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Sociocultural Theory and Reading Comprehension: Hard vs. Soft Scaffolding Effect on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract
This study aimed at surveying two types of scaffolding impact on the reading skill performance of learners in the Iranian EFL context. For this purpose, 60 Iranian intermediate EFL learners were randomly selected out of 100 participants. and they were set into three groups (two experimental and one control group). Each group consisted of 20 learners. To check the homogeneity of the participant, a reading comprehension pre-test was administered and no significant difference was observed. The experimental groups received one of the designated treatments, hard or soft scaffolding, which lasted twenty sessions, but the control group got just the usual classroom reading teaching. Eventually, their reading skill was evaluated through the use of a post-test of reading comprehension performance. The results of one-way ANOVA disclosed that the hard scaffolding group outperformed the other groups, and the soft scaffolding group transcended the control group. The implications are discussed regarding the effectiveness of hard and soft scaffolding to indicate whether they can enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension or not. This study could be useful for classroom teachers who wish to make a variation in their classrooms and for English learners as well. They can be better readers and help each other to work out the challenges of language learning.

Keywords: Hard scaffolding, Reading comprehension, sociocultural theory, soft scaffolding

INTRODUCTION

Due to the fact that reading is an important and valuable source of authentic input, a large number of teachers encourage EFL learners to read more. However, most of them, specifically the ones with less proficiency, find it a very challenging task. Meaningful reading cannot occur without comprehension. Comprehension and understanding are fundamental skills for students (Sweet & Snow, 2002). According to Khonamri and Karimabadi (2015), reading comprehension is the paramount crucial language skill for EFL learners resulting in the learners' career, social, and personal success. Some researchers believe that both cognitive and affective factors are included in the process of reading comprehension and they are considered important to the same degree in constructing reading competence (Brown, 2000; Cramer & Castle, 1994). According to Fitzgerald (1994), second language readers can succeed if they consider both factors, cognitive and affective. Correspondingly, Gee (1999) claimed that teachers and educators mustn't neglect the importance of affective factors in the promotion of reading competence. He enlightened the significance of affective factors as a process wherein prosperous readers have a positive view of reading. As a result, they read more and more and consequently they become better readers

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and this cycle continues. Reading more leads to a broader vocabulary domain and a better grammatical competence which accordingly is prompting and brings about reading more. Furthermore, Nuttal (1996) pointed out that less proficient EFL learners do not read as much as they should, thus these learners' reading competence does not enhance. Consequently, when they are not able to enhance their reading comprehension, they don't get pleasure from reading and end up feeling frustrated and disappointed. Sweet and Snow (2002) pointed out that reading is a socially-constructed, language-mediated process. Consequently, the meaning-making process must be scrutinized in light of interactional, collaborative activities that bring about the co-construction of meaning between and among readers and not just as the product of a single reader's individual process.

According to cognitive approaches, learning is based on some predestined levels, while sociocultural theory (SCT) states that learning occurs in a sociocultural setting and learners are active creators of their own learning settings (Johnson, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2004; Williams & Burden, 1997). Unlike the cognitive perspective, SCT emphasizes social factors and claims that without social interaction cognitive development won't take place. In fact, mediation and scaffolding are necessary for cognitive development (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Snow (2002) claimed that reading ability is the simultaneous process of eliciting and making meaning through the use of cooperation and interaction with the text. Therefore, SCT regards reading comprehension as a social skill that is the outcome of the interaction between two or more readers striving to create meaning together (Commander & Guerrero, 2013). As reported by Lantolf (2006), scaffolding and interacting with competent adults, parents, teachers, or peers can provide a supportive environment for the proper development of reading comprehension.

During the last decades, an increasing concern was found about the role of scaffolding in learning situations. The idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Vygotskyan SCT create the foundation of scaffolding (Berk, 2003; Daniels, 2002; Wells, 1999). Nevertheless, the explanations and descriptions of how scaffolding is related to ZPD have been diverse. Vygotsky and Cole (1978) defined the ZPD as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Based on sociocultural theory, Wood, et al., (1976) created the notion of scaffolding and explained it as assistance from instructors, peers, or other places which helps learners to accomplish roles that they are not able do alone.

Schnotz and Heiß (2009) believe that scaffolds elicit cognitive activities related to a specific learning process and bring about higher learning under particular circumstances. Hence, scaffolds must help learners discover the right answers rather than merely revealing the answers. Wells (1999) thought of scaffolding as operationalization and application of Vygotsky's (1987) notion of ZPD. Daniels (2002) stated that scaffolding is a limited concept compared to the ZPD. Based on Stone (1998), scaffolding pictures is one of the main characteristics of children's learning, controlled by others, trying (explicitly or implicitly) to organize learning chances. Berk (2003) defined scaffolding as a type of backing during an instruction wherein adults modify the support; they supply to conform to the learner's existing rate of proficiency.

Saye and Brush (2002) classified scaffolding methods in two categories: soft scaffolds and hard scaffolds. They claimed that soft scaffolds present dynamic and situation-specific assistance given by an instructor or peer during the learning process. Such scaffolding demands instructors to circulate the class, converse with their students, recognize the understandings of learners and intervene when support or guidance is needed. According to Vygotsky and Cole (1978), soft scaffolds have their origin in social interactions, whether teacher-to-student or student-to-student interactions. Soft scaffolds emerge when there are situation-specific and momentary needs. If these needs don't emerge, the scaffold won't be administered. In

fact, the type and value of needed support and assistance are based on student needs during instruction time. Van Lier (2014) referred to this type of scaffolding as contingent scaffolding.

Conversely, hard or embedded scaffolds are immobile aids that are able to be prepared beforehand based on expected or common learner problems to help students with learning homework. Hard scaffolds might take an online form or hard-copy cognitive tools. Reading clues, reference books, graphic organizers and partly solved problems are all examples of hard scaffolds that a teacher can utilize. Hard scaffolding frees up the teacher to provide more soft scaffolding (Saye & Brush, 2002). Some researchers stated that once the students become proficient in completing the given tasks, hard scaffolds should be faded (Belland, et al., 2008; Puntambekar & Hubscher, 2005). In fact, fewer resources should be supplied to the students when proficiency increases. Thus, independent learning is encouraged by giving adaptable scaffolding (Schmidt, et al., 2007). Sharama and Hannafin (2007) pointed out that not only hard scaffolds but also soft ones are crucial to learners' progress and must be balanced in accordance with students' differences and needs. Soft scaffolding pertains greatly to a practiced instructor realizing when and how to assist learners. Hard scaffolding pertains to learners' aptitude to identify the scaffold as beneficial or practical, and not consider it as a different task to be accomplished or as an additional task (Oliver & Hannafin, 2000; Simons & Klein, 2004).

The study by Samana (2013) intended to look into the scaffolding interaction and the learning development as a result of having interaction in a classroom during pair work activities. It presented only the scaffolding provided by the teacher of the classroom and by classmates. To collect desirable data, EFL university students with low English proficiency were selected as potential candidates for the study. They were seven females and five males (18-19 years old). The purpose was to compare the scaffolding strategies used by the teacher with the scaffolding strategies used by the classmates. The participants were given collaborative pairs tasks which were audio recorded. The scaffolding interactions were counted and analyzed. In addition, there was an interview with the participants to give reflections on their interaction. The participants were asked to do eight (8) tasks in pairs at the end of each classroom session. Findings concluded that not only the teacher can scaffold students, but students with a low level of English proficiency can also successfully scaffold their peers. Moreover, scaffolded assistance can be provided by the teacher as well as the students. Data from the interview showed that they wanted to try by themselves before getting the teacher's support. Students with a low level of proficiency preferred to request help from the teacher (58%) more than from their classmates (41%). Teacher's scaffolded assistance (87%) and students' scaffolded assistance had positive outcomes in the learners' interaction as well.

Concepts such as SCT, ZPD, and scaffolding have received enormous attention and become interesting in educational contexts, especially in L2 studies. Safadi and Rababah (2012) tested the impact of scaffolding teaching on the reading performance of Jordanian EFL learners. The experimental group was taught via a scaffolding instruction program for nine weeks, but no scaffolding was applied during the teaching process to the control group. Pre-test and post-test were administered to investigate the impact of the scaffolding procedure on the learners' progress. The findings proved that the experimental group surpassed the control one. In another study, Abdul-Majeed (2015) examined scaffolding strategies and EFL students' reading performance. Forty-four university students joined in the study. Reading skill was taught to the experimental group through the use of scaffolding methods for six weeks but the lecture method was taught to the control group. The groups equally were subjected to pre-and post-test. An independent t-test analysis proved a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group. In other words, scaffolding strategies were effective in enhancing the reading skill of the learners (Mojarrabi et al., 2019).

Likewise, Kusumawati (2018) surveyed the administration of scaffolding learning in improving reading performance and writing skills

as the outcome of reading comprehension. Structured learning support was provided for the subjects and they were asked to learn more independently. Based on the English learning result, all learners passed the requisitions. Progressed proficiencies of both learning skills were found in the pre-test and post-test. It was deduced that scaffolding instruction is a beneficial approach to fulfilling the English expertise of Mechanical Engineering students in the first semester. Moreover, Gashaw (2018) tested English instructors' scaffolding actions on students' reading comprehension performance. The participants were forty-five preparatory English teachers. Data were collected via questionnaires, interviews, and structured classroom observation checklists. Through the use of frequencies, means, and percentages the quantitative data were analyzed while the qualitative ones were meta-explained. The results indicated that English teachers had good knowledge of utilizing scaffolding techniques in teaching reading comprehension.

In the Iranian context, Attarzadeh (2011) examined scaffolding effects on reading skills of several text methods on Iranian EFL learners with various stages of language competence. 180 EFL students participated in the study. The subjects were selected randomly and set into three groups of low, mid, and high proficiency based on their scores on TOEFL. Different types of text such as narrative, argumentative, descriptive, and explanative were taught. The groups with scaffolding received a constructivist-interactive type of instruction whereas the groups without scaffolding were engaged in usual individual reading. By the time the treatment ended, a post-test was executed. The results of a two-way ANOVA affirmed that scaffolding had a beneficial impact on learners' reading performance (Mojarrabi et al., 2019).

In the same vein, Bassiri (2012) investigated the scaffolding effect on reading skill, motivation, and attitude in the Iranian EFL setting and the likely effect of gender. The study was carried out with 34 intermediate English learners studying in a private English language institute in Iran. The participants were selected based on their scores in a pre-test. Then, they were divided randomly into two groups scaffolding (the experimental group) and non-scaffolding (the control group). They got 17 sessions of instruction and their reading performance was measured at the end of each session. Quantitative data analysis demonstrated that there was a positive effect of scaffolding on reading comprehension scores and motivation. The results also highlighted a positive correlation between female and male learners' success in terms of their reading and motivation.

Khosravi (2017) aimed at investigating symmetrical scaffolding impact on advanced EFL learners' reading performance. Twenty male and female Iranian students took part in his study. A pre-test was performed at the starting point. There were 10 reading comprehension passages being worked on in 10 sessions by the participants. A Post-test was administered at the end of the study, and the results were analysed using a *t*-test. It was found that symmetrical scaffolding was beneficial for participants' reading skills (Mojarrabi et al., 2019).

Bearing in mind the fact that comprehension is unquestionably an indispensable part and the central goal of reading, it is exactly substantial to examine closely how to increase the reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. Vygotsky (1987) claimed that "what the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (p. 211).

This Study

Although numerous researchers have studied scaffolding strategy and its impact on the skills development of English language learners, few if any studies have been implemented to compare the effects of two types of scaffolding (soft and hard scaffolding) on the reading performance of EFL learners in Iran. Therefore, this research aimed to study the effects of using hard and soft scaffolding on the reading comprehension skill of Iranian EFL learners and addressed the following questions:

RQ1. *Does hard scaffolding affect Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance?*

RQ2. *Does soft scaffolding affect Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance?*

RQ3. *Is there any statistically significant difference between the impact of hard and soft scaffolding on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance?*

METHOD

Participants

The study was performed with 60 female EFL learners studying English at a private English institute in intermediate level. The participants were 17 to 35 years old. They were picked out of a pool of 100 students based upon scores in a proficiency test. Those who scored one standard deviation above the mean and one below the mean were picked out. The participants were assigned randomly into three groups, each group having 20 students. There were one control group and two experimental groups, soft scaffolding group (SSG) and hard scaffolding group (HSG).

Research Design

The current study was quasi-experimental research in which the main variables consisted of hard and soft scaffolding and reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL learners. Hard and soft scaffolding were independent variables and reading comprehension ability was the dependent one.

Participants

The participants of this study comprised 60 Iranian intermediate EFL learners who were randomly selected out of 100 participants and were set into three groups (two experimental and one control group). Each group consisted of 20 learners. To check the homogeneity of the participant, a reading comprehension pre-test was administered and no significant difference was observed. The experimental groups received one of the designated treatments, hard or soft scaffolding, which lasted twenty sessions, but the control group got just the usual classroom reading teaching.

Instrumentation

In an effort to make sure of the subjects' homogeneity regarding language proficiency, the researchers carried out a PET test. A test of reading comprehension (pre-test) was run by the researchers. It was given to participants at the initial stage of the course to designate their ability in reading skills. The same test was repeated at the end of the course to determine the development after the intervention. The reading comprehension test was adopted from the intermediate course book in a private English institute. Three experts in test design checked the test to validate the obtained scores and confirmed it. They estimated the reliability of the test as 0.69 which was achieved by the Cronbach Alpha coefficient.

Data Collection Procedure

A pre-test for reading comprehension was administrated to all groups to affirm the participants' reading ability at the beginning of the study and to verify they are at the same level. Having ascertained initial homogeneity regarding reading comprehension skills among the participants, the treatment started. One of the pre-designated treatments, soft scaffolding or hard scaffolding, was given to the experimental group for 20 sessions. In SSG, the participants got permanent support from the teacher's side. They were asked to do some tasks jointly every session. The teacher monitored the learners attentively and gave them a hand where needed. For example, in the pre-reading stage, the participants were given a list of words with their definitions to match. They were asked to complete the task together. The teacher supervised the process and when she observed that the participants faced difficulty handling the task, she assisted them using different methods, such as using pictures, graphics, etc. In fact, the teacher was an active participant in class undertakings.

In HSG the teacher prepared some support mechanisms in advance based on students' problems with a task. She tried to predict the potentially problematic areas on the basis of her experience in other equivalent environments and decided how to deal with the problems before starting the class. For instance, she used graphic organizers and some pictures or prepared explanations for difficult words to help students. In fact, hard scaffolds are a form of forwarding guidance planned in advance. These structures can be inserted within learning

environments to provide students with support while they are actively engaged with a problem (Cramer & Castle, 1994).

The control group received usual reading instruction which was a teacher-oriented model. The instructor perused and explained the passages phrase by phrase and the students were not supplied with any forms of scaffolding, pair, or group work. Later, the students answered the subsequent comprehension questions individually.

When the treatment was over, a reading comprehension post-test was administered to the participants in all groups to assess their reading comprehension performance.

RESULTS

SPSS was utilized to analyze the test scores of the control and experimental groups. The descriptive statistics of these groups on the reading pre-test performance are depicted in Table 1. The table shows the mean and SD of the reading pre-test for HSG are (M = 21.08, SD = 2.51), for SSG are (M = 21.08, SD = 2.99), and for the control group are (M = 20.91, SD = 2.65).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of SSG, HSG, and Control Groups on the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Skewness			Kurtosis		
				Statistic	Error	Ratio	Statistic	Error	Ratio
Control	20	21.0	2.66	-0.039	0.472	-0.08	-0.677	0.918	-0.737
SSG	20	21.08	2.99	0.136	0.472	0.283	-0.7	0.918	-0.76
HSG	20	21.08	2.51	0.058	0.472	0.122	-0.265	0.918	-0.288

To check the meaningful assurance of the participants' homogeneity in reading comprehension level, a one-way ANOVA test was applied. To manipulate ANOVA, the homogeneity of variances was controlled at first. The result reveals that variances are equal [F (2, 57) = 0.398, p = 0.81 > 0.05] on the pre-test; thus, ANOVA test is utilized. The results of the one-way ANOVA test can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2
ANOVA Results for Control, SSG, HSG on Pre-test scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.47	2	0.12	0.015	1.000
Within Groups	113.46	57	7.56		
Total	119.926	59			

The ANOVA results, in Table 2, demonstrated that the three groups were not significantly different (F = 0.01, p = 1 > 0.05) in terms of their reading pre-test performance.

A reading comprehension post-test was executed for the participants to assess their reading comprehension performance after the treatment. Table 3 indicates the statistics of the group and compares the post-test of the three groups which were done at the end of the study. As demonstrated in Table 3, the mean score of the SSG is 24.87 (SD =2.4); the mean score of HSG is 25.58 (SD = 1.8), and the mean score of the control group is 22.83 (SD = 2.18). Therefore, the mean score of HSG is higher than that of the other groups. Furthermore, the mean score of the control group was lower than that of SSG.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Control, SSG, HSG on Post-test scores

Group	N	Mean	SD	Skewness			Kurtosis		
				Statistic	Error	Ratio	Statistic	Error	Ratio
Control	20	22.83	2.2	-0.372	0.472	-0.788	0.017	0.918	0.018
SSG	20	24.87	2.4	-0.415	0.472	-0.879	0.213	0.918	0.232
HSG	20	25.58	1.86	-0.385	0.472	-0.815	-0.807	0.918	-0.879

In order to check the significance of the difference in mean scores, the researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA test. It is worth mentioning that the homogeneity of variances was investigated first. The result indicates that variances are equal [F (2, 57) = 0.155, p = 0.33 > 0.05] on the post-test; therefore, NOVA test is employed. The results of the ANOVA test of participants' post-test can be found in Table 4.

Table 4
The Results of ANOVA Test for Control, SSG, HSG on Post-test scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.43	2	5.218	2.570	0.0086
Within Groups	117	56	2.039		
Total	127.43	58			

As can be seen in Table 4, the three groups were significantly different (F = 2.57, p = 0.00 < 0.05) in terms of their reading performance in the post-test. It can be elicited that the treatment was successful and using scaffolding strategies had a beneficial impact on the progress of reading skills of the participants. The groups getting treatment significantly attained higher reading comprehension ability than the ones which did not.

For responding to the third question of the study, a post hoc test was employed to survey which type of scaffolding was more beneficial to participants' reading ability. Table 5 shows these differences in detail.

Table 5
The Results of Post-hoc Tukey HSD on the Reading Post-test

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	SSG	-2.0400*	0.45141	0.0217	-1.9346	0.3346
	HSG	-2.7500*	0.45141	0.0119	-2.0846	0.1846
SSG	Control	2.0400*	0.45141	0.0217	-0.3346	1.9346
	HSG	-0.7100*	0.45141	0.0346	-1.2846	0.9846
HSG	Control	2.7500*	0.45141	0.0119	-0.1846	2.0846
	SSG	0.7100*	0.45141	0.0346	-0.9846	1.2846

Note. *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As Table 5 depicts, the comparison between the control group and experimental groups indicated that the experimental groups were in a better position than their counterparts in the control group because their p-value was lower than the pre-designated value (p < 0.05). As the second-row shows, by comparing SSG with the control one, noticing the amount of p-value, it can be elicited that there remains a significant difference between the results of the SSG and the control group. The same findings are found for the HSG. The p-value for this group is 0.01 which is lower than 0.05. Contrasting the SSG and HSG groups, the results show that the HSG outperformed the SSG (p = 0.03 < 0.05). Thus, regarding the results, it can be warily deduced that soft and hard scaffolding modified learners' reading comprehension performance in the Iranian EFL context. However, considering the results, hard scaffolding was more beneficial than soft scaffolding in improving the participants' reading skills.

DISCUSSION

Founded on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), the present study investigated the probable impacts of employing two types of scaffolding on EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. The *Tukey HSD* test and One-way ANOVA results disclosed that the groups getting hard scaffolding exceeded the soft scaffolding group and control group. Furthermore, the soft scaffolding group exceeded

the control group as well. To state the matter differently, the results proved that both hard and soft scaffolding was effective in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. These results are corroborated by the general model of scaffolding.

The results of this study were similar to those of former studies, which showed that utilizing scaffolding reading strategy instruction leads to an enhancement in the reading skills of the learners (Butler, 2007; Jallivand, 2014; Kim & White, 2008; Mesfin, 2008; Tiruneh, 2014). Bassiri (2012) noticed that the learners with scaffolding strategies performed better on the reading comprehension post-test. Bassiri (2012) stated that scaffolding increases the reading ability of the students. Accordingly, the results of this study also confirm those of Kusumawati (2018) who understood that instruction through scaffolding is beneficial to enhance the Mechanical Engineering students' English proficiency in the first semester. Khosravi (2017) investigated the impact of scaffolding on the reading comprehension of advanced EFL learners. The findings approved that scaffolding was beneficial for participants' reading comprehension skills. Safadi and Rababah (2012) presented similar results regarding the effects of scaffolding instruction programs on the reading comprehension ability of EFL learners in Jordan. They came to the conclusion that the experimental group displayed remarkable progress in reading comprehension.

Huggins and Edwards' (2011) study indicated that using scaffolding helps learners to improve their reading comprehension. They proposed that offering help and guidance for the learners provides a communicative setting. The same findings were confirmed in the present study as well. Scaffolding brings about so much interaction. Since participants are in pairs, they should cooperate and interact together. Taking all these studies into account, it is advised that scaffolding strategies be used in language courses. The application of such strategies as presenting new words or posing questions will trigger the students' former knowledge. According to Larkin (2002), in the pre-reading phase, the learners become familiar with some of the language items in the text, such as new vocabulary items or some grammatical structures, and review their experience in relation to the topic. Chances of cooperation and assistance can boost their efficiency to a considerable amount.

The current study drew on one of the central notions of SCT, i.e., scaffolding, and investigated its effects on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. The outcomes gave away that scaffolding improved the participants' reading comprehension performance.

Huggins and Edwards (2011) claimed that the scaffolding devices in language classes can lead to improvement in the reading comprehension ability of the learners. In this study, as well, the teachers used different scaffolding tools and strategies and gained the same results. According to Vygostky (1987), learners can be lifted up by activating their zone of proximal knowledge. It means if the learners are assisted, they perform better. In the studies of scaffolding techniques, this theoretical framework is put into consideration. With receiving constant support from the teachers in a collaborative learning environment learners can maximize their potential and improve significantly.

There are lots of other researches considering the concept of scaffolding in different lines of research. For example, in the study carried out by Riazi and Rezaii (2010) they attempted to contrast the effect of teacher and peers scaffolding. It was revealed that teacher scaffolding was more effective in learners' success. This claim is somehow in line with the one in the present study as both studies found scaffolding effective and helpful. It seems also impossible to separate the effect of teacher and peer scaffolding because scaffolding means collaboration. It happens just when students are put into pairs and groups. Therefore, it is a difficult claim to say that the improvement happened because of the teacher or peer assistance or both.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicated that soft and hard scaffolding improved Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension ability. However, based on the findings, hard scaffolding was more effective than soft scaffolding in the reading comprehension of the participants. The findings are in favor of providing a social

and collaborative learning environment that encourages EFL learners to be active in the process of learning. As Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) pointed out, the dialogic interaction in the sociocultural context enables the learners to move from other-regulation to self-regulation; from dependency on others to independence.

This study substantiates the need to extend the view of reading as individual interaction between reader and text to incorporate the construction of meaning via the collaborative interaction of two or more readers. In this view, meaning is constructed when learners work together to comprehend a text. As Appel and Lantolf (1994) claimed, interaction helps individuals to "make sense of, or to comprehend, the world" (p. 449). Pedagogical procedures like scaffolding which are rooted in a socially-interactive view of meaning construction should be encouraged in reading classes instead of traditional teacher-led methods of teaching reading comprehension.

Sweet and Snow (2002) emphasized the potential effect of multiple strategies on reading comprehension. Collaboration during the scaffolding procedure offers learners the opportunity to observe the academic tools and strategies used by their more competent peers. Another advantage of integrating collaborative activities into classroom instruction is the motivational aspect of collaborative work within the type of social context they most enjoy (Risko & Bromley, 2020).

This study could be beneficial to EFL teachers who wish to make a variation in their classes and assist the learners get better by employing inventive ways, teachers who do aren't inclined to old methodologies and schemes, and those who are intellectual enough to accept and encounter challenges, and also desire to create new version of teaching reading comprehension ability to their learners. These kinds of teachers can aid their learners to become better reader as well as better speakers.

The present study is also useful for English learners as well, because it can teach them how to be better readers. Learners can help each other to work out the challenges of learning a language. They can collaborate with more competent peers to work on different problematic areas. Effective collaboration is a beneficial way to make their English better without formal studying.

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