

Using Snowball Strategy to enhance Reading Comprehension of EFL Iraqi School Students

Sabeeha Hamza Dehham

sabeehadehham66@gmail.com

College of Basic Education / University of Babylon

ABSTRACT:

The goal of this research is to empirically analyze the influence of snowball throwing technology on the reading skills of Iraqi EFL preparatory school students. A two-month experiment is performed to accomplish the objective of the study. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the current research is limited to 4th-grade female students in Babil City high schools.

As the Experimental Group, the study sample comprises 40 students and 40 as the control group. After application of the Language Listening Ability Pretest (0,801), the reliability coefficient was found.

The findings of the analysis after the post-test administration showed that the Higher outcomes of the experimental group subjected to snowball technique are As proposed by the recommended textbook, than that of the control group subjected to the conventional approach. Lastly, some helpful recommendations They were made for further studies.

Keywords:

Reading Comprehension, Snowball Strategy, Secondary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem and Its Significance

English is a medium for spoken and written correspondence. This will make it easier for us to provide and learn from others, make our lives easier and face the modern world, since it is necessary for Iraqi students to master English in Specifically, particularly those Entering the education program .English is also mandatory for teaching in Iraq. English is not only taught in the classroom, but also in the home and in society. Teachers are not only a source of learning, they must make the learning process exciting for students, because students must actively explore through sources of knowledge. Some language skills, some basic skills such as speech, reading and writing, consist in the teaching and learning of English. Among the languages here, One of the skills to be learned by students was the ability to understand reading. Understanding of reading is not only in science, it is also in education. Other areas, such as career planning, work and business applications, such as

When they experience other facets of the world, master's reading will help students become more experienced (Alakrash et. al.2021).

For a good understanding of reading, practice is critical. Students must still practice and practice will help students learn how to achieve a strong

understanding of reading, which requires requirements such as content, vocabulary and usage of languages for successful reading processes. In order to know the requirements for successful reading, the teacher may create a scenario in which students learn how to read well.

Teachers should still consider whether a motivator will be the instructor,

Instrument and study for directing and promoting the method of teaching and learning.

Based on the observation of the researcher of the English teacher, the researcher inferred that when teaching students, the English lesson instructor used the eclectic method, the student was very involved in the classroom, but the clarity and reading practice of the teacher was much less (Alakrash et.al 2020).

The English teacher was not able to give students situations that did not motivate students to read text. Then, the role of teacher as facilitator was not effective as students could not guide them when they wrote in class.

Once her students completed their writing assignments, she did not provide the students with input, although some students did not understand the materials they had studied. Teachers must increase the students' interest in the learning process, as students must strive to discover other sources of information. The researcher found that most of the students had trouble learning English. First, after the first student interview, the researchers had information that the motivation of the students to learn

arn English was weak. The students said that reading t
he topic of comprehension was very difficult because i
t was small. When they identified themselves, the stud
ent had ruble because they didn't know what to write.
The researcher wants to enhance the English learning p
rocess by Snowballs Throwing (Elaf& Hussien
2020).

This approach will help the student rethink the structur
e of the sentence after teaching in the classroom. It is p
ossible to improve the class atmosphere. It can make th
e teaching learning process more enjoyable and improv
e students ' readiness to show their expertise in group d
iscussions.

Based on the context study and after the researcher had
observed the pre-
research and interviewed the English teachers, the rese
archer gave the students first interview and pretest, whi
ch allowed the researcher to recognize some of the teac
hing and reading learning process problems that occur
in college students as follows:

1. English was important, but particularly when readin
g comprehension, students had difficulty understandin
g it.
2. The process of learning English was very boring, wh
ich made the learning process motivation of the studen
ts weak (Alakrash & Bustan 2020).
3. Students failed to understand how to use good langu
age to make a good
sentence.
5. The less of the mastery of students' vocabulary in kn
owing comprehensin.
7. As students learned reading skills the less incentive.
The research is therefore an attempt to close the gap an
d show the importance of using this method to ensure i
mproved reading comprehension mastery.

1.2 Aims of the study

The Study goals are:

1. Seeing the influence of Snowball Throwing Techniq
ue on the
understanding of Iraq EFL high school students.
2. To research the role of the new step in enhancing stu
dents' ability to
understand the aspects that lead to a passage.
3. To recognize better reading by students using the Sn
owball Throwing
Technique.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

It is hypothesized that there is no statistically significa
nt difference between the experimental group's mean s
core taught through snowball throwing technique and t
hat of the control group taught in reading comprehensi
on by the
traditional technique.

1.3 Limit of the Study

The research during the 20182019 academic year is li
mited to the fourth
grade high school students.

1.4 Procedures

The following steps in carrying out the study include:

1. A selection of excerpts from the recommended book
are randomly picked.
2. A specification of experimental
control groupings will be implemented
per article.
3. Reading performance test will be prepared to assess
the level of reading
comprehension among students.
4. Statistically manipulating the obtained data to achie
ve the study 's aims.
5. Conclusions, guidelines and suggestions are being p
ut forward for further study.

1.5 Value of the Study

The study results are supposed to be beneficial for stud
ents , teachers and
other researchers. For the students, their reading skills
are required to be
improved. In using Snowball Throwing Technique in
classroom teaching
and learning practice, they will be involved and imagin
ative in learning
comprehension of reading as the technique is more eng
aging and enjoyable.
Furthermore, the students can share thoughts about so
mething that can be introduced in their class with their
peers.

Whereas, for the teacher, the result will help the teache
r understand how to treat the students in reading teachi
ng by using Snowball Throwing Technique and it can l
ead to effective teaching of English learning and later i
ncrease the interest of the students. This research may
be a starting point for improving the teaching approach
that applies in the school.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Reading Comprehension:

It's the ability to interpret language, grasp its context a
nd interact with what the reader knows already. Knowl
edge of the meaning of words, the ability to understand
the meaning of a word from the context of a discourse
, the ability to follow the organization of a passage and
to identify backgrounds and references in it, the abilit
y to draw inferences from a passage on its contents, the
ability to identify the main thinking of a passage, the a

bility to answer questions are fundamental skills required for an effective reading understanding.

Reading comprehension (RC) essentially includes a number of cognitive techniques that can promote the understanding of learners (e.g. asking questions about the text, tracking their understanding, summarizing and enabling context knowledge)(Ali, et al.2019) RC skills, along with other linguistic abilities, are to be improved by the Ministry of Education 's syllabus introduced at Iraqi schools. A lot of reading passages are provided for that purpose; but many students encounter comprehension issues. By the conclusion of their high school study, they display no evidence of learning these skills. According to Wigfield and Lutz (2005:45), the method of reading comprehension involves the elicitation and the construction of meaning from documents. Most read investigators now believe that interpretation means active meaningbuilding

rather than passive reception of knowledge from a text

2.2 Snowball Throwing Technique

Definition

Sunistini et al (2011:3) note that "Snowball Throwing" is a tool that can be used to offer the students definition of the difficult material and use it to know the information and understanding of the students about it. Snowball throwing is a practice that helps students to enjoy speaking, and can will worry about learning. It triggers creative thinking. Students may improve their ability to communicate through the use of a foreign language and learning inspiration.

Snowball throwing also promotes the active speaking involvement of the students in the classroom, as this method involves a rich communication where students need to be involved. Snowball throwing also has the ability to increase the self-

confidence of hesitant students, because the students will have

different roles and have to speak in snowball throwing activities, which means they don't have to take on the same responsibilities. Widodo (2009) recommends that the method of throwing snowball might train students to think

more about receiving messages from others, and give that message to friends in a group.

2.2.1 The Steps of "Snowball Throwing" Method

The phases of the "Snowball Throwing" process according to Suprijono (2015: 147) are:

- 1) Teacher shall prepare the material for submission.
- 2) Teacher summons each group leader to illustrate the content.

3) Each group leader goes back to the groups and explains the material to his peers, respectively.

4) Each student is then given a worksheet to write down a question about any matter the group leader has mentioned.

5) The paper then includes questions that were shaped like a ball and tossed from one student to another for \pm 15 minutes.

6) After the students obtain one ball / one question, students are given the opportunity to answer questions written in the form of a paper ball in turn.

7) Assessment, students make text of the procedure from the picture and the issue.

2.2.2 Procedures in Using Snowball Throwing Method

Asmani (2011: 47) gives procedures for using throwing snowball.

These are as follows:

1. The instructor gives the materials according to the basic skills.

2. The instructor makes groupings and gives the moderator an description of the content.

3. Back to their classes, each moderator explains what the instructor explained to their friends on the basis of each group before.

4. Then, each student gave a paper to compose a question that included the information that each group's moderator needed to explain.

5. Instead, a question paper made it like a ball and for \pm 15 minutes throws it from one student to another.

6. Before that, each student gets a snowball paper then the student gets an opportunity to answer the question from the question paper as per turns.

7. Teacher makes evaluation of the content.

8. Teacher ends cycle of teaching and learning.

2.2.3 Techniques and Application in Using Snowball Throwing Method

Farrel and Jacobs (2010) described snowball throwing as a useful

cooperative learning method since each member works first alone and then

presents himself to the group, thus discouraging students from doing either nothing or trying to dominate the group. Whereas in Farrell and Jacobs (2010) Kearney (1993) gave that snowball is in fact two techniques in one: forward snowball and reverse snowball.

Forward snowball involves students working together to generate ideas, and students choose from among the ideas that their group has created in reverse snowball. Forward snowball is used for brainstorming and shows the benefit of heterogeneity as it is good for collecting as many ideas as possible or as much knowledge.

Forward Snowball is also useful for building teambuilding (creating bonds between group members) as it provides dramatic evidence that two (or more) heads are actually better than one. Teaching in second language classes such

as English as a Second Language (ESL). And reverse snowball may work as follows with each group member listing four examples of particularly good text writing. They try to agree on the best examples of good writing in the text by step 3 of reverse snowball, and plan to justify their choice.

Based on the above statements, the researcher may conclude that throwing snowball can increase the reading skill of students because it makes students enjoy the snowball question with throwing. This approach also gives the students a high motivation to talk by giving and answering each other's questions.

Snowball throwing method is one of the modification techniques that emphasize arranging skill questions and turned it into an interesting game, which is throwing the snowball. And the inside of snowball is a matter of students having to throw the snowball at other students and the other students having to answer it. This method requires the ability of students that is very easy, and all students can do it where they ask material-based questions.

Widodo (2008) clarified that the method of snowball throwing is a tool used to lift a subject. Several classes always use this approach and it consists of five to eight students who have the ability to question such a ball in a paper made like this.

Then, the ball throws to other groups to receive that question by answering it

Based on the above definition, snowball throwing promotes the active involvement of the students in the classroom reading, as this approach involves a rich communication where students must be involved. Snowball throwing also has the potential to improve the selfconfidence of inexperienced students, as the students will have different positions in snowball throwing events and will have to talk and read, which means they don't have to take on the same tasks. It is hoped that snowball throwing as a teaching model will improve the reading ability of students, as this model often gives students a high incentive to talk by giving and answering each other's questions.

2.2.4 The Advantages and Disadvantages of "Snowball Throwing" Method

The advantages of using the Snowball Throwing method according to Shoimin (2014: 176) are:

1) The class atmosphere is fun because the students are playing with other students throwing a paper ball.

2) Students have the chance to build their ability to think because they can create questions and give them to others.

3) The student is ready for a broad range of options because the students don't know what their friends are asking.

4) Students can be active in the process of learning.

5) The teacher does not use the media because the students participate directly in the class.

6) The process of learning is more successful.

7) The cognitive, affective and psychomotor dimensions can be achieved in three ways. According to Shoimin (2014: 178), "Snowball Throwing" approach is hampered by:

1) The ability of students to grasp the subject depends on how marginally the students grasped it. The questions the students only ask about the material mentioned or the examples of questions given can be seen.

2) The group leader can not clarify the material well so that it can impede the interpretation of the given material by another student so that he needs more time to discuss the material.

3) There is no personal quiz or group incentive so that when students are paired they are not encouraged to cooperate. But teachers will give a personal review and a community award.

4) It's a long time it takes.

5) Students who are disrespectful make noise.

6) Classes are always noisy as the students' community is formed.

3. Methods

This section provides a description of the procedures used to achieve the study's objectives, beginning with selecting the population and samples, neutralizing all sample variables, developing the study's instruments and equipment, performing the experiment and reviewing the data and findings.

3.1 Experimental Research Design

The experimental design involves one independent variable (snow balls throwing technique) and a dependent variable (test scores), so the experimental design was implemented on two similar classes, one experimental and the other controlled.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample of the presented study is represented for the educational year

(2018-2019) by the fourthgrade secondary school students in the province of

Babylon. Al Huda Secondary School, which is at the heart of the province, was selected to sample control and experimental groups as well. We randomly selected class (A, 37 students) to represent the experimental group receiving snow balls throwing techniquebased instruction and class (B, 39 students) to represent the control group that was taught using conventional teaching methods (Z.M. et al , 2019).

3.2.1 Samples Equivalence

In some variables the researcher conducted a statistical equivalence between the experimental and control sets which could influence the experiment 's results. The researcher has randomly selected the two groups, the research sample students from similar social and economic status and study at the same school. Such variables are: age calculated by months, first class grades, and academic achievement of parents(Hammad et al. ,2019. (Statistical results showed that the two groups were similar in all of the above variables (Kareem, et al . , 2019).

3.2.2 Extraneous Variables

Given the fact that the researcher tested the equivalence of the two test sets

in certain variables which are assumed to influence the course of the experiment, she also attempted to prevent the effect of any foreign variables during the experiment. Many of these factors are as follows, and how to manage them:

1- Experimentrelated injuries. There were no injuries when the experiment was being conducted. Several students left school or have been transferred to another. The sample was selected intentionally and the two sets were equalized accordingly.

2 - The maturity factor: Since the duration of the experiment has been unified between the two research groups, as well as the age of the students in the two groups, all the growth that has occurred will be unified among all the students because they are on a level. Therefore, this aspect had no effect on the research.

3The influence of experimental procedures: the researcher focused on reducing the impact of experimental procedures that may affect the dependent variable during the experiment (Dehham,2019) & (Abbas, et al . ,2018).

3.3 Preparing the Material

The teaching materials used to conduct the experiment were represented by the "English for Iraq" syllabus and the content taught during the academic

year's second half (2018-2019) (Unit 5 Unit 8). The researcher set a number of behavioral goals from the test sample to be expected.

As for the lesson plans, a minimum of (30) lesson plans were planned by the researcher for each study group based on the fourth secondary "English for Iraq."

3.4 Research Instrument

3.3.1 The Performance Test

This is defined as evaluating an individual's knowledge in a specific field of content area, ability or achievement in a given curriculum, time frame, and material. They may also help to diagnose student levels and what they need to develop and work on (Brown.2003).

Following these steps the efficiency check was constructed:

1 – The purpose of the test: the desire to construct the test was to measure the ability of students to read English in accordance with the behavioral objectives set out in the teachers' guide.

2-Determination of test items: the researcher determined the test items to be 25 test items and prepared a test scoring scheme.

3 – The test was designed based on Bloom's revised Educational Objective Taxonomy (Rahoomi, et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Pilot Test

The researcher has selected the students from a school near the main school where the experiment was performed. The school was the high school of Al-Hilla. Fifty school students to pilot test. The test items were evaluated statistically and found that the issue with the item ranged from (0.76-0.31) from which the test items were deemed accurate in terms of the difficulty level. The prejudice against products ranged from (0.82- 0.33) which is also acknowledged.

3.3.3 Conducting the main test

The Pre-test Final Administration

On 20 February 2019 both the experimental and control groups were

pre-tested. The goal of this pre-test was to compare the scores of achievement of the students in the pre-test with those in the post-test.

The Post-test

On 20 April 2019, students from both groups (the experimental and the control ones) were post-tested. In performing the post-test, the same pre-test procedures were followed, including scoring scheme, validity, pilot analysis, issue with the item, prejudice against the item, and reliability. It is worth noting that a jury of fifteen linguistic and TEFL specialists have accepted the post-test.

6. Results

The experimental group students who studied using the snow balls throwing technique had a better language of understanding (English) to the control group in the success study, who studied according to the controlled process. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is dismissed and the alternative null hypothesis is accepted: (There is a statistically significant difference at the level of (0.7) and the superiority of the experimental group that studied the control group, which was taught according to the prescribed procedure, using snow balls throwing technique.

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