

The Effect of Stations and Centers Strategy on Jordanian EFL Tenth Grade Students' Motivation in Reading Comprehension

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Abstract:

This study aimed at investigating the effect of using stations and centers strategy on motivation toward reading comprehension among tenth grade students in Jordan. The researchers chose a school purposefully. Two tenth grade sections were chosen randomly to be the sample of the study. They were 80 students. The sample was divided into two groups; the experimental group and the control group. Each group consisted of 40 students. The researchers developed a questionnaire in order to achieve the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was applied to the experimental group which was taught through using the stations and centers strategy. The results of the study showed that the tenth grade motivation was high and positive toward using the stations and centers strategy in reading comprehension lessons. Based on the results of the study, the researchers recommended using this strategy in teaching reading skills.

Key Words: stations and centers strategy, reading comprehension, motivation, EFL students.

أثر استراتيجية المحطات والمراكز في دافعية طالبات الصف العاشر الأردنيات في الاستيعاب القرائي

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ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أثر التدريس باستخدام استراتيجية المحطات والمراكز في تحسين مستوى دافعية طالبات الصف العاشر الأردنيات نحو الاستيعاب القرائي. حيث قام الباحث باختيار المدرسة بشكل قصدي. وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة التي تم اختيارها عشوائياً من 80 طالبة. إذ قسمت العينة إلى مجموعتين، مجموعة ضابطة مكونة من 40 طالبة ومجموعة تجريبية مكونة من 40 طالبة. وقد طُبِّقت الاستبانة على المجموعة الضابطة التي تم تطبيق الاستراتيجية عليها. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن مستوى دافعية الطالبات نحو استخدام استراتيجية المحطات والمراكز في حصص مهارات الاستيعاب القرائي كانت إيجابية ومرتفعة. وباعتماد على هذه النتائج، يوصي الباحثون باستخدام هذه الاستراتيجية في تدريس مهارات القراءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية المحطات والمراكز، الاستيعاب القرائي، الدافعية، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

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Introduction

Language is a system which is used by people to interact their feelings, ideas and opinions with others. Since English language becomes an international language, it is important to learn that language to be able to communicate with the people all around the world. This communication is not just through listening and speaking but also through reading and writing.

Reading is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language (Khaki, 2014). It has vital part in learning a foreign language for many reasons: it enhances the reader's understanding of the literature, it fosters the learner's metal and literacy development, and it scaffolds the learner's ability to be independent lifelong learners (Hadley, 2001). Furthermore, reading enhances the reader's knowledge and vocabulary storage which enables him/her to communicate in the target language and to understand this language (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt and Kamil, 2003).

Reading is one of the important sources for the language input (Grellet, 2001). So, English learners acquire the language structures, its culture, and vocabulary through reading. According to Keer, Duran, and Topping (2015), one of the most important reading skills is reading comprehension because without understanding the written text, the reader cannot move to the higher steps to reach the creative reading levels. Moreover, the reader who understands the text is the one who understands the written information and use them clearly in different contexts. However, Armbuster and Osborn (2003) state that teaching reading comprehension is one of the complex teaching matters. From here, teachers need to vary their strategies and methods in teaching reading comprehension such as the cooperative learning which focuses on the students' working together to understand the written text. However, teaching reading comprehension at most of public schools in Jordan is taught using the regular teaching method which focuses on the teachers' role as reader, translator of the written text in the mother tongue. Then he/she asks some questions to be answered by the students. This method may not suit all students; it doesn't take into consideration differentiations in teaching a language. This use of one traditional way in teaching reading may affect the students' motivations toward reading in English. Almahzoomi (1986) stated that most Jordanian students have low levels in reading comprehension skills which refer to the bad methods in teaching reading comprehension and in the teaching methods which focus on the teacher center-instructions lessons. Freahat (2014) stated that most English learners at universities face difficulties in understanding the written

text. Moreover, Alkhresheh (2011) claimed that the failure of learning English is started from the failure in learning literacy skills. This may refer to the adaption of traditional ways in reading comprehension lessons which is mainly based on a teacher's efforts not on the students' efforts to read by their own to be lifelong readers.

Consequently, reading comprehension needs to be taught in a way which is based on cooperative learning, students' efforts, differentiation tasks, and the teachers' roles as facilitator. Taki (2014) suggested that using a group work as a strategy for teaching English has an effective role on the students' motivations, motivation, and learning performance. However, students may feel boring by sitting in one group and doing one task all the time of reading comprehension lessons, so it may be beneficial if students move from one task to another one to accomplish the outcomes of reading comprehension lessons. This rotation in the reading comprehension may activate them and give them the chance to exchange their thoughts in different activities.

The use of traditional method in teaching English as a foreign language may affect the students' motivation and motivations toward reading comprehension lessons. Motivation is one of the most important factors in learning a foreign language Nakata (2006). This factor is considered as a basic for learning any language.

In the language learning process, cooperative learning tasks has a great effect on enhancing the students' motivation toward learning (Rahaman, 2108). Cooperative learning can be through group work or pair work. Through group work, the students interact with each other which increases their high thinking and their comprehending of the shared tasks. In addition, the members of the same group share their opinions, thoughts, and feelings to achieve the shared tasks effectively (Frey, Fisher, and Everlove, 2009).

The teacher's role in cooperative learning tasks can be through motivating students to learn through providing them with the materials they need to think creatively and to learn from their experiences. Through cooperative learning the students' motivation increases highly because through group work there is low anxiety and supportive environment for the students themselves (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). One of the cooperative strategies is stations and centers strategy. These stations and centers are provided with colored, printed and attractive materials and different tasks which enhance the students' motivation toward learning (Ediger, 2000).

In this study stations and centers are like group works. Stations are

areas inside the classroom where students attend to accomplish specific tasks collaboratively. Moreover, in each station there are different resources, tools, and activities which enhance the students to achieve the outcomes of the lesson well (Benjamin, 2014). Stations and centers strategy is effective in learning especially English language learning (McKnight, 2016). Working through stations and centers can improve the students' self-confidence and their responsibility toward learning (Collier, 2010). Self-confidence is very important in learning English as a foreign language. From here, the students will take all the efforts to do well in learning English.

For more attractive reading comprehension lessons, students have centers in each station and they use the available aids and materials to achieve the tasks of reading comprehension lessons. This also is helpful in enhancing the comprehension of the reading texts and to avoid boring feelings. Visual materials enhance the students' motivation toward literary texts and they increase students to get knowledge (Ramírez, 2012). As a result, stations and centers strategy is one of the suggested strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

Learning centers strategy includes focused activities which foster content development and literacy skills. Learning centers are similar to learning stations. They are useful for all students with different characteristics. Moreover, they are used in any type of schools. Through learning centers, the focus is on the students and they are responsible for their learning. However, the teacher's role is a guide; he/she gives students the structured activities and the directions. Moreover, learning centers strategy structure begins with the role of the teacher as a model of a specific skill. Then, the students are given the opportunity to practice this modeled skill in pairs or groups. Finally, the students practice a variety of skills in articulated centers (McKnight, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Amoush (2012) stated that the use of the inappropriate strategies in teaching reading comprehension affects the students' levels in reading comprehension negatively and Jordanian students suffer from low reading comprehension levels because of the use unsuitable of reading strategies. Alkhawwaldeh (2011) stated that Jordanian students cannot decide which strategy is more beneficial than others because they depend on their teachers in reading comprehension lessons. The researchers noticed that most of the Jordanian learners face difficulties in comprehending a reading text.

Moreover, the teachers suffer from their students' low reading comprehension performances. This may refer to the inappropriate use of teaching strategies which do not focus on the students' different needs, characteristics, and interests. Those inappropriate strategies affect the learning of reading comprehension skills and the students' motivation toward learning reading comprehension lessons negatively. Students nowadays need to be able to read based on their efforts, needs, and interest. From here, the researchers attempted to find if there is a significant difference in EFL students' English language reading comprehension skills and motivation due to the use of stations and centers strategy.

1.2. Purpose and Questions of the Study

This study aims to investigate the students' motivation towards the use of stations and centers strategy in reading comprehension lessons. This study attempts to answer the following question: What is the effect of stations and centers strategy on the experimental group students' motivation in reading comprehension?

Significance of the Study

Motivation is one of the vital factors in making a successful learning of the foreign language. From here, students' highly motivation will enhance them to be successful learners. As a result, stations and centers may be helpful in increasing the students' motivation to participate in reading comprehension tasks. The findings may solve the problem of devoting efforts by the teacher inside the classroom to teach based on the teacher centered instruction. Instead of, stations and centers strategy is based on the learners' efforts and responsibilities to achieve reading comprehension outcomes.

Furthermore, there are a few studies which are conducted about the effect of stations and centers on enhancing students' motivation in reading comprehension. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there were no studies conducted in Jordan about the effect of stations and centers strategy on the students' motivation toward reading comprehension lessons.

The results of this study may find that the stations and centers strategy is helpful in making students independent and motivated learners inside and outside the classroom. This study may be beneficial for English teachers through using stations and centers strategy to motivate students to learn and to increase their academic successful in learning a language. In addition, the supervisors can encourage the English teachers to use stations and centers

strategy to enhance the students' motivation in reading comprehension. Also, the researchers can benefit from the results of the study through conducting studies investigate the effect of stations and centers on the other skills of English language. Furthermore, the textbooks designers can design activities which enhance the student's motivation via using cooperative learning.

Operational Definition of Terms

In this study the terms are defined as:

Motivation: it refers to the tenth-grade students' desire to perform reading comprehension activities which is assessed by the students' responses to the questionnaire items.

Stations and Centers strategy: In this study, it is defined as groups (stations) and each group has its own basket of tasks, materials, and tools to achieve the reading comprehension on a specific text from the tenth-grade textbook. In each station, there will be three tasks and the students in each station will rotate from one task to the next one in a specific time. So the rotation here is not from one area to other areas in the classroom. Instead of that, there is a rotation of tasks.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study will be restricted to the following limitations:

1. The sample of the study is limited to tenth grade female students at a public school in Amman, Jordan.
2. The period of the study is limited to eight weeks of the second semester of the school year 2018/2019. Forty-five minutes to each lesson.
3. The taught material was the Action Pack Ten. The taught passages were from Action Pack Ten.

Review of Related Literature

O'Donnell (2010) examined the effect of centers on the kindergarten students' learning behaviors and performance. The participants were two kindergarten teachers who used the centers with their students to know the effect of then on their students. The instrument was an interview the two teachers who taught the two kindergarten students. The results of the study showed that centers increased the students' motivation, accountability, and achievement.

Schaal and Bogner (2010) conducted a study of human visual perception learning at workstations. The sample of the study was 125 ninth grade students. The study compared between the use of traditional method in teaching and the workstation strategy. The result of this study showed

that the workstation strategy enhances the students' collaborative work. Besides, the students became better to their personal life than those students who taught via traditional instruction.

Kracl (2011) conducted a study on the effectiveness of literacy workstations on the managing small groups instructions. The participants were 4 first grades teachers and their students from one school at Midwestern town. The instruments were teacher interviews and observation of students' and teachers' performance at literacy stations. The results of the study revealed that the literacy stations have a great effect on increasing the students' motivation and interesting in literacy stations. This leads to see their effective performance in literacy and the increasing of their motivation toward learning. Moreover, they become independent and have self-confident during the implementation of literacy workstations.

Worthy, Maloch, Pursley, Hungerford-Kresser, Hampton, Jordan and Semingson, (2015) conducted a study about the use of stations and centers in the first grades into two classrooms. The participants were the two teachers who taught using the centers. The instrument of the study was interviews of these two teachers and observation of students' performance in these learning centers. The results of the study showed that stations and centers enhance the students' self-monitoring of their behavior and learning. Moreover, they were highly engaged in reading tasks.

Hicks (2017) conducted a study to explore the benefits and challenges of applying literacy centers. The participants of the study were two female kindergarten teachers and their students in each class were between 18-20 students in North Dakota school. The instruments were semi-formal interviews with open-ended questions. The students felt proud of their accomplished works at centers and their motivation increased highly with in centers. However, the drawbacks of centers were the classroom management was hard in somehow and the teachers' wasting of a lot of time and money to create the materials for the centers.

Method and Procedures

Design of the Study

This study followed the descriptive design to examine the effect of stations and centers strategy on developing the students' motivation toward reading comprehension. The researchers chose a school purposefully. The school was one of the secondary schools in Amman Directorate of Education. Two tenth grade classroom sections were appointed randomly to

be the sample of the study which had (40) students. The students of this section were appointed randomly. Students in the chosen school had almost the same background and the same living conditions. All the students included in this study had the same learning experience and used the same textbooks (Action Pack Ten). Tenth grade female students during the second semester were selected to achieve the purpose of this study.

Variables of the Study

1. The Independent Variable - The stations and centers teaching strategy.
2. The Dependent Variable: was student's motivation towards the use of stations and centers strategy.

Instruments

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers developed a set of research instrument: A Questionnaire: the researchers developed a questionnaire in order to measure students' motivation towards stations and centers teaching strategy in reading lessons. This questionnaire was of 12 items to cover the EFL students' motivation towards stations and centers teaching strategy. It was of a five point Likert scale. The questionnaire items covered the EFL students' motivation towards stations and centers teaching strategy in reading comprehension lessons.

Motivation Questionnaire

A questionnaire of 12 items was developed to investigate the students' motivation towards using stations and centers teaching strategy. The researchers developed a questionnaire based on the theoretical framework, and previous studies, and then distributed it to the participants to identify students' motivation towards stations and centers strategy

Teaching Method

The following two methods were used in this study:

- a. The regular teaching method: is a method in which a lesson is designed by the teacher of the material. The teacher applies the traditional way of teaching reading comprehension lessons. In the traditional teaching strategy, the teacher presents the reading passages by asking certain questions about the pictures and the concept of the title. She asks pre-reading questions just to warm up students before reading the passage. Then the teacher gives students a limited time to listen to the cassette then to read the passage silently. After that, she asks students to answer the questions in the book.. In the end, the teacher asks students to answer the following reading activities in the book individually.

- b. The stations and centers strategy: The teacher planned for the lesson and in advance divided the students' works. There were five groups and in each group there is a center of materials such as dictionaries, pictures, colors, plaster, glue, scissors, colored papers, and charts. Each group has a number of tasks and they have to move from one task to the next one till the end of the lesson. The rotation is not by the students from one area to another one. The rotation keeps the same group and each group had a number of activities related to the written text and everything that the students need to accomplish the reading comprehension tasks. The students worked in groups to achieve the tasks. The teacher divides the students within five groups. The teacher makes students to rotate in the following activities; watching a video, questioning, pair work to discuss the written passage, group work to discuss the passage, creating a poster or drawing a picture which shows the students' understanding of the passage, and presenting of the students' works in front of the classroom.

Validity

To ensure the validity of the motivation questionnaire, the questionnaire was judged by a number of experts consisting of 11 EFL professors, EFL experts, English Translation professors, English Language and Linguistics experts. Their feedback and suggestions were taken into consideration in editing the statements of the questionnaire. Their comments were taken into consideration in preparing the final draft of the questionnaire, some items were omitted, some were changed and others were modified. The questionnaire was applied on a prospective sample of 20 students from outside the study sample, and calculated the correlation coefficients between each item, and the questionnaire as a whole.

Reliability

The reliability of the test was verified through a pilot study of 20 students who were excluded from the sample. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated and it was found .821 which is considered acceptable for conducting the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedures

After assuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers followed the following procedures to collect the needed data in the second semester of the academic year 2018 / 2019:

1. The researchers had permission from Amman Directorate of Education to apply the study in the chosen school.

2. The researchers met the principal of the school from which the sample was drawn.
3. The researchers talked about the purpose of the study to the tenth grade students and their teachers who will participate in the study.
4. The researchers trained the teacher on how to implement stations and centers strategy. The English teacher taught the reading comprehension lessons for the experimental group and control group.
5. The researchers applied the questionnaire.

Results of the Question:

What is the effect of stations and centers strategy on the experimental group students' motivation in reading comprehension?

To answer the question of the study, means and standard deviations of the students' responses to the questionnaire items were calculated. Table (1) below presents the results:

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Students Responses

No	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Degree
1	Stations and centers strategy made reading lessons interesting.	4.47	.716	High
2	I felt that reading comprehension tasks are done easily through stations and centers strategy.	4.25	.742	High
3	Stations and centers strategy enhanced my responsibility for learning.	4.13	.853	High
4	I enjoyed working with my colleagues in stations and centers.	4.53	.784	High
5	I was an active student in Stations and centers strategy.	4.20	.966	High
6	Stations and centers strategy was easy to use in class.	4.40	.709	High
7	I was able to achieve the reading comprehension tasks easily.	4.10	.810	High
8	Stations and centers strategy was flexible.	4.30	.791	High
9	Stations and centers strategy was useful in developing reading comprehension skills.	4.35	.622	High
10	I made a good use of time through stations and centers.	3.98	.832	High
11	Stations and centers strategy enhanced collaborative work.	4.48	.751	High
12	I had a chance to share ideas and opinions with others through stations and centers strategy.	4.40	.672	High
	All items	4.30	.466	High

Table 1 shows that the highest mean scores was (4.53) for item No (4) "I enjoyed working with my colleagues in stations and centers." followed by item No (1) "Stations and centers strategy made reading lessons interesting." (Mean score 4.47), while the lowest mean score was (3.98) for items No (10) "I made a good use of time through stations and centers. "Students' Motivation Scores" was (4.30) after treatment. So, students' motivation toward using stations and centers strategy improved after the treatment.

Discussion and Recommendations

The researchers believe that the students were more encouraged and motivated toward reading comprehension lessons using new strategies such as stations and centers strategy. This strategy might be beneficial for students due to several reasons such as active participation, independent leaning, self-confidence, high motivation, active interaction, creativity, raising student's achievement scores and maximizing comfort and understanding of reading materials content. Students have been motivated because the existence of different tasks, rotation from one task to others, interaction between students, and the availability of the different materials and sources which help the students to understand the reading comprehension texts. Motivation could play an important role in the improvement of students reading comprehension. This result was in line with study by Migdadi (2016) who investigated the strong relationship between reading comprehension and motivation. The findings of his showed that motivation might provide positive impact on students' reading comprehension achievement.

The question examined the students' motivation toward using stations and centers strategy in reading comprehension lessons. The results revealed that the students' motivation in reading comprehension was positive and high through using stations and centers strategy in reading comprehension lessons. The findings showed that students preferred having stations and centers strategy in their classrooms. Moreover, students' motivations showed that stations and centers strategy helped them to have more opportunities to participate in learning activities. This result was in line with the previous studies (e.g. O'Donnell, 2010; Schaal and Bogner, 2010; Hicks, 2017; Worthy, Maloch, Pursley, Hungerford-Kresser, Hampton, Jordan and Semingson, 2015; Krael, 2011). These studies stressed the importance and the positive effect of stations and centers strategy on learning a language, the students' high engagement, motivation, accountability, and achievement. Moreover, this strategy increases the collaborative work, students' academic,

linguistic, and social skills, the teacher's positive toward teaching, and the learner's communicative skills. Furthermore, the results of the studies showed that stations and centers enhance the students' self-monitoring of their behavior and learning. Moreover, they were highly engaged in reading tasks.

In conclusion, students' responses might have a good indicator about the effectiveness of using stations and centers strategy on Jordanian EFL tenth grade students reading comprehension. The researcher noticed that students were encouraged and motivated in stations and centers lessons. The researchers claim that the students' positive motivations towards stations and centers strategy could be attributed to the interesting and exciting environment which stations and centers strategy provided.

Conclusions

This study found that there was a statistically significant difference between students' motivation before and after using stations and centers strategy, as the experimental group who studied using stations and centers strategy, motivation enhanced significantly. In other words, experimental group who studied using stations and centers strategy had high motivation in reading comprehension lessons. The researchers believe that, stations and centers strategy was beneficial. It improved learning and teaching, developed communication and enhanced students' achievement. Therefore the researchers concluded that stations and centers strategy had a significant impact on EFL students' reading comprehension. The researchers believe that students' motivation towards stations and centers strategy was positive; the results showed that students considered stations and centers strategy, useful, interesting and enjoyable.

Recommendations

Based on what has been reached from the results and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- This study lasted for 8 weeks. Therefore, further research that lasts for a longer time is recommended.
- It is recommended to conduct further prospective studies using stations and centers strategy in the teaching of different course materials for different level grades in different ways.

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