



## Negotiated Interaction: A Way out of Cul-de-sac in Reading Classrooms

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### Abstract

This study aims to translate tenets of social constructivism into practice via a scaffolded modality of learning. It is hypothesized that hermeneutical nature of passage interpretation could create “affordances”, Van Lier’s (2000) term, or “interactional opportunities” which are psycholinguistically and developmentally valuable crucibles for “negotiated interaction” and subsequently enhancement of reading comprehension. To this end, 24 randomly-selected intermediate-level English learners, having been divided into two equal homogeneous scaffolded (experimental) and non-scaffolded (control) groups, were subjected to 15 half-an-hour reading activities. Whereas the non-scaffolded group proceeded individually, the scaffolded groups did reading tasks interactively; they read the passages for themselves, publicized their reading problems, discussed the difficulties with each other, and wrote a joint summary. On the 15th session a post-test (unseen texts) was administered. Pretest and posttest results were compared using Wilcoxon Match Pairs Signed Ranks Test, indicating that scaffolded reading enhanced the reading ability of the readers.

**Keywords:** Reading, Scaffolded Learning, Affordances, Hermeneutics, Social Constructivism

### 1. Introduction

According to Frehan (1999), the last four decades have witnessed the emergence of three reading models: “bottom-up” (data-driven) reading process, “top-down” or psycholinguistic approach to reading and the “interactive” approach. Although these models have facilitated the enterprise of language reading in one way or another, they have never been able to account for a plethora of the challenges and complexities associated with reading yet to be dealt with. These still-existing reading-associated difficulties and challenges in the reading pedagogy classrooms prompted us to approach the issue of reading and reading pedagogy from a fundamentally different perspective. We hope to propose a new way which may add to our enlightenment concerning reading pedagogy, and which may open a new page in further facilitation of the elaborate process of reading.

As a point of departure and within the conceptual framework of Thomas Kuhn (1970) it can be argued that along with other disciplines and fields of studies language studies have also undergone a sort of “paradigm shift.” The once-dominant paradigms of learning and teaching have been superseded with new outlooks and frames of reference. This paradigm shift has taken place as a result of the failure of the current scientific practices (in Kuhn’s terms “normal science”) in addressing and settling the ever-emerging questions and challenges of the world of language education. Such “paradigm shift” is basically rooted in a kind of epistemological metamorphosis (from transmissional to transformative) which the world of language studies have been subjected to in the past half of the last century.

The transmissional nature of knowledge (language, language teaching and learning) is corresponding to such an epistemological tendency which is deeply rooted in the tenets of positivism, modernism and objectivism, and holds that

the “knowledge,” supposedly declarative and propositional, is out there and it is the teacher’s responsibility to transfer this knowledge in the frame of a lecture to a learner.

Antithesis to the “transmissional” epistemological orientation is “transformative” outlook which is staunchly advocated by proponents of constructivism. This paradigm does assume some fundamentally different philosophical and epistemological underpinnings. Unlike the proponents of the transmissional nature of knowledge, the constructivists tend to believe in the transformative nature of learning, contending that people (co-)construct meaning through their interpretive interactions in their social environments. As a social constructivist Vygotsky (1978) argues that constructivism takes place “primarily” through social interaction rather than primarily within the individual. He further assumes that development of individual cognition is tied to one’s participation in conventionalized social activities. He argues that through such participation, novice members learn to acquire not only the appropriate activity-related behaviors but the goals that call forth such an activity as well (cited in Joan Kelly Hall, 1993).

The zone of proximal (potential) development perhaps is the best known concept of Vygotskian socio-cultural psychology. Vygotsky (1978, p.87) defined the ZPD as follows:

“The distance between a child’s[novice] actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers[expert].”

Now the question which might be raised here is “under what condition can a novice benefit from interactive activities”? In the framework of Vygotskian perspective, it is “under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” that learners move from one lower level to a higher level. This guidance, collaboration or assistance is “scaffolding” in Vygotskian social interactionist constructivism. This assistance in the ZPD functions most effectively when it is tailored to the learner, adapted and eventually withdrawn in response to learner development (Lantolf and Aljaffareh, 1996). Donato (1994, p. 40) compares it to a “situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence.” Donato’s definition of scaffolding is unfortunately too much confined to “skills and knowledge.” Language development, in a sociocultural view, is the whole development of the human being; it covers much more than skills and knowledge. Nassaji and Swain (2000, p. 36) defines scaffolding, in a broader sense, as “the collaboration of both the learner and the expert operating within the learner’s ZPD.”

## 2. Social Constructivism and the Present Study

Vygotskian approaches to L2 learning have been gaining momentum in the field of L2 learning studies (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Donato & McCormick, 1994; Foley, 1991; Lantolf, 2000; 1994; Schinke-Llano, 1993). Indeed, this increase in the visibility of social constructivism and particularly a recent upsurge of interest in Vygotsky’s ideas have been the main propelling force behind our project. In this study, drawing upon the transformative epistemological orientation, we are to investigate the effectiveness of the amalgamation of the stated notions of Vygotsky and collaborative (cooperative) learning and teaching on reading enhancement of learners with reference to a typical English classroom in Iran. In a novel manner, we have attempted to generalize the Vygotskian principles which are normally applied to productive skills, to receptive skills, especially reading. It also goes without saying that Vygotskian approaches are well-known to employ scaffolded learning and Collaborative (cooperative) imperatives as presumably the practical instantiations of transformative epistemology.

Along with Bakhtin’s Dialogical view of language and Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, Van Lier (2000) likewise talks of “Affordances” or interactional opportunities. Also, Shotton and Newson (1982, cited in Van Lier, L., 2000, p.253) assert that:

“The environment is full of language that provides opportunities for learning to the active, participating learner. The interactional environment, in which the learners are engaged, is full of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablements and constraints \_ in short, affordances.”

We believe that such interactional opportunities are more likely to emerge in the scaffolded and collaborative reading design of our study. To our thinking, creation of such opportunities for interaction in collaborative reading classroom is originally rooted in the phenomenology of reading and subjectivities of the reader and author. It seems that the hermeneutical or diverse interpretation of the same passage on the part of various group readers, possessing a range of diverse personal characteristics including diverse values, assumptions, beliefs, rights, duties, obligations and in short, personal-reader factor, is a determining factor in the creation of these interactional opportunities; in the sense that the probable imperfection in understanding a text or diverse understanding of the passage, as Nuttall (1998) talks of non-totally of comprehension and Bakhtin (1986, cited in Thorne, S.L., 2000) talks of lack of “single universal truth due to differential positioning” ,on the part of various readers may possibly be a factor in the creation of a “bone of contention”, a “comprehension problem” or an “interactional opportunity” requiring to be addressed and resolved mutually or addressed through negotiated interaction. Indeed, these opportunities for interaction between the learners

create proper venues for the cross-fertilization and cross-enrichment of ideas and as Valsiner (1987, cited in Palincsar, 1998) assumes, these social transactions guarantee the “individual development.”

Based on what was stated above, this study aims to argue for the point that placing the learners in the conducive atmosphere of interaction and collaboration, which is abundantly replete with what Shotton and Newson (1982, cited in Van Lier, 2000) calls “demands and requirements”, “opportunities and limitations”, “rejections and invitations”, “enablers and constraints”, and Van Lier’s (2000) calls “affordances” will more likely put the meaning-making process as well as developmental processes and subsequently language learning and reading processes in motion. Actually, being engaged into such collaboratively-designed reading activities allows the novices to be guided by experts.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 24 unpaid volunteer intermediate-level students studying at R.R.4 level at Shokuh English Institute in Tabriz. The participants were between the ages of 16 and 22. The native languages represented included Persian and Azeri Turkish. To guarantee homogeneity between the scaffolded group (experimental) and non-scaffolded (control) group, a reading ability pre-test was administered to the population of 33. Based on the results of the pre-test the students were assigned to two homogeneous classrooms: 12 for scaffolded group and 12 for non-scaffolded group.

#### 3.2. Materials

Materials consisted of 15 intermediate English passages which were taken from the Interactions 2 reading book by Elaine Kim and Pamela Hartmann. The passages represented a wide variety of genres and students’ topics of interest. The materials were authentic and on general topics.

#### 3.3. Procedures

The participants were tested in their own classes as part of their regular classroom activities. The constructivist instructional design and collaborative learning underlie the design of the study. The researchers tried their utmost to incorporate the various aspects of constructivism and collaborative learning into the design of the study. The configuration of activities necessitated the cooperation among the readers. Skimming through the pertinent literature, we came across some theoretical notions which seemed to theoretically underlie the operationalized facet of our study. Writing (joint text summary) was widely utilized during the study to further engage the learners (readers) with the process of meaning negotiation and learning. The second typology of activities employed is supported by mounting evidence in the literature indicating that the use of “writing” along with “group discussions of problems” can enhance learning (cited in Tierney et al., 1989). Furthermore, Ur (1981, cited in Gabrielatos, 1992) states that in order for a discussion to be successful a purpose is needed. This purpose is manifested through a task which should involve “thinking”, “interaction”, “result” and “interest”. We did our best to incorporate the four parameters in our study. As for “thinking”, the students were asked to first read the passage by themselves and form an opinion as an individual (before within-group discussion). The formation of some ideas and opinions seemed to be the “result” of the activity because these ideas were to be used to convince the rest of the group of one’s choices and opinions and reach an intragroup consensus. Reaching such a consensus was guaranteed by means of “interaction” between the members. As far as “interest” was concerned, the topics of reading passages were decided based on their orally stated interests (during an informal discussion at an earlier point of the course) and on the teacher’s intuition of the learners’ topics of interest.

Following the above-mentioned theoretical basis, we conducted our constructivism-oriented study during the semester in 15 sessions as follows: The equal time limit of 30 minutes was allocated for the readers of both scaffolded and non-scaffolded groups. While the non-scaffolded group readers were subjected to the traditional individual reading, scaffolded group readers were exposed to a constructivist-interactive model of learning. The teacher divided the allotted time of 30 minutes for reading into two time span of 10 minutes and 20 minutes for both groups. The first 10 minutes were devoted to identical teaching conditions including pre-reading and while-reading activities in either of the groups. The classrooms first proceeded with pre-reading activities. During the pre-reading activities, some questions and topics pertinent to the title and content of the passage were raised to stimulate the prior knowledge of the learners. Not to mention that in the event of lack of relevant schemata, the teacher provided some relevant information to build new blocks of knowledge. Finishing the pre-reading phase of the reading process, the two groups entered the second phase of “While-reading” activities. During this stage the teacher had the readers embark on executing the two while-reading strategies of skimming and scanning. First, everybody skimmed through the passage and some students selectively provided the teacher with an overall picture of the whole text and then they scanned the text for some specific pieces of information and responses to some of the questions from the passage (scanning).

At the end of the first 10 minutes, the non-scaffolded group readers were given the free hand to proceed “individually” and read the passage as many times as they like and also utilize their own individualistic learning styles to deal with

the post-reading activities. However, the scaffolded group was divided into groups of three and the members were assigned the roles of “leader”, “spokesperson” and “secretary” on the rotating basis and instructed to follow the stages below: 1) the “leader”, “spokesperson” and “secretary” of groups were asked to read the passage for themselves and take some notes of the problems they faced; 2) afterwards the group members were asked to compare and contrast their understanding and problems with each other with the aim to settle the problems; 3) the group readers were also asked to jot down the discussions’ key points; 4) finally, they were prompted to jointly write a summary for the passage read and discussed.

The source of concern which was thought to be adversely affecting the implementation, evaluation and generalization procedures of the study was the probable lack of adequate motivation in doing reading activities in either of the groups, particularly the non-scaffolded group. In order to lessen the effect of this nuisance (lack of adequate motivation) as much as we could, the readers in both groups were notified that their class participation and performance during those 15 sessions would be of high significance and value in deciding their final scores. Unlike the previous semesters in which 30% of the final marks had come from class participation, in our classroom the percentages were altered in favor of our study. Notifying and winning the consent of the principal of the institute, the percentages were decided 60% and 40%, respectively for final examination and class participation. Observation of the readers’ diligence and checking out of the papers indicated that our modus operandi was a good guarantee. Actually, altering the percentages contributed to boosting motivation and interest in reading class.

As the treatment provision period came to an end, both groups were administered a post-test. In post-test the students were presented with identical passages (unseen texts) and they were asked to read the passages individually and answer reading comprehension questions.

#### 4. Results

Our basic results (descriptive values) are reported in Table 1. In order to statistically analyze the data, the Non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was employed. It was preferred to t-test due to some factors such as smallness of the size of subject population deemed to be adversely affecting the generalizability of scores. For the pretest and posttest, the average comprehension scores for both Non-scaffolded and scaffolded groups increased as a result of reading activities performed during the semester. The non-scaffolded group’s gain of 0.34 points from the pretest to post test is not statistically significant using the Wilcoxon Match Pairs Signed Ranks Test:  $Z = -.924$ ,  $p > 0.05$  ( $.356 > 0.05$ ). Thus, we may claim that results obtained or the reading proficiency enhancement could have occurred by chance. However, it is not the case with the scaffolded group because the scaffolded group’s gain of 1.75 from pretest to post test could not have occurred by chance  $Z = -2.616$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.009 < 0.05$ ) and there is a statistically meaningful difference between the performance of learners in pretest and posttest.

#### 5. Discussion

This part is aimed at providing discussion and explanation for the results obtained above. The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the amalgamation of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and tenets of collaborative learning in the enhancement of reading ability of the EFL learners in a typical English classroom in the context of English language pedagogy in Iran (Tabriz). The results obtained might be justified drawing upon some solid theories.

1. The postmodern sociocultural perspective as the cornerstone of this study has much to say and justify the results reached in this study. In the case of our study we might claim that the design of our study, albeit accidentally, let the readers with the lower ZPD be juxtaposed with those possessing higher ZPD, and this seems to be compatible with Vygotsky’s ideal condition of learning; a less proficient learner (novice) is juxtaposed with a more proficient learner (expert), and within the interactional opportunities coming up during reading activities the novices are scaffolded by the experts to solve a problem, carry out a task and consequently achieve a goal that would be beyond their unassisted efforts.

As the results revealed, the scaffolded group’s reading comprehension improved at the end of the semester. This improvement may be attributed to a host of factors, one of which might be “metatalk” during interactions. It is a well accepted fact among the advocates of sociocultural aspect of language teaching that “metatalk” can mediate language learning by enabling learners to achieve a deeper understanding of a linguistic feature and helping the process of internalization. Actually, metatalk arises when learners focus explicitly on language in the course of performing a task. A central claim of the collaborative dialogue investigated by Swain and her fellow researchers is that it involves language-related episodes where the participants talk about linguistic form as an object (cited in Ellis, 2004). This augmentation in linguistic competence attributable to the occurrence of explicit episodes of language (metatalk) can be one of the factors positively affecting the reading ability of the group readers.

2. Some scholars have linked Vygotsky’s social constructivism to cooperative learning. According to Newman and Holtzman (1993, cited in Jacobs, 2004), Vygotsky’s strategy was essentially a cooperative learning strategy. First and

foremost, in the framework of group working in collaborative learning students are further likely to develop a sense of autonomy and self-confidence in that students look to themselves for resources rather than relying solely on the teacher. Overcoming the problems as a result of intragroup cooperation and collaboration will make them believe in their hidden abilities and untapped potentialities. This synthetically injected motivation and self-confidence in the atmosphere of the classroom undoubtedly guarantees much perseverance and hard work of the members. Long and Porter in their review article (1985) argue for the pedagogical value of group work in language teaching: 1) Group work increases the amount and variety of language practice; 2) group work improves the quality of student talk; 3) group work help individualize instruction; 4) group work promotes a positive affective climate, and 5) group work motivates learners.

It is also a truism to say that in the interaction-based classrooms and collaboration-oriented settings time tends to be used more optimally in that several people are speaking simultaneously. Thus, exposure to language is intensified. However, in classrooms in which group activities are not used time is not utilized to the best advantage because activities are sequential and one person speaks at a time, usually a teacher. One of the reasons which may account for the results we reached might be the amount of exposure of the learners to interactive transactions of language.

3. Notwithstanding being fundamentally based on the tenets of social constructivism, the findings of this study do seem to be backed up by other existing EFL theories as well. Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis are drawn upon here.

Krashen's (1987) Input Hypothesis posits that SLA is driven by comprehensible input. Jacobs (2004) believes that input from groupmates inside a group is more likely to be comprehensible. Putting Krashen's and Jacob's ideas together, we may argue for the existence of plentiful comprehensible input in verbal transactions of group members which for Krashen, seems to be the necessary and adequate condition for occurrence of acquisition and boosting language proficiency of the learners.

Building on Krashen's Input hypothesis and extending it, Long (1983, 1985) admitted that comprehensible input was a necessary condition for SLA. Long's Interaction Hypothesis regards Krashen's comprehensible input as a sine qua non for language learning, but not a sufficient factor. Interaction Hypothesis mostly tends to highlight the role of social interaction (negotiation of meaning) in increasing the amount of comprehensible input that students receive. This interaction includes students' asking for help when they do not understand input. The learners may resort to a variety of activities and strategies to "modify" the input to make it comprehensible to ensure that process of communication goes on. Raymond Brown (1991) includes prompts, confirmation checks, clarification requests, definition requests, repetitions, and rephrasings as the characteristics of "modification." The main point is that in negotiating meaning a piece of language that was not comprehensible before, now becomes comprehensible as a result of negotiation work and can thus be incorporated into the learner's target-language repertoire. Long (1996) in his updated version of the interaction hypothesis also suggests that second language interaction can facilitate development by providing opportunities for learners to receive comprehensible input and negative feedback, as well as to modify their own output, test hypotheses, and notice gaps in their interlanguage (cited in Mackey, A., 2002). Jacobs (2004) also argues that the collaborative setting in groups and the "positive interdependence" and trust among the groupmates make it more likely that students will have opportunities to repair comprehension breakdowns. Equal and symmetrical power relations between the group members likewise might be another factor in intensified engagement in language activities (Norton, B. & Toohey, K., 2001).

Also, it is expected that by assigning some figurative characters and roles in the groups, we might have alleviated the anxiety and psychological tensions generic in tutored settings or in Krashen's terms affective filters might have been lowered. It may be posited that by holding pseudocharacters of Leader, Spokesperson, and Secretary, the groupmates were further likely not to be afraid of making mistakes and consequently risk-taking was encouraged on their part. Creating such a warm and embracing atmosphere for learners in which students are willing to take the risk of exposing the language they know to the teacher and their classmates is one of the crucial responsibilities of an effective teacher. Juxtaposing the roles of "negotiation of meaning" and the encouraging atmosphere of our classroom for interaction among peers, we cannot help concluding that there was an abundant amount of interaction (opportunities for meaning negotiation) among the learners. Negotiated interaction and lowered affective filter are two important variables which our language activities must provide for. Schinke-Llano & Vicars (1993) state that condition that is both necessary and sufficient for successful L2 acquisition is that of negotiated interaction. By this they mean that L2 acquisition will not occur unless the learner is provided with ample opportunity to negotiate meaning in relevant and appropriate conversational exchanges.

In a seminal article, Swain (1985) argued that comprehensible input may not be sufficient for successful second language acquisition, but that "opportunities" for nonnative speakers to produce comprehensible output are also necessary. She claimed that understanding new forms is not enough and that learners must also be given the opportunity to produce them because "comprehension processes involve mainly semantic decoding, whereas production also involves syntactic processing" (cited in Bygate, M. 1988, p.77). She claimed that Comprehensible Output is the output

that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired. The sense of accountability and duty due to holding some roles and having the anxiety of being effective in the performance of the whole group on the one hand, and sense of “positive interdependence”, Jacob’s (2004) term, on the other hand presumably created a situation in which the students felt compelled to “produce” language and this is what Swain’s Comprehensible Output Hypothesis aims at. Raymond Brown (1991) has likewise indicated that doing tasks in the frame of small-group work is an important variable that can ensure the learner more opportunities to produce comprehensible output.

Indeed, Swain and other proponents of sociocultural perspective have argued that interaction in the framework of such collaborative dialogues is crucial for learning. For example, when a more expert interlocutor supports, or scaffolds, a learner socially, cognitively, and affectively during interaction, the learner is provided with the opportunity to develop not only her linguistic skills, but her cognitive and problem-solving abilities as well (Lantolf, 2000).

## 6. Conclusions

In this study, particularly the significance of incorporating “affordances” or “reading interactional opportunities” came to light. It was revealed that the “affordances” which seemingly emanate from hermeneutical and phenomenological dimension of interpretation in interactive reading activities provide the learners with pedagogically and developmentally excellent opportunities to co-construct meaning and knowledge through engagement in social interactions. Without doubt, the pedagogical value of the learning theories or learning atmospheres affiliated with “constructivism” is further appreciated and acknowledged in this study.

The findings of this study also give support to the idea advocated by some scholars like Swain and Lapkin (2001, cited in Ellis, 2004) that collaborative dialogues involve some language-related episodes where the participants talk about linguistic forms; these explicit language reflection episodes, “metatalk” episodes, mediate second language learning and solidify learners’ metalinguistic and linguistic knowledge by enabling them to achieve a deeper understanding of a linguistic feature and thus helping the process of internalization.

Despite the fact that we only addressed the notion of reading ability (reading comprehension) enhancement as the focal point of our study, it seems that such an interactive design does incidentally address other salient aspects of language phenomenon as well. In this regard, Joan Kelly Hall (1993) is of the opinion that active and frequent participation in the oral practices of group work leads to the development of sociocultural competence and the ability to use the resources to display and modify this competence. In fact, he sees active oral transactions in group activities as a microcosmic version of people’s continual engagement in their socioculturally framed face-to face everyday activities. Similarly, Donato & McCormick (1994) believe that the development of language learning strategies is mainly a by-product of mediation and socialization into a community of language learning community. They further assume that participation in this “community” is characterized by the learner’s ability to develop, reflect upon, and refine their own language learning strategies.

By the same token, Bygate (1987, cited in Gabrielatos, 1992) asserts that in the process of such activities students become aware of certain “communication strategies”; they also become cognizant of the reciprocal nature of oral interaction and certain features of “interaction routines”. Moreover, they become aware of the benefits of assuming joint responsibility for the negotiation of meaning.

As it was the case with our study, language was addressed holistically and without being broken down into constituent elements, such simultaneous multifaceted addressing of a language phenomenon apparently takes us to what Brown and other educationalists discuss under the rubric of integration of skills. In this respect Brown contends that reading will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking activities, and “even in those courses that may be labeled ‘reading’ your goal will be best achieved by capitalizing on the interrelationship of skills especially the reading-writing connection” (Brown, 2001, p.298).

Equally, the results and findings of our project give much support to Doughty and Pica’s (1986, cited in Brown, 1991) findings that Two-way tasks are much favorable to SLA than one-way tasks. Two-way tasks are those in which both participants (in a dyad) and all participants (in a group) possess some but not all of the information, everyone also needs to get some information it was revealed that such tasks (two-way) tend to create a much real-life-like situation in which learning happens to the best advantage.

## 7. Implications

The findings of this study are noteworthy, since apparently no previously published research has shown that such an interactive and scaffolding-based model of reading have been applied in reading pedagogy classrooms to have enhanced EFL reading comprehension. Although researchers and practitioners have previously called for tapping into the untapped hidden treasure of interaction-based learning’s potentialities in order to as much facilitate the learning enterprise as possible, there seems not to be enough evidence suggesting that such models have been applied in reading classrooms. At its best, these models have been restricted to the enhancement of “productive” skills. However, the

results of this study indicated that the “receptive” skills, exclusively reading may benefit from the extrapolations of social constructivism. And although some EFL classroom reading teachers may have already incorporated such a model into their teaching methods’ repertoire, for the first time we seem to have tangible evidence that social constructivist reading model can yield a positive outcome.

Based on our observations and results of the study in a typical context of English language pedagogy in Iran (Tabriz) the following points might be implied:

1. It would seem appropriate that reading instruction be taught in the interaction-based context, where the readers are ingeniously guided and actively engaged in “doing” language in an integrated way because the integration of skills reinforces and interaction enriches learning.
2. Sustained interactive reading should be encouraged because it might be claimed that it well guarantees the development of autonomy, confidence, and better appreciation of reading and its relevant potentials on the part of learners.
3. Last but not least that with regard to the crucial role the sociocultural approach (negotiated interaction) played in the enhancement of reading ability of L2 learners in a typical English classroom in Iran, our educational policy-makers and material developers at the macro level, and teachers at the micro level are expected to join hands together to shed much light on the untapped potentialities of constructivism and to develop a sort of curriculum in which socioculturally-oriented collaborative materials and activities be an essential part. Hopefully, doing so will pave the way for the betterment of the language education and the efficient utilization of talents, finances and facilities.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

GROUP		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PRETEST	1.00 Non-Scaffolded	14.4167	3.05877	12
	2.00 Scaffolded	14.3333	2.90245	12
	Total	14.3750	2.91641	24
POSTTEST	1.00 Non-Scaffolded	14.7500	3.25087	12
	2.00 Scaffolded	16.0833	1.92865	12
	Total	15.4167	2.70131	24