

A Program Based on Shared Reading to Develop Secondary School Student's EFL Critical Reading Skills

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the impact of a shared reading program on developing secondary school students' EFL critical reading abilities was the goal of this study. At Essam Qura Secondary co-School in the Sharkia Governorate of Egypt, sixty second-year secondary school students participated in the study. The study's design was quasi-experimental. As a result, they were purposefully divided into two groups: a control group (n = 30) and an experimental group with 30 members. Pre-posttests and an EFL critical reading skills questionnaire were created by the researcher in order to gather data. Regular training was used to teach the control group, whereas the shared reading program was used to teach the experimental group. The current study was carried out during the first term of the academic year 2025–2026 for a period of twelve weeks, with a 60-minute session. Lastly, the study's findings demonstrated that the shared reading program significantly improved the EFL critical reading abilities of second-year secondary school students....

Key words: shared reading, EFL critical reading skills

INTRODUCTION

Critical reading is evaluating, inferring, and interpreting the text meaning to get in-depth understanding of the text and move beyond the surface level of meaning. Reading always involves critical perception, interpretation and rewriting what is read. It enables students to read and understand the world to deeply connect it to their own world experiences and thus, explore their beliefs, fears, values and tastes. Critical reading goes beyond memorizing. Therefore, a focus on teaching students how to think critically seems to be necessary to improve their effective and rational thinking (1,2).

The importance of EFL reading is unquestionable for learners. EFL Reading is a fundamental process in learning since it is not only one of the often used resources during the academic years but can also become a basic vehicle for ongoing learning throughout life. Teachers usually do not emphasize EFL critical reading skills when teaching reading. They focus more on word attack skills, comprehension skills, and fluency skills. Therefore, EFL teachers should prepare learners to be better critical readers in life and to communicate effectively when they leave school (3,4).

Context of the Problem

As an EFL teacher, the researcher saw that secondary-stage students had low scores in the majority of critical reading skills, and she studied the previous study that confirmed the persistence of EFL students' lack of critical reading skills...

To document the problem, a group of fifteen second-year secondary school students took a pilot critical reading skills test. The findings showed that students were unable to evaluate the text's worth. They were unable to make logical deductions and differentiate between literal and inferred meanings. Additionally, they were unable to express ideas, draw analogies, deduce connections between occurrences, identify the information's source, and assess it. They were unable to decipher information by reading between the lines (5).

Statement of the problem

In light of reviewing the previous discussion, the pilot study and the researcher's experience in EFL teaching, it can be stated that secondary students are weak in EFL critical reading skills results. The researcher proposed a new program to overcome such difficulties. It is a shared reading -based program that may develop EFL reflective reading skills of secondary school students. This led to the following questions:

- 1) What are the EFL critical reading skills targeted for 2nd secondary school students?
- 2) What are the actual EFL critical reading skills of 2nd secondary school students?
- 3) How can a shared reading-based program be designed to help develop EFL critical reading skills of secondary school students?

Shared reading

The purpose of shared reading is to help student's reading along text fulfilling an interactive reading activity under the guidance of teacher, and to provide them enjoy reading. It means shared reading can make the student enjoy and easy to read the text together.

Shared reading helps students to learn faster, gain larger vocabulary, and turn into successful readers, comprehension can boots up because students are exposed to words frequently, gain prior knowledge and content various concepts. With the recurrent reading, students are permitted to inquire more about the content provided in the book. In this way, they gain more experience and opportunities to improve their learning experience. The shared reading approach has a positive impact on the students' comprehension and other literacy skills. Shared learning can help students to focus their attention and energy on important skills. They can make important predictions in reading. When students can develop a sense of a story, it can ultimately help enhance their comprehension. Therefore, it is one of the most useful approaches for teachers to apply in the classrooms. During the early years of education, this approach can help students to gain important reading and other literacy skills (6,7).

Critical reading skills

Critical reading has always been one of the main factors for academic success. The purpose of critical reading is to form judgments about the accuracy, validity of reading materials and how it works based on correct criteria or standards. It is a skill that analyzes, interprets and evaluates the reading materials which helps to develop student's critical thinking skills. Improved critical reading skills are important for success in the academic field. Critical reading has several benefits, including a deeper understanding of content, the lengthening of contents maintenance term in the memory and learning how to submit feedback critical of the reasonable ideas. Critical reader reads in order to understand (8).

In order to understand importance of critical reading in EFL studies needs to have a broader understanding of what the concept entails. The roots of critical reading can be traced to critical theory developed by the Frankfurt school which focused on the social theory's role of critiquing and changing society contrary to traditional theory's function of understanding or explaining it. Critical pedagogy, and in specific critical literacy, was based on this fundamental assumption of critical theory (9,10).

The study design

Participants were split into two groups for the current study's quasi-experimental design, which served as a primary source of data (control and experimental). The control group received standard education, while the experimental group received shared reading.

The study participants

Sixty second-year secondary students from Esaam Qura Secondary School, Hehia Educational Directorate, Sharkia Governorate, who were enrolled in the second semester of the academic year (2024-2025), participated. They were split up into a control group of thirty students and an experimental group of thirty students. Since the participants were purposefully chosen, it was considered that they made up a homogeneous group. Therefore, it was assumed that they would be similar in many ways and that their ages and experience levels would not differ significantly.

Instruments

The instruments listed below were created, verified, and put into use.

1. To determine the appropriate subskills for second-year secondary school students, an EFL critical reading questionnaire is required.

2. An actual instrument for determining the participants' level is an EFL critical reading test.

Data analysis

The study's hypotheses were tested using a t-test to see if there were any differences between the treatment group's mean scores on the EFL critical reading skills test before and after administration. This was done in order to ascertain the impact of the shared reading-based program on the development of EFL critical reading skills.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis

It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post administration of the critical reading skills test results, in favour of the experimental group ones. The results have been presented in Table (1). the treatment group results were higher than the control group in the EFL overall critical reading skills ones and sub-skills, where t-values were, (9.78) for overall critical reading skills, (3.45) for interpretation, (2.23) for analysis, (4.23) for evaluation and (3.56) for summarizing, all were significant at 0, 01 level. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 1: Both groups post EFL critical reading skills test results

Critical reading dimensions	Group	M	S.D	t-value	Sig
Interpretation	Control	2.74	2.92	3.45	0.01
	Experimental	6.01	3.24		
Analysis	Control	2.35	2.13	2.23	0.01
	Experimental	6.15	3.45		
Evaluation	Control	3.33	1.24	4.23	0.01
	Experimental	6.26	2.35		
Summarizing	Control	2.77	2.82	3.56	0.01
	Experimental	6.26	3.76		
Overall critical reading test	Control	11.67	5.35	9.78	0.01
	Experimental	24.92	6.46		

Significant at (0. 01)

The second hypothesis

It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-posttest results of overall EFL critical reading and its sub-skills, in favour of the post-test ones

Table 2: Comparing the pre/post critical reading skills test results of the experimental group

Critical reading dimensions	Group	M	S.D	t-value	Sig
Interpretation	Pre-test	2.92	1.53	3.55	0.01
	Post-test	6.03	3.24		
Analysis	Pre-test	2.82	2.55	4.98	0.01
	Post-test	6.13	3.45		
Evaluation	Pre-test	4.93	2.46	5.18	0.01
	Post-test	2.25	4.23		
Summarizing	Pre-test	2.72	1.60		

	Post-test	6.52	2.80	3.55	0.01
Overall EFL critical reading test	Pre-test	11.91	2.62	8.46	0.01
	Post-test	24.91	5.23		

Significant at (0. 01)

Table (2) indicates that the means of scores of the treatment group were higher in the post test results than those of the pre-ones in the EFL critical reading skills and its sub-skills, where t-values were, (8.46) for overall EFL critical reading skills, (3.55) for interpretation, (4.98) for analysis, (5.18) for evaluation, and (3.55) for summarizing; all were significant at 0, 01 level. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed.

The third hypothesis:

It was hypothesized that using the shared reading Program had a positive large effect on the experimental group students' EFL critical skills. Results are shown in table (3).

Table 3: The experimental group effect sizes of the EFL critical reading skills

Critical reading dimensions	Test	M	S.D	Eta square	Effect size
Interpretation	Pre-test	2.92	1.53	0.85	Huge 1.2
	Post-test	6.03	3.24		
Analysis	Pre-test	2.82	2.55	0.8	Huge 1.2
	Post-test	6.13	3.45		
Evaluation	Pre-test	4.93	2.46	0.99	Huge 1.9
	Post-test	2.25	4.23		
Summarizing	Pre-test	2.72	1.60	0.95	Huge 2.3
	Post-test	6.52	2.80		
Overall EFL critical reading skills test	Pre-test	11.91	2.62	1.1	Huge 1.5
	Post-test	24.91	5.23		

Significant at (0, 01)

Table (3) indicates that the effect sizes of the treatment group in the post critical reading test results were higher than those of the pre-ones in the EFL overall critical reading skills, where the effect sizes were (1.1) for overall critical skills, (.85) for interpretation, (.8) for analysis, (.99) for evaluation, and (.95) for summarizing; all these values were significant at 0,01 level. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed.

According to the total value of the effect size for all the four main skills, it was clear that 1.1 of the total variance in overall EFL critical reading skills can be attributed to the experimental treatment (the shared reading and multiple intelligences Program). The large effect size of the treatment exceeds the minimum percentage level. This indicates a large level of effect size of the experimental training upon the overall critical reading sub-skills.

The following outcomes could arise from reporting the statistical tables:

The experimental group did better than the control group on the EFL critical reading skills test after it was administered.

According to the findings of the EFL critical reading skills test, the post-administration performed better than the pre-administration.

The shared reading based program had a large effect size on the experimental participants' overall main skills of EFL critical reading skills test results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study made the following recommendations based on its findings and findings:

To teach EFL critical reading, EFL secondary teachers must be trained in appropriate activities and procedures.

More time in English language teaching should be spent to strengthen the learners' EFL critical reading skills.

Secondary EFL teachers should be encouraged by their supervisors to focus on their students' EFL critical reading abilities.

Checklists of the essential EFL critical reading abilities and instructions for practical exercises to develop them should be included in the teacher's handbook.

By using shared reading methodologies, teachers can shift their roles from being the sole information provider to that of a facilitator, guide, monitor, and consultant.

Students should be grouped in EFL classes according to several criteria, such as individuals, couples, small groups, or the entire class.

EFL secondary instructors should receive training on a variety of assessment techniques, including participation, group activities, speeches, presentations, and self-evaluation..

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