**The effectiveness of the Arab draft reading challenge in the development of creative reading skills of primary education for grade students (V) in the Sultanate of Oman**

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**Abstract**

The "Arab reading challenge" the largest project launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President of the UAE, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, which aims to encourage and develop a love of reading in children and the younger generation in the Arab world, and to instill a habit in their lives which promotes curiosity and a passion for knowledge. It also expands their knowledge, and consolidate the values of tolerance and cultural open-mindedness.

Educators agree on the importance of instilling a love of reading among children through improving the link between them and the books and make them have the desire to tap into its information and ideas which develop their abilities. In addition, the implementation of several reading programs for thinking development, led to the emergence of new types of readings such as creative reading that change knowledge acquisition from a passive process to a mental activity that aims to a better understanding of the content.

Reading creativity is one of the goals that the educational systems in the world are seeking for learners to upgrade them to the degree of consciousness, perception, ability of accurate understanding, and solving problems. These outcomes can be achieved through the strategic goals of the project, including the improvement of the Arabic language skills of students to increase their ability to fluently and accurately express ideas, to develop self-learning skills, analytical thinking skills, and to broaden their perceptions and understandings. For the importance of this project, Oman has sought the participation through its students in public and private schools. The present study aimed to identify the effectiveness of this project in the development of creative reading skills of primary school students, grade (V) in the Sultanate of Oman. It also aimed to identify the differences in the development of creative reading skills in terms of gender. The study sample consisted of 70 male and female students who were purposely selected from seven schools in two districts in the Muscat governorate for the year 2015/2016. The sample was distributed in two groups of (35 students representing the experimental group, and 35 students as control group, not p Creative Reading Skills Test (CRST) was developed for grade 5 students including 30 items in its final form. The test included different reading skills (i.e., fluency, flexibility, originality). The test reliability and validity was examined before the final application. Moreover, variables of age, gender and Arabic academic achievement were controlled in the experimental and control groups. Students' participation in the project was followed from mid-September to mid-April through their supervisors in schools. CRST was implemented for both experimental and control groups at the end of April.

After analyzing the data, statistically significant differences were found between the control group and experimental group which means that the participation of fifth grade students in the reading challenge project has had a significant impact in the development of creative reading skills. It has positively influenced the development of students' creative reading skills. The study came out with a number of recommendations and suggestions some of which were related to encourage all students to participate in the challenge program and developing the methods of their participation. This would contribute to the development of creative reading skills for students in the Arab world.

**Key words :** Arab draft reading challenge, Creative reading skills, students of basic education.