

The Effect of using Peer Partner Learning (PPL) Strategy on Iraqi EFL College Students' Anxiety and Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study is dedicated to examine the effect of employing Peer Partner Learning (PPL) strategy on the reading comprehension and anxiety of Iraqi EFL College Students. In order to achieve the aims of the study a null hypothesis is put forward. This null hypothesis indicates that there no statistically significant differences between the experimental group (who are taught using Peer Partner Learning (PPL) strategy) and the mean score of the control group whom were taught using traditional methods. The sample of the study is limited to (44) students of EFL Iraqi college students. The result of the analysis revealed that there indeed a statistically significance difference between the mean scores of the experimental group who were instructed using Peer Partner Learning (PPL) strategy and the mean scores of the control group. Following the above results, a number of conclusions, suggestions and

recommendations for upcoming research were put forward the above result, some conclusions, pedagogical recommendations and suggestions for future research have been put forward.

Keywords: Peer Partner Learning (PPL), reading comprehension, anxiety scale

تأثير استخدام إستراتيجية التعلم من قبل الزملاء
على قلق طلاب كلية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة (PPL)
أجنبية وفهمهم القراني

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المستخلص

هذه الدراسة مخصصة لدراسة تأثير توظيف
استراتيجية التعلم من الأقران (PPL) على فهم القراءة
وقلق طلاب كلية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)
العراقيين. من أجل تحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم طرح
فرضية لاغية. تشير هذه الفرضية الصفرية إلى عدم

وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعة التجريبية) الذين تم تدريسهم باستخدام إستراتيجية التعلم من الأقران الشريك ((PPL) ومتوسط درجات المجموعة الضابطة التي تم تدريسها بالطرق التقليدية. وقد اقتصر عينة الدراسة على (٤٤) طالباً وطالبة من طلبة كلية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). كشفت نتيجة التحليل أن هناك بالفعل فرق دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية الذين تم توجيههم باستخدام إستراتيجية التعلم من الأقران الشريك (PPL) ومتوسط الدرجات للمجموعة الضابطة. بعد النتائج المذكورة أعلاه، تم طرح عدد من الاستنتاجات والاقتراحات والتوصيات للبحث القادم النتيجة المذكورة أعلاه، وتم طرح بعض الاستنتاجات والتوصيات التربوية والاقتراحات للبحوث المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم عن طريق الأقران

(PPL)، الفهم القرائي ، مقياس القلق

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Students who study English as a foreign language may face a different types of problems regarding the understanding of the written texts. Reading Comprehension is known to be problematic for Iraqi students, as the education system does require reading English for students. Comprehending a reading passage need an equal efforts by both teacher and student, both of them need to do their best to analyze and overcome the obstacles and difficulties that may come along with traditional methods that are employed for

such activities which involve only simple steps such reading the passage, explaining its meaning and answering its questions (Williams, 1988:23). Peer partners learning strategy could be used as an effective tool multiple advantages that are worthy of investigating and studying throughout the conduct of study that measure their impact and effectiveness in increasing students' achievement in reading comprehension. The study is expected to hoping that its findings will be useful to Iraqi students and teachers.

On the other hand, anxiety is considered as one of the psychological obstacles that could reduce the productivity and efficiency of the students. Therefore, this issue should be given a lot of consideration so that the success of education could guaranteed. The studies evidently prove that a high level of anxiety would results in less achievement. Anxiety is considered to be one of the main factors that could effects and influence the success of students and their learning achievements (Sheu, 1988:12).

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aims of the present study are:

1. Enhancing EFL Iraqi students' reading comprehension skills

9. Managing the EFL Iraqi college students levels of anxiety.

5. Examining the influence of applying peer partners learning strategy (PPL) on Iraqi EFL College students' level of anxiety and their reading comprehension achievement

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

The current study formulates the following hypothesis:

1. There are no significant differences between the mean scores of the reading comprehension post-test achievement of the first group where Peer partners learning strategy was applied and the second group who receives ordinary method reading comprehension.

2. There are no significant differences between the mean scores of the comprehension post-test achievement of the first group where Peer partners learning strategy was applied and the second group who receives ordinary method reading comprehension.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations and as follows:

1. The study participants are limited to a group of students from the second year at English department in Missan University.

2. The academic year 2020-2021

3. The material of instruction is limited to three reading passages selected from three famous books (Pride and Prejudice, The Hunger Games and lord of the rings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Achievement

Achievement is defined by Good (1973:37) as "an accomplishment of proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge". An operational definition can be set for the achievement, where it can defined as the degree of knowledge related to comprehension that the EFL Iraqi students could achieve throughout their study of certain passages in English. The degree of achievement will be measured by using marks that are taken from the achievement test constructed by the researcher. The test is designed to measure the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

2.2 Reading Comprehension:

Reading comprehension is commonly defined as "the linguistic process of

reconstructing the intended message of a text by translating its lexical and grammatical information into meaningful units that can be integrated with the reader's knowledge and cognitive structures." (Harris, 1982:76)

An operational definition can be inferred for Reading Comprehension as we can introduce it as a cognitive process where the students comprehend and understand the passage they are reading and the events that taking place in it.

٢.٣. Anxiety

2.3.1 The Concept of Anxiety:

According to Kakabra(2015:55) "Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process". Although anxiety is a mixture of feelings that considered being important for some persons, it generates fear that cause a wornness. The result would be creating obstacles that affect the cognitive areas that are responsible for memory and processing".

2.3.2 Reading Language Anxiety

Sparks et al.(2000:16)explain the arguments and asserts that introduce anxiety as an outcome of the difficulties concerning linguistics that some learners

go through. Anxiety of foreign language reading is not something that can be detected easily by teachers. This ascribed to the fact that reading is not a process that involves a spontaneous communication like speaking. On the contrary, FL reading anxiety is the type of anxiety that students feel when throughout the process of FL reading process and thus is related to the specific language skill of reading (Zhao, et al.,2013:25).

2.4 Peer tutoring/Peer teaching

It is well known that to learn something in more efficient ways you need to teach it. That to say, students learn by teaching each other in a manner of "Pair, Think, Share!". Afterward, the students are asked to choose a partner. Assuming one of the students is named A while the other is B. Then student A would share the things he learned with student B. The same case for student B, by taking turns, they will end up sharing what they have learned with each other. The role of the teacher here is just listening and gives a formative assessment whenever needed (Green, 1998:27).

Peer tutoring is applied mainly when the teacher asks the student who is tend to be more active and clever than other classmates to tutor (teach) his classmates.

This strategy relies on the fact that this student can acquire knowledge better than the others can. The reason behind employing such technique is that students tend to equip information in much better way from someone who is close to their age skills, study habits and even learning styles. Tutoring arrangements may be in any of the following:

2.4.1 Peer Teaching and Partner Learning Methods in Teaching

Peer tutoring is the process of learning with the assessment of classmate who is from the same age and same class. On the other hand, partner learning refers to the process of making a team with one of the classmates to make him as partner.

1. Instructional tutoring.

In this type of peer learning, older students help the younger ones and they study as a group. The method in which the lessons are presented are determined by them. Such strategy is employed when there is a noticeable difference between tutor and tutee.

2. Same age tutoring

Such method is applied with students who can work as interactive pairs. In other words, they are willing to help each other.

3. Monitorial tutoring

An assigned monitors are requested to be the leaders of the group. Such strategy gives the teacher the opportunity to take break from monitoring the whole **class**.

4. Structural tutoring

A specific steps are followed here. Trained tutors manage strongly structured tutoring.

5. Semi-structured tutoring

A mixed between two type of tutoring is applied here. Namely, the unstructured and structured in which the role of the tutor is to lead the tutee into a carefully-planned learning guide.

2.4.2 Partner learning

As its name suggests, this type of learning is based on having a partner. Each student chooses one of his classmates as a partner. Such strategy is employed when the students want to repeat what they have learned and discussed it with their classmates so their understanding can be checked and expanded. It is also an indication of the “study buddy”. In other words, teacher is responsible for selecting a study buddy (partner) for each student. Each partner becomes

responsible for his buddy learning. Nevertheless, each partner remains responsible for his own learning.

2.5 Guidelines for Its Effective Use

- In order to eliminate any possible unrelated to the main topic interaction between the partners, a definite time must be given to the partners to finish a certain assignment.

- The given time should be less than the actual time the teacher thinks it's needed. Later, teacher can give them some extra seconds whenever necessary. It is better than to let the minutes drag on with your students getting off task. Example: "Turn to your learning partner, and recap what you have just learned about. Take turns doing the recap. You have two minutes to do that. Go"

3. Methodology

3.1 The Experimental Design

Christensen (1980:35) defines the concept of experiment as "an objective observation of a phenomenon which is made to occur in Strictly controlled situation in which one than one factor is

varied and the others are kept constant ". A non-randomized, equivalent- groups design has been selected to be conducted to achieve the aims of the present study, the researcher has selected the non-randomized, equivalent- groups design. This type of designs requires two equivalent groups one of them is the experimental group and the second one is the control group. The two groups are tested with the same reading comprehension pre-test. Afterward, the independent variables Peer Partner Learning (PPL) is applied on the experimental group. On the other hand, a traditional methods of teaching where applied to the control group.

Later, a post test is given to the both groups. To give further illustration of the experimental design see table (1):

The groups	Test	The independent variable	Test	Dependent variables	Measurement tools
Experimental group	Pre	Peer Partner Learning (PPL)	Post	The achievement of students in reading comprehension and their anxiety levels	1.Achievement Test in Reading Comprehension 2.Test of Anxiety levels
Control group	Pre	Traditional methods	Post		

Table (1): The Experimental Design of the Study

3.2 Face Validity

What is meant by face validity is that “A test is face valid if it appears to be measuring what it claims to measure”. “It is the best type of validity in the case of self- rating” (Kline, P. 2013:53).

After finishing constructing the test items, it was submitted to the jury to assess their validity. The members of the jury were selected based on their experiences in the education field. The researcher asked the jury to identify and check out the items of the test to give their decision about whether or not the test is

suitable. Therefore, certain items needed to be removed and others to be modified. Most of the jury members have verified the test items validity.

3.3 The Sample

The current study experimental design is applied to second year students at English Department in Misan University academic year 2020/2021.

The sample that had been chosen for the current study consists of (44) students. Those students are at their second stage in the English department. In order to fulfil the aims of the study, those students are divided into two groups. The sample of the study can be further illustrated in Table (2).

Group of students	No.	Total
Experimental group	20	44
Control group	22	

3.4 Instruments of the Study

In order to fulfill the study objectives, the following instruments are employed :

1. Pre and post test of foreign language reading comprehension
2. Foreign language reading anxiety scale have been constructed.

3.5.1 Construction of the Test

The students who are part of the pre-test were given a a post test. This has been conducted when the research was done. Precisely after the treatments and exercises were given to the experimental group. The outcome of the post-test were employed to make a comparison between the pre-test. Furthermore, it helped in reaching the conclusion that (PPL) can in fact improve and enhance students achievements in reading comprehension and lower their anxiety levels.

With accordance to previous studies that dealt with reading comprehension measurement and to make a comparison

between the mean scores of the two groups a post test was put forward.

3.6 Identifying Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale

The previous studies that are related to measuring anxiety level while reading in foreign language showthat Foreign Language anxiety is linked to the oral aspects of language such as speaking, listening, reading (Aida,1994:155).

The elements that effects or results in students' foreign language reading anxiety are listed by the researchers as following:

- 1- The uncomfortable feeling students carry for the foreign language
- 2- Fearing the negative criticism
- 3- difficulties of language
- 4- The attitudes of the teacher

3.7. The Results of the Study

The study results are analyzed based on the hypotheses of the study. As stated before, the study Hypotheses that there is statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group performance of the control group in reading comprehension and their levels of anxiety. In order to test the truth of this hypothesis, T. test for Independent Sample was conducted. The results of the tests show that the calculated value (0.150), that

is to say it is higher than the calculated value and the level of significance is ($\alpha=0.05$). Thus, this shows that there are indeed notable statistical differences in mean scores in the results the two groups achievements. Consider table (3) which explain these results clearly.

3.7.1 Results Related to the first hypothesis:

The analysis reveals that there is statistically significant differences between the mean score group which is taught using PPL (experimental group) and that which is taught using traditional methods (control group) in the pre-test of reading comprehension and anxiety scale. For further clarification, a post- test was employed to test both of the groups. For further illustration check table (2).

Table(3):The Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Value of Students' Achievement in reading comprehension

Groups	N	M	Stan D	Calc	Tab
	o	ea	dar	F	ulat
	.	n	d	ed	ed
		sc	Devi	T-	T-
		or	atio	valu	valu
		es	ns	e	e
Experim	2	80	6.22	6	2.00
entalGr	0	.9		0.	0.05

oup		6		0		
Control	2	6	8.1	0		
Group	2	6.	9			
		97				

3.7.2 related to the second hypothesis:

The analysis clearly reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group (who are taught using PPL) mean score and that of the control group (who are taught using traditional methods) in reading anxiety post-scale. For further illustration, check table (4):

Table (3):The Mean, Standard Deviation and T-Value of Students' Achievement in reading anxiety Post-scale

Groups	N	M	Stan D	Calc	Tab
	o	ea	dar	F	ulat
	.	n	d	ed	ed
		sc	Devi	T-	T-
		or	atio	valu	valu
		es	ns	e	e
Experim	2	٤٨	٦.٥٠		2
entalGr	0	.٢		0.	.00
oup		٢		0	.05
Control	2	57	٤.٣٦	0	
Group	2	.3			
		3			

3.8 Conclusions

The results gathered from the analyzed data, the study revealed that the use of peer partner learning (PPL) can give EFL Iraqi students the ability to improve their reading comprehension and lower their anxiety levels. Employing PPL in the classroom can facilitate learning of reading skills in various subjects. Employing types of Peer learning can help students to become more mature readers and the process of reading would be more active as they will continually check on their comprehension. Working along with partners to comprehend a passage can come out with a much better understanding and a higher level of achievements. It also raises students' confidence of the students to become more confident readers to and keep reading their reading texts. Additionally, this type of learning improves the relationships between the classmates because there will be less stress which leads to facilitating the learning process.

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