

Investigating the application of critical thinking skills based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning approach A case study of children's stories by Taghrid al-Najjar



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Abstract

Since cognitive learning approaches—including Vygotsky's social learning theory—support the development of critical thinking skills, applying the methodological foundations of these approaches can help institutionalize such skills in contemporary human life. This research examines the children's stories of Taghreed Al-Najjar, a contemporary Jordanian writer, analyzing the actions, performances, and dialogues of the characters through a descriptive method based on Facione's six critical thinking skills models. Additionally, it explores how these skills can be taught using the principle of scaffolding, emphasizing the facilitating role of adults and more skilled peers within the child's zone of proximal development (ZPD). The findings reveal that Taghreed Al-Najjar simplifies the cognitive complexities of critical thinking by applying social learning theory in her children's stories. Depending on the audience's age group, self-regulation and interpretation skills rank first and second in priority, serving to enhance cognition, identity formation, character development, awareness, and knowledge generation in children. Furthermore, the skills of inference, analysis, evaluation, and explanation—supported by both emotional and cognitive educational strategies—have been central to the author's objectives, ultimately contributing to a new perspective on the pedagogical potential of fictional texts. The study also highlights that, from Taghreed Al-Najjar's perspective, language and culture serve as vital tools for advancing children's cognitive development and mental structuring.

Key words: children, thinking, social learning, the zone of proximal development, Taghrid al-Najjar

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