Using Collaborative Strategic Reading to Develop EFL Prep School Students' Metacognitive Reading Skills

Asmaa Goda Mohamed El-Sayed

EFL teacher

Supervised by

Dr. Azza Hamdy El-Marsafy   **Dr. Michal Abdel Massieh**

Abstract

Study Aims: This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of CSR approach on Prep School Students' Metacognitive Reading Skills.

Study Approach: To achieve the study aims, the researcher adopted the experimental approach on participants of (40) students at Al Ola private Preparatory School which were randomly selected. The participants were divided into two equivalent groups. Both groups were pretested to assure that they were equivalent. The experimental group was taught using CSR while the control one was taught by the traditional method in the first term of the scholastic year 2019-2020. The experiment lasted for six weeks in which the researcher implemented the study tools to investigate the effect of CSR. The results were statistically analyzed by SPSS to be compared with the post-test results.

Study Tools: The researcher used 4 instruments to collect data: 1) questionnaire for teachers to determine the most important metacognitive reading skills, 2) a pre/post metacognitive reading skills test, and 3) a metacognitive reading skills rubric to determine the students' metacognitive reading skills performance. The main purpose of the rubric is for scoring the pre-post metacognitive reading skills test.

Study Results: The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.01$) between the mean scores of the control group and those of the experimental one on the metacognitive reading skills posttest in favor of the experimental group. This positive result was attributed to the effectiveness of using the CSR.

Study Recommendations: According to the findings, the researcher recommends that the English Language teachers need to activate CSR approach throughout reading in order to develop their students'' metacognitive reading skills.

Keywords: collaborative strategic reading, metacognitive reading skills.

1.2. Background of the study

English may not be the most spoken language in the world, but in a large number of countries, it is the official language. With increasing numbers of its learners, English has shown a greater importance as an international language of communication. Learning English requires to focus on the basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing .It is clear that reading is a very important life skill by which man may acquire knowledge and build his own schema. The first verse that was revealed to prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) told him to "read". It is mentioned in The Holy Quran in Surah Al-'Alaq (The Clot, Read!) Translated by Picktahll (1981).

Everyone realizes the importance of training English language learners on improving their reading skills due to the fact that English is an international language and most of the important sources, in science or humanities, are written in English. Further, the expansion of electronic communications and the internet, has enforced the importance and need to be able to read in English. In other words, the greatest use at the end of language study is reading since most materials are printed, so it can be a basis for students. Reading is essential to almost every aspect of learning. Ziyaeemehr (2012,p.38) points that reading is amongst the most prominent skills that EFL learners should learn. Khonamri and Karimabadi (2015,p.1375) explain that it is the most important academic language skill for second language students which can lead to their professional, social, and personal development. Reading is a key skill for most students in a foreign language because they need to access professional knowledge written in English. With fluent reading proficiency, students are likely to not only attain greater success in English learning but also gain better academic performance (Chang, 1998).

Finally, the ability to read will stay longer than theother skills, and it is the skill that will be most convenient to use.(Akyel &Ercetin, 2008, p.135). Reading is not only decoding from a foreign language to a mother tongue. Some people show that reading is a process of transferring letters, from print words to sounds. However, Reading is more complex than this. Reading involves comprehending and recognizing words and sentence patterns (Cohen, 2007; Rasinski&Padak, 2008).

Improving students' reading skill in English as a foreign language is a big challenge for teachers. Many research studies show that many learners do not have the ability to understand complex texts (Biancarosa& Snow, 2004).When the breakdown of reading comprehension occurs, students can use many strategies that can help them repair disengagement to the text. Researchers, Booth & Swartz (2004) show that effective readers use reading strategies to build meaning and achieve reading comprehension as they work in real reading situations. Additionally, the authors assert that good readers activate their background knowledge, when they engage with text. At this time, students should"maintain a consistent focus on constructing meaning, monitor and repair comprehension throughout the reading process" (Booth & Swartz, 2004, p. 26).

A lot of elementary students struggle with reading and reading comprehension because of the lack of competent reading skills, strategies, and metacognitive knowledge (Fox, 2009). These students want to read a text without interest or main prior knowledge. Additionally, they may fail to realize reading is an active search for meaning (Dermitzaki, Andreou, &Paraskeva, 2008). Struggling readers may not monitor their reading to achieve comprehension .They fail to use strategic steps to derive meaning, when there is a breakdown in comprehension .Finally, these students may not change their strategy use with altering types of text (Horner &Shwery, 2002).

Metacognition, which is the knowledge and control of one's own and learning and thinking, includes two categories of mental activities: "self-appraised knowledge about cognition and self-management of one's thinking" (Cross & Paris, 1988, p. 131). Metacognitive skills are referred to as "self-direction skills" (Burke, 2007, 151).Cooper and Sandi- Urena (2009) describe those with metacognitive skills as ones who can do things correctly even when they have no experience doing something. Metacognition is a form of a high level thinking process that involves positive control over cognitive processes (Wenden, 1998). It is also considered as the 'seventh sense' and one of the mental abilities that successful learners use (Birjandi, 2006) .Metacognitive skills are the characteristics to control cognitive performance. Individuals with metacognitive skills usually have self-confidence and self-efficacy, and this situation has anactive influence on learning (Eisenberg, 2010; Hacker, Dunlosky, &Graesser, 2009).

Strategies specific to reading can be classified in the following three clusters of metacognition: *planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies* (Israel, 2007; Pressley &Afflerbach, 1995).Planning strategies are employed before reading; an example of planning strategies is activating learners' background knowledge to get prepared for reading (Almasi, 2003; Israel, 2007). Also, previewing a picture,title, heading, or subheading can help readersunderstand the overview of the text. Readers may also preview the general idea in the text and its structure (Almasi, 2003; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991).

Further, setting the purpose for reading can also be classified as aplanning strategy (Paris et al., 1991; Pressley, 2002). When the sources upon reading comprehension are examined, metacognition remains at the forefront(Aksan&Kisac, 2009).

Monitoring strategies occur during reading. Some examples of monitoring strategies are comprehension of vocabulary, self-questioning, summarizing, and grasping the main idea of each paragraph (Israel, 2007; Pressley, 2002). Readers may also focus on key information, determining which part of the passage can be emphasized or ignored based on the purpose of the task is an example of monitoring strategies (Hudson, 2007).

Evaluating strategies are used after reading. For example, after reading a text, learners may think about how to apply what they have read to other situations. Metacognitive aware' learners know some of the kinds of thinking that they do – finding evidence, generating ideas, etc. – but thinking is not necessarily planned. 'Strategic' learners deliberate their thinking by using problem solving, classifying, decision making, etc. They know and apply the strategies that help them learn. 'Reflective' learners are not only strategic about their thinking but they also reflect upon their learning as happening ,monitoring the success or not of any strategies they're using and then evaluating them as appropriate.

Basing on what is mentioned previously, the researcher is trying to find out efficient ways to deal with the problems in teaching reading. She believes that an appropriate strategy may help students create a good learning atmosphere to take part actively in the classroom activities in order to increase their reading comprehension and learning motivation. In this case, the researcher proposes Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in reading lessons. In this approach, each student in the group has a role. Students' roles are an important aspect of CSR because collaborative learning seems to work best when all team members have been assigned a meaningful task. Possible roles include: leader, clunk expert, announcer, encourager, reporter and time keeper. In addition, they take turns sharing what they learned with the class. Working in cooperative teams and giving each student responsibility of doing part of the task will increase their learning motivation and

give them the feeling of being secure. Al-Robaiy (2005, p.90) points that students show enthusiasm towards cooperative work as it liberates them from the instructor's control and gives them a chance to teach each other, which is an interesting job for them.

From the previous clarification of the CSR and by looking at many related studies that prove its important role in increasing reading comprehension, the researcher hopes that CSR will help to improve students specially on reading comprehension skills.

1.3. Statement of the problem

Based on the aforementioned discussed, the problem of the study could be stated that the second-year preparatory private school students lack metacognitive reading skills. Thus, the current research attempts to develop metacognitive reading skills through answering the following main question:

What is the effect of collaborative strategic reading **on** Metacognitive reading skills for prep stage students **?**

From the above mentioned question, the following sub-questions were derived

1. What are the required Metacognitive reading skills for prep stage students?

2. To what extent do prep stage students master these Metacognitive reading skills?

3. What is the effect of collaborative strategic reading on developing prep students metacognitive reading skills؟

4. What is the effect of a collaborative strategic reading on prep students Metacognitive reading skills ?

1.4. Research hypotheses

4.1. a. Hypothesis1:

It has been hypothesized that" There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the pre test .

<div align="center">Table (1   )</div>

t-test Result of metacognitive reading skills test comparing the experimental to the control group .

Group	N	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	t-value	Df
Control	25	8.72	2.09	20.84	24
Experimental	25	7.72	2.07	18.63	24

Table (1   ) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental groups in the pre of metacognitive reading test .The mean scores of the control group is(8.72)and the mean scores of the experimental group is (7.72),   t-value being (20.84),(18.63). So, the first hypothesis was validated.

٤.١.b. Hypothesis2:

It has been hypothesized that " There are statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the students in the experimental group and the control group   in   the post- test favoring the experimental group".one sample t-test was used as shown in (table 5).

Table (2   )
t- test results of comparing both groups metacognitive reading skills at the post test.

Measurement	N	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Df
The experimental group	25	22.04	2.13	51.72	24
The control group	25	17.4	1.85	47.07	

*Significant at (0.05)

Table (2) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental groups in favor of the later in the post administration of metacognitive reading test, the mean scores of the experimental is higher than the mean scores of the control group, t-value being (51.72),(47.07)s. It is significant at (0,05) level. So, the second hypothesis was validated.

٤.١.c.   Hypothesis 3:

It has been hypothesized that" There are statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group at   the   post test and the pre-test for the post test.
A paired samples t-test was used to verify this hypothesis as shown in (table 6   ).

Table (3   )
t- test results of comparing the pre -post of the experimental group metacognitive reading skills test.

Measurement	Number of Participants	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	df	t- Value
Pre	25	7.72	2.072	24	22.96
Post	25	22.04	2.13		

*Significant at (0.05)

Table (3), indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and the post test of experimental group in favor of the later in the metacognitive reading test, the mean scores of the post- test is higher than the mean scores of the pre- test , t-value being is (22.96) significant at,0.05. So, the third hypothesis was validated.

٤.٦.f.   Hypothesis 4:

It has been hypothesized that" Collaborative strategic strategy is effective in developing metacognitive reading skills for EFL prep school students " . Cohen's equation was used to verify this hypothesis as shown in (table 7

Table (4)
Results of Cohen's equation comparing the pre to post administrations of the experimental group.

The Group	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	T. value	df	Effect size
The experimental group Pre –test	25	7.72	2.072	22.96	24	0.62
The experimental group Post - test	25	22.04	2.13			

Cohen's equation was used to verify the impact of the strategies. The impact was measured through the Cohen's equation:

As indicated in table (7), it is obvious that the final value of Cohen's equation for the experimental group, comparing its pre to the post administrations in the metacognitive reading test is (0.62) significant at (0.05). Based on that, it has been concluded that there is a positive effect of the collaborative strategic strategy in developing metacognitive reading skills for students at the prep school.

Discussion of the Results:

The results of the present study shows that the experimental group, taught through collaborative strategic strategy performed better than the control one in the post administration of metacognitive reading Skills, since there were statistically significant differences at (0, 05) between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in favor of the former.

1.5.Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using Collaborative strategic strategy on developing metacognitive reading

skills of grade two prep school students. This study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1- Investigating the effectiveness of using Collaborative strategic strategy on developing writing skills of fourth graders in (the model institutes).

2- Identifying the writing skills suitable for fourth graders.

1.6.Significance of the study

This study may benefit:

•Students:

It may encourage and motivate students to use Collaborative strategic strategy to improve their metacognitive reading skills .

•Teachers:

The study may attract the attention of English teachers to the importance of using Collaborative strategic strategy as a mean of developing students' metacognitive reading skills. Also, it may help them to facilitate their wok.

•Decision makers:

This study may help decision makers to employ Collaborative strategic strategy in teaching English language.

•Supervisors:

This study may attract supervisors' attention to hold training courses for teachers in the importance of using Collaborative strategic strategy on developing metacognitive reading skills and other skills.

1.7.Limitations of the study

*The Academic Limit

1-The study is limited to teaching English language textbook " Go Up "every reading lesson in Unit (1 –2–3) .

2-The study is limited to metacognitive reading skills.

*The time and place limit

The study is limited to grade two prep school students, El-Ola private school, Sharkia . It was implemented in the first semester of the school year (2019– 2020).

1.8.The instruments of the study

Three instruments were used as follows:

- A questionnaire of metacognitive reading skills .
- A test of metacognitive reading skills.
- A Rubric of metacognitive reading test.

1.9.Procedures

The study progressed according to three stages: preparation stage, implementation stage and finally evaluation stage.

a) **The Preparation Stage:**

1-Reviewing literature and previous studies related to CSR to improve reading comprehension skills.

2-Deciding on the instruments of the study: a questionnaire of metacognitive reading skills to decide the degree of importance, a timed achievement metacognitive reading skills test (Pre & post-test).

3-Identifying the metacognitive reading skills appropriate for the second prep school students.

4-Designing the questionnaire of metacognitive reading skills and introducing it to specialists, including professors of teaching methodology, supervisors of English language and teachers who have long experience in teaching ninth graders to decide the degree of importance of these skills to second prep school students.

5-Checking the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire.

6-Applying the questionnaire and recording the results to be used in building the achievement test.

7-Designing the lesson planning which is based on CSR approach to develop reading comprehension skills through:

 Preparing lessons based on CSR approach.

☐ Deciding strategies and activities which are suitable for applying the approach.

8-Preparing the achievement test (pre and post-test)

9-Checking the validity and the reliability of the test through the following:

☐ Consulting the specialists.

☐ Applying the test on a pilot sample who have the same characteristics of the study sample and the results are recorded.

☐ Finding out the internal consistency coefficient using "Pearson formula".

☐ Identifying the difficulties and the discriminations of the test.

10- Choosing the sample of the study that includes the experimental group and the control one.

11- Administering the pre-test on the sample of the study and computing the results. The researcher made sure that both groups were equivalent and then conducted the experiment.

b) The Implementation Stage:

1-The researcher explained then modeled the new approach to the experimental groups. She explained the steps and procedures they were going to follow. Then, she gave them the materials and told them how, when and why to use them.

2-The researcher divided the learners into seven mixed-abilities groups depending on their achievement in the reading comprehension test, and gave each student her role. Each group consisted of students of different levels. This serves the collaborative learning purposes.

3-The teacher helped students to practice the approach as much as possible in the regular classes. She followed three steps: the pre-reading, during reading and after reading. At the beginning, the teacher helped students in applying the approach. Gradually, students depended on themselves and implemented the roles perfectly.

4-The experiment lasted for six weeks.

c) The Evaluation Stage:

1-Applying the post-test on both groups of the study.

2-Analyzing and interpreting the results.

3-Presenting the suggestions and the recommendation in the light of the study findings.

Conclusion

The results of the study proved that there is a statistically significant difference at (0.01) level between the mean scores of the pre- and post- measurements of the experimental group in the metacognitive reading test in favor of the post-measurement. Also, there is a statistically significant difference at (0.01) level between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post measurements of the metacognitive reading test in favor of the experimental group. This result showed that the collaborative strategic reading has a positive effect on the participants' metacognitive reading skills .The students in the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group in the post-metacognitive reading test results. This means that the collaborative strategic reading contributed to an improvement in the students' metacognitive reading skills. Based on the results obtained throughout the current study, it can be concluded that CSR approach:-

1-Improved students' metacognitive reading skills as their test results show .

2-Enabled students to use their own background knowledge and experiences to make connections.

3-Increased the students' ability to judge the texts and express their opinions .

4-Created a co-operative, motivating learning environment where students could learn without any kind of pressure or tension.

5-Considered the individual differences among learners .

6. Provided variety of techniques used in the lessons that were suitable for all ages and students and reduced students' boredom

٥.٣ **Recommendations**

In light of the results of the current study, the following recommendations can be given:

1-Teachers should avoid acting as the center of the educational process and should avoid dominating the classroom activity. They should pass the responsibility to the students to manage their own learning and to build self-confidence and self-autonomy.

2-CSR stimulates creativity and helps students to understand ideas at higher levels of thinking than teaching through rote memorization alone.

٣-The use of CSR in the learning process encourages students to be more cooperative and active when doing an activity.

4- Developing a collaborative strategic reading for each grade in basic education schools is a good idea that would positively affect the English teaching process in Egypt. collaborative strategic reading is a suitable implementation for Egyptian students (from the beginner suitable implementation for Egyptian students)from the beginner level onwards.

5- CSR creates an opportunity for collaboration as students need to ٤. work together to complete the given task, a vital element of the learner-centered approach.

6-CSR takes into consideration the individual differences among students and they feel relaxed and motivated when using it. Teachers should be aware of their students' needs and abilities in order to include appropriate activities that go in harmony with students' abilities.

7-Applying collaborative strategic reading as an alternative to traditional way in teaching reading using recount text because it can help the students in comprehending the text easier.

8-Encourage teachers to implement activities that require this kind of group work approach which activate and motivate students to learn.

9-Have Training sessions on how to use and build up the CSR in teaching.

10 Encourage children to read books, magazines, journals and other reading materials that will help improve their reading comprehension skills.

11-Provide support for the learners to be able to learn on their own through using new strategies such as the CSR strategies.

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