

THE EFFECT OF USING COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACH ON IRAQI EFL LEARNERS PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING

By

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فعالية استخدام طريقة اللغة الاكاديمية المعرفية على اداء الطلبة العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في كتابة الانشاء

المستخلص

تحاول الدراسة الحالية التحقيق في الفعالية وكذلك التأثير الجانبي للطريقة التي يتم بها تعلم اللغة الأكاديمية المعرفية والتي احرثت لطلبة الدراسة المتوسطة في العراق. أن التركيز واهتمام الدراسة قد وجه نحو كتابة الأنشاء. هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على أثر تدريس استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة من خلال تعلم اللغة الأكاديمية المعرفي (CALLA) على أداء التلاميذ في المدارس المتوسطة في كتابة الأنشاء باللغة الانكليزية. تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى ايجاد تأثير تدريس استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة الاكاديمية المعرفية على أداء طلبة المتوسطة في كتابة الانشاء.

وقد افترضت نظرية صفرية واحده على انه يوجد اختلاف احصائي ملحوظ في متوسط درجات المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة.

إن حدود الدراسة تشمل طالبات الدراسة المتوسطة في مديرية الرصافة الثانية/محافظة بغداد، للعام الدراسي ٢٠١٧-٢٠١٦. تم اختيار ٥٠ طالبة من الصف الثاني المتوسط وتم تقسيمهن الى مجموعتين، تحتوي كل مجموعته على ٢٥ طالبة. وقد تم اختيارهن لتمثيل المجموعه الضابطة والتجريبية.

إن النتائج التي تم التوصل لها في هذه الدراسة سوف تساعد مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية لتعزيز فهمهم لافضل الاجراءات الممكنة لتقييم مهارة الكتابة لدى التلاميذ وادائهم. وستساعد الدراسة أيضا مصممي الكتب العراقيين على معالجة ما توصلت إليه الدراسة في كتابة الكتب النصية المرتقبة وجعلهم على بينة لاكثر الإجراءات المفيدة في الكتابة.

Abstract

The present study tries to investigate the effectiveness as well as the side effect of the approach whereby an academic learning of cognitive language is carried out in the intermediate school setting in Iraq. The focus and attention of the study are directed towards composition writing. The present study aims at finding out the effect of teaching Language Learning Strategies by Cognitive Academic Language Learning (CALLA) on Iraqi EFL Intermediate school pupils' performance in composition writing. One null hypothesis is posed which states that: there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control group.

The study is limited to the Iraqi EFL second intermediate female pupils, in Baghdad province, Al Rusafa the Second; during the academic year ٢٠١٦-٢٠١٧. The total number of the ٣rd Intermediate female pupils' is ٥٠ pupils divided into two groups, ٢٥ pupils per group. Both of them have been selected and assigned as an experimental group and a control one.

The results come up to, in this study, will help Iraqi English language teachers reinforce their understanding of the best possible procedures of evaluating pupils' writing skill and performance. The study will also help Iraqi book designers to manipulate what the study comes up to in the writing of prospective text-books and make them aware of the most useful procedures of presenting writing.

Key Words: cognitive academic, Language, Learning Strategies, Approach, Composition Writing

١. Introduction

Traditionally, learning strategies can be considered as procedures or techniques that students and learners of the language can use to make a learning task easily understood by others. While some learning strategies, such as taking notes or making graphic organizers are observable, most strategies are mental processes that are not directly observable (Chamot and O'Malley, 1986:2).

Teacher can give insight into student's mental processes by discussing with student their approaches to specific learning tasks and any special techniques (ibid: ٤). In recent decades, the teaching of writing has been the focus of considerable interest within both first and second Language contexts. Writing is often of crucial importance as a gate – keeping activity: judgments on the performance of an individual may have consequences for the writer. Writing is an important skill in supporting other learning experiences, as a means of recording, assimilating and reformulating knowledge, and of developing and working through his/her own ideas. It may be a means of personal discovery, creativity and self-expression (Chamot and O'Malley, 1987:3٤١).

The cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instrumental approach that integrates current educational trends in standards and content-based Language instruction. It provides explicit instruction in learning strategies that will assist student in meeting notional curriculum standards, learning both Language and content, and becoming independent learners who evaluate their own learning process (ibid: ٤).

The cognitive Academic language learning activates the brain and creates a delightful and meaningful experience for those who teach, and it enhances a self-monitoring, writing process, offers a process for problem solving and decision making, and fosters independence, leadership, and teamwork (Copeland, 2005: 36).

The present study aims at finding out the effect of teaching Language Learning Strategies by Cognitive Academic Language Learning (CALLA) on Iraqi EFL Intermediate school pupils' performance in composition writing. One null hypothesis is posed which states that: there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group which is taught by the CALLA, and that of the control group which is taught to students by the traditional approach in their performance in composition writing on the post test. The study is limited to the Iraqi EFL second intermediate female pupils, in Baghdad province, Al Rusafa the Second/ Aum Ayman Intermediate School for Girls, during the academic year 2016-2017 and the prescribed Textbook.

The following procedures have been adopted in the present study:

١. A sample has been selected from intermediate school female pupils then distributed into an experimental group and a control one.
٢. The two groups have been equalized in age, level of parent's education, and pupils' scores on the previous academic year in composition writing.
٣. During one academic semester, the experimental group pupils have been taught Learning Strategies by the CALLA, while the control group pupils have been taught Learning Strategies according to the traditional approach.
٤. At end of the semester, pupils in both groups have been post tested in their performance in composition writing.
٥. Data computed and results are obtained by using suitable statistical methods.
٦. Finally, suitable results and conclusion are stated.

٢. Cognitive Academic Language Learning (CALLA): A Theoretical Background

It is an instrumental approach used with ELLs to increase their abilities in composition writing when they are taught in a language in which they are not proficient. CALLA is developed by Chamot and O'Malley (١٩٨٦), and is concentrated on the use and application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies by ELL students (Chamot, ١٩٩٦:٢٣). The goal of CALLA is to develop writing skill needed in the classroom, as well as focus on "explicit instruction in Learning strategies" (Chamot, ١٩٨٧:١٢).

٢,١ CALLA Theory of Language

Grabe (١٩٩٦) states that language learning strategies are actions and processes that are consciously developed by learners to help them learn the language easily. These include "cognitive strategies for memorizing and manipulating target Language structures, metacognitive strategies for managing and supervising strategy use" (p.٩)

٢,٢ CALLA Theory of Learning

The CALLA helps students use their prior content knowledge as a tool in acquiring new knowledge, and has been successful in improving student learning in science, as well as in order academic subjects. The main reason for the selection of this model is to develop and increase the functions in memory and working memory (ibid).

٢,٣ Composition Writing

Getting started is the most difficult phase in writing, Elbow (١٩٨١), pp١٣-١٤) evokes a responsive chord in memory, he notes that much writing time is spent not writing: crossing out, and having second thoughts. He recommends that it is the easiest way to get words on paper, the goal of free writing is to energies are to be concentrated entirely on the creative process.

٣. Procedures

This section presents all the procedures followed to achieve the aim and to verify the hypotheses of the experimental design, population and sample selection procedure, the pre-post test, equivalence of the samples the experimental procedures, and the statistical tools.

٣,١ The Experimental Design

Before conducting a study, researchers must select an experimental design that is suitable for testing the deduced consequences of their hypotheses" (Van Dalen, ١٩٦٢:٢٣٠). In order to achieve the aim of the present study, the Nonrandomized Control- group Pretest- posttest Design is chosen (Lewin, ١٩٧٢:٥٢).

Groups	The Test	Independent Variable	The Test
Experimental	Pre-test	The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)	Post-test
Control	Pre-test	Traditional Approach	Post-test

It is characterized by the following features:

١. Selecting two groups randomly and assigning them to an experimental and a control group.
٢. The experimental group is administered by an independent variable.
٣. Both groups of subjects submit to "a pre- test and then to a post – test " to measure the influence of the dependent variable.

The experimental group is taught by using the CALLA, while the control group is taught by the conventional technique.

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The Population

The population of the present study consists of Iraqi EFL ٢nd intermediate school female pupils, in Baghdad proving during the academic year ٢٠١٦-٢٠١٧. The range of their ages is between ١٣ and ١٦ years. The total number of the ٢nd year female pupils at the intermediate schools in Baghdad is ٥٠٤٠٢ from General Directorates of Education in Baghdad province. The total number of the female pupils in Al- Rusafah directorate the second is ٢٧٩٢٦ female pupils with a percentage of ٥٥%.

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The Sample

The sample of the present study is chosen from Iraqi EFL ٢nd Intermediate female pupils' year (٢٠١٦-٢٠١٧). The total number of the ٢nd Intermediate female pupils' is ٥٠ pupils divided into two groups, ٢٥ pupils per group. Both of them have been selected and assigned as an experimental group and a control one.

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Equalization Between the

Two Groups

The aim of making equalization between the two groups the Sensitivity of the experiment. Therefore the following been controlled for both groups: The age of subjects, father academic level, mother academic level, the pupils' scores in English on the previous academic year, and the pre- test score.

٣.٥. Scoring Scheme

For the purpose of objectivity and reliability, the researcher has adopted an analytical scoring scheme proposed by O'Malley & kupper (١٩٨٩:١٤٥) which is used with writing composition. This Scoring scheme consists of five components to be rated and a series of ratings which have numerical values. The scoring scheme has allocated ٤ marks for each component. Thus, the highest mark the student could get is ٢٠ while the lowest mark is ٥.

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Item Analysis

Item analysis is the process of evaluating the test item in respect to certain characteristics. It usually involves determining the difficulty level and the discrimination power (see Table ٣,١):

٣,١. The Overall Performance of Item Analysis

Componen ts	Groups	No.	M.	S.D	t- value		df	Level of significance
					Computed	Table t- Value		
Composing	Experimental	٣٠	١,٢٣	٠,٤٣٠	١,٤٤١	٢	٥٨	Not significance
	Control	٣٠	١,٤٣	٠,٦٢٦				
Style	Experimental	٣٠	١,٤٧	٠,٥٠٧	١,٤٤١	٢	٥٨	Not significance
	Control	٣٠	١,٧٠	٠,٨٧٧				
Sentence Formation	Experimental	٣٠	١,٥٣	٠,٦٢٩	١,٢٦١	٢	٥٨	Not significance
	Control	٣٠	١,٦٧	٠,٨٠٢				
Usage	Experimental	٣٠	١,٥٧	٠,٦٧٩	٠,٧١٦	٢	٥٨	Not significance
	Control	٣٠	١,٦٧	٠,٦٦١				
Mechanics	Experimental	٣٠	١,٥٣	٠,٦٨١	٠,٥٩٧	٢	٥٨	Not

	Control	٣٠	١,٦٣	٠,٦١٥				significance
Composite Score	Experimental	٣٠	٧,٣٣	٢,٠٤٠	١,٣٣٩	٢	٨٥	Not significance
	Control	٣٠	٨,١٠	٢,٣٨٣				

١. The mean score in composing component is ١.٢٣ for the experimental group, and ١,٤٣ for the control group. The computed t- value is ١,٤٤٢ which is less than the table t- value which is ٢ under ٥٨ degrees of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance.

٢. The mean score in style component is ١,٤٧ for the experimental group and ١,٧٠ for the control group. The computed t-value is ١,٢٦١ while the table t-value is ٢ under ٥٨ degrees of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance. The comparison has indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this component.

٣. According to the sentence formation component, the mean score of the experimental group is ١,٥٣, whereas the mean score of the control group is ١,٦٧. The computed t- value is ٠,٧١٦ while the table t-value is ٢ under ٥٨ degrees of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance. The comparison has indicated that there is on statistically significant difference between the two groups in this component.

٤. The mean score in usage component is ١,٥٧ for experimental group, and ١,٦٧ for the control group. The computed t- value ٠,٥٧٨ which is less than the table t- value ٢ under ٥٨ degrees of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this component.

٥. The mean score in mechanics component is ١,٥٧ for the experimental group, and ١,٦٣ for the control group. The computed t- value is ٠,٥٩٧ which is less than the table t- value ٢ under ٥٨ degrees of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this component.

٦. According to the composite score, the mean score is ٧,٣٣ for the experimental group, and ٨,١٠ for the control group. The computed t- value is ١,٣٣٩ which is less than the table t-value ٢ under ٥٨ degree of freedom and at ٠,٠٥ level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their composite score of the pretest.

٣.٦.١. Level of Difficulty

To show the level of difficulty of each component of the scheme, the Same sample of the pilot test has been used to find out the difficulty level. Thus, the researcher has separated two subgroups of test papers; an upper group ٢٧ students who have gained the highest marks consist of ٢٧% of the number of pilot sample students. The researcher has selected ٢٧ students who gained the lowest marks to represent ٢٧% of the number of pilot sample students. Thus, the formula of difficulty level has been computed on the first two groups. The result have indicated that all the components

(٣.٢) The Level of Difficulty and Discrimination Power of the Scale Components

The Component of the Scale	Analyzing the Results Students' Writing								Difficulty Level	Discrimination Power
	Upper				Lower					
	١	٢	٣	٤	١	٢	٣	٤		
Composing	٠	١٠	٩	٣	٢٥	١	١	٠	٠,٤٦	٠,٣٦
Style	١	٢	١٤	١٠	١٥	١٠	١	١	٠,٦٠	٠,٤٢
Sentence Formation	٢	٢	١٥	٨	١٢	١١	٢	٢	٠,٦١	٠,٣٢
Usage	٤	٣	٩	١١	١٥	٧	٣	٢	٠,٥٩	٠,٣٢
Mechanics	٠	٦	١٨	٣	٢٧	٠	٠	٠	٠,٤٩	٠,٤٧
Composite Score	٥	٢	١٤	٦	١٢	١١	٣	١	٠,٥٩	٠,٣١

٣.٦.٢ Discriminatory Power

The discriminatory power of the test means the degree to which the item discriminates between learners with high and low performance (Gronlund, ١٩٧٦:٢٦٨). Furthermore, any test should be discriminative because

indiscriminative test are useless (Richarel and Rodgers ٢٠٠١: ١٨٠). In order to measure the discrimination power of each component, the formula of discriminatory power has been used. After the application of the formula of the item discrimination power, it has been found that the discrimination power of test components range between ٠,٣٢ to ٠,٤٧ which are considered according to Cohen (١٩٩٨: ٣٩٧) suitable discrimination level (see Table ٣.٢ above).

٤. Results

Comparison of the Experimental and the Control Groups in the Post – test Scores in order to compare the experimental and Control groups, the t- test for two independent samples is used, that result reveals. This result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is ٢,٤٣ and that of the control group is ١,٨٠. The computed t- value ٨,٤٩٤ is higher than the table t- value (٢) at ٠,٠٥ level of significance and under ٥٨ degrees of Freedom. This results shows. That there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the composing component of the post- test. That is, the experimental group is better than the control group; so the first hypothesis which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group performance and that of the control group in the composing

٤.١ Discussion of the Results

All things of the present study demonstrate the positive impact of the CALLA on students' performance in composition writing. The reasons behind the result are due to the fact that using CALLA provides opportunities for students to come up with original and useful ideas. This approach encourages students to think more widely, to promote deeper reflection, and to avoid impulsivity. The issue of depth in problem definition is linked to the fact in writing any composition, a narrow definition of the problems and ideas will produce a rapid solution as a sort of creativity which has clearly demonstrated in CALLA. The CALLA is based on mediated learning experiences, a dynamic process through which students of weak ideas interact with creative students to learn how to generate and arrange their ideas that support their cognitive development.

٤.٢ Conclusion

This study elucidates that the CALLA enhance students' writing performance. This approach produces positive effects on the students' performance in the writing lessons. Apart from better composite scores, the students' compositions are off better quality in terms of composing, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics; the experimental group's students score significantly better than the control group's students' scores in their composition writing.

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