

“The Effect of the Double Entry Journal Strategy on Developing Ninth Grade Students' Performance in Creative Reading”

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of Double Entry Journal strategy (DEJ) on 9th-grade students' creative reading. The sample of the study consisted of two intact sections of 60 students of Yarmouk University Model School. One section (n=30) was assigned as the experimental group, which was taught by using the DEJ strategy. While the other section (n=30) was assigned as the control group which was taught according to the conventional method. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group ($\alpha=0.05$) in the reading post test mean scores. The results indicated that DEJ strategy played an important role in developing students' performance in creative reading.

Key words: creative reading, DEJ strategy, 9th Grade students, EFL students.

Introduction

English is an international language, it is the language used among students in schools, employees in multinational corporations, researchers in universities and conferences, and people from different nationalities and backgrounds on social media. It can be considered as the shared language between people from different parts of the world. Thus, the demand for learning English has increased enormously in the past century.

Learning English gives people the chance to improve themselves in many aspects of life; it helps them gain good jobs, access the top academic journals and institutions, and work in different scientific and technological fields in which English is an essential requirement (Hoge, 2017). Along with the increasing demand for learning English, the demand for effective teaching strategies has also risen. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the current trend that serves the purpose of learning and development very well (Richards, 2006).

CLT is one of the most influential approaches to language teaching, it gives teachers the chance to experience proficiency. CLT had a great influence on language teaching in the 20th century, the main principles of this approach are today openly confirmed around the world. CLT starts from a theory that looks at language as a communication method and cooperates it with culture. In other words, language is a system that focuses on meaning rather than form, It functions as a communicative and functional instrument. Hence, the structures of a language reflect its functional and communicative uses. CLT supports fluency and accuracy; accuracy activities should support fluency activities. Within the communicative approach to language teaching, there are many tasks that take different forms in the classrooms such as Content-Based Teaching CBT, Task-Based Language Teaching TBLT, the Natural Approach and the Whole Language. (Brown, 2001; Richards and Rogers, 2006).

Reading is a fundamental skill in the language learning process, as it provides communication among people on one hand, and among the reader and the text on the other hand. It is also an essential skill for learners to master a foreign language. Reading composes of two related processes; word recognition and comprehension. The former refers to the process of realizing how written symbols match the ones' in spoken language. While the latter refers to the process of dealing with words, sentences, and text (Kursova, 1999).

Smith (2007) defines reading as thought stimulated and directed by written language. Grellet (1981) claims that it can be defined as: "understanding a written text that means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible", Wolf (2007) points out that it is a neuronally and intellectually indirect act.

Reading improves students' intelligence, it enhances their long memory, and improves their imagination. It allows students to get used to dealing with books and articles on different subjects (Kursova, 1999). Moreover, reading improves comprehension as it is associated with motivation and background knowledge (Martain, 1991). It also gives the reader the chance to discover new things and stay updated on everything that takes place all around the world. Finally, reading paves the way for people to acquire new perspectives and ideas, and perhaps correct wrong beliefs and answer long-standing questions (Davis, 2016).

Russell (1987) claims that everyone reads at four interweaved levels; the levels are; a. word cognition b. skimming c. literal meaning d. creative reading. Each level has its own work and vision, for example, the word cognition refers to pronunciation while skimming refers to getting an overview look at the text. The literal meaning level has a huge role for it enables the reader to answer the comprehension questions. After going through all the mentioned levels, learners reach the creative reading level. According to Russell, this level includes reading for implied and inferred meanings, appreciative

reactions and critical evaluations. Implied and inferred meaning involves literal comprehension and reading beyond the facts, in other words, reading between the lines. The appreciative reactions employ imagery, identification with the story's characters, allowing the reader to relate emotionally. Critical evaluation, on the other hand, pays more attention to comparisons with known norms/standards and judgment making, in addition to the reader's ability to distinguish between what is real and what is fanciful.

To conclude, it can be summarized that the aims of creative reading as follows: It enables readers to produce fresh and original ideas. It makes the reader an active participant/co-author. It requires thinking, imagination and emergence of ideas that stimulate the reader's mind. It is generally beneficial to the reader's personal and social skills.

Creativity has two sides; creative invention (Hofstadter & McGraw, 1999; Knudner & Wills, 1993) which is a directed and inner process, a cognitive aspect, that gives useful results. Creative understanding is also a directed and inner process by a cognitive aspect and it gives useful understanding.

Creative reading captures the imagination. It is considered an art as it produces fresh thoughts and ideas. Moreover, it takes curiosity into consideration through different strategies for example; creating a "book hook" which stimulates students' curiosity. The teacher here puts a group of books in a box and picks up each book separately by showing the cover and hooks the students with a question then the teacher asks them to offer one or two sentences about the book with just enough information about certain elements such as characters, places and so on. (Ruth & Marilyn, 2011).

Creative reading includes four skills. The first skill is fluency which can be divided into:

1. Concluding the learned lessons from the passage.
2. Giving the possible number of synonymous with a word.
3. Asking implicit questions.
4. Identifying the aim of the text.

The second skill is flexibility which includes the following:

1. Writing suggestions for the title.
2. Giving an opinion on a certain issue.
3. Thinking about reasons for a certain phenomenon.

The third skill is originality, it includes:

1. Explaining a certain paragraph from the passage.
2. Summarizing the passage.
3. Suggesting or expecting the ending of the passage.

The fourth skill is detail literacy:

1. Suggesting further details on the readable text.
2. Creating endings for the readable text.
3. Adding new ideas to the readable text.

Creative reading activities encourage students to read more and more about any topic of interest. On the other hand, schools are responsible for preparing their libraries providing with sufficient reading materials, ranging from novels, books, and magazines, to videos and blogs. Creative reading activities are not only for individuals but also for groups. Activities like; kids as reading partners, reading through writing and reading relay, improves comprehension and encourages cooperation among students (Ruth & Marilyn, 2011).

Double-Entry Journal DEJ might be a suitable strategy for reading in general and for creative reading in specific. It is followed to enhance reading and writing skills. Buehl(2009) defines the DEJ strategy as using students' responses to immediate connection to background knowledge, creating new ideas and imagery.

DEJ enables students to record their thoughts on the text as they read(Litwiller,2003). Students write down phrases or sentences from their assigned reading, then write their own reaction to what they have read (Double Entry Journal, 2010). The purpose here is mainly to give students the opportunity to express themselves and become actively involved with the

material they read. DEJ also improves student's comprehension, vocabulary and context retention. Moreover, it activates their prior knowledge and reveals their feelings.

Journals are writing containers; they document what is written over time. They also record experience, facilitate the learning process, support understanding, increase group working, enhance reflective practice and support planning. Journals have many types such as; tapes, videos and electronic forms (Moon, 2010).

DEJ allows students to write down their responses and thoughts on paper and read them before sharing them with the whole class (Burnard, 1988). There are advantages to using Double Entry Journal DEJ strategy; it facilitates students' comprehension of the text, engages them with the text, gives them the chance to reply immediately to the text, and allows them to reflect and improve their personal understanding of the text. This strategy can be used for both fiction and non-fiction texts (Frye 2010).

Using DEJ requires three types of connections; text-to-self connection, text-to-text connection, and text-to-world connection. The strategy works by asking students to fold a piece of paper in half, lengthwise. In the left column, students are asked to pick any phrase or sentence from the text and write it down along with the paper number. In the right column, students are asked to react to the passage by writing their personal opinions, thoughts or feelings. Teachers here would have already given the students the elements of reflection by writing them on board such as; question/confusion, prediction/speculation, appreciation/disagreement, significance /importance, and connections. The entry may include a comment, a question or an analysis. Students can also share their responses with the class, so group work is also enabled. Atwell (1987:14) describes effective reading as a workshop that provides students with what real readers do when they interact with the print. This is based on her belief that reading is a meaning-seeking process and students should read what makes sense to them. She stresses three major factors determining the success of teaching reading; time, ownership and response.

According to Staton (1987), dialogue journals are written conversations between both the student and the teacher. They enable students to share and communicate their feelings, thoughts and daily routine actions inside the classroom. It also enables them to think together (think out aloud). DEJ strategy helps the teacher plan for daily lessons differently. Furthermore, it enhances time and class management. A noteworthy point is that DEJ strategy differs from any other means of communication in the responding manner; it relies on listening to other's opinions before responding. It does not only encourage negotiating and discussing ideas as a group but also supports literacy socially and functionally.

In Jordanian schools, most students, especially at the early stages, read without comprehension and score lower marks in reading. Many studies on teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan revealed that students suffer reading difficulties (USAID, 2016). Indeed, these studies agreed that the main reason for the problem is the lack of trained teachers. Namely, teachers still use traditional teaching methods instead of using modern improved ones. (Albdour, 2015)

Statement of the Problem

Through the researchers experience in teaching English language, they noticed that most students have reading problems ranging from difficulties in decoding, also known as sounding out words, to understanding the general meaning of the text. Despite the fact that the teaching process has been considerably improved over the years, education in Jordan still lacks quality. Poorly developed reading skills for students in the early stages, negatively affect their overall achievement and academic success, as reading is the basic skill required for understanding any topic efficiently. Additionally, weak pre-service and in-service training for teachers, as well as following outdated teaching methods especially for early age students, caused students long term difficulties in mastering reading and comprehension skills (USAID, 2016).

Purpose and Question of the Study

This study aims at investigating the effect of using a modern teaching strategies, particularly the double entry journal strategy DEJ on ninth grade students' creative reading. It attempts to answer the question:

1. Are their statistically significant differences in the ninth grade EFL students' mean scores in the post creative reading test due to the implementation of DEJ strategy v.s conventional teaching method?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study governs the fact that it addresses an important issue of FLL, which is developing students' communicative competence. Moreover, the results of the study may be significant for language teachers as they provide them with a strategy for enhancing creative reading. This study is also significant for students since it gives them the chance to express their ideas and thoughts freely.

This study has the following limitations:

1. It is limited to addressing creative reading.
2. It is limited to the sample of the study; the researcher deals with the female students only.
3. The duration of the study is two months. A study with a longer duration may yield different results

Operational Definition of Terms

- **Reading** defined by Grellet (1981) as: "understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible". Wolf (2007) defined reading as a neuronally indirect act that reinforced by the directions of a reader's thoughts. In this study, creative reading is measured by students' scores on the reading performance test that was constructed by the researcher.
- **Creativity**: refers to the production of new and imaginative ideas and turning them to reality (Naiman, 2018). While Creative Reading is a creative art that captures the imagination of the reader in ways to produce creative thoughts and ideas (Small and Arone, 2011). In this study, creativity refers to the ability to interact with the text and to produce new ideas.
- Creative reading skills are:
 - a. **Originality**: The ability to present unfamiliar ideas to the readable text, and the ability to generate uncommon solutions for a certain action. In addition to the ability to suggest new endings to the text.
 - b. **Fluency**: the ability to present as many synonymous as possible for any word. Plus, the ability to adding new ideas to the original ideas of the text.
 - c. **Flexibility**: The ability to suggest the largest number of titles to the text, and solutions to problems.
 - d. **Detail literacy skill**: the ability to add new ideas to the readable text, and to suggest more details about the text.
- **Double Entry Journal** is a written conversation through which students and teachers regularly communicate. Students write their reflections freely, teachers take a look as an overview of students' comments and ideas (Peyton, 1993). In this study, the (DEJ) strategy is related to the approach that will be used by both the researcher and the students to observe their progression in reading using Action Pack Nine book.
- **Journal**: (diary): a written record of what a person does every day, sometimes including his/her private thoughts and feelings (Cambridge Dictionary). In this study, journal means the container of student's thoughts, ideas, questions, and feelings.
- **Enterprise Nine**: is the official EFL textbook for students in Yarmouk University Model School. It contains four models which based on a carefully graded language syllabus.

Procedures in the DEJ Strategy

In order to have a successful implementation of the strategy, teachers may follow the following steps:

1. After reading the passage, the teacher asks students to fold up a piece of paper in half lengthwise.
2. In the left column, students are asked to write any phrase or sentence they want along with the line number.
3. In the right column, students are asked to react to the passage by writing their personal opinions, thoughts, feelings, ideas, insights, questions, or reflections.
4. There are codes that students can use in their responses such as:
 - **Question (Q)**: asking about unclear points in the readable text (limited only to two). If the student finds the answer, he/she should point that out.
 - **Connect (C)**: making connections between the readable text and life, the world, or another text.
 - **Clarify (C)**: answering previous questions or confirming a prediction.
 - **Reflect (R)**: thinking deeply about the hidden messages and extract the learned lessons.
 - **Evaluate (E)**: making judgments about the characters.
5. Provide at least one entry per each code.
6. Evaluation is the responsibility of the teacher who collects the entries and reads them, then reflects the evaluation as positive feedback (Burrows and Heaps, 2016)

Participants

The study follows a quasi-experimental design. It included 60 EFL ninth-grade female students, from Yarmouk University Model School. It was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. Two ninth-grade sections taught by the same trained teacher were purposefully chosen for research. Section (B) which consisted of 30 students was randomly chosen to represent the experimental group, while section (C), which consisted of 30 students too, was chosen to represent the control group. Students' reading skill in both groups was pre-tested for the purpose of valid at in the upcoming results. For over eight weeks, students of the experimental group were given 45 minutes of creative reading classes twice a week, during which the DEJ strategy was applied. The participants were fully familiarized with the DEJ strategy, and that played a role in encouraging them to rely on this strategy to complete the reading tasks. On the other hand, section (C) students, the control group, were taught in a way that corresponds with the guidelines of the teacher's book. After completing the 8 weeks treatment, both groups were given the post-test.

Instrumentations

The researcher prepared a pre/post creative reading test and established its validity and reliability.

The researcher designed a creative reading test that evaluates the four sub-skills under study; fluency, flexibility, originality, and detail literacy. The test included 25 questions: eight on fluency, six on flexibility, six on originality, and five on detail literacy.

Validity of the Instruments

To establish validity, the instruments were examined by a jury of 17 university professors of Curriculum and Teaching Methods, and linguistics (Appendix, 4 p) . The validation jury provided comments and suggestions concerning the content and adequacy of the instruments for the purpose of the study. Some items were added, others were deleted. As for the questionnaire, the language used was modified to suit the abilities of 9th-grade students.

Reliability of the Instruments

To establish the reliability of the creative reading test, two weeks after administering the test to section (A) students, it was re-administered to them and the coefficient turned out to be .91. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested through a pilot study of 20 students who were excluded from the sample. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was .76.

Findings and Discussion

The first question of the study is : Are their statistically significant differences in the ninth grade EFL students' scores in the post creative reading test due to the implementation of DEJ strategy v.s traditional teaching method? To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the students' scores on the pre and post-tests were calculated.

Table (2) The means, standard deviations and estimated marginal means of creative reading pre/post-test

GROUP	Pre		Post		Estimated Marginal Means		N
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Error	
Experimental	11.77	6.129	18.77	4.240	18.811	.816	30
Control	12.10	3.438	14.87	4.974	14.823	.816	30
Total	11.93	4.930	16.82	4.986	16.817	.577	60

Table 2 shows variation in the mean result of the students' scores in the creative reading post-test, after applying the DEJ strategy rather than following the regular teaching method. To find out whether these differences are considered statistically significant ($\alpha=0.05$), one-way analysis of covariance (one way ANCOVA) test was applied. Table 3 presents the results

Table (1) One-way ANCOVA results related to Method variable on creative reading skills total score

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
pre test	2680.744	1	2680.744	331.951	.000	.812
GROUP	309.384	1	309.384	38.310	.000	.332
Error	621.831	77	8.076			
Corrected Total	3497.887	79				

Table 3: shows that there is statistically significant variation in the mean result of the students' scores in the creative reading post-test, after applying the DEJ strategy as opposed to the regular teaching method. F value was 38.310, which is statistically significant at ($\alpha= 0.05$). Therefore, there are statistically significant differences between the mean results of the experimental and control groups' scores in the creative reading post-test due to applying the DEJ strategy. To find out which groups were more affected, the adjusted mean and standard errors were calculated.

Discussion and Recommendations

The questions of the study investigated students' performance of creative reading for ninth grade. The results showed that DEJ strategy had an appeared effect on students' performance and creativity. In addition, this strategy gave students the needed space to show up their feelings in the way they want by using the six types of reflection (question, prediction, clarification, evaluation, reflection, connection). Furthermore, DEJ strategy allowed students to make their comments on any part they were interested in.

DEJ strategy supported group work and considered it as a part of the implementation. Students were allowed to work within groups and share their responses with the whole class in order to make all students benefit from each other. Another important point during the implementation was students' relationship with their teacher, it was too positive and open. Students felt totally free to ask whatever they want without any hesitation.

The environment of the class during the implementation also supported the idea of learning-centered, where students were able to express their feelings and opinions in a new way. In terms of presentations, students were encouraged to read aloud and write their responses on board and share them with the rest of the class with full confidence.

The results of this study agreed with the results of other related studies which claimed that DEJ strategy improved students' reading performance. For example, Lee (2004) claimed that the (DEJ) strategy has an important role in developing reading

skills. Lorrotta (2009) found that the(DEJ) strategy is effective in developing students' performance in reading skills. In addition, Qasem (2009) revealed that the(DEJ) strategy has a significant effect on reading skills, and on improving students' high skills like critical thinking. Rogelton (2012) also claimed that the(DEJ) strategy has a great role in enabling students to work with a team and to express themselves freely.

Recommendations

In light of what has been reached from the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Textbooks designers are recommended to make the DEG strategy included in reading skill.
2. Researchers are recommended on using DEJ strategy in other grades.
3. Teachers are recommended to apply different strategies. DEJ strategy is recommended.

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ملخص البحث

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى دراسة أثر استراتيجية مجلة المدخل المزدوج على طالبات الصف التاسع لمهارة القراءة الابداعية. عينة الدراسة تكونت من شعبتين بعدد 60 طالبة من المدرسة النموذجية لجامعة اليرموك. الشعبة الأولى تكونت من 30 طالبة وكانت للمجموعة التجريبية والتي تم تطبيق عليها الاستراتيجية. بينما الشعبة الثانية تكونت من 30 طالبة وكانت للمجموعة الضابطة والتي تم تدريسها بالطريقة التقليدية. نتائج الدراسة أظهرت أن المجموعة التجريبية تفوقت على المجموعة الضابطة في الامتحان البعدي. النتائج أظهرت أيضا أن استراتيجية مجلة المدخل المزدوج لعبت دورا مهما في تطوير أداء الطلاب في القراءة الابداعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة الابداعية , مجلة المدخل المزدوج, طالبات الصف التاسع