

The Impact of a Social-Constructivism Instructional Program on Eleventh-grade Female Students' English Reading and Writing Skills in Jordan

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Abstract

Objectives: This study investigates the effectiveness of an instructional program based on social constructivism in improving English language reading skills among eleventh-grade female students in Jordan.

Methods: A quasi-experimental study approach was adopted during the first semester of the scholastic year 2023-2024 at Alqweismeh School for Girls at Alqweismeh Directorate. The study sample consisted of 46 students in two sections, randomly distributed to a control group (25 students), and an experimental group (21 students). Reading tests were used to assess the reading skills of both groups. The study data was collected using a single research tool: a comprehensive English achievement pre-and-post reading test, based on a verbal rating scale. The data was analyzed using mean averages, standard deviations, and ANCOVA.

Results: The study findings indicate a statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) between the mean scores of either group (experimental or control) regarding their English language reading skills. The mean score of the experimental group was (14.86 + 3.72) compared to the mean score of the control group (10.00 + 3.27). The reading achievement was in favor of the experimental group.

Conclusions: The study findings indicate that the instructional program, based on social constructivism, is significantly more effective than the conventional method in developing students' English language reading skills. The study recommends that English language reading skills be improved by including social constructivism tenets in English language curricula and instruction methods.

Keywords: Social Constructivism; Instructional Program; English Language Reading Achievement Test; English Language Reading Skills.

أثر برنامج تعليمي قائم على النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية في تطوير مهارتي القراءة والكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طالبات الصف الحادي عشر في الأردن واتجاهاتهن نحو تعلم هاتين المهارتين

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ملخص

الأهداف: الكشف عن فاعلية برنامج تعليمي قائم على النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية في تطوير مهارات القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طالبات الصف الحادي عشر في الأردن.

المنهجية: اتبعت الدراسة المنهج شبه التجريبي، وطبقت الدراسة على طالبات الصف الحادي عشر في مدرسة القويسمة الثانوية في مديرية لواء القويسمة خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول للعام 2023-2024. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 46 طالبة في شعبتين، وزعن عشوائياً؛ بحيث عدت إحداهما مجموعة ضابطة (25) طالبة، والأخرى مجموعة تجريبية (21) طالبة. اختبرت المجموعتان باستخدام اختبار قراءة لقياس مهارات القراءة لديهن، وقد استخدمت أداة بحثية واحدة لجمع بيانات الدراسة؛ وهي اختبار تحصيلي شامل لمهارات القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية (قبلي وبعدي)، قيم بسلم تقدير لفظي؛ لقياس مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. وحللت البيانات باستخدام المتوسطات الحسابية، والانحرافات المعيارية، إضافة إلى تحليل التباين المصاحب (ANCOVA).

النتائج: أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية ($\alpha=0.05$) بين متوسط علامات كلتا المجموعتين (الضابطة والتجريبية) لمهارات القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية. فإن المتوسط الحسابي للمجموعة التجريبية (14.86+ 3.72)، مقارنة مع المجموعة الضابطة (10.00 + 3.27)، ولصالح المجموعة التجريبية.

الخلاصة: توصلت الدراسة إلى أن البرنامج التعليمي القائم على النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية أكثر فاعلية من الطريقة التقليدية في تطوير مهارة القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطالبات. توصي الدراسة بضرورة تطوير مهارات القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية؛ من خلال تضمين مبادئ النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية في مناهج وأساليب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات الدالة: النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية، برنامج تعليمي، اختبار تحصيل القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية، مهارات القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

1.1. Introduction

Social constructivism is a learning theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in 1968. According to Vygotsky, language and culture affect academic growth and influence how learners perceive their environment. A community of learners, who share language and culture, co-construct knowledge socially. In other words, learners construct knowledge when they interact with their peers and the teacher through collaborative learning (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020). According to Vygotsky, this social interaction improves learners' personality and cognitive abilities (Saleem, et. al., 2021). Additionally, learners create knowledge when they interact with and explore their surrounding environment and reflect on it (Akpan et al., 2020; Olorode and Jimoh, 2016). Social constructivism has been flourishing in foreign language learning and teaching disciplines. It presents a psycholinguistic explanation of how to support the learning process using interactive and innovative teaching methods that enable learners to construct knowledge and engage in communicative interaction within a supportive learning environment (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). Thus, the learner is no longer considered a passive recipient of ideas or an empty vessel to be filled with doctrines predetermined by the teacher, as is believed in behavioral learning theory (Saleem, et al., 2021). Hence, learners are considered active constructors of information, through inquiry, discovery, reasoning, and judgment, rather than merely passive recipients. (Piaget, 1973; Saleem, et. al., 2021).

Social Constructivism emphasizes the importance of Social Interaction. Language learning is viewed as an active social interaction, e.g. collaboration and group work, within and outside the boundaries of the classroom. This social interaction helps learners achieve effective learning outcomes (Nawaz, 2012). Students should be taught within a communicative social environment. This way, students can fully grasp multiple and complex forms of meaning. This also makes language learning more relevant and purposeful to them. In addition, EFL learners should participate in interactive learning tasks to be autonomous learners (Yang and Wilson, 2006). Students are also encouraged to use innovative techniques to acquire Knowledge and reflect on it. They also should discuss their ideas and achievements in the classroom with their teachers and their classmates (Fleury & Garrison, 2014). Students form individual and subjective experiences and different perceptions inside their environment (Creswell, 2009). In other words, different people construct different realities; "Two people looking at something together never actually see the same thing in the same way" (Kim, 2001, p.10). Social Constructivism practices encourage collaborative and active learning which consolidate interactive communication between students and their teacher within a supportive learning environment. Hence, instructional models based on social constructivism necessitate the need for learners to work with other learners and with their caregivers in the social environment (Lave & Wenger, 1991; McMahon, 1997).

Social constructivism highlights the importance of the cultural and social context in constructing knowledge. Communication should abide by the social norms society imposes on its members to be effective. This movement is inspired by the works of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Kim, 2001). Two factors play a paramount role in constructing meaning; the learning context and the sociocultural background of learners. Both factors interact with the learning context itself (Gredler, 1997). The most common key components and tenets of social constructivism are: (1) implantation of arguments, debates, and discussions, (2) Improving problem-solving skills, (3) using materials and resources for solving problems, (4) improving social-communication skills, (5) making authentic real-life examples (Tenenbaum, Naidu, Jegede, & Austin, 2001), (6) to meet learner's needs (Meyer, 2004), (6) activation of prior-knowledge, (7) integration of different learning skills, (8) creating self-regulated autonomous learners (Alt, 2014) (9) Active learning (Von Glasersfeld, 1989), (10) instructor's role is facilitator and guide (Brown, 2001), and (11) student-centered learning (Prawat and Floden, 1994). Students should participate in activities connected to the learning experience that mimic real-life situations in which they need to use language communicatively (Gredler, 1997).

Social constructivism considers language learning a self-motivated process. In other words, a student-centered language classroom is the ultimate goal. Thus, all components of a learner affect language learning. This means every student is unique, in terms of social background, ideas, impressions, and learning goals (Saleem, et. al., 2021). Any teaching program should consider this uniqueness when planning learning goals, activities, and assessments to help students construct knowledge based on their unique perspective (Rannikmäe, et.al, 2020). This includes their behaviors, beliefs, emotions,

aptitudes, motivation, and previous knowledge. Learners should have the means to connect their previous knowledge to the new knowledge. In addition, the popular and mass culture of the target language, to which students are exposed, plays an essential role in improving their understanding of the target language. It also helps students alter their conceptions, opinions, and viewpoints towards the target culture and life. Using culture in the language classroom is essential as it provides prospects for creating social communities in which teachers and learners can communicate based on mutual understanding and shared interests (Marsh & Millard, 2000). This might also increase their sociocultural and pragmatic awareness of the target language and culture (McKinley, 2015).

An important principle in social constructivism is scaffolding. Scaffolding is defined as metacognitive, strategic, conceptual, or procedural support that enables the learner to transcend their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), i.e., the gap between what a learner has learned fully and what they can learn with sufficient support (Belland, 2010). In other words, scaffolding means providing learners with the appropriate amount of supportive guidance and ample interaction with peers to construct knowledge and accomplish certain tasks (Vygotsky, 1978). This supportive guidance can be provided by parents, teachers, caregivers, or peers. This supportive guidance also helps students achieve better academic results (Taylor, 2018). This support should be in the form of detailed, stepwise, and outcome-oriented procedures for students to follow. These procedures help students master a certain skill successfully (Trif, 2015). Teachers should assess their students' ZPDs before teaching and design tailor-made teaching practices accordingly. This conforms with Kumaravadivelu's three pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility; in other words, teaching should be situation-specific and tailor-made to meet the needs of different students in different situations (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Reading and writing are integrated skills and should be taught simultaneously. Contemporary social constructivist approaches demand transformations of knowledge, social interaction, and collaboration, as well as the integration of writing with other forms of learning such as reading (Tynjälä et al., 2001). Consequently, teachers need to understand that these two language skills are integrated, and they should not be taught in isolation. Reading and writing integration engage students effectively in language learning and reflect the natural use of the target language in everyday life (Al-Busaidi, 2013). Learners have to read to learn the way writers use language to convince, amuse, educate, and inspire their readers. In other words, when students are exposed to various genres, they shall have better textual awareness (Wallace, 1995).

Social constructivism is the new 'old trend' in language teaching and learning. However, this research aimed to shift it from theory into practice in the field of EFL pedagogy and to shed light on some of the innovative teaching practices of social constructivism, such as using the Social Constructivist Five E's Instructional Model. This focus shift might help EFL students in Jordan face fewer difficulties developing English language reading skills. Tawjihi exams, the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination in Jordan, mostly concentrate on testing students' performance in reading skills. Thus, helping students master this skill makes them achieve better results in national exams, such as the Tawjihi exams. Moreover, this study might help make Jordanian EFL classrooms less teacher-centered and more student-centered. This is obvious in the Jordanian context where the stakeholders have generally considered knowledge as the 'truth' that cannot be questioned, and which should be passively transmitted to students by teachers, i.e. teacher-centered classrooms (Sakarneh & Al-Swelmyeen, 2020).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Students need to develop their literacy skills, particularly reading, to communicate effectively and achieve better results academically. However, EFL students in Jordan face many problems in reading. Saed & Al-Omari (2014) argued that the currently used teaching strategies might be one of the factors that cause this. Additionally, Jordanian EFL students find it difficult to read English texts due to ambiguous and unfamiliar vocabulary and structure (Qrgez and Rashid, 2017). These challenges lead students to achieve poor results in English language Tawjihi Exams. Throughout the researcher's experience as a teacher in public schools and tutoring Tawjihi students, she noticed that students face difficulties comprehending written texts. This study emanates from the recommendations of some studies which refer to the importance of exploring further studies on ways to improve students' reading skills by implementing Social Constructivism practices in the language

classroom. For example, the findings of international and national studies, e.g., Yan and Hongying (2020), Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018), Jubran (2016), Huang (2009), Mahmoud (2004), and Au (1998).

Innovative EFL teaching methods, based on social constructivism, need to be considered when developing the EFL teaching policies and practices in Jordan, to improve students' reading skills. Therefore, this study aimed to shed light on the effectiveness of a proposed instructional program based on social constructivism on eleventh-grade female students' achievements in reading tests in Jordan and to highlight the importance of the integration of reading and writing skills in a harmonized and interactive atmosphere inside the language classroom. Therefore, the researcher thought that an instructional program based on social constructivism tenets may have a considerable effect on eleventh-grade female students' reading achievements in Jordan during the scholastic year 2023-2024.

1.3 Purpose and Question of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an instructional program based on social constructivism in improving English language reading skills among eleventh-grade female students in Jordan. It aimed to answer the following question:

1. Are there any significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, which can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that an instructional program, based on social constructivism, helps develop eleventh-grade female students' English language reading skills in Jordan and their achievements in language tests in Jordan. Thus, the findings of the current study are beneficial for EFL curriculum designers and developers, textbook authors, teachers, students, and researchers. Moreover, these findings might encourage researchers to conduct other studies on the effectiveness of using an instructional program based on social constructivism in improving reading abilities among different school students. And possibly, the effectiveness of using this approach in disciplines of knowledge other than English language pedagogy.

Social constructivism has proven to be effective in engaging students in active learning and in helping them achieve their full potential in learning within a supportive social environment (Suhendi, et al., 2021). Moreover, social constructivism has a positive influence on the advancement of education in general (Kothani, 2004). Consequently, implementing such a social constructivism-based instructional program results in helping students become autonomous and lifelong learners. Adopting Social Constructivism practices in teaching reading improves learners' reading skills significantly as highlighted by Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018), Jubran (2016), Huang (2009), and Au (1998).

1.5. Definition of Terms

The instructional program: This is an instructional program that had been developed by the researcher based on the principles of social constructivism to develop EFL eleventh-grade female students' reading skills and enhance their performance in reading tests.

Eleventh-grade students: refer to female students at Alqweismeh Secondary School for Girls in Jordan who study English as a foreign language, between the ages of sixteen and seventeen.

Social Constructivism: refers to a school of thought developed by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky that advocates that learners are "active constructors of their learning environment" (Mitchell & Myles, 1988, p. 162). In other words, learners are considered to be active learners who reconstruct knowledge in their minds through interactive communication with teacher/parent, peers, and even knowledge itself, within a supportive social context (Yang and Wilson, 2006).

Reading skills: Reading is considered a communicative interaction between the reader and the writer of the text (Widdowson, 1984). The main purpose of teaching reading skills in an EFL language classroom is to equip students with

reading mechanisms that enable them to be “efficient readers, who are flexible, interrogative of the text, critical and creative in communicating with the author (Byram and Hu, 2013, p.585). In this study, reading skills refer to eleventh-grade female students’ skills to understand, predict, infer, analyze, and reflect on what they read in English as measured by the reading achievement test.

2. 1. Previous Related Studies

Maisa Seh (2022) investigated the constructivist learning model's effectiveness in improving fourth-graders' motivation toward reading among Arab students in Israel. The study followed a quasi-experimental framework. The research tool was a questionnaire to measure students’ motivation towards reading. The study sample consisted of (39) male and female students who were chosen randomly. The study results showed that the constructivist-learning model improved students' motivation towards reading. The researcher suggested the need to equip instructors with the necessary means to use constructivist learning models within supportive learning environments. It also encouraged researchers to conduct more studies on the challenges instructors face when implementing modern teaching techniques, such as constructivist learning theory ideas and students' attitudes and acceptance of the constructivist approach to learning.

Yan and Hongying (2020) studied the effectiveness of using a constructivist learning model that consists of e-books and interactive online instruction to improve English reading comprehension skills and motivation among ESL learners at a middle school in Bengbu, an underdeveloped area of China. The study followed a quasi-experimental approach. The study participants were (72) students at the same school. The study findings showed improvement in students' reading comprehension skills and increased motivation and interest in learning. The researcher recommended that instructors use a constructivist learning model that employs technology and the Internet in their teaching practices. This helps students become autonomous learners and construct knowledge themselves with the help of the internet. It also improves students' intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, and interest.

Alhusban (2019) researched reading comprehension teaching practices used by EFL Jordanian teachers. The study sample consisted of thirty teachers, who were observed by the researcher, and ten of these teachers were also interviewed. Descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the observation data, and thematic content analysis was used to analyze the interview data. The study findings showed that EFL Jordanian teachers used traditional methods in teaching reading comprehension. Most of the interviewed teachers named new methods of teaching reading comprehension but could not employ and practice them. The researcher recommended equipping EFL language teachers with the necessary innovative teaching methods of reading comprehension and how to apply them efficiently in the classroom.

Zahawi (2019) conducted a study that studied the effectiveness of implementing constructivist principles in teaching reading to Kurdish EFL students. The study followed a quasi-experimental research design. The study participants were (51) students, chosen randomly, from the College of Basic Education/English Department at Salahaddin University-Erbil during the academic year 2016-2017. A reading comprehension test was the study tool. The results of the study showed that social constructivism practices improved students’ reading comprehension skills and social skills. Also, social constructivism-based teaching practices proved to be effective in teaching English language reading comprehension and language instructors should consider using such practices in teaching language skills.

Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018) investigated students' reading comprehension achievement, vocabulary mastery, and social values among the third-semester students at the Computer Engineering, English, and Business Administration Department of Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Indonesia. In this research, the writers used the Research & Development (R & D) methodology. The purposive sampling included 3 high classes and 3 low classes consisting of 148 students. To collect the data, tests of reading comprehension and vocabulary were given and then statistically calculated with the paired-sample t-tests. The findings indicated that the students in the high and low classes could significantly improve their reading comprehension achievement and vocabulary mastery. The students have also shown positive moral values towards their friends such as being cooperative, respectful, responsible, and helpful, and report that it has made their reading process

more tangible and interesting. These results verify the efficacy of the social constructivism-based reading comprehension teaching strategy.

Furthermore, Jubran (2016) identified the effectiveness of the social constructivist approach in teaching reading to Jordanian university students and their attitudes toward reading. The subjects of the study consisted of 67 juniors at Princess Alia University College during the academic year 2014-2015. The subjects were divided into an experimental group (34 students) and a control group (33 students). Both groups were pre-tested to measure their reading skills before experimenting. A quasi-experimental design was employed in this study. During the experiment, the instructor of the experimental group used the social constructivist approach while the instructor of the control group used the traditional approach in teaching reading. A significant difference was evident in the adjusted mean score in favor of the experimental group.

Also, Alkhawaldeh (2015) studied the effect of reading strategies-based EFL programs on Jordanian High school students' reading comprehension achievement and their awareness of such strategies. The study sample consisted of 82 high school students and was divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. The results of the research showed a positive effect of strategy-based instruction on secondary students' achievement in reading comprehension and their reading strategy awareness as derived from the results of pre-and posttests and the self-observation scales in favor of the experimental group students being able to do better in summarizing the reading text, transforming the reading text to a story and trying to understand meanings of unknown words identifying and understanding meanings of new unfamiliar words in the text, restoring prior information to understand the reading text, understanding the main aim of the reading text, and extracting the main ideas from the text.

Mahmoud (2014) investigated the effectiveness of using constructivist-based teaching strategies in developing reading comprehension skills and thinking skills of first-year general secondary stage students in Egypt. The researcher followed a quasi-experimental research framework. The study tool was a reading test. The study revealed that constructivism has significantly developed reading and thinking skills among first-secondary Egyptian students. The researcher recommended that curricula and teaching methods should be designed following social constructivism principles.

Moreover, Huang (2009) recommends using the constructivist approach to teaching reading. It has shown how a dialogic approach to reading empowers readers to position themselves as participants in making meaning with the text and its authors, rather than remaining as mute outsiders to the reading process. This shift in constructing reader roles means that students need to take a strategic approach to reading and will need careful scaffolding to help them develop effective, independent reading strategies.

Likewise, Au (1998) proposed a conceptual framework for addressing the literacy achievement gap. This framework suggested that the school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds will be improved as educators address the goal of instruction, the role of the home language, instructional materials, classroom management and interaction with students, relationships with the community, instructional methods, and assessment. From a social constructivist perspective, five explanations for the literacy achievement gap were provided: linguistic differences, cultural differences, discrimination, inferior education, and rationales for schooling. This framework increased Students' ownership of literacy.

In Conclusion, the review above indicates that there is a research gap in the field of social constructivism concerning the development of EFL students' reading skills. Furthermore, no proper research has been conducted on the effect of using social constructivism principles in teaching English language reading skills in Jordanian public schools. In addition, using social constructivism practices in teaching different disciplines in Jordan is minimal (Sakarneh & Al-Swelmyeen, 2020). Traditional teaching methods are extensively used by EFL English language teachers in teaching reading comprehension in Jordan, hence, the need for implementation of innovative reading comprehension teaching methods in Jordan is crucial (Alhusban, 2019). Thus, the current study attempts to address this research gap and sheds light on the effectiveness of an EFL instructional program based on social constructivism in improving English language reading skills among eleventh-grade female Jordanian students.

Moreover, as viewed in the previous literature related to the effectiveness of Social Constructivism implementation on

correlating EFL reading skills, Social Constructivism practices can be integrated into EFL curricula and pedagogy to improve students' English reading skills. For example, Yan and Hongying (2020), Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018), Jubran (2016), and Mahmoud (2014) examined the efficacy of the social constructivism-based reading comprehension teaching strategy and the results indicated that the students could significantly improve their reading comprehension skills using such an approach, which is similar to the outcomes of the current study. It is worth mentioning that this study was distinguished from the above-mentioned studies; it might have been the first study at Alqweismeh Directorate in Amman to put together an instructional program based on Social Constructivism tenets and to investigate its influence on improving eleventh-grade EFL students' reading achievement. The study was different as it used only one instrument: an EFL reading achievement test.

3. Methods and Procedures

This section includes a description of the design of the study, the subjects of the study, the research instruments, the validity and reliability of the instruments, data analysis, and procedures.

3.1. Study Design

The design of this study is quasi-experimental. There will be one independent variable: which has two levels: the instructional program versus the ordinary program. There will be one dependent variable: students' achievement in reading.

EG: O1 X O1

CG: O1 --- O1

EG: stands for the experimental group, CG: stands for the control group, X: stands for the treatment" the instructional program based on social constructivism, and " O1: stands for EFL reading achievement test".

3.2. Participants of the Study

The participants in the study were chosen purposefully from Al-Qweismeh Secondary School for Girls at Alqweismeh Directorate of Education in Amman during the first semester of the academic year 2023–2024. This school has been selected purposefully as the researcher is teaching there and because the school agreed to collaborate with the researcher. The study sample consisted of 46 students in two sections, randomly distributed to a control group (25 students) and an experimental group (21 students). Students of the experimental group were taught English using the social constructivism-based program, whereas students of the control group were taught using the conventional teaching method. Both groups were instructed by the researcher herself. Both groups took the one EFL reading achievement test before and after the treatment. To ensure reliability, a third eleventh-grade section (36 students) from the same school, Al-Qweismeh Secondary School for Girls, participated in this study as the pilot group.

3.3. Instruments of the Study:

The study instrument used to collect data was a reading achievement test.

3.4. Reading Achievement Test

The Reading Achievement Test consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions, each was given two marks. The total mark of the Reading Test is 20. The passage was an unseen text. The questions were formulated based on a table of specifications, designed by the researcher herself. The test consisted of some sub-skills. Eleventh-grade students took the same English reading achievement test as pre-posttests over two sessions. The duration between the pre-test and post-test was six weeks. This reading achievement test in English, based on the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) mentioned in Action Pack Eleventh student's and teacher's books, was designed by the researcher. The duration of the reading test was forty-five minutes.

3.5 Teaching Method

3.6. Description of the Instructional Program

The researcher developed an instructional program based on the tenets of social constructivism. The social Constructivism framework promotes collaborative and active learning which emphasizes interactive communication between the students and their teachers, and the students themselves, within a supportive learning environment (Saleem et.

al, 2021). Additionally, social constructivism highlights the importance of the cultural and social context in constructing knowledge. Thus, the instructional program applied in this study shares the same Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of Action Pack 11 (The Teacher's Book of Action Pack 11, p.7-14) (The Ministry of Education, 2014) in Action Pack 11 textbooks, but it differs in terms of the type activities and the teaching method, which are intended to implement social constructivism practices in language learning. Most of the activities in this program are based on the Social Constructivist Five E's Instructional Model, which consists of five stages: engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate (Bybee, 2009). It also used innovative teaching strategies, such as guided discovery learning e.g., jigsaw, discussions, problem-based learning, brainstorming, and group and pair work. Therefore, the program aimed to develop eleventh-grade students' achievements in learning English language reading skills in Jordan. The social constructivism-based program was exclusively introduced to the experimental group of eleventh grade at Alqweismeh Secondary School for Girls at Alqweismeh Directorate over a period of 6 weeks during the first semester of the scholastic year 2023 – 2024. This school was selected purposefully as the proposed program had been taught there by the researcher herself. Two eleventh-grade sections were selected to conduct this study. One section was randomly assigned as the experimental group, whereas the other was the control group. The program was implemented on the reading content of units three and four of Action Pack 11. The content of the reading texts (Action Pack 11, Module 3, Units 3&4), for instance, the intended learning outcomes, themes of the reading tasks, assessment instruments, number of lessons, number of activities, time assigned to each lesson, and the teacher was the same for both the control and experimental groups. Nevertheless, the differences between the Social Constructivism-based program and the conventional program were in the teaching strategies and learning tasks. The lessons in the instructional program had been thoroughly planned to include the learning outcomes, procedures, content, tasks, and time. In other words, the program was designed to provide English language teachers with detailed and feasible steps to implement the main principles of social constructivism in the language classroom. First, the teacher used various innovative instructional approaches, based on social constructivism, that maximized students' involvement in learning. These strategies, such as Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), were implemented on the reading comprehension tasks. Second, reading and writing are integrated skills and thus were taught simultaneously. Yang (2009) argued that improving students' reading skills affects their writing skills and vice versa. Consequently, reading activities were integrated with writing as these two skills are inseparable. For example, using CSR logs, while doing reading tasks, helped students understand the underlying meanings of reading texts and communicate this knowledge with their colleagues in a collaborative manner. In addition, the teacher's role was to scaffold learners and provide help and guidance when needed. Students were empowered to become autonomous learners and to be responsible for their learning. Besides, students were engaged in numerous collaborative tasks during the program, such as the 'Think-Pair-Share' strategy, which promotes active interaction and collaborative learning. Moreover, the instructional program aimed at exposing eleventh-grade students to authentic learning materials that promote their social and pragmatic awareness of the target language culture. This also helped in increasing their textual awareness of reading passages. Additionally, being exposed to different reading genres, during the program, helped students understand how writers use language to convince, amuse, educate, and inspire their readers (Wallace, 1995).

Eventually, implementing the Social Constructivism-based program helped to create autonomous learners who can use the English language effectively in authentic communication that mimics real-life situations and increase their motivation to use English effectively in communicative situations.

3.7. Description of the Conventional Program

This refers to the teaching method described in the Teachers' Book of Action pack 11. This method was based on the principles of the communicative approach, learning English as a foreign language, and authenticity. This represents the importance of teaching English in context and integrating all language skills while teaching and learning. All curriculum components, (the aims, the Intended Learning outcomes (ILOs), activities, content, procedures, learning and teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and tools), were drawn from the General Guidelines and General and Specific Outcomes for the English Language: Basic and Secondary Stages in Jordan, the Activity Book, the Student's Book, and the Teacher's Book of Action Pack 11. The outcomes of modules 3 and 4 are the same as those of the Social Constructivism-based

instructional program. For example, the reading outcomes in these two modules were meant to achieve the following learning outcomes: First, to develop eleventh-grade students' achievements in learning English language reading skills. Second, to create autonomous students who use the English language effectively in real communication. Third, to integrate learning reading skills with writing skills, as they are inseparable. Fourth, to help students reflect on their learning and increase their involvement in the learning process. Finally, to promote positive attitudes towards learning English reading skills which are the same outcomes intended to be achieved by the Social Constructivism-based instructional program.

3.8. Validity of the Research Instruments

To establish the content validity of the research reading instrument, a jury of twenty-three experts was consulted (i.e. two professors of English Curriculum and Instruction, three professors of Linguistics, one professor of Education, one professor of Syntax, four TEFL professors, nine PhD holders in English Curriculum and Instruction, three EFL supervisors at the Ministry of Education). The experts were kindly requested to check the appropriateness of the reading test in terms of accuracy, clarity, language, relevance, comprehensiveness, and length. There were many valuable suggestions which mainly included reviewing word choice, re-organizing the items, deleting some repeated or irrelevant items, and adding items.

3.9. Reliability of the Research Instruments

To ensure reliability, a third eleventh-grade section from the same school, which is Alqweismeh High School for Girls in Alqweismeh Directorate (36 students) was selected as a pilot group. The reliability of the reading test was established using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (.728).

3.10. Statistical Analysis

To analyze the study data, the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used. This included calculating the means and standard deviations for both groups (i.e., experimental and control). One-way ANCOVA was also used to test the statistical differences between the mean scores of the two groups concerning their responses to the reading tests.

4. Findings

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an instructional program based on Social Constructivism in improving reading skills in English among eleventh-grade female students in Jordan.

This section presents the study results and provides the data analysis using different measurements and tests such as mean scores, standard deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The research question was examined as follows:

Results related to the first question of the study: Are there any significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, which can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations of reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, which can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism, were calculated. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of eleventh-grade students' reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism.

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
experimental	21	6.95	4.41	14.86	3.72
Control	25	6.64	3.20	10.00	3.27
Total	46	6.78	3.76	12.22	4.22

Mean scores are out of 20

Table 1 reveals differences in the mean scores of both groups (experimental and control). The mean score of the experimental group on the post-test for reading was (14.86) while the mean score of the control group was (10.00). To test

if those differences were statistically significant ($\alpha=0.05$), a one-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) test was applied. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. One-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of the reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	256.994	1	256.994	24.175	.000*	.360
Pre-reading	75.465	1	75.465	7.099	.011	.142
Error	457.107	43	10.630			
Total	801.826	45				

* Statistically significance at level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 2 reveals statistically significant differences in the mean scores of students of both groups regarding their reading mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students in Jordan, which can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism. The "F" value (24.175) is statistically significant ($\alpha=0.05$). The adjusted mean scores and standard errors were also calculated. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Adjusted mean scores and standard errors of students of both groups (experimental vs. control) of the reading test mean scores due to (Conventional vs. Social Constructivism-Based Instructional Program)

	Group	Mean	Std. Error
Reading	Experimental	14.80	.71
	Control	10.05	.65

Table 3 shows that the adjusted mean of the experimental group (14.80) was higher than the adjusted mean score of the control group (10.05). This indicates that the differences were in favor of the students who were taught using an instructional program based on social constructivism. To know the effect size, Eta square was also obtained. As shown in Table 2, the effect size was (0.360), which means that (36%) of the variance in the total scores of students' reading mean scores was attributed to the instructional program based on social constructivism.

5. Discussion

Discussion Related to the research Question: "Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the mean scores of eleventh-grade EFL students' reading achievement in Jordan, which can be attributed to applying an instructional program based on social constructivism vs. the conventional teaching method?"

The findings of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha=0.05$) between the mean scores of the students of the experimental group who were taught according to the Social Constructivism-based program and the mean scores of the control group students who were instructed according to the conventional method. This difference was in favor of the experimental group students since the adjusted mean score was ($M=14.86$) higher than the adjusted mean score of the control group ($M=10.00$). This indicates that the Social Constructivism-based program had a remarkable effect on developing the reading skills of the experimental group students. These results are consistent with those of Yan and Hongying (2020), Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018), Jubran (2016), Mahmoud (2014), Huang (2009), and Au (1998).

This improvement in students' reading skills is due to the interactive and collaborative reading strategies initiated by applying the Social Constructivism-based educational program within a supportive learning environment. Such activities included activating prior knowledge of a given reading topic and discussing it before reading. For instance, using jigsaw puzzles and word maps to consolidate vocabulary recognition before reading, as in unit 3, lesson 1, exe.1. Moreover, using The Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) and vocabulary logs helped increase students' repertoire, as used in the

reading exe. pp. (34-35) SB. Vocabulary knowledge enrichment helped students understand reading texts more effectively. In addition, using KWL charts, as in AB exe.5 p.2, helped students be more self-conscious of what they know about a certain topic, and what they have learned. Teachers might be surprised at how much information students know about a certain topic when they are encouraged to discuss it. Consequently, these collaborative activities improved learners' reading skills, and this supports Kohnke & Har's (2022) viewpoint.

Another reason behind the improvement of student's achievement in reading is the fact that social constructivism highlights the importance of the cultural and social context in constructing knowledge. Nevertheless, "pragmatically relevant input in the classroom is limited,' (Choraih, Loutfi & Mansoor, 2016, p.189). Thus, social constructivism-based activities, such as authentic reading materials have focused on increasing students' sociocultural and pragmatic awareness of the target language and the target culture, and this goes hand in hand with McKinley's recommendations (2015). For example, watching authentic videos about most of the different reading topics in units 3 and 4, before reading them, and discussing them in groups, helped students get a glimpse of the target culture. These videos have also helped students predict what the reading texts were about. These videos were selected by the researcher to enrich this instructional program and make reading tasks more interesting. Students were also encouraged to surf the internet to explore the reading topics and to get interesting information that they could share with their colleagues using social media. Gredler (1997) emphasized that meaning construction depends on both the learning context and the sociocultural background and this was taken into account in designing the activities, which helped improve students' reading skills.

Additionally, scaffolding within a supportive learning environment was an integral part of this instructional program. Providing learners with the appropriate amount of supportive guidance and sufficient interaction with peers might have contributed to students' improvement in reading. The teacher's role was a "guide on the side," rather than a "sage on the stage" (Kumaravadivelu, 2005). In addition, increasing pair and group work throughout the program helped students become more supportive of each other, such as doing multiple pre-reading worksheets about sports vocabulary in pairs or groups, SB. Exe.1 p.38., and grammar worksheets about passive voice and present perfect continuous tense equipped students with better textual awareness that helped them understand the underlying meanings of the text. Consequently, learners became active constructors of meaning, as Piaget (1973) believed, not merely passive recipients of knowledge.

Besides, the activities of the Social Constructivism program seemed to have helped students choose the most appropriate strategy for dealing with a written text, e.g., using Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). Looking at textual clues, skimming the text, and actively reading the text to find clicks and clunks to identify unfamiliar words helped students become more aware of the reading process. In addition, using clunk cards to figure out the clunks in groups consolidated collaborative learning. Getting the gist, and working in pairs, also helped students identify the most important ideas and this helped them understand the text more fully. Moreover, Wrapping Up by formulating questions and answers motivated the students to run the class and pretend to be teachers. This might have helped students become more responsible for their learning and this interpretation agrees with Yang and Wilson's (2006) perspective.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of the findings of this study may be limited by the following:

1. The study is limited to a purposive sample of two eleventh-grade sections chosen from only one school which is Alqweismeh Secondary School for girls at Alqweismeh Directorate of Education in Amman. It was chosen because it allowed the researcher to conduct the instructional program.
2. The study participants were only 46 eleventh-grade female students, divided into two sections (21 and 25 students).
3. The study participants were only female students. Secondary public schools in Jordan are not mixed.
4. The limited chosen sample in number (46) and nature (only females) is because the researcher is a teacher at the aforementioned school, and she has conducted the research herself.
5. The study has been implemented over only six weeks during the first semester of the academic year 2023 – 2024.
6. The study is limited to only reading language skills, within only two units (units 3-4) in Action Pack 11 textbooks.

7. The only instrument that was used (reading achievement test) was developed by the researcher. Therefore, the validity of the obtained results depends on the reliability and validity of the instrument.

6. Conclusion

In summary, using an instructional program based on Social Constructivism to teach English language reading skills to EFL eleventh-grade female students has improved their achievement in reading skills. The results showed that the social constructivism-based program helped students improve their reading skills noticeably. The reason behind improving reading skills was that students have participated in cooperative learning activities in which they needed to use language communicatively and effectively in pairs, and groups. This helped learners become autonomous and life-long learners. Another factor that helped in this improvement is creating a supportive learning environment and giving students peer feedback and teacher feedback when necessary. Moreover, scaffolding students, and providing them with sufficient supportive guidance, helped them transcend their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and this goes in line with (Belland, 2010). Reading and writing were taught simultaneously, and this also might have contributed to the students' improvement in reading. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned limitations of the study may affect the generalization of the current research results in Jordanian schools.

Recommendations

1. English language teachers should be trained to integrate more collaborative learning activities in their teaching practices, to help learners become autonomous learners.
2. Professional development programs held by the supervisors of the Ministry of Education should consider social constructivism tenets in their workshops during teachers' training.
3. Curricula developers and textbook authors should incorporate more social constructivism-based activities in the EFL curriculum.
4. Teachers should be trained to teach reading and writing language skills integratively and not in isolation within a supportive learning environment.
5. Other researchers are recommended to undertake more research on the impact of social constructivism-based educational programs on improving reading skills in English among other grade levels. Further research is also needed to find out whether writing, listening, and speaking skills are enhanced by such educational programs.

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