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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the effects of micro learning on developing critical comprehension skills of faculty of specific education prospective teachers. The students were selected to participate as the treatment group. The Strategy was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2023/2024. The data were analyzed statistically to measure the difference between the performance of the participants on the pre post-test, and to measure the differences in their performance on each reading sub-skill (Literal, Inferential, critical and creative comprehension skills), and how the participants were confident during reading. The results of the study indicated that there were significant differences in participants' performance in all sub-skills before and after implementing the strategy in favor of the post-performance. Accordingly, the study provided some recommendations addressing EFL teachers, curriculum designers and future researchers.

Keywords EFL e-Reading comprehension and Micro learning.

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في استخدام استراتيجية التعلم المصغر لتحسين مهارات الفهم القرائي الإلكتروني في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب كلية التربية النوعية . تم اختيار الطلاب عشوائياً للمشاركة في هذه التجربة وتم تنفيذ البرنامج في الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الأكاديمي ٢٠٢٤/٢٠٢٣ . تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً لقياس الفروق بين أداء المشاركين في الاختبار الأولي والاختبار النهائي، ولقياس الفروق في أدائهم في كل من مهارات القراءة الفرعية (مهارات الفهم الحرفي والفهم ذو المعنيين والفهم النقدي، بالإضافة الي الفهم الإبداعي) وتم استخدام الاختبار القبلي والبعدي و تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام استراتيجية التعلم المصغر . وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالات إحصائية في أداء المشاركين في جميع المهارات الفرعية قبل وبعد تنفيذ البرنامج لصالح الأداء النهائي. وبناءً على ذلك، قدمت الدراسة بعض التوصيات التي تستهدف معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مصممي المناهج والباحثين المستقبليين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارات الفهم القرائي، التعلم المصغر .

Introduction:

English language, like other languages, is the learner's means to express his/ her own ideas and emotions, and to exchange information with others. This happens through using different linguistic elements employed to communicate and engage in different real-life situations. It is reasonable that the process of teaching English language plays a significant role in the learning/ teaching process. Hence, emphasis should be placed on investigating new methods of teaching in order to support learners learning and enhance the development of key skills. Among the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the one that is basic is reading. Reading is decoding and understanding a text for particular reader purposes. Readers decode written texts by translating a text to speech, and translating directly to meaning. To understand a written text, readers engage in constructive processes to make a text meaningful, which is the end goal or product. Reading is one of the four language skills that requires special attention. It is the process of recognition, interpretation, and perception of written or printed materials. In many situations, reading is considered an indispensable channel of communication in an ever widening world.

Mikulecky (2011) reported that reading is a complex conscious and unconscious mental process in which a reader uses a variety of strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended, based on data from the text and from the reader's prior knowledge. Veeravagu, Muthusamy, Marimuthu and Subrayan (2010) defined reading comprehension as "a thinking process by which a reader selects facts, information, or ideas from printed materials; determines the meanings the author intended to transmit; decides how they relate to previous knowledge; and judges their appropriateness and worth for meeting the reader's own objectives".

Pirls (2006) reported that reading EFL is a good habit that one needs to develop in life. Good texts can inform, enlighten and lead in the right direction. It is important because it is good for overall well-being. It develops language skills and vocabulary. It is important to read a good book at least for a few minutes each day to stretch the brain muscles for healthy functioning.

According to Hung and Ngan (2015), Reading is a basic skill to improve vocabulary, writing, fluency and speaking. Thus, it would help learners successfully perform their target language. Pang (2008) added that a learner needs to be familiar with a text structure and topic, be aware of reading strategies, how to use these strategies in the processing of material and word recognition to be able to comprehend what is read.

In English language learning, reading is considered a frequently used skill out of the four language skills. It is a necessary skill which

learners of foreign languages need to successfully perform the language and gain knowledge. It is multifaceted and requires simultaneous interaction of numerous cognitive, metacognitive, and linguistic skills and competencies. Reading comprehension, is a skill that is essential for everyday life activities. It allows learners to understand the written materials effectively and interpret visual symbols the related background knowledge related to the words they read (Rraku, 2013) .

Learning to read opens the door to exciting new worlds, both real and imaginary, and provides the necessary skills to advanced one's knowledge and skills in the literate arts, math, social studies, science, and other domains in primary and secondary schools and continued education and training opportunities (Kilpatrick, 2019). Literacy, particularly Reading skills, also provides access to and facilitates meaningful and sustained engagement with critical societal systems and infrastructures such as health care, education for individuals and their dependents, and broader civic engagement (OECD, 2016).

According to Yee (2010, p. 16), Reading Comprehension is the process through which known words are converted into a meaningful idea. It is a complex activity requiring the activation of many cognitive skills. It begins with decoding words, accessing their related meanings, processing words related to one another, and then grasping the ideas within a text to understand the overall meaning. If a reader can decode and comprehend the printed word, he/she has acquired a necessary skill that provides a strong foundation for future success in reading comprehension.

El-Marsafy (2009) clarified that EFL reading comprehension is getting the whole meaning from a text clues using readers' background information. This process promotes interaction between the reader and the text. It means that EFL readers construct meaning from the text through making predictions and arranging information. Additionally, EFL readers make connection between what they already know and what they are reading in order to effectively develop a good understanding of the written material.

Critical comprehension is evaluating a written material, comparing the ideas discovered in that material to known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. A critical reader must be an active one, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until he or she has considered all of the material. Critical reading depends upon literal comprehension, and grasping implied ideas is especially important (Sinambela, E., Manik, S., & Pangaribuan, R. (2015).

To Zhang and West (2020), micro-learning is a way of performing competency-based Education (CBE). While traditional

education relies on teacher-led training, CBE focuses on individual learners' goals. This type of learning allows learners to select which skills they would like to improve and choose an option in an application that would help them achieve their goals. To Hosseini, Ejtehad and Hosseini (2020) and ,Khong and Kabilan (2022), achieving the competencies helps improve the teacher-learner relationship as learners might appreciate their renewed focus on their learning process and not the traditional course objectives. On the other side, authors report that higher education institutions that implement it must deal with existing national-level regulations that might prevent them from changing education paradigms. Definitions of competencies should also be standardized across similar knowledge areas. For second language instruction, micro-learning has offered benefits and has shown that these students enjoyed studying more, were more actively involved in the learning process, and were more conscious of the learning process as a whole. This led to the growth of their autonomy and self-regulated learning.

1.2. Context of the problem

To make sure that the students encounter problems during EFL electronic reading comprehension, a pilot study was conducted among 60 EFL students at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University. A pilot EFL electronic reading comprehension skills test was administered, and the pilotes' responses were corrected and analyzed. Results indicated that more than (80%) of them obtained low scores.

The pilot results of the experimental group pre to post the EFL electronic Reading Comprehension skill test.

Dimensions	Measurement	Number of Participants	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	df	t-Value
Critical comprehension skills	Pre	30	12.40	1.30	29	13.70
	Post	30	17.60	1.40		
Total	Pre	30	27.90	2.90	29	23.50
	Post	30	43.70	2.70		

The current study, therefore, has been an attempt to enhance students' EFL electronic reading comprehension.

Najamuddin (2009) reported that the difficulty of EFL reading comprehension is caused by some problems: 1) Students lack learning EFL strategies to be more active toward understanding the materials, 2) These students have low motivation and sometimes are passive in learning English, 3) The materials presented in the textbooks are difficult for the students.

Kaya and Balta (2016) explored the use of Socratic application for undergraduate students. They conducted a survey after using Socratic application in EFL classes for grammar quizzes and discussions. The results revealed that 86% of the participants stated that

Socratic application was helpful in learning English and 74% of them replied that it helped them engage more in EFL activities.

The problem of the current study could be stated in the poor performance of EFL electronic reading comprehension of sophomore students enrolled in the Technology section at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University. This problem was proved by the results of the pilot study results. It was noted that the majority of the pilotes were not able to infer the meaning of electronic reading texts that is a flexible pattern of discovery between the lines. Additionally they could not reach comprehension beyond what has been explicitly stated in the texts. Thus, in order to overcome the problem, the current study suggested utilizing a Micro Learning Strategy to enhance electronic reading comprehension skills . This study attempted to address the following main question: "What is the effect of a micro learning strategy on enhancing Faculty of Specific Education students 'electronic reading comprehension skills?"

1.3. Statement of the Problem:

The problem of the current study has been stated in the poor performance of the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University pilotes' EFL electronic reading comprehension skills. This problem was proved by previous studies and the results of the pilot study conducted by the researcher. In an attempt to face such a problem, the current study suggested the use of a micro learning to enhance pilotes' EFL electronic reading comprehension skills.

1.4. Questions of the study

The present study attempted to answer the following main question:

What is the effect of a micro learning strategy on enhancing Faculty of Specific Education Students 'Electronic Reading comprehension skills?

This main question could be divided into the following sub- questions:

- 1- What are the EFL electronic reading comprehension skills (literal and inferential reading comprehension skills) needed for faculty of specific Education Instruction Technology Students?
- 2- How far are these students proficient in performing these skills?
- 3- What are the features of a micro learning strategy to develop electronic reading comprehension skills for faculty of specific Education Instruction Technology students?
- 4- How can a micro learning strategy be designed to develop EFL Electronic reading comprehension?

The Study Hypotheses

The Study Hypotheses could be stated as follows:

1: It has been hypothesized that " There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the the experimental and the control groups in the post- results of the EFL e-Reading Comprehension skills favoring the experimental group".

2: It has been hypothesis that " There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre/ post EFL e- Reading Comprehension test results , favoring the post ones.

3: It has been hypothesized that " The Micro Learning Strategy has a large positive effect on developing the EFL Electronic Reading Comprehension skills of the students in the faculty of Specific Education".

Delimitations of the study

The present study was delimited to:

-A group of EFL Technology Section third year students at Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University.

- Some EFL digital reading skills required for Technology Section third year students as approved by the jury members.

-The Faculty of Specific education Zagazig University

- The academic year 2023-2024

Definitions of the study terms

Critical comprehension

Critical comprehension is evaluating a written material, comparing the ideas discovered in that material to known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. A critical reader must be an active one, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until he or she has considered all of the material. Critical reading depends upon literal comprehension, and grasping implied ideas is especially important (Sinambela, E., Manik, S., & Pangaribuan, R. (2015).

Micro Learning

Micro-learning is defined as a strategy that involves breaking down a complex concept into small units. A learning material is created to reflect individual needs. There are many variables that impact a microlearning strategy. Micro learning determines the independent contents that have concrete single themes while being composed of small units and can be learned at once through simple interactions and learning activities through those contents. Micro learning can serve personalized learning and on-demand selective learning, helping learners acquire new knowledge and remedy omissions in their existing knowledge.

Literature Review and Relevant Studies

This chapter reviews literature and pertinent studies related to the study variables: EFL reading and E-reading comprehension skills and micro learning strategy.

EFL Reading comprehension

Woolley (2011) clarified that EFL reading comprehension is the core of reading, and it is a complex cognitive ability, as well. Readers are not merely passive recipients of information, but they are active constructors of meaning. Skilled readers use a variety of skills to get meaning from the reading text. They construct meaning from the reading text and at the same time use their prior knowledge to get the whole picture clear in their minds. Reading comprehension is a two-way process. It integrates information from the reading text with information from the readers' background knowledge using inferential processing. Therefore, the main goal of EFL reading comprehension is to gain an overall understanding of what is written in the text rather than to make meaning from separate words.

To illustrate the idea completely, Sweeney (2004) asserted that EFL text comprehension is the main reason for EFL reading in the first place. Without comprehension, EFL reading would be a mere exercise for pronouncing a set of words. Questioning is a useful strategy that aids EFL text comprehension. Teachers ask questions to make students read with a purpose, think actively while reading, review what they read, and make connections between what they read and their prior knowledge. Teachers also can teach students the questions-answers relationship, which will help them in answering the reading comprehension questions.

Similarly, Snow (2002) reported that EFL reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and building meaning through interacting with written language. According to this view, comprehension includes three elements; the reader who is doing the comprehension, the text to be comprehended, and the activity which comprehension is the target. These three elements are interrelated. The words "extract and construct" prove that the reading text alone is insufficient to be comprehended effectively.

E-Reading

E-reading is a new term used in the literature in the last few years. There are three terms which may be similar. These terms include "digital reading ", "online reading " and "web-based reading". These terms depend on the internet access. In the present study, these three terms will be used interchangeably.

Kesterson (2015) have defined e-reading as reading on a computer screen. There are several screens which learners can choose. It

takes place via a computer screen. It depends on digital tools; personal computer, internet, personal digital assistant (PDAS) and smartphone via e-reader and tablet. These tools are used professionally and personally. Freund, Kopak and O'Brien (2016) indicated that e-reading means that readers jump and skip through texts and media in the form hyper-reading. It allows browsing and scanning as one time reading but non-linear. It is a human ability in written language accompanied with technologies as scroll, codex, hypertext and web. The reading behavior on the web gives interaction of print materials to be faster less linear and movement between texts for increasing implications of e-reading. E-reading means the digitalization of reading skill. It has the digital action of reading skill. It has two meanings; reading object that means content of the reading in digital formats, networks, novels, electronic maps, books, digital photos, blogs and web pages. The second is reading methods on the screen which displays instruments as PDA, MPU, MPS, laptops, e-readers and mobile phones.

To Larson (2009), reading is one of the important ways of conveying information. Problems related to legibility and readability have been investigated for decades, mainly focusing on printed texts. However, since portable digital devices have become more accessible in everyday life, paper reading materials are being replaced with visual display materials. Compared to printed texts that are seen through recognizing reflected lights, digital displays are a self-illuminant surface that emit light, resulting in more stress to the human eye. So, recent studies have typically devoted more attention to discovering the appropriate light on displays such as smartphones, tablet PCs, and e-books. These studies suggest particular guidelines to prevent visual fatigue caused by displaying materials, but these suggestions lack careful consideration of the human visual system. People do not realize luminance in absolute terms but rather they see luminance contrast.

Ingram (2013) explained that the variety of reading materials, available with the use of computer technology and the internet, can encourage students and provide opportunities to read widely in foreign language like English. This can be useful for learning vocabulary through proper reading and successfully perform important structures in the target language. So, it is argued that computers can promote extensive reading; build reading fluency and rate; enhance intrinsic self-efficacy for reading; and contribute to a coherent curriculum for student learning. Advances in e-technologies are dramatically changing the texts and tools available to teachers and students.

Method and Procedures

This chapter deals with the method and procedures of the study in terms of the study design, the participants, the study instruments, and the instructional material.

Design of the study:

The current study has adopted the quasi-experimental design as a method for data collection in which the study participants were chosen and divided into two groups (control and experimental). The experimental group was taught through the learning management system by Ed application on their smartphones while the control group was taught through the regular instruction.

Participants of the Study:

The participants of the study were sixty students from the Technology Section at the Faculty of Specific Education, Zagazig University during the First semester of the academic year 2023-2024, in Sharqia Governorate, Egypt. They were divided into two groups, experimental (n=30) ones and control (n=30) ones. It was assumed that they formed a similar group as they were chosen. So, they were predicted to have a lot in common and would not differ much regarding the quality of experience and their ages. In order to confirm that the development of participants' EFL e-reading comprehension skills were attributed only to the effect of utilizing the micro learning strategy.

Instruments of the study:

For achieving the purpose of the study, the following instruments were designed and used:

3.3.1.a- An EFL e-reading comprehension skills checklist.

3.3.2.b- A pre-post EFL e-reading comprehension skills test.

3.3.3.c-) An EFL Reading skills Rubric to score the reading skill test through assessing the reading skills before and after treatment.

Results and Interpretation

Hypothesis1:

It has been hypothesized that " There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the the experimental and the control groups in the post- results of the EFL e-Reading Comprehension skills favoring the experimental group".

Table (1)Comparing the post results of both groups in the EFL e reading comprehension.

Dimensions	Groups	Number of Participants	Mean scores	StandardD eviation	t- Value	df
Critical comprehension skills	experimental group	30	17.60	1.30	4.60	58
	control group	30	15.50	1.10		
Total	experimental group	30	43.70	2.70	16.50	58
	control group	30	35.20	2.80		

*Significant at (0.05)

Table (1) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between both groups in favor of the experimental in the post results of the Electronic Reading Comprehension test, t-value being (16.50). It is significant at (0,05) level. So, the second hypothesis was verified.

Hypothesis 2:

It has been hypothesis that" There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre/post EFL e- Reading Comprehension test results , favoring the post ones.

Table (2) Comparing the experimental group pre to post results in the EFL electronic Reading Comprehension.

Dimensions	Measurement	Number of Participants	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	f	t-Value
Critical comprehension skills	Pre	30	12.40	1.30	9	3.70
	Post	30	17.60	1.40		
Total	Pre	30	27.90	2.90	9	3.50
	Post	30	43.70	2.70		

*Significant at (0.05)

Table (2), indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and the post test results of experimental group in favor of the later in the EFL Electronic Reading Comprehension test, t-value being is (23.50) significant at,0.05. So, the third hypothesis was verified (23.50).

Hypothesis 3:

It has been hypothesized that" The Micro Learning Strategy has a large positive effect on developing the EFL Electronic Reading Comprehension skills of the students in the faculty of Specific Education"

Table (3) The Effect size of the micro learning strategy on the EFL Electronic Reading Comprehension skills.

Dimensions	Groups	Number of Participants	Mean scores	Standard Deviation	t-Value	f	Effect size
Critical comprehension skills	experimental group	30	17.60	1.30	4.60	8	0.80 Large
	control group	30	15.50	1.10			
Total	experimental group	30	43.70	2.70	16.50	8	0.86 Large
	control group	30	35.20	2.80			

Cohen's equation was used to verify the impact of the strategy. The impact was measured through the Cohen's equation.

Suggestions for Future Research

According to the current study, the following may be suggested:

- 1) Micro learning can be applied for investigating the effectiveness in enhancing EFL electronic reading among students at the university .
- 2) Adapting educational micro learning activities for developing other language skills such as listening and writing.
- 3) Investigating the effectiveness of micro learning developing some affective factors such motivation and attitudes towards language use.
- 4) Utilizing a micro learning in a wide range of language aspects.
- 5) Electronic reading comprehension skills should receive appropriate attention in order to be developed especially at university years.
- 6) Not only should reading comprehension skills be tackled, but it also should be evaluated regularly in order to identify students' needs and problems.
- 7) Utilizing the new technology tools and strategies to fill the gap between what students experience inside and outside the classroom.

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