Using Sheltered Instruction Strategies
to Develop EFL Secondary Stage Students' Reading Comprehension Skills

Dr. Heba Elsayed Abdelsalam Elghotmy

Lecturer of Curriculum and Methods of Teaching English,

Faculty of Education, Menoufia University, Egypt.

Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the effect of sheltered instruction strategies on developing EFL first year secondary stage students' reading comprehension skills. Seventy EFL first year secondary stage students were randomly assigned into two groups; experimental (n=35) and control (n=35). The experimental group used sheltered instruction strategies in EFL reading comprehension skills while the control group underwent regular reading instruction. The findings indicated that EFL first year secondary stage students of the experimental group outperformed those of the control group in their EFL reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: Sheltered Instruction Strategies, EFL Reading Comprehension Skills, Secondary Stage Students.

1. Introduction

EFL Reading skills are considered to be key elements for understanding context, boosting learning and enhancing education. Readers should know how to think as this helps them to deeply understand their subject matter and develop learning. Since reading is complicated, teaching it has been considered a challenging experience. This research primarily focuses on strategies that instruction could adopt in order to confront the demands of academic learning in a foreign language environment. Over the last decade, English as a Foreign Language training has

become an immersive and expanding area in the field of education (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Graddol, 2006). What has become the norm is to introduce the learner to sheltered instruction training as a result of the belief that language skills acquisition can be attained with a high degree of competence (Caine, 2008; DelliCarpini & Gulla, 2016; Molle, 2013; Mora-Flores, 2011; Wright, 2010).

Teaching English as a foreign language in a globalized world imposes constant innovations in methodological frameworks and resources. The inclusion of content in the EFL classroom seems to be unavoidable (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Tsai & Shang, 2010). What is more, the selection of content seems to play a significant role when borrowing, adapting or designing materials to guarantee the successful teaching of content. The dynamics within education force teachers to seek more effective and efficient strategies for teaching students who learn English as a foreign language (Caine, 2008; DelliCarpini & Gulla, 2016).

The depth of literature terminology would represent a language with many complexities in addition to those posed by the English language itself. In essence, the EFL learner is required to become not only a bilingual learner, but with literature added to the mix, a trilingual learner (Arkoudis, 2005; Lyster, 2007; Moeller, 2009). Thus, the acquisition of content becomes a nightmare for many EFL learners and a pedagogical challenge for teachers. Literature classroom discourse contributes in important ways to the development of students' understanding and comprehension skills. However, many EFL first year secondary stage students are not ready for literary discourse. Therefore, a classroom environment should be sheltered because its fundamental purpose is to assist students to reach a certain point of understanding or learning (Markos & Himmel, 2016; Nichols, 2012). This study is intended to show that the use of some sheltered based strategies can be regarded as a valid resource to teach literature in the EFL classroom.

1.1 Context of the problem

The problem of the current study is derived from the following resources:

First, the researcher interviewed 25 EFL secondary school teachers. Questions were about students' reading comprehension. Teachers assured that students find difficulty comprehending reading passages as they are not exposed to classroom strategies that support literacy situations. Besides, reading is taught within the regular strategies that are not adapted to the characteristics of EFL students and needs of the teaching of EFL contexts.

Second, the researcher conducted a pilot study to investigate the existence of the problem. A test, designed by the researcher, was administered to 50 EFL first year secondary stage students (See Appendix 1). The students were asked to read two passages and answer multiple choice questions and some open-ended ones based on the passages. The results indicated that students find difficulties in reading comprehension skills. This pilot study revealed that there was an obvious weakness among the EFL first year secondary stage students in reading literary texts.

1.2 Aim of the study

The current study aims to develop some EFL Reading Comprehension skills of first year secondary stage students through using sheltered instruction strategies.

1.3 Questions of the Study

The current study attempted to answer the following main question:

What is the effect of using sheltered instruction strategies on developing first year secondary stage students' EFL reading comprehension skills?

In answering this main question, the following sub-questions were also answered:

1. To what extent does the implementation of sheltered instruction strategies develop first year secondary stage students' EFL literal reading skills?

2. To what extent does the implementation of sheltered instruction strategies develop first year secondary stage students' EFL inferential reading skills?

3. To what extent does the implementation of sheltered instruction strategies develop first year secondary stage students' EFL critical reading skills?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the overall EFL reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group.

2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the literal reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group.

3. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the inferential reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group.

4. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the critical reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The current study might be significant to students as it could help them develop their EFL reading comprehension skills. It could also be helpful for teachers as it might raise their awareness of the importance and benefits of sheltered instruction and how it could be implemented effectively in EFL classrooms. Besides, the current study could provide them with some sheltered strategies that could help them enhance secondary school students' reading comprehension.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The current study was delimited to:

1. Only 70 of EFL first year secondary stage students in Shebin Elkoum, Menoufia Governorate.
2. The first four chapters of "Oliver Twist" literary work on first year secondary school students.
3. The first semester of the academic year 2017-2018.
4. EFL Reading Comprehension skills that include (literal, inferential, and critical).

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 EFL Reading comprehension skills

It is operationally defined in this study as the ability of first year secondary stage students to comprehend literary text at the literal, inferential, and critical levels, where the reader is viewed as a strategic learner who actively uses contextual clues and efficient learning strategies to construct meaning from the text (Fahrurrozi, 2017; Ferrer, VidalAbarca, Serrano, & Gilabert, 2017; Wing, 2017).

1.7.2 Sheltered instruction strategies

It is operationally defined in the current study as content-area instruction, presented in a way that allows EFL learners to comprehend the content while developing their English language skills (Crawford, Schmeister, & Biggs, 2008; Mora-Flores, 2011; Walters, 2012). They are instructional strategies that meet the linguistic needs of EFL learners (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002; Hansen-Thomas, 2008) to ensure EFL learners are able to achieve mastery of content while working toward mastery of the English language (Echevarria,

Richards-Tutor, Chinn, & Ratleff, 2011; D. Short, Vogt, & Echevarria, 2010; Vogt & Echevarría, 2007).

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading is the most important skill for those who learn a language, as it develops language vocabulary and culture, besides, maintaining fluency and competence in speaking, listening and writing (Barton-Hulsey, Sevcik, & Romski, 2017; Imperial, Praises, & Robles, 2016). Behjat (2011b) stated that reading is an active process, since it requires attention and it is not mechanical. The reader's feeling of purpose is the motivation and effective sustaining force. According to Granville (2001), the text is no longer the primary stimulus for comprehending. The comprehension process involves an understanding of words and how those words are used to create meaning. "Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow, 2002: p.11). True understanding happens when readers merge their thinking with the text, ask questions, draw inferences, think about what's important, summarize and synthesize. This enables them to use their new understanding to ask further questions and guide new learning. This active, constructive, strategic thinking process entails far more than simply retelling (Harvey & Goudvis, 2013, p. 1).

2.2 Importance of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the basic skill in every language classroom. It is the core of the curriculum in the foreign language learning. Young and Rasinski (2017) described it as a synthesis and an integration of two processes: identification and recognition of words and comprehension. It functions as a

means of increasing learners' knowledge of the language being learnt (Behjat, 2011:239). It facilitates curriculum teaching as it opens the door to the rest of the curriculum parts (DelliCarpini & Gulla, 2016; Douglas Fisher & Frey, 2015; Kissau & Algozzine, 2017). It is a creative process which has four distinctive and fundamental characteristics: it is purposeful, selective, anticipatory and based on comprehension (Ferrer et al., 2017; Imperial et al., 2016; Kaya, 2015).

2.3 Reading Comprehension Levels

The levels of reading comprehension process and their sub-skills can be summarized as follows:

Literal Comprehension

This is the most basic level of understanding involving a grasp of the factual information presented in the text. It is dependent upon sub-skills such as understanding word meanings, recognition of main idea and grasping of sequence and order of details or events (Basaraba, Yovanoff, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2013). This level depends greatly upon the learner's own previous knowledge and experience. It includes recognizing and recalling textually explicit, literal or denotative meaning, facts and details; identifying the main idea; and recognizing the sequence of a passage (Wing, 2017).

Inferential Comprehension

This level requires the reader to go beyond what is actually presented in the text and "reading between the lines" to predict and draw tentative conclusions (Basaraba et al., 2013; Yoonji, 2014). Sub-skills at this level include anticipating outcomes, making generalization, reasoning cause and effect relationships when these are not stated. Inferring information is not specifically stated in text: inferring the textually implicit or connotative meaning; inferring implicit meaning; inferring from context clues the meaning of unfamiliar words; drawing

conclusions; predicting outcomes; inferring cause-effect relationships; and inferring referents for anaphora (Basaraba et al., 2013; Yoonji, 2014).

Critical Comprehension

This level involves judgments of the quality, value and truthfulness of information given in the text (Granville, 2001; Marzban & Barati, 2016). It also involves making evaluative or critical judgments about the content; evaluating personal judgments on the relevancy, validity, logic, and reliability of what is read; recognizing the author's intent or point of view; distinguishing facts from opinion or from fiction; questioning the writer's purpose; interpreting figures of speech; detecting the use of propaganda techniques; and evaluating the material source (Day, 2005: 258-259).

2.4 Content and Language Integrated Instruction

Content and Language Integrated instruction refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, is utilized as a medium in content learning and teaching. It is an approach to bilingual education in which both curriculum content such as literature and English are taught together (Behrman, 2003; Xu, 2015).

Content and language integrated instruction can also be regarded as a means of teaching English through the study of a specialist content

(Graddol, 2006, p. 86). This so-called "accommodation" (between content being taught and English as the means and/or the medium which should be achieved (Coyle et al., 2010). Content is taught using methods which support language learning and understanding to introduce new vocabulary, concepts and, grammatical use in conjunction with the content (Creese, 2005; Leung, 2005; Pawan, 2008).

The value of Integrating Language and Literature, as a discipline, has particular linguistic registers (Genesee & Riches, 2006; Schleppegrell, 2008; Tsai & Shang, 2010), whereby "every literature lesson is a language lesson" and "learning the language of literature is a major part of literature (Wellington & Osborne, 2001, p. 1). So, while engaging in the literature classroom, it is possible to appropriate the classroom language, which includes both modality "multiple aspects of the oral and written channels through which language is used" and registers "the multiple features of students' and teachers' language use in the classroom while engaged in literature practices" (Okhee, Helen, & Guadalupe, 2013, p. 2).

2.5 Sheltered instruction

Sheltered instruction (SI) is "an approach to teaching content in strategic ways that make the subject matter comprehensible while promoting students' English language development" (Short, Vogt et al. 2010, p. 5).

Effective teachers "shelter" their core content delivery by modifying their teaching techniques to help students access content they could not otherwise access on their own. SI includes both language and comprehension support (Echevarria et al., 2011).

Sheltered instruction is a student-centered instructional approach designed to foster both language development and academic achievement in the content areas. Through Sheltered Instruction students have access to academic subject matter while learning a second/foreign language (Markos & Himmel, 2016; D. Short, 2013; J. Short, 2000). The term is also used when referring to content-area classes such as sheltered literature (Fritzen, 2011; Hansen-Thomas, 2008; Walters, 2012).

Sheltered instruction provides an instructional framework for capitalizing on English Language Learners' (ELLs) cultural background and their prior knowledge (DelliCarpini & Gulla, 2016; Hadaway et al., 2002; Hansen-Thomas, 2008; Hart, 2012; Macías, Fontes, Kephart, & Blume, 2012; Molle, 2013). Furthermore, sheltered instruction theory provides teachers with the freedom to use various strategies and techniques designed to create appropriate learning environments for ELLs, so that they can create their own understanding (Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017; Bråten & Anmarkrud, 2011; Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009; Keene & Zimmermann, 2013). Sheltered Instruction strategies were developed as a resource to support English Language Learners (ELLs) within the classroom setting through the implementation of specific instructional techniques. Sheltered Instruction strategies are intended to enhance instruction of mandated curricula to ensure students not yet fluent in English comprehend and retain content.

2.6 Rationale for sheltering the EFL Classroom

The common rhetoric of educational reformers is that all students in literature classrooms should be engaged in the strategies or practices of readers, rather than just learning about the results of those practices. Language is a medium or tool for learning. Most children use language while engaging and participating in classroom activities, during which language is appropriated (Lantolf & Poehner, 2010; Shakki, Derakhshan, & Sedigh Ziabari, 2016). For EFL learners, this use means they are engaging in the language of the literature classroom through a language that they are still acquiring (Hadaway et al., 2002). In many classrooms, it is true that English language learners may develop a fair amount of oral fluency in English. But when it comes to the usage of language in academic settings, like literature classrooms, EFL learners may still struggle (Anstrom et al., 2010). They will need additional support to engage in academic work in classrooms.

Duffy (2004) emphasized the importance of instructional support for EFL learners for the acquisition of a second language.

Thus, by engaging in literature practices with teachers and peers, EFL learners can engage not only in memorizing literary vocabulary but also in the meaning-making capacity of literature language. In a literature classroom, language is integral to the content and the medium of learning and thinking. The construction of meaning through discourse, inquiry, and investigation is central to learning (Behnam and Babapour, 2015).

2.7 Sheltered Instruction Strategies

Sheltered instruction strategies refer to meeting students where they are and helping them overcome barriers in an engaging and equitable environment (Diane August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009; Grognet, Jameson, Franco, & Derrick-Mescua, 2000b; Macías et al., 2012; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011; Xu, 2015). Sheltered instruction embeds the approach of learning content and language simultaneously. The strategies embraced by sheltered instruction were intended to "shelter" content to ensure students not yet fluent in English were able to comprehend and retain content (Christian, 2001; Cummins, 2009; Pawan, 2008; Pray & Jimenez, 2009).

Using sheltered instruction strategies allows students to negotiate meaning and make connections between course content and prior knowledge; allowing them to act as mediators and facilitators; sheltered instruction provides teachers a framework for teaching content. These steps require a commitment of time and energy on the part of the teacher. Specific strategies and instruction must be planned to provide background knowledge needed for the students to master the new content standards while learning the language (Grognet, Jameson, Franco, & Derrickmescua, 2000a; Hadaway et al., 2002; Hart, 2012).

SI was intended to serve as a framework throughout the planning and implementation of instruction. SI was designed to serve as an integrated approach to instruction to merge the instruction of content skills with those of language acquisition (Echevarria et al., 2011). The reality is that the strategies promoted by the Sheltered instruction strategies are excellent for building content knowledge, comprehension, and thinking skills of all learners (D. Short et al., 2010; J. Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011; Vogt & Echevarría, 2007).

2.8 Sheltered Instruction Strategies in the Literature Classroom Central to the conception of learning through sheltered instruction is the constructing and representing of meaning through literary and discourse using multiple modes. Most of the research for EFL learners in education have paid special attention to supporting their language learning while engaging in classroom discourse through reading.

Literature shares highly complementary learning processes and discourse practices (Cervetti, Pearson, Bravo, & Barber, 2007). Hence, there has been research on literature-language teaching guides capitalized on potential synergies between literature and language, where students can utilize skills such as posing

questions, making predictions, or making inferences, which can be used for both literature inquiry and for EFL reading comprehension. Stoddart, Solis, Tolbert, and Bravo (2010) advocated paying special attention to the promotion of content-based vocabulary learning and engaging students in reading tasks that are authentic to the content area.

With its tangible concepts and processes that are perfect for hands-on learning, literature is considered a good subject to shelter for English learners, even for those students at lower levels of English proficiency. Teachers can also make content more comprehensible by incorporating multiple forms of input throughout a lesson. Strategies such as Concept Attainment, Find Someone Who, Frayer Model, Sketch to Stretch, Window Paning, Storyboard, and Words across Contexts are great ways to bridge content and language divides (Alford & Nino, 2011). They make literary concepts accessible for EEL learners. What makes these strategies effective for EFL learners is that they can be done in pictures and words, provide details about the term or concept through the characteristics, use examples and non-examples to provide clarity, allows clarifications in a simple language to be made, and can be done cooperatively, providing needed interaction, and giving required association (Crawford et al., 2008; Nichols, 2012; D. Short, 2013; J. Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012). Using sheltered instruction strategies is effective for helping English language learners in literature classrooms by combining good literature teaching with a focus on language development (D. August, Artzi, & Mazrum, 2010). Literary lesson instruction encompasses much more than a list of words to teach at the beginning of the lesson but also involves integrating them in all tasks across the sessions (Blachowicz, WattsTaffe, & Fisher, 2006; D. Fisher & Frey, 2010; Johnson, Acevedo, & Mercado, 2016). The teachers also can incorporate the use of noncurricular words to enhance the integration of learning of both literature and language through the use of analogies, by contextualizing the use of vocabulary, and re-representing the same core ideas through different tasks(Fahrurrozi, 2017; Faliyanti, 2015; Meyer & Schmitt, 2002; Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2005) while implementing the tasks used to assist the learning process, the teachers used certain scaffolds to assist the learning process.

Sheltering instruction can be done using a combination of direct and interactive strategies, such as identifying discourse patterns for text types, revising a peer's paper, using transitional words and phrases between paragraphs, and using dialogue in a story to show emotions. Interactive instruction involves students working with others in pairs, small groups, or as a class. This combination of direct and interactive instruction is very effective for English learners (Genesee et al., 2006). Sometimes, providing students with key words from a word bank or word wall can be the right amount of support. Effective sheltered instruction teachers continually assess student progress toward the content and language objectives of the lesson and use formative assessment data to plan lessons that meet the linguistic and academic needs of all of their students.

Teachers of English language learners must understand that until students reach a certain level of English proficiency, content area achievement can be masked by limited language ability (Abedi & Lord, 2001; Martiniello, 2008). Indeed, the results of most classroom assessments reflect students' language proficiency, even if their intended purpose is to measure only content area achievement. Teachers who shelter instruction should be purposeful about the goal of the assessment instruments they use (i.e., what they want their assessment to measure) and modify them as appropriate.

Teachers can also utilize sheltered strategies to provide students with multiple opportunities to interact with the words at a semantic level. Building on ideas and stories dictated by students to promote reading comprehension while at the same time showing students that through reading, we communicate (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Wright, 2010). Sheltering allows English learners to understand and participate in language content, and research shows that this kind of sheltering is key to helping students move beyond word-level comprehension to

text-level analysis (D. August & Shanahan, 2006). Teachers must also provide scaffolds to support students in learning for a variety of purposes.

Another effective way to shelter language instruction is using sheltered instruction strategies that allow students to learn about reading concepts (e.g., predicting, finding the main idea, determining the meaning of unknown words). These strategies allow English learners to talk with a peer, a small group, or the teacher as they participate in lessons and demonstrate their understanding of the concepts (Alford & Nino, 2011; Fritzen, 2011; Macías et al., 2012). The reading concepts learned through talk then transfer to the skills students will use when they read and engage with texts independently (Alford & Nino, 2011; Fritzen, 2011; Macías et al., 2012; Markos & Himmel, 2016). During shared reading experiences, teachers can prompt students to select words that might be essential to the understanding of a short passage bringing students' attention to general academic terms to focus on specialized vocabulary in language arts texts (Al Otaiba, Connor, & Crowe, 2017; Barton-Hulsey et al., 2017; Ferrer et al., 2017).

Familiarity with the content of a text can offset comprehension difficulties stemming from a student's reading ability (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). Similarly, reading about a shared experience or a literary topic familiar to students can offset. The challenges of learning to read different types of texts (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). When teachers use texts or choose reading assignments based on students' background and interests, they are presenting cognitively demanding content in context-embedded ways.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were seventy EFL first year secondary stage students in Shebin Elkom directorate, Menoufia Governorate in the academic year 2017/2018. The current study is a pre-post-test quasi experimental one. During experimentation, the experimental group was taught using the sheltered instruction strategies whereas the control group received regular instruction. At the end of treatment, participants were post-tested.

3.2 Pre-testing

In order to investigate the equivalence of the two groups (the experimental group and the control group) on the pre-test; t-test of Independent samples was used to identify the significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in reading comprehension skills. Table (1) shows the t- values.

Table (1): The Significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control groups on the Pre-test

Skill	Participants	Mean	SD	t-Value	Significance
Literal comprehension	Experimental	4.65	2.14	0.47	Not Significant
	Control	4.42	1.89		
Inferential comprehension	Experimental	3.91	1.9	0.509	Not Significant
	Control	3.68	1.85		
Critical comprehension	Experimental	3.51	1.93	0.503	Not Significant
	Control	3.28	1.87		
Overall reading comprehension	Experimental	12.08	5.04	0.583	Not Significant
	Control	11.4	4.79		

It is clear from the above table that the calculated values of "t" were not significant which meant that there were no differences between the mean scores of the two groups. Thus; the two groups (the experimental group and the control group) were equivalent pre-the implementation of the research experiment.

3.2 Instruments of the Study

3.3.1 The Reading Comprehension Skills Test

3.3.1.1 Aim of the Test

It aimed to test first year secondary stage students on the intended EFL Reading Comprehension skills which the study was concerned with (literal, inferential, and critical comprehension skills). Based on the reading comprehension skills, the checklist, the Ministry of Education objectives and reviewing previous studies, a reading comprehension skills test was developed (See Appendix A). This test was used as a pre and post-test. As a pre-test, it was used to measure secondary stage students' level in the identified reading comprehension skills before the experimentation. As a post-test, the reading comprehension skills test was used to investigate the effect of the experimental treatment in developing the reading comprehension skills. The test aimed to measure the students' reading skills before and after experimentation. The following table shows the description of the test.

Table (2): Description of the Pre-Post Reading Test; items and their description

Skills measured	Sub-skills measured Items
Literal comprehension skills	Skimming to get the main idea.
	Scanning to find specific information.
	Asking and answering questions for details.
	Recognizing ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading material.
	Answering literal questions.
Inferential comprehension skills	Summarizing the main ideas.
	Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words.
	Recognizing the sequence of events.
	Understanding reference of words and pronouns.
	Inferring cause & effect relationship
Critical comprehension skills	Identifying the author's purpose and point of view.
	Differentiating between facts and opinions.
	Drawing conclusion from the author's words.
	Judging the accuracy of the given information.
	Expressing a personal opinion.
	Agreeing/disagreeing with the given information.

3.2.1.2 Description of the test

The test consisted of two reading texts selected and adapted to first year secondary school students' level and followed by both multiple-choice questions and open- ended questions based on these texts.

3.2.1.3 Test Validity

To measure the test content validity, it was given to a panel of jury to evaluate it in terms of:

1. The consistency of the questions with the aim of the test.

2. The extent to which the test items are adequate to measure the comprehension skills required for the study.

3. The suitability of the reading texts and test items for EFL first year secondary school students' linguistic level.

The panel of jury agreed that the test is valid and measures the intended skills.

3.2.1.4 Test Reliability

Test re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the test. The correlation coefficient was 0.80 which is highly reliable.

3.2.1.5 Scoring rubric

The Reading comprehension skills rubric was prepared to assess the participants' responses to a set of open- ended questions addressing the skills mentioned in the checklist.

3.3 The teacher's guide (Appendix B)

3.3.1 Aim and Objectives of the guide

The teaching guide aimed at enhancing the EFL reading comprehension skills necessary for first secondary stage students through using sheltered instruction strategies. This guide was designed to provide teachers with the practical procedures about sheltered instruction strategies and how to make use of them in developing EFL reading comprehension skills. It also aimed to increase teachers' knowledge concerning sheltered instruction to help their students develop their reading comprehension skills.

Objectives

By the end of the teaching guide, students were expected to:

1. Recognize main idea.
2. Recognize supporting details.
3. Infer cause and effect relationships.
4. Infer character traits.
5. Draw conclusions about the author's intended message.
6. Relate information from the text to students' background knowledge.
7. Evaluate information acquired from the text in terms of previous knowledge or experiences.
8. Identify the author's purpose and point of view.
9. Differentiate between facts and opinions.
10. Draw conclusion from the author's words.
11. Judge the accuracy of the given information
12. Express a personal opinion.
13. Agree/disagree with the given information.

3.3.2 Time Duration

The guide contains eight sessions. Teaching to the experimental group took place in two periods per week over an 8-week duration. Each session took 90 minutes. Each session consisted of objectives, presentation and practice, tasks, activities and evaluation.

3.3.3 Strategies

The researcher used varied and interesting sheltered instruction-based strategies relevant to the students in order to engage them in EFL reading skills and tasks. These strategies included: Concept Attainment, Find Someone Who, Frayer Model, Sketch to Stretch, Window Paning, Storyboard, and Words across Contexts.

3.3.4 Evaluation

Students' understanding was checked at the conclusion of each session through formative evaluation (questions, quizzes and tests). Also, by the end of intervention, the reading comprehension post-test was administered to both groups. So, summative evaluation took place.

4. Results

Statistical Package for the Social SPSS Sciences (SPSS), version16 was used to analyze the participants' scores on the pre and post-tests. Results are shown in the light of the study hypotheses and questions. The reading comprehension test was administered as a posttest to both groups. The researcher and another scorer used the rubric to rate students' answers.

Table (3) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the posttest mean scores of the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. It shows that the participants of the experimental group outperformed those of the control group regarding all the EFL reading comprehension skills which the study is concerned with.

Table (3): The Significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control groups on the Post test

Skill	Participants	Mean	SD	t-Value	d.f	η^2	Effect size (d)	Significance
Literal comprehension skills	Experimental Group	6.74	2.01	3.901	78	0.18	0.94	Significant at (0.01)
	Control Group	4.91	1.90					
Inferential comprehension skills	Experimental Group	6.37	1.84	4.992	78	0.27	1.21	Significant at (0.01)
	Control Group	4.17	1.83					
Critical comprehension skills	Experimental	6.82	2.10	6.287	78	0.36	0.36	Significant at (0.01)
	Control	3.91	1.75					
EFL reading comprehension skills	Experimental	19.88	4.58	6.327	78	0.37	1.53	Significant at (0.01)
	Control	12.82	4.74					

Figure (1): Bar Charts of the Mean Scores of EFL first year secondary school students of the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the Post Application.
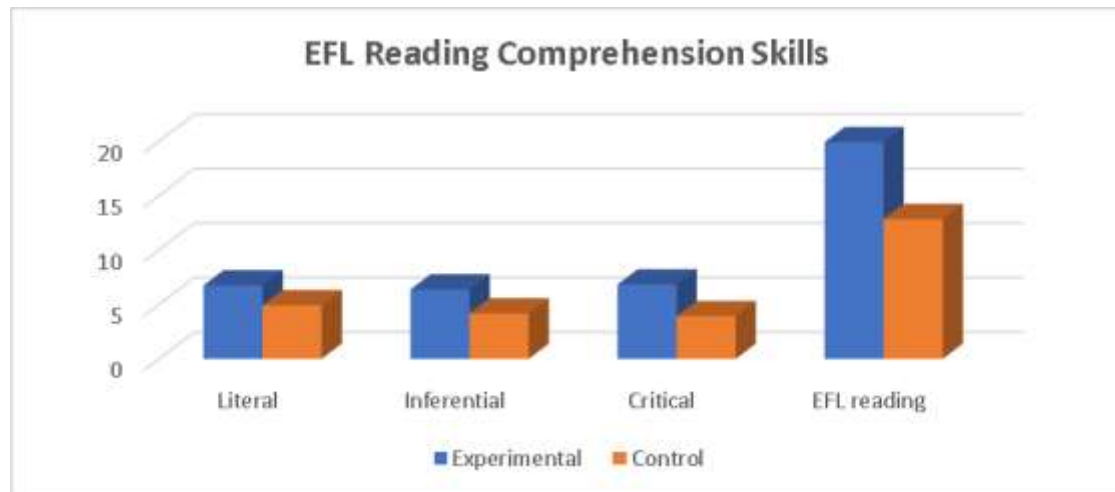
It is clear from the above table that the calculated value of "t " (6.327) was greater than the tabulated value of" t" at 78 degrees of freedom and significant level "0.01"; which meant that the difference between the mean scores of the two groups had reached the level of statistical significance. In order to investigate the educational importance of the results and its educational importance and effect; the value of eta squared had been calculated as its value (eta squared) was 0.37. In the light of this, it can be said that 37% of the variations between the scores of EFL first year secondary stage students in the reading comprehension skills could be due to differences of teaching treatment which the two groups were exposed to, and that there was educational importance for using sheltered instruction strategies for developing reading comprehension skills. Thus, the hypothesis which indicated that there are statistically significant differences between the post-tests mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in overall reading comprehension skills in favor of the experimental group was accepted.

4.1 Interpretation of Results

The results of the study showed the effectiveness of sheltered instruction strategies in developing EFL secondary stage students' reading comprehension skills. Sheltered Instruction strategies helped students in the experimental group to develop their literal, inferential and critical reading skills. As a result of the sheltered instruction strategies being used, EFL first year secondary stage students were able to make a connection between language and literature that inspire their interests and motivation. In the light of the findings of this study, it can be stated that using sheltered instruction strategies were effective in developing secondary stage students' reading comprehension skills. The results of the current study might be due to the following:

Sheltered Instruction strategies can be seen as a powerful teaching tool because it helps keep students focused and centered on the task at hand. Teachers who embrace a variety of learning strategies that appeal to multiple learning modalities are more likely to achieve early success for all EFL first year secondary stage students and sheltered instruction strategies can help accomplish that goal. Sheltered instruction strategies tend to generate a climate that is non-threatening to the learners. Learners also can overcome their fear of inaccurate reading and writing and engage in learning environment under lower risk circumstances. The strategies in sheltered instruction strategies arouse students' interest and help them to engage more in the learning process as a result, learning becomes more meaningful. The teacher is effective because he engages the students in learning by utilizing an active learning environment. The active learning teacher encourages the students to participate in classroom strategies motivating the students to collaborate and interact with each other in a low affective classroom. Similar views have also been reported by many studies

(Crawford et al., 2008; Hansen-Thomas, 2008; Markos & Himmel, 2016; Nichols, 2012; J. Short, 2000; J. Short et al., 2012; Walters, 2012).

The use of sheltered instruction strategies promotes the development of reading skills in a secure learning environment that was designed to provide a low effective filter. Language was acquired through meaningful content that focused on partner and team learning. It occurred when learners comprehend the message they received, also known as comprehensible input. Sheltered instruction strategies provide a framework for instruction in which lessons were designed and adapted to meet the individual linguistic needs and stages of language development. Setting goals is one of the stages in sheltered instruction strategies teaching. The introductory session familiarized students with the aim and objectives of sheltered instruction strategies. Similar views have also been reported by many researchers (Fritzen, 2011; Macías et al., 2012; McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Muñoz, & Beldon, 2010; D. Short, 2013; J. Short et al., 2011; Tesoro, 2009).

To conclude, sheltered instruction strategies proved to be effective in developing first year secondary school students' reading skills. This result was indicated by the significant improvement among students.

5. Conclusion

The current study was designed to develop EFL reading comprehension skills of EFL first year secondary stage students by using sheltered instruction strategies. The researcher designed reading comprehension skills test, administrated before the experimentation, whose results revealed weakness in the secondary stage students' reading comprehension skills. Sheltered instruction strategies were designed and taught by the researcher for the experimental group while the control group was taught using regular instruction. Administering the reading

comprehension skills test after the experimentation revealed a noticed development in the experimental group's reading comprehension skills. It was concluded that the sheltered instruction strategies were effective in developing the EFL reading comprehension skills of the first-year secondary stage literature teachers. Based on these results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Sheltered instruction strategies were effective in developing the reading comprehension skills of literature teachers.

2. The present study made an observable change in the performance of the EFL first year secondary stage students in the experimental group.

3. Sheltered instruction strategies proved to be helpful in developing the Secondary stage students' reading comprehension skills and promoting their ability to communicate in the target language.

4. Sheltered instruction strategies motivated the EFL first year secondary stage students to participate more during the learning teaching process.

6. Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the results of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The proposed treatment in the present study can be adopted for teaching reading comprehension skills at other learning stages taking into consideration the learners' age, needs and levels.

2. Investigating the effectiveness of using sheltered instruction strategies to develop EFL secondary stage students' creative writing skills.

3. Using sheltered instruction strategies to develop EFL preparatory stage pupils' positive attitude towards language learning.

4. The effect of sheltered instruction strategies on the development of

5. EFL pupils' online self-learning skills.

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