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'Iraqi EFL Students Mindfulness and Modeled Talk aptitudes improvement through Communication games

A B S T R A C T

The aims of the study are through best techniques to avoid the shortcomings of the conventional English in students and for improving communicative ability by Using, Modelled Talk and Communication games in Iraq for third year college students. The strategies utilized were arranging, acting, watching, and reflecting. It was done into two Part before and after. The analyst utilized communitarian activity investigates with a portion of the English teacher. For the data collection, we used interview with students and observed their activities.

This examination researched the utilization of 'Mindfulness and Modelled Talk aptitudes improvement through Communication games on Iraqi 3rd year college students. We selected 60 students (22 females, 38 males) at University of Baghdad in Iraq of 240 students.

This research studies impact of using Modeled Talk aptitudes improvement through Communication games on Iraqi college students. It gives positive change in students for their familiarity with talking ability. In short it can be depicted that the system of Educating and learning makes great to build positive conditions and reduces the stress© 2022 JTUH, College of Education for Human Sciences, Tikrit University

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اليقظة الذهنية لدى الطلبة العراقيين دراسي اللغة الإنكليزية وتحسين كفاءتهم في الحديث من خلال
العاب التواصل

ا.د نغم قدوري يحيى/ جامعه تكريت / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية
الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى عرض تقنيه لتجنب فيها اوجه القصور في تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية التقليدية لدى الطلبة وتحسين قدرتهم التواصلية باستخدام الحديث على الكفاءة والعباب التواصل في العراق للمرحلة الثالثة البكالوريوس .
لهذه الاستراتيجية ابعاد منها التنظيم , التمثيل , المشاهدة , والانعكاس وتقوم على جزئين قبل وبعد استخدام هذة الاستراتيجية

استخدم الباحث اداه لجمع المعلومات من خلال المقابلة لطلبة و ملاحظة فعاليتهم حيث ان استخدام تقنية الحديث على غرار الكفاءة يحسن كثيرا من خلال العاب التواصل في العراق لطلبة المرحلة الثالثة من كلية التربية في جامعة بغداد وعددهم ٢٤٠ طالبا ويمثلون مجتمع البحث بينما عينة البحث يبلغ عددها (٦٠) طالبا مقسمين الى (٣٨) طالبة و (٢٢) طالبا توصلت الدراسة ان استخدام تقنية اليقظة الذهنية على غرار كفاءة الحديث لها تأثير وتغيير ايجابي للطلبة ولعوائلهم و ما لها من دور ايجابي في عملية التعليم و التعلم

Introduction

Teaching and Learning of English has become very important in today's world. English has become sort of a universal language. The motive is to make the student capable enough to be able to communicate with people round the world successfully, both orally as well as in written. People everywhere study different languages, so that they are able to communicate effectively and better, but most of all, all colleges and universities make it a point to teach English to the students. Learning to communicate via writing is not as tough as it is to communicate orally, or verbally. Along with learning the language well, a student also needs to develop enough confidence so as to be able to speak it fluently, to understand it quickly and to overcome the anxiety that builds up whenever we speak something that we are not sure enough about. In order to teach and learn English effectively in classrooms, researchers all around the world has been coming up with various strategies for learning as well as teaching English, so that students can learn faster and teachers can teach better. The strategies that are used by English as foreign language (EFL) students to overcome the failure during oral communication are known as communication strategies (CSs).

In the old traditional teaching method, while teaching a new language, focus was paid to writing, reading, listening and speaking of the language. However, the modern communication games are more focused on strategies like arranging, acting, watching, and reflecting. These strategies help the students not to mug up different words while learning speaking or writing in a new language, but to have opportunity to learn it through games, and develop the ability to understand and speak it fluently while playing communication games stress free and with fun.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Explore various communication strategies used by Iraqi EFL students in classrooms
- 2) Explore the impact of communication games on EFL students aptitudes
- 3) Explore the impact of mindfulness training on EFL students in learning English
- 4) Implore the best techniques of teaching and learning to avoid the shortcomings of the conventional English in EFL students
- 5) for improving communicative ability by Using Modelled Talk and Communication games on EFL Students
- 6) the impact of the communication games on modelled talk aptitudes on Iraqi EFL students.
- 7) the impact of the communication games on mindfulness aptitudes on Iraqi EFL students.
- 8) imploring strategies to build positive conditions of learning effective English for EFL students
- 9) studying the effectiveness of strategies to provide a stress-free learning classroom environment for EFL students

Scope

The scope of this research is limited to studying the impact of using communication strategies on Iraqi EFL students using Dornyei and Scotts's taxonomy of CSs (1995).

This research also focuses on the importance of mindfulness of students while learning English and ways to improve students' mindfulness aptitude while teaching English to EFL students.

This study also focuses on the impact of the communication games on modelled talk aptitudes on Iraqi EFL students.

Research Method

This study employs the survey method to achieve the aims stated above. According to Creswell (2009) survey design represents quantitative research procedures through which the researchers can administer a questionnaire to a group of participants who are the sample of the study.[1] This study uses Dornyei and Scotts's taxonomy of CSs (1995) to elicit Iraqi EFL students' use of CSs. For the research, 60 students (22 females, 38 males) of 3rd year college level were chosen at University of Bagdad in Iraq out of a total 240 students in third year, randomly.

To investigate the CSs used by Iraqi EFL students, the researcher used a quantitative method instrument, which is the questionnaire to achieve the above aim. The questionnaire is adopted from Dornyei and Scott's taxonomy of CSs (1995). The questionnaire is divided into three main categories (direct strategies, indirect strategies and interactional strategies). A five-point Likert type scale with the following weights (1=never use this strategy, 2=hardly ever use this strategy, 3=sometimes used this strategy, 4=often use this strategy and 5=always use this strategy) was used to get participants' responses for each strategy involved in this questionnaire. The duration of twenty minutes allowed for the participants to complete the questionnaire of CSs. The data will be computed in the statistical package for social science (SPSS Statistic 17.0), which arises from the participants' respondents of the questionnaire. The researcher will compute the data to find out the mean, standard deviation, frequency and the percentage as well.

Result and Analysis

The questionnaire administered to a sample of 60 Iraqi EFL students at tertiary level. Descriptive statistical analyses of their responses to the survey items are shown in this section which addressed their use of CSs. The participants ranged between 18-20 years.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviation for each direct communication strategy used by Iraqi EFL students respectively. A mean score of 3.5 and above rated as high use, a mean between 2.5 and 3.4 rated as moderate use and mean less than 2.5 rated as low use. From the output shown in the table, code-switching strategy gets the highest mean score (M=3.6000, SD=1.34012) while message abandonment strategy gets the lowest mean score (M=2.6200, SD=1.21033) among other direct strategies.

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for each indirect communication strategy used by Iraqi EFL students respectively. From the output show in the table, the scores for indirect CSs resulted in mean score and standard deviation for use of fillers ($M=3.1800$, $SD=1.46650$), self-repetition ($M=3.1800$, $SD=1.35059$), feigning understanding ($M=3.1800$, $SD=1.39518$) and verbal strategy makers ($M=3.1200$, $SD=1.28793$). These results show

that the first three indirect strategies get the same mean score while verbal strategy makers get the lowest mean score among other indirect strategies.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for each international communication strategy used by Iraqi EFL students respectively. From the output shown in the table, direct appeal for help gets the highest mean score ($M=3.6800$, $SD=1.33156$) while the response: confirm strategy gets the lowest mean score ($M=2.2200$, $SD=1.34453$) among other interactional strategies.

Table 1. The Means and Standard Deviation of Most Frequently Use of Direct CSs by Iraqi EFL Students

Types of CSs	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	S. D.
Code-switching	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.6000	1.34012
Self-Repair	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.5600	1.23156
Foreignizing	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4800	1.18218
Message-Replacement	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.3600	1.28983
Word Coinage	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.3000	1.40335
Mime	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2800	1.29426
Approximation/Generalization	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2800	1.32542

Literal translation	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2600	1.4 54 20
Omission	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1200	1.4 09 01
Retrieval	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0800	1.3 22 34
Use of similar sounding word	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.4 42 79
Message-reduction	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.9400	1.4 20 12
Use of all purpose words	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.9000	1.1 99 49
Other repairs	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8200	1.3 95 18
Self-rephrasing	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8200	1.3 20 02
Circumlocution/paraphrase	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7800	1.0 74 57
Restructuring	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7800	1.4 74 82
Mumbling	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7600	1.3 93 28
Message Abandonment	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.6200	1.2 10 33
Valid N (listwise)	60					

Table 2. The means and Standard Deviation of Most Frequently Use of Indirect CSs by Iraqi EFL Student

Types of strategies	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Use of fillers	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1800	1.46650
Self repetition	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1800	1.35059
Feigning understanding	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1800	1.39518
Verbal strategy makers	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.1800	1.28793
Valid N (listwise)	60					

Table 3. The Means and Standard Deviation of Most Frequently Use of Interactional CSs By Iraqi EFL Students

Types of Strategies	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Direct Appeal for Help	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.6800	1.33156
Asking for Clarification	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.5800	1.27919
Response: Reject	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.5400	1.40277
Expressing Non-Understanding	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.4800	1.34377
Response: Repair	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2800	1.37083
Interpretive Summary	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.2600	1.38225
Indirect Appeal for help	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0400	1.48407
Comprehension Check	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.0200	1.36262
Response: Rephrase	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.9800	1.39225
Own accuracy Check	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.9600	1.53809
Guessing	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.9000	1.43214
Response: Repeat	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.8800	1.31925
Response: Expand	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.7600	1.40785
Asking for confirmation	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.6400	1.39620
Asking for repetition	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.4400	1.41652
Response: Confirm	60	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.2200	1.34453
Valid N (listwise)	60					

Discussion

DISCUSSION

According to Dornyei and Scott's taxonomy of CSs (1995), CSs are divided into three main categories, which are direct, indirect and interactional strategies. As shown in table 5.0 (refer appendix), Iraqi EFL students used code switching and self-repair extensively. This is to compensate their low proficiency in

English language. This supports Igari's (1998) study, which found that learners at low proficiency of language tend to use L2 based strategies (code-switching and self-repair) more frequently. Iraqi EFL students also used foreignizing, messagereplacement, word-coinage, mime, approximation/generalisation, literal translation, omission, retrieval, use of similar sounding word, message-reduction, use of all purpose words, other repairs, self-rephrasing, circumlocution/paraphrase, restructuring, mumbling and message abandonment strategies moderately. These strategies help to overcome difficulties during communication, because of their lack of grammatical competence. This finding supports Rabab'ah's (2003), study which found that when the second language learners recognise that there is a mismatch between their resources of linguistic and their intentions of communication they used CSs (appeal for help, literal translation, circumlocution, approximation, word coinage) to resolve these problems to get better understanding and to communicate effectively [5].

Among indirect CSs, Iraqi EFL students used use of fillers, self-repetition, feigning understanding and verbal strategy makers moderately, while the interactional CSs, direct appeal for help, asking for clarifications and response: reject were used more often by them. Since Iraqi EFL students do not use English more in their everyday life's functions and since they could not master all foreign language words, they tend to use these strategies more to ask about what the suitable words they must use during conversation in the target language. They also ask about how to say them correctly and orderly during communication tasks. They used expressing non-understanding, response: repair, interpretive summary, indirect appeal for help, comprehension check, response: rephrase, own accuracy check. Guessing, response: repeat, response: expand and asking for confirmation moderately. On the other hand, they used strategies asking for repetition and response: confirm in a low rate. This means that they do not have enough opportunities to interact with others in English, so they tend to use these kinds of CSs.

Theory

The strategies utilized were arranging, acting, watching, and reflecting

Modeled talk strategy:

Modeled talk strategy is a type of teaching strategy in which you physically demonstrate the directions or concepts involved in a lesson. It uses gestures, visuals, and demonstration of communicating information.

Effective modeled talk step-by-step:

Step 1: Identify – involved identifying the lesson and gathering materials, designing gestures that will help the students to understand the exact thing that is being explained without having to rely on the English language solely.

Step 2: Practice – it involves practicing the gestures and determining whether your model gestures are conveying the correct message to the students or not.

Step 3: Design – it involves the designing of standard visuals for directions which can be used multiple times in a lecture to convey the same message, to ask them to do a task, etc.

Step 4: Review – this involves reviewing the messages after delivering the modeled talk. The visuals are to be used as a reminder and to re-enforce the instructions.

Benefits of modeled talk strategy:

- this strategy allows students to see the expectations and content, rather than just hearing the instructions
- this strategy combines the use of gestures, verbal cues and visuals
- this strategies shows the students an effective way to model their thought processes for others to understand well
- using this strategy, students do not need to understand the language completely, do not need to understand the verbal instruction in order to complete the task
- this strategy helps to increase confidence levels in students regarding the understanding of the lectures

Mindfulness

In today's world, mindfulness is of utter importance in every field, be it studying, learning, teaching or even while creating art, recreation, etc. Kabat-Zinn (1994) defines mindfulness as “paying attention in a particular way: on

purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (p.5). Similarly, Srinivasan (2014) describes mindfulness as “... a kind, curious, [and] nonjudgmental awareness that we try to bring to each moment” (p.18). While these two definitions focus more on being in the present moment nonjudgmentally, Langer (2000) describes mindfulness as “a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context” (p. 220). This last definition suits teaching contexts where teachers are constantly endeavoring to have their learners’ attention on the subject at hand so that they can actually notice newly introduced materials in class.

Benefits of mindfulness according to Langer:

- increase in competence
- improvement in memory
- improvement in concentration
- ability to focus more and for longer period of time
- ability of staying in the present and steering clear of distracting thoughts
- helps in making better decisions
- enhances problem solving abilities
- learning faster and better
- increasing awareness and observing skills
- helps in building a collaborative learning classroom environment

Major Benefits in the classroom for EFL Students :

- i. **Mindfulness promotes attention levels**, resulting in higher engagement in the classrooms and hence faster learning as well as creating a fun environment in the classroom where everyone is interested.
- ii. **Mindfulness reduces anxiety**. It is normal for a student to have anxiety issues while learning a new language and hesitating in speaking it or conversing in English. But studies prove that students are more anxious when they are either distracted and miss some parts,

therefore not understanding the context well. Hence, mindfulness increases concentration. If the student is more concentrated, he/she will understand the matter better. This will help him control his anxiety and stay calm while learning. A direct correlation is found between anxiety and mindfulness during researches.

- iii. **Mindfulness encourages collaboration.** Vygotsky in 1978 said “language develops primarily from social interaction.” Hence an effective collaboration or social interaction is required in the EFL classrooms in order to achieve proper and full interactive learning of the language. Mindfulness promotes empathy and kindness leading to building a supportive environment in classrooms.

Application of mindfulness strategies in classrooms:

Srinivasan(2014) suggests to employ warm up exercises before actually taking students through serious mindfulness training strategies. These exercises include:

- (a.) encouraging cooperative learning through pair and share strategies and activities,
- (b.) asking open-ended questions instead of yes/ no questions,
- (c.) making use of wait time to let students think mindfully, and
- (d.) Encouraging them to listen to each other and asking a student rephrase what the other has just said.

Effective Mindfulness training strategies:

1. **Sitting Meditation:** The students should be asked to sit upright in the sitting position as comfortable as possible, close their eyes and follow the script below:

As you settle down in your chair, bring your attention to your breath. Try to feel it. (Pause) Focus for a while on the tip of your nose. Feel the breath coming in and going out. Now put your hand on your belly feel how it rises and falls along with your breath. (Pause). Now you are going to focus only on your breath for the next (3- 5 minutes). Other thoughts may arise. It is completely natural.

When you find your mind wandering, bring your attention to your breath, using it as your anchor.

(Adapted from Kabat-Zinn, 2014, p. 105)

This exercise will help the students to focus and achieve higher concentration levels in the classroom and during the lectures. Teacher should also suggest students to practice meditation twice or thrice a day so as to improve their general concentration, reduce anxiety, get a better sleep and improve memory and problem-solving skills.

Conclusion

This study shows that the various CSs used by Iraqi EFL Students are helpful and make an impact in the positive direction. The results show that Iraqi EFL students face several difficulties in communicating in English language. Hence, it is important to incorporate communication strategies into the English learning programs at various levels so as to enhance and enrich students' ability in verbal communication.

This study also shows the importance and requirement of incorporating the strategy of modeled talk into teaching and learning of English for EFL students, discussing various benefits of it.

We also studied how mindfulness is an important aptitude required in every field of learning and should be attained through meditations and students should be encouraged accordingly.

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