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The Effectiveness of a Program Based on Social Constructivist Learning Model in Developing Some Metacognitive Reading Skills of the Secondary First Graders

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فعالية برنامج مقترح قائم على نموذج التعلم البنائي الاجتماعي لتنمية بعض مهارات القراءة ما وراء المعرفية لطلاب الصف الأول الثانوي العام

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Abstract

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Title of the Research: "The Effectiveness of a Program Based on Social Constructivist Learning Model in Developing Some Metacognitive Reading Skills of the Secondary First Graders".

The present study aimed at developing the necessary metacognitive reading skills for Egyptian EFL first year secondary school students, through the use of a proposed program based on social constructivist learning model (scaffolding). The study adopted the quasi-experimental pre-post test control /experimental group design. The study sample consisted of 80 students from El-Galwia public secondary school in Sohag Governorate and was equally divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control one. Students of the experimental group received training through, the proposed program based on scaffolding model while students in the control group received regular instruction. Tools of the study include: metacognitive reading skills checklist, a pre-/post-metacognitive reading skills test, a metacognitive reading skills awareness inventory and think-aloud method. The study results revealed evidence that there were statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the control and the experimental groups on the post test in favor of the experimental group in overall metacognitive reading skills as well as in each metacognitive reading skill. There were also statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-administration and post-administration of the metacognitive reading skills awareness inventory in favor of the post-administration.

Key Words: Social constructivist Learning Model (Scaffolding),
Metacognitive Reading Skills

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CHAPTER ONE

Background and Problem

1.1 Introduction

Language is considered a means of thinking and transferring culture from one generation and one nation to another. It is also a means of communication among mankind. Hence, countries give great interest to teaching languages rather than the native language to their citizens. People live in an age of technology and information. This requires giving more care for learning foreign languages especially the English language which is considered an international language for communication among people.

One of the main objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt is to develop the students' skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Reading is one of the most important skills in English and other languages, as all experiences and information can be obtained through reading. Reading English as a foreign language is also very important for several reasons. First, it is critical to success in some academic majors in Egyptian universities. Second, it is a useful source for information that might be missed in class lectures. Third, it can improve native language reading. Fourth, it can accelerate foreign language learning and improve other language skills. Finally, it is a major means of learning both vocabulary and spelling (Hussein, 2007).

According to Lawrence (2007), "Reading is seen as a meaning making process in which the reader uses his prior knowledge to gain understanding". Grabe (1991) points out that the importance of the reading skill in academic areas had led to considerable research on reading in a second language. In fact, recently the current focus of second language reading research has begun to focus, among other things, on reader's strategies.

It can be said that students use more strategies when reading in a second language than reading in their mother tongue. Feng and Mokhtari (1998) examined the strategies used by native speakers of Chinese while reading easy and difficult passages in English and Chinese: they found that the strategies were used more frequently when reading in English than in Chinese, and more frequently for difficult texts than easy texts. Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) found that both native and non-native readers display awareness of and do use nearly 30 strategies when reading academic materials.

Metacognition plays a vital role in reading comprehension. Although the term metacognition is relatively new, the concepts and skills to which it refers have long been recognized. Researchers have recognized that reading involves planning, checking, evaluating activities, understanding and monitoring, all of which are now regarded as metacognitive activities. The study of metacognition- what readers know about themselves, the task of reading, and various reading strategies-has become an important area of investigation. In fact, metacognition has been viewed as an integral component of reading. Several researchers have identified many metacognitive skills involved in reading such as clarifying the purposes of the reading, identifying the important aspects of the text rather than trivia, monitoring activities for comprehension purposes, self-questioning, and taking corrective actions when comprehension failure occurred (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

A number of empirical investigations have established a positive relationship between metacognitive skills and reading comprehension. Abu Shamais (2002) stated that metacognitive skills are necessary for this rapidly changing world. These skills will help students to solve the problems they face in successful ways. Teachers must help in establishing metacognitive

situations that enhance skill use through training and integrating of skill instruction into classroom activities. The inclusion of metacognition in skill training is important since metacognition helps students to be consciously aware of what they have learned and recognize situations in which it could be useful. The only way to help students become proficient readers is by motivating them to read through a variety of reading materials that are familiar and meet the students' needs and interests.

After speaking about reading in general and the relationship between reading and metacognition, the nature of metacognitive reading skills should be explained. Glover and Ronning explain (1990) that metacognitive reading skills specifically refer to knowledge readers have about reading and how this knowledge is used in the reading process. They introduce these skills as follows:

- Identifying main ideas.
- Summarizing and review.
- Self-questioning.
- Drawing inferences.
- Finding errors and inconsistencies.
- Calibration of comprehension.
- Relating new information to previous knowledge.

Hartman (2001) states that metacognitive reading skills include: skimming, activating relevant prior knowledge, constructing mental images, predicting, self-questioning, comprehension monitoring, summarizing and connecting new material with prior knowledge. Student cannot be expected to be competent with these skills because they are rarely taught and not every one develops them independently. They need to be explicitly and continually addressed, practiced and internalized. Improvements in these skills can lead to great improvements in academic achievement.

It is important to look at the national standards for teaching English as a foreign language set by NAQAAE (The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education) for secondary stage. Learners are expected to be able to skim and scan complex text for general meaning or to determine subject matter or organization. They are also expected to be able to guess meaning of new words from context, demonstrate culture independent reading for pleasure, and analyze information to determine relevancy of main ideas to supporting details. By the end of the secondary stage, learners should be able to ask and respond to high level thinking questions which connect new ideas to personal experience, draw conclusions about context, events, characters and setting from written texts and read critically to interpret and evaluate the content of long reading texts. (NAQAAE, Content Standards Document for Pre-University Education, English as a Foreign Language, 2009)

Regarding the necessity of metacognitive reading skills for secondary school students, Brown (2005) indicated that metacognitive skills help readers monitor and regulate their thought. These skills can be used voluntarily and consciously and can become automatic due to practice. It is thought that good readers are in general good thinkers who can function automatically and are able to recognize a problem and apply a variety of problem solving strategies.

Again, Abu Shamais (2002) points out those low achieving readers need to acquire strategies that will result in comprehension through assisting, motivating and building confidence which are essential to improve the performance of these students.

Social constructivism has emerged as a significant concept advanced for changing the educational process, engaging the minds of students and connecting schooling to practical life. In social constructivist environment,