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استخدام استراتيجية القراءة التشاركية لتنمية مهارات الفهم القرائي لتلاميذ الصف الرابع الابتدائي

(بحث مستل من رسالة ماجستير)

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Using Shared Reading Strategy to Develop Fourth Year Primary Stage Pupils' EFL Reading Comprehension skills

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مستخلص

أجريت هذه الدراسة بهدف التحقق من فاعلية استراتيجية القراءة التشاركية في تنمية مهارة الفهم القرائي لدى تلاميذ الصف الرابع الابتدائي. وللتحقق من هدف الدراسة تم استخدام المنهج شبه التجريبي لمجموعتين. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 75 طالبة تم اختيارهم بطريقة عشوائية من مدرسة الإيمان الخاصة بدمياط، وتم تقسيمهم لمجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية (ن = 41) والمجموعة الضابطة (ن = 34). لجمع البيانات قامت الباحثة بتصميم اختبار في مهارات الفهم القرائي وتم تطبيقه قبل إجراء المعالجة التجريبية وبعدها. قامت الباحثة بالتدريس للمجموعة التجريبية باستخدام استراتيجية القراءة التشاركية، بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة طريقة التدريس التقليدية. أسفرت نتائج الاختبارت عن وجود فرق ذو دلالة احصائية عند مستوى دلالة 0.05 بين متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة في اختبار الفهم القرائي وذلك لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وبناءً علي ذلك تقترح الدراسة استخدام استراتيجية القراءة التشاركية لتحسين مهارات الفهم القرائي باللغة الانجليزية لدى التلاميذ. وعلاوةً علي ذلك تقترح الباحثة إجراء دورات تدريبية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لتحسين طرق التدريس لديهم من أجل تنمية مهارات اللغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *مهارة الفهم القرائي، استراتيجية القراءة التشاركية.*

Using Shared Reading Strategy to Develop Fourth Year Primary Stage Pupils' EFL Reading Comprehension skills

Abstract:

The study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using the shared reading strategy in developing fourth-year primary-stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills. The participants of the study were 75 pupils from El-Eman private school in Damietta, Egypt. The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. So, there were two intact groups: an experimental group (n= 41) and a control one (n= 34). To collect data, the researcher used a reading comprehension pre-posttest. The researcher taught the experimental group using the shared reading strategy, whilst the control group was taught using the traditional way of teaching. The results of the study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the reading comprehension test in favor of the experimental group. The study recommends utilizing shared reading strategy during EFL sessions to enhance pupils' reading comprehension skills. Moreover, the researcher suggests conducting training sessions for EFL teachers to improve their methods of teaching different language skills aiming at developing the pupils' performance.

Key words: *reading comprehension, shared reading strategy.*

1. Introduction and background

Reading comprehension is important to effective reading and is an essential component of literacy development, playing a critical role in knowledge acquisition and application. The imperative to advance reading comprehension skills among pupils stems from recognizing that literacy encompasses cognitive processes extending beyond the mechanical act of reading. According to Roit (2008), pupils in this process engage actively in a variety of cognitive processes before, during, and after reading. It necessitates comprehending, analyzing, and critically engaging with diverse texts. Additionally, it requires pupils to actively construct meaning by integrating their prior knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Hence, developing strong reading comprehension skills empowers pupils to navigate information and ideas, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication.

While teaching EFL reading skills, the selection of instructional strategies exerts a profound influence on the acquisition and refinement of pupils' reading proficiencies. Handayani, Martina, and Rizal (2021) stated that pupils still have trouble understanding the material when they are reading; for instance, learners may know how to pronounce the words but not their meanings. The pupils can look up the meaning in the dictionary, but they struggle to define the content of each paragraph. Pupils who read for pleasure are bored and frustrated since it is difficult for them to understand what they are reading. As a result, it is suggested that teachers employ a range of strategies to expose and motivate language learners. Noteworthy among these strategies is shared reading, an

instructional strategy that supports enhancing reading comprehension.

Shared reading strategy is characterized by collaborative and interactive engagements between the teacher and pupils during the reading process, creating an environment conducive to the exploration and interpretation of text. Hudson and Test (2011) referred to it as a text-based interaction between the pupils and the teacher where the teacher pauses intermittently to engage the pupils with the book through discussion, questions, and response, or physical interaction. Moreover, shared reading strategy not only enhances comprehension but also promotes a sense of collaboration among pupils as they engage collaboratively in the reading process. This strategy fosters a supportive learning environment, where pupils can discuss and clarify concepts together. Additionally, the shared reading strategy provides valuable opportunities for the teacher to model effective reading strategies, empowering pupils with the tools they need for comprehension. Consequently, shared reading emerges as an effective strategy, providing teachers a guide to pupils through a collaborative exploration of written texts.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem of the study indicates that EFL fourth-year primary pupils have a weakness in reading comprehension skills, which was observed while teaching English as a foreign language in a primary school. Accordingly, a pilot study was carried out on EFL fourth-year primary-stage pupils to determine the pupils' level and the reading comprehension skills and subskills in the textbook. The results of the pilot study show the pupils' deficiency in reading comprehension skills, which goes

along with the results of the literature review and pilot study. Therefore, the present study attempts to solve this problem by using shared reading strategy to investigate its effectiveness in improving pupils' reading comprehension skills.

1.3 Questions of the study

The study aims to answer the following main question:
"How far can shared reading strategy develop fourth year primary stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills?"
The following sub-questions can emerge:
1- What are EFL reading comprehension skills appropriate for fourth year primary stage pupils?
2- How can shared reading strategy be used to develop fourth year primary stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills?
3- What is the effectiveness of shared reading strategy in developing fourth year primary stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills?

1.4 Aims

The current study aims to verify the effectiveness of the shared reading strategy in developing EFL reading comprehension skills for fourth year primary stage pupils.

1.5 Significance

The study may have the following significance:
1- Providing EFL teachers with a list of the appropriate EFL reading comprehension skills for fourth year primary stage pupils.

2- Providing EFL teachers with educational activities for developing EFL reading comprehension skills for fourth year primary stage pupils.

3- Providing EFL teachers with a reliable and valid reading comprehension test to be used in assessing EFL pupils ' levels and use them as a model for designing other tests.

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were investigated:

1- There is a statistically significant difference at (≥ 0.05) between the mean scores of the control and experimental group in the post-application of EFL reading comprehension skills test for fourth year primary stage pupils in favor of the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference at ($\geq 0,05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post application of the EFL reading comprehension test for fourth year primary stage pupils in favor of the post application.

1.7 Delimitations

The current study is delimited to:

1- Two classes of fourth-year primary stage EFL pupils at El-Eman Private School in Damietta, Egypt.

2- The appropriate EFL reading comprehension skills for fourth year primary stage pupils (literal, inferential, and critical skills).

3- The reading passages included in the English language textbook (Connect) of fourth year primary stage.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms
1. Reading Comprehension

The researcher defines reading comprehension as the process of recognizing, comprehending, inferring and constructing meanings through the reading texts included in the fourth year primary stage English textbook.

2. Shared Reading Strategy

The researcher adopted Short, et al. (2000) definition of the shared reading strategy "allowing the teacher to model and support the use of cues and self-monitoring reading strategies, which may include the use of pictures to help construct meaning, making predictions, rereading, segmenting and blending phonemes, and finding familiar word chunks to decode words" (p.287), as it describes teacher's roles and how to support pupils in reading, help and guide them during reading.

2. Review of literature and the related studies
2.1 Reading comprehension
2.1.1 The nature of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading and the fundamental skill that serves as the foundation for further learning. Grabe (2009) points out that, "reading is fundamentally a comprehending process" (p.14). Also, Jad (2003) asserts that "reading comprehension is the supreme goal of reading which the teacher seeks to achieve and the educational process aims at achieving" (P.18). Reading comprehension, according to Kuo, Yeh, Duann, Wu, Hung, Tzeng and Hsieh (2001), is the quickest way to raise pupils' educational level. It is believed that reading comprehension broadens knowledge, fosters organizing skills, and improves language skills.

Reading comprehension is a complex process in which the brain is stimulated by noting a word, decoding it, and determining the relevant meaning. Also, it refers to the pupil's ability to comprehend information delivered via written words (Storm, 2007 and Petersen, 2008). The pupil generates meaning by interacting with the text and connecting it to the prior knowledge and experiences. Therefore, true comprehension occurs when pupils actively engage with the text, ask questions, make inferences, identify key information, and synthesize their understanding. As a result, they can ask new questions and direct new learning using their new knowledge.

2.1.2 Reading comprehension skills

Text comprehension is a complex, multidimensional and dynamic process which gives meaning to texts (Cain and Oakhill, 2009). Texts can be comprehended at various levels based on the skills employed in the comprehension process. According to Saad (2006), there are numerous divisions of reading comprehension skills that vary depending on different expert viewpoints. Some classified them relying on the size of the reading units, while others on the type and quantity of the cognitive content conveyed in the reading text. Others classified them based on the level of intangible mental processes deduced from their behavioral outcomes.

Reading comprehension skills and sub-skills are categorized by Ma'youf and Aburezeq (2022) as follows:

1. Literal, direct, or superficial comprehension skill: It describes the pupils' ability to grasp the meanings of the words, sentence structures, information, and events in the text by direct understanding merely and not to a greater degree.

2. Inferential or explanatory comprehension skill: It indicates the pupils' ability to recognize and comprehend hidden meanings in a text that are not directly stated.

3. Critical comprehension skill: This high degree of comprehension necessitates that the pupil applies some external criteria from their own experience to evaluate the writing's quality, values, reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations. The reader must be active in this reading skill level, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until evaluating all of the material, according to (Srisang and Everatt, 2021).

4. Creative comprehension skill: It represents the pupils' ability to present innovative and new ideas, as well as to suggest a new intellectual path or direction, in which pupils begin with facts and information that they are familiar to. Also, seeing unconventional and new uses for them or distinct relationships between them.

2.1.3 Issues related to teaching reading comprehension

The difficulties pupils have in learning to read appear to be a result of not only their inability to acquire and develop reading comprehension but also the teaching of reading comprehension. Yazar (2013) asserts that "although reading is an individual activity, it requires guidance to develop basic reading skills" (p.36). One of the challenges to teaching reading is a lack of expertise among teachers who can effectively teach reading skills. Sailors and Price (2015) state that strengthening teachers' capacity to instruct pupils effectively is crucial for raising reading achievement and text comprehension among pupils. Therefore, giving teachers the proper training before teaching reading skills can be effective.

2.1.4 Studies related to developing reading comprehension skills

Many studies Hollingsworth, et al (2007); Bulut (2017); Ragab (2018); Ahmed (2019); and Muhammad and Abdullah (2022) reflect the effectiveness of using different strategies in developing students' reading comprehension skills (e.g., cooperative learning strategy, SQ3R reading comprehension strategy, concept maps strategy, literature circles strategy, blended learning strategy). Some other studies such as Abu Shamla (2010); and Al-Farani and Al-Asmari (2021) show the efficacy of adopting the suggested program based on boosting students' reading comprehension skills. These studies have shown that reading comprehension skills can be enhanced through using appropriate and powerful instructional strategies and suggested programs based in classrooms.

2. 2 Shared reading strategy
2.2.1 Nature of shared reading strategy

Teaching reading is determined by the teacher and the pupils as each teacher instructs in a variety of ways based on pupils' needs. Carrying out a variety of reading strategies is mainly to develop pupils' reading skills. One of these strategies is shared reading strategy, which Blachowicz and Ogle (2001) expressed that many teachers use the term shared reading to describe a variety of classroom activities such as echo reading (pupils echoing the words aloud after the teacher reads), choral reading (pupils reading aloud while the teacher reads aloud), and cloze reading (teacher reads aloud and pauses periodically for pupils to fill in the missing word).

Likewise, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) explain that shared reading is an interactive reading experience in

which pupils participate in or share the reading of a large book or other enlarged text while being guided and supported by a teacher or another skilled pupil. So, shared reading is usually called a shared book experience strategy. Pupils watch an expert reading a text aloud with fluency and expression. The text must be large enough for all pupils to see clearly and to engage in the reading of the text. Furthermore, shared reading is a reading strategy in which the teacher models fluent, expressive reading, employs effective reading strategies, and encourages responses to texts with pupils. As a result, pupils' ability to read independently improves. Also, it allows teacher to focus on comprehension and introduce content area concepts, vocabulary, and advanced literacy skills to make pupils more proficient readers.

2.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of shared reading strategy

Routman (2003) clarifies that research shows that shared reading typically improves pupils' reading achievement, hence shared reading strategy has the following advantages:

1. Developing pupils' love of reading.
2. Building self-esteem and self-efficacy.
3. Developing pupils' confidence as readers.
4. Explicitly teaching reading strategies and skills.
5. Providing a risk-free, safe reading environment in which pupils can continue to build and develop their reading strategy toolkit.
6. Improving oral language development.
7. Introducing pupils to a variety of genres, text types, and forms in order for them to enjoy rich, authentic, and interesting texts that are above the class average independent reading level.

8. Supporting all pupils at all reading levels. Each pupil will participate in reading and discussion at his or her own level of ability, and will benefit from listening to and learning from others while being supported by the teacher. (p.p 100- 105)

On the other hand, according to Nurmala (2018), the following are the disadvantages of shared reading strategy:

1. The pupils may be left behind. There is a risk of pupils falling behind when the entire class is reading a large book together without a specific pupil being called on to read. If a pupil does not understand what is going on or is not paying attention to the shared reading, she/ he might not benefit from the activity.

2. A pupil may become frustrated if she/he tries to participate. For example, when the pupil is unable to keep up with faster pupils while producing the next phrase.

3. It may increase the pupils' anxiety level, and as a result, the shared reading experience may be negative rather than being a positive one.

2.2.3 Studies related to using shared reading strategy to develop reading comprehension skills

Many studies demonstrated the correlation between using shared reading strategy and developing reading comprehension skills Leou, et al (2009); Gusneli, et al (2016); Maghfirah (2021); and Hayati, et al (2022). These studies have asserted that employing shared reading strategies not only enhances reading comprehension but also boosts a deep engagement with the text. In addition, they provide clear evidence supporting the role of shared reading as an instructional strategy for fostering comprehensive reading skills.

3. Methodology
3.1 Design
This study adopted the quasi- experimental design using two groups to investigate the effectiveness of using shared reading strategy on fourth year primary stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills. The experimental group was taught using shared reading strategy, whereas the control group was taught in the traditional way of teaching. The control group did not receive any type of intervention except that they had the pre/post-test of EFL reading comprehension skills for the aim of comparison with the experimental group.

3. 2 Participants
A group of 75 fourth-year primary stage pupils was selected randomly from El-eman private school in Damietta in 2022/2023 academic year. The participants were divided into two groups. The first group of 41 pupils acted as the experimental group, and they were taught via shared reading strategy. The other group of 34 pupils comprised the control group and received the regular way of teaching.

3.3 Instruments and materials
1- A checklist of EFL reading comprehension skills and subskills appropriate for fourth year primary stage pupils.
2- An EFL reading comprehension test for fourth year primary stage pupils (designed by the researcher).
3- Activities based on the shared reading strategy to develop EFL reading comprehension skills for fourth year primary stage pupils.

4. The shared reading strategy

The researcher applied a pre-test in EFL reading comprehension on the control and experimental groups. The findings revealed pupils' deficiency in reading comprehension skills. To address this issue, an intervention was implemented in the experimental group through the use of shared reading strategy to teach the designed lessons which contained various activities aiming at enhancing the targeted skills. The post-test was conducted on both groups after the intervention, and the findings indicated significant improvement in the EFL reading comprehension skills of the participants in the experimental group, indicating the effectiveness of the shared reading strategy in developing the EFL reading comprehension skills.

5. Findings

Findings of the study are in relation to the study hypotheses.

5.1 Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one stated that there was a statistically significant difference at (≥ 0.05) between the mean scores of the control and experimental group in the post-application of the EFL reading comprehension test for fourth year primary stage pupils in favor of the experimental group. To calculate the t-test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group (two independent groups) on the reading comprehension posttest, the SPSS program was used and to calculate the t-test as shown in table (1).

Table (1)

T-test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the posttest of reading comprehension

Post-test	The group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	The calculated significance level	significance level
Reading comprehension	The experimental group.	41	20.707	6.19372	0.9673	13.084	73	0.000	0.05
	The control group.	34	6.852	2.51218	0.4308				

It is evident from table (1) that the t-value is higher than the tabular value at 73 degrees of freedom, which indicates a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group. Therefore, this proves the validity of the hypothesis.

5. 2 Hypothesis two

Hypothesis two stated that there was a statistically significant difference at (≥ 0,05) between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post application of the EFL reading comprehension test for fourth year primary stage pupils in favor of the post application. To calculate the t-test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the reading comprehension pre and posttest (paired group), the SPSS program was used and to calculate the t-test as shown in table (2).

Table (2)

Calculating the t-test between the mean scores of the experimental group

on the pre-posttest of EFL reading comprehension

Pre and post-test	The experimental group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	The calculated significance level	significance level
Reading comprehension	Pre- test		5.682	3.4383	0.53697				
	Post- test	41	20.707	6.1937	0.96730	14.25	40	0.000	0.05

It is clear from table (2) that the t-value is higher than the tabular value at 40 degrees of freedom, which indicates a statistically significant difference in favor of the post-application. As a result, the hypothesis was proven to be valid.

To verify the effectiveness of the designed unit using the shared reading strategy in developing fourth year primary stage pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills, the researcher applied: 1- η2 equation, 2- Blake Modified Gain Ratio.

1- η2 equation.

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df} \longrightarrow$$ (1) Al-Barqi (2012)

Where:

η^2 = effect size for the unit.

t = the calculated t from the t test.

df = free degrees for the experimental group.

Table (3)

The effect size for the experimental group pupils in reading comprehension

t- value	df	η2	Significance
14.25	40	0.84	Acceptable

For η2 to be acceptable, it must be 0.14 or more. By calculating the value of η2 from the previous equation, its value was 0.84, which is higher than the acceptable limit, as shown in table (3). As a result, the increase in reading comprehension is due to teaching the designed unit utilizing the shared reading strategy.

2- Blake Modified Gain Ratio.

$$MG = \frac{M2 - M1}{P - M1} + \frac{M2 - M1}{P} \longrightarrow \quad (2) \quad Haridy$$

(2017)

Where:

M_2 = posttest mean

M_1 = pretest mean

P = total score

Table (4)

The modified gain ratio for the experimental group pupils in EFL reading comprehension

Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Total score	Modified gain ratio	Significance
5.6829	20.7073	28	1.209	Acceptable

Blake modified gain ratio must range between 1 and 2. Moreover, Blake suggests an acceptable value of 1.2 or higher so that unit efficiency can be considered acceptable. By calculating the value of MG from the previous equation, its value was 1.209, which is higher than the acceptable limit, as shown in table (4). As a result, the

increase in reading comprehension is due to teaching the designed unit utilizing the shared reading strategy.

The results of the current study reveal the validation of the previous hypotheses and the high value of the experimental intervention effect size on overall reading comprehension skills. By comparing the results of the reading comprehension test before and after the intervention for the experimental group, it appears that the mean scores of the pretest = 5.682 and the mean scores of the post-test = 20.707, which indicates a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre and post-test. As t-value = 14.25, which is higher than the tabular value at a significance level of 0.05, then it is proven that the shared reading strategy contributed to the reading comprehension level to increase for the experimental group pupils. Consequently, the results show that intervention using the shared reading strategy increased the EFL reading comprehension level of the experimental group pupils. Thus, the increase in reading comprehension may be due to the pupils' interest while applying the strategy practically. Moreover, the findings of this study are consistent with the study results of Leou, et al (2009), and Kristian and Asvio (2016) which asserted the positive influence of shared reading on developing reading comprehension skills.

6. Conclusions

The above-mentioned findings lead to several conclusions regarding the use of shared reading strategy in teaching and its impact on reading comprehension skills. Implementing the shared reading strategy proves to be instrumental in enhancing pupils' EFL reading comprehension skills and subskills. Additionally,

incorporating interactive games and activities adds dynamism to the learning environment, establishing a learning atmosphere that maintains active participation and communication. Moreover, shared reading strategy emerges as a multifaceted tool, not only enhancing comprehension but also nurturing a profound engagement with texts, contributing to a holistic and meaningful learning experience.

7. Recommendations

The following suggestions were made in light of the study findings: integrating reading comprehension skills and subskills into the textbook for pupils to practice and improve the different skills in a practical setting within the classroom; conducting teacher pre-and in-service training sessions by qualified experts in developing pupils' reading comprehension skills and subskills; delivering training sessions to pupils at different academic levels to boost their reading comprehension skills and subskills; conducting studies based on shared reading strategy for various skills, including listening and writing; and using the shared reading strategy to improve reading comprehension skills in pupils with learning difficulties.

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