



Utilization of Numbered Heads Together in Teaching English Short Stories on Developing Written Narrative Skills of Al-Azhar Secondary School Students

Prepared by

Mai Hussein Abdul-Aziz Eldreeny

EFL Supervisor in El-Fatayat (for Girls) Institute in El-Azhar

Dr. Salah El-deanM. Badr
Professor of Curriculum and
EFL instruction
Faculty of Education,
Tanta -University

Dr. Heba Sayed El-Tokhy
Lecturer of Curriculum and
EFL instruction
Faculty of education,
Tanta university

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Mai Hussein Abdul-Aziz Eldreeny*, Salah El-deanM. Badr,
Heba Sayed EL-Tokhy

Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty of Education,
TantaUniversity, Egypt.

*Corresponding author E-mail: maih97304@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study aimed at developing students' writing skills by using numbered heads together in teaching short stories and providing new strategies to overcome the problems which students face when learning a new language. This study used the Dick and Carey's mode of instruction (2009) which consisted of: 1-Identifying instructional goals, 2-Conducting instructional analysis, 3-Developing instructional material, 4-Developing an instructional strategy, 5-Evaluation, 6-Home work. Instrument of the study is Writing pre-post test to measure students' ability to write narrative texts. The sample of the study: Thirty students randomly selected of first year secondary school students of Al-Azhar Institute for girls. Result of the study shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group on narrative skills in using: 1-Linguistic features in written narrative in: A-Choice of words, phrases, and sentences. B- Capitalization and punctuation, C- Use of past tense, D- Choice of time words. Rhetorical features in written narrative: A- Sequence of ideas, B- Use of transitional words and phrases.

Key Words: Numbered Heads Together - Short Stories - Written Narrative

استخدام الرؤوس المجمعّة في تدريس القصة الإنجليزية القصيرة في تنمية مهارات السرد الكتابي لدى طالبات المرحلة الثانوية الأزهرية

مي حسين الدريني*، صلاح الدين بدر، هبة الطوخي

قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس، كلية التربية، جامعة طنطا، مصر.

*البريد الإلكتروني للباحث الرئيس: maih97304@gmail.com

ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى تطوير مهارات الكتابة باستخدام استراتيجية الرؤوس المجمعّة في تدريس القصة القصيرة، كما هدفت إلى استخدام استراتيجيات جديدة للتغلب على المشكلات التي تواجه الطلاب عند تعلم لغة جديدة. استخدمت الدراسة نموذج ديك وكاري (2009) الذي يتكون من: تحديد الأهداف، وتحليل المحتوى الدراسي، وتعديل وتطوير الأدوات، وتعديل وتطوير المحتوى التعليمي، وتطوير الاستراتيجية المستخدمة، والتقييم، والواجبات المنزلية. اعتمدت الدراسة على التصميم التجريبي ذي المجموعة الواحدة (القياس قبل التجربة وبعدها لمجموعة واحدة)؛ حيث طبقت الدراسة اختباراً قبلياً وبعدياً لقياس قدرة الطالبات على الكتابة. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (30) طالبة تم اختيارهن عشوائياً من معهد الفتيات الثانوي الأزهرى بطنطا. وتوصلت نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية لدى الطالبات في: 1- السمات اللغوية للكتابة تشمل: (أ) اختيار الكلمات والجمل وشبه الجمل، (ب) استخدام الأحرف الكبيرة وعلامات الترقيم، (ج) استخدام الزمن الماضي، (د) استخدام الكلمات الدالة على زمن أو وقت محدد. 2- السمات البلاغية وتشمل: (أ) ترتيب الأفكار، (ب) الكلمات التي تربط الجمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرؤوس المجمعّة، القصص القصيرة، السرد الكتابي.

Introduction

A Good educational research usually stems from field problems attempting to find solutions that could be used to solve them. Thus, this study springs from true problems in learning English as a foreign language among first year El-Azhar secondary school students.

Teaching short stories as part of the English curriculum in the three school levels faces defects in the methods used. This is because concentration is on activities that don't help achieving the aims of teaching short stories at every level.

The teacher usually gives a brief summary of events and connects them to previous events. Then, reads parts from the story or asks some clever students to read aloud, stopping at some points to explain a word, a phrase, a meaning and its opposite or to focus on an event or a character in the story. Finally, the teacher asks questions related to events, and receives individual answers to measure students' understanding, neglecting group work.

Students use bad language structure when they attempt to answer class questions using inappropriate expressions. They, lack writing skills when asked to write a few sentences or paragraphs. They make writing mistakes, in spelling, using punctuation marks and using of appropriate structures that suit the type of text they want to write such as descriptive or narrative texts. This is from the linguistic view.

As for the rhetorical aspect and how to express their thoughts in writing, the majority fail to use appropriate cohesion devices, and appropriate transitions to help the reader or listener understand the main ideas easily. Also, they have sentence

structure and generic structure problems in written narratives related to sequencing ideas to insure effective communication. Thus, by studying short stories using new strategies as numbered heads together, students can develop their writing and rhetorical skills as well as their motivation to learn.

Statement of the Problem

This study tries to investigate the effect of using numbered heads together strategy in teaching short story on developing written narrative skills of El-Azhar secondary schools' students.



Research Question

To what extent can the suggested strategy affect El-Azhar secondary school students' ability of applying the sub-skills of writing narrative texts that follow:

1. The linguistic features for writing narrative texts.
2. The rhetorical features for writing narrative texts.

Importance of the Research

The importance of the study lies in the following:

- 1-Shed light on problems dealt with in learning English as a foreign language in El-Azhar secondary schools, related to teaching short stories.
- 2- Introducing new ways to overcome these problems in the form of a suggested strategy.
- 3-Making recommendations for English teachers , about how to create similar research and apply it when teaching short stories.
- 4-Directing researchers to create similar programs using different strategies and different linguistic skills.

Delimitations of the Research

This research is delimited to the following:

- 1-Dealing in written narration with the linguistic features of:
 - Choice of words ,phrases ,and sentences.
 - Capitalization and punctuation.
 - Use of past tenses for narration.
 - Choice of time words.
- 2-Dealing in written narrative with the rhetorical features of:
 - Sequence of ideas.
 - Use of transitional words and phrases.
- 3-Applying the strategy of: Numbered heads together .

Hypothesis of the Research

1-There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written narrative test between the pre - post test at 0.01.level in the following dimensions:

1. Applying linguistic features for written narration.
 - 1- Choice of words, phrases ,and sentences.
 - 2-Capitalization and punctuation.
 - 3-Use of past tenses for written narration.
 - 4-Choise of time words.
2. Applying rhetorical language features for written narration.
 - 1-Sequence of ideas.
 - 2-Use of transitional words and expressions.

Research Sample

The sample consists of 30 students, randomly selected of first year secondary school students of El-Azhar Institute for girls in Tanta.

Instruments of the Research

1- Writing pre-post test to measure students' ability to write narrative texts.

Significance of the Research

The significance of the present study lies in the following benefits:

- Developing first year students' writing skills .
- Building a strong personal relationship between the student and the teacher which gives students a sense of confidence in writing.

Aims of Teaching Short Stories

Hundreds of writers wrote about short stories and objectives of teaching them in our schools such as Zerrin (2004), Perded(2011), Yilmaz (2015) and Indriani(2014). They tend to emphasize some aims



Linguistic Aims : develop the four language skills listening ,speaking ,reading and writing.

-Increasing the learners repertoire of vocabulary, idioms , and expressions from material extracted from the story.

-Developing learners awareness of grammatical structures through emphasizing them in the story and allowing learners to practice using them.

Literature Aims :Utilizing the stories to train learners in how to:1. Identify the plot , event , and characters in the story.

Features of Narration

1- Language Features :

-Using narrative grammar : " past simple tense - continuous past tense and past perfect tense " .

-Using time words and phrases

Using appropriate punctuation and capitalization .

2- Rhetorical Features

Using transitional words and phrases,and repetition of key words.

3 –Generic Features of a Narrative (arrangements of a narrative)Generic structure of a narrative when narrating should be :**Orientation:** introducing the participants and informing the place and the time.

Complication Describing the rising crises which the participants have to do with.

Resolution: showing the way for participants to solve the crises.

Review of Literature

When reviewing previous studies ,it was clear that researchers who used group work as Othman (1995), Zakaria (2013), Huiyin (2017) and Hussain(2017) helped develop students' writing skills, rhetorical skills, punctuation, capitalization ,sequence of ideas and other writing skills.

On the other hand using short stories had positive effects on students, such as the study of Etkisi(2009),Abdel-Hack (2016) , and

Hussain (2017), who gave students writing activities and writing short stories, succeeded in developing their writing skills, as well as developing their rhetorical skills as in the study of Abd-Allah(2000),and David(2016).

However,the studies of Lambhot(2002),Haydon(2010),Novitasari(2013),Jaidi(2017), and Prayekti(2019)made use of numbered heads together when teaching short stories. Students answered activities based on writing short stories ,summarizing events and writing about stories which they watched and read. This helped students develop their writing skills, as well as developing positive attitude toward learning and using short stories ,and using numbered heads together.

Methods and Procedures

The following steps designed by Dick and Carey were carried out.

1- Identifying Instructional Goals:

To identify the goals of the target research; the participants were required to narrate in a written form appropriately .

2- Conducting Instructional Analysis :

The skills that the participants should master,

linguistic sub- skills :

- Use the appropriate words, phrases, and sentences in the written context.
- Use correct punctuation marks and capitalization.
- Using past tenses correctly for written narration .
- Using correct time words for narration.

For rhetorical sub- skills of written narration:

- Sequencing ideas logically
- Using correct and appropriate transitional words and sentences



Developing Assessment Instruments :

After identifying participants' characteristics and objectives of the program, the following instruments were developed, and then verified for insuring validity and reliability:

Written Narration Pre/ Post Tests:

Each participant was required to write a narrative test on some topics guided with some suggested topics such as :

- How you spend your yesterday
- How your family spent the last holy month of Ramadan.

5- Developing Instructional Material :

Thus, the researcher analyzed the story "treasure Island ", specifying pieces that can be used for presenting information that suit each objective and around which learning activities were to be prepared ,and collecting information necessary for teaching learning.

6- Developing an Instructional Strategy:

The aim of the research is mainly investigating the effect of utilizing numbered heads together strategy in teaching English short stories on developing written narrative skills

Description of " Numbered –Heads – Together" Strategy

The teacher divides the class into teams .In each team each student gets a number. After students receive the work sheet, each student thinks about the answers to the question(s) and then the members in each group put their heads together to discuss the answers and make sure everyone knows the answer, then students with the same number share their answers with the class. . This activity is carried out within a time limit which the teacher had announced. The teacher then announces a question from the work sheet and calls a number and asks all students with that number to stand and answer the question .

The teacher then comments on answers and elaborates through rich discussions .

8- Evaluation

The researcher decided to depend on varied techniques for assessing the participants' development in the target sub- skills . written tests, and objective questions were to be used alternatively for evaluation purposes .

9- Assigning homework

The researcher planned for a different kind of home assignment mainly in a written form then, submitted to the teacher to be corrected and returned with suitable.

Results of the study

Writing Test .1. Linguistic Features in Written Narrative

Hypothesis (1.1.) Choice of Words, Phrases and Sentences

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written test between the pre - post test at 0.01 level in applying linguistic features for narration, in choice of words ,phrases sand sentences

Table(1)

t -value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in choice of words, phrases and sentences.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	10.93	3.71			
Post- test	12.73	3.48	12.24	.000	29

Table(1) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group on narrative skills in using correct choice of words, phrases sand sentences in favor of the post test. Therefore, the null hypothesis concerning correct choice of words , phrases and sentences is rejected.

Hypothesis (1.2.): Capitalization and Punctuation.

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written test between the pre - post



test at 0.01 level in applying linguistic features for narration, in capitalization and punctuation.

Table(2)

t-value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in capitalization and punctuation.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	8.00	5.43			
Post- test	10.23	5.67	8.08	.000	29

Table (2) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group on narrative skills in capitalization and punctuation in favor of the post test. Therefore, the null hypothesis concerning capitalization and punctuation is rejected.

Hypothesis(1.3.):Use of Past Tense:

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written test between the pre - post test at 0.01 level in use of past tense.

Table(3)

t-value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in use of past tense.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	7.80	3.98			
Post test	9.10	4.23	10.93	.000	29

Table(3) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group on narrative skills in use of past tense in favor of the post test. Therefore, the null hypothesis concerning use of past tense is rejected.

Hypothesis(1.4.):Choice of Time Words.

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written test between the pre - post test at

0.01 level in applying linguistic features for narration, in choice of time words.

Table (4)

t-value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in choice of time words.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	11.60	3.22			
Post -test	12.76	3.21	7.000	.000	29

Table(4) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group in choice of time words in favor of the post test. Therefore, the hypothesis concerning time words is rejected.

2. Rhetorical Features in Written Narrative

Hypothesis(2.1) Sequence of Ideas

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the written test between the pre - post test at 0.01 level in good sequence of ideas for narration.

Table (5)

t-value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in applying good sequence of ideas.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	11.56	2.88			
Post- test	12.80	3.10	9.280	.000	29

Table (5) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group in applying good sequence of ideas in favor of the post test.

Therefore, the null hypothesis concerning applying good sequence of ideas is rejected.



Hypothesis(2.2): Use of Transitional Words and Phrases

There are no statistical significant differences in the mean scores of the participants on the writing test between the pre - post test at 0.01 level in use of transitional words and phrases for narration.

Table (6)

t-value significance of the differences on the pre-post test for the experimental group on narrative skills in use of transitional words and phrases.

Tests	Mean	SD	t.Value	Sig.	DF
Pre-test	7.40	3.71			
Post test	8.73	3.78	10.26	.000	29

Table(6) shows that there were significant differences for the experimental group in use of transitional words and phrases in favor of the post test. Therefore , the null hypothesis concerning use of transitional words and phrases is rejected.

Conclusion

To conclude the use of numbered heads together strategy helped students understand the text easily than before . The use of the new strategy motivated students to read and search for main ideas , main events , main characters and follow the events to see what happened at the end .

The attempt to use the short story to find tenses and put them in new sentences , rhetorical words or phrases, made students more encouraged to read and work together to find the answers.

Thus new strategies should be employed in reading the short story , to avoid the usual way in teaching the story . Teacher's , also should employ new strategies and new skills for better understanding and more active learning and better performance in the future.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that;

- 1-Students should use new strategies in learning short stories as, think-pair-share ,numbered- heads –together and one-minute-paper.
- 2-To help students develop their writing , teachers should introduce new strategies , that can help students acquire new information using new methods and new strategies .
- 3- Teachers should give students more space to express their ideas freely with no fear of mistakes .
- 4-In discussions , the teacher should step back leaving students to discuss what they believe is right . He should be a guide that leads the way and help when necessary, leaving students to express their point of view .
- 5- Treating errors as a natural phenomenon. It should not be an obstacle in writing and students should understand that they learn from these errors.

Definition of Terms

Numbered- Heads -Together :

One of the learning strategies in which students are divided into groups. Every student is given a number in the group. Every individual discusses the problem for some time, the same number in every group says his solution and the teacher corrects and comments(Fbriani,2016).

Narrative Texts

It is turning a sequence of true events to a written or oral material .It is the story telling of events using oral and written language to inform the listener or reader and amuse him as seen in stories, news in papers or telling about events which happened long ago or events which took place nowadays. (Harton,2017).



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