



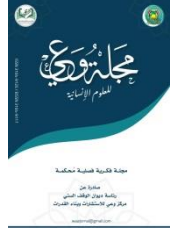
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مقال مراجعة: قراءة نقدية لنتائج البحوث في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

## Review Article: A Critical Reading of Research Findings in English Language Teaching

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### Abstract

This paper is a critical analysis of Iraqi studies on the field of English language teaching, that is, it will discuss the nature of the findings published in peer-reviewed journals, and how they have been interpreted. According to the review, the contemporary teaching methods are effective in helping learners to develop their language competencies. The article is based on the Iraqi literature covering grammar learning strategies, cognitive strategies and their effects on text understanding, teaching methods and evaluation of the curriculum. Even though the results tend to be positive, in most cases, the interpretations are always quantitative with less emphasis on the contextual and pedagogical conditions. This article suggests that there is a need to adopt more analytic methods that associate research results with theoretical and educational paradigms to make the research scientifically valuable in this area.

## Introduction

ELT in Iraq has experienced a major advancement in recent years especially on the aspect of instructional methods and strategies to enhance performance of learners in critical language skills. There is an increasing amount of research on different features of teaching methods, such as grammar learning strategies, cognitive strategies in reading, classroom methods, and application of new methods of teaching like flipped learning. This growth is indicative of a growing consciousness of the significance of embracing learner-centered strategies that encourage interaction and significant engagement with the language.

Nevertheless, the fact that such research is growing and growing requires that their findings be critically analyzed. Although numerous research findings indicate that modern instructional strategies yield positive results, it is required to go beyond a superficial understanding of research findings and examine the mechanisms that explain the observed outcomes. This requires a critical outlook in order to make sure that research findings are useful to theory as well as practice in teaching English language.

## Theoretical Framework

Modern methods in teaching English language focus on the active participation of the learners in developing knowledge via interaction and practice.

This perception is explicit in the study that has been conducted to understand grammar learning strategies among Iraqi learners that reveals that they use a combination of cognitive and memory-based strategies, in order to come up with a superior understanding of language structures. These findings underscore the importance of strategic learning towards achieving language proficiency.

In a similar way, studies on cognitive approaches and their connection to reading comprehension point at strategic thinking as to the way it helps learners enhance their capacity to process and comprehend texts. These studies prove that literacy performance can be improved greatly with the help of efficient use of the cognitive strategies, and instructional interventions should aim at building the strategic competence of learners.

Moreover, the research exploring the topics of classroom instruction and the application of new methods, including flipped learning, suggests that these strategies can result in better learning in comparison to traditional methods. Curriculum evaluation studies also highlight the importance of teaching resource in determining the course of the instruction and the performance of the learners. Collectively these studies help in enlarging the overall understanding of the ways through which various instructional strategies can aid in language learning in the Iraqi context.

## **Research Gaps**

Critical reading indicates that there are some obvious gaps:

Although the literature on the topic has been increasing, a critical review shows that there are some significant gaps. Majority of the studies concentrate on the short-term learning outcomes with little emphasis on the long-term effects of teaching strategies on language development.

Moreover, quantitative methods are overused and, although they are helpful in quantifying results, they do not give enough information about the processes involved in learning.

The other interesting weakness is the lack of association between the research results and theoretical frames since most of the time research findings are made without sufficient clarification of how they relate to other general theories of education. Moreover, there is a lack of focus on individual learner differences and differences in classroom situations that restricts the generalizability of results. These gaps need to be addressed in order to progress the research in English language teaching and make it relevant to the actual classroom practice.

## **Conclusion**

According to the review, the effectiveness of the modern instructional strategies in enhancing the language skills of the learners is always supported

by the research in English language teaching in Iraq. Nevertheless, this uniformity is coupled with lack of depth in interpretation of findings.

It is evident that more rigorous methods of analysis are necessary that goes beyond the reporting of results to giving them an explanation in the context of their theoretical and contextual contexts. This would add significance to research to the body of knowledge and the teaching profession.

### **Discussion / Critical Insight**

The review of the literature in the sphere of the English language teaching in Iraqi literature represents a stable pattern of positive outcomes in case of introducing a modern approach to teaching. Strategies of grammar learning, cognitive strategies training and flipped classroom strategies have been established to improve the language proficiency and reading comprehension of the learners.

However, a more detailed examination shows that most of the research remains largely quantitative and is usually premised on test–result improvement without there being any discussion about the pedagogical processes. Moreover, the situational factors, such as classroom environment, motivation of learners, and individual differences are frequently under–studied. The impoverishment of synthesis of theoretical models and empirical results also suppresses the richness of the interpretation. Consequently, despite the indications of the success of innovative approaches, a more subtle analysis that contextualises the findings in the context of the Iraqi education, links them to learning theories and explores the outcomes of long–term language development is required.

## **Recommendations**

- Promote mixed-methods research in order to give both quantitative and qualitative information about the processes of language learning.
- Clearly implement theoretical ideas on research design and interpretations of result to improve pedagogical implementation.
- To make the findings more applicable, analyze situational variables, including classroom dynamics, learners motivation, and cultural aspects.
- Conduct longitudinal research to find out how instruction strategies impact language proficiency in the long term.
- Encourage teacher professional development courses on the current strategies to make sure that classrooms are implemented effectively.
- Improve practitioner and researcher collaboration to align the results of research with the teaching needs and curriculum.

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