

The Effectiveness of Assisted Extensive Reading on Developing Reading Comprehension Strategies for Ninth Graders in Gaza Governorate

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Abstract: The present paper investigated the effectiveness of an "Assisted Extensive Reading Program" on developing reading comprehension strategies, mainly; skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of words in context and inference. The target students are ninth graders in Gaza governorate. Three groups were assigned. Experimental group (1) received reading comprehension strategy training only. Group (2) received reading comprehension strategy training integrated with a nine-week period of extensive reading activities. Both the reading comprehension strategy training and the nine weeks of extensive reading activities consist the Assisted Extensive Reading Program. The control group was instructed in the traditional way. The results of the three groups pretest were almost similar. The post test results showed that the "Assisted Extensive Reading Program" proved to be absolutely efficient in developing reading comprehension strategies. On the other hand, strategy training alone was useful but to a limited extent. The traditional method was ineffective, in that, students made no significant progress.

اثر القراءة الحرة المكثفة على تنمية مهارات استيعاب المقروء لدى طالبات الصف التاسع بمحافظة غزة

ملخص: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بيان مدى فعالية البرنامج المكون من التدريب على استعمال استراتيجيات القراءة المدعمة بالقراءة الحرة لمدة 9 أسابيع على مدى النمو الممكن حدوثه في مهارات القراءة والاستيعاب لدى طالبات الصف التاسع بمدرسة السيدة رقية الأساسية العليا للبنات بمحافظة غزة. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن المهارات المستهدفة تحسينها هي التصفح لمعرفة فكرة النص أو الكتاب المقصود، ثم تفحص النص للبحث عن معلومات محددة، تخمين معاني الكلمات من خلال السياق دون العودة إلى القاموس، وأخيراً، استخدام مهارة الاستدلال لقراءة ما بين السطور واستنباط الدروس المستفادة.

حددت الدراسة ثلاث مجموعات عشوائية: المجموعة الضابطة من مدرسة مصطفى حافظ الأساسية العليا للبنات، والمجموعتان التجريبتان من مدرسة السيدة رقية الأساسية العليا للبنات. وقد تلقت المجموعة التجريبية (1) تدريب على مهارات القراءة والاستيعاب وتلقت المجموعة التجريبية (2) تدريبات على مهارات القراءة والاستيعاب ثم أعطيت الفرصة لممارسة تلك المهارات من خلال القراءة الحرة لمدة 9 أسابيع بمعدل 45 دقيقة يومياً. أجري امتحان تحصيلي قبلي وبعدي، وتبعهما تحليل إحصائي للحصول على النتائج قبل وبعد تنفيذ البرنامج. جاءت النتائج إيجابية بالنسبة

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للمجموعة التي تلقت التدريب على متغيرين (استراتيجيات القراءة والقراءة الحرة) حيث كان متوسط التحصيل في الامتحان القبلي = 8.600 وجاء المتوسط في الامتحان البعدي = 15.425 . بالنسبة للتدريب على مهارات القراءة التي تلقتها المجموعة التدريبية (1) فقد أدت إلى تحسن نسبي ليس ذات دلالة، حيث تراوحت نسبة التحسن من (47% - 63%) لكل مهارة على حده أي بمتوسط 55% لكل المهارات مجتمعة، بالنسبة للمجموعة الضابطة فقد كان مستوى التقدم ضعيف على كل المستويات

Introduction

What is meant by reading in this paper is not decoding letters but the complex interactive process through which readers can construct meaning. To illustrate, reading comprehension involves two main processes. The first is bottom up process that refers to the low cognitive strategies in use. In other words, it represents the reader's ability to decode letters, recognize words, then moves towards phrases, sentences and paragraphs. The second is the top down process which refers to the reader's ability to involve comprehension strategies represented in predicting, skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of vocabulary in context, inference, and monitoring. Cohen (1994, pp. 213 - 214) stated :

bottom-up reading focuses exclusively on what is in the text itself, and especially on the words and sentences in the text. This process is also called *text-based* or *data-driven* reading. Top down means approaching a text on the bases of prior content, or textual schemata that the reader might have with regard to that particular text.

As experienced teachers, the researchers believe that the Palestinian students are in bad need to possess those cognitive and metacognitive strategies/skills. The researchers attribute this deficiency to the inefficient use of reading comprehension strategies and to the shortage of vocabulary. Findings of previous researches confirmed the importance of training students on using reading comprehension strategies to improving their comprehension.

(Chamot, Kupper, 'O'Malley, Russoand ,Stewner,1985, p. 561) stated "students without metacognitive strategies are essentially learners without direction."

However, other researchers assured the importance of practicing extensive reading as a means of developing reading comprehension strategies/skills. Eskey, (2002, pp. 5-9) said "To become skillful readers, apprentice readers must read a lot. Engaging in extensive reading behavior is a prerequisite for developing reading skills." In addition to that, Krashen (2006) declared :

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English learning programs should give strong consideration to the teaching of extensive reading (ER) in order to help EFL learners not only to enhance their reading abilities and general English proficiency but also make it is easier for them to find pleasure in reading."

The researchers' long experience and their awareness of the learner's need in Gaza city and findings of previous studies inspired them to combine the two approaches; reading comprehension strategy training and extensive reading practice, in a program titled as "The Effectiveness of Assisted Extensive Reading Program on Developing Reading Comprehension Skills in the Ninth Graders in Gaza Governorate"

Statement of the Problem:

The problem is that EFL students in grade 9 in Gaza governorate are in shortage of the strategies/skills to cope with reading comprehension. So, they perform poorly and receive low scores on reading comprehension tests.

Research Question:

- How effective is the " Assisted Extensive Reading Program" on developing reading comprehension strategies of the ninth graders in Gaza Governorate?

Research Hypotheses:

In order to address the research question, seven corresponding non-directional research hypotheses were tested.

1. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of skimming among the students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies only (experimental group1), student who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies integrated with extensive reading; (experimental group2) and the control group who is taught comprehension in the traditional approach.
2. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of scanning among the students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies only (experimental group1), students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies integrated with extensive reading; (experimental group2) and the control group who is taught comprehension in the traditional approach.
3. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of guessing meaning of words in context among the students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies only (experimental group1), students who learn comprehension through

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training on reading comprehension strategies integrated with extensive reading; (experimental group2) and the control group who is taught comprehension in the traditional approach .

4. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the level of inference among the students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies only (experimental group1), students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies integrated with extensive reading; (experimental group2) and the control group who is taught comprehension in the traditional approach.
5. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in mean level of total degree for the four strategies among the students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension strategies only (experimental group1), students who learn comprehension through training on reading comprehension integrated with extensive reading; (experimental group2) and the control group who is taught comprehension in the traditional approach.
6. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in mean scores for the four strategies and the mean of total degree of the strategies between pre and post application for experimental group1.
7. There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in mean level for the four strategies and the mean of total degree of the strategies between pre and post application for experimental group2.

Definitions of Variables and Terms

• **Assisted Extensive Reading**

The term refers to training the target students on using reading comprehension strategies; skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of words in context and inference, on one hand, and flooding them with books appropriate to their levels in order to read for enjoyment and to practice the target reading strategies, on the other hand

• **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension refers to the target students' ability to interact with a texts they read employing skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of words in context and inference to construct meaning or to convey the authors' messages.

• **Reading Strategies**

Reading strategies refer to skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of in context used by the target readers to understand texts they are .

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- **Extensive Reading:**

Extensive reading refers to provide the target students means to read a large amount of easy interesting material appropriate to their different levels just for pleasure. Readers are not exposed to exams.

- **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to ninth graders, Roquia female High elementary school in Gaza Governorate. It was implemented in the second semester 2009.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension is one of the main components of this study. It is belied by theories represented in "Schemata Theory" which refers to the previous knowledge, experience, concepts and beliefs that a reader may bring to help constructing meaning of new texts. An other theory is the "Mental Model Theory" which describes the complete reading process from recognizing words until constructing a representation of the whole meaning of a text. The last is "Propositional Theory" which point out that any text consists of a chain of related sentences and each sentence bears a small idea that participates in building the whole idea.

Reading strategies are other components of this study. They were defined by

Nishino (2007, p. 77) as "Reading strategies can be broadly defined as the mental operations performed by a reader to achieve the goal of textual comprehension.

However, students should be provided with the opportunity to practice reading strategies through extensive reading. According to (Carel and Carson, Day and Bamford, Krashen, 1982/ 1993) extensive reading is characterized by the following:

- students read as much as possible. Learners choose what they want to read. Freedom is one of the main principles that distinguish extensive reading from intensive reading or text books. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
- Students should not use dictionaries. Using dictionaries interrupts readers and breaks their enjoyment. They have to guess the meaning of the key words and to skip or ignore unnecessary words. Motivation is one of the key factors to success of an extensive reading program. Extensive reading is based on learner's responsibility and initiative, it encourages students to manage their own learning and to move themselves from passive recipients to active producers.

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As a result of the upper mentioned characteristics ,students may get various benefits such as improving reading ability, reading speed, fluency and reading comprehension, aural and oral skills, increasing reader's range of vocabulary , improving language structure ; written performance, grammar, vocabulary, spelling .

Previous Studies:

'Fostering Reading Comprehension in Fifth grade by Explicit Instruction in reading strategies and peer tutoring' This study was led by Vankeer (2004). Vankeer is a researcher from Ghent University in Belgium. The main objective of the study was to investigate the effect and durability of explicit reading strategies instruction on fifth graders' reading comprehension achievement. The participants were twenty-two fifth grade teachers and their 454 students chosen from different schools in Flanders. They were divided into an experimental group who received explicit reading comprehension strategy training and the control groups which was taught comprehension in the traditional way. Teachers were trained how to lead the study and provided with the aims and organization of the interventions in addition to the materials; lessons, activities, plans and techniques. Prior to the implementation, the underlying theoretical background of the innovation was clarified. Six strategies were assigned to be trained on. They were the following: (1) activating background knowledge (2) predicting what the text could be about. (3) distinguishing the main ideas from the supporting ideas. (4) Monitoring and regulating (5) Classifying text genre and adjusting reading behavior needed. Those strategies were used pre, during and after reading. A pre test and a post test were used to collect data. The hypotheses of the study stated that explicit reading strategies instruction would enhance reading comprehension scores more than traditional comprehension activities which are characterized by strong emphasis on questioning students after reading a text. The findings supported the effectiveness and the feasibility of the explicit reading strategy teaching. The post test scores of the experimental groups outperformed the scores of the control group.

Mi (1998) conducted a study titled as 'Teaching Reading Strategies in an Ongoing EFL University Reading Classroom'. The target participants were foreign language university students. The target strategies to be trained on were the following: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The following research questions were addressed: "Does strategy training enhance the reading ability of EFL college students?" If so, "How is the effectiveness of reading strategy training related to the reading proficiency of the students?" "Which types of reading comprehension questions are

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affected by strategy training?". A pre and a post test were administered to collect data. The result indicated that students performance improved in grasping the main ideas and in inference strategies more than answering detailed questions.

The current researchers think that the differences in the level of improvement depends on the nature of each strategy, the type of training students receive, in addition to individual differences and the affective factors which imply different types of performance.

However, explicit strategy training in Mi study improved the students reading comprehension performance. .

'Combining Extensive Reading and Intensive Vocabulary Study in a Japanese university.' is a title of a study conducted by Rosszell (2007). Rosszell investigated the claim that extensive reading ,alone, can provide L2 learners with the vocabulary they need. He designed a study on 40 intermediate EFL students in a Japanese university. The students were divided into two groups. They were labeled as **extensive reading +(ER+)** group and **extensive reading (ER)** group. (ER+) group was involved in graded readers accompanied with supplementary discussion and intensive vocabulary study. The (ER) group read graded readers and completed a short weekly report. Data were collected by a pre and a post test. ANOVA test revealed a statistically significant advantage for (ER+) group over the (ER) group. This result means that extensive reading assisted with intensive study and supplementary exercises of texts is superior to both extensive reading alone or intensive reading alone..

AlShwairkh who defended a ph.D dissertation in (2004) titled as **'Learning vocabulary through Internet reading: Approaches and attitudes of ESL MBA students'**. The dissertation investigated the impact of extensive reading on improving reading comprehension strategies/skills as well as vocabulary knowledge. The dissertation was a qualitative research that described the approaches and attitudes of ESL business students towards learning vocabulary through extensive internet reading program which lasted for 8 week period. The participants were advanced ESL MBA students. They were divided into two groups of 9 students each. Both groups were exposed to pretest and post test and were asked to fill questionnaires to assess their vocabulary size. The participants practiced net extensive reading for two months. They employed some common vocabulary learning strategies including guessing word's meaning in context, using dictionaries and keeping a vocabulary notebook. The result showed improvement in the participants vocabulary level and positive attitudes toward internet extensive reading .

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'Can Extensive Reading Help Unmotivated Students of EFL Improve?'

is a study conducted by Mason and Krashen (1997a). It investigated whether so called bad students or failures in EFL could improve with an extensive reading program. The participants in the study were female students from Osaka university in Japan. The groups were assigned; experimental and control group. The experimental group was designed for students who had failed EFL classes. The control group was chosen from average students. In the first semester both groups received the same traditional curriculum which included reading selections, comprehension questions, vocabulary, grammar and translation exercises. Students in the control group did well, but the performance of experimental group was poor and one third of the students dropped the class before the end of the semester.

The experimental group received treatment along second semester. They spent the whole semester reading graded reader and practicing other extensive reading activities such as writing synopses and keeping a diary to record their feelings, opinions and progress. Teachers encouraged the students to read and discuss what they read with them. The average number of books read was about thirty. At the end of the course a post test was administered. Although the control group outperformed the experimental group, the mean of the progress achieved by the experimental group in the post test was higher than the mean progress achieved by the control group. As to students attitude toward English language, many of the reluctant students of EFL became eager readers. Several wrote in their diaries that they were amazed at their improvement.

Keiko (1999) reported an abstract of his study titled as 'Reading Strategies and Extensive Reading in EFL Classes'. He argued that the results of an investigation on reading strategies and extensive reading of EFL students indicated that reading a lot in both L1 and L2/FL becomes the most important factor for improving reading skills rather than just teaching reading strategies. He stated that extensive reading gives learners rich background knowledge, vocabulary recognition, high motivation for more reading, the basic skills of rapid reading, discovery of reading strategies by learners themselves, and increases the ability of guessing meaning of words in context. This abstract confirms the current researchers' belief that learners develop their use of reading strategy through extensive reading.

'Developing Reading Fluency in EFL: How Assisted Repeated Reading and Extensive reading Affect Fluency Development' is a study implemented by three researchers; Taguchi and Takayasu and Gorsuch (2004) in Texas Tech University. The study aimed to investigate the impact

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of assisted repeated reading and extensive reading on developing fluency, word recognition and reading comprehension. To accomplish that job, they conducted a study on 20 participants. The participants were Japanese students who were learning English as a foreign language at a university near Tokyo. They were five males and fifteen females. All were first-year Japanese linguistics students. As a part of their academic program, the participants had five 90-minute English classes a week designed to improve reading, writing, speaking, listening and grammar. Most of the participants were 18 years old with two exceptions; one was 19 and the other was 60. They were divided into two groups; one practiced repeated reading, the other practiced extensive reading. Both types of reading were assisted with skill building activities. The course lasted for 17 weeks. The study questioned the following points:

- Is Repeated Reading effective in developing fluency in beginning-level FL readers?
- Is Repeated Reading as effective as Extensive Reading to develop reading fluency of beginning level FL readers?
- Is Repeated Reading as effective as Extensive Reading to improve comprehension of beginning-level FL readers?
- How do beginning-level FL readers perceive the effectiveness of each method?

The instruments used were a pre test and a posttest by which the researchers checked the participants' scores in fluency, word recognition and reading comprehension. Moreover, a questionnaire was used to check the students' perception of the two methods. The results of the study showed that assisted repeated reading is as effective as assisted extensive reading to enhance second and foreign language readers' fluency and to improve their word recognition and reading comprehension. Moreover, learners became independent readers. They read faster and enjoyed reading.

Smith (2006) conducted a study titled as '**Comparison of "Pure" Extensive Reading with Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading with Supplementary activities**' in Taiwan to compare the effectiveness of three approaches relevant to reading comprehension. The questions of the study were:

- Can extensive reading be improved by adding supplementary activities?
- Is ER more effective than intensive reading?
- Is extensive reading enough to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary gains?

The duration of the study was one academic year. All the participants were first year junior college English majors. They were all 15 – 16 years old.

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Three experimental groups were designed each of (51) students. The first group received extensive reading practice. The second group received intensive reading only. The third group received extensive reading + supplementary activities. At the end of the first semester an achievement test was conducted to measure the progress the students made. The results of the first group which received extensive reading activities was superior to the results of the other two groups. In contrast, at the end of the second semester the scores of the third group which received extensive reading + supplementary activities outperformed the scores of the other two groups. These results mean that extensive reading + supplementary monitoring activities is more effective than other practices.

It is believed that the results after the second term are more convincing. To explain, supplementary activities enabled students to recognize their progress and gave them hints of seriousness of the whole job. According to the current researchers, The claim that extensive reading is reading for enjoyment and that supplementary activities may take reading time and reduce enjoyment is not fully accepted. Actually, lots of people enjoy working seriously.

Summary of the Findings of the Previous Studies discussed in This Paper

The majority of the previous studies confirms the effectiveness of extensive reading programs on developing reading comprehension, vocabulary and other language skills at all ages and at all stages of education.

Reservations were announced by some authors who found that extensive reading should be preceded or accompanied with reading comprehension strategy training.

Some studies advised to integrate extensive and intensive reading to develop comprehension strategies.

Most of the studies assured the need to support extensive reading with supplementary following up activities.

Positive affective results always accompanied the extensive program activities.

METHODOLOGY

The Design of the Study:

The study was designed according to the experimental approach. Three groups were assigned as the participants of the study; experimental group1, experimental group2 and the control group. The "Assisted Extensive Reading Program" represented the independent variable falling in two categories; the first is reading comprehension strategy training, the second is

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extensive reading activities. Experimental group1 received reading comprehension strategy training only. The training lasted for two weeks. Experimental group2 received both reading comprehension strategy training for two weeks and extensive reading activities for nine weeks. The control group was instructed in the traditional method.

Sampling Procedures:

The sample of the study consisted of (111) students distributed into three groups. Two experimental groups consisting of (70) students and one control group consisted (41) students. The experimental groups were randomly chosen from ninth graders in Roqia High Elementary Female School in Gaza governorate where the researcher works as a head teacher. The control group was chosen randomly from ninth graders in Mustafa Hafiz School.

| Group | Experimental(1) | Experimental(2) | Control |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| count | 30 | 40 | 41 |

The Participants: The participants were 14 -15 years old. They represented three classes that were chosen randomly out of ten classes in the mentioned schools. The class chosen from Mustafa Hafiz high elementary female school was assigned as a control group and the other two classes chosen from Roquia high elementary female school were assigned as the experimental groups. Each of those classes was arranged at the beginning of the year to contain the three levels; high, average and low achievers. These participants were enrolled at governmental schools at 6 years old. Since then, they had been receiving English classes three times a week, 45 minutes each in the low elementary stage and five classes in the high elementary stage. None of them had received private education. The three groups were almost equivalent in the economic, cultural and social levels. Age variable of the sample was also controlled .

The Instruments

A pretest and a post test were the instruments used to collect data in relevance. To illustrate, a pretest was carried out by the three groups; the control group and two experimental groups. The test was built according to the criteria of the test specifications.

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The Program Implementation

First: Teachers' Role

-Explicit Strategy Instruction

The teacher explained to participants when, how and why to use the strategy.

-Modeling

They read aloud and thought aloud to familiarize students with the characteristics and the mental activities that should accompany each of the target strategies

-Guided Practice

The teachers guided and assisted the students as they learn how and when to apply the strategy. They led discussions, elicited students answers and responses to raise their awareness of the strategies in concern

Assessing Success

The teacher helped the students to assess their success in using the strategies and to assess how useful strategy use was. They monitored the students before, during and after the silent reading of the assigned texts. They advised their students, gave direction and facilitated difficulties encountered them. They encouraged students through prompts, without giving direct answers.

Second: Students Role

Skimming

Students were trained to skim the target texts to get the gist and the main ideas carrying out the following activities:

- 1.They read the title if any to help them get an idea of what the passage was about.
- 2.They read the first paragraph.
- 3.They read the first sentence of each paragraph.
- 4.They read any headings or sub-headings.
- 5.They examined the accompanied pictures or phrases and words that were in boldface, italics or shaded
- 6.They read the summary or the last paragraph.

Scanning

Students scanned the texts for specific pieces of information. They answered questions which were already prepared by the researcher. When the researchers felt that their students had formed a background about the scanning strategy, they encouraged them to form their own scanning questions before scanning the text. Yes/ no questions were not encouraged. On the other hand, the students were encouraged to construct and answer

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when , why , how and what questions because they deepen students' understanding of the text. This activity was done in group work to help low achievers understand the texts and to improve their attitudes towards reading.

Guessing Meaning of Words in context

To develop students' abilities in guessing meaning of word from context, they were trained on the following activities:

- 1.To find clues that might lead to the meaning of the new word. These clues may be found in the surrounding sentence, in the paragraph, or understood from the whole text.
- 2.They were trained to analyze words into their components; root word and affixes.
- 3.The researchers focused upon word homophones providing rich information about how each target word is used in a variety of contexts, students had to recognize different meanings of the same words in different contexts. To do that, they practiced the following activities:
 - looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and finding relations between the word and the surrounding clues.
 - looking at the wider context of the unknown word and recognize the relation between the word and the whole topic.
 - finding the part of speech of the unknown word.
 - guessing the meaning of the word or the nearest meaning which enabled them to understand the text.
 - checking whether their guessing was correct.

Inference

Students were trained to go behind the literal words to get the hidden message the author wanted to convey. To achieve that, they practiced thinking before, while, and after reading leading the following activities:

1. predictions and guesstimate by using text clues; titles , pictures and keywords.
2. employing their prior knowledge to anticipate the contents of the text.
3. identifying and recognizing pronouns and their antecedents.
4. using clues in the text to identify personalities, beliefs and motivation of characters
5. trying to understand the relations among characters.
6. figuring out the bias if the author shows any.
7. interacting with the text by having expectations about its purposes
8. reflecting on the author's hidden purpose and concluding lessons to be learnt from texts.

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It is worth noting that these strategies need long, continuous conscious and subconscious practice through extensive and intensive reading. They are not something that can be taught on Monday and tested on Friday. They must be interwoven throughout all areas of the program. Rivers (1986, p. 215) stated " reading with direct comprehension and with fluency is a skill which must be taught in progressive stages, and practiced regularly with carefully graded material."

Extensive Reading Activities

Extensive reading activities were practiced by experimental group2 only. Before students started the extensive reading activities, the researchers had familiarized them with the types and the levels of books in the school library intended to be used in the program. In addition to that, they taught them how to choose the books which were suitable to their levels confirming the free book choice. they advised them to change any book whenever they felt that it was difficult or not interesting. She told the students how to form an idea about the book through investigating the title, pictures on the cover and to skim inside the book for the subtitles and pictures to check whether the book was interesting. Furthermore, they assured the necessity of making effort to guess meaning of new words in context and skipping words which were not key ones. They advised them not to use dictionaries for unknown words in order not to interrupt themselves and not to break their reading enjoyment. They familiarized the students with the items in the learner's log. The items were represented in writing short summaries and some of the new words they learnt , in addition to writing their reflection or the lesson they learnt from the books they read.

Class extensive reading was practiced in regular steps and in different forms of activities as the following:

The First Extensive Reading Step

listen and Read to Sing

The first step in extensive reading activities was "listen and read to sing". Students listened and watched action songs shown on video. They resang them happily. The purpose was to improve their attitudes towards English language and to enjoy themselves singing in English. The hidden purpose which they were not aware of was to enrich their vocabulary, to improve their English structure and to build self confidence in relevance to learning English.

The Second Extensive Reading Step

Controlled Reading Activity

The second step was a controlled reading activity started with everyone in the class reading the same book together. The book was easy enough for

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everyone in class to understand. The researcher used the LCD set with electronic books to enable all the students to read the same book at the same time. She did that to generate excitement about reading by sharing fun and discussion with the book read and to create a co-operation atmosphere between low and high achievers in the class. To demonstrate this activity, the teacher read aloud as a model to her students. After that, some students read aloud then all the class were encouraged to read silently. Students were incited to practice reading strategies including activating schemata, reacting, discussing, asking and answering questions about the main characters and the main ideas.

The Third Extensive Reading Step

Big Book Reading

students read big books provided with attractive pictures. Reading in groups was encouraged to facilitate learning.

The Fourth Extensive Reading Step

Free Reading Practice

Gradually the students were let free to choose the books they liked. They were advised to start with easy short books. Regular fifteen to twenty minute period of silent reading in class was demonstrated. This silent reading has been said to help structural awareness development, build vocabulary and promote students' confidence in understanding the target language. From time to time, the teacher refreshed the students' information concerning reading comprehension strategies. The target students were divided into groups. The groups were not homogenous. In contrast, they included high achievers, average and low achievers. The purpose was to encourage peer learning.

The down listed activities were practiced during the free reading stage:

- Loud Reading

Shorter time was devoted to loud reading which was done either by the teacher or by the students themselves. Students' loud reading might last from 1 to 2 minutes each. Smith (1982) and Teale (1984) reported that reading aloud to children help them to grasp the structure of stories better, enhance their comprehension of texts and propel them towards becoming independent readers.

-Role play of the stories

Learners who read the same story may work together to write a script of the story and to play it in front of the class. The learners wrote short plays especially about Gaza war, they acted them in the class and in front of the school audience. It was really a motivating activity, particularly for low achievers who became able to play simple short roles in public.

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- Retelling procedure

students retold texts or stories they had just read to their peers. It is an activity that provided the students with the opportunity to listen to each other and discuss the retold texts. This means that each student could have an idea about the books read by her peers. (Brown & Cambourne 1988, p. 1) reported "Related to peer interaction is retelling procedure. This procedure is recommended to provide an extremely powerful learning activity for practicing a range of literacy skills; reading, writing, listening, talking, thinking, interacting, comparing, matching, selecting , organizing information, remembering and comprehending)". It is worth noting that discussion was done after each reading activity to enhance students' understanding and enjoyment.

- Home reading

In addition to the class reading and activities, students were allowed to borrow books for home reading.

The upper mentioned activities were conducted in a spirit of positive expectations within a relaxed, largely informal classrooms. This atmosphere copes with students' tendency to take The Assisted Extensive Reading Program less seriously than classes that are examination oriented.

The Fifth Extensive Reading Step: Post Reading Activities

Researches relevant to extensive reading has also shown the usefulness of reading complementary activities. They are usually done after reading. It is necessary to mention that not all authors who contributed to extensive reading literature agreed that post reading tasks should be included in the extensive reading programs. On the other hand, Swain (1985) others provided support to the use of post reading tasks. Yu (1993, pp. 1-9) announced, "we feel that post reading tasks, if carefully designed, can serve useful purposes." However, the current researchers' opinion is that post reading activities are necessary. They believe that even when people are playing chess or tennis table just for enjoyment and pleasure, they achieve more pleasure and enjoyment when they have sense of success or making progress. Then the post reading activities are the tools by which students can observe their progress. It is logical that progress is a source of happiness. Post reading activities are useful in the following ways:

- They reinforce what students have learned from their reading.
- They give students a sense of progress.
- They help peers' interaction and encourage sharing information about what has been read.

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Types of Post Reading Activities :

-Monitoring

- Students had to fill a form called "Learner's Log". The learner's Log included the title of the book, the author's name, the number of the pages. Moreover, students had to comment on the significance of pictures in the book, to point out the main characters, to express their own opinions about the characters (good or bad) and to justify their opinions. In addition to that they had to list some of the words and expressions they learned from the book and to write a very short summary which represented the gist of the books they read.

- Book Conference

Book conference is another aspect of monitoring. Book conferences were held with students weekly. Each student talked about the books she read. This conference was as brief as 10 to 15 minutes for the whole class.

Students were aware that monitoring activities were done as a way of displaying their progress, rather than a way of assessing their performance.

-Teacher's Records

As the teachers were monitoring the program implementation, they kept their own records about the students' progress, the number of the books they read and the students' attitudes towards reading.

-Continual Assessment

After each two weeks, a short test was given to the students to check whether they achieved progress relevant to the four assigned skills (skimming, scanning, guessing meaning of new words and inference or drawing conclusion). It is necessary to point out that students were not aware that they were demonstrating a test of their progress.

-The Evaluation Stage:

First: The post test was carried out by the three target groups. The results were collected and analyzed statistically.

Results and discussion

The main hypothesis is "How effective is an Assisted Extensive Reading Program on developing reading comprehension strategies in the ninth graders in Roquia High Elementary Female School in Gaza governorate?"

The test results were positive. In that, the experimental group made progress at all levels tested in the study.

The First Hypothesis is relevant to the impact of the program on skimming strategy.

To test this hypothesis, the researchers used One Way ANOVA test. The following table shows the One Way ANOVA results.

Table (14): One Way ANOVA test results of differences among the three groups in the skimming strategy.

| strategy | Variance resource | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig . | Sig. level |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| skimming | Among Groups | 128.022 | 2 | 64.011 | 21.179 | .000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | Within Groups | 326.411 | 108 | 3.022 | | | |
| | Total | 454.432 | 110 | | | | |

Table (14) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) among the three groups on the level of skimming strategy.

To determine direction of the differences ,the researchers used Scheffe test.

Table (15): Scheffe test to know the direction of the differences among the three groups in skimming scope

| groups | Experimental Group 2 Mean = 4.000 | Experimental Group 1 Mean =2.833 | Control group Mean =1.487 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Experimental Group 2 Mean = 4.000 | - | 1.167* | 2.512* |
| Experimental Group 1 Mean =2.833 | - | - | 1.346* |
| Control group Mean =1.487 | - | - | - |

* sig. at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Table (15) shows that there are statistically significant differences between experimental group2 and both experimental group1 and the control group, in favor of experimental group2, and there are statistically significant differences between experimental group1 and the control group in favor of the experimental group1

This progress is an evidence of the effectiveness of the program, ,especially, the students' ability to make use of skimming strategy. It appeared that students took help of the titles, subtitles and the pictures that accompanied the texts to point out the main idea of the texts they read.

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This result conforms to the results of the previous studies which assured the effectiveness of explicit reading strategy training on developing the use of reading comprehension strategies. Some of these studies were conducted by and (Akeyel , Mi ,Salataci, Vankeer and 1998/2004)

The Second Hypothesis tested the effectiveness of the program on **scanning strategy**.

To test this hypothesis, the researcher used One Way ANOVA test.

Table (16): One Way ANOVA style results of differences among the three groups in scanning strategy.

| scope | Variance resource | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Sig. level |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|--------------|
| scanning | Among Groups | 52.185 | 2 | 26.093 | 11.017 | .000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | Within Groups | 255.779 | 108 | 2.368 | | | |
| | Total | 307.964 | 110 | | | | |

Table (16) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) sig. among the three groups on the level of scanning strategy.

To determine the direction of the differences, the researcher used Scheffe test.

Table (17): Scheffe test to show the direction of the differences among three groups in scanning

| Groups | Experimental Group 2 Mean = 4.200 | Experimental Group 1 Mean = 3.066 | Control group Mean = 2.634 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Experimental Group 2 Mean = 4.200 | - | 1.133* | 1.566* |
| Experimental Group 1 Mean = 3.066 | - | - | 0.433 |
| Control group Mean = 2.634 | - | - | - |

* sig. at ($\infty \leq 0.05$)

Table (17) shows that there are statistically significance differences between experimental group2 and both experimental group1 and the control group in favor of experimental group2 and there are simple differences between experimental group1 and the control group on the level of scanning in favor of experimental group1 ,but the differences were not statistically significant. However, These findings mean that there was a tendency for the

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improvement in relation to the amount of training they received. It is worth noting that these results did not match the findings of the previous studies which assured the effectiveness of strategy training. In contrast it conformed to the results of previous studies and the beliefs which assured the necessity of integrating strategy training with extensive reading to achieve the desired development. Hedge (2003, p. 202) who reported, "it is only through more extensive reading that learners can gain substantial practice in operating these strategies more independently on a range of materials."

The current researchers have attributed the inconsistency between the results scored by group1 and the findings of the previous studies to specific variables in Gazan context represented in the following:

Lack of Practice: It is clear from group (1) scores that the twelve texts and the two weeks assigned for practicing reading strategies were not enough to achieve the desired development. Moreover, the amount of reading practiced during strategy training was limited to short passages designed for the specific purpose of training. They were not widely different from the passages in the text books used for teaching student through the traditional approach. Cubukcu (2008) assured the idea of long time practice and big number of texts. She stated:

what we need to remember is that skilled readers don't achieve which strategy to use and when, where, why to employ a particular strategy overnight. They learn how to do this complex reading by doing it repeatedly, over long periods of time, with lots of different texts, and with lots of opportunities to practice applying strategies, and monitoring their progress and evaluating the effectiveness of different strategies for themselves in different reading situations.

Shortage of Motivation: As to the motivation variable, it was not sufficient. The training was conducted in the traditional class environment; the blackboard, the dust of the white chalk, stress and class restrictions. No change was brought to the classroom environment nor to the teaching method. Adding to that, Strategy training texts were imposed on learners in a way similar to what happens in the traditional approach. This means that the material was not of equal interest for all readers.

The Israeli war of January 2009 on Gaza Strip:

War disasters and grief shaded school life for sometime. Consequently, students' mental and affective performance declined. Nevertheless, On the level of scanning strategy, the result of present study, exactly, conformed to the findings of the study conducted by Mi (1989). That Study showed that strategy training improved students ability to recognize the main ideas and to get the gist through Skimming strategy more than answering detailed

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questions (scanning strategy). and that strategy training did not improve all the strategies equally. Similarly, the only significant difference recorded in favor of group one in the current study was in skimming strategy.

The Third Hypothesis is relevant to guessing meaning of words in context .To answer this hypothesis ,the researchers used One Way ANOVA test .

Table (18): One Way ANOVA Style results of differences among three groups in guessing meaning of new words in context strategy

| strategy | Variance resource | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Sig. level |
|--|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Guessing meaning of words from context | Among Groups | 49.789 | 2 | 24.894 | 12.582 | .000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | Within Groups | 213.689 | 108 | 1.979 | | | |
| | Total | 263.477 | 110 | | | | |

Table (18) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) sig. among the three groups on the level of guessing meaning of new words in context strategy. To determine the direction of difference, the researcher used Scheffe test.

Table (19): Scheffe test to know the direction of the differences among three groups in vocabulary strategy

| ups | Experimental Group 2 Mean =3.400 | Experimental Group 1 Mean =2.366 | Control group Mean =1.854 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Experimental Group 2 Mean =3.400 | - | 1.033* | 1.546* |
| Experimental Group 1 Mean =2.366 | - | - | 0.513 |
| Control group Mean =1.854 | - | - | - |

Table (19) shows that there are statistically significant differences between experimental group2 and both experimental group1 and the control group, in favor of experimental group2, and there are no statistically significant differences between experimental group1 and the control group although there are little differences in favor of experimental group1. The current researchers have attributed the lack of effectiveness of reading strategy training on group (1) performance in guessing meaning of words in context to the same reasons, above mentioned, relevant to the Gazan context. In addition to that, the specific characteristics of guessing meaning of

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vocabulary in context made the guessing task a hard one. To elaborate, Guessing meaning of vocabulary in context is not a shallow strategy. It is a lengthy interrelated process. Students need to recognize the clues which may lead to the meaning of the target word. They may relate it to main topic and to their own schemata. They have to discriminate root word from affixes. Moreover, they have to recognize the semantic and syntactic factors related to the word. It is both a cognitive and a metacognitive process which needs inference, monitoring, finding relations and regulating. Then, students are in need of long practice to master this strategy. In this concern Laufer (1997, pp. 20-34) stated,

Guessing word meaning in context is a higher-level strategy. Beginning and intermediate level FL/SL readers often display very different characteristics. They rely heavily on words as landmarks of meaning, less on background knowledge and virtually ignore syntax. In general, they don't seem to transfer good L1 reading strategies to L2 reading, and they often fail at using context to guess word meanings.

In the same concern, Twaddell (1973, p. 65) assured the necessity of long time practice to improve vocabulary. He declared, "there is no quick solution for vocabulary improvement since learning starts at the early stages with the limitation of vocabulary to some extent and increases through time."

Although this result did not conform to the results of the previous studies which assured the effectiveness of strategy training on developing vocabulary acquisition and guessing meaning of words from context, it conformed to Idding et al., (1999) study titled as "Improving Comprehension and Vocabulary Development Through Multiple Instructional Strategies and Technology" which strongly recommend the use of multiple instructional strategies and technology when teaching reading and language arts to elementary students. Furthermore, Idding reported that only %40 of students improved their vocabulary and reading comprehension by strategy training while %74 of the students improved their reading comprehension by strategy training and a home reading program. Idding results confirmed that reading strategy training was insufficient to improve the majority of students performance. In contrast, supplementary reading improved the performance of %74 of the students.

To conclude, motivation, long period of practice and extensive reading are crucial factors in improving learners' vocabulary and their ability to guess meaning of words in context.

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The Fourth Hypothesis tested the relation between the program and inference strategy

To answer this hypothesis the researchers used One Way ANOVA test.

Table (20): One Way ANOVA Style results of differences among three groups in inference strategy

| strategy | Variance resource | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Sig. level |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|--------------|
| inference | Among Groups | 79.272 | 2 | 39.636 | 18.164 | .000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | Within Groups | 235.665 | 108 | 2.182 | | | |
| | Total | 314.937 | 110 | | | | |

Table (20) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) sig. among the three groups in the inference strategy.

To determine the direction of the differences ,the researcher used Scheffe test. **able (21): Scheffe test to show the direction of the differences**

among three groups in inference strategy

| Groups | Experimental Group 2 Mean = 3.825 | Experimental Group 1 Mean = 2.500 | Control group Mean = 1.787 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Experimental Group 2 Mean = 3.825 | - | 1.325* | 1.947* |
| Experimental Group 1 Mean = 2.500 | - | - | 0.622 |
| Control group Mean = 1.787 | - | - | - |

* sig. at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Table (21) shows that there are statistically significant differences on the level of inference strategy between experimental group2 and both experimental group1 and control group in favor of the experimental group2 and there are no statistically significant differences between experimental group1 and the control group.

Repeatedly, the scores of the experimental group(2) were statistically distinguished from the other two groups, On the other hand, experimental group (1) scores were not statistically significant when compared to the scores of control group .

Those findings were within the range of expectations. In that, They resulted from the shortage of vocabulary which appeared to be the lowest in the scores of the pretest. Adding to that, the students showed notable weakness in guessing meaning of words in context. To explain, inference, which

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means reading between lines and drawing conclusions, is a metacognitive strategy based on a series of cognitive strategies. Jouini (2005, p. 94) described the difficulties readers face to infer or to draw conclusion. He stated:

second/foreign language learners often experience difficulties in retrieving the overt, explicating over all meaning of texts and fail to gauge their convert or implicit meaning. Failure to understand new words to relate the meaning of successive sentences and to retrieve macro- propositions of larger text units contributes to lack of understanding.

In present study, inference was obstructed by the lack of the students' ability to scan for detailed information or to guess meaning of words from context. This conforms to Wilkins belief (1972, p. 111) who ascertained the importance of vocabulary in achieving better comprehension. He stated, "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1986) also emphasized that words are essential, and the lack of them leads to feeling of insecurity in language learning

The Fifth Hypothesis tested the effectiveness of the program on the total degree of the four strategies

To test this hypothesis ,the researcher used One Way ANOVA test.

Table (22): One Way ANOVA test results of differences among three groups in total degree for the four strategies

| scope | Variance resource | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig . | Sig. level |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| total degree | Among Groups | 1175.592 | 2 | 587.796 | 27.219 | .000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | Within Groups | 2332.264 | 108 | 21.595 | | | |
| | Total | 3507.856 | 110 | | | | |

Table (22) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) sig. among the three groups in all the total degree of the four strategies To determine the direction of the differences, the researchers used Scheffe test.

Table (23): Scheffe test to know the direction of the differences among three groups in total degree for the four strategies

| groups | Experimental Group 2 Mean =15.425 | Experimental Group 1 Mean = 10.767 | Control group Mean =7.854 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Experimental Group 2 Mean =15.425 | - | 4.658* | 7.571* |
| Experimental Group 1 Mean = 10.767 | - | - | 2.913* |
| Control group Mean =7.854 | - | - | - |

* ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

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Table (23) shows that there are statistically significant differences on the level of the four strategies between experimental group2 and both experimental group1 and the control group in favor of experimental group2 and there are statistically significant differences between experimental group1 and the control group in favor of experimental group1.

The Sixth Hypothesis

There are statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the mean scores of the four strategies and the total degree of the strategies between pre and post applications for experimental group2

To test this hypothesis ,the researchers used T.test paired sample.

Table (24): T.test paired sample results of differences between pre and post test for experimental group2 for the four strategies and the total degree.

| scope | applied | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | Sig. (2tailed) | sig. level |
|--------------|---------|----|--------|----------------|--------|----------------|--------------|
| Skimming | pre | 40 | 2.200 | 2.078 | 5.125 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 40 | 4.000 | 1.569 | | | |
| scanning | pre | 40 | 2.700 | 1.091 | 6.624 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 40 | 4.200 | 1.181 | | | |
| vocabulary | pre | 40 | 1.675 | 0.917 | 9.274 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 40 | 3.400 | 1.257 | | | |
| inference | pre | 40 | 2.025 | 1.368 | 10.918 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 40 | 3.825 | 1.357 | | | |
| total scores | pre | 40 | 8.600 | 3.986 | 12.973 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 40 | 15.425 | 3.980 | | | |

Table (24) shows that there are statistically significant differences between the pre and the post test on the level of all the strategies and in the total scores in favor of the post test of experimental group 2

To calculate the effect size, the researcher used Eta square " η^2 " of the method by using the equation stated by Afana (2000 , p. 42)

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$$

Table (25): Standard table of size effect (η^2)

| Test | Effect volume | | |
|----------|---------------|--------|-------|
| | Small | Medium | Large |
| η^2 | 0.01 | 0.06 | 0.14 |

Table (26) "t" value eta square (η^2)for each scope and total degree (group2)

| Scope | t value | η^2 | Effect volume |
|--|---------|----------|---------------|
| Skimming | 5.125 | 0.402 | Large |
| Scanning | 6.624 | 0.529 | Large |
| Guessing meaning of words from context | 9.274 | 0.688 | Large |
| Inference | 10.918 | 0.753 | Large |
| total post test | 12.973 | 0.812 | Large |

The large size of the effect shown in Table (26) assures the effectiveness of the assisted extensive reading program on developing reading comprehension strategies; skimming, scanning, vocabulary, inference and on the level of the total degree of the post test demonstrated by group2.

The seventh hypothesis

There are statistically significant differences ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the mean scores of the four strategies and the total degree of the strategies between the pre and post applications for experimental group(1).

To test this hypothesis the researchers used T.test paired sample

Table (27): T.test paired sample results of differences between pre and post test for experimental group(1) for the four strategies and the total degree

| scope | applied | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | Sig. (2tailed) | sig. level |
|--|---------|----|--------|----------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| Skimming | pre | 30 | 2.133 | 1.776 | 4.583 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 30 | 2.833 | 1.967 | | | |
| scanning | pre | 30 | 2.733 | 1.596 | 0.970 | 0.340 | not sig. |
| | post | 30 | 3.067 | 1.780 | | | |
| Guessing meaning of words from context | pre | 30 | 1.333 | 0.922 | 3.670 | 0.001 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 30 | 2.367 | 1.497 | | | |
| inference | pre | 30 | 1.800 | 1.095 | 4.826 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 30 | 2.500 | 1.456 | | | |
| total score | pre | 30 | 8.000 | 4.034 | 5.067 | 0.000 | sig. at 0.01 |
| | post | 30 | 10.767 | 4.783 | | | |

Table (27) shows that there are statistically significant differences at (0.01) sig. between pre and post test applications of experimental group1 on the level of skimming, guessing meaning of new words in context, inference

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and on the level of the total degree of the four strategies but not on the level of scanning strategies. The differences are in favor of the post test.

To calculate the effect size, the researcher used Eta square " η^2 " using the previous equation. **Table (28) "t" value eta square (η^2)for each scope and total degree (group1)**

| Scope | t value | η^2 | Effect volume |
|--|---------|----------|---------------|
| Skimming | 4.583 | 0.420 | Large |
| Scanning | 0.970 | 0.031 | small |
| Guessing meaning of words from context | 3.670 | 0.317 | Large |
| Inference | 4.826 | 0.445 | Large |
| total post test | 5.067 | 0.470 | Large |

Table (28) shows that the effect size is large on the levels of skimming, guessing meaning of new words in context, inference and on the level of the total degree of the post test conducted by experimental group(1). In contrast the effect size of scanning strategy was small. Nevertheless, the large effect upper mentioned does not mean that strategy training alone was sufficient to develop reading comprehension strategies in the Gazan context. It was limited to the difference between the scores of the pre and the post-test. Statistically, the mean score of the four strategies in the post test ranged between (2.36 =%47) and (3.06=%61) and the total degree was (10.76=%53.8). This result does not qualify students to be good readers or to achieve the desired goals of learning English.

It is necessary to diagnose the status of the control group who was taught through the traditional approach. statistically , the effect size of development made by the this group was very small. These findings mean that the traditional approach was insufficient to develop reading comprehension strategies.

As illustrated above, testing the seven hypotheses resulted positively. These results conform to the results of the previous studies conducted by a massive number of researchers who highly evaluated the effectiveness of assisted extensive reading programs on developing reading comprehension strategies and other language skills. Some but not all of researchers were mentioned in chapter two such as (Day and Bamford , Gorsuch, Kitao , Krashen, Lai, Liem, Meena Singhal Rosszell 1982/2007).All of those researchers assured the necessity of integrating both reading strategy

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training with extensive reading to improve reading comprehension and other language skills.

The results, also, conformed to the findings of the previous studies which compared the effectiveness of extensive reading to the effectiveness of intensive reading on developing reading comprehension and proved the superiority of extensive reading to intensive reading. Some of those studies were conducted by (Rob and Susser, Sims , Smith, 1989 /2006).

The researchers can announce that The assisted extensive reading program proved to be a fertile teaching / learning environment that enhanced both conscious learning and subconscious acquisition of language skills. Conscious learning is represented in the explicit instruction of reading strategies. Subconscious acquisition of reading strategies / skills results from practicing the extensive reading program activities; flooding students with comprehensible input, free book choice and free voluntary reading. All the activities took place in a low anxiety enjoyable environment. Totally, the results of this study are in line with Krashen's views on the effect of voluntary extensive reading. Krashen cited in Hill and Holden (1990, p. 92) concluded that learners acquire language through reading. According to him, learners who do free voluntary reading make better progress in reading comprehension and vocabulary development. He strongly believes that learners who read for pleasure are better readers, better writers and have more grammatical competence.

It is worth noting that another improvement was recorded statistically on the level of the final general exam conducted by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in May (2009). The exam tested the four language skills and aspects. Out of the forty members of group (2), only one student scored under (20 out of 40) this means that the positive effect of the assisted extensive reading program widened to include the four language skills and aspects not only reading comprehension strategies.

It is necessary to cast light on the effect size took place in the performance of experimental group (2). Statistically , it was %90.

Furthermore, success was not only on the level of statistical scores of the pre and post tests but on a number of other areas such as the total number of books read by the participants which developed from zero to thirty books through long the period of the program implementation. Equally, the apparent changes in the students attitude towards reading were encouraging results. To elaborate, when the assisted extensive reading program was introduced to the students at the start of the program, many students appeared a little incredulous at the effectiveness of the idea of voluntary reading, especially, in English. Some doubted the possibility of any

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improvement in their English language proficiency. Adding to that, before starting the program, only three students thought that reading in English would be enjoyable while the others had never done it before. Nevertheless, by the time, most of the students showed eagerness to join the library to enjoy reading or even chatting in English. Twenty-five students stated that they started to read in English, precisely, for pleasure and the others often did.

Second: Interpretation of the Results Relevant to Reading Comprehension Strategy Training

The scores of experimental group1 who received reading comprehension strategy training ,only, showed no significant differences when compared to the scores of control group on three levels; scanning, guessing meaning of words from context and inference. The only significant difference was recorded on the level of skimming. However, their was tendency to improvement in relation to the training period of time. This tendency was expressed statistically by comparing the results of the pre test to the post test. As it was 2.733 pre test, 2.067 in the post test on scanning level, 1.333 pre test to 2.367 pre test on the level of guessing meaning of words from context and 1.8 to 2.5 on inference level.

Pedagogical Implication

1. Implementing extensive reading programs in Gazan schools is an advantage.
2. Training students to practice using reading strategies systematically is a necessity.
3. Efforts should be exerted to convince teachers and students with the importance of extensive reading as a step on the way to life long learning.
4. It is necessary to activate school libraries role and to provide them with the books that conforms to different students levels, interests and needs.
5. School and class environment should be provided with electronic equipment that may motivate students and enhance their enthusiasm and engagement in the educational process.
6. Techniques that could be alternative to the traditional approach should be implemented in Gazan English language classes to enhance better learning.

Conclusion

The virtue of Assisted Extensive Reading is superior to reading strategy training approach and to the traditional method.

Training students to reading comprehension strategies alone proved to be insufficient and its positive effect was limited to the minority not the majority of students. Few number of students showed tendency to improvement or became familiar of the tools that might enable them to comprehend the text they read. If they had been provided a motivating reading environment and long practice, they would have improved.

The traditional approach was ineffective in developing reading comprehension strategies.

Finally, these findings assure the current researchers' belief. "It is necessary to combine reading strategy training with extensive reading to improve reading comprehension and language skill in general."

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