The Efficacy of Robinson's Strategy in Developing Reading Comprehension Skills in Arabic Language Course of Grade Eight Students

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Abstract:

The study aims to examine the efficacy of Robinson's Strategy SQ3R strategy (Scan, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) for formulating reading comprehension skills in the Arabic language course of eight grade students in Sakaka City, Saudi Arabia. The study adopted a quasi-experimental study design and random sampling was employed to select a total of 52 male students enrolled in eighth grade. The participants were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. The traditional method was adopted to teach the control group and Robinson's strategy SQ3R was adopted to teach the experimental group. The researcher devised a test of reading comprehension. Further, a post-test was conducted to examine comprehension skills among the participants of the experimental group. The scores of both groups were analyzed using a t-test value at a significant level of 0.05. The results displayed a statistical difference at four levels such as literal, inferential, evaluative, and creative among the participants of the experimental group. The study concluded that Robinson's Strategy SQ3R is significant to develop expertise in reading comprehension among the students of grade eight learning the Arabic Language.

Keywords: Robinson's Strategy, Reading Comprehension Skills, Arabic Course, Saudi Arabia.

فاعلية استراتيجية روبنسون في تطوير مهارات الفهم القرائي في مقرر لغتي الخالدة للصف الثاني متوسط

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المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي فاعلية استخدام استراتيجية روبنسون (استطلع ، اسأل ، أقرأ ، أعيد الصياغة ، أراجع) في تطوير مهارات الفهم القرائي في مقرر لغتي الخالدة للصف الثاني متوسط في مدينة سكاكا ، المملكة العربية السعودية. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج شبه التجريبي ، تكونت عينة الدراسة من 52 طالبا ، والذي تم اختيارهم بشكل عشوائي في مجموعتي الدراسة ، التجريبية والتي دُرست باستخدام استراتيجية الهمزات الخمس لروبنسون ، والضابطة والتي دُرست بالطريقة الاعتيادية. تم استخدام الاختبار ليكون أداة للدراسة؛ لقياس مهارات الفهم القرائي لدى الطلاب. تم تحليل درجات كلا المجموعتين باستخدام قيمة اختبار تي عند مستوى أكبر من 0.05. أظهرت النتائج فروقا ذاتِ دلالة إحصائية لمهارات الفهم القرائي الحرفي والاستنتاجي والتقييمي والإبداعي بين الطلاب لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن استراتيجية روبنسون فاعلة لتطوير مهارات الفهم القرائي في مقرر لغتي الخالدة لدى طلاب الصف الثاني متوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية روبنسون ، مهارات الفهم القرائي ، مقرر لغتي الخالدة ، المملكة العربية السعودية.

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Introduction

Language is reckoned as one of the most distinctive elements of human civilizations which is a crucial exchange of knowledge, instructions, emotions, and communication. Creating linguistic competencies among children is such a daunting task that needs attention and evolutionary analysis of the practices intact. It is also known as a necessary part of the national heritage that is used for communicating thought processes, and folds of experiences as the guardian of national esteem and culture that helps to strengthen its national métier polity (Ibrahim, 2022). Teaching Arabic has different characteristics. Zulharby et al. (2019) concluded a study to investigate these characteristics of Arabic language teaching to develop Arabic speaking skills among the students of Indonesia. The findings of the study showed lacking the Arabic language for beginners where phonetics aspects were missing and there was a monotonous method of practice. Kurniawan et al. (2021) have investigated the strategy adopted in the integrated Islamic school to teach Arabic. The study revealed that Hector Hammerly's perspective was used that implied collaborative, cognitive, natural, and communicative methods where teachers adopted visual aids, practices, quizzes, and cognitive audio-oral bilingual method (Kurniawan et al., 2021). Moreover, Wargadinata et al. (2021) investigated the Arabic learning process during the pandemic. The study unveiled that the pandemic transformed the existing cultural approach into an instrumental approach. The study by Shiddiq (2020) has examined the significance of the usage of an android application, Nemo that was designed for students to master vocabulary during language learning in the form of a pocket dictionary. The research was conducted with the students of Al-Khalifa University where for Android-based application was used for Arabic learning. Given the results, the students expressed their satisfaction to use the online application for language learning as there was a lack of instructional designs and manuals for Arabic language learning.

Reading lays the basis for learning and grasping the concepts of knowledge and practicing the knowledge learnt. Having good reading skills is also a prerequisite for good academic performance as lacking reading and comprehension skills will create a learning void. Erya and Pustika (2021) have asserted that reading skills are fundamental skills for humans through which they interact. These skills are also considered vital for new scientific development and discoveries as the largest share of knowledge development and sharing takes place via reading. However, not every human has an instinct or acumen to optimize reading ability which triggers the need of learning and developing reading skills for self-improvement, analytical capabilities and for internalize cultures. Also, it is considered that having reading skills helps in developing critical and logical thinking due to possessing expertise in linguistic devices and elements.

Soto et al. (2019) discovered an association between self-reported parameters and the comprehension performance of students. Their comprehension performance was associated with their metacognitive accuracy. These findings implied that meta-comprehension and performances of the students are significantly linked with each other. When there is an improvement in the comprehension skills of students, it has an accelerating impact on their metacognitive abilities of students. Similarly, Hjetland et al. (2020) have concluded that developing linguistic comprehension skills has a direct impact on reading comprehension. It further elaborated that language development interventions are useful in language development and reading comprehension skills.

Several are reading comprehension skills that are used and adopted to sharpen reading skills. SQ3R method developed by Robinson is one of the viable reading comprehension strategies. The SQ3R includes survey, question, read, recite, and review steps to inculcate reading expertise among readers by following the stated five steps starting from survey activities to review. This strategy has been recognized as an enduring strategy for reading in content areas. This strategy is adopted for active reading activities

to enable students to easily read and gain mastery over the reading contents , memorize and grasp them for longer and make use of them where applicable. Under this strategy , students are asked to give the reading material a general reading to generate general ideas , brainstorm questions and express their opinions along with stating important aspects of the content to retain the information for longer (Lombu et al. , 2021). Bakhtiar (2019) has also suggested the use of SQ3R to positively persuade students to quality reading as it has reported that the adoption of SQ3R strategy led to an increased level of motivation , prompt understanding of the main idea , and necessary information , learning of new vocabulary and focus on key takeaways.

Research Gap

Given the vitality of reading comprehension abilities globally , a large pool of financial resources is allocated along with efforts to figure out reading abilities and reading development of countries while conducting an international test named Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) a flagship project of International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) , working for reading literacy of students and monitoring its instructional designs to inculcate reading. A country-wise performance is evaluated out of centre points of 500 (Toprak-Yildiz , 2021). However , it has been observed that grade four Saudi Students have low marks in an international assessment of PIRLS (Alghamdi , 2019). Moreover , through the researchers experience and fieldwork with the teachers , it was observed that there are deficiencies in the students reading comprehension skills. Thus , a need exists to devise an SQ3R strategy to assist students in improving their reading comprehension skills. The results of the study will offer insights to extend the educational research regarding the efficacy of the SQ3R regarding Arabic learning. Further , the study's findings are beneficial to policymakers , researchers , and educationists to devise and adopt better learning strategies for inculcating reading expertise in the students of Saudi Arabia.

Research question

Based on the study aim stated above, the present research has the following research question:

1. What is the efficacy of Robinson's strategy to develop reading comprehension skills in the Arabic Language course of grade eight students in Sakaka City?

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is a complex activity at involves cognitive functioning and is considered an intricate task to be deliberated upon, researched, and measured. Concerted efforts are required from all the stakeholders aiming to develop crucial skills to perform this activity such as educationists, researchers and policymakers. Reading comprehension skills require special emphasis and efforts on building vocabulary basis, learning to make inferences, having background knowledge, and comprehension monitoring skills for students of all grades and academic disciplines (Dua et al., 2019). However, not much time has been spent devising new methods and techniques to lift the capabilities of the students and teachers for practicing reading comprehension skills as per their academic needs. A greater degree of coordination is required such as cognitive and linguistics processes with synergies where a person needs to possess the ability to read and understand the given words, the skills of inferring the facts and reading between the lines which makes it a multifaceted process. For example, under the inferential mediation and components model, it is worth finding the pressure points to enhance the reading skills of a reader (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). The task of generating inference within or across the given text is also supported by having background knowledge about the topic concerned to link the ideas that have not been mentioned in the text explicitly. Literal understanding is also crucial that is associated with the ability of the reader to grasp the ideas, words, sentences and their literal meanings. Moreover, a strong grip on vocabulary helps a reader to derive better conclusions and connections. In addition,

learning reading comprehension skills involves the ability to critically evaluate all the happenings so that one may differentiate between the facts and opinions, the main idea of supportive information and could connect all the events and guess the writer's intention. Creativity skills are another significant aspect of language learning that can be sharpened through skill reading comprehension to be used at all stages of learning (Stahl & Armstrong, 2020).

Francis P. Robinson is the architect of the SQ3R strategy. This strategy is one of the most frequently adopted strategies since decades (1946) that was used as a study strategy to teach passages and content to the students. Thus, the theory occupies a greater relevance of it in the literacy profession. Devising the strategy included increasing the motivation of the student which was of a matter of prominence for Robinson. The SQ3R strategy comprises five steps to read and prepare notes from the textbook (Stahl & Armstrong, 2020). This is an acronym of five letters that describes five actions to be performed for building reading comprehension skills. Step 1 is to survey that initiates recalling background knowledge of the readers to better connect the ideas for learning further. Step 2 is to question as the text is organized by breaking down the ideas into subheadings and topics so readers can inquire about these events of information. This act helps in increasing students' engagement and eagerness to explore new information. Step 3 is associated with reading where a reader is required to read questions and try to answer these self-administered questions. Next to it is recite where the readers are asked to find the answers while reading the content. Finally, they have to revise them all and sometimes change the questions or break down them into further questions. Several studies have documented the significance of adopting SQ3R strategies to build reading comprehension skills among students by evaluating the performance of students, teachers can fairly track their level of expertise and areas of improvement (Rahyana, 2016; Yuliyanti, 2017; Widiawati et al., 2020). Al-Harthy et al. (2022) have attempted research to discover the efficacy of SQ3R in developing reading skills to be taught to students in eighth grade. The researcher prepared reading comprehension skills and recruited the participants into experimental

and control groups. Control groups were taught with the conventional method, whereas the students of the experimental group were instructed by Robinson's SQ3R strategy. The results revealed statistical variances between the mean scores of both groups. More importantly, the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group. The participants improved their performance based on the deductive, reasoning, critical and creative levels. The study by Al-Magableh et al. (2022) explored the impact of the SQ3R strategy to accelerate active learning for Jordanian students in eleventh grade. This study recruited 50 students in two groups; control and experimental. The research revealed the significance of the SQ3R strategy to develop reading skills. The effectiveness of the reading speed strategy was examined concerning developing reading skills of English-speaking skills of children with disabilities by Khasawneh (2021). The experimental study documented a statistically significant impact of reading speed technique in improving the skills of children in reading. Also, Almakahleh and Alramamneh (2018) evaluated the effect of SQ3R on the students of the sixth class who were differently-abled learning capabilities. The findings revealed that on account of applying the strategy, the scores of the experimental group were higher in terms of literal, deductive, and applied skills. Moreover, the study by Al-Ubodi (2020) adopted a new approach and modified the SQ3R strategy into a five-step strategy and applied it to the pupils of mathematics. In the control group, the SQ3R strategy was applied while in the experimental group, its modified version was practiced. The findings have accounted that the modified SQ3R strategy brought about significant positive results in terms of quality learning of the students in mathematics.

Research Method and Procedures

Study Methodology

A quasi-experimental research design was adopted as the study aims to assess intervention execution in real-life settings (Handley et al., 2018).

This research method comprises pre- and post-test interventions to assess a comparison group or an outcome. The participants were distributed into two clusters randomly i.e. , control and experimental. The quasi-experimental study design helps in measuring the correlation coefficient of the dependent and independent variables (Pedaste et al. , 2015).

The Study Sample

The study comprised 52 grade eight students and each group had 26 participants. Robinson's strategy SQ3R was applied to the experimental group whereas the control group was educated with the conventional technique. To carry out the research, ethical approval was obtained from Jouf University. The vice presidency for graduate studies and scientific research at the university sent a letter to the Ministry of Education to conduct the study among the Sakaka middle schools. This letter was enclosed with the online link to the reading comprehension test. The schools' administrations were contacted through their official emails and the school that showed positive and cooperative attitudes concerning perform and comply the study procedures was selected to recruit the study population. The researcher recruited eighth-grade male students from a school in Sakaka City , Saudi Arabia. The eighth grade of the school had three sections. The participants of section A were selected to be included in the control group whereas the participants from section B were allocated to the experimental group randomly.

Research Tools

1. Reading comprehension skills

Aiming to examine the efficacy of the SQ3R strategy of Robinson , a research tool was formulated related to reading comprehension skills that were separated into different levels i.e., evaluative level , literal level , inferential level , and creativity level. Each level was further divided into sub constructs. Additionally , based on twenty-two behavioural indicators , levels were carved out (Table 1).

Table(7)

Reading Comprehension Skills

1- Literal level
1.1- Write another word for the word.
1.2 - Write the opposite word of it.
1.3- Make use of this word in your sentence.
1.4- Find the recurring word in the text.
1.5- Determine the aim of its recurrence in the text.
1.6- Think about other words to be used instead of repetition in the text.
2. Inferential level
2.1- Make a personal connection to the text.
2.2- Recall the first and the last events and try to make the connection between these two events.
2.3- Judge the positive and negative characters/aspects in the text.
2.4- Reflect and recall the real message of the text.
2.5- Rank the ideas in order of importance.
2.6- Determine the mood of the author from the text.
3. Evaluative level
3.1- Differentiate fact and opinion in the text.
3.2- Differ between the reasonable and the absurd
3.3- Compare the relevance of the passage in the present time.
3.4- Highlight key ideas and supporting text/information.
3-5- Describe in your way the character.
4. Creative level
4.1- Suggest a new plot for the topic or story.
4.2- Determine the indirect/hidden aspect of the story/topic.
4.3- Predict the effect or solution presented at the end.
4.4- Pair new words used in the text with action words.
4-5- Relate new words with the words you know.

2. Reading Comprehension Skills Tests

After the review of published seminal educational research , the researcher designed pre-and post-tests. These tests were prepared from the textbook based on comprehension skills as well as external sources for eliminating the bias and element of familiarity. The tests were structured as multiple-choice questions aiming to measure behavioural tendencies based on tests. Twenty-two were the behavioural indicators that were equal to the test items where four options were provided against each item out of which one was the correct option.

Validity of the Test

The researcher validated the tests which it was brought forward to a panel of arbitrators and their observations and modifications were documented and performed. They also evaluated the tests to rate their applicability to assess the students of grade eight. Moreover , the tests were also evaluated concerning their integrity structure , and contextual suitability as well as the applicability of the alternative options given was measured. The researcher performed the suggested modifications to prepare the final form of tests.

Consistency of the Test

For examining the consistency of the test a pilot study was conducted , comprising 24 students of grade eight. Cronbach alpha was used for measuring the reliability coefficient. The values of Cronbach alpha have been given in Table 2. According to it , the value of the consistency coefficient came out to be 0.902 which validates an acceptable consistency as the consistency coefficient of Cronbach alpha ranges between 1-0. It implies that a closer value to 1 demonstrates a higher consistency value whereas a value that is closer to 0 shows a lesser degree of consistency coefficient. Moreover , the value of 0.7 for the Cronbach's alpha is adequate and 0.8 is considered good (Amirrudin et al. , 2021).

Table(2)
Cronbach Alpha values of the test items

Level	Items	Consistency
Literal level	6	0.895
Inferential level	6	0.858
Evaluative level	5	0.921
Creative level	5	0.935
All levels	22	0.902

Lesson Planning

The researcher devised a lesson plan to conduct and implement the test for achieving the research objectives. In this instance, published educational literature was consulted about implementing the SQ3R strategy as well as regarding reading comprehension skills with the help of the senior instructors of the Arabic language. The lesson strategies were validated while presenting them to an expert panel of professors for reflection and guidance about it.

Equivalence of the Study Groups

For ensuring equivalence in both the group's control and experimental, the researcher equally assigned the participants. Also, it was considered that the students of both groups had equal expertise in reading comprehension. Before implementing the strategy, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviations for both groups.

Study Variables

The present study dealt with the independent variable of the SQ3R strategy, while the dependent variable included reading comprehension skills.

Study procedures

The researcher met the teachers for elaborating on the study goals. Robinson's strategy SQ3R was instructed to the experimental group which lasted for six weeks, from 25 September 2022 to 3 October 2022. For the same period, the traditional method was used to instruct and teach the control group. Afterwards, a post-test was conducted to examine the significance of the adopted strategy to enhance the reading comprehension skills of the students in eighth grade included in the experimental group.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was performed by using statistical software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v. 23. The researcher measured Cronbach's alpha, mean and standard deviations and independent sample t-test to measure the reading comprehension skills and efficacy of SQ3R strategy.

Results

Table 3 illustrates the outcomes of the pre-test of both the groups; control and experimental.

Table(3)

Results of pre-test

Skills	Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Significance
Experimental	26	9.74	2.98	0.574	0.571	Insignificant
Control	26	10.56	2.45			

Table 3 demonstrates an insignificant value of 0.571 which is higher than the value of 0.05. These results implied that no statistical differences were found in both the groups through the pre-test where a combined reading comprehension skill set was conducted. The mean scores representing the control group were more (10.56) than the experimental group (9.74) which

can be construed as a very closer reflection and equivalence of the reading comprehension skills of both groups for conducting this experimental study. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the experimental and control groups. It illustrates that contrasting the findings of the pre-test, the mean scores in the post-test, of the experimental groups are greater.

Table(4)

Mean values of the scores of post-tests

Test Items	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Literal level	Control	1.83	0.917	0.187
	Experimental	4.08	0.717	0.146
Inferential level	Control	1.92	0.881	0.180
	Experimental	4.13	0.680	0.139
Evaluative level	Control	2.13	0.797	0.163
	Experimental	3.96	0.806	0.165
Creative level	Control	1.92	0.776	0.158
	Experimental	3.92	0.830	0.169
Overall	Control	1.95	0.842	0.172
	Experimental	4.022	0.758	0.154

The present study examined the significance of the SQ3R approach in ameliorating the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students. Table 4 validates the mean score which reflects a vivid disparity between the experimental and control group in terms of reading comprehension expertise which showed that the adopted strategy was helpful to develop compulsory reading comprehension expertise among the student. Further, the researcher performed an independent t-test for measuring the degree of effectiveness of Robinson's SQ3R strategy and the traditional method had been practiced to teach eight grade students. Table 5 displays post- test t- values the groups showed about significant improvement at four levels that are quintessential for creating reading competencies among the students.

Table(5)

Post-test t-values

Items	Groups	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Literal level	Experimental	27.112	0.000	4.074074
	Control	11.760		1.851852
Inferential level	Experimental	26.000	0.000	3.851852
	Control	11.584		1.888889
Evaluative level	Experimental	24.563	0.000	4.037037
	Control	10.916		1.926
Creative level	Experimental	23.487	0.000	4.259259
	Control	12.394		2.037037

Discussion

The findings showed that the strategy was useful to ameliorate reading skills. The literal level skills of the experimental groups were statistically significant having the highest t– value of (27.112) in contrast to the control group (11.760). In the experimental group , the inferential level was higher (26.000) in comparison with the inferential level of the control group (11.584). A similar positive trajectory has been found where the t– values of in experimental group are higher in contrast to the control group. The t–value of the creative level of the experimental group which is (23.487) also signifies the effectiveness of the underlying approach to improving reading comprehension competencies.

Thus , in the light of an overall score and t–values , it can be inferred from the results that there is a statistically significant efficacy of the SQ3R approach to improving reading comprehension skills. However , it has been observed that t–values are higher for the literal and inferential levels among the students of experimental groups in comparison with the t–values of evaluative and creative levels. The fact can be associated with the content taught to the students of eighth grade that are usually focused on skills such

as literal, evaluative, and inferential understanding of the content. An improvement in the reading comprehension expertise of the students can lead to a boost in their confidence and academic performance.

The results of the study are comparable to the study by Shaei (2022). This study was conducted with a non-English university students studying in Saudi Arabia that discovered the significance of the SQ3R strategy to develop reading comprehension expertise. The results of this experimental study concluded the efficacy of this strategy to build mastery over reading comprehension.

These findings are also consistent with the qualitative finding of the study by Dewi et al. (2021) that was conducted to examine the efficacy level of the SQ3R approach for refining the comprehension skills of the pupils of Islamic elementary education schools. It further presented an improvement in the pupil's ability to analyze the visual content and information, note-taking, and deductive understanding. Furthermore, the scope of the SQ3R strategy is not limited to building the reading comprehension competencies of elementary and middle-level students. Rather, Herwanis et al. (2021) have substantiated its efficacy as compared to Fix-up a strategy to sharpen the reading comprehension skills of grade ten. This was a quantitative study that evidenced the defectiveness of the SQ3R strategy in comparison with the Fix-Up strategy. Further, this strategy has been found useful for building the comprehension skills of college students in Sana'a through the experimental method (Saeed, 2022). It found a statistically significant difference in the control and experimental groups where the highest significance was observed in developing creative expression skills, especially among female participants.

In contrast, Asfour and Asaad Jihad (2022) conducted their study to assess the effectiveness of SQ3R in developing speaking and critical listening skills of the students in fifth grade that were recruited from the schools of Palestine. The results showed that Robinson's SQ3R strategy was also significant to inculcate critical listening and speaking skills. Al-Magableh et al. (2022) also employed the SQ3R strategy for developing active learning

strategies to increase the participation of 11th-grade students in Jordan and have found its significance.

Given the results of the study, it has been established that SQ3R is a viable strategy to instil effective reading comprehension skills in students. These findings will offer insights to the researchers, academicians, educationists, policymakers and students to devise and reform the educational practices, systems, content and strategies for improving the country's outlook in international assessments.

Recommendations

The present study encapsulates the recommendations stated in the following:

- Training the teachers of Arabic language teaching to employ Robinson's SQ3R strategy during teaching the Arabic language effectively.

- Chalking out effective instructional manuals for teachers with a special emphasis on lesson planning.

- Unfolding further research on exploring more state-of-the-art strategies for effective learning.

Conclusion

The present experimental study has investigated the efficacy of the SQ3R approach to enhance the reading comprehension skills for pupils, studying Arabic language courses in Saudi Arabia. The adopted strategy has been found statistically significant for sharpening reading competencies. Adoption of such strategies is also vital to teach the students critical learning and speaking skills along with their confidence building and enhancement of deductive understanding as reading comprehension skills are prerequisites for active learning and greater student engagement.

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