

# Using Storytime Technique in developing Iraqi EFL Primary Pupils' Reading Skill

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### Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of using storytime technique on developing Reading skills of Iraqi EFL Primary Pupils.

The Population of this study EFL fourth-grade primary school pupils during the academic year 2018-2019. The Sample includes 68 students who were chosen randomly. The participants were divided into two groups; experiment group consisted of (35) students who were taught reading texts by using storytime technique while the control group consisted of (33) students who were taught reading skills by using traditional methods. The researcher constructed two tools to achieve the aim of the study, the first tool, a checklist to test students' Motivation to learn English and the achievement test for students reading comprehension. The tests have been given to a group of jury members to ensure their validity and reliability, after that the tests are given to the pilot sample which consisted of (28) students. The motivation question was used before starting the experiment for the purpose of equalization and the end to test students' motivation. The achievement test was administered upon the subjects who were invalid in the experiment. The researcher did the equalization between the experiment and control groups; in the following variables: (students' age, intelligence quotient test score, a pre-test of motivation, students' scores in English and gender variable).

The experiment started at the 20<sup>th</sup>. Feb.2018 and ended at the 20<sup>th</sup>. Apr.2018, the researcher herself taught the two groups. The data obtained were analyzed by using t-test formula for two independent samples. The results showed that the storytime technique was effective in improving reading skills' achievement and motivation to learn English.

**Keywords:** Storytime Technique, Reading skills.

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## 1. Introduction

Reading skill is seen as “intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interaction between context and reader”. It is the end goal of all reading –it is the understanding gained from reading texts (Cohen and Cowen,2005:178).

According to Wigfield and Lutz (2005:45), reading skill is the process that includes elicitation and building meaning from contexts. Most of the reading investigators now assume that comprehension implies active construction of meaning rather than passive receiving of information from a text. Reading skill, basically, contains a variety of cognitive strategies that can facilitate learners' comprehension (e.g., posing questions about the text, monitoring one's comprehension, summarizing and activating one's background knowledge) (ibid:46).

Reading skill is considered as the most important and necessary for the learners in a classroom context and . It is an interactive-constructive process in which readers comprehend, interact and respond to a text according to what they already know (Al-Rifa'i and Krebt, 2013:331).

Teaching reading is an integral part of the process of educating children (Alderman, 2013). Besides, reading techniques, teaching procedures, curriculum contents and the aesthetic environment are influential, as well as technological factors incorporated into reading due to dynamic technological advancements (Mashburn, et al., 2008).

### The Problem of the Study

Reading is a basic communication skill. It enables all students to pursue their studies and interest in all fields of knowledge. "It is very necessary for the EFL students since it brings them to contact with a living language and helps them to think and express themselves both in speaking and writing" (Sikiotis,1981:300).

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The basic premise of English for Iraq course is that primary school pupils learn English for the purpose of communication. "The process of communication requires a clear and explicit focus on the

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actual development of all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing" (Harris et al., 2009:8).

Reading Comprehension is the ability of a person to understand well the written text that the author wants to convey. Comprehension is the heart and the goal of reading since it forms an interactive process between the text and the person who reads the text (Rivers, 1981:180).

The researcher found that through her modest experiences as a teacher the pupils have difficulties to comprehend the transcript when they read the text, hence the researcher tries to identify some subskills like (Read for gist, read for specific word, read for details) to treat them through story time activities, activities such as Content Focus, Interactivity Focus, Critical Thinking, Production, Problem Solving, and Reflection. pupils face difficulties in making prediction while reading these texts. Also, only very few of them could draw conclusions about the events, characters, and setting. These findings are discouraging; therefore, such texts require explicit activities to demonstrate comprehension.

## The Aim of The Study

This study aims to find out the effect of story time strategy on the performance Iraqi EFL learners' reading skills.

## Hypothesis

the present study will be achieved by verifying the following hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores obtained by the subjects of the experimental sample who are learned reading skill by story time activities and that of the control sample who are learned reading skill by the conventional way in reading post-test.

## Limits

The present study is limited to Iraqi EFL fourth-grade primary school pupils during the academic year 2018-2019. The materials are taken from their textbook 'English for Iraq'.

## Value

The value of the present study stems from the significance of learning to read as an essential aspect of the process of teaching EFL. The reading skill is very important to be mastered by learners of a

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foreign language. The current study may also be valuable for teachers of English, teacher trainers, educators, and EFL learners and textbook designers.

## **Procedures**

To achieve the aim and verify the hypotheses of the current study, the following procedures will be adopted:

1. Selecting a sample of EFL pupils from fourth-grade 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 pretest and posttest in reading comprehension and ensuring its validity and reliability,
5. Administering the pretest to the pupils to assess the level of the pupils in reading comprehension,
6. Teaching reading comprehension to the subjects of the experimental group by using STA (Storytime activities).
7. Conducting the posttest to the subjects of both groups to find out whether the suggested technique has any effect on the subjects or not,
8. Analyzing the collected data to get results by using suitable statistical tools, and finally.
9. Interpreting the obtained results to come up with conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

## **Storytime Technique**

The storytime activities are feeding the pupils interest in storybooks and enhance the pupil's language. It represents a great method to transmit information. The story techniques can be used in a lot of another curriculum for example math's, science and social studies. (Read, 2011:3-7).

## **The Aim of Using The Storytime Technique**

It aims to provide feeding for the pupils' interest in storybooks and enhance the pupil's language to transmit information and motivate the pupils. Storytime includes detail picture, finger puppets picture puppets, marionettes toys, hand puppets, costumes and various props that can help to focus attention on the story. It helps to support the story because the pupils communicate with the story better when they feel, see, touch objects.

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## Procedures and Methodology

The experimental design is a "blueprint of the procedure that enables the researcher to test his hypothesis by arriving at valid conclusions about relationships between independent and dependent variables" (Best and Kahn, 2006:177). It is very hard to arrange a true experimental design, particularly in school classroom experimental research. For this reason, the current study adopts one of the quasi-experimental designs, which is "the pretest-posttest non-equivalent groups". Discussing the design in question, (ibid:183) mention that "this design is often used in classroom experiments when experimental and control groups are such naturally assembled groups as intact classes, which may be similar". To carry out the experiment of the present study, two classes in an intermediate school were selected by tossing a coin. One group was served to be experimentally taught by using storytime technique, whereas the other was served to be the control group taught by using the recommended method of teaching. Prior to the introduction of the storytime technique, both groups were submitted to a pre-test. "At the end of the experiment, a post-test was submitted to see whether there is any significant differences between the two groups or not".

## Population and Sample of the Study

The study population is the fourth- grade at the primary schools for girls in Kirkuk province during the academic year (2018-2019). Al-Bayader primary School was chosen to be the sample of this study. The number of pupils was (78) divided into three sections A, B, and C. Two sections were selected randomly to represent the experimental (section A) and the control (section B) groups. The number of pupils are (33) in group A and (32) in group B.

## Equivalence of Subjects

The two groups were equalized by controlling some variables which may affect the experiment outcomes. These variables are pupils' age (measured in months), parents' educational level, and pupils' English scores in the first-course examination of the same academic year.

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## Controlling Extraneous Variables

The researcher attempts to manipulate the influence of these variables. Extraneous variables are independent variables that have not been controlled. Therefore, the investigator's task is to eliminate their effect. (Tavakoli, 2012: 217).

1. History
2. Experimental Morality
3. Maturity
4. Selection Bias
5. Instrumentation

## Research Instrument

### 1) Performance Test

It is defined as the assessment of the knowledge of an individual in a particular area content area, skill or accomplishment in a particular curriculum, time frame, and material. They can also help in diagnosing the level of pupils and what they need to develop and work on (Brown, 2003).

The performance test was constructed by following these steps:

- The purpose of the test: the desire for constructing the test was to measure pupils' reading skill aptitude in the English language by depending on the behavioral objectives specified by the teachers' guide.
- Determining test items: the test items were determined by the researcher to be 25 test items and prepared a scoring scheme for the test.
- The test was designed by depending on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives.

### 2) Pilot Test

The researcher chose the pupils of two schools that are located near the main school on which the experiment was conducted. The two schools were Babylon intermediate school and Al-Rahman and on (50) student from each school. The test items were statistically analyzed and found that the item difficulty ranged from (0.76- 0.31) by which the test items are considered valid in difficulty. The item discrimination ranged from (0.82- 0.33) which is accepted also.

### 3) Conducting the test

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## The Pre-test Final Administration

Both pupils of the experimental and control groups were pre-tested on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2019. This pre-test aims at comparing the scores of the pupils' achievement in the pre-test with those in the post-test. As a result, the researcher tested and scored the sample of the study.

## The Post-test

Pupils of both groups (the experimental and control ones) were post-tested on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. The same pre-test procedures were followed in conducting the post-test, namely scoring scheme, validity, pilot study, item difficulty, item discrimination, and reliability. It is worth mentioning that the post-test also was seen by a jury of fifteen specialists in linguistics and TEFL methodology

## The Validity of the Tests

One of the most important criteria that must be taken into consideration when selecting or constructing a test is its validity. Validity is the degree to which conclusion drawn from the outcomes of a particular assessment is suitable, expressive, and significant to the assessor's intention Gronlund (1998: 226). In other words, validity pertains to the degree to which an exam assesses what it is intended to assess. This means that you have to test what you teach and how you teach it Coombe( 2010: xxii). In terms of classification, Brown (2010: 30-6) classifies validity as criterion-related, face, consequential, construct and finally content validity.

## Criterion-related Validity

According to Mousavi (2009: 247) face validity refers to the degree to which a test looks right, and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other psychometrically unsophisticated observers".

" The test was seen by a jury of twenty specialists in linguistics and TEFL methodology in order to ensure its face validity". "Those experts were asked to decide the face validity of the test and state their suggestions about the suitability of the test and its items to the pupils' level". "The jury members agreed that the test is valid in its

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face and its items are suitable for the pupils' level except for some modifications which are taken into consideration".

## The Results

The pupils of the experimental group who studied according to the story time technique were superior to the pupils of the control group, who studied according to the guided method in the performance test, thus rejecting the first null hypothesis and accepting the alternative null hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant difference at the level of (0.7) And the average score of pupils in the control group who study according to the guided method in the English test". "This is consistent with the studies that confirmed the superiority of the experimental group studied according to story time activities to those of the control group, which was taught according to the recommended way".

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استخدام تقنية وقت القصة في تطوير مهارات القراءة لدى تلاميذ المدارس الابتدائية في

العراق

ا.م. صبيحة حمزة دحام  
كلية التربية الأساسية/جامعة بابل

## المستخلص

تهدف الدراسة إلى دراسة تأثير استخدام أسلوب وقت القصة في تطوير مهارات القراءة لدى تلاميذ المدارس الابتدائية في العراق. عينة هذه الدراسة هم تلاميذ الصف الرابع الابتدائي الدراسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية خلال العام الدراسي 2018-2019. تشمل العينة 68 طالباً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً. تم تقسيم المشاركين إلى مجموعتين. تتألف المجموعة التجريبية من (35) طالباً تم تدريس نصوص القراءة باستخدام تقنية وقت القصة ، بينما كانت المجموعة الضابطة تتكون من (33) طالباً تم تعليمهم مهارات القراءة باستخدام الطرق التقليدية. صمم الباحث أدواتين لتحقيق هدف الدراسة ، الأداة الأولى ، قائمة لاختبار دافعية الطلاب لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية واختبار التحصيل القراءة للطلاب. تم تقديم الاختبارات لمجموعة من أعضاء لجنة التحكيم للتأكد من صحتها وموثوقيتها ، وبعد ذلك يتم تقديم الاختبارات لعينة تجريبية تتألف من (28) طالباً. تم استخدام سؤال التحفيز قبل بدء التجربة لغرض المعادلة ونهاية اختبار دوافع الطلاب. تم إجراء اختبار التحصيل على الأشخاص الذين كانوا غير صالحين في التجربة. قام الباحث بالمساواة بين مجموعات التجربة والمجموعة الضابطة ؛ في المتغيرات التالية: (عمر الطلاب ، درجة اختبار حاصل الذكاء ، اختبار مسبق للدوافع ، درجات الطلاب في اللغة الإنجليزية ومتغير الجنس). بدأت التجربة في العشرين. Feb.2018 وانتهت في العشرين. Apr.2019 ، قامت الباحثة بتدريس المجموعتين. وقد تم تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها باستخدام صيغة اختبار t لعينتين مستقلتين. أظهرت النتائج أن أسلوب القصة كان فعالاً في تحسين تحصيل مهارات القراءة ودافعها لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. الكلمات المفتاحية : تقنية القص ، مهارات القراءة.