The Effectiveness of an Attribution Retraining Intervention in Developing Faculty of Education English Majors' Reading "Comprehension"

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Abstract

The current research aimed at investigating the effectiveness of an attribution retraining program in developing EFL majors' reading comprehension. Accordingly, a pre-post reading test was designed to determine the effect of the suggested program before and after administrating the research. The sample consisted of 70 EFL students at Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University (N70.). The analysis of data obtained (using the one-sample t. test) revealed higher significance in favor of the post administration of the EFL pre-post reading test. Attribution retraining use, as the empirical research findings confirm, is highly effective when dealing with language skills in general and reading skill in particular. Providing students with attribution retraining whilst receiving reading comprehension strategy instruction maximized the effects of the intervention and led to greater reading comprehension. Discussion of findings, recommendations and suggestions for further studies were also presented. Finally, it was concluded that the research provided evidence for the success of attribution retraining intervention based on comprehension strategy instruction in enhancing EFL majors' reading comprehension.

Key words: attribution retraining, reading comprehension

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فاعلية برنامج لإعادة التدريب على العزو فى تنمية الفهم القرائي لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية

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المستخلص

هدف البحث الحالي إلى التحقق من مدى فاعلية برنامج لإعادة التدريب على العزو فى تنمية الفهم القرائي لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية ..حيث أن هؤلاء الطلاب قد عانوا في المرحلة الثانوية من اختلاف نظم الاختبارات ومن ثم إهمال الطلاب لتنمية مهارة قراءة النص باللغة الإنجليزية..بالإضافة إلي عزوهم ضعف الفهم القرائي لديهم لأسباب غير حقيقية ..لذا قامت الباحثة بتصميم أداتي البحث وهما اختبار لقياس الفهم القرائي وبرنامج لإعادة التدريب على العزو السليم

تكونت عينة البحث من 70 طالب وطالبة بكلية التربية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وبتحليل النتائج إحصائياً باستخدام البرنامج الإحصائي للمجموعة الواحدة تبين أن هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية واضحة بين متوسطات درجات المجموعة التجريبية لصالح التطبيق البعدي للاختبار الخاص بالفهم القرائي . ولقد أسفرت نتائج البحث الحالي عن أن المتعلمين الذين يتلقون تدريب مبني على آلية وكيفية استخدام الاستراتيجيات المناسبة قبل وأثناء وبعد قراءة النص قد تحسن مستوى الفهم القرائي لديهم . ولقد قامت الباحثة بتحليل النتائج إحصائيا ومناقشتها وبعد أن تبين مدى فاعلية البحث المقدم وإسهامه في القاء الضوء على أحد الاليات التي يمكن استخدامها في تنمية الفهم القرائي لدى أفراد العينة قامت الباحثة بتقديم التوصيات والمقترحات لأبحاث لاحقة

الكلمات المفتاحية :الفهم القرائي /إعادة التدريب على العزو

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Introduction

Reading skill is considered, in many researches, the essential academic language skill in foreign language learning context. In academic settings, reading is considered the central means for learning and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. It is said to provide good model for English writing, offer opportunities to study vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation, and demonstrate the way to construct sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts. Coming to college students, as many studies confirmed, reading is a crucial skill that college students have to master. They attributed that to the fact that all academic courses and studies require students to read and most of them lack the proper reading strategies that direct and help them be good readers, consequently, reading is said to be a demand for them to succeed not only in the academic context but also in life beyond.

Comprehension is believed to be the ultimate goal of the reading process or the reason why we read; if a reader can read words but is not able to comprehend or connect to what s/he reads; it means s/he is not really reading. This leads to the fact that reading comprehension is not a matter of recognizing word by word, or even understanding each individua. All models of comprehension recognize the need for readers to build up a mental representation of a text: a process that requires integration across a range of sources of information, from lexical features up to knowledge concerning events in the world (Shea, 2017). Furthermore, comprehension process takes place in the brain of the reader; it is the thinking that s/he does, before, during and after text reading. So, students with

poor comprehension skills usually have reading difficulties throughout their schooling.

Since Comprehension is known as the main goal of the reading process, all models of comprehension recognize the need for readers to build up a mental representation of text, a process that requires integration across a range of sources of information from lexical features up to knowledge concerning the whole world's events. Given the complex nature of reading comprehension, it is not surprising that some individuals have issues in this area; their understanding of comprehension is mostly associated with the answering of teacher directed questions after reading.

The most effective way to help EFL readers enhance their comprehension begins with helping them identify the real causes of their weakness rather than attributing them to ability, or luck (Johny, 2021). Such students always ascribe their failure to uncontrollable causes such as low aptitude or low ability. They always lead their academic failure to luck or lack of ability. They are likely to develop a set for future failure because they always believe that whatever they do is perceived to be dependent upon their ability which is unchangeable and out of their control. Such misinterpreting is called attribution. Attribution retraining is a viable technique for handling such a problem through modifying their maladaptive attributions to ones that support achievement. Based on the assumption that students' patterns of attributional beliefs can be reframed (Genc, 2016), attribution retraining summarizes maladaptive causal ascriptions for failure and suggests that failure is controllable and unstable.

Based on Weiner's theory (1986), attributions refer to students' causal ascriptions of their academic success and failure. In his study, Weiner (2000) categorizes attribution causes into three categories; locus of causality, stability, and controllability. The

"locus of causality" property concerns placing responsibility for success or failure on external, environmental causes like difficulty or luck; or internal, personal causes such as ability or effort. The "stability" property concerns attributing causes for success or failure to stable or unstable factors over time. The "controllability" property concerns placing cause for success or failure on factors within the control of the student or not within his control.

Typically, attributional retraining involves exposing students to a planned series of experiences couched within an achievement context. In such a context, modeling, practice, and feedback are used to teach students to:

- Concentrate on the task at hand rather than worry about failing
- Cope with failures by retracing their steps to find their mistakes or by analyzing the problem to find another approach
- Attribute their failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or use of ineffective strategies rather than to luck or ability (Struthers & Perry, 1996).

Context of the problem

Based on the previous introduction, studies in the field of reading comprehension, modern exams policies students encountered along secondary stages, and researcher's experience in the field of teaching English language for students of all educational levels, it has become obvious that EFL students have problems in reading texts.To overcome such problems, they usually attribute their miscomprehension to unreal causes. Those students find themselves keep on failing and always attribute failure to any other reasons except lack of effort and lack of appropriate strategies.

As hardly found empirical researches with statistical output- as far as the researcher's knowledge- were conducted in this realm with regard to EFL Egyptian majors' attributional reading deficits, a need

was felt for experimenting with the new training intervention and deciding on its effectiveness in remedying these deficits.

Thus, the current study is an attempt at investigating the effectiveness of attribution intervention aims at enhancing EFL majors' reading comprehension. Of particular significance here is the idea that the current research is an attempt at establishing a procedural training framework via which attributional retraining routines can be incorporated into strategy instruction, an area that has not yet been well-established in current research literature in general and Egyptian research context in particular.

The current research tries to find answer to the following main question:

"What is the Effectiveness of an attribution retraining intervention in developing faculty of education English majors' reading omprehension?"

Research significance

This research is supposed to be significant as it focuses on attribution intervention and strategy instruction to help EFL readers comprehend texts well and that has not been adequately emphasized particularly with EFL students before.

Research main objective:

The current research mainly aims at identifying the effectiveness of an attribution intervention with strategy instruction in enhancing faculty of education English majors' reading comprehension.

Research Hypothesis

- There are statistical significant differences at the mean scores of the experimental group on the post administration of the EFL reading comprehension test.

Limitations

- Faculty of Education students, both male and female.
- The second term of the school year 2022- 2023.

Operational definition for terms
Reading comprehension
In this research, the following definition is adopted:
"The intentional, interactive process that should occur when students read texts; it aims the level of reconstructing meaning from a text. This reconstruction comes from the interaction between the words that are written and the reader who generates knowledge and makes sense of what s/he reads".

Attribution intervention:
The researcher is going to adopt the following operational definition:
"A training program intends to restructure students' explanations about their academic reading performance to change unhelpful attributions related to EFL reading comprehension to real ones that sustain their comprehension".

Theoretical background& related studies
Reading comprehension in FL context
According to the socio-cognitive perspective of reading, reading is a meaning-reconstruction process where readers interact with not only the text-based components but also the extra-text components of a reading passage. Anderson (2003) ascribes reading comprehension as "the ability of the reader to use a variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading" (p. 8). Discovering the best methods and techniques or processes the learners choose to access is the goal of research in reading strategies. In addition, reading is the kind of process in which one needs not only to understand its direct meaning, but also comprehend its implied ideas. As Tierney (2005) states, "learning to read is not only learning to recognize words; it is also learning to make sense of texts (p. 51). It involves a great deal of cognitive capacity available for comprehension (Pressley, 2002).
Reading is considered an essential skill for students, especially for those at university. According to Grabe (2009) reading is as an essential skill and apparently the most vital skill for foreign language learners to master in their academic settings and ensure

their further progress. It can be viewed as a gateway for getting, manipulating, and learning upcoming knowledge.

Of the four skills, reading can be regarded as especially important because reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). In the digital world where information is easily accessed, the ability to read is critical. According to Eskey (2005), many EFL students may not need to speak English in their daily lives but they need to read it to access the richness of information in English.

Freese (1997) points out that some students encounter problems when reading. They read the paragraphs in the text but are still unaware of what they have read. Unlike these students, Grabe, (2009) claim that proficient readers can employ different reading skills when reading different texts or reading for different purposes. For instance, they search for the information in a manual by scanning for the key words. Reading the newspaper, they skim headlines to see if they want to read in more detail. For studying, they read carefully to integrate information, so various reading skills are employed in different situations. From this perspective, the nature of reading is complex. In addition to the complexity of reading, the reading process is cognitively demanding because learners need to coordinate attention, perception, memory, and comprehension (Sellers, 2000).

Snow (2002) found that many learners have difficulties in understanding what they read especially academic texts. Also, academic foreign language readers, though they have adequate language competency, to some extent still have difficulties in comprehending those academic texts thoroughly (Eskey, 2005). Being a university student requires reading a large number of texts differing in their level of difficulty, style, length, topic etc. Studens' prior knowledge, which plays an important role in reading comprehension, is also different among learners.

Models of reading comprehension

Historically, reading comprehension has long been considered a process where readers interact with the texts to construct meaning. Barnett (1989) stated that this process can be illustrated by three different reading models, namely bottom-up model, top-down model and interactive model. The bottom-up model, as described by Gough (1972), is a process in which small chunks of texts are decoded, analyzed and added together to gradually construct meaning. A similar model was proposed by Laberge and Samuels (1974) and Chall (1996), the former even arguing that meaning can be achieved as a natural consequence of decoding words. This argument tends to be inconclusive, as although decoding is fundamental to further comprehension of the texts, it does not necessarily guarantee that meaning can ultimately be grasped. Regarded as a lower-level reading process, the bottom-up model has been widely criticized for two main reasons. Firstly, the model is entirely text-driven and the readers are simply passive recipients of the information provided (Paris and Turner, 2009). Secondly, meaning can only be constructed separately at word or sentence level, which hinders the process of achieving overall meaning (Nuttall, 1996). The reading speed is also significantly reduced when readers have to focus on every single word and try to understand every single detail.

In contrast, the top-down model emphasizes the use of schemata in processing the information of the texts (Cook, 1997). Schema (plural schemata) is defined as "a mental structure of all the particular experiences a reader has, which can grow and change throughout his life" (Nuttall, 1996:P. 7). When the reader interacts with the texts, his schema is activated and leads him to predict what might happen, and whether he successfully comprehends the message depends on the extent to which his schema is relevant to the writer's. This concept-driven model was also advocated by other authors like Kolers (1972), Smith (1973) and Goodman (1976), emphasizing the active role of readers in approaching meaning. With the activation of schemata, the readers can interact with the

texts by making and confirming predictions, asking oneself questions, evaluating the text information, etc. instead of just absorbing the contents passively. However, this model tends to undervalue the importance of word recognition and decoding in the reading process. According to Carrell and Eskey (1988), if readers do not pay enough attention to words or sentences in the text, they will find it harder to confirm the hypotheses already made. Furthermore, this model may not be appropriate for less fluent readers who lack certain background knowledge to generate predictions (Stanovich, 1980).

The interactive model, as indicated by its name, was then proposed to balance the pros and cons of both bottom-up and top-down models. This model suggests that readers should use bottom-up and top-down strategies as two complementary approaches in facilitating comprehension. Nuttall (1996) viewed "bottom-up" as the action of "a scientist with a magnifying glass examining the ecology of a transect" (P. 17), and "top-down" as "an eagle's eye view of the landscape" (P. 16). These metaphors vividly illustrate the nature of both reading models: while "bottom-up" draws readers' attention to small details through decoding letters and words, analyzing sentence structures or scrutinizing the lexis and syntax; "top-down" help readers draw an overview of the text based on their background knowledge and past experiences. The combination of "an eagle's eye view" and "a magnifying glass" is obviously effective for any reader in constructing meaning from the texts. This viewpoint was also supported by Stanovich (1980) and Rumelhart (1994), who established that readers should make use of multiple sources of knowledge simultaneously to generate the best interpretation of the text input. Whether the knowledge is at lexical, semantic or syntactic level, they can be utilized in both bottom-up and top-down modes. In general, the interactive model has been widely accepted by many other linguists like Carrell and Eskey (1988), Barnett (1988), Day and Bamford (1998), McDonough and Shaw (2013), etc. According to Block (1992), the debate between

"bottom-up" and "top-down" has come to an end, as most researchers have now agreed that the two models function as two complementary processes to aid comprehension.

Good Vs. poor readers

Exploring reader behavior either directly or indirectly, a variety of terms has been used to delineate different types of readers. These dichotomous modifiers, as mentioned in Pang's (2008), include proficient versus less-proficient, successful versus unsuccessful, fluent versus non-fluent, skilled versus unskilled, and fast versus slow. While in most cases these terms are used interchangeably by various researchers. Yet, terms like fluent and non-fluent, for instance, can refer to some specific attribute of reader behavior. Using more general terms like good versus bad has the advantage of encompassing various specific attributes of the reading comprehension process, and the labels of good reader and poor reader are certainly not conclusive terms because good or poor reading behavior is only evoked depending on various factors such as the time of reading and the complexity and the topic of a text. Therefore, readers exhibit characteristics that may be good or poor at different times and to varying degrees on different dimensions. Henceforth, labeling them as good or poor is only a relative and idealized conceptualization of desirable or undesirable reading behavior. The concept of poor readers refers to "normal individuals in comparison with other normal readers in their reading proficiency; it does not refer to readers classified as dyslexics"(Pang,2008; P. 9).

One way that researchers have studied what good and bad readers do, has been to ask them to think aloud as they read. From these studies, Texas Education Agency (2002) assembled and illustrated what researchers have determined. Most of them believed that the seemingly effortless activity described as "good reading" is made of a set of highly complex, well-developed, and well-practiced skills and abilities. Particularly impressive is the way in which good

readers actively and consciously coordinate these skills and strategies before, during and after reading a text.

Before reading, good readers tend to set goals for their reading. They note the structure, or organization of the text, and often create a mental overview or outline of the text to help them decide whether it is relevant to their goal. During reading, good readers read words accurately and quickly, and simultaneously deal with the meanings of those words as well as the meanings of the phrases and sentences into which the words are grouped. Good readers connect the meaning of one sentence to the meaning of another. If something is confusing to them, they use their background knowledge to try to clarify the meanings of words and phrases. Sometimes good readers interact with the text by asking themselves questions about its content and reflecting on its ideas. They are adept at using their background knowledge to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them.

Good readers continuously evaluate their predictions and revise them as needed. Good readers are selective as they read. They are likely to focus more of their attention on the parts of the text that are most closely tied to their reading goals. They may decide to skip some parts of a text because they already understand the content or because they do not think the parts are important to what they need (or want) to learn from the text. They may decide, after reading several pages, to skip the rest of the chapter because they recently read something similar. On the other hand, they may decide either because they do not clearly understand the content or because they find the topic interesting – to reread a passage or chapter before going on. They also may summarize the content of a passage as they read it. In doing so, they may consciously determine what is important, what is supportive, and what is less important. As they read, good readers often make inferences. They may draw on their background knowledge or look for cues in the text to supply information about characters or events that the author has not provided directly. Some good readers may also create mental

images, or visualize a setting, event, or character to help them understand a passage in a text.

Good readers monitor their comprehension as they read. When they realize that they do not understand what they are reading, they apply procedures to "repair" or "fix-up" their lack of understanding. For example, they may ask themselves questions about the meaning of what they are reading, they may rephrase a passage in their own words, they may look up the meanings of difficult words, or they may outline the content of the text.

After reading, good readers often think about, or reflect on what they read. They may mentally summarize major points or events in the text, or even go to other sources to find additional information about the topic of the reading. In short, good readers are most often strategic readers. That is, they use a number of comprehension strategies to get meaning from text. Comprehension strategies are conscious plans or procedures that are under the control of a reader, who makes decisions about which strategies to use and when to use them. In addition, good readers engage in meta-cognition as they read; Hamdan, Ghafar, Sihes, & Atan, (2010) believed that good readers are able to select the appropriate comprehension strategies for use with a particular text.

Flavell (1979), the first to propose the concept of meta-cognition, viewed meta-cognitive good readers as those who: (a) establish objectives in reading, (b) evaluate reading materials, (c) repair miscomprehension, (d) evaluate the developing understanding of text, (e) analyze the text and paragraph structure to clarify the author's intention, (f) adjust reading speed and selecting cognitive strategies accordingly, and (g) engage in self-questioning to determine if the objectives have been reached (Carrell et al., 1998, Pp. 100–101).

In contrast to good readers, most poor readers do not read strategically, nor do they have sufficient meta-cognitive awareness to develop, select, and apply strategies that can enhance their comprehension of text. Typical poor readers rarely prepare before reading. They often begin to read without setting goals. They

seldom consider how best to read a particular type of text. During reading, according to Shokrpour & Fotovatian, (2009), poor readers may have difficulty decoding, and so have difficulty reading the words of their texts accurately. In addition, some poor readers read too slowly, or lack fluency. As a result of their slow, labored reading, they often do not comprehend much of what they read, and the attention they have to give to figuring out the words keeps them from understanding the text's message.

All too often poor readers lack sufficient background knowledge about the topic of a text. They may have trouble connecting the ideas of a text. They often are not familiar with the vocabulary they encounter, and have trouble determining word meanings. Further, even when poor readers possess relevant background knowledge, they frequently are not able to activate it to help them understand what they read. Some poor readers also are unaware of text organization. They do not know enough about the organizational structure of narratives or the various organizational structures of expository texts to help them read and understand. After reading, poor readers typically do not think about or reflect upon what they have read. They almost never seek out additional information about a topic. The cumulative effect of these difficulties is that poor readers often lose confidence in their ability to read. Because reading is difficult for them, poor readers cannot and do not read widely. As a result, they are exposed to less text than good readers are and so receive less practice reading.

Summing up, being a university student requires reading a large number of texts differing in their level of difficulty, style, length, topic etc. Students' prior knowledge, which plays an important role in reading comprehension, is also different among learners. The interaction of these factors makes the reading process at an advanced level a highly complex activity.

Attribution

How people interpret and explain their world is a fascinating subject. One early psychologist interested in the subject was Fritz

Heider who developed the theory of attribution as a result of his studies into human behavior. This theory simply stated people assign either an internal or an external attribution to assign causality to the outcome of an event. (Heider, 1958). Attribution theory of Weiner is originated in the work of Heider (1958). He believed that people act on the basis of their beliefs. Attribution theory mainly concerned with the reasons people attribute to their perceived successes and failures in academic and other achievement-related situations (Weiner, 2010). The importance of realizing the causes of outcomes is that they provide an understanding of why individuals behave in a particular way and how they are expected to behave in future (Weiner, 2006).

Individuals' attributions can have impact on their later motivation (Jarvis, 2005); their affective states (Weiner, 2000), and also the degree of effort they will invest in their future efforts. In academic achievement studies, the four most cited causes are ability, effort, task difficulty and luck (Weiner, 1986).

Patterns of attribution:

Researchers tend to use the following categories to describe patterns of attribution: Internal/ability, Internal/effort and External. These categories refer to the "place", or locus, where a person thinks control over an event resides. Therefore, an external attribution is the same as saying "This event was caused by something outside of me"; while an internal attribution is the same as saying "that the cause of this event resides in me". For instance, the cause of a low test score (event), may be attributed to bad luck (external attribution), or to lack of study (internal attribution)

Dimensions			Attributional factors
Controllability	**Stability**	**Locus**	
Uncontrollable	Stable	Internal	**Ability**
Controllable	Unstable	Internal	**Effort**
Uncontrollable	Stable	External	**Task difficulty**
Uncontrollable	Unstable	External	**Luck**

Attribution factors & dimensions, adapted from Vispoel & Austin (1995), based on Weiner (1979)

In brief, ability is regarded as an internal and stable factor and the learner does not have a direct control over it whereas, effort is regarded as an internal and unstable factor and the learner has a lot of control over it. Task difficulty is an external and stable element and beyond the control of the learner while luck is considered as an external and unstable element.

The most adaptive type of causal inference comes from effort. When students attribute success or failure to the amount of effort exerted on an activity, they are usually more motivated to make great efforts on later situations, because it is an internal, unstable, and controllable factor (Jarvis, 2005). Pishghadam & Zabihi (2011) in their quantitative study of Iranian EFL learners found that effort attribution was significantly related to language achievement. In a similar vein, Hsieh and Schallert (2008) observed that students who perceived themselves as unsuccessful gave their lack of effort as a reason for their failure. Similarly, Williams et al. (2004) asserted that internal reasons are twice more significant than external ones. Lei & Qin (2009) pointed out, "Effort is very important in learning, without which learners could achieve nothing." (P.46); the learner who attributes failure to lack of effort, i.e. to their own actions and characteristics, feels more responsible for their actions; teachers, thus, should remind learners of the value of effort. According to Hsieh (2004), "when learners feel that they are responsible for the outcome of their grades, they tend to become more involved and active in the learning process." (P. 143)

Attribution and foreign language learning

Attribution theory is also important in the area of language learning, because as Dornyei (2005) stated failure is common in learning a language and learners do not usually achieve the desired level of proficiency. According to Dornyei (2003), attribution theory can be studied in relation to language learning because, in the first place, failure is a common experience among language learners and, as a

result, how individuals perceive their failures has a very strong impact on their future performance; secondly, language aptitude is a familiar term for many people which makes it easy for them to come up with negative perceptions such as: "I don't have a knack for language learning".

Yet, very few studies have been carried out in the EFL domain. Azar & Arezoo (2012) stated that there has been little attempt to use attribution theory in the area of language learning; there could not be found a consensus in the literature of attributional interventions concerning EFL learning in general and EFL majors in particular (Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Kun & Liming, 2007; Lei & Qin, 2009; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). Therefore, the present study is trying to introduce an application of Weiner's theory of attribution to foreign language learning in the Egyptian context.

Attribution re-training

Attributional re-training involves exposing students to a planned series of experiences couched within an achievement context. In such a context, modeling, practice, and feedback are used to teach students to (a) concentrate on the task at hand rather than worry about failing, (b) cope with failures by retracing their steps to find their mistakes or by analyzing the problem to find another approach, and (c) attribute their failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or use of ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability. Howell (2015) stated that "All of the programs that based on attribution retraining have certain common characteristics" (P.2):

- They involve teaching the student how to think about success and failure,
- They are explicit and direct,
- They present models of appropriate and non-adaptive attribution,
- They involve demonstration by the teacher (or a student tutor),
- They show the teacher (and/or successful peers) making mistakes and responding correctly to them,

- They involve the use of adaptive "self-talk" which is demonstrated by the teacher and copied by the student,
- They take place in meaningful contexts and are tied to the actual tasks which the student must complete class,
- They include lots of guided practice,
- They emphasize self-monitoring,
- They are long term and applied across different settings"

Instructor's role in academic situations based on attribution re-training

The overall goal for instructors should be to assist students in achieving success. However, the tendency is for instructors to seek retributive action and be somewhat unwilling to help a student when failure is perceived to be the student's own fault (Ahles & Contento 2006). Being consciously aware of this concept can inspire instructors to move beyond their personal beliefs and work with the student to achieve success.

In his study, Tollefson (2000) concluded that teachers are to:

- Make reading objectives clear.
- Describe goals as behaviors not as construction (e.g. Mention three of your friends' good reading habits not what are the characteristics of good readers?)
- Give direct and frequent feedback and reinforcement
- Evaluate the student on progress towards the reading target
- Always make it clear that reading tasks are only difficult when one doesn't know how to work them, or one lacks a needed resource.
- Always make it clear that reading errors are signals for the need to learn or to obtain new reading resources, techniques, and strategies
- Always make it clear that comprehension is accomplished through perseverance and work.
- Never blame reading errors on fixed ability deficits (e.g., "you made that error because you have a learning disability").

• Only blame errors on external factors if it is the truth. Even then, explain how the student must work hard to learn to deal with the external factor.

• When a student makes an error explain that it is probably due to missing prior knowledge and that once that knowledge is acquired (through perseverance) the item can be done correctly.

• Remind the student of tasks which were difficult until s/he learned how to do them (e.g., note taking was hard until you practice it well and became a piece of cake).

• Make it clear that errors are not failures. The only failure would be to give up. Errors simply indicate when it is time to work harder or to try working in a different way.

To respond to the influence of learning strategies based on the findings of that study, what teachers can specifically do is plan and execute a strategy training program for students by 1) letting students discover more about themselves as language learners; 2) encouraging them to evaluate their learning and strategy use; and 3) giving them the opportunity to explore new learning approaches or techniques and make any personal improvements to their existing learning behavior.

Attribution re-training: general correction guidelines:
Howell (2015) stated some points that an instructor should follow in an attributional environment:

- Listen to the student,
- Identify the content of the statement
- Identify the type of attribution error the student is making
- Use the student's original statement and expand it into an adaptive reply
- Be sure you portray the situation /problem accurately. Here are examples:

Example correction	Example error	Attribution type
"You can't do the problem yet because you have not learned The skills to do it."	"I am too dumb to do this task "	Internal /unalterable change to internal/ alterable
"You need to study the things on the test, and then it will be easier.	"The test was too hard"	External/ unalterable change to internal alterable
"To study you need to organize your desk."	"My desk is too messy to study."	External alterable shift to internal alterable.
"Great! Your work on the assignment shows how much you have improved."	"Great! I passed the assignment."	Performance accomplishment change to progress/learning."
"You can learn how to be a good reader "	"I am not good at reading "	Personal effacing change to personal supportive
"You are having problem with poetry not all reading texts."	"I could not comprehend poetry; I am not a good reader."	Pervasive negative change to comprehending specific problem
You will be once you learn how to."	"I am not good at team work and I will never be."	(Permanent change to temporary)

Higher education settings are particularly appropriate for studying attribution re-training because they involve a transition from a familiar to a novel learning environment (i.e., high school to college). The shift from high school to college is a developmental transition faced by many. Thereby, attribution retraining treatments are particularly applicable (Perry et al., 2009b). Although attribution re-training research is conducted within a range of academic achievement settings, little is done in higher education settings (college setting) and seldom research is done in the Egyptian academic context of EFL

Considering the nature of higher education learning environment, college students are to face the transition from high school to college. Tara et al. (2009) argue that unfamiliar learning conditions college students encounter, and new achievement settings can adversely affect achievement. These novel and unpredictable conditions include increased pressure to excel, more frequent failure, unfamiliar learning tasks, ineffective instruction, stringent grading practices, critical career choices, and new social networks.

College students can gain personal benefit from participating in attribution re-training program in terms of significant performance increases. Students who participate in attribution re-training program outperform their no-attribution re-training counterparts on in-class tests (Perry et al., 2009) and at year's end on final course grades (Hall et al 2007). For instance, a study found that final course grades were 10% higher for students in the attribution re-training condition as compared to those in the no-attribution condition (Haynes et al., 2008).

Attribution retraining and EFL reading comprehension
The recognition that reading is probably the most important skill for foreign language learners to master in academic contexts has been a contributing cause in this respect (Lynch & Hudson, 1991). To this end, the ability to read proficiently in English has become the first and foremost requirement for the university students throughout the

world. According to Lyon (1995) reading comprehension is not an easy task; students do not feel comfortable with the effective use of the reading skill. In spite of the great attention paid to the reading-based course in EFL universities, the educational mainstream involving the reading proficiency of the students in English is not up to the mark or is very unsatisfactory. Still, quite many undergraduates view reading as the least proficient language skill which they acquire even though they have made great efforts for it.

The current attribution re-training program is based on a strong theoretical framework, powerful reinforcement of attributional information and strategic administration of each lesson. Consequently, the current program is based upon the following pivots: attribution retraining, and strategy instruction.

- Aattribution retraining lesson lasted for two sessions. The first session dealt with students' attributional analysis wherein students are first organized into groups and encouraged to discuss their attributional styles using three hypothetical reading situations: success, failure and unexpected ones. The groups are instructed to think about a time when they performed worse than expected, better than expected and a third one to respond freely whether they performed the worst or the best. Then, they are asked to think about the causes they generated (causal attributions) for their unsatisfactory performance through giving replies to four questions (according to the causal dimension scale. The second session, discussion went on as the students are to discuss these replies with their groups, after which they report their replies to the instructor and to the other discussion groups. The instructor lists the reasons on board, reviews them with the students, and identifies which are adaptive (controllable) and which are maladaptive (uncontrollable). For each uncontrollable attribution, the instructor and the students discuss alternate controllable attributions to replace the uncontrollable ones. After that, the instructor asks them to respond to four other questions (concerning locus of control, Hobson 2012)

and explain how internal, self-controllable and unstable attributions lead to academic success. Introducing the concept of attribution theory, particularly attribution re-training, to students was shown to have a positive impact on academic behavior and persistence when combined with strategy instruction; the combination produced good results and is the most beneficial way to use attribution re-training (McDwell, 2009).

Studies related to attribution retraining and EFL reading comprehension

Yilmaz (2012) investigated Turkish EFL students' attributions in reading. The aims of the study were to investigate university students' attributions for success and failures in second language reading and examine the ways in which these vary according to gender, proficiency and teacher opinions. Student questionnaires identified 13 common attributions. Also, 17 EFL teachers were asked to what they attributed student success and failure in reading. Many statistically significant differences were found between attribution and gender, proficiency, and between student and teacher opinions. The study concluded with a set of pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English reading.

Ismail (2006) aimed at designing a training program pairing attributional retraining with oral communication strategy instruction and field-testing its impact on remedying oral communication deficits of the underachieving EFL students. More specifically, the study investigated the immediate and delayed impact of pairing attributional retraining with oral communication strategy instruction on developing the oral communicative competence and reducing communication apprehension of EFL underachievers at the Teachers' College of Riyadh. For this end, the suggested training program was administered to a cohort of 49 EFL underachievers who were randomly divided into an experimental group (N=25) and a control group (N=24). The experimental group students studied the suggested program incorporating attributional retraining with oral communication strategy instruction whereas the control group

students received oral communication strategy instruction without attributional retraining. Findings of the study indicated that pairing attributional retraining with strategy instruction was more effective than strategy instruction alone in developing oral communicative competence and reducing oral communication apprehension of the EFL underachievers. Immediate and delayed testing of oral communicative competence and oral communication apprehension indicated that the experimental treatment was more likely to enhance strategy transferability and maximize the long-run benefits of training.

Research methodology

Research design

A quasi-experimental design with a pre-post one experimental group type was adopted in this research. The data was collected to investigate the existing situation concerning EFL majors (N.70), Faculty of Education, reading comprehension. This was identified through pre- administrations of the EFL reading comprehension test. It was also identified through the post administration of the EFL reading comprehension test so as to compare the participants' results before and after study administration.

Reading for comprehension pre-posttest

After identifying and validating the freshmen students reading comprehension skills and reviewing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the reading comprehension pre-posttest was designed. The test consisted of three reading passages. All the necessary instructions were given to the students before administrating the test. The researcher used two statistical methods to check the statistical validity of the test: Discriminant validity and internal consistency validity on a sample consisted of (40) students other than the study sample and the results were as follows.

Sig.	T. Value	High-score individuals		Low-score individuals		Reading Skills
		Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	

Discriminant Validity for the reading comprehension test

Sig.	T. Value	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Reading Skills
0.01	9.314**	2.391	21.076	0.925	14.910	Total Score

** Significant at the level of significance (0.01)

The researcher calculated the coefficient of correlation between individuals' scores on the questions items and the total score of the test as a whole. The coefficient of correlation between the items and the total marks on the reading comprehension test **(N=40)**. The results indicated that there are statistically significant correlations between the scores of the sample individuals on the items and the total degree of the EFL reading comprehension test, which means the scale validity.

Coming to test reliability (the extent to which the measurement of the test remains consistent over repeated tests of the same subject under identical conditions), the Cronbach's Alpha equation and the split-half reliability are both used and indicated that the value of the alpha coefficient was high (0.831) , as well as the value of the reliability coefficient of split-half method (0.849), which means trusting the reliability of the test.:

Making sure that there would be no problems or difficulties that may face the students while administering the study, the pre-post reading comprehension test was piloted on a group of (N.40)majors other than the experimental group. Consequently, it was calculated that a period of 60 minutes would provide suitable time for students to answer the test. This time was estimated according to the mean time equals the time taken by the first student plus the time taken by the last student by two. This is 60 minutes.

Research program

This research aims at developing EFl reading comprehension through using attribution re-training throughout the following procedures:

- Attribution retraining & students' attributional analysis: wherein students are encouraged to discuss their attributional styles through using three hypothetical reading situations: success, failure and unexpected ones. Then, they are asked to think about the causes they generated. The instructor lists the reasons on board, reviews them with the students to identify which are adaptive (controllable) and which are maladaptive (uncontrollable). For each uncontrollable attribution, the instructor and the students discuss alternate controllable attributions to replace the uncontrollable ones. After that, the instructor explains how internal, self-controllable and unstable attributions lead to academic success.

- Connecting effort with achievement: The focus here is on how to change students' beliefs about effort in order to improve their academic achievement. This happened through opening discussions, and displaying video tape to explain what effort means and how effort is necessary to achieve one's goals, then, making connection between reading comprehension and effort and achievement through a reading activity.

- Strategy instruction: This is done through providing students with a theoretical background of reading strategies and when, how, why, and for which situations the strategies are advised. The focus was on supplying students with a procedural knowledge of how to tackle reading problems.

- Guided practice: The aim is to help the learner during the reading activity. Guided practice provides sufficient practice of all content that learners are asked to do independently.

- Students' book: where all students' work, responses, activities and tasks are written down. Each student has his portfolio. These portfolios were exchanged back and forth with the instructor for feedback. After each unit there is an effort and achievement chart

where students are repeatedly asked to rate how much effort they put into completing the tasks.

• Free practice: where the chance is given to the students to act freely, express their opinions and take part in the discussion raised. Students are to apply the strategy taught to another text in which teacher's monitor is less than before.

Findings and discussion

Validating the first hypothesis which stated "there are statistical significant differences at the mean scores of the experimental group on the post administration of the EFL reading comprehension test" and is statistically analyzed. The one sample T-Test statistical analysis was used and the data was treated as follows:

T-test & Std. D., obtained on the pre- and the post-test administration of the reading test in favor of the post administration

Sig.	"T" value		Post (N=70)	Pre (N=70)		The 1ˢᵗ hypothesis
		Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	
0.01	20.1010**	2.5852	27.8382	3.4965	18.1989	There are statistical significant differences at the mean scores of the experimental group on the post administration of the EFL reading comprehension test

** Significant at the level of significance (0.01)

Data above showed that T. value obtained was significant in favor of the post administration. The results gave comprehensive answers to the research questions. The answer was given through the statistical analysis of the supposed hypothesis. This research was a try to reframe EFL maladaptive attributions about their comprehension problems and replace them with ones that accommodate strategy instruction. attributional retraining

intervention with strategy instruction is considered consistent with empirical research findings that students who receive attributional retraining with cognitive interventions outscore those receiving either attributional retraining or strategy instruction. Providing students with attributional retraining whilst receiving the cognitive intervention maximizes the effects of training and leads to greater academic achievement (Ruthig et al., 2004, Mohamed; 2006).

Also, attribution retraining reframes students' misconceptions about their ability into ones that maximize comprehension strategy use, task engagement, and persistence. Having EFL students attribute their reading miscomprehension to insufficient effort and use of inappropriate strategies rather than low abilities or luck led to more effective learning outcomes. This is consistent with previous research results indicating that attributional retraining is effective in modifying college students' misconceptions about success and failure and thus leads to more effective strategy training (Menc & Perry, 1995). A feature relevant to the preceding ones is that of strategy transferability. As Ismail (2006) states "Strategy instruction alone is less likely to enhance long-term outcomes of skills training. The immediate outcome of strategy instruction may apparently seem promising. Yet, the long-term benefits may be at stake…" (P.40). That is particularly consistent with EFL majors who were encountered with different types of courses with a high range of difficulty and much effort should take place (instead of attributing poor reading to low ability, or luck).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

- Reflective discussions should be taken into account when suggesting cognitive researches.
- EFL teachers need further training in detecting and diagnosing problems EFL learners encounter. They should be trained on how to help students detect them.

Suggestions for further research

Although this research shed some light on the importance of meta-comprehension strategies when providing a remedy for students with reading problems, a number of research avenues remain open. The following ones seem worthy attempting:

- Pairing meta-thinking strategies with attribution re-training intervention to enhance EFL learners' problem solving ability.
- Investigating the effectiveness of an attributional intervention in enhancing EFL majors' writing
- Specifying the attributional profiles of gifted and the non-gifted EFL learners to see whether attributional profiles constitute a potential factor behind linguistic giftedness.

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