



*The Impact of Using Fishbowl Strategy to Enhance Creative
Imagination in Writing Skill for Iraqi EFL College Students*

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اثر استخدام استراتيجية حوض السمك في تعزيز التخيل الابداعي في مهارة الكتابة
لطلبة الكليات العراقية دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية

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المستخلص

يهدف البحث الى التحقق من اثر استخدام استراتيجية حوض السمك في تعزيز التخيل الابداعي في مهارة الكتابة للطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية . وللتحقق من الهدف صيغت الفرضية الصفرية (لا يوجد فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى دلالة (٠,٠٥)) بين متوسط درجات الطلبة في المجموعة التجريبية الذين درسوا وفق استراتيجية حوض السمك في التخيل الابداعي في مهارة الكتابة ومتوسط درجات الطلبة في المجموعة الضابطة الذين درسوا وفق الطريقة الاعتيادية في الاختبار البعدي لمادة الكتابة . تبنت الباحثة التصميم التجريبي للضبط الجزئي للمجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة تضبط احدهما الاخرى ذات الاختبار البعدي في مادة الكتابة . ومثل مجتمع البحث طلبة المرحلة الثانية اقسام اللغة الانكليزية اكلية التربية الاساسية للفصل الاول من العام الدراسي ٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٢ وقد اختيرت العينة قصدياً اذ بلغت (٢٠٠) بواقع شعبتين مثلت شعبة المجموعة التجريبية وتضمنت ١٠٠ طالباً وطالبة ومثلها المجموعة الضابطة في شعبة ب . وقد كافأت الباحثة كلتا المجموعتين في عدد من المتغيرات منها أعمارهن , مستوى التحصيل الدراسي للوالدين , إضافة الى مهارة الكتابة. حيث قامت الباحثة بتصميم كلا الاختبارين (القبلي والبعدي) وتم التأكد من صلاحية وصق الاختبارات بعرضهم على الخبراء في مجالات طرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية وعلم اللغة , وتأكدت الباحثة من ثبات الاختبار من خلال معادلة الفا كرونباخ والتي كانت (٠.٨٦) . وبعد الانتهاء من التجربة تم تحليل البيانات احصائياً باستخدام الاختبار التائي وقد توصلت الباحثة إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة في مهارة الكتابة في نتائج الاختبار البعدي ولصالح المجموعة التجريبية.

وقد استنتجت الباحثة إن استخدام استراتيجية حوض السمك في تدريس التخيل الابداعي في مادة الكتابة , يعزز أداء الطلبة ومهارتهم , وتمنحهم الفرصة لتنشيط وتطوير مهاراتهم التي تمكنهم من تحديد , تجميع , تحليل ونقد المعلومات على المدى الطويل وتنمية الفهم لديهم وتقتصر اجراء دراسات لمراحل ومواد دراسية اخرى باستخدام الاستراتيجية اعلاه .

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the impact of using fishbowl strategy to enhance creative imagination in writing skill for Iraqi EFL college students. To achieve the aim of the present study , the following hypothesis has been put : There is no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group who is taught creative imagination in writing according to Fishbowl strategy and that of the control group who is taught according to the traditional way in the post test of writing. Thus , an experiment design was adopted . The sample of the study was Purposive sample consisted of 90 students from 2nd year class\ English department \college of basic education\ University of Diyala (45 students as an experimental group which are taught writing by the use of the Fishbowl strategy and 45 students as a control group which are taught writing according to the traditional way during the academic year 2021 -2022). Meanwhile, the subjects of both groups are matched according to their age, level of parents' education , and their scores in the writing skill at the pre-test. Writing test (pre& post) have been designed and the validity of the tests have been obtained by exposing them to jury members in the fields of EFL and linguistics. The reliability of the tests has been secured by using Alfa Cronbach formula found to be (0.86) which indicates high reliability. Statistical analysis of data achieved through using the t-test indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups in favour of the experimental group in the post test .

The researcher concludes that using Fishbowl strategy enhances students' creative imagination in writing , and provides them opportunities to actively develop writing skills. That enable them to locate, gather, analyze, critique and apply information in a wide range of contexts as they develop understanding and the researcher suggests to use it to make another study for other stages and other subjects .

1.1 The problem and its significance

Promoting students' writing skills is considered to be one of the most important tasks which EFL learners need to develop throughout their schooling. Razoqey (2019) pointed out that writing is invaluable for helping students communicate and understand how the parts of language go together.

It is well-documented that many studies have been carried out to tackle students' weaknesses in writing through studying students' written performance. All of these studies have found that students cannot formulate personal views during the classroom discussion. Using traditional techniques in teaching writing may have an effect on the failure of improving writing (Al-Karkhi 1999 , Al-Temimi 2005).

In the light of the researcher's observations and experience in the field of English language teaching, little attention is attached to creative imagination writing in EFL composition classes in Iraqi Colleges. Moreover, the researcher analyzed a random sample of second stage students' composition writing in EFL. Results showed that most students were not able to compose a composition based on clear elements. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed a number of second stage English language instructors and asked them about obstacles facing learners while writing in EFL composition classes. The teachers noted that most students had very poor performance in arranging sentences in logical order and fair in forming a good paragraph structure : The students found that writing was difficult and at the same time stressing. They did not feel confident in their writing and did not encourage themselves to develop their ability in writing. Hence, they did not frequently practice this skill unless the teacher asked them. The most serious writing problems arise when the student tries to transform a native language sentence word for word into a foreign

language equivalent. The problems faced above are not solely caused by the inability of the students to write, but also by the inappropriate strategy implemented by the teacher in the teaching and learning process. For this reason it has been selected using fishbowl strategy and intends to develop EFL learners` writing.

Thus, the current study comes as an attempt to examine the impact of Fishbowl Strategy to enhance creative imagination in writing skill for Iraqi EFL college students, hoping to find solutions and remedy to the difficulties faced by the students .

1.2Theoretical Background

1.2.1Fishbowl strategies

The “fishbowl” is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the “fishbowl” circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to the process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when the teacher wants to make sure all students participate in the discussion, when the teacher wants to help students reflect on what a “good discussion” looks like, and when the teacher needs a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics. (Priles ,1993: 49).

Fishbowl strategy can create productive environments for initiating

important, yet potentially charged, writing, and we can imagine a number of topics that would work well within the fishbowl format (Garrison and Munday, 2012).

1.2.2 The Objectives of Fishbowl

Johnson & Carson (1990: 30) mention a number of objectives for the Fishbowl Strategies that can be summarized as follows:

1. The primary focus in this technique is on the fact that students can learn English from an instructional program through using communicative tasks and procedures.
2. This technique aims primarily at enabling learners to learn the language through carrying out activities not through performing mere tasks specified in the syllabus.
3. It develops students' confidence in speaking, reading, writing and listening through true participation with the group.
4. It aims at developing thinking and study skills as well as language and academic concepts of students at different levels of language proficiency.
5. It provides the students with opportunities to use the target language contextually, and to explore it through activities.
6. It encourages the participants to get in touch with their thoughts/feelings concerning their cross-cultural and bilingual relationships.

1.2.3 Procedure of Fishbowl Strategy

In implementing the strategy, Brozo (2007) used some steps as follow:

1. Identify a focus for class discussion. Typically, the more controversial and charged the issue, the greater level of engagement on the part of students.
2. Ask students to turn to a neighbor and talk about their ideas and opinions related to the issue. Tell students to take notes on their discussion.
3. Demonstrate the format and expectations of fishbowl discussion.
4. Get the discussion started by telling the discussants sitting in a cluster to talk among themselves about the ideas and opinions they raised when conversing with a partner.
5. Tell the other students to listen carefully to their classmates while they engage in a small group discussion and take notes or jot down questions share afterward.
6. Allow the discussants to talk for 5 minutes or so, getting involved only if the discussion dies or to ensure everyone is contributing and taking turns.
7. When the small group finishes or is stopped, ask the other students to make comments on the discussion they observed and/or ask questions of the discussants. This is an ideal time to model appropriate comments and questions.

8. Gather small group of volunteer discussants, and continue to the fishbowl process until all students have had the opportunity to be inside the fishbowl and they are clear about their roles and expectations.

1.3 Creativity and Imagination

Vygotsky (2004:9) theorizes the relationship between creativity and imagination. He denotes that the imagination serves as an imperative impetus of all human creative activity. The fact that this human creative behavior “makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present” .As a result, Vygotsky (ibid:13) claims that the operation of imagination is “a function essential to life”. In Vygotsky’s view, the most principle that formulates the operation of the imagination is contingent on the richness and wideness an individual’s experience because “imagination always builds using materials supplied by reality”.

The creative imagination is dramatic in its character. It is the skill of seeing the imaginative possibilities, understanding the relations between two concepts and seeing the dynamic force between them (Courtney, 1968 :90). Play an important role to shape the imagination. The imagination in fact involves feelings that manifest a person truly experiences. However, the process of imagination is not only guided by personal feelings. Rugg (1963: 67) states that discovery and verification are indispensable to productive thought and identifies creative imagination as the instrument of the act of discovery.

Mellou (1995:106) states that imagination and creativity are related and their basic relationship is that they are both based on reality for providing alternatives and possibilities for innovations

and original changes . The creative imagination can be further enhanced by role playing education (Karwowski & Sosynzski , 2008:173).

Finally, Smolucha (1986: 4) summarizes four key components of Vygotsky's theory of creative imagination:

- 1) Imagination is the internalization of children's play.
- 2) Imagination is a higher mental function of as such is a consciously directed thought process.
- 3) Creative thinking involves the collaboration of imagination and thinking in concepts, which occurs first in adolescence but mature in adulthood.
- 4) Both artistic and scientific creativity require the collaboration of imagination and thinking in concepts.

2.1 Methodology and Procedures

2.1.1 The Experimental Design

It is necessary to choose an appropriate design to determine whether or not the obtained results will be valid, objective and accurate. The experimental design applied in the present study to achieve its aim is the pre-test-post-test non-equivalent groups design. Moreover, Krysik and Finn (2013: 23) argue that this type of experimental design is one of the most commonly used quasi-experimental designs in educational research.

This design does reduce the threat of assignment bias. A pre-test was applied before the administration of the experimental and control treatments, whereas a post-test is applied at the end of the treatment period. The purpose of the pre-test was to allow the researcher to assess whether the two groups are equivalent on the dependent measure or variable before the treatment is given to them (See Table 1).

Groups	Test	Treatment	Test
Experiment group	Pre-test	Fishbowl strategy	Post-test
Control group	Pre-test	Traditional strategy	Post-test

Table (1) the Experimental Design

2.1.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study is limited to the second -year student at English Department (morning studies)/College of Basic Education/Diyala University during the academic year 2021-2022. Since the population of the study is limited, they are all considered as a sample of the current study. The sample consists of (90) male and female students. In order to increase the sensitivity of the experiment, the researcher has equated the sample on the basis of four variables. The age of the students, the level of fathers' education , the level of mothers' education and the students' pre- test performance in writing.

2.2 The Test and its Scoring Scheme

One of an excellent device for providing both a purpose and content for writing is the use of pictures. A picture or series of pictures not only provides the students with the basic material for their composition but also stimulates their imaginative powers. If the stimulus in a situational composition is purely verbal, the testees often tend to reproduce the phrases and sentences contained in it. The test is given 100 marks distributed as follows:

Writing 10 marks	Sentence formation 10 marks	Style 10 marks	Usage 10 marks	Mechanics 10 marks	Total
Focuses on central ideas with an organized and elaborated text	Standard word order , no enjambment , no sentence fragments	Purposefully chosen vocabulary sentence variety information and voice to affect reader	Standard inflections (e.g., plurals ,possive , -ed ,-ing with verbs, and -ly with adverbs) ,subject – verb agreement , standard word meaning	Effective use of capitalization , punctuation, spelling and formatting	50 marks

Table (2) the analytical scoring scheme for composition writing

Fluency 10 marks	Flexibility 10 marks	Unity and coherence 10 marks	Elaboration 10 marks	Originality 10 marks	Total
the ability to produce a large number of ideas	the ability to produce a variety of ideas	-A single idea is developed in each paragraph -All ideas "hang together" and the reader understands them easily. - showing logical development of ideas.	the ability to develop ideas	the ability to produce ideas that are unusual as opposed to obvious.	10 marks

Table (3) The analytical scoring scheme for creativity

2.3 Instruments of the study

2.3.1 Pre-testing

Before starting the experiment , all the students of the two groups were asked to write an essay about the given topic. The allotted time for the topic was forty five minutes. The papers were collected and each student's score was measured based on the average score for the two raters.

Groups	No. of subjects	M	S.D	df	t- value	
					Calculated	Tabulated
E G	45	33.802	7.953	98	0.662	1.001
C G	45	34.232	8.231			

Table (4) The Statistics of the Performance of the EG and CG on pre-test in the writing composition components .

Groups	No. of subjects	M	S.D	df	t- value	
					Calculated	Tabulated
E G	45	41.205	13.04	98	1.348	1.587
C G	45	32.649	14.01			

Table (5) The Statistics of the Performance of the EG and CG on Pre-test in the creativity components .

This tables shows the mean and the standard deviation of each group in writing composition and creativity components. The analysis indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and the control groups at (0.05) level.

2.3.2 Strategy Instruction

The strategy instruction phase started a week after the students participated in the pretest. They participated in twelve hours study sessions. The students in the experimental group received the instruction for fishbowl strategy. Which is consist of using

brainstorming, then prepare classroom for the discussion. Typically, I place two tables or four desks in the center of the room. That is my fishbowl. During the discussion, four students will sit in the middle of the room and answer and discuss the topic questions. The rest of the tables and desks in the room are arranged in a circular pattern around the fishbowl. That way, just like people look at the fish inside a fishbowl, the rest of the students in the classroom are looking at the students who are actively participating in the discussion. At the front of the room, or at the top of the fishbowl, I usually place two desks or one table. This is designated as the “hot seat.”

A- Prepare Students: In order for the fishbowl discussion to be effective, students need to be prepared for the discussion questions, and that is why this activity works very well as a review activity. Typically, a couple days before the discussion, I will assign my students about 20-30 review questions to help them prepare for the discussion and the end-of-unit test. Open-ended questions that require evidence and explanation and opinion-based questions typically work best for the discussion. When students can either agree with one another or disagree, the discussion will be more powerful. The day before the discussion, I will have my students either work in groups to answer the questions, or I will conduct some sort of collaborative activity (gallery walk, question jigsaw, or review stations) that requires students to answer the questions.

B- Conduct the Fishbowl Discussion: Before I begin the fishbowl discussion, I print out the review questions and cut them up into little strips. I then fold each strip a couple times and place them in some sort of bucket. I use my small bucket

from the Target Dollar Spot. I then explain the fishbowl procedures to my class: each student must speak at least once; each student must contribute something meaningful to the conversation that demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of the content; only the “fish” inside the fishbowl can answer the discussion questions and participate in the conversation; students sitting in the outside circle can participate at any time as long as they move to the designated “hot seat” location; only two students may occupy the “hot seat” location at a time; all students need to be respectful at all times; and once the fish inside the fishbowl are satisfied with their answers, they must tap in a student from the outside circle that hasn’t been inside the fishbowl yet. I also explain to my students that they are being graded based on their responses, and that in order to receive full credit, they must contribute something meaningful to the discussion.

Usually right before I begin this activity, I provide my students with some sentence starters and sentence frames to help them properly agree or disagree with their classmates. I want to model to them proper communication strategies that will help them in college and in the work force.

Sentence Frames for the Fishbowl Discussion

- “While I agree with _____ about _____, I also feel that _____.”
- “I respectfully disagree with _____ about his/her stance on _____ because I feel that _____.”
- “Adding onto _____’s contribution, I would also like to say _____.”
- “While _____ has a great point, I believe that _____.”
- “While I can see why _____ said _____, I think differently because _____.”

Holding a fishbowl conversation in your classroom is a great way to get all of the students involved in a classroom discussion. It is also a great way to help students learn difficult concepts and prepare for upcoming tests. Additionally, having fishbowl conversations in class helps students open up and share their thoughts because even though they are sharing their thoughts and answers with the entire class, the intimate setting of the four seats in the center feels more like an intimate conversation than a classroom presentation.

2.3.3 Post-testing

A week after the instruction period of the strategy of creative imagination all the students in different groups again wrote essays about the given topic. The papers were collected and each student's score was measured based on the average score for the two raters.

2.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument.

The primary purpose of language test is to provide a measure that one can interpret as an indicator language of an individual's language ability. Hence, the measurement quality, validity is too essential to the usefulness of any language test (Bachman and Palamer, 1996:23-24). For validating the instrument (checking if it measures what is it meant to be measured, the researcher submitted the test to (4) experts who are known for their long experience in the field of linguistics and TEFL methodology. After approving its suitability for the purpose of the study, the researcher took the suggested modification into consideration and it was typed again and distributed it to the students. To ensure the reliability of the test, the researcher has also ensured the inter-rater reliability. He asked another teacher to correct the test papers. So each of the 45 students has two scores .The correlation between the scores of the two raters (the researcher and the instructor) was calculated by Alfa Cronbach formula. The reliability coefficient was found to be (0.88) which indicates high reliability.

3.1 The Results

The results obtained from the application of the posttest in the writing composition components on the two groups show that the mean scores of experimental is 25.340 and that of the control group is 20.567 . The computed t – value 3.650 is higher than the table t-value 1. 987 at 0.05 level of significance and under 98 degrees of freedom see table (6). The posttest in the writing creativity components on the two groups show that the mean scores of experimental is 27.540 and that of the control group is 23.677 . The computed t – value 4.462 is higher than the table t-value 1.875 at 0.05 level of significance and under 98 degrees of freedom see table (7) .

Groups	No. of subjects	M	S.D	df	t- value	
					Calculated	Tabulated
E G	45	25.340	6.416	98	3.650	1.987
C G	45	20.567	4.818			

Table (6) The statistic of the Performance of the EG and CG on post-test in the writing composition components .

Groups	No. of subjects	M	S.D	df	t- value	
					Calculated	Tabulate d
E G	45	27.540	6.416	98	4.462	1.875
C G	45	23.677	5.423			

Table (7) The statistic of the Performance of the EG and CG on post- test in the writing creativity components.

This result shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the composition writing posttest scores(composition and creativity components) in favor of the experimental group .This means that , the experimental group is better than the control group ; so the hypothesis which indicates that there is no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of composition writing posttest of the experimental group who is taught composition writing according to Fishbowl strategy and that of the control group who is taught composition writing according to the traditional way .

Conclusions

In the light of the empirical evidence revealed to this study and in relation to the researcher's own observations during the experiment, the following conclusions are drawn : The improvement in the performance of the sample on the posttest has led to the conclusion that within the limit of the design and implementation procedures of the study, enhancing creative imagination in composition writing through Fishbowl strategy proved to be more vital and useful for the EFL students, than through traditional strategies . And It is also concluded that students should focus on communicating an ideas or opinions to someone rather than on the language forms themselves. In such situation the students' subconsciously use their acquired grammar rules to convey the passage more effectively. Moreover, Fishbowl strategy is means of alternative assessment which help student to become autonomous and collaborative learners and provide strategies for their own learning. This is evident in the improvement of their performance in composition writing after being trained through the use of Fishbowl strategy.

The right strategies use to teach writing can make the process of teaching and learning more alive and conducive. It can be known from their motivation to study. If the students enjoy the class, they will be motivated to learn; hence it can improve their learning achievement.

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Appendix (A)

The Post Test

Q1\ Complete the following paragraph. (Not more than 5 lines)

My favorite hobby is reading and I always spend my spare time in.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2 \ Look at the picture and then write a composition according to your imagination.



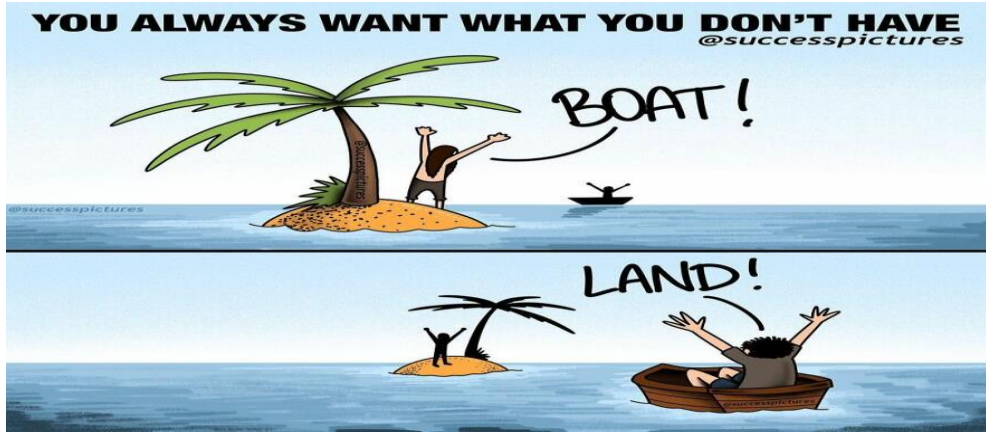
Q3\ **Write a letter to your younger self.** Have you ever wished you could say something to your younger self? Here's your chance. Think of a subject you want to address, like a significant event, and compose a letter to your younger self as if you were a separate person. Offer advice or send a message you wish you had received when you were a child or young adult.. Write at least 120 words.

Appendix (B)

The Pretest

Q1\ Write a fake advertisement. Choose a random word from a nearby dictionary and write a mock ad for it. Then describe the object and convince the reader why they should buy it.

Q2 \ Look at the picture and then write a composition according to your imagination.



Q3\ Identify the irrelevant sentence in each passage. Write the letter of your choice.

1\ (a) Pope John Paul" reigned as pope of the Roman Catholic Church for almost 27 years until his death. (b) He was the first non-Italian pope since the 16th century. (c) During his reign, the pope traveled extensively, visiting over 100 countries, more than any of his predecessors. (d) Even in 1992 as he was diagnosed with Parkinson disease, he continued with his travels. (e) He maintained an impressive physical condition throughout the 1980s.

2\ (a) Everyone who is interested in Formula One races knows Michael Schumacher. (b) Statistically he is the greatest driver of all time. (c) He used a homemade kart built by his father, who managed the local karting track. (d) He is also the first and only German to win the drivers' championship. (e) Furthermore, Schumacher is the most notable and well-paid figure in the recent history of Formula 1.