same time, traditional approach of teaching writing almost does nothing to improve students' ability to communicate in the language. This is mainly due to the focus in teaching English is on making students memorize and recite words and grammar rules. In writing, students should answer exercises as (matching, choosing, and correcting the word(s) after reading the text. Hence, students' weakness in writing is manifested in facing difficulties in understanding texts content, vocabulary, expressing their thoughts and showing anxiety and tension when they make mistakes with constructing their own meaning.

Studies such as; (Abdelhamid, 2010; Suleiman, 2015; El Tantawy, 2016; Makhamar, 2016, p.20) attributed the poor ability and weakness of the preparatory stage students in writing to some difficulties such as; the frequent use Arabic language in the classroom. Teachers' role is training students how to learn writing and construct their own meaning but they have not enough time to do this. Also, internal difficulties such as; students' lack of vocabulary and linguistic outcome which lead students to feeling bored and giving up writing; incorrect use of structures even if the simple components of the simple sentences; fear of making mistakes in grammar, mechanics, content, unity, cohesion, logical order and so on. Besides, the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammar, structures and the text content, unity, cohesion, logical order and so on.

Further, it is indicated that the majority EFL students often had mechanical difficulties in writing because they are used to repetition and lack of being inexperienced in practicing writing activities that led to students' inability to get correct spelling, make sentences, with grammatically accepted vocabulary, paragraph organization which result in no more free writing. This results in students' inability to actively practice activities of (pre, during, post) performance that help students activate their prior knowledge, connect it with the new experiences. In addition, "poor performance among EFL first year preparatory students in writing and their inability to do these skills with their team and teachers". So, the researcher proposed a program based on the

constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials to investigate their effect on developing students' writing skills for the first preparatory school.

Research Question:

The current study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the writing skills required for the preparatory school students?
2. What is the effect of the proposed program based on the constructivist approach, utilizing EFL authentic materials on writing skills among EFL first year prep students?

Research Hypotheses:

The current study tests the following hypotheses:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the participants of the study in the pre-post testing of their overall writing skills.
2. There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the participants of the study in the pre-post testing of their writing sub- skills.

Aims of the Research:

The study aims to develop writing skills among EFL first year preparatory students through:

1. Identifying writing skills that EFL first year students of preparatory school must acquire.
2. Identifying and preparing the proposed program based on the constructivist approach utilizing EFL authentic materials to develop writing skills among EFL first year preparatory students.
3. Studying the effect of the proposed program based on the constructivist approach utilizing EFL authentic materials to develop writing skills among EFL first year preparatory students.

Significance of the Research:

The current study is expected to be useful in many aspects as:

1. Providing a program based on the use of constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials which is expected to help preparatory students develop EFL writing skills.

2. Providing teachers with methods and strategies of constructivist approach and EFL authentic materials that help them achieve the goals of teaching English and design writing activities that attract students' interests.
3. Helping curriculum developers to plan and develop educational programs to improve the writing performance of preparatory students.
4. Supporting other researchers to conduct studies to develop writing performance in EL for students of all education stages.

Study delimitation:

1. Some skills of writing with three stages of constructivist approach and authentic materials performance "pre stage - during stage - and post stage.
2. Some strategies of (CAAM) as; team-work, Surfing internet, self-learning, and collaborative learning through problem-solving, brainstorming, note-taking.
3. A group of first year female pupils in preparatory school in Helwan.
4. A full semester of 2023-2024.

Definition of Terms:

EFL authentic Materials:

Tomlinson (2012, p. 161) defined "authentic materials" as the vehicle that provides students with meaningful exposure to the target language as it is actually used in its community, and help them develop a range of communicative competencies and enhance positive attitudes towards that language learning.

Gilmore, (2007, p. 98) indicated that authentic materials are those created for some real world purpose other than language learning, and often, but not always, provided by native speakers for native speakers.

For the purpose of the current study, authentic materials is defined operationally as a type of materials with activities that originally produced for native speakers but proved to be effective when being used for educational purposes. Authentic materials such as old receipts, tickets, brochures, and notes that are lying around most people's homes and classrooms, help learners interact with the real world. They increase students' motivation and engagement in the learning process and help them practice real language. Therefore,

Authentic Materials foster students' abilities to comprehend. They are also handy for teaching contexts that may not be well supplied with teaching materials

Writing Skill:

McDonough and Shaw (2004, P.152) defined writing as a vehicle for language practice and an attempt to communicate with the writer's ideas and thoughts. It allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and makes them visible and concrete. It encourages thinking and learning because it motivates communication and makes thoughts available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

Hedge (2001, P.302) defined writing as a complex process which includes several components that one must master to be able to independently comprehending the intended message, interact and gain meaning from written language. It is a cognitive activity which is essential for adequate functioning and to gain information in the today's communities. Besides, it is the ability and potency of learners to grasp the meaning of the written texts, text details and main ideas and activates learners to communicate with writers, understand the main ideas and details of written texts.

For the purpose of the current study, writing is considered to be therapeutic, and a helpful way to express feelings that cannot be expressed so easily by speaking. Writing is a complex process of creating text using prior knowledge and experiences because when thoughts are written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

The importance of writing skill:

In daily routine and academic life, often writing is the most basic skill for communication processes which usually one practices all his life Long. This implies that students have to learn to write either at school or through daily transactions. Writing skill may benefit students in many ways such as; being more interactive and efficient, being the best way for more practice, because it involves a rethinking, reforming the curriculum and sharing some acts as: summarizing. Also, (Hayes & Williams, 2016, p. 19) emphasized that writing as a source of information, help learners gain information about different cultures and customs. Besides, it creates a spirit of co-operation and support when reacting to the texts, discussing them, extracting ideas and thoughts, and proceeding them in planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

Further, English language has widely adapted for communication between most people around the world, the thriving cross-cultural interaction between individuals around the world and even within single cultures or education, it has produced a need for individuals to learn the ability to interact in the foreign language fluently, accurately and even quickly. For example, reading more books, newspaper, magazines in foreign language has become essential as a key elements of language learning and constructing meaning. Since, it involves a combination of knowledge of the target language with skills and techniques to use it effectively. At the same time, there is a clear need for extensive communicative skills and this includes further emphasis on improving effective and productive writing comprehension and constructing knowledge in writing. (Hirvela, 2004; Graham & Herbert, 2011).

Further, Raham and Herbert, (2011) investigated the importance of writing as a tool for learning and improving reading fluency and comprehension. They found that writing is the basis of learning and increasing the learners' imagination and creativity. Writing enables learners to gather information – in notes, summaries, and full texts that can be used, to communicate to others. Moreover, the act of writing helps the writer remember and learn the content of what is written. The explicitness of writing enables us to see the connections between the ideas in a text, examine the assumptions behind those ideas, and ask further questions. Because writing is permanent it enables us to reread it, review it, revise it and evaluate it usefulness. They also found that writing, along with reading fluently, is a necessity. It is a predictor of success in school and a fundamental requirement for full participation in civic life and in the global economic.

Current trends for developing reading skill:

Improving students' performance in writing requires them to learn through real situations and activities that promote interaction and provide them with the ability to communicate and practice that skill. The common European frame work of reference for language described the importance of engaging EFL learners in discourse task in order for them to perform communicative strategies and activities that are suitable for their awareness raising about the language. Learners should also be guided to reflect on their own communicative needs. Hence, it is for practitioners to focus on the reading learning environment in order to determine the communicative activities that could serve this purpose. (Council of Europe, 2001)

First of all, communicative activities that aim at writing practices in a social situation and linguistic expectations, play a vital role to motivate students to communicate effectively. Implementing these activities requires using specific techniques such as "planning activities"; "drafting activities"; and "revising activities". The main target of these activities as Graham & Herbert (2010) asserted is to help students discuss the topic, generate main ideas and details, organize them, and make a draft, revise and edit. So, these activities are the rich stimulus that urge students to read, and draw upon their real experience. As well, actively engagement of students to perform these activities and acquire meaningful knowledge in a stimulated real-life context, and a supportive environment. Besides, (Li & Yang, 2014, p.48; Pysarchyk & Yamshynska, 2015, p. 78; Pardede, 2017, p. 218) emphasized that reading skills are communicative and interactive processes that help students use their language knowledge effectively.

On the other hand, (Mvududu & Thiel-burgess, 2012; Seydrezaia & Barani, 2017; Holmes, 2019) clarified individuals acquire experiences through their interaction with the environment and their personal interpretation of the world. From that view, learners play an active role in constructing meaning through their engagement and participation in communicative activities such as; surfing the internet, exploring information, making inquiries, searching new meaning, generating thoughts, and reflecting on their personal findings. Besides, the strategies of doing these activities as; group work, cooperative learning, problem solving, and project based. As well, utilizing prior knowledge to analyze new information before connecting it to the previous one.

Constructivist & authentic materials approach (CAMA)

(CAMA) shares a core belief that knowledge cannot be taught but it is invented and constructed on the part of learners themselves via using technology and digital literacy that makes it easier for students to surf the internet and search for authentic materials. Also, ILPE (investigating learners' previous experience) to brainstorm ideas and thoughts related to the given topic which is selected from authentic materials. As well, several strategies such as; directed discussion (asking questions that help students grasp the meaning, extract ideas and details and engage more interactively with the text), reciprocal teaching (exchanging roles and having students take up teacher's for executing the given task), selecting authentic materials appropriate to students' interest and ability to achieve understanding, mastering reading performance, developing communicative competences, a problem based learning and cooperative learning.

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CAAM combines different types of learning as; "constructivist, cognitive, active, and experiential learning through utilizing authentic materials". (kanselaar, 2002, p. 2; Mvududu and Thiel, 2012 p.109) stated that when an approach includes constructivism, it involves two major strands "a cognitive perspective and a social cultural perspective". In a cognitive perspective, creating knowledge is greatly based on students' actively participation in their learning. In addition, any approach includes "constructivism", widely works to probe for students' level of understanding and how that understanding can increase and change to a higher level of thinking. Accordingly, implementing CAMA approach illustrates how knowledge is acquired through using authentic materials, describing the way of teaching them effectively and helping students make sense of these materials.

Further, CAAM approach uses strategies such as; "group work, cooperative learning and self-learning" that focus on students' active role in doing activities. They provide real world scenarios in order to motivate and engage students in real situations skill such as; negotiation, and persuasion. At the same time, doing these activities requires using senses of observation, reflection and selecting logical thoughts to learn, and get experiences. That's why, a student is considered as a researcher engaging in a teamwork and cooperative learning to investigate and stimulate his intellectual curiosity and broadcasting to construct knowledge. Further, educators should build school curriculum and the strategies to teach it around the students' experience and prior knowledge, taking it as the growth point of generating new knowledge and allow them to put their knowledge into practice. Thus, this greatly increases students' understanding. (Dewey and Ryan, 2011; Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess, 2012, p. 118)

(CAAM) can be described as a cluster of different approaches constructivist that utilizes authentic materials. It shares a core belief that knowledge cannot be taught but it is invented and constructed on the part of learners themselves. (CAMA) approach is based on main factors such as; using technology and digital literacy that makes it easier for students to surf the internet and search for authentic materials to be used as instructional materials. ILPE (investigating learners' previous experience) to brainstorm ideas and thoughts related to the given topic which is selected from authentic materials. As well, several strategies such as; directed discussion (asking questions that help students grasp the meaning, extract ideas and details and engage more interactively with the text),

reciprocal teaching (exchanging roles and having students take up teacher's for executing the given task), selecting authentic materials appropriate to students' interest and ability to achieve understanding, mastering writing performance, developing communicative competences, a problem based learning and cooperative learning.

Owing to CAAM combines different types of learning "constructivist, cognitive, active, and experiential learning through utilizing authentic materials", it is a valuable approach. (kanselaar, 2002, p. 2; Mvududu and Thiel, 2012 p.109) stated that when an approach includes constructivism, it involves two major strands "a cognitive perspective and a social cultural perspective". In a cognitive perspective, creating knowledge is greatly based on students' actively participation in their learning. In addition, any approach includes "constructivism", widely works to probe for students' level of understanding and how that understanding can increase and change to a higher level of thinking. That is due to, constructivism is a school of thoughts. Accordingly, implementing CAMA approach illustrates how knowledge is acquired through using authentic materials, describing the way of teaching them effectively and helping students make sense of these materials.

Further, CAMA approach uses strategies such as; "group work, cooperative learning and self-learning." that focus on students' active role in doing activities. They provide real world scenarios in order to motivate and engage students in real situations skill such as; negotiation, and persuasion. At the same time, doing these activities requires using senses of observation, reflection and selecting logical thoughts to learn, and get experiences. That's why, a student is considered as a researcher engaging in a teamwork and cooperative learning to investigate and stimulate his intellectual curiosity and broadcasting to construct knowledge. Further, educators should build school curriculum and the strategies to teach it around the students' experience and prior knowledge, taking it as the growth point of generating new knowledge and allow them to put their knowledge into practice. Thus, this greatly increases students' understanding. (Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess, 2012, p. 118)

In addition, Applefield, Huber & Moallem, (2001) stated that applying CAAM approach needs to implement other strategies such as; cognitive apprenticeships, project works, scaffolding, web quests, predicting ideas and details as well as modelling writing practices in order to greatly benefit and accelerate students' learning outcome. For instance, modelling a solution for a problem through verbalizing thoughts for having

students adopt another. Predicting ideas and details through skimming (eliciting general information ideas and concepts), and scanning (eliciting specific information from the text through picking up dates, years, names, important vocabulary etc.). As well, recognizing sentences sequences through connectors and starters like 'on the other hand', 'in spite' and 'even though' and guessing the meaning of vocabulary and difficult words.

The premises of constructivist approach & authentic materials

(CAMA) has two premises "constructivist approach and authentic materials". Constructivist approach is an epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasizing knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission and the recording of information conveyed by others. It is the most important area of knowing what knowledge is, and how it is constructed. Whereas, authentic materials which are taken from the real world and not primarily created for pedagogical reasons, are particularly important for communicative purposes since they reproduce an immersion environment and provide a realistic context for tasks that relate to learner's needs. The role of the learner in the two premises, is conceived as one of building and transforming knowledge.

According to constructivist approach, (Heard, 2007; Chaves, 2008, p. 4; Seydrezaia & Barani, 2017;, 2019) explained that constructivism assumes that learning is a personal interpretation of the world, and knowledge is constructed and developed from his experience, learning is a social activity. In this approach prior knowledge is needed for an individual to learn a longitudinal, adaptive, recursive process in which the development of meaning is more important than the acquisition of a large set of concepts or skills. Vygotsky, (1986) highlighted the role of social interaction on learning under the umbrella of constructivism. That's why, using that approach in teaching/learning reading requires EFL teachers to achieve some points as; helping students expand their capacity to read extensively, teaching students how to read not teaching them reading through some kinds of irrelevant texts which are common in EFL classrooms.

Besides, Tomlinson (2014, p. 21) indicated that the rationale behind incorporating constructivism in educational contexts is for achieving the interaction among students, and the environment that results in three goals of learning " acquisition, making meaning and transferring independent tasks and activities (AMT)". Since, CAMA includes constructivist approach and authentic materials, it aims to proactively modifying the

curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities and students' products to address the needs of individual students and small groups to maximize opportunities for each student in the classroom. It is also to equip students with essential life skills, authentic experiences and abilities required for problem solving, life beyond school and connecting school learning with real-life.

The other premise of CAAM approach is utilizing authentic materials which related to real language in the EFL classroom context. From that concept, authentic materials are as (Martinez, 2002; Kilickaya, 2004) declared "the materials produced by native speakers and for native speakers themselves". They are related to the real language, produced for social purpose of living and communication. Therefore, using authentic materials, is the "exposure to real language as it is used in its own community." That materials are also known as a stretch of real language produced by and for native audiences to convey a real message of some sort. Therefore, the main goals for designing these materials are: full filling social purposes as real life communication in the language community, solving real life problems and practicing activities of native speakers to communicate meaning. Besides, the term authentic material refers to "any written or spoken texts" which are commonly not intended to language teaching. These materials include advertisements, newspaper articles, magazines, media, brochures, pamphlets, restaurant menus and weather reports (Berardo 2006; Gilmore, 2007, p. 98)

Guariento and Morley, 2001,p. 347; Belet Boyaci, 2018, pp. 355-360) indicated that using authentic materials in EFL classrooms is effective and beneficial for various reasons such as; providing students with an opportunity to read and extract information from authentic texts with real language that the native speakers use in their interactions, promoting something new, challenge and interesting. Learners' preferring to be native speaker like in terms of pronunciation, idioms use or accent, and learning based on practice and doing, equip students with foundational skills. As well, authentic experience is required for problem solving and achieving learning goals "acquisition, making meaning and transferring independent tasks and activities". Besides, creating students' awareness of the target language through providing information about the culture of the target language, and being the most suitable means of showing the real use of English for communication rather than materials which were designed especially for teaching purposes.

Moreover, there is a general consensus among researchers in language teaching that the use of AM in the classroom is more significant for both students and teachers. For students Guariento and Morley (2001, p. 347) asserted that learners' exposure to authentic materials gives them direct contact with input data which reflects genuine communication in the target language and provide exact examples of how that language is used by native speakers. Using AM in reading instruction makes students see "the relevance of classroom activity to their long-term communicative goals" and increases students' motivation for learning as they give the learners the feeling that they are in touch with a living entity and the real language, used in the community which speaks it." In addition, using AM greatly affects students with different levels of the language because the selection of these materials is according to students' needs and interests. For such, AM helps students engage effectively in the learning process, resulting in long-lasting learning and higher source.

Types of authentic materials

There are different types of authentic materials which are at the disposal of the EFL teacher, e.g. literature, computer software, media, etc. But selecting contents to work with, is often a difficult task since EFL teachers are to bear in mind concerns as learners' interests and availability of appropriate material. The learners are generally interested in topics that have to do with their present specialized studies and future professional careers. There are plentiful sources and examples of these materials, but EFL teachers often have a hard time finding and working with relevant material because they should realize that the content of their lessons must be meaningful and the activities engage the students to use the target language to communicate rather than just imitate. These types include; newspapers, magazines, media, Brochures, pamphlets and flyers, menus, and weather Report.

Application of constructivist and authentic materials approach (CAMA):

Improving comprehension requires students to learn through real life situations and activities. These situations and activities provide students with the required experience for mastering comprehension. CAAM approach mainly depends on using activity-based and task-based learning that help students learn by practice. Thus, students can experience and interact with ideas and information through being engaged in some strategies that enable students to learn the target language by performing tasks or

practicing language in real situation. Scrivener, (2005, p. 281) stated in that activity, items of sub-activities are centered round a task which is usually real world rather than language focused. In the activity-based, meaning is primary, there is some sort of relationship to the real world and task completion has some priority.

Besides, the task should be seen as a piece of classroom work or work plan that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting. In response to that, samples of real materials (advertisements, magazines, newspapers, and others which prepared for social communication) are used. For instance, logging on to the (Train or Bus Line Website), students may find out everything about advertising tours around Europe, e.g. the following advertisement "Explore Europe effortlessly by train and bus save 61% on average when you book in advance". EFL teacher discusses the advertisement with students through pre-writing, scanning /skimming to get more information about the ad. As well, asking questions through intensive writing to decode the meaning and get the main idea, details, and vocabulary. This indicated any task based activity, has goals, input, activities, roles, settings and outcomes.

(Oxford, 2006, p. 98; Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 5) stated that goals vary from the meaning, form, forms to the real language. Students should be given opportunities to use the target language in the classroom as they use in everyday life. Accordingly, students' engagement in a task is via answering the given questions about the topic to help them generate ideas and details; extracting difficult words; using electronic dictionary for looking up the words and getting the synonyms and types of words. Teachers use "asking questions to brainstorm strategies" to urge students extract information about the topic and use that information in forming sentences of their own to summarize another topic. This improves students' abilities to think, scrutinize, practice the real language, use the organizational ability and improve language competence as; grammatical competence along with the appropriate meaning to form a text, using the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization.

Berbardo (2006) also referred to another strategies as; collaborative learning. The main aim at using this strategy is allowing students to work together with others of various talents, abilities and backgrounds to accomplish the goals and learn from each other, and widen their understanding. Each individual team member is responsible for his learning and other team members learning. (Tomlinson 2005, pp.4, 5; Tripathy, 2004) stated that this type of learning is used as means of enriching and refining students'

understanding as well as exceeding their vocabulary, phrases etc. It could create a non-threatening environment in which students can more readily take academic risks. Accordingly, when students work cooperatively together, they show increasing participation in group discussion, demonstrating a more sophisticated level of discourse, and providing more intellectual valuable contribution.

The following diagram clearly shows CAMA instruction including; whole class instruction, small groups, strategies of authentic materials that imply interactions among students, the teacher and independent students work, results in creative learning environment.

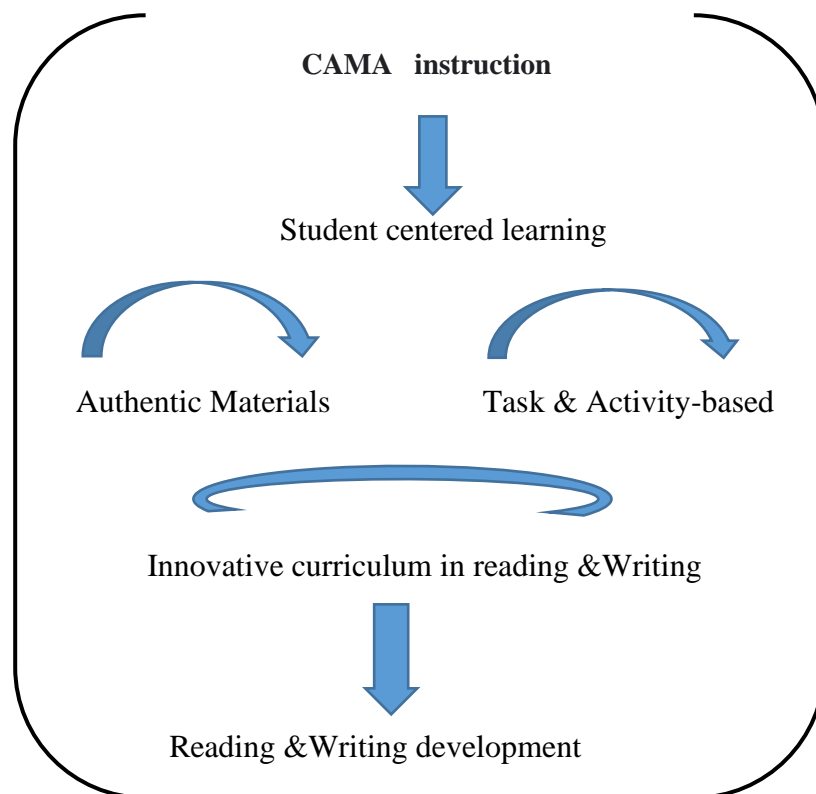


Figure (3) Creative Learning Environment design

Source: Original

Reading stages via applying CAAM approach

Reading skill works best when applied through using constructivist approach and utilizing authentic materials. (Tsai, 2006, p. 18; Miller et al., 2012, p. 4 ; Cho & Griffler, 2015; Park, 2016) have shown that reading skill is essential for human language because reading more assists students to learn naturally from context. Researches in the field of applied linguistics such as; Grabe, (2003, p.245) have concerned with how the language functions and how to utilize the language in various contexts. Reading have some complex activities "pre-during and post performances which include "free reading, organizing, outlining, drafting, and revision".

Therefore, applying (CAAM) strategies as; brainstorming, and problem-solving in doing effectively activities, help learners understand how the written discourse is organized to communicate with genre and task expectation. As well, urging readers to further practice of language and acquire a lot of information in different fields. Further, (CAAM) strategies involve previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating. Therefore, utilizing such strategies already assist students become more metacognitive readers.

Moreover, CAAM includes three stages to achieve reading performance as these stages urge students to extract the main ideas, identify supporting content and organize thoughts into a logical flow that articulates their ideas. They are:

Pre-performance:

It is students' preparations to comprehend a text through doing some activities and using "related prior knowledge" to achieve reading comprehension. Malova (2017, p. 43) indicated that reading requires students to plan by drawing on and activating their prior knowledge. It includes perception and word recognition or a mechanical aspect of reading where perceiving the right word (structure) and its pronunciation. In this stage, teachers apply some techniques as discussion to brainstorm ideas and details and reveal students' prior knowledge about the topic, determine the purposes of reading. Besides, applying some activities such as; warming up for getting an overview of the content, making predictions, get a quick sight of the text, guess the meaning through using their prior knowledge, the context, or logging on electronic dictionary. Then, paraphrasing their comprehension of the text so as to generate and organize their own connecting ideas with

prior experience that help students get a sense of the structure and content, extract main ideas, activate schemata, and think about the text in a more meaningful manner.

During-performance:

"Drafting" as Vrublevskis, (2015) indicated the recognition of the text structure, and getting supportive details from the text is called a stage of comprehension which requires the abilities of literal comprehension and interpretations. Interpretation takes the reader beyond the printed page by requiring him/her to put together ideas which the author has not explicitly related to one another in the text. As an outcome of this process, the reader is able to process information and draw conclusions. The main skills of drafting are bottom up, top down, and intensive reading and their sub skills that help students scrutinize both vocabulary and syntax, getting a global meaning of the text, through "clues" in the text and the reader's good schema knowledge and search for abstract concepts, get lots of information, understand the text, identify linguistic objects. Going through these steps, students are asked to elicit general and specific information from the text by using staking key word/meaning notes that articulate comprehension, considering syntax and sentence structure by noting grammatical functions of words.

Post-Performance:

A follow-up stage, in which students revise what they have read to get a feedback and check their understanding, give deeper analysis of the text and make sure that the ideas, they have extracted are clear and interesting. Ibrakhimova, (2016, p. 45) assured that learners begin giving feedback through revising their work upon its initial completion whether they have completed reading texts. Also, students should perform some activities such as retelling the meaning of the text, being involved in a class discussion and summarizing the text. Further, it involves evaluation and reaction because learners should always go on evaluating the events, ideas, characters or intentions of the author. As well as, going on reacting ideally to the material read. That higher level of comprehension always lead to the development of evaluative capacity and appropriate reaction, among the readers, towards, the material read. In addition, evaluation and reaction should require utilizing some techniques such as paraphrasing to create new ideas in one's own words, summarizing ideas, rereading and rethinking to make ideas clear and interesting.

Previous Studies:

Studies as; Graham and Herbert, (2011) investigated writing as a tool for learning and improving reading fluency and comprehension. They found that writing is the basis of learning and increasing the learners' imagination and creativity. It enables learners to gather information – in notes, summaries, and full texts that can be used, to communicate to others. The very act of writing helps the writer remember and learn the content of what is written. The explicitness of writing enables us to see the connections between the ideas in a text, examine the assumptions behind those ideas, and ask further questions.

Grabe (2009) asserted “reading as the process in which readers learn information from what they read and apply it in an academic context as part of their education”. A number of the skills and processes used in reading require effort on the part of the reader to anticipate text information, select key information, organize and mentally summarize information, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to the reader goals."

Cambria and Guthrie, (2010) proved the importance of reading which can only be achieved through motivation to read and develops with children's tastes, desires, and interest in reading. For this reason, it can be argued that the development of reading comprehension skills requires motivational processes as well as cognitive processes.

According to CAAM approach Holmes, (2019) considered learners' responsible role as active constructors of knowledge who have their own views of the subject matter via engaging intensively in the learning process. This emphasizes learners' participation and achieving deeper knowledge of the subject matter through using authentic materials (newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, and literature). As well, using the internet to enhance students' overall.

(Belcher, 2004; Sullivan, 2012; Boyacı, Babadağ & Güner, 2017) noted that using AM approach was experimentally validated and considered as a very effective way in giving students the opportunity to read and extract information from "real language" texts that used by native speakers in their interactions and to feel as a native speaker like in terms of pronunciation, idioms use or accent. The findings revealed that using AM which are genuine in time, location and people, makes it easy for students to relate the events to their own experience, become more productive and confident in classroom reading. Consequently, using AM is generally acknowledged as “a way of increasing students'

motivation for learning through giving them the feeling that they are in touch with a living entity and use a real language as it is used in the community which speaks it”.

CAAM is more reliable in its purpose, communication, and its proposed framework. Based on data given, and supported by classroom observation data, the use of CAAM would maximize the integration between the real world and the school environment via authentic materials. Also, based on real world experiences obtained from authentic material, it allows learners to transfer literacy skills to every area of daily life. (Demirel & Şahinel, 2006, p. 19) The findings showed significant improvements in students' performance in writing summaries and stories after their critical reading of authentic materials and the use of authentic materials enhances EFL writing performance.

Methodology and Design

The aim of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of constructivist teaching approach utilizing authentic materials for developing writing skill. To this end, the following methodology and design of study are adopted the quasi-experimental one group pre – posttest design. One class of the first preparatory scholars was selected to form the study participants. Participants were trained using reading skills.

Participants

This study was carried out at El-Wafaa preparatory school in Helwaan during the academic year of (2023). The first year preparatory school students (30 students) were the population of the study. The average age of the participants was (13) years old. The researcher used one group which was chosen randomly to be the subjects of the experiment. The key principle of constructivism using authentic materials to be employed was the emphasis on social learning; thus cooperative work was the essence of the researcher’s work. Accordingly, this principle required sub-dividing the experimental group into smaller groups of five students. Then, the researchers sub-divided the experimental group into six smaller groups, each containing five students.

Research Design

Research Design Reviewing previous researches on measuring the impact of a treatment on an outcome lead the researchers to decide on conducting an experiment. In this respect, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) highly recommend to use an experiment in educational research when investigating the effectiveness of utilizing specific

techniques/strategies on students' progress. Correspondingly, the students in this study are prepared to receive a treatment in order to explore the relationships between the independent variable the 'effect of using constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials, and 'students' development in writing skills' would be the dependent variable on which the independent variable is acting. For the purpose of deciding on which design to follow, the researcher reviewed the literature in order to reach a sound decision. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 274) maintained that empirical studies in education tend to be quasi-experimental rather than experimental and in most cases these studies depend on pre-existing intact groups. Hence, the researcher adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test, 15 weeks treatment, post-test design in that study.

The Instrument

The main instrument of the current study is a pre/post-test. The researchers used a meaning making test as an instrument to collect data. In designing the writing test, they referred to many resources via reviewing the related literature in addition to their own experiences. The test was administered to students at the beginning of the course (pre-test) to determine their writing comprehension ability prior to the experiment. The same test was given to students at the end of the experiment to determine their improvement after the accomplishment of the experiment. The researcher tried to let the questions go beyond simple comprehension to address the main writing sub-skills. The present study aims at assessing students' development in their sub-skills of reading, namely; identifying the main ideas of the text, extracting supportive details, guessing the meaning of new words, confirming predictions and summarizing a text. In developing the test, the researcher tried to well align it to serve the instructional objectives which have been emphasized during the experiment, i.e., to accomplish the main aim of the study that is assessing the development of writing sub-skills of experiment groups. To achieve this aim, the researcher used a set of different tasks in their test to ensure that these sub-skills were successfully measure.

Validity and Reliability of the Test

In order to evaluate face validity of the test, a panel of experts was selected as jury members based on their relevant knowledge and experience. To determine the content validity of the test, the researcher tried to make certain that the elements of the main issue in the test (writing and its sub-skills) are being covered in the test. The researcher ensured the writing sub-skills are being examined in the writing test whether through allocating

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an entire section in the test or through a single item or a combination of test items in the writing test. For the purpose of calculating the reliability of the test, the researcher used split half and inter-rater scoring in her study. She used the former to check the reliability of the first question which is an objective question, and the latter was used to check the reliability of the second question which is a subjective question scored according a rubric designed for this purpose.

The reliability coefficient was calculated by using the statistics package SPSS, i.e., the correlation coefficient for the two halves was found by computing the Spearman-Brown coefficient. It was estimated as 0.82, which indicated that the test enjoyed a good reliability in terms of internal consistency. To check for reliability as equivalence, inter-rater reliability was used. It was used to examine the degree of agreement among raters. The correlation between the researchers' and a second rater's scores calculated as 87.4%; it confirmed a high agreement correlation.

Data Analysis and Discussion

To answer the research question, the steps are as follows: The researcher started with comparing the mean scores of the students' results on the pre- and post-administration of the reading comprehension test to investigate whether the students in the experimental group (henceforth Ex G) improved their reading ability after receiving the treatment through CAAM-based instruction. They used the dependent t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference before and after the treatment. The results were described statistically in terms of: Mean, T-test, and P-value. The results are presented below.

Table (1) Statistics of the t. value and its significance on the writing pre -post total test scores

| Att. | N | Means | Std. Deviation | df | Tabulated t. value | | Calculated t. value | Sig | D |
|------|----|--------|----------------|----|--------------------|------|---------------------|------|-------|
| | | | | | 0.05 | 0.01 | | | |
| Pre | 30 | 5.1667 | 3.8959 | 29 | 2.04 | 2.75 | 14.852 | .001 | 0.495 |
| Post | 30 | 21.633 | 6.0400 | 29 | | | | | |

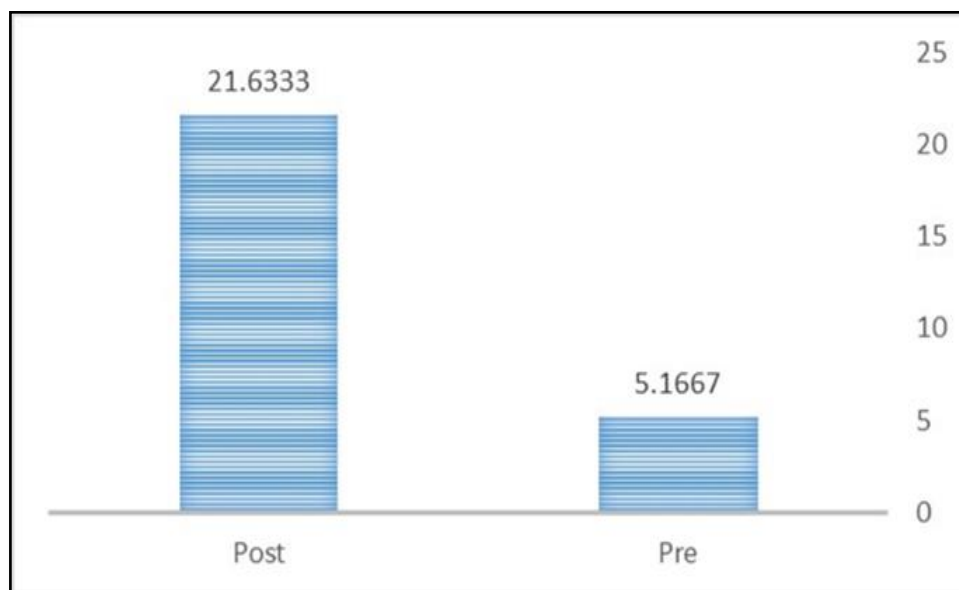


Figure (1) Differences between means of the total scores of writing pre-posttest administration

The table and diagram above demonstrate that the mean score of the writing posttest (21.633) was higher than the mean score of the pre one (5.1667). The calculated t. value (14.852) was statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance and was higher than both tabulated t. values (2.75) at 0.01 level of significance and (2.04) at 0.05 level of significance. The effect size *d* showed a large value (0.495) which declares that the improvement in study sample's writing performance in overall writing performance' was due to the experience they had during the implementation of the study program. Thus, the researcher could reject the null hypothesis.

This result confirmed the second hypothesis of the study; there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the participants of the study in the pre-post testing of their overall writing sub- skills". Accordingly, students' writing skill will be enhanced and improved after conducting the program according to the principles of CAAM (after the experiment).

Table (2) Statistics of the t. value and its significance on the pre and post test scores in the writing performance sub –skills

| Measured Competence | Att. | N | Mean | St d Deviatio | Tabulated t. value | | Calculate d t. value | sig | d |
|---|------|-----------|-------|------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|------|--------------|
| | | | | | 0.05 | 0.01 | | | |
| Brainstorming main Ideas & Details | Pre | 30 | .983 | .78216 | 2.04 | 2.75 | 12.030 | .001 | 0.401 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.283 | .94398 | | | | | |
| Generating details & outcomes | Pre | 30 | .783 | .6908 | | | 15.784 | .001 | 0.526 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.100 | .8346 | | | | | |
| Organizing ideas in introduction, body & conclusion | Pre | 30 | .633 | .4535 | | | 8.903 | .001 | 0.267 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.017 | 1.4999 | | | | | |
| Using sentences with a lot of correct vocabulary | Pre | 30 | .683 | .4997 | | | 14.489 | .001 | 0.483 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.000 | .8709 | | | | | |
| Employing varied ideas & facts | Pre | 30 | .6667 | .57735 | | | 12.776 | .001 | 0.426 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.067 | .91664 | | | | | |
| Using correct grammar , coherence tools & punctuation marks | Pre | 30 | .6833 | .6628 | | | 10.859 | .001 | 0.362 |
| | Post | 30 | 3.017 | 1.0866 | | | | | |
| Using correct spelling | Pre | 30 | .7167 | .5971 | | | 12.592 | .001 | 0.419 |
| | Post | 30 | 2.950 | .9680 | | | | | |

Writing Skill Measured:

From the demonstrated data analysis, the null hypotheses were refuted and the third question which stated "What is the effect of using the training program based on the constructivist approach utilizing EFL authentic materials to develop first year preparatory students' writing skills?" was answered as the proposed program had a significant effect on the study sample. The calculated t. values and effect size *d* of

each sub- skill of the writing performance is arranged in the following table and diagram from the highest to the lowest.

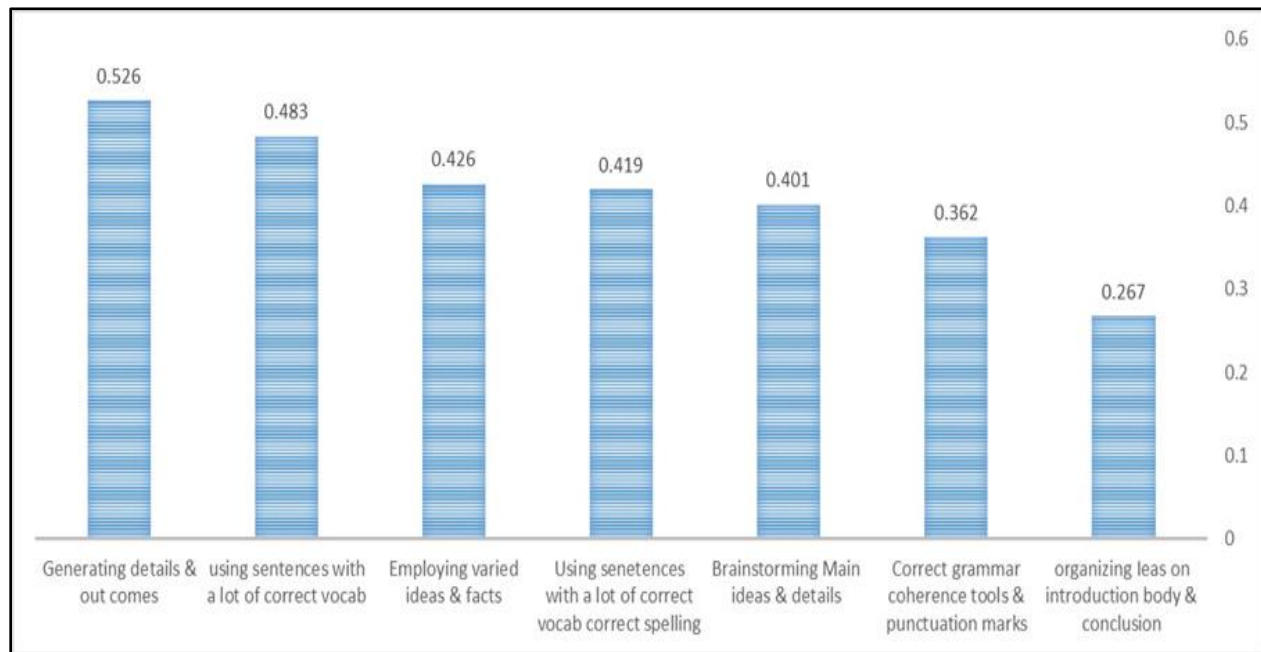


Figure (2) Cohen *d* values from highest to lowest in writing

In sum, greater progress in the total score of the writing test is seen in the results of experimental groups' responses in the posttest as compared to the results obtained by the participants in the control group. Due to the assessment level at α (0.01), the result is signed. Therefore, the hypothesis which writes "preparatory students' writing comprehension will be improved after the implementation of the principles of constructivism and authentic materials(after the experiment)" is accepted.

Accordingly, the results proved that constructivist-authentic materials based approach, to which preparatory school students have been exposed to, is better and more efficacious than the traditional one in promoting students' writing skill. This result is in line with what Jubran (2016) stated, that CAAM instructional model was more effective than the traditional model in developing the English majors' writing skill. Yet, this researcher did not tackle the individual sub-skills of reading in her study; she only judged on her students' progress by analyzing the total scores of her students.

Finally, it can be said that the results of the post-test gave empirical evidence to be added to the theoretical one supporting the effectiveness of implementing CAAM

approach in improving EFL students' writing skill and sub-skills. These results can be attributed to some reasons;

1. The smooth and ample implementation of CAAM strategies during the experiment has led to the distinct improvement in learners' writing sub-skill.
2. Employing different types of authentic materials prepared by the researcher such as; authentic sources including relevant articles, caricatures, photos, and relevant videos had a profound impact on students' progress and created a conducive context to meaningful learning.
3. Incorporating cooperative work in teaching the experimental group helped them to manipulate group discussions and improve their writing in an adequate way.
4. With reference to the activation of the students' prior knowledge, the pre-writing activities prior to the presentation of materials have assisted them in constructing their own view of the writing and constructing meaning and this led to better making meaning of their own.
5. The experiment yielded important results in terms of students' interest and willingness to improve their English. The researchers deduced this through the students' continuous research, punctual attendance of the lectures, commitment to delivering assignments, and their increased participation in the lessons.

Conclusion

In essence, the current study verified that a proposed program based on constructivist approach utilizing authentic materials is crucial and effective in improving first year preparatory students' EFL writing performance. Students developed their writing skills and obtained the relevant phrases, expressions and became able to organize their ideas to write other topics in a logic sequence. Furthermore, they learnt to cope with the difficulties, they encountered while writing through utilizing cohesive devises, team work and cooperative learning that helped them to stay on topic and keep writing going on. Also, students could benefit from videos, internet and electronic dictionary to acquire new vocabulary, expressions and phrases to produce their own knowledge that used in increasing their vocabulary and information about the topics they need to write. Even though, they needed more exposure to authentic materials activities as well as writing ones in order to master

writing main skills and perform better with accurate syntax rules and attain new vocabulary, expressions and phrases to have more ideas and produce their own topics.

Based on the current study results and findings, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- There is evidence that the proposed program based on (CAAM) approach helped preparatory students improve their EFL reading comprehension and use what they read to construct their own meaning.
- There is evidence that exposing learners to practice writing activities and subjects which tackle their interests improved their writing performance.
- It is approved that teaching learners the sequence of writing activities helped them develop their ability to think critically, widen their understanding and form their own meaning.
- There is a stable evidence that the use of authentic materials in teaching writing performance helped students acquire more real information and language and enhanced their ability to use that real language either inside or outside classroom.
- It is proved that Increasing students' awareness of constructivist approach techniques such as; group working and cooperative learning helped them to collaborate with each other to solve problems and overcome all difficulties they encountered during their interactions with reading and writing activities.

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