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جامعة عين شمس

التوثيق الالكتروني والميكروفيلم

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Ain Shams University
Faculty of Education
Curriculum and Instruction Dept.

B4950

**A Cognitive Strategies Program In English Language
To Improve Reading Comprehension For
University Students**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of the Master of Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

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The experimental group received the cognitive reading strategies program that focused on summarizing, self-questioning, predicting, guessing the meaning of words, semantic mapping, looking for markers of cohesion, note-taking and getting the idea quickly (skimming and scanning). While the control group received ten passages from their prescribed English course.

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Results of the study indicated that the subjects of the experimental group, who demonstrated a good command of cognitive reading strategies, after the program were implemented, tended to be proficient in interpreting texts. This lends support to the notion that cognitive reading strategies play a significant role in the ability to comprehend a text. Overall findings indicated justifications for a cognitive strategies oriented language curriculum.

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Key Words: reading comprehension, cognitive strategies, reading strategies, non-specialist university students.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Research Problem

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Research Problem

1.1 Introduction:

One of the most valid goals of learning a foreign language is increasing reading comprehension. The expectations for readers have widened. The higher levels of reading comprehension became essential in preparing non-specialist university students, who study English as a foreign language (EFL), to be literate at the levels required for the 21st century. The advanced technologies of today demand a new level of reading comprehension among university students who will use them.

Reading has a significant role in learning a foreign language. In Carrel's opinion (1988), reading is the most important of the four skills in learning English as a foreign language. Most of English language learners find out that reading is the main required skill. In addition, at advanced levels in a foreign language, the ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills.

Reading is the skill which will stay with language students, particularly in learning English as a foreign language context. Nevertheless, Anderson (1999:2) claims that "to many second language readers, reading is a suffocatingly slow process".

Devine (1988:261) argues that "because of the universality of the reading process, success in second language reading was seen as the result of the transfer of good reading strategies from the first language.... Classroom instruction aimed at improving second

language reading typically focused on teaching good reading strategies which were thought to be lacking in the first language."

Furthermore, Wenden (1986:8) maintains that "one of the leading educational goals of the research on learner strategies is an autonomous language learner. It is intended that insights derived from the research guide the development of learners training activities so that learners become not only more efficient at learning and using their second language but also more capable of self-directing these endeavors."

One of the major problems that faces any foreign language teacher in Egypt is the short class time. Therefore, it should be used "as effectively as possible to teach those aspects of language.... One major aim or set of aims will relate to the teaching of specific language skills, other aims will relate to development of learning skills, such aims... to provide learners with efficient learning strategies." Nunan (1988: 3)

The significance of learning strategies, as stated by O'Malley and Chamot (1994:3329), "stems from the observation that learning is an active and dynamic process in which learners approach new tasks strategically, analyze task requirement, apply various mental processes appropriate to the task and reflect on the success of their attainment."

Furthermore, students who use different learning strategies will transfer the use of strategies to similar tasks and become more independent and confident learners. In addition, students become more motivated as they begin to understand the relationship between their use of strategies and success in learning English.