

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at developing critical reading skills of first year secondary school students. In order to achieve this purpose, the researcher designed a computer program based on the identified critical reading skills deemed necessary for high school students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- What are the critical reading skills required for first year secondary stage students?
- 2- What are the bases of using computer in teaching?
- 3- What is the program for developing critical reading skills by using computer?
- 4- What is the effectiveness of the program aiming at developing critical reading skills for first year secondary stage students?

METHOD

Procedures

For this study, the literature relating to the identification and development of critical reading skills has been carefully reviewed. The review resulted in compiling a comprehensive list of critical reading skills. This list was then submitted to a jury of specialists in order to determine the skills mostly needed by first year secondary school students. Based on the jury's opinions, a final list was prepared (Appendix 3)

The bases for using computers in teaching have also been identified through a review of a number of learning theories. Each of the theories reviewed provided important guidelines for designing a computer program enabling students to develop their critical reading skills.

The final list of critical reading skills and the principles of using computers for teaching have been used in designing a computer program aiming at developing the predetermined skills. The content of the program was based on the current reading textbook. (5) lessons were selected because they lent themselves to modifications allowing for critical reading. The program comprised (5) units. Each unit focused on a particular critical reading skill. A critical reading test has also been constructed. Its validity and reliability were determined.

The Study Design

The pretest-posttest control group design has been implemented in the study. A sample of first year secondary stage students was selected. They were all given the critical reading pretest. They were then divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group studied the selected lessons following the regular teaching procedures and the experimental group studied the same lessons using the designed computer program. After finishing the program, both groups were given the critical reading posttest. The data were then statistically analyzed using -- (T)- test.

FINDINGS

There were statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group in their overall level of critical reading at 0.01 in favor of the experimental group. Moreover, there were statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group at 0.01 in favor of the experimental group in the following skills: discrimination between fact and opinion, relevant and irrelevant information, strong and weak justifications.

In addition, there were statistically significant differences between the control and the experimental group at 0.01 in favor of the experimental group in the skills of deducing/identifying the writer's purpose, motives, the main topic of a paragraph, and the consequences from a reading text.

Finally, there were statistically significant differences between the control and the experimental group at 0.01 in favor of the experimental group in judging the accuracy of the title of the reading text, the writer's objectivity, and his efficiency in selecting the topic. In addition, the experimental group excelled the control group in judging the evidence a writer uses to verify a problem and the writer's achievement of his aims.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study suggest the need to reconsider the objectives and the content of the current reading syllabuses of the secondary stage. Including critical reading skills as important objectives of the curricula is essential in order to prepare students capable of facing the smorgasbord of ideas surrounding them.

Critical reading skills will not be developed on their own. They do not come naturally to the learners. They need to be developed intentionally by the collected efforts of both curricula designers and teachers inside classrooms.

Using computers in developing learners' skills is certainly an aim that needs to be adopted by all those involved in education. Educational technology is no longer a luxury but rather a necessity. Applications of computers in teaching other subjects, not only Arabic, need to be explored. This attempt in designing educational software is a step in that direction.

Arabic teachers play a pivotal role in developing their students' critical reading skills. In doing so, there needs to be professional development courses that raise teachers' awareness of the importance of these skills, develop their capabilities to adapt their courses for the inclusion of these skills and increase their expertise in using computers in helping their students learn.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The results of this research open the door for further investigations of the possible benefits of using computers in developing critical reading skills of students at different stages and not only at the secondary stage. The potential of computers for teaching the deaf is also an important area of research. Moreover, the area of software design is promising. Designing educational software to develop different concepts such as grammar and rhetoric and examining its effectiveness need to be explored.