

# The Effectiveness of an Educational Program based on Reciprocal Teaching Strategy for Developing Reading Comprehension Skills among Lower Basic Stage Students at Public Schools at Al Aqaba Directorate of Education

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of an educational program based on reciprocal teaching strategy for developing reading comprehension skills among lower basic stage students at public schools at Al Aqaba Directorate of Education, the study population consisted of all students in the third, fourth and fifth grades in Aqaba Governorate at Faisal II Elementary School for Boys and Salman Al Farsi Primary School for Boys, their number is about (430) students. The final sample of the study consisted of (60) students where two groups were formed: (30) students in the experimental group and (30) students in the control group. They were selected from among the students in the third, fourth and fifth grades in these two schools at Al Aqaba Directorate of Education. To achieve the objective of the study, three reading texts were used from the curriculum content in the third, fourth, and fifth grades to make sure of possession of pupils of correct reading skills, and test reading comprehension skills (prepared by the researcher), And the educational program based on a reciprocal teaching strategy to develop comprehension reading skills. The results of the study revealed statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups, experimental and control in reading comprehension skills on the post-test is attributable to the educational program, for the benefit of the experimental group, this indicates improvement of the students marks who have been treated in reading comprehension. And also a lack of statistically significant differences between mean scores of experimental group members in reading comprehension skills on the post-test in the third, fourth, and fifth grades attributed to the educational program, this shows that the benefit of the program was the same degree or level. The results of the study: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean of the marks of the students of the experimental group in the skills of reading comprehension in Post-test and their marks on the follow-up test are attributed to the educational program. In the light of the results, a set of recommendations were made can be used to alleviate the difficulties of reading among basic school students.

**Keywords:** Reciprocal Teaching Strategy, Lower Basic Stage Students, Reading Comprehension Skills

## Introduction

Reading comprehension is a mental process aimed at obtaining and acquiring meaning, a process composed of a number of subtasks by the reader to elicit meaning. The reader interprets the reading based on his or her prior knowledge and experience. The comprehension process is a process of interaction between the reader and the author, mental perception is more than perception-based; it requires focus, attention, analysis, conclusion, linkage, criticism, and judgment.

Reading comprehension is the focus of the reading process, which the educational system seeks to provide to the students to raise them to the level of awareness and perception, so it prepares a reader possesses the actual functional reading skills that enable him to comprehend the reading text within the advanced levels that lead him to be more aware and comprehensible, and the ability to understand and analyze the writer's objective; to issue objective judgments on what he or she reads in the light of his high reading comprehension (Alsaid., 2004).

Abdullatif (2004) emphasizes that reading comprehension is the focus of the educational process. It works to expand the individual's educational experience and raise the level of the individual to achieve the desired educational goals that seek to change the negative role of the student in the learning process to an active learner who analyzes, interprets, criticizes, and connects ".

Ashour and Muqdadi (2005) believe that reading comprehension is the result of the reader's understanding and the knowledge and facts he draws on the knowledge background. The process begins by understanding the written symbols, the words and the relationships that connect them, then understanding the meanings and significance of the written symbols and knowing the intention of the writer. Therefore, assimilation is a process of interaction between the reader and the writer of the text.

And reading comprehension requires the reader to discover the meaning required to achieve the purpose of reading and interpretation of this meaning. Therefore, the good reader is characterized by mental flexibility before and during reading and after, that flexibility that qualifies him permanently and continuously modify his reading path according to several things including: the mental ability of the reader, and his experience with the subject of reading, and the difficulty of the text and the purpose of reading (Abdel Bari, 2010).

### **Reciprocal teaching consists of four sub-strategies:**

- **Predicting:** This strategy allows students to expect the text and information to be included in the text. This can be done after scanning the text and seeing its main title, subheadings, and its contents, illustrations and clarifications, drawing on previous experiences on the subject.
- **Questioning:** This strategy provides students with the opportunity to ask direct and interpretive questions about the readable text and to answer them in order to learn them. Even if they start reading, they will look for answers to these questions. This means that they will read with some concentration, and deeper assimilation, and during reading perhaps students stop on a vague idea, or a vague word and here comes the third strategy.
- **Clarifying:** This strategy allows students to be aware of what can make the material difficult to understand such as the existence of a vague idea, or unfamiliar concepts, or images are not counted, or vague vocabulary, and this motivates them to use mental processes supreme, and when his knowledge repository does not help him, asks his mentor, talks to his colleagues, and perhaps uses an external reference.
- **Summarizing:** This strategy offers students the opportunity to express what they have understood in their own way and their own words to reach the core of the subject, after stripping it of extinctions, additions and repetition (Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

### **Problem of the Study**

Based on the reasons given in the introduction to the study, and taking into account the recommendations of some previous Arab and foreign studies, and what the researcher observed during her field work, the teachers' focus on the literal level in the treatment of reading texts, the lack of attention to the critical and creative levels and the lack of training and activities focusing on creative assimilation skills , In addition to the interest of foreign studies in the strategy of mutual education and its importance in the development of absorption skills in general. In contrast, the lack of Arabic studies that dealt with this strategy in improving the skills of reading comprehension at the level of critical and creative. Hence, the researcher's desire to investigate the impact of the reciprocal teaching strategy in improving the reading comprehension skills in the critical and creative level of the lower basic stage students at public schools at Al Aqaba directorate of education was generated. This study represents an attempt to reconsider the normal teaching method, and the researcher hopes to add new to avoid weakness in reading comprehension.

### **The importance of the study**

This study gains its importance from the following points:

1. Provide English teachers with theoretical information on the strategy of reciprocal teaching, the mechanisms of implementation, and how to refer them to procedural applications that improve critical and creative reading comprehension.

2. This study is expected to be a scientific addition to educational research in the field of reciprocal teaching, teaching reading comprehension, and is expected to pave the way for other scientific studies.
3. Provide the designers of English language curriculum with a modern strategy that will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of teaching reading skills, and taking them into account in the development of teachers' guides.
4. Reducing the weakness of students in reading comprehension skills.

### Hypothesis of the Study

1. There were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ) between Average scores of students in both experimental and control groups on Reading comprehension skills on the post-test attributed to the educational program.
2. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in students' reading comprehension due to the variable of the class.
3. There are no statistical significant differences at the level of (.50) in the mean scores of the students of the experimental group in the skills of reading comprehension in the post-test and their scores on the follow-up test attributed to the educational program.
4. There are statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the reading comprehension of students after the follow-up test, attributed to the class variable.

### Definition of Terms

**Reciprocal Teaching Strategy:** Educational activities that come on a dialogue between the teacher and the students, or between the pupils themselves, so that they exchange roles according to the sub-strategies involved clarifying, asking questions and summarizing in order to understand the readable text.

**Reading comprehension:** Reading comprehension in the present study is meant to be able to answer questions at the levels: literal and reorganization and the evaluation. It is expressed by the mark that the student gets in the reading comprehension test prepared for this purpose.

### Literature Review

Al- Zubaidi, Haddad and Waeli (2013) study entitled "The effect of educational program based on oriented communicative in improving critical listening skills , and to achieve the goal of the study an educational program was built, and a listening test was developed, the study members were (158) students divided into experimental and control groups. The results showed the existence of significant differences between the two groups due to the impact of the program, and in favor of the experimental group, and the lack of a statistically significant difference was due to the effect of gender, or the interaction between the method and gender.

Dewi & Ewi (2013) revealed the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching techniques in narrative analysis of texts, and finding the problems and difficulties faced by students in understanding and analyzing texts through (Reciprocal / RTT Teaching Technique) and the qualitative research methodology was used, where the data was obtained by observation and interview. The sample of the study consisted of (28) students from the eleventh grade students in Indonesia, the study members set for a pre-test where the average of their performance in the test was (45.67), while the average performance in the post-test was (64.65), and the study concluded that increase the ability of students in understanding narrative texts (RTT) and analyzed it.

The study of Chebaani & Tomas (2011) revealed on the impact of Reciprocal Teaching, self-monitoring to improve reading comprehension among fourth-grade students in Spain, the study members consisted of (59) students were divided into three groups: the first group studied according to the Reciprocal Teaching strategy, and the second group studied according to Reciprocal Teaching and self-monitoring strategy, and the third group studied in the usual way, then a test to measure reading comprehension was applied, and the results of the study revealed the superiority of the two groups who studied using the Reciprocal Teaching, and Reciprocal self-education and self-monitoring, over the group that studied using the usual way, and the lack of a statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups.

kok (2011) conducted a study to investigate the effect of Reciprocal Teaching strategy to improve reading comprehension, the study sample consisted of (68) students from the Malaysian university with underachieving, where the researcher chose nine lessons taught using Reciprocal Teaching strategies to the experimental group, while the control group studied in the usual way, and then each group was given five questions to compare the performance of open (T) , and the two-group test was used, the results revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group that studied using Reciprocal Teaching strategy.

The study of Harb (2011) revealed the impact of Reciprocal Teaching strategy in reading awareness for students of tenth grade in Jordan, the members of the study are (77) tenth grade students, they were divided into two groups: the experimental, and the control, the experimental group studied using the Reciprocal Teaching strategy, and a test to measure reading awareness was built, it consisted of (20) items distributed on four areas: planning for reading, reading and organizing awareness, evaluation, and conditional knowledge. The results showed statistically significant differences in reading awareness in its four dimensions in favor of the experimental group that studied the comprehension texts using Reciprocal Teaching strategy, the study recommended the employment of Reciprocal Teaching strategy in the teaching of literacy texts, and all the subjects.

The Alazamat (2010) study aimed to trace the effect of integrative orientation program in the development of listening processes at among seventh grade students, the study members consisted of (69) students from the seventh grade in the northeastern desert students, they were divided into two groups: experimental and control group , and to achieve the objective of the study an educational program was built, and a listening test was built to measure the listening processes. The results indicated the presence of a statistically significant difference in listening operations in favor of the experimental group that studied according to the program. The results showed the existence of a statistically significant difference due to the gender variable, in favor of females, and the results also showed the existence of statistically significant differences due to the impact of the interaction between the method and gender, in favor of females.

## **Method and procedures**

### **The population of the Study and its Sample**

The study population consisted of all students in the third, fourth and fifth grades in Aqaba Governorate at Faisal II Elementary School for Boys and Salman Al Farsi Primary School for Boys, their number is about (430) students. The final sample of the study consisted of (60) students where two groups were formed: (30) students in the experimental group and (30) students in the control group. They were selected from among the students in the third, fourth and fifth grades in these two schools at Al Aqaba Directorate of Education. Table (1) shows this

**Table (1): The sample of the study**

Group	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Total
Experimental	10	10	10	30
Control	10	10	10	30
Total	20	20	20	60

### **Study Tools:**

#### **First: Reading comprehension test:**

The test of reading comprehension skills aims to identify aspects of strength and weakness of students in the lower basic stage in comprehending Reading skills, which includes the following levels: literal level and Reorganization of information level, deductive comprehension level and Evaluation and assessment level, where the test includes a group of the overall paragraphs of previous levels.

#### **The content of the Test:**

This test in its final form consisted of (21) Multiple choice questions, and essay questions, divided into five levels which were mentioned earlier.

### Validity of the test:

The test was presented to ten arbitrators from the panel of Teaching in universities and specialists in curricula and teaching methods, in order to see the paragraphs and the dimensions of the test, determining the suitability of the vertebrae of the dimensions and the sample students, and the achievement of the objective for which the test was established. In the light of the views of the members of the jury, the wording was amended in several paragraphs of the test.

### Test Reliability

The test was applied to a sample of (15) students in grades Third, fourth and fifth elementary at schools at Al Aqaba Directorate of Education, and the period of time between the two applications was fifteen days. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Re-application method, alpha coefficient of reliability. Table (2) shows the reliability coefficient of reading comprehension test levels through re-application.

**Table (2): Reliability coefficient using the re-application to reading comprehension levels test**

Level	Reliability coefficient
Literal	0.782
Reorganization	0.749
Deductive	0.838
evaluative	0.797
Estimated	0.816
Total	0.861

### Second: the educational program to develop reading comprehension skills

#### Program Goals

The educational program is based on a reciprocal teaching strategy to develop reading comprehension skills, and the procedural objectives for a tutorial based on a reciprocal teaching strategy are the following:

After completion of the program, the student is expected to:

1. Identify the main ideas, sub-sections and partial details.
2. Arrange events in the text.
3. Compare the figures and their work in the text.
4. Distinguish between cause and effect.
5. The student classifies the information contained in the text.
6. Summarizes and restores the information contained in the text.

#### Reliability of the program

The educational program was presented to a group of arbitrators comprising of four university faculty members, and three educational supervisors and English language teachers. The arbitrators reported the validity of the program for its application and suitability to achieve the objective set for it and the students of the current study sample.

#### Study variables

**Independent Variable:** An educational program to develop reading comprehension skills using a reciprocal teaching strategy.

**The dependent variable:** students' reading comprehension skills after application of the program.

**Intermediate Variable:** Class Level

### Study design:

This study is based on the experimental approach in its procedures, this approach is characterized by its ability to adjust variables that may effect on the semi-experimental variable and observe what the independent variable might do in the performance of the experimental group students, it is a strategic use of Reciprocal teaching in teaching reading comprehension skills for students, as it is appropriate method for the subject of the study, so that the hypotheses of the study are tested to prove its validity or negation.

This study takes the following experimental design:

G1: O1 X O2 O3

G2: O1 - O2

Whereas:

G1: Students of the experimental group.

G2: Students of the control group.

O1: Pre/Test.

O2: Post-test

O3: Test-up.

X: Processing.

-: No treatment.

### Statistical Methods

A range of appropriate statistical methods were used to address the study data:

1. Means and standard deviations of study groups in the Reading comprehension pre/posttest and tracking test.
2. T. Test to indicate differences between arithmetic averages of study groups in the reading comprehension pre/posttest and tracking test.
3. ANOVA analysis of variance to Compute the differences in the means in the reading posttest and tracking test according to class variable.

### Results of the Study

**First: the results of the study on the first hypothesis**, which states that "There were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ) between Average scores of students in both experimental and control groups on Reading comprehension skills on the post-test attributed to the educational program.

To verify the hypothesis, means and standard deviations were found of the scores of the students of the experimental and the control groups of the reading comprehension test in the post-application and table (3) shows this

**Table (3): significance of differences between the averages of the two schoolgirls' scores for both experimental and control groups on the Reading Comprehension test after the application of the program**

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t-test	Sig
Experimental	30	39.15	2.970	6.71	0.001
Control	30	28.90	4.790		

Table (3) shows statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the post-application to test reading comprehension, for the benefit of the experimental group where the average increase after application of the program is greater among the experimental group than the control group. Where the scores of the experimental group were better and the mean reached (39.15) while the arithmetic mean of the students in the control group reached (28.90) which means the differences in reading comprehension were in favor of the experimental group. The results of the T test also showed statistically significant differences between the averages at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ), where the significance level was (0.001) in favor of the experimental group. This indicates the effect and effectiveness of the educational program, which means rejecting the null hypothesis.

**The second hypothesis**, which states that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in students' reading comprehension due to the variable of the class and to verify the validity of the hypothesis, the average and standard deviations of the scores of the experimental group students were found on the reading comprehension test in the posttest . Table (4) illustrates this

**Table (4): means of scores of students at experimental group on reading Comprehension test after the application of the program depending on the level of the class**

Class	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Third	10	39.20	2.951
Fourth	10	38.65	3.416
Fifth	10	39.55	3.573
Total	30	39.00	3.000

As shown in Table (4), there are no apparent differences in the arithmetic mean of the students of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test in the post application due to the class variable. To determine whether these differences were statistically significant, the significance of the differences was determined by using (ANOVA) for the differences between the arithmetical averages and the standard deviations and table (5) illustrates this.

**Table (5): test results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the differences between the means of the students' scores of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test after the application of the program**

Differences	Df	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	F	Sig
Between groups	2	2.533	1.312	.129	.883
Within groups	12	115.100	9.601	-	-
Total	14	117.820	-	-	-

Table (5) shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the arithmetic mean of the students of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test in the posttest due to the class variable. The value of F reached (0.129) which is not statistically significant and this indicates that the benefit of the program was the same for students and did not differ according to the class. This means acceptance of the Hypothesis.

**The third hypothesis:** which states that there are no statistical significant differences at the level of (.50) in the mean scores of the students of the experimental group in the skills of reading comprehension in the post-test and their scores on the follow-up test are attributed to the educational program. To verify the validity of the hypothesis, the mean and standard deviations were found and the value of (T) to indicate the differences in the scores of the students of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test in the follow-up application after one month of the application of the program. Table (6) illustrates this

**Table 6: (T) test of the differences between the averages of student scores of the experimental group on reading comprehension test after follow-up**

Group	Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Sig
Experimental	Posttest	30	39.00	2.900	0.374	0.699
	Follow-up	30	38.95	3.680		

Table (6) shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the students of the experimental group on the test of reading comprehension between the post-application and follow-up. The value of (0.374) is not statistically significant, this indicates the impact of training after one month of program implementation, which means acceptance of the hypothesis.

**The fourth hypothesis:** It states that there are statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the reading comprehension of students after the follow-up test, attributed to the class variable. To validate the hypothesis, the mean and standard deviations of the experimental group scores were found on the reading comprehension test after a month of follow-up from the program application to the third-Fourth and fifth grade students. Table (7) shows this

**Table (7): Mean averages and standard deviations of student scores of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test after a month of application of Program according to grade level**

Class	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Third grade	10	38.900	3.020
Fourth grade	10	39.35	3.475
Fifth grade	10	38.65	3.680
Total	30	38.71	3.680

Table (7) shows that there are no apparent differences in the arithmetic mean of the students of the experimental group in the third, fourth and fifth grades on the reading comprehension test after one month after the application of the program in the third and fourth and fifth grades attributed to the educational program. To investigate whether these differences are statistically significant, the significance of the differences using one way (ANOVA) for the differences between the arithmetical means and standard deviations and table (8) illustrates this

**Table (8): one way ANOVA results for the differences between the arithmetical averages of the experimental group test scores on the reading comprehension test after follow-up from the application of the program to the grade level**

Differences	Df	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	F	Sig
Between groups	2	10.554	5.301	0.340	0.731
Within groups	12	188.399	15.690	-	-
Total	14	198.898	-	-	-

Table (8) shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students' scores on the reading comprehension test according to the different grades (third, fourth, and fifth) within one month of application. The value of F reached (0.340) it not statistically significant at this level. This indicates that the effect of training on students in reading comprehension has transferred and that the effectiveness of the educational program for students in grades 3, 4 and 5 continues. This means acceptance of the hypothesis

### Discussion of results

The aim of this study was to reveal the effectiveness of an educational program based on the reciprocal teaching strategy to develop reading comprehension skills among students of the basic stage in Al Aqaba / Jordan. This study was designed to build a teaching program based on the reciprocal teaching strategy. In order to measure the effectiveness of this program, a test was designed in the reading comprehension and was applied



before and after the program to the students of the experimental and control groups. Then the reading comprehension test was applied to the experimental group students after one month of applying the educational program.

#### **Discussion of the findings concerning the first hypothesis:**

The results of the first hypothesis test showed differences in reading comprehension among the students of the experimental group and the control group in the post application, the differences were in favor of the experimental group, Where the students of the experimental group exceeded the students of the control group in the reading comprehension, Meaning that the differences were in favor of the experimental group that studied through the educational program using a reciprocal teaching strategy. The results of the post-test indicated that there were statistically significant differences at the mean level ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ) if the mean level was (0.001) in favor of the experimental group. This means rejecting the first Null hypothesis.

These differences and the increase in achievement in the reading comprehension of the experimental group students better than their peers in the control group can be attributed to the educational program studied by the experimental group's students, this is evidenced by the importance of using the reciprocal teaching-based teaching program to develop reading comprehension skills, where the learning program has had a clear impact on the development of reading comprehension skills.

#### **Discussion of the findings concerning the second hypothesis:**

The results of the second hypothesis showed that there were no differences in reading comprehension in the arithmetic mean of the experimental group's students in the post-application due to the class variable. This indicates that the reading comprehension among the experimental group did not differ according to the grade. The absence of statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-application can be attributed to the grade level that the benefit of the program was the same among the students. This means acceptance of the hypothesis. This result could be due to:

- The reciprocal teaching strategy opens up dialogue and discussion for students and helps them to express their opinion in a balanced manner, in the sense that each student takes the right to participate in education, as the student exercises four strategies (prediction, clarification, questioning, summarization) at each step, students interact and discuss in a systematic and organized manner about the skills required to learn.
- The importance of the educational program that is directed to the students of the experimental group, the student within the group reads the given text and determines the skill required, then analyzes and interprets the information contained in the text, then his work is transferred to the students of the group, students exchange dialogue and discussion to reach the right work, then transfer it to other groups, groups exchange dialogue and discussion, and then dialogue between the teacher and the groups to achieve the required skill. Each step receives feedback from students.

#### **Discussion of the findings concerning the third hypothesis:**

The results of the third hypothesis showed no statistical significant differences at the level of the mean scores of the experimental groups in the reading comprehension skills in the post-test and their marks on the follow-up test are attributed to the educational program, which means that the impact of the educational program continues even after a month of application of the educational program, and thus acceptance of the hypothesis in the sense that pupils retained an impact of learning and have the ability to transfer the impact of learning. This result could be due to:

- The importance of the use of the teaching program based on the methodology of cross-teaching in the development of reading comprehension skills, as the educational program helped students to keep what was learned and transfer the impact of learning to other situations, in the follow-up application to test reading comprehension did not show statistical differences from the post-application of the understanding test, this indicates that the students used the skills acquired during the tutorial in the sequential test, and they have the ability to employ them in other situations in the present and future if these reading comprehension skills practiced in this way.
- The effectiveness of the Reciprocal teaching strategy for students of the lower basic stage has been shown in helping students to retain what they have learned and to employ in other situations.

### **Discussion of the findings concerning the fourth hypothesis:**

The results of the fourth hypothesis showed no statistical significant differences at a level of reading comprehension among students in the lower basic stage after the follow-up test due to the class variable.

The arithmetic mean of the marks of third-graders was (39.00) for fourth grade students (39.60) and for fifth graders (38.73) and the overall average (38.93). This indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the students of the experimental group on the reading comprehension test in the follow-up application after the application of the program is attributable to the class variable. The results of the ANOVA analysis comparing the three levels (third, fourth, and fifth) of the experimental group students on the reading comprehension test showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) where the level of significance was (0.722).

This indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental groups in the reading comprehension test according to the difference in grade (third, fourth, fifth) after one month of application of the educational program which means acceptance of the hypothesis.

This outcome can be attributed to:

The importance of both the educational program and its activities and training based on the Reciprocal teaching strategy in helping students to retain the impact of learning and move it to other situations.

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