

The Effect of Using Literature Circles(LC) Strategy on Students' Achievement in Literature Spots For " Iraq Opportunities textbook "

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Abstract:

Literature is generally seen to play a valid role in language teaching and therefore, should have its place in the language curriculum.

This study aims at finding out the effect of using literature Circles(LC) Strategy on Students' Achievement in Literature Spots For " Iraq Opportunities textbook".

The study is restricted to the students (females) of the third year intermediateschools in Iraq during the academic year 2014-2015. In this study,(100) female students are included. Sixty students are chosen randomly to represent the main study sample. In order to collect the necessary data. A literature test is applied as an instrument.

The obtained results of this study show that there is a significant difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of the experimental group that indicates the effectiveness of using LC in teaching novel, and indicate the positive effect of using LCT. The collaborative discussion in LCs and the communication among pupils, so each pupil has the responsibility to share ideas, thoughts and meaning in the discussion according to her role improve the higher level of pupils in understanding the story and expressing their ideas and experiences moreover comprehension of the characters, events and author's style.

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

One of the most important reasons for using literature in the foreign language classroom is its constructive power to improve language skills. Teaching literature is a difficult task to be tackled especially in intermediate stages because the language of literature is rich and full of language and voice devices. It also can be difficult because students have different reading levels and diverse learning styles. Therefore , Before beginning any piece of literature, it is important to be aware of dynamics of students.

Pavey as cited by Allen and Compell (1972:182) states that teaching literature in the foreign language classroom implies among other things developing the pupils' awareness of language. This is so because literature

develops all language skills by extending students' linguistic in vocabulary, usage and syntax. Literature then, is valuable in language teaching when all language skills are enhanced together with secondary skills which include making statements, narrating, persuading ...etc (Haycraft, 1978: 19). Moreover, Literature allows students to conceive things; they have never seen or conceived before. It can enhance their imagination too.

Though literature is interesting for teenagers, but it needs special care in dealing with understanding metaphor, simile, symbolism, theme, plot of literary work whether it is poetry, drama or novel.

LCT is collaborative and student-centered reading strategy. This strategy demonstrates the different roles and allows students practice discussion and they take responsibility of their tasks.

To sum up, LCT has not been applied in Iraq, besides its effect is unknown. So there is a need to experiment the effect of this strategy. This study investigates empirically the degree of effect this strategy creates on pupils' achievements in literature.

1.2 Aims

1. finding out the effect of using literature Circles(LC) Strategy on Students' Achievement in Literature Spots For " Iraq Opportunities textbook"

1.3 Values

1. This study provides teachers with new strategy in teaching literature which facilitate their work.
2. LCT is a good and a suitable way to literature teaching and reading instruction that promote social interaction and discussion as students learn to comprehend text.

1.4 Hypotheses

It is assumed that the outcome of a study like one we have at hand falls into one of the following alternative:

1. There is a significant degree of positive effect on English language learning by using literature circle strategy in teaching literature spots in IO series.
2. There is no significant difference between the control group (CG) and the Experimental group (EG) achievement in literature by using LCs.

1.5 Limits of the study

This study is limited to

1. The students (females) of the third year intermediate schools in Iraq during the academic year 2014-2015.

2. Literary spots in "Iraq Opportunities" series Book 7 and a simplified novel. "The Prince and the Pauper" for the writer Mark Twain, "The Fruits of Labour" for the writer Shazia Andaleeb and "The War of the Worlds" for the writer Herbert George Wells chosen to be taught.

1.6 Definitions of Basic Terms

1.6.1 Literature Circle (LCs):

It defines LCs as a small group of students gather together to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by student's response to what they have read. The students talk about events, characters, setting and theme ShickNoe (1999: 45).

Literature Circles are small peer-led discussions groups that discuss literary texts (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002: 90).

1.6.2 The operational definition:

it is using small groups of students to discuss a piece of literature and take responsibilities of reading and discussing the text taken from the material of literature spots of IO series.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Teaching Literature Circle (LCs) in EFL Classroom

The use of literature in EFL classroom can provide a powerful pedagogic tool in learners' linguistic development. Literature is found as a difficult subject because students, learners require greater efforts to interpret literary text since meaning is detached from the reader's intermediate social context (Carter & Long, 1996: xxiv).

Moreover, Literature Circles are strong classroom strategies because of the way that they couple collaborative learning with student-centered inquiry. As they conclude their description of the use of literature circles in classroom. This strategy helps student become stronger readers and they take their responsibility for their own learning and this is reflected in effectively choices of the LC groups. The students take charge of their own discussion, held each other accountable for how much or how little reading to do and for the preparation for each session.

The positive peer pressure that the number of each group placed on each other contributed to each student's accountability to the rest of the group when students engage with texts and one another in this way. The students take control of their literacy in a positive and rewarding way (Nash & Julie, 2000: 29-37).

2.2 Role of Teacher and Learner in Literature Circles(LC):

The teacher can use the authentic material from daily language to present their texts in the class if the pupils level is low rather than the complex context. In addition to that magazines and newspapers use sometimes many simple texts which can be used in the class. Literature is one of the advanced tools to present the material in the class to enable pupils read more and more to grasp the target language (Leonard, 1983: 31).

Meanwhile , Literature circles provide away for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss and respond to books. Collaboration is the heart of this technique. Students reshape and add onto their understanding as they construct meaning with other readers. LCs guide students to deeper understanding of what they structured discussion and extended written moreover artistic response (Noe&Johnson, 1999: ix).

Similarly ,In Literature circles the discussion is guided by students, talk about events, characters setting and theme. They also discuss the author's life and the personal experience that is related to the story. The aim of LCs is to encourage students love reading through the discussion and to allow students practice and develop their skills and strategies of good readers.

Additionally ,there are many different roles within the literature circle vary for primary grade levels and middle grade levels. The roles for older readers consist of the *connector*, *questioner*, *literary luminary*, *illustrator*, *summarizer*, *researcher*, *word wizard*, and *scene setter* (Daniels, 2002).

1. *The connector's job* requires the students to make self to text, text to text references. This means connecting what the student reads with real life or in the community to similar events or to other people or problems. He has shared his connection to this section of the story, each member in the group relates her own connection to the story and they may refer to different passages (Harste, 1988: 50). The purpose is to help other students be spotlighting something interesting, funny, puzzling or important from the text.

2. *The questioner* is responsible to write down questions for the group to discuss in the circle. that his group may want to discuss about any part of

the story. The best questions that come from his own thoughts, feelings and ideas about this section of the story (Fall, 2000: 37). He may write questions about characters setting and events. He makes a list of questions about any part of the story (Burda, 2000: 17).

3. **The illustrator** is assigned the responsibility of drawing anything about the story that the group liked or thought was meaningful. The student's job is to draw or write the important events, characters and setting in the story.

4. **The word wizard** is asked to look through the text and determine what words are meaningful and/or tricky. The student's job is to look for strange and important words in the story. He finds the puzzling and unfamiliar words, he marks them down on the page. Later, he can look them up in a dictionary and write the meaning or definitions of these words. He can find words that are significant to the story and help members find and discuss the words (Keegan, 1991: 85).

5. **The literary luminaries**' role requires them to go through the text and locate a few special sections or quotations to discuss within the group.

6. **The summarizer's job** is to prepare a brief summary of the assigned reading to share with the group. He doesn't tell the whole story in full details; he just focuses on the important events. The other members of the group will be counting to him to give statements of the summary and give key points.

7. **The researcher's role** is to gather background information on any topic that relates to the book. Such topics could be the geography or the climate for the book's setting.

8. **The scene setter's task** is to discuss the setting or settings if the text has characters that change their locations (Daniels, 2002).

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

The sample of this study includes (60) third year pupils' intermediate schools of the English language in Misan Governorate.

The population of this study is the third year pupils. Two sections have been selected randomly from the second intermediate year. One section has been selected randomly as an experimental group (taught with LCT), it is section B, the other is the control group (taught with traditional technique it is section "A", within an academic setting to obtain a pre-test measure then to create coherent pairs, and finally to assign students randomly in different sections (Scherer & Wertheimer, 1965: 34). The students in each group is (30) students. Al-Tahreer intermediate School for girls is selected since it is being in the centre of the town.

3.2 Instruments

In order to achieve the aims of the study, a literature test has been constructed to be the main instrument used .

3.2.1 Face Validity of the test:

An instrument is considered to have face validity in case that its items are well accepted by other testers , moderators , teachers (Hughes , 1989 : 22). In order to ensure the face validity of the literature test , its first version has been exposed to a number of specialists in the fields of linguistics and methodology of teaching EFL as shown in table (1) below

Table(1)

The Academic Ranks, Names, and Locations of the Jury Member

N	Academic Rank	Name	College
1	Asst. Prof.(Ph.D in ELT)	BushraSaadoon Al - Noori	College of Education, University of Baghdad
2	Asst. Prof.(Ph.D in Linguistics)	BushraNi'ma Rashid	College of Education , University of Baghdad .
3	Asst. Prof.(M.A. in ELT)	Alaalsmail Chaloob	College of EducationUniversity of Anbar
4	Asst. Prof .(M.A. in ELT)	SaadonSalih	College of Basic Education, University of Misan
5	Instr .(Ph.D in ELT)	khansaHasan	College of Art , University of Al.ImamALKadhim
6	Instr .(Ph.D in ELT)	LiqaaHabeeb	College of EducationUniversity ofDiayla
7	Instr.(M.A. in ELT)	NajimAbdulah	College of Education, University of Misan
8	Asst Instr.(M.A in ELT)	HyfaaKahadim	College of Basic Education, University of Misan
9	Asst. Instr.(M.A. in Linguistics)	Iqbal S. Disher	College of Basic Education, University of Misan

3.2.2 Construction of the Test

The test consists of five questions about three stories, these stories are found in IO textbook for the third intermediate school. Four questions consists of three items and the other one question is from five questions ,but the answer should be included in five statements. students to achieve their best opportunities for students to learn important kills.

4. Results, Conclusions, Recommendations

4.1. Results Related to the Aim of the study:

4.1.1 Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post-test Scores

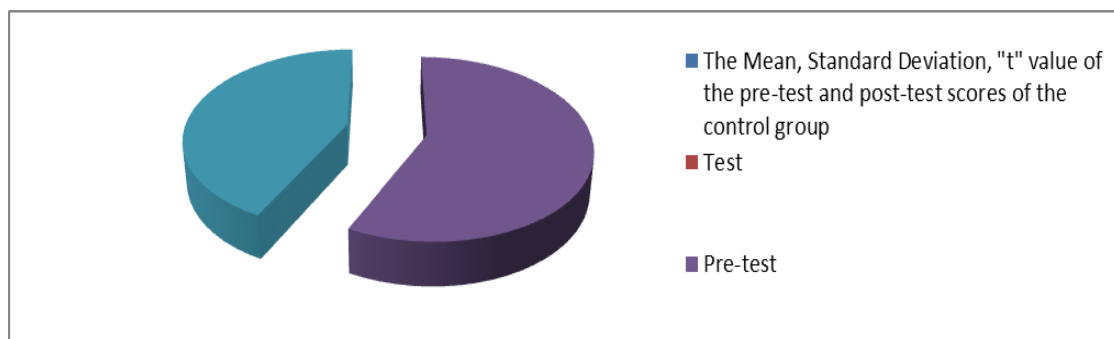
In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the two mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the total scores of the post-tests, the mean scores of the two groups is (61.933) and the mean of the control group have been compared, the mean of the experimental group is (51.167).

The "t" test has been calculated in order to find out if there is significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. The "t" value is 2.297, it is compared with "t" critical value which is 2.000

Table (2)

Mean, Standard Deviation and "t" Test Value of Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Group

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	"t" Value	The Critical Value
Experimental	61.933	18.631	2.297	2.000
Control Group	51.167	17.653		



Graphic 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and "t" Test Value of Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Group

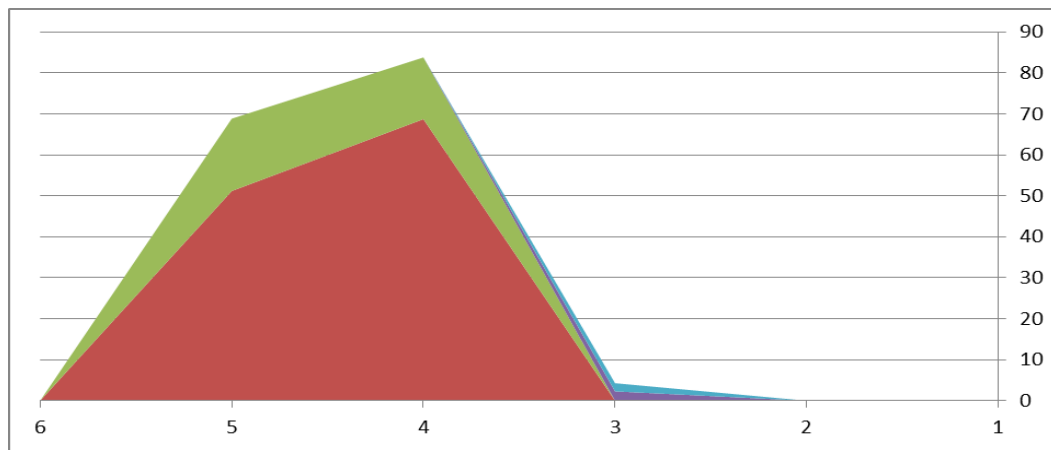
Table (3) indicates that the achievement of pupils in the experimental group is better than the achievement of the pupils in the control group.

Table (3)

The Mean, Standard Deviation, "t" value of the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group

Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	"t" Value	The Critical Value
Pre-	68.7	15.06		

test			2.289	2.000
Post-test	51.168	17.658		



Graphic 2: The Mean, Standard Deviation, "t" value of the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group

This indicates that using LCT which is based on collaboration and discussion of the stories in circles and each pupil has his role in the discussion circle is more effective than the use of traditional strategy which is based on question and answer for pupils. The LCT provides the pupils with opportunities to share their own ideas, opinions and every member has a personal responsibilities for contributing in the discussion with their peers. It has been also noticed that the LCT aims to LCs:

1. LCs promote the pleasure of sharing reading experiences and thinking about what has been read through discussion and the opportunity to speak and be heard.
2. LCs encourage pupils to speak and retell the story in their own words and think about the events. LCT is a student's-centre. The teacher is the observer, monitor, and facilitator.
3. Extend students comprehension of literature and develop personal responses to a text.
4. Involve students in discussion and decision-making in a group setting.
5. Develop appreciation of author's style and literature.

Finally, pupils' talk in the experimental group speaking more confidently about the story than the pupils in the control group.

4.2 Conclusions

A. The results of this study indicate the positive effect of using LCT The collaborative discussion in LCs and the communication among pupils, so each pupil has the responsibility to share ideas, thoughts and meaning in the discussion according to her role improve the higher level of pupils in understanding the story and expressing their ideas and experiences moreover comprehension of the characters, events and author's style.

B. This study supports the point of view that teaching literature depends on discussion and critical thinking that are the base of communication in LC.

C There is a significant difference between the pre-test score and post-test score of the experimental group that indicates the effectiveness of using LC in teaching novel.

D. The results indicate the importance of the LCs and the role of each pupil makes the literature as an easy subject for pupils to understand the plot and theme and makes them enjoyable. Besides, using data-show to display the story is more and interesting that the pupils are motivated to read the story.

E. There is a need to give pupils opportunities to discuss and speak their ideas, events with their peers in LCs under the observation of the teacher.

4.4 Recommendations.

1. New methods of teaching literature spots such as LCT must be applied in our classrooms.

2. Teachers need to make the classroom a suitable place for pupils to share and discuss different stories in different circles with their peers and take a new role in each LC meeting.

3. Teachers of literature should add a suitable factor to make the subject easier for pupils especially literature, pupils find it a difficult subject to read like using cartoon films , data show, charts, writing notes and fix them on the wall for each group.

4.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

These are the suggestions for the related studies that can be applied in our classroom.

1. A study to conduct experiments of using LCs, in different stages of learning i.e. university, secondary and primary.

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Appendix (A)

The Items of the Test for Third Intermediate School Pupils.

Q1: Match the name of the writer in List A with the writer's book in List B.

List A: The Writer's Name:

1. Mark Twain.
2. Shazia Andaleeb.
3. Herbert George Wells.

List B: The Writer's Book:

- a. The Prince and the Pauper.
- b. The War of the Worlds.
- c. The Fruits of Labour.

A. The Prince and the Pauper

Q2 1. Do you think it is easy or difficult to be a prince or king?

2. Does money always make you happy?

3. Do you want to change places with someone? Say who and who.

B. The War of the Worlds

Q3 : 1. Is the narrator happy at the end? why /why not?

2. Do you think it is important that people go to space?

3. Do you think advanced technology is a good or bad thing? Give your reasons.

C. The Fruits of Labour

Q4 Answer these questions .

1. What did the son like and dislike?

2. Why did the son run to his mother?

3. Where did the boys' mother go? why?

4. When the businessman sent his son out a second time, what did he threaten him with?

5. Why did the son agree to carry the trunk of the shopkeeper?

Q5. Mention two characters of these stories.

1. The Prince of the Pauper.

1. The Fruits of Labour

2. The War of the Worlds

Appendix (B)

Time: (90) minutes for each meeting

The method used in the classroom.

The researcher used Literature Circle strategy in teaching the literature spots.

Presentation

The pupils shape five circles, each circle has eight pupils.

The chosen story is displayed by using data-show and pupils see the story as a film cartoon, they also have copies of the story.

Each group consists of eight pupils each one of them has a role with certain responsibilities.

1. The connector's job

2. The questioner

3. The illustrator

4. The word wizard

5. The literary luminaries' role

6. The summarizer's job

7. The researcher's role

8. The scene setter's task

Each group writes a list of questions and comments about the author, characters events and connect them with their experiences. After the discussion the director with his group write the questions and answers with comment on a paper and fixed it on the wall. There will be different ideas, comments, and experiences observed and monitored.

The members of the group change in each new meeting.

Date	The students' name and their role in each group				
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
The Name of the Story	1. The connector's job 2. The questioner 3. The illustrator 4. The word wizard 5. The literary luminaries' role 6. The summarizer's job 7. The researcher's role 8. The scene setter's task				

أثر استخدام إستراتيجية دوائر الأدب (LC) على تحصيل الطلاب في بقع الأدب بالنسبة " لكتاب فرص العراق".

أ.م.د. فاطمة رحيم مدرس. رائد فاضل محمد

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الملخص:

ينظر إلى الأدب عموماً بأنه يلعب دوراً فعالاً في تعليم اللغة، وبالتالي، يجب أن يكون مكانها في مناهج اللغة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استخدام إستراتيجية دوائر الأدب (LC) على تحصيل الطلبة في بقع الأدب بالنسبة إلى "كتاب فرص العراق".

تقتصر الدراسة إلى (٦٠) طالبة (الإناث) من المدارس المتوسطة السنة الثانية في ميسان خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠١٤-٢٠١٥. ومن أجل جمع البيانات اللازمة، تم تطبيق اختبار كأداة في هذه الدراسة. النتائج المتحصلة عليها من هذه الدراسة تظهر أن هناك فرق كبير بين درجة الاختبار القبلي ودرجة الاختبار البعدي للمجموعة التجريبية التي تشير إلى فعالية استخدام دوائر الأدب (LC) في رواية التدريس، وتشير إلى الأثر الإيجابي لاستخدام LCT المناقشة التعاونية في خطابات الاعتماد والتواصل بين التلاميذ، لذلك كل تلميذ لديه مسؤولية لتبادل الآراء والأفكار والمعنى في المناقشة وفقاً لدورها في تحسين مستوى أعلى من التلاميذ في فهم القصة والتعبير عن الأفكار والخبرات وعلاوة على ذلك فهم الشخصيات، الأحداث وأساليب البلاغ.