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Using Concept Cartoons Strategy on Developing the Performance of Iraqi EFL Primary School pupils' speaking skill

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Abstract

This study deals with methods of English language teaching not only in Iraq but also the world over. Improving the performance of teaching speaking skills is a great societal need. The aim of the study is to know the impact of using Concept Cartoons Strategy on teaching speaking skills of Iraqi EFL pupils . To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher uses an experimental study of two groups. The two groups fall into two groups: experimental and control groups. The researcher designs two tests (per and post test). The experimental group includes 32 students, and 32 students in the control group. The researcher utilizes the T-.test formula to analyze the results of the tests .The results revealed that the Concept Cartoons Strategy is considered more useful, enjoyable, and suitable to teach speaking skill than the traditional method.

1.Introduction

Speaking is a skill which is used by someone to communicate in daily life, whether at school or outside the school. Speaking is an activity involving two or more people in which the participants are both the listeners and the speakers having to act what they listen to and make their contribution at high speed, (Brown, 2004: 140). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking (Cunningham, 1999). Courses in speaking skills have a prominent place in language programs around the world today, ever-growing needs for fluency in English around the world because of the role of English as an international language have given priority to finding more effective ways to teach English.

Therefore, timely reviewing what current questions and practices are the nature of speaking has undergone considerable changes in their implications for classroom teaching and materials design (Richard, 2008, p.1). At the same time, approaches of teaching speaking in ELT have been more strongly influenced by fads and fashions, speaking in traditional methodologies usually meant repeating after the teacher, memorizing a dialogue, or responding to drills, all of which reflect the sentence-based view of proficiency prevailing in the audio-lingual and other drills- based or repetition –based methodologies of 1970. The emergence of communicative language teaching in 1980 led to changed views of syllabuses and methodology which are continuing to shape approaches to teaching speaking skills today (McCarthy and Carter, 1997: 141).

1.1Statement of the Problem

Speaking is one of important parts in teaching language because it includes one of four basic language skills. To speak in the foreign language in order to share understanding with other people who need attention to accurate the specific language. A speaker need to find the most appropriate words and correct grammar to express meaning accurately and specifically and needs to organize the discourse so that the listener will understand. So that, speaking is a fundamental skill that foreign language learners should master (Richards, 2008: 19).

Although the Iraqi curriculum is based on the communicative approach, speaking remains a challenging skill in many English classrooms. This is due to various reasons: A large number of students in a class, Teachers' inability to speak fluently, Students' little opportunity to use the target language outside the classroom. Therefore, the main problem of EFL learners is the inability to handle a communicative situation. The inability in handling a communicative situation may gradually lead learners to reach a state of hatred to learn English.

Even proficient learners are sometimes unable to communicate their thoughts because they do not have access to the required word or expression due to failure in the memory or any other reasons such as fatigue and the linguistic deficiency (Tovakoli, etal., 2011: 44).

In addition, teachers have to choose the appropriate strategy for the students with different quality and quantity (Brown, 2001: 160). Besides teachers attempt to create a good learning atmosphere to make students experience the learning process by using both appropriate materials and teaching strategies delivered by teachers. However, all teachers' endeavor to comply with students' needs has something to do with properly selecting accurate teaching strategies.

Through our study, we want to show the importance of cartoons as visual aids to motivate EFL beginner students to improve their oral performance. This research will be useful to those who train teachers to help them introduce in their teachings other types as visual aids. Furthermore, this research work is useful since it reveals that teachers can use cartoons in EFL classes to motivate their students to increase their oral performances. Finally, the present investigation can pave the way for other researchers who are interested in the roles of cartoons as audio-visual aids in EFL teaching and learning.

1.2 Aims of this study

This study aims at:

1.Finding out of impact concept cartoon strategy on the achievement of Iraqi EFL primary schools pupils in speaking skill.

2.Figuring out the differences between the performance of pupils in the experimental group who are taught speaking by concept cartoon strategy and those in the control group who are taught by the conventional way.

1.3 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

There is no statistical significant difference between the mean score of obtained by pupils of the experimental group who study using concept cartoon and the achievement of the control group who study using the conventional way.

1.4 Limits

This study is limited to:

1.Iraqi EFL fifth primary school pupils in Baghdad Governorate.

2.The speaking activities in English for Iraq text-book (fifth primary), and

3.The academic year 2020- 2021.

1.5 Procedures

To achieve the aims and verify the hypothesis of the current study, the following procedures will be adopted:

1. Selecting a sample of EFL pupils from 5th primary schools.

2. Dividing the selected sample of pupils into two groups (an experimental and control group).

3. Choosing a suitable experimental design,

4. Constructing a pre-test and post-test in speaking skill and ensuring its validity and reliability,

5. Administering the pretest to the pupils to assess the level of the pupils in speaking skill

6. Using the Whats up and Telegram application to teach the two study samples.

7. Teaching speaking skill to the subjects of the experimental group by using (concept cartoons strategy by preparing 20 videos).

8. Conducting the posttest to the subjects of both groups to find out whether the suggested strategy has any effect on the subjects or not.

9. Analyzing the collected data to get results by using suitable statistical tools.

11.Interpreting the obtained results to come up with conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Purpose of Speaking:

It was argued that the purpose of speaking can be either transactional or interactional. Apparently, there are some differences between the spoken language used in both transactional and interactional discourse. In transactional discourse, language is used primarily for communicating information. Language serving this purpose is 'message' oriented rather than 'listener' oriented (Nunan, 1989: 27).

Clearly, in this type of interaction, accurate and coherent communication of the message is important, as well as confirmation that the message has been understood. Examples of language being used primarily for a transactional purpose are: news broadcasts, descriptions, narrations and instructions (Richards, 1990: 54- 5).

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Speaking turns serving this purpose tend to be long and involve some prior organization of content and use of linguistic devices to signal either the organization or type of information that will be given (Basturkmen, 2002: 26). On the other hand, some conversations are interactional with the purpose of establishing or maintaining a relationship. This latter kind is sometimes called the interpersonal use of language. It plays an important social role in oiling the wheels of social intercourse (Yule, 1989: 169). Examples of interactional uses of language are greetings, small talks, and compliments. Apparently, the language used in the interactional mode is listener oriented. Speakers' talk in this type tends to be limited to quite short turns (Dornyei and Thurrell, 1994: 43 & Dehham,2019)).

However, in spite of the distinctions between the two types, in most circumstances, interactional language is combined with transactional language. This helps to ease the transactional tasks to be done by keeping good social relations with others. In other words, we can say that speakers do one thing by doing another (Brazil, 1995: 29). So both purposes can be viewed as two dimensions of spoken interaction. Analyzing speaking purposes more precisely, (Kingen, 2000: 218) combines both the transactional and interpersonal purposes of speaking into an extensive list of twelve categories as follows:

1. Personal - expressing personal feelings, opinions, beliefs and ideas.
2. Descriptive- describing someone or something, real or imagined.
3. Narrative-creating and telling stories or chronologically sequenced events.
4. Instructive-giving instructions or providing directions designed to produce an outcome.
5. Questioning-asking questions to obtain information.
6. Comparative-comparing two or more objects, people, ideas, or opinions to make judgments about them.
7. Imaginative-expressing mental images of people, places, events, and objects.
8. Predictive-predicting possible future events.
9. Interpretative-exploring meanings, creating hypothetical deductions, and considering inferences.
10. Persuasive-changing others' opinions, attitudes, or points of view, or influencing the behavior of others in some way.
11. Explanatory-explaining, clarifying, and supporting ideas and opinions.
12. Informative-sharing information with others

2.2 Basic Procedure for Teaching Speaking

Speaking is a sophisticated process and in order to produce meaningful output learners go through a number of stages (Burns and Joyce, 1997: 87). Richards (2012: 147) indicates that the speech procedure encompasses activities that take place before, during, or after the actual speech performance. Harmer (2015:308) points out that teachers' arrangement of their teaching speaking stages and the way they react to pupils efforts represent a crucial factor in the progressing of prolific speaking tasks. Furthermore, he (Ibid) sets down a basic procedure for the teaching of speaking skill that is consisted of four steps, which are:

1-Lead-in: In this initiative stage, teachers involve pupils with the topic by asking them how much they know and to what extend they are familiar with the topic, for example, if teachers decide to use role-play activity like checking a restaurant reservation, this may aid them to imagine and predict the type of dialogue that usually occurs when costumers check in (Chastain, 1988: 38).

2-Task: After initiating the task, teachers clarify what the pupils will do. During this stage teachers are in need of explaining the activity somehow. For example, if the instructor decides that pupils work in groups, he should display for the class how the task is done by acting as a member in one of the groups in order to show the whole class the process in action (Celce-Murcia, 2001: 93 & Dehham, et al.,2020).

3-Monitoring: The moment that pupils begin, teachers will supervise the activity. This means that teachers can listen to pupils while working and aiding them when they face any difficulty (Tuttle and Tuttle, 2012: 67).

4-Feedback and Fellow up: When the activity is done, then teachers allocate the remaining time for reviewing and providing feedback. This stage gives pupils the opportunity to discover how well they have done (Goh and Burns, 2012: 48).

2.3 Concept Cartoon Strategy

Concept cartoons were first developed in the 1990s by Keogh and Naylor as a result of endeavour to enlighten the relationship between constructivist approach and epistemology and classroom applications. These cartoons combine visual elements with the texts written in the form of dialogues (Keogh and Naylor, 1999: 68). Concept cartoons are interest-arousing and surprising drawings in the form of a cartoon in which each cartoon character defends different viewpoints concerning a happening in daily life (Keogh and Naylor, 1999a: 263) and (Martinez, 2004: 146)). Concept cartoons are colourful, animated which are cartoon-style drawings showing different characters discussing everyday situations, are designed to provoke discussion and stimulate thinking (Webb, etal., 2008: 93). Researchers found that concept cartoons help create a discussion environment in the classroom that can

reveal pupil misconceptions (Kabapinar, 2005: 159). Concept cartoons help pupils to see their misconceptions on the subject and help them develop new knowledge (Birisci, etal., 2010: 88).

The concept cartoons can be used to promote group discussion which can enhance pupils' formation of ideas and critical thinking (Warren, 2001: 104). Group discussion with the brainstorming activity is an essential part of critical thinking, it helps pupils to find the idea or solution to problem solving. Akamca, etal., (2009: 77) found learning through concept cartoons improved pupils' achievement. Cartoons increase both learning efficiency and pupils' understanding of content by engaging pupils in the study and remedying misconceptions. These approaches have a positive influence on the final performance of all pupils (Zhang, 2012: 45).They also thought that these Cartoons could create a positive learning environment for the pupils in the classroom and able to stimulate pupils' imagination and creativity. Numerous educators consider cartoons as an excellent tool for grasping the attention of pupils within the class. Many scholars have demonstrated that teachers (Khalid, etal., 2010: 61) and learners (Hill, 1990: 29) both find it helpful in improving the standards of the teaching learning process. Along with its usefulness in a classroom.

2.4 Importance of Cartoon in Teaching

Using cartoon pictures opens up practical possibilities more than static pictures. Here are just a few advantages of working with cartoon:

● **Makes learning faster:**

Hegarty and Sims (1994: 12) state that cartoon may help pupils learn faster and easier. Furthermore, they add that this is an excellent aid for teachers to teach pupils difficult subjects such as science and mathematics.

● **Visual attributes:**

Kobayashi (1986), Rieber (1996), Goetz and Fritz (1993) mention that information coded both visually and verbally is more likely to be remembered than when each is coded alone. So, cartoon doubles the chance of information being stored and as a result retrieved easily. Rieber and Kini (1991: 33) also suggest a number of advantages of cartoon over static graphics. For example, with animated graphics, learners do not need to generate a mental image of the event or action being targeted and therefore, avoid the risk of creating a false understanding. In addition, Wang and Chou (2005: 18) states that cartoon provides and increases capacity to present information regarding a continuity of motion.

Yunis (1999: 170-175) also adds that the movement element in cartoon film is considered as the most important one that can confirm the information in the pupils' mind. Furthermore, cartoon provides viewers with two different visual attributes: images and motion (Rieber 1996: 34-36). For scientific learning, images and motions are both essential for understanding and memorization.

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•**Saving time and effort**:

Stephenson (1994: 179) argues that such system (cartoon films) can reduce time by an average of 33% and aid the "quality" of learning, as compared with more traditional techniques. Stoney and Oliver (1998: 88) also cite that computers can save efforts from painting, shading, calculations for appropriate and consistent lightening effects instead of the animator.

• **Using sounds and music effects :**

The usage of sound or music and how and where they are going to be used in the plan and during presenting cartoon film is very important. These sounds can be used to support the images and the events in the cartoon.

• **More creative fun/ satisfying tool:**

William and Fisher (2002: 324) notice that many case studies suggest that pupils find using animation in education more satisfying and engaging than traditional learning modalities. Moreover, Hallagren and Gorbis (1999: 66) confirm that "Historically, visualization technology played an important role in many fields and made district interesting environment. Armstrong (1996: 69) adds that multimedia has the ability of capturing the attention of a generation who has grown up with technology. It plays an increasing role in their lives and education.

Waters (2007: 34) also cites that using animation films helps pupils to develop listening, speaking and reading skills. This strategy provides an environment with native speakers, real texts and thousands of real- life images. The teacher through using animation films introduces the new vocabulary through defining them with objects, pictures and events. Thus, pupils acquire the new vocabulary and the language by linking them to objects and events from the real world around them (Dehham,2021).

Furthermore, (Coyner and Mccann, 2004: 223) state that learning outside the traditional room using technologies like animations and movies through computers encourage pupils to learn.

• **More useful and household record:**

Pupils (target group) can take the animation films to their houses. They can think deeply about them and repeat them many times.

• **Instant, easy, photo sharing:**

King (2010: 15) states that: "You do not have to address an envelope, find a stamp or truck off the post office or delivery drop box. You can send the animation film by attaching it through email. It is not just sending a film through an email, it is also convenient".

3.Methodology

3.1 Population and Sampling

The population of the study represents the fifth primary school pupils of the Baghdad educational directorate in the educational year (2020-2021). The two samples were randomly selected from Kamel Al-Basir primary school. The size of the sample is (62) fifth primary pupils allocated into two groups, group (A) represents the control sample and group (B) represents the experimental sample. Group (A) receives traditional language teaching while group (B) is taught according to the concept cartoon technique.

3.2 Sample Equivalence

The researcher equated the two samples with reference to their social and economic status by selecting them from the same district in Baghdad and also from the same school. Pupils' age was calculated by months. Pupils who repeated the same class were excluded from the experiment. The linguistic background of the two samples was measured by relying on the test scores as a comparison with the mean scores for the first course which turned out to be equivalent to the research requirements. The achievement of the parents was also taken into consideration and equated by using a statistical formula (Chi square).

3.3 Extraneous Variables

Some extraneous variables may affect the course of the experiment. Therefore, the researcher made sure to equate them also. The experiment lasted for 45 days and none of the participants left the experiment. They all matured the same as the experiment did not last more than the intended period hence; the growth is unified across all members of the experiment. The students did not know that they were participating in an experiment and according to that the Hawthorne effect did not take place.

3.4 The Material

The teaching material is limited to 5th primary pupils textbook entitled English for Iraq units 5, 6. The researcher throughout the experimental period presented (20 vidoes) and set a number of behavioral objectives to be met across (20) lesson plans which are proved by a jury of (15) language methodologists.

3.5 Instruments

Pre-test and Post- test is the main study tool that was used to collect information from the study sample. Every tests contains 40 questions from the 5th grade material. The researcher has conducted speaking skill

achievement tests and she used these tests as pre and post-tests. The researcher gave these tests to a control group as well as an experimental one. The pre-test was used in order to compare its results with the post-test and then measure the extent in which pupils have benefited from using concept checking questions

4. Results and Findings

The results of the current study are presented based on the dependent variable, which is the speaking performance of 5th primary pupils. Accordingly, this study investigated the impact of concept cartoon strategy on developing speaking skill of 5th primary pupils. The obtained data form the pre-test and post-test were analyzed statistically to achieve the objectives of the study and examine the research hypothesis.

4.1 Comparison Between the Scores of the Experimental and Control Group for the Post- test

The final results of the post- test for EG and CG reveal that the mean score is (32.88) for the EG and (20.19) for the CG. The results confirm that the performance of the EG is better than that of the CG.

Through utilizing the SPSS program, the t-test equation was applied to two independent sample to conclude if there is any significant difference between pupils scores for both EG and CG. The equation indicates that T value is (7.87). this confirms the existence of a significant difference between the two groups at (0.5) level of significance and under (62) degree of freedom (see Table 4.1). Depending on the given statistical results, the null hypothesis that is set in (1.3) which states (There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of obtained by pupils of the experimental group who study using concept cartoon and the achievement of the control group who study using the prescribed method is rejected.

Table (4.1) Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-values of the pupils' Post-test for the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	No	M	SD	DF	t- value		Statistical significance(0.05)
					Calculated	Table	
EG	32	32.88	6.41	62	7.87	1.99	Significant For the EG
CG	32	20.19	6.47				

4.2 Comparison Between the Pupils' Scores in the Control Group for Pre-test and Post- test

The researcher applied a one- sample t- test to compute the difference between the results of both pre and post-test for the experimental group. The calculated statistical results reveal that the mean score of the pre-test is (15.66), while the mean score of post- test is (19.33) with a T- value of (1.73) for pre- test and T- value of (2.04) for post- test in (0.5) level of significance and (31) level of freedom. The statistical results disclose that there is a slight difference between the two test and the pupils' performance in the post-test a little bit is better than in the pre-test (see Table 4.2)

Table (4.2) Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-values of the pupils' Pre-test and Post-test of the Control Group

Group	No	M	SD	Df	t- value		Level of significance
					Calculated	Tabular	
Pre- test	32	15.66	7.46	31	1.73	2.04	0.05
Post- test	32	19.33	7.34	31			

4.3 Comparison Between the Pupils' Scores in the Experimental Group for Pre-test and Post- test

As for the pre-test, one sample t-test is used to calculate the difference between the results of both pre and post-test for the experimental group. The calculate statistical results reveal that the mean score of the pre-test is (13.56), while the mean score of post-test is (32.88) with a T-value of (12.38) for post-test in (0.5) level of significance and (31) level of freedom. The statistical results show that there is an obvious improvement in pupils' performance. (see table 4.3).

Table (4.3) Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-values of the pupils' Pre-test and Post-test of the Experimental Group

Group	No	M	SD	Df	t- value		Level of significance
					Calculated	Tabular	
Pre- test	32	13.56	7.29	31	12.38	2.04	(0.05)
Post- test	32	32.88	6.14	31			

Conclusion:

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The most important findings of the study: the effectiveness of the suggested concept cartoon strategy in promoting pupils and it has empirically proved to be a prosperous mannerism to upgrade pupils speaking performance, also confirmed the pupils gained a relatively substantial amount of improvement in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar and helped them develop their personalities, life skills and attitudes towards English language speaking skills. It transfers their concentration from feeling afraid to speak into accretion of participation, pupils has raced to exchange their information and ideas.

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