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CONTENTS

An Emersonian Interpretation of the Two Significant Fictional Characters: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale and Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe

Nathaniel Hawthorne'un Arthur Dimmesdale Karakteri ile Daniel Defoe'nun

Robinson Crusoe Karakterinin Emerson'un "Self-Reliance-Özgüven"

Makalesine Göre İncelenmesi

Hande İSAOĞLU AKBIYIK 1

An Action Research Study: Benefits of Using Active Learning Strategies and Activities in Speaking Classes

Bir Eylem Araştırması: Konuşma Derslerinde Aktif Öğrenme Strateji ve

Aktivite Kullanımının Faydaları

Sanaz MOAEZZEZE, Hülya YUMRU 13

Efl Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing

İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Akademik Yazma Konusunda

Karşılaştıkları Zorluklar

Bayan MOHAMMAD ALNIJRES, Hülya YUMRU 27

The Role of Motivational Strategies in Motivating Iraqi Efl Students to Speak English

Iraklı Yabancı Dil Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Konuşmaya Teşvik Edilmesinde Motivasyon

Stratejilerinin Rolü

Kosrat OMAR, Akbar Rahimi ALISHAH 35

The Impact of Educational Games and Gender on Five Year Old Iraqi Efl Learners

Eğitim Oyunlarının ve Cinsiyetin Beş Yaşındaki Iraklı Öğrenciler Üzerindeki Etkisi

Akram AL-ZANGANA, Akbar Rahimi ALISHAH 51

From The Editor

The International Journal of Media, Culture and Literature, published biannually by the School of Foreign Languages at Istanbul Aydın University, Istanbul, Turkey, is an international scholarly journal in English devoted in its entirety to media, culture and literature.

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As a biannual academic journal, JMCL publishes articles on English language and linguistics, on English and American literature and culture from the Middle Ages to the present, on the new English literatures, as well as on general and comparative literary studies, including aspects of cultural and literary theory. JMCL also aims to create a critical, discursive space for the promotion and exploration of media, culture and their relations with literature.

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**Nur Emine KOÇ, PhD.
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An Emersonian Interpretation of the Two Significant Fictional Characters: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale and Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe

Lecturer Hande İSAOĞLU AKBIYIK¹

Abstract

Ralph Waldo Emerson's well-known essay "Self-Reliance" mainly discusses the basic steps that should be followed to become a complete individual. Briefly, in his essay Emerson says: achieving self-reliance comes from trusting yourself and being honest with that self. He describes how a person should be, what characteristics to have, and the importance of becoming self-reliant. Emersonian fulfillment of self-reliance can be seen in different fictional works, his ideas and definition of self-reliance provide insight to analyze two significant fictional characters from an Emersonian perspective: one is Arthur Dimmesdale from *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the other one is Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. Hawthorne's depiction of Arthur Dimmesdale is an example of how an individual fails to possess the feeling of self-reliance. Throughout the novel, Hawthorne focuses on the weakness and fears of Dimmesdale which retains him from being a self-reliant individual. On the other hand, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe manages to achieve self-reliance despite having difficult times. Robinson's existence on the island actually deepens his self-reliance since he withdraws from the external society that is far from him and as a result he turns inward. Being alone on a desert island provokes the feeling of self-reliance, which is necessary to survive. He manages to survive as a self-reliant man by depending on his capabilities, logic, and personal instincts.

Keywords: *Self-reliance, isolation, self-awareness, fear, connection*

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Nathaniel Hawthorne'un Arthur Dimmesdale Karakteri ile Daniel Defoe'nun Robinson Crusoe Karakterinin Emerson'un "Self-Reliance-Özgüven" Makalesine Göre İncelenmesi

Öz

Ralph Waldo Emerson'un ünlü makalesi "Self Reliance-Özgüven", temelde tam bir birey olmak için izlenmesi gereken temel adımlardan bahsetmektedir. Özgüven duygusu kazanmak, kendinize güvenmekten ve bireyin kendisine dürüst olmasından geçmektedir. Bir insanın nasıl olması gerektiğini, hangi özelliklere sahip olduğunu ve kendine bağımlı olmanın önemini tanımlar. Emerson'ın kişinin kendine ait özgüvenini nasıl oluşturabileceği ve kendine güven ifadesinin nasıl tanımladığı farklı kurgusal eserlerde görülebilir. Emerson'un bu yaklaşımı onun perspektifinden iki önemli kurgusal karakteri analiz etmek için gerekli yaklaşımı sağlar: Bu karakterlerden biri, Nathaniel Hawthorne'nin Scarlet Letter'ından Arthur Dimmesdale ve diğeri Daniel Defoe'nun Robinson Crusoe karakteridir. Hawthorne'un Arthur Dimmesdale'in tasviri, bir bireyin kendine güven duygusuna sahip olamamasının ve bunun sonuçlarının bir örneğidir. Roman boyunca Hawthorne, kendisini kendine güvenen bir birey olmaktan uzak tutan Dimmesdale'in zayıflığı ve korkularına odaklanır. Öte yandan Defoe'nun Robinson Crusoe'su zor zamanlara rağmen kendine güveni elde etmeyi başarıyor. Robinson'un adadaki varlığı, kendisinden çok uzakta olan dış toplumdan çekilmesinden ve sonuç olarak içeriye dönmesinden kaynaklı, kendi özgüvenini derinleştirmektedir. Bir ıssız adada yalnız kalmak, hayatta kalmak için gerekli olan kendine güven duygusunu tetikler ve ortaya çıkmasına sebep olur. Tüm bunların sonucunda da Crusoe, kendi yeteneklerine, mantığına ve kişisel içgüdülerine bağlı olarak kendine güvenen bir adam olarak hayatta kalmayı başarır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kendine güven, yalnızlaşma, kendini tanıma, korku, bağlantı kurmak*

Introduction

Written in 1841, Ralph Waldo Emerson's well-known essay "Self-Reliance" mainly deals with the issue of being an individual. Briefly, in his essay Emerson says: being an individual comes from trusting yourself and being honest with that self. He starts his essay with these sentences; "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men - that is genius." (Emerson 145). He describes how a person should be, what characteristics to have, and the importance of becoming a self-reliant individual. First of all, an individual should trust in himself or herself: the first point that makes an individual self-reliant is the feeling of trust. Everyone is born possessing the adequate qualifications to become an individual: people just need to learn how to utilize these things that they have, and this happens as long as people trust in themselves and accept the person that they truly have inside. Emerson expresses his idea on the importance of trust:

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. (Emerson 146)

Emerson suggests individuals trust themselves, their intuition, and their nature. Only individuals possessing these qualities are able to create harmony within themselves. Consistency is another point that is discussed through the essay. Everyone expects people to be really consistent. There should not be any dilemma or conflict between their acts and ideas. Their actions and thoughts are supposed to be predictable; however, according to Emerson, being different and unpredictable will bring you greatness. Emerson names consistency as a kind of terror and says: "The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our inconsistency" (Emerson 151). Individuals should not be afraid of expressing their own ideas and supporting them, or should not be afraid of being misunderstood: "Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be

misunderstood" (Emerson 152). In addition, he supports the idea that of believing in one's self and not hesitating to express personal thoughts: "In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts" (Emerson 145). Secondly, an individual is expected to be a non-conformist. This is the core of self-reliant feelings. Emerson explains the importance of conformity by saying: "The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs" (Emerson 148). Nobody has to tell people what is wrong or what is right to do. If an individual wants to find the truth and the things that are true, he/she must follow his/her own beliefs and values. As long as individuals consider their acts or decisions true, they do not have to care about what the rest of the world says. Once a person heads for his inner self, it is impossible not to find out the truth. According to Emerson, people's own nature bears the top priority, over everything: "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it" (Emerson 148). The actions or the decisions that individuals take should only be concerned with them, not the other people around them. There is always a conflict between the individuals and the society as a whole; there will always be people who think they know what is best for others or who are always eager to prove what is true or wrong. In such a case, the difficult task is to be a single and different individual among the people of the society rather than following the latest trends of the world and the other members of the community: "What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think" (Emerson 150). People must be responsible for what they have done or are doing, not for what others tell them to do or blame them for doing.

George Kateb in his book, *Emerson and Self-Reliance*, gives the best definition of self-reliance: "it is the steady effort of thinking one's thoughts and thinking them through. It is intellectual independence, reactive and responsive self-possession" (Kateb 31). Individuals should not be afraid of criticism: people have a tendency to criticize or ridicule, but this will not be permanent. The thing that will stay with individuals is what they think. Individuals cannot shape their own decisions according to other people and should not let them affect the way they choose. Finally, Emerson also points out the advancements of society. According to Emerson, society does not show true progress:

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is Christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given something is taken. (Emerson 166)

While making advances, society does not go further because everything, any kind of development is based on give and take relationships. While one side gets better, the other side becomes distorted, which means the total advancement will never be possible for society. Emerson gives a really meaningful example to exemplify these give and take relationships in society: “The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a Geneva watch, but fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun” (Emerson 167). While showing progress on one side, the modern man is falling behind on the other side. Thus, according to Emerson, society never progresses or advances.

Why Hawthorne’s Arthur Dimmesdale Cannot be a Self-Reliant Individual

Emersonian fulfilment of self-reliance can be seen in many different fictional works, this essay will analyze two significant characters from an Emersonian perspective of becoming a self: one is Arthur Dimmesdale, from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, and the other one is Robinson Crusoe from Daniel Defoe’s novel of the same name.

Hawthorne’s depiction of Arthur Dimmesdale is an example of a character who cannot become a self-reliant individual or in other words, an individual who fails to possess the feeling of self-reliance. Throughout the novel, Hawthorne focuses on the weakness and fears of Dimmesdale. According to the portrayal of Dimmesdale by Hawthorne, he is incapable of making life-altering decisions and changes instead he places the burdens upon the shoulders of others. That is why Hawthorne’s depiction of Arthur Dimmesdale is seen as a failure from the perspective of achieving Emersonian self-reliance. Roger Lundin comments on this issue and says, “In *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne set out to realize this Emersonian romantic ideal and failed at his task” (Lundin 156). As Emerson describes the way of being a self-reliant person, the first thing is

to trust yourself. Dimmesdale fails to do this in the very beginning of the novel since he does not have trust and courage to accept his guilt; he is not able to accept the fact that he committed adultery with Hester Prynne, thus he puts this burden on Hester's shoulders and she bears all the humiliation and accusations alone without Dimmesdale. He does not trust himself enough to reveal his adultery in front of Puritan society, rather he leaves the decision of whether to reveal his name or not to Hester: "If thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace, and that thy earthly punishment will thereby be more effectual to salvation, I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer!" (Hawthorne 93). Instead of making his sin public, he does not trust himself and does not share the outcome of that "sin" with Hester Prynne. As a result, Hester is known as the symbol of adultery, of the sin that they have shared whereas Dimmesdale lacks the courage to reveal it to the Puritans because of his holy and highly respected position in Puritan society. Another failure of self-trust occurs during another scaffold scene. Pearl, their daughter, asks Dimmesdale to stand on the scaffold with them. At first, the Minister agrees, and stands on it when the place is empty, and there is nobody around. However, when Pearl asks him to stand on the scaffold with them again, he says; "Not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not to-mor-row!" (Hawthorne 172-73). Here again, he has a chance to acknowledge his sin and share the destiny of Hester and Pearl, but the thing he does is to leave them alone since he does not trust himself enough to reveal his secret and make this public to others. He, also, does not trust the decisions he is supposed to take; instead he asks Hester to do it in his place, because he does not believe that he is strong enough to make a true decision. In the brook scene of the novel, when Hester and Dimmesdale meet and are walking through the forest, Hester reveals the identity of Roger Chillingworth, who is her former husband, and asks Dimmesdale to stay away from him. Dimmesdale cannot make a decision on his own as he is not a self-dependent individual, and instead asks Hester to do it for him: "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!" (Hawthorne 213), and Hester agrees to help him and gives him advice: "Thou must dwell no longer with this man, said Hester slowly and firmly. Thy heart must be no longer under his evil eye!" (Hawthorne 213). Dimmesdale repeatedly fails in making decisions and trusting himself and thus he reveals his lack of self-reliance. Rather than being a self-dependent

person, he is an independent one. He is in search of someone else who can share his burden and stay much stronger than him. In this novel, if anyone is self-reliant, this person must be Hester Prynne. She is the stronger, she trusts herself and she stands behind her behaviors. Despite knowing that adultery is a sinful act, she listens to her inner voice and acts according to her own values and morals.

Another quality to achieve self-reliance is to maintain a single identity regardless of social context. Most of the time, people really care about what others think about themselves or how they feel that they have to follow the norms and values that have been determined before by the society. However, each person is a single identity, therefore it is really important to preserve this identity from distortion. However, in the very beginning of the novel, Dimmesdale fails to create this single identity. He is Arthur Dimmesdale only when he is with Hester Prynne; however, he has responsibilities and duties that are determined by the community. He is known as the Minister Arthur Dimmesdale by the members of Puritan community. This title or identity always prevents him from revealing the truth and confessing his sin. Emerson discusses this issue and says; “It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude” (Emerson 150). As Emerson states, it is more important to live by one’s own standards not focusing on what the rest of the world says. Dimmesdale was not able to achieve this until the very end of the novel. It is just a short time before his death when Dimmesdale decides to reveal himself to the Puritan people. He begins his sermon with:

“People of New England!” cried he, with a voice that rose over them, high, solemn, and majestic, - yet had always a tremor through it, and sometimes a shriek, struggling up out of a fathomless depth of remorse and woe, - “ye, that have loved me! - ye, that have deemed me holy! - behold me here, the one sinner of the world ! At last! - at last! - I stand upon the spot where, seven years since, I should have stood; here, with this woman, whose arm, more than the little strength wherewith I have crept hitherward, sustains me, at this dreadful moment, from groveling down upon my face! (Hawthorne 267)

Finally, these are the sentences of a man who reveals his secret sin that he shares with Hester Prynne; this is only one of the few moments when he achieves self-reliance throughout the novel. He is enlightened by the weight of his burden that he has been carrying for a long time and makes everything known to the Puritan people, and then passes away.

Although Dimmesdale is rarely depicted as a self-reliant individual in the novel, Hawthorne often portrays him as a personally and socially constrained individual. He does not trust himself, does not make his real identity clear to other people, and deeply cares what others think about him and his life. Dimmesdale mostly stays under the effect of Puritan society and cannot leave all the responsibilities and duties he has behind him as he is a respected member in Puritan society. Thus, he is never able to obtain real freedom and trust that are really integral parts of being a self-reliant individual.

How Defoe's Robinson Crusoe Succeeded in Being a Self-Reliant Individual

While Hawthorne's depiction of Dimmesdale shows how an individual fails to achieve self-reliance, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe portrays how an individual manages to achieve self-reliance after difficult times. Throughout the novel, Defoe deals with the importance of self-awareness. Robinson's existence on the island actually deepens his self-reliance since he withdraws from the external society that is far from him and turns inward. Being alone on a desert island makes him become self-reliant, which is necessary for him to survive. Having no connection with the outer world, Robinson becomes aware of his abilities and capabilities. He learns to trust and utilize his abilities in order to survive on this island rather than to give up and die. He builds a shelter for himself, grows food, and tames animals; he finds a pet parrot, takes a goat as a pet, and keeps a record of his daily activities. He develops a sort of calendar for himself, and this shows that he does not want his days just to pass, but he keeps records of his days so that he can be aware of the time he has been spending on this island:

Upon the sides of this square post I cut every day a notch with my knife, and every seventh notch was as long again as the rest, and every first day of the month as long again as that long one; and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly, monthly, and yearly reckoning of time. (Defoe 50)

Robinson becomes a self-reliant person after spending time on a desolate island; he has to question himself and find answers by depending on himself. Russel A. Barkley describes self-reliance with these words;

[...] it can be thought of as comprising the sorts of activities measured by those dimensions of adaptive behavior interviews and rating scales that pertain to the degree of responsibility individuals assume for fulfilling their own immediate and near-term (often-daily) needs and wants. This includes assuming responsibility for sleeping, clothing and dressing, bathing and general hygiene, food or nourishment, personal safety and self-defense from the elements, from other species, and from other humans, shelter and other self-care routines considered to be a necessary component of general self-reliance, survival and basic social independence. (Barkley, 109)

At first, there happens to be no community on the island, it is only a remote place where Robinson is all alone and has to deal with solitude, but sometime later he rescues Friday and some other people, and his island becomes peopled. Although not a big society, there are enough people for Robinson to save his island from being desolate: "My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects." (Defoe 153). At the same time, Robinson accepts that he managed to create a society on this island: "Having now society enough, and our number being sufficient to put us out of fear of the savages, if they had come, unless their number had been very great, we went freely all over the island ..." (Defoe 156). The island, now, has people and Robinson feels brave to walk around the island freely and even to fight against cannibals. Robinson, Friday and the others that were saved all have some responsibilities on the island. Some cut trees, some deal with the animals, etc. They do not have strong bonds with each other; each person becomes a free individual on the island. Friday was captured and he used to be a slave, but now he is free and deals with his own responsibilities. Robinson used to be alone at first, but now he is surrounded by some people; however, this does not mean that these people interfere with each other's private space. Throughout the novel, Defoe portrays Robinson as an individual who manages to attain self-reliance by completing the missions that Barkley mentions. Living on a desolate island does not push him to give up; instead he becomes more aware of himself, his talents, and his inner self. Therefore, he succeeds in creating his own

living space on an island, he meets his basic needs of self-reliance: food, shelter, safety, self-defense, etc. He develops his own way of protecting himself from the strangers who come around his island since he has no other choice but to be self-reliant. After realizing that he is alone on the island, Robinson becomes aware of the fact that the only one who can help and protect him is actually himself. After embarking on the island, he says:

I consulted several things in my situation, which I found would be proper for me: first, health and fresh water I just now mentioned; secondly, shelter from the heat of the sun; thirdly, security from ravenous creatures, whether man or beast; fourthly, a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight, I might not lose any advantage for my deliverance, of which I was not willing to banish all my expectation yet. (Defoe 47)

Defoe's portrayal of Robinson is so strong and powerful that it is not surprising for readers to see that Robinson attains self-reliance. Another critical point that Emerson insists to achieve self-reliance is relying on our own values and truths. If someone believes that what he does is true, he should pursue this truth; people are generally afraid of expressing themselves frankly or have the fear of not being accepted by other people. Most of the time, people feel urged to hide their own feelings and thoughts to themselves, and try to act according to the norms and values of the society in which they live. Robinson rejects this idea by leaving everybody and everything behind while going to sea. In the very beginning of the novel, Robinson expresses his own opinion, how passionate he feels to go to sea, and says:

[...] but I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea; and my inclination to this led me so strongly against the will, nay, the commands, of my father, and against all the entreaties and persuasions of my mother and other friends that there seemed to be something fatal in that propension of nature tending directly to the life of misery which was to befall me. (Defoe 14)

His family strongly rejects Robinson's idea of leaving his homeland and going to sea, but he insists on his idea and makes it come true for himself. He understands the worries of the people he loves, but he adheres to his own values and thoughts, which shows that he is transformed into a self-

reliant man. After his family does not want him to leave the house, he hesitates for a while and even is about to stop thinking of going abroad. However, then he chooses to follow his own way no matter how wrong it is:

I was sincerely affected with this discourse, as indeed who could be otherwise? and I resolved not to think of going abroad any more, but to settle at home according to my father's desire. But alas! A few days wore it all off; and in short, to prevent any of my father's further importunities, in a few weeks after, I resolved to run quite away from him. (Defoe 15)

Robinson is quite passionate about going to the sea, but also he believes that this is a way of achieving self-reliance and that he could stand on his own by doing so. However, he flees from society, and according to Emerson's concept of self-reliance, self-reliance is behaving in society as you do in your own world in private. Robinson could not find privacy and happiness in the society he lives so he chooses to leave it behind. Robinson prefers relying on himself rather than staying at home and following his father's business to earn his life. Despite having tough times at the sea and facing many challenges, these hardships do not stop him from realizing what he really wants to do or achieve in life. However, Robinson upsets his family while trying to achieve self-reliance as he leaves them. Mostly, we see that Robinson is a self-reliant man, however, he thinks that he becomes self-reliant by going against his family's wishes, but actually he fails in his purpose by doing so. Self-reliance requires to believe in your own thoughts and not to care about what others think of you, but this does not mean that self-reliance can and should be achieved by going against people or making them upset.

Conclusion

Emersonian concept of self-reliance can mainly be achieved through trusting yourself, avoiding inconsistency, and following one's instincts and ideas. In addition, Emerson presents self-reliance as an ideal, moreover, as a virtue. Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale is not able to attain self-reliance till his death because he does not possess the Emersonian qualifications of a self-reliant man. However, Defoe's Robinson mostly achieves self-reliance, and he manages to survive as a self-reliant man by depending on his own capabilities, logic, personal instincts and ideas.

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An Action Research Study: Benefits of Using Active Learning Strategies and Activities in Speaking Classes

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of an action research study which aimed to find ways of increasing the students' level of participation in speaking lessons. An eight-week action research study was conducted with 25 students during the speaking/listening sessions at the preparatory school of a foundation university to find an answer to our puzzle. The instructional intervention in our action research cycle involved the use of active and animated speaking activities such as group-chatting, pair or group work, practicing listening to native speakers in movies, group and whole class discussions based on movies, preparing and making presentations in the class. The data of the study were collected through student diaries, teacher-researcher field note, semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated that the students work well together as a group and that working in groups increase the students' confidence in speaking and an increase in self-confidence results in an increase in classroom participation in speaking lessons. Involvement in an action research study has also increased the researcher's confidence to adopt and apply speaking activities to increase the participation of the students in English lessons in the future.

Keywords: *Teaching speaking, active learning activities, communicative activities*

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Bir Eylem Araştırması: Konuşma Derslerinde Aktif Öğrenme Strateji ve Aktivite Kullanımının Faydaları

Öz

Bu eylem araştırması bir vakıf üniversitesi hazırlık okulu konuşma dersinde ortak çalışmaya dayalı iletişimsel dil öğrenme aktivitelerinin kullanımı yoluyla öğrencilerin derse katılım seviyelerini yükseltmek amacıyla yürütülmüştür. Sekiz hafta süren bu eylem araştırması, 25 öğrencinin katılımıyla dinleme/konuşma derslerinde sürdürülmüştür. Çalışma süresince çeşitli iletişimsel aktiviteler kullanılmış ve hangi aktivitelerin öğrenci motivasyonunu ve derse katılım seviyelerini yükselttiği tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışma süresince ikili ve büyük grup tartışmaları, film izleme ve tartışma tekniği, öğrenci sunumları gibi iletişimsel aktiviteler kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri öğrenci günlükleri, araştırmacı tarafından tutulan alan notları, açık uçlu öğrenci mülakatları ve anket yolu ile toplanmıştır. Çalışma sonuçları iletişime dayalı dil öğretim tekniğinin öğrencilerin derse katılımını arttıran bir öğrenme atmosferi yarattığını; öğrencilerin grup çalışmalarında iyi bir performans gösterdiklerini; grup çalışmalarının öğrencilerin kendilerine olan güven seviyelerini arttırdığını ve bunun da öğrencilerin konuşma aktivitelerine katılımını arttırdığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu eylem araştırması, araştırmacının da iletişimsel dil öğrenme aktivitelerinin nasıl adapte edilip kullanılması gerektiği konusundaki özgüvenini de arttırmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Konuşma öğretimi, iletişimsel aktiviteler*

Introduction

Among all the four language skills in language learning, speaking is considered the most important skill, through which the learners' can communicate and express their opinions and intentions to an audience. In addition, 'speakers' of the target language are the people who have the knowledge and the ability to communicate with that certain language. As Rivers (1981) claims, in communication, speaking is twice useful in comparison to the other skills. Writing is one of the skills that has been compared to speaking, as these two skills have been considered as being "productive skills." Meanwhile, speaking is also related to listening; these two skills need to work together to accomplish the whole communication process. One of the most important skills in communication through language could be speaking (Richards, 2009). In a legitimately short time-period English has replaced all the other languages and developed into a leading means of communication worldwide. The modern world of Internet, media and communication demand good knowledge of English, specifically spoken English.

According to our experience, class participation is a huge issue for many students. Generally, many teachers complain about the students' passiveness in speaking tasks. Unfortunately, not much research has been conducted to find ways of fostering classroom participation in speaking classes. Mostly, low level of confidence and anxiety have been considered as the causes for the students' lack of participation in classrooms (Thomson, 2001). Bonwell and Eison (1991) note that active learning is a kind of instructional method that could engage the students in the whole process of learning. In addition, the learner is more likely to learn when he/she is with others rather than working in isolation. Meanwhile, working in a team helps to solve an issue or collaborate in a project. Collaborative learning empowers and enables the students learn how to view their peers as a resource, how to test their own knowledge and learn from other students' mistakes.

Research Methodology

This study was designed as an action research study. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) state that an action research is a collaborative process that occurs through the cycles of observation, planning, reflection and action. This reflective cycle is believed to lead improvement as its reflective cycles help to understand an identified problem and in turn help the researchers

to take action steps to improve the issue (Hensen, 1996; McTaggart, 1997 and Johnson, 2012). Qualitative research methods were used in the collection and the analysis of the data. Qualitative research primarily has been recognized as understanding human beings' personal experiences in a humanistic and interpretive approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research involves the natural interpretation of our world. Descriptive analysis was used in order to analyze the data collected from the students' diaries, teacher-researcher's field notes, the open-ended questionnaire and the interviews.

The participants of this study were a total of 25 young adults, who were enrolled in the preparatory school of Istanbul Aydin University; beginner (A1) proficiency level students. At this level, the students have 22 hours of English classes 5 days a week including 4 hours of listening/speaking, 3 hours of reading, 2 hours of laboratory, 3 hours of writing and also 10 hours of main course per week. The research was conducted during the speaking/listening sessions. The speaking sessions were 2 hours per week. Researchers who are interested in collecting qualitative data have been interested in conducting diary studies (Bailey, 1983; Krishnan and Lee, 2002). One of the main data collection instruments used in this study was the diaries kept by the students. The students were asked to write in their diaries after each activity which was a 2-week process. The second data collection instrument used in this study was the use of field note by the teacher-researcher. The researcher kept the field note to find out the effect of each session and the activities used on the level of student participation and improvement of interest in speaking lessons. The researcher filled in the field note after each activity was completed. The third data collection instrument used in the study was an open-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire involved 5 questions. The questions were designed after the analysis of teacher reflections recorded in the field note and the student reflections in the diaries were completed. The aim of using the questionnaire was to triangulate the data gathered from the above-mentioned data collection instruments. In addition, we wanted to make sure that we provided the students a space to express their ideas. The final data collection instrument was the semi-structured interviews. Dornyei (2007) and Kendall (2008) note that interviews are one of the most commonly used data collection tools in qualitative research as the data gathered reveals in-depth/detailed insights on interviewees' thoughts,

attitudes, and actions. Descriptive analysis was used in order to analyze the data collected from the teacher's field notes, the students' diaries, interviews and the questionnaire.

Instructional Intervention

The instructional intervention in our action research cycle involved the use of active learning strategies and speaking activities such as group-chatting, pair or group work, practicing listening skills with native speakers in movies, group and whole class discussions based on movies, preparing and making presentations in the class.

The learning objective of the lessons in the first two weeks was to talk about facts and express daily routines. Reflecting on the possible activities to be chosen to achieve the stated objective, we decided to use Speaking Marathon Activity. The speaking strategy chosen for the first two weeks was collaborative learning to encourage higher level thinking. Related literature suggests effective collaborative learning could involve establishment of group goals as well as individual goals, which help motivate the group to focus on the task and establish an unambiguous purpose. In the present study, Speaking Marathon activity focused on greetings and free discussion. The language structure to be practiced in week 3 and 4 was present progressive. The speaking strategies chosen for the third and the fourth weeks of the study were listening, brainstorming and notetaking. We also aimed to foster critical thinking through in and out of class activities in addition to establishing a native like situation in class so that the students could learn the language implicitly. To achieve the aims stated above, the students were assigned to watch the first and the second episodes of an American series, "*Baby Daddy*" in the class, after they had completed studying present progressive with their main course teacher and the note taking strategy in their listening lesson. When watching the movie, the students were asked to take notes about the characters and the daily life routines of the people in the target culture so that they would talk about and discuss the theme of the movie. The students watched the part of a movie and they were asked to comment on the characters trying to put themselves in the characters' shoes and find better solutions for the discussed issues. The objective of the lessons in weeks 5 and 6 was to revise the use of simple present and progressive present tenses. The activity used was listening to the favorite songs and performing karaoke songs on stage.

The aim of choosing this activity was using students' interest in music and their favorite singers to encourage them to participate more in the speaking lessons. In order to achieve the above-mentioned aim, the students were asked to choose their favorite songs and copy out the lyrics for the whole class. In addition, each student was assigned to add the meaning of the complicated vocabularies at the end of the paper and prepare for a solo (if they wanted to) or a group *Karaoke* presentation. The students were encouraged to have control over their learning materials as they were asked to bring their own favorite songs. The students were also free as to whether they would work on their own or in small groups. A few of the students suggested to have the presentations in group of two or three which the teacher considered to help their confidence. This approach also helped those shy students to perform well. Finally, the rest of the class commented on the song and also on the presentation; they asked questions about the song. The activity ended with singing the best performed song. The speaking strategies chosen for weeks 7 and 8 was brainstorming and journaling in addition to collaborative strategies. Journaling and brainstorming helped the students to think on their own and the collaborative strategy helped them to attain high level of thinking. An effective collaborative learning is believed to help the students set up group goals as well as individual goals. This also helped to make the students feel part of a group. The students' critical thinking skill was activated by asking them to comment on each other's experiences. The topic of the activity used was writing in a diary. The teacher expected the students to write in their diary about a special event as an assignment and later give a presentation to their classmates on a voluntary basis. The aim of this activity was to help the students take control of what they were going to talk about in the session and getting to know their classmates better by commenting on their presentations. The language structure to be practiced was simple past tense. During the presentations, the listeners were expected to take notes so that they could comment on what they had listened to after the presentation is over. When it was the time to present in front of the others, they took turns to present their diaries. The second stage was commenting on the presentations and sharing suggestions.

Researcher and Student Reflections on the Intervention

At the outset of the study, I tried to change the classroom atmosphere from a passive learning environment to a more active one. I tried to achieve this change by engaging the students in tasks related to daily life topics such as greetings, daily routines, etc. I aimed to motivate the learners to try to speak and to interact with one another without being afraid of making mistakes. In their daily lives, my students do not use English as a medium of communication, but they use English for taking an examination and/or to conduct higher level academic studies. In addition, I tried to change my role as a teacher, from a knowledge giver and the controller to a facilitator to promote a better rapport between me and my students. Following this line of intention, in the first two weeks of the study, I used the *Speaking Marathon* activity in which the students work in groups of four/five. The aim of using this activity was to build confidence in the students so that they express their ideas and opinions easily having collaborated with their peers. Moreover, I adjusted the speaking tasks in my speaking classes to promote student confidence and motivation by employing active and animated speaking activities. More specifically, the activity chosen for the third and the fourth weeks of the study was watching part of a movie and taking notes about the characters and the daily life routines of the people in the target culture so that they would talk about and discuss the theme of the movie in addition to finding solutions to the problems raised in the movie. The main strategies emphasized in these two weeks were listening, notetaking, brainstorming and collaboration. The observations recorded in the field note showed that almost all of the students joined the first part of the activity attentively. Everyone took part as much as they could and when one could not continue the other peer took part in and helped the other one. In the second part of the activity the students were expected to discuss and find solutions to the problems the characters faced. The topic of discussion was based on different cultural values and norms so the students had very different point of views to express. However, there were some students who did not want to participate in the discussion. On reflection, I realized this might be due to some cultural boundaries, beliefs and shyness. The rest of the class members, however, got into strong discussions especially when they were comparing girls' and boys' situation. The topic of the activity in the fifth and the sixth week was listening to the favorite songs and performing karaoke songs on stage. The speaking strategy chosen was active learning strategy with a specific

emphasis on listening and speaking skills. The analysis of the data showed that most of the students improved their confidence in speaking English; some of those students could even perform better speaking after getting more opportunities to practice. Moreover, I noticed that my students were motivated and also more active in the class while singing together or performing Karaoke song. Most importantly, even though a few of the students did not want to have a Karaoke song performance in front of the class, all of the students collaborated well as a group. In the last two weeks of the study, the topic of the activity was writing in a diary about a personal event and later give a presentation on the same topic to the classmates. The strategies reinforced were brainstorming and journaling in addition to collaborative strategies. Journaling and brainstorming helped the students to think about the topic on their own and the collaborative strategy helped them to attain high level of thinking through group discussion. I tried to challenge the students with this activity to write their own experiences of life and also to rehearse speaking for the presentation in front of their classmates and the teacher. On observing the students while they were on task, I realized that it was not an easy task for my students, but still it was satisfying to see that many of them tried to do their best to fulfill each task. When giving their presentations, they showed less fear of making mistakes in their speech. there were some students who could not talk more than two minutes which I believe might have stemmed from the nature of the activity. On reflection, I thought I could have asked them to find a story or a movie of their own interest instead of asking them to prepare their presentations about a personally important event. I also noticed that while a few of the students were tardy to step out some others were more active and willing to show their efforts. A few others were not well prepared or a little unsteady. The atmosphere in the classroom was not as lively as it was in previous weeks. I observed that not everyone wanted to participate, they either did not have the courage or did not have knowledge to take part in the conversation. Meanwhile the students with high language proficiency level were participating much more than I expected. Based on my observations, I can state that some students did not have a fulfilling note as they told me that their lives are so routine that they could not think of something special. In addition, even though the activity was based on the brainstorming strategy and personalizing the learning process, it did not fulfill my expectations as a final activity.

All of the students expressed their satisfaction with the created learning atmosphere and mentioned that the atmosphere in the lessons had a positive effect on their speaking performance. The students claimed that the movies, the games, the songs as animated speaking activities made the speaking atmosphere enjoyable and interesting. The students also pointed out that hearing target language related to real life situations and being involved in different types of activities increased their motivation. The students stated that involvement in note-taking, brain storming strategies and working in a relaxed and native-like environment raised their confidence in using the target language. Moreover, the students pointed out that working with their peers either in pairs and/or group activities reduced their anxiety levels. Most of the students pointed out that they found the atmosphere of the classroom lively and amusing in the Karaoke activity except for one or two who believed that their voice is not good enough to sing in the classroom. In addition, more than half of the students pointed out that they had more confidence to speak than what it was at the beginning of this cycle. Those students rationalized this situation by stating that they did not experience anything interesting to share with their classmates or they thought that it was too personal to be shared in the classroom.

While I was conducting the last activity, *Diary*, the result was not much satisfying as many students were not ready or confident to provide a suitable material to present and discuss in the class and it was a little confusing for some others, which made me realize that the students need to have more hints and more specified material to be able to take part and cooperate in the class activities although, there were very few number of the students who provide the class with interactive ideas in their diaries to be discussed in the classroom by their classmates. The students' individual presentations were promoted partially successful during the Diary activity. Apart from students practicing interaction with one another related to the songs, I tried to challenge them with the Diary to encourage them in making their own sentences and also to rehearse speaking for presentation in front of their classmates and teacher. Meanwhile I realized that It was not easy for my students, but still it was satisfying to see that many of them tried their best to fulfill each task. However, I did not stop providing help for those students who needed it.

Conclusions

At the end of the action research cycle, we might conclude that using learner-centered classroom activities such as group and pair work, making presentations, and performing karaoke songs increase the level of student participation in speaking lessons. In this study, we observed the positive effect of group activities on student participation in speaking lessons, especially in *Speaking Marathon*, *Movie Discussion* and *Performing a Karaoke song*, respectively. While this conclusion is in line with the arguments raised by Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) and Okech (2005), it contradicts with Brown (2000) who states that only the extroverted students tend to actively participate in group activities while the other group of the students who are introverted tend to be passive. In the present action research study, especially the group activities such as Speaking Marathon, Movie Discussion or Performing a Karaoke Song increased the students' confidence and eventually their level of participation during speaking classes by establishing a feeling of security in the students diminishing the feeling of shyness. After each group work activity, the learners seemed to be more confident to step up in the class and actively participate in the classroom discussions. For example, the Movie activity which was based on a brain storming strategy, was definitely effective in increasing the students' level of participation in classroom. During the movie discussion activity, the students worked in groups and thus they had the chance to express and support their own ideas about some social and daily-life situations, the characters and the events in the movie. In these discussions, most of the introverted students seemed to engage in the tasks. It might be appropriate to argue that, the activity also encouraged out-of-class learning as most of the students stated that they continued watching the same series at home. Songsiri (2007) states activities as such are engaging as they are related to daily life situations. Our conclusions regarding pair-work activities are similar to our conclusions about group work activities even though Kuramoto (2002) argues in peer work the concern of peer pressure can result in less motivation among the students. In the present action research study, we observed that the students work better together and the feeling of shyness in some students reduces as a result of involvement in pair work activities.

Group and pair work activities also helped the learners to establish a sense of collaboration, which is an important characteristic, "...the world is requiring ... absolute collaboration, life-long learners and critical thinkers, creative active learners" (Prensky, 2005; Tapscott, 1998; Robinson, 2009). They collaborated well in almost all of the speaking activities despite their restricted general English language knowledge.

We may argue that, most of the learners showed some improvements specifically in their confidence and even some students could perform better speaking after getting more opportunities to speak. Moreover, I noticed that my students were happier and also more active in the class while presenting their songs and singing together or solo. Gugliemino (1986) claimed that it can be very valuable if the teacher uses a song in combination with the lesson. Meanwhile, Lo and Li (1998) argued that applying songs in the lessons might distract the classroom routine; however, according to my observations the students' motivation to participate increased considerably.

Nunan (2003) claims that while planning a lesson, the basic necessity is to promote the real use of language which needs to relate the activity with the participants' common interest so that we could be able to increase the motivation and confidence in our classroom. Moreover, the use of cooperation in the activities and involving the students in choosing the course materials (through letting students choose their own favorite songs and present them in front of the class) and generally the whole conducted activity was absolutely motivating and confidence boosting for the students, which ended in more participation during the following speaking activities.

Despite the English language scholars indicating that the learner-centered activities such as speeches or storytelling could remove or decrease the low level of oral skills (Gathumbi and Masembe, 2005; Okech, 2005), the results from my last activity (i.e. Diary) could not achieve the fulfilling expectations.

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Efl Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore the writing strategies used by ELT students and the difficulties they experience in academic writing. A questionnaire was used to collect the data that was obtained from 34 second-year students, studying at the English Language Teaching Department at the Education Faculty of a private university in Istanbul, Turkey in 2017-2018 academic year. The results of the present research revealed that the participants of the study are aware of the importance of using metacognitive writing strategies in the completion of quality writing assignments. It also became clear that the participants pay attention to the identification of what they specifically want to say at the pre-writing stage. That is, they use brainstorming techniques and prepare an outline before they begin to write their first drafts on a given topic. The participants favor peer feedback at the pre-writing stage but not at the post-writing stage. The most frequently used writing strategy was found to be revising strategy. However, it also became clear that the participants prefer self-revision or teacher feedback for the improvement of their papers. Finally, the findings of the study indicated that the participants experience many difficulties in writing, such as finding relevant references, choosing a significant topic, paraphrasing, referencing and citation, expressing own voice, coherence and cohesion, using conjunctive cohesive devices appropriately, and language use, respectively.

Keywords: *Academic writing difficulties, writing strategies*

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İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Akademik Yazma Konusunda Karşılaştıkları Zorluklar

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü öğrencilerinin kullandıkları yazma stratejileri, yazma ödevlerine karşı tutumları ve bu ödevleri tamamlamak için kullanmayı tercih ettikleri kaynakları ve bunların yanı sıra akademik yazma konusunda karşılaştıkları sorunları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmaya 2017-2018 akademik yılında İstanbul'da bir vakıf üniversitesinin İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü 2. sınıfında okumakta olan 34 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırmanın amaçlarına ulaşmak için nicel ve nitel veriler bir anket yolu ile toplanmıştır. Çalışma sonuçları, öğrencilerin üst bilişsel yazma stratejilerinin öneminin farkında olduklarını ortaya koymuş, bunun yanı sıra öğrencilerin büyük bir çoğunluğunun yazım öncesi evrede beyin fırtınası ve taslak hazırlama stratejilerini kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin hemen hepsinin en çok düzeltme stratejisini kullandıkları bulunmuştur. Ancak öğrencilerin düzeltme stratejisini kullanırken yazım öncesi evrede akran geri bildiriminden faydalanmayı tercih ettikleri ve yazım süreci sonunda ise akran dönütüne değil, öğretmen dönütüne önem verdikleri tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca öğrencilerin yarısının İngilizce yazma aktivitelerini günlük hayatta kullanmayıp sadece verilen ödevleri yapmak için kullandıkları belirlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin ödevlerini hazırlamakta kullandıkları ana kaynakların sırasıyla kitaplar, dergiler ve internet veri tabanları olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak, öğrencilerin yazma sürecinde en sık yaşadıkları sorunların sırasıyla konu ile ilgili kaynak bulma, konu seçme, açıklama, kaynak kullanma ve alıntı, kendi düşüncelerini ifade etme, bağlaşıklık ve bağdaşıklık ifadelerini kullanma ve dili kullanma olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akademik yazma sorunları, yazma stratejileri

Introduction

EFL learners experience a lot of difficulties acquiring and practicing language learning skills and strategies. One of the most difficult language skills that the students encounter when learning English is writing (Al Badi, 2015; Al Fadda 2012 & Xiao & Chen, 2015). Academic writing is considered as a difficult and a complex task because it involves learning to use many aspects of writing. EFL students who lack the ability to master all those aspects of writing suffer many difficulties when they try to express their messages in

written English (Xiaoxiao, 2010; Xiao & Chen, 2015). Academic writing is a complex process since it requires learners to generate ideas, select and use appropriate language and vocabulary in addition to organizing information through drafting, revising and editing (Rusinovci, 2015). Teachers spend a lot of time and effort to meet the students' needs in academic writing tasks. Despite the teachers' efforts, the students might continue suffering writing difficulties as they are not only learning a foreign language, but also try to learn how to compose successfully. For these reasons, there is a need to conduct research on the difficulties EFL students experience in academic writing, so that the instructors working at universities can make informed-decisions when teaching academic writing strategies. The current research aims to explore the writing strategies used by ELT students, their attitudes towards writing assignments and the sources they like to use as well as the difficulties they experience in academic writing. The following research questions framed this study:

1. What are the writing strategies used by the students?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards writing assignments?
3. What are the sources the students like to use in writing?
4. What difficulties do the students encounter in academic writing?

Research Methodology

Quantitative research methods were employed in order to collect as well as to analyze the data of this study. This study was conducted at a private university in İstanbul, Turkey in 2017-2018 academic year. The participants of the current study were a total of 34 students, studying at the English Language Teaching Department of Education Faculty. The participants were second year (sophomore) Turkish students. The data of the study was collected through a questionnaire developed by Al Badi (2015). The questionnaire includes 4 sections. The first section of the questionnaire includes 3 questions to collect demographic data about the participants of the study. The aim of the second section of the questionnaire is to find out the writing strategies ELT students use in the completion of writing assignments. To achieve this aim, the participants are provided with 12 writing strategies based on a 6-point Likert-type rating scale. The response options are from *Always* to *Never*. Section 3 of the questionnaire aims to identify the students' attitudes towards writing assignments and the sources ELT students like to use in writing. Accordingly, Section 3 involves 2 questions. The first question asks the students to rate whether they find

writing assignments easy or difficult based on a 4-point Likert-type rating scale from *easy* to *neither difficult nor easy*. The second question of Section 3 offers the participants 4 sources that they may possibly use to accomplish their writing assignments. The sources the participants are offered include *Books, Journals, Both, and Others (specify)*, respectively. Section 4 of the questionnaire aims to find out the difficulties ELT students experience in academic writing. In order to find out the areas of difficulty ELT students experience, they are provided with 8 options. The questionnaire contained options such as, *Referencing and citation, Language use, Paraphrasing, Expressing own voice, Finding relevant references, Coherence and cohesion, Choosing a significant topic, and Others (specify)* that give the participants the chance to add any additional ideas. The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire was subjected to the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software, version 22.

Findings and Conclusions

The first research question of the study is aimed at finding the types of writing strategies the students use in the completion of their writing assignments. The findings of the current study revealed that the most frequently used writing strategies by the majority of the students are *Revising the content and ideas* and *Editing the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation*. The frequent use of these two strategies shows that revising strategies are the most commonly used writing strategies among the students. Based on this finding, we may conclude that almost all of the students are conscious of the importance of revising the content of their papers, paying attention to the ideas conveyed. We can also state that almost all of the participants know that editing is very important in producing a quality product and that is why they try to check and revise what they have written. This conclusion is in line with some other studies, which also investigated the students' use of writing strategies. For instance, Sadi & Othman (2012) conducted a research on writing strategies of Iranian EFL learners. After analyzing the data of their study, they found that "repetition, rereading, revision..." are the mostly used strategies by good writers (p.1151). Moreover, Mohite (2014) conducted a study to investigate the English language writing strategies used by Polish EFL learners. The findings of this research revealed that the participants tend to "favor revision strategies over the planning strategies" (p. 39). On the other hand, the findings of other researchers may contradict the conclusions arrived in the current study. For example, in his study of Japanese students, Yasuda (2004) found out that "students used more strategies in the writing stage than

in the prewriting and revising stage” (p. 54). In the current study, however, we concluded that almost half of the participants have not established the habit of giving or receiving feedback from their peers when revising their papers, but that they prefer self-revision or teacher feedback for the improvement of their papers. Based on this conclusion, we might argue that the participants of the study need an additional explicit exercise on how to give and receive peer feedback at the revision stage. The findings of the current study indicated that almost half of the participants perceive their teacher as a source of information and as a reliable reference. On the other hand, more than half of the students stated they discuss what they are going to write with other students at pre-writing stage. In addition to the frequent use of revising strategies, we found out that almost all of the students use pre-writing strategies. That is, they use brainstorming techniques and prepare an outline before they begin to write their first drafts on a given topic. Following Riazi’s (1997) classification of ESL writing strategies, we may conclude that the students in the study are aware of the importance of using metacognitive writing strategies in the completion of quality writing assignments (cited in Abdul-Rahman, 2011). We may also conclude that the students in the present study pay attention to the identification of what they specifically want to say at the pre-writing stage. Finally, we conclude that all of the students do not write in English for pleasure, but they only write in English in order to complete their assignments.

The second aim of the study was to identify the students’ attitudes towards writing assignments. The analysis of the data revealed that only one third of all the participants find writing assignments difficult. Drawing on this finding, we might assume that the participants of the study are familiar with writing in English and this is why they do not perceive writing as a difficult task. This finding is in line with that of Hanane (2015) who also conducted a research on students’ attitudes towards academic writing in Republic of Algeria and came up with similar results to those of the current study. These results show that most of the participants find it interesting and easy to write in English.

The third aim of the study was to find out the sources the students like to use in the accomplishment of their writing assignments. The findings showed that most of the students prefer using both Books and Journals as main sources to accomplish their writing assignments. The second source as identified by the students was Internet. On reflection, we realized that the students’ choice is dependent on the nature of the writing assignments

required by the instructors at the university. For this reason, we might conclude that the instructors at ELT department use books, journals, and web sites frequently as sources of information. Review of literature regarding the sources ELT students use in the completion of their writing tasks seem to be under-researched. We could not find much study to compare this conclusion with those of other researchers. However, in a related study, McCulloch (2012) stated that it is necessary that the students become acquainted with using source materials successfully. This would assist them in their discussions. In other words, the most important thing is to utilize source materials, whatever these materials are, efficiently and successfully.

The final aim of the study was to identify the types of difficulties the students encounter in academic writing. On analyzing the students' responses to the questionnaire items, we concluded that the most difficult areas of writing for most of the students were *Finding relevant references* and *Choosing a significant topic*. This finding indicates that the students in the study suffer trying to find suitable references that help them complete their writing assignments. In addition, they are confused about how to select important topics and leave those of less importance. These two difficulties are discussed in a study done by Al Badi (2015). In this study, the results reflect that finding relevant references as well as choosing a significant topic are the two difficulties faced by the students. The second most difficult area of writing for many of the students in this study was *Paraphrasing*. This finding reveals that the students need additional practice activities on paraphrasing in order to be able to say someone else's ideas using their own words. This finding is in line with that of Liao & Tseng (2010) who concluded that the students had serious problems in appropriate paraphrasing which resulted in plagiarism. The next most difficult area of writing for most of the students in our study was *Referencing and citation*. This conclusion clearly indicates that the students find it difficult to quote from a book, paper, or author and then list the sources they have cited. This finding is in line with that of McCulloch (2012) who conducted a case study on five Japanese postgraduate students. McCulloch (2012) concluded that the students had difficulty to cite the materials that they had used in their writing products. Moreover, we concluded that the students in the current study experience difficulties in *Expressing own voice*. This conclusion reveals that the students have difficulties in conveying their ideas in addition to linking their ideas logically to produce coherent texts. This conclusion is in line with the conclusion of Bailey & Pieterick (2008).

Bailey & Pieterick (2008) conducted their study on first year students at a British university, and they concluded that the students are challenged when trying to express themselves in academic writing. Furthermore, the students' responses reflected that they encounter difficulties in *Language use* as well as in producing *Coherent & cohesive* written pieces. This finding shows that some students experience problems in using grammatically correct and appropriate sentences in English. Moreover, the students have difficulties in using conjunctive cohesive devices appropriately. This conclusion is compatible with that of Al Badi (2015). In this study, the findings depict that the most frequently experienced difficulties are language use as well as coherence and cohesion. Finally, 2 students pointed out that they suffer other difficulties. They find *time management, using the same words continuously and finding synonyms* difficult to cope with in writing assignments. Experiencing difficulties in time management was also cited in Yeoh & Terry's (2013) study. This study was conducted on research students in Australia. The results indicated that time management was one aspect of the academic challenges faced by the students. Secondly, using the same words continuously and having difficulties in finding synonyms is in line with the findings of Chi (2010) who conducted a research on the engineering major students at Hong Kong University. The findings of this study demonstrate that "students' lack of vocabulary knowledge" (p.171).

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The Role Of Motivational Strategies in Motivating Iraqi Efl Students To Speak English

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Abstract

Motivation determines the degree of students' desire to learn English. Therefore, current research investigates the role of motivational strategies in order to improve Iraqi learners' speaking skills. Three research questions were designed according to the aims of the study which are: finding out the types of the motivational strategies used by university teachers to improve the students' speaking skills, the extent to which English language teachers use motivational strategies and the students' attitudes toward these motivational strategies in speaking classes.

The instruments included were questionnaires and interviews. The participants of the study consisted of 113 students in different years of their studies; second, third and fourth year students from Salahaddin University, the College of Languages, department of English language. In addition, 18 teachers teaching English language at the same college participated in the current study. The questionnaires and interviews were administered for both groups of the participants.

Finally, after collecting and analyzing the data, the findings indicated that the strategies such as applying role-play, debate and problem-solving, employing group/pair work discussion and providing friendly learning environment are very important to engage students in speaking activities. The teachers also reported that providing students with different activities, asking them to make presentations, adopting student-centered approach, paying attention to individual needs and preventing students using L1 were among strategies that they could use to help students get engaged in

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speaking activities. Also, the majority of the students were motivated and thought that motivational strategies were important to improve speaking skills. Also, they think that friendly relationships, group work and creating enjoyable atmosphere are the most effective motivational strategies for developing the students' speaking skills.

To conclude, we suggest that motivational strategies are important to encourage the learners to speak; the learners must rely on different motivational strategies to master their speaking skills and it is necessary to use different types of motivational strategies in class.

Keywords: *Motivation, Motivational strategies, Speaking skills*

Iraklı Yabancı Dil Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Konuşmaya Teşvik Edilmesinde Motivasyon Stratejilerinin Rolü

Öz

Motivasyon, öğrencilerin İngilizce öğrenmeye ne ölçüde istekli olacaklarındabelirleyici rol oynar. Bu çalışmanın amacı da Iraklı öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinin geliştirilmesinde motivasyon stratejilerinin rolünün araştırılmasıdır. Araştırmada karşılaşılan başlıca sorun, Salahaddin Üniversitesi İngilizce Bölümlerindeki öğrencilerin normalde İngilizce öğrenmeye motive edilmemesi idi. Bu araştırma soruları, araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda belirlenmiştir; bu bağlamda üniversite eğitmenleri tarafından öğrencilerin konuşma becerisini geliştirmek için uygulanan motivasyon stratejisi türleri, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğrencilere motivasyon stratejilerini ne ölçüde uyguladıkları ve öğrencilerin sınıfta İngilizce konuşulmasına yönelik motivasyon stratejileri karşısında takındıkları tutumun belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araç olarak anketler ve mülakatlardan yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılanlar, Salahaddin Üniversitesi Dil Fakültesi İngilizce Bölümü ikinci, üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıfları olmak üzere farklı öğretim sınıflarında okuyan 113 İngilizce Yabancı Dil öğrencileridir. Yine aynı fakültede görevli 18 İngilizce Yabancı Dil öğretmeni de bu araştırmaya katılmıştır. Anketler ve mülakatlar da her iki katılımcı grubu kapsayacak şekilde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin toplanması ve analiz edilmesinin ardından son aşamada elde edilen bulgular, rol oynama, tartışma ve problem çözme, grup/ikili tartışma fırsatları yaratılması ve dayanışma temelli öğrenim ortamı sağlanması gibi

stratejilerin, öğrencilerin konuşma etkinliklerine katılımında son derece önemli olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu bağlamda öğretmenler, öğrencilere farklı etkinlikler hazırlanması, sunum yapmalarının istenmesi, öğrenci merkezli yaklaşım benimsenmesi, bireysel gereksinimlere önem verilmesi ve öğrencilerin L1 düzeyinde dil kullanmalarının önlenmesinin de öğrencilerin konuşma etkinliklerine katılımını sağlamak için öğretmenler tarafından uygulanabilecek yardımcı stratejiler olduğu görüşünü de dile getirmişlerdir. Keza, motive edilen öğrencilerin çoğunluğu, konuşma becerilerinin gelişmesinde motivasyon stratejilerinin önemli olduğu görüşündedirler. Öğrenciler, arkadaşça ilişkinin, grup çalışmasının ve zevkli ortamlar hazırlanmasının, öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerinin geliştirilmesinde en etkin motivasyon stratejileri olduğu görüşündedirler. Son bölümde yer alan tavsiyelerden bazıları şunlardır; öğrencilerin konuşmaya teşvik edilmesinde motivasyon stratejileri önemli olmakla birlikte, öğrencilerin kendi konuşma becerilerini yönlendirebilmeleri için çeşitli motivasyon stratejilerine gereksinimleri vardır ve sınıfta farklı türde motivasyon stratejileri uygulanmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Motivasyon, motivasyon stratejileri, konuşma becerisi*

Introduction

Motivation is one of the most important ingredients in English language learning and teaching strategies used by the English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and students. The term motivation has been defined by many writers and linguists, and its definition differs from one theory to another; perspective to perspective. In this regard, we will try to describe a definition for motivation. Brown (2007) defines motivation in three different perspectives. First, in behavioral perspective, he defines it as the anticipation of reinforcement. Second, in cognitive perspective, he thinks that it depends on the power of self-reward and the source of motivation. Third, in constructivist perspective, motivation is the learner's or the individual's instruction with the social context, and three levels are required in the learning EFL which are global, situational and task oriented.

Speaking is one of the important skills and EFL teachers' task is to plan and set activities for the students to learn them and to be more active in the classroom. Also, teachers must help the students master their speaking skills

by communicating, correcting the students' errors and utilizing productive teaching methods (Boughazzoula, 2016). Also, language teachers have to use several and various teaching techniques to encourage their learners to speak, and motivate them to participate in the language learning process.

Motivational strategy has a very important role in the process of learning and teaching second/foreign language. Motivational strategies refer to some techniques that aid the student in administering goal-related behavior. Moreover, motivational strategies are those techniques which help students promote, direct and maintain behavior (Dörnyei, 2001; Burden and Byrd, 2007). Using different strategies and motivational strategies are very important in the learning process and it helps students learn the target language more effectively (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

Additionally, motivation is being used by the EFL teachers and EFL students as a significant aspect in improving the quality of English language learning and teaching in classrooms. Moreover, the influence of motivation on teaching foreign language speaking was examined in several studies (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Ahmad, 2016; Mawlood, 2016) and in majority of the studies, the helpfulness of motivation in learning foreign language was preferred.

There are several examples of motivational strategies for preparing students for the course to be taught, for example, offering gifts to the most successful students is a good strategy to start the lesson in addition to playing a video to warm students up, attracting their attention with a sense of humor, providing a brief review of the previous material through distributing short questions.

The present study aims at finding out the role of motivational strategies on motivating Iraqi EFL learners to speak in English. The researcher is looking for improving the knowledge of using motivational strategies for learning and teaching English as a foreign language in northern Iraq. Also, another purpose of the current study is to determine how motivation works in academic fields, especially, for university students, and to examine students' perception of the motivational strategies.

Methodology

EFL teachers and students from the Department of English Language at Salahaddin University were randomly selected to participate in the current study. The students were in different years of their studies (2nd, 3rd, and 4th). The number of the participants were 113 EFL male and female students and 18 male and female teachers from English Language Department; the total number of the participants was 131 (76 Male and 55 Female) EFL students and EFL teachers. The instruments of this study consisted of questionnaires and interviews. So as to get a detailed information about the first research question in this study, the participants were given questions about whether the EFL teachers' usage of motivational strategies motivate students or not. Also, the researcher prepared an interview for the teachers to provide a clear answer for the second research question that asks the types of motivational strategies used by the EFL teachers to motivate EFL students for promoting their speaking skills. Furthermore, the researcher prepared a questionnaire and an interview to get a clear answer for the third research question; both the questionnaire and interview ask them about their perception of the EFL teachers' usage of motivational strategies.

Procedure

After designing the questionnaires, the first one was given to the 2nd year students, after that to the 3rd year and finally to the 4th year students on the same day, Wednesday, December 13th, 2017, during the Fall semester. Then, the researcher gave students instructions regarding the questionnaire by translating the difficult items, explaining the questions and providing facilities for them. Next, each group of students was given an hour to fill the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher collected the papers for later analysis.

Regarding the teachers' questionnaire, it was given to teachers a day after the students, on Thursday, December 14th, 2017. They were given a week to return the forms. Then, a week later, on Thursday, December 21st, 2017, the researcher visited the English Language Department and collected the teachers' questionnaire forms. However, six teachers returned the forms one or two days later.

After the administration of the questionnaires, the teachers were interviewed. The interviews were done on Sunday, the 24th and Monday the 25th of December 2017; the interview was carried out individually with each teacher and each one lasted for 10 to 15 minutes. Finally, the interviews of the teachers were recorded and then transcribed.

Result and Data Analysis

As the questionnaire, a set of 20 questions were used for the teachers. The questionnaire items were five-point Likert scale items to address the opinions of the respondents using “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely” and “Never” ticks. Below is the table where the results of each question is explained in detail.

Table 1: Teachers’ questionnaire results of the first research question

	Al	Of	St	Ra	NV	Weighted Mean
1- Is promoting the students’ confidence considered as significant motivational strategy in English language teaching to improve speaking skill?	66.7%	27.8%	15.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.61
2- Do you think that inviting an English speaker to the class increases the students’ motivation to speak?	27.8	22.2%	44.5%	5.5%	0.0%	2.72
3- Do you give update materials that motivate the EFL students to speak English language?	16.7%	72.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5
4- Do you give the students oral assignments (e.g. role-play, presentation)?	27.8%	44.5%	22.2%	5.5%	0.0%	2.94
5- Do you encourage the EFL students to prepare the assignment in groups?	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	2.88
6- Do you pay attention to the EFL students’ natural curiosity in your teaching speaking activities?	44.5%	44.5%	5.5%	5.5%	0.0%	3.27

7- Do you consider behavioral objects in your lesson plan for speaking English language?	22.2%	50.0%	27.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.94
8- Do you assign tasks and activities according to the EFL students' level during oral classes?	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%	2.66
9- Do you provide feedback on the EFL students' oral performance?	61.1%	27.8%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5
10- Do you create an active and supportive classroom environment for the EFL students to learn to speak?	50.0%	27.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	3.33
11- Do you use intrinsic rewards (e.g. involving the EFL student into the subject) to engage the students in the process of learning speaking skills?	33.4%	50.0%	11.1%	5.5%	0.0%	3.11
12- Do you use extrinsic rewards (e.g. giving grades) to engage the EFL students in the process of learning speaking skills?	11.1%	55.6%	27.8%	5.5%	0.0%	2.72
13- To which extent do you encourage EFL student-student interaction in the class to speak with each other?	44.5%	44.5%	5.5%	5.5%	0.0%	3.27
14- How often do you try to expand the EFL students' knowledge about English language speaking in lessons?	72.3%	11.1%	5.5%	11.1%	0.0%	3.44
15- Does the interference of culture diversity improve the students' speaking proficiency?	50.0%	27.8%	16.7%	5.5%	0.0%	3.22
16- Do you use learner-centered approach in teaching speaking skills?	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0

17- Do you divide the class into groups during teaching speaking lessons?	44.5%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	3.11
18- Do you encourage the students to work in pairs or groups cooperatively during speaking lessons?	33.4%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	0.0%	2.66
19- Do you use technological devices (e.g. Data-show, Cd-player, DVD, etc.) during speaking classes?	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	3.22
20- Do you give EFL students an opportunity to select the topic of discussion by themselves?	66.7%	22.2%	5.5%	5.5%	0.0%	3.50

It can be seen in the answers of the participants that teachers motivate the student with different motivational strategies by raising the students' self-confidence, using updated materials, considering behavioral objects in the lesson plan, providing feedback, creating supportive environment, using intrinsic rewards, encouraging the student-student interaction and giving opportunity to the students to select the topic of discussion by themselves. Thus, it can be said that the teachers at SU department of English language are aware of the importance of using motivational strategies in improving all language skills, especially, speaking skills.

Teachers Interview Results of the Second Research Question

Five questions were formed for ten teachers during the interviews and all questions were related to the case of the research. Teachers were free to answer the questions with no pressure and stress, they were given time to remember, think, and speak their mind.

Concerning the first question, "How can the EFL teacher and student relationship motivate a learner for learning speaking skill in classroom", respondents think that the relationship between them must pave the way to create a good environment in the class and that their relationship makes the students talk without feeling shy and leads them to have a better interaction and use language easily:

Teachers 1 and 9: the relationship between me and the students create a more comfortable classroom environment for students to ask questions and it is one of the most active ways.

Teachers 3, 8 and 10: engaging the students and making them do the talk and not to feel shy at the time of speaking guide them to be more active in real conversation.

Teacher 4, 5, 6 and 7: EFL teacher can make a good class management and concrete relationship with student since students are less capable of communicating with teachers who are not in relationship with them. So, teachers are responsible for teacher-student interaction and encourage students to talk and express themselves.

Only Teacher 2 thinks that their relationship affects the students' learning of speaking skill and engagement of the learner more in conversations.

Furthermore, the teachers' answers regarding the second question, 'In your opinion is it important to use motivational strategies in speaking lessons to promote the students' motivation?', all of them think that using motivational strategies are important in teaching speaking skills:

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10: Motivational strategies are an essential part of teaching methods because sometimes students need different strategies to be motivated and improve speaking skills. Students are able to speak but the right motivational strategy should be detected.

Teacher 9 thinks that despite their advantages and disadvantages, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be used. Keeping students' interests in mind matters most because in this way there will be connection between the students' interest and the subject taught.

Regarding the third question 'What are the most important strategies of a teacher to make the class room environment safe for the EFL students' motivation?', a great number of them think that enjoyable environment and using visual material are a good way of keeping the classroom quite:

Teachers 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10: A teacher must be enthusiastic about his/her subject, and teachers should create a pleasant, relaxed and enjoyable environment for their students. Besides, they must contribute in the flow of the lesson using achievable and visual materials, varying teaching methods, and last but not least, giving students a sense of control and responsibility.

Teachers 1, 3, 5 and 8 think in a different way to keep the classroom quiet and they responded as follows:

Teacher 1: I think having a lesson plan, and making the lessons digestible, using visual materials and creating a comfortable atmosphere are the most actual strategies.

Teacher 3: By assuring them that they won't be judged no matter what they say and giving them prizes.

Teacher 5: Treating the students with respect and love will make them feel safe and boost their self-confidence to participate and share their ideas.

Teacher 8: The most important strategy of teachers is to make the classroom environment safe since the classroom is a great place to learn. The teachers can move around and interact with their students to know them better. Also, getting to know students is more than just memorizing their names; it means understanding their needs, desires and interests that can motivate them to enjoy the learning process and not to be bored.

Moreover, for the fourth question 'What types of teaching materials are suitable and important for generating students' motivation?', the majority of the teachers prefer using visual materials and claim they are the most suitable:

Teachers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10: Video materials can be considered as one of the most significant elements of motivation because it helps students focus more when they hear and see the conversations of native speakers. Also, videos entertain students at the time to overcome boredom.

Only Teachers 1 and 3 did not indicate any material and he/she just shared his/her opinion and stated that:

Teacher 1: The teacher should consider the age, ethnicity, and the gender of the students, and then the materials should be chosen accordingly.

Teacher 3: The teacher should choose a realistic and suitable material.

Another participant, Teacher 2, thinks that dedicating gifts to the most successful students, praising their cleverness and participation and making competition among the students are better than using materials.

On the other hand, Teacher 9 believes that besides using visual organizers using literature is also helpful:

Teacher 9: Using literature can be motivating because of the language awareness, multiple layers of meaning and new culture. Also, using visual materials are needed because it helps the students keep information in their mind for a longer period of time.

Finally, for the fifth question ‘What types of motivational strategies do you use at the beginning, during and at the end of the speaking lessons and how do you keep them motivated?’, teachers answers were divided into three parts; using motivational strategy at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the class. Firstly, the majority of the teachers preferred to use a strategy to introduce the topic of discussion at the beginning of the class:

Teachers 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8: I give them an ice breaker at the beginning, and it is better to introduce the topic at the beginning.

In contrast, Teachers 2, 6 and 10, each of them, preferred other ways and using different strategies at the beginning of the class:

Teacher 2: Dedicating gifts to the most successful students is a good strategy to start the lesson.

Teacher 6: My class always starts with watching a video to warm my students up.

Teacher 10: Attracting the attention of the students with a sense of humor, a brief review of the previous material through distributing short questions are good warming ups.

Regarding the strategies that the teachers preferred to use during class, a great number of the teachers like to divide the students to small groups and letting them to work cooperatively:

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10: During the class I promote group work by engaging the students.

Only one teacher (Teacher 4) uses short videos about the topic in order to be clearer while Teacher 7 uses authentic material that the students can connect with, and that matches their needs and interests. Moreover, Teachers 5 and 6 let the students share their opinions about the lesson and have discussion with each other during the class.

Finally, concerning the strategies to be used at the end of speaking classes, the majority of the teachers give time to their students for expressing their ideas and what they have learned and commenting on the topic:

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10: Finally, the lesson should end up with letting the students to speak out by sharing their own thoughts regarding the topic, asking them to talk about what they have understood and complete the missing parts of their speaking.

As the questionnaire, a set of 20 questions were used for the students. The questionnaire items were five-point Likert scale items to address the opinions of the respondents using “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely” and “Never” ticks. Below is the table where the results of each question is explained in detail.

Table 2: Students' questionnaire results of the third research question

	Al	Of	St	Ra	NV	Weighed mans
1- Does motivation lead you to improve your tasks speaking performance?	22.1%	20.3%	50.4%	4.4%	2.8%	3.54
2- Do you like learning speaking English language?	74.3%	14.2%	9.7%	1.8%	0.0%	4.61
3- Do you think learning speaking English language is useful?	76.9%	11.5%	8.8%	2.8%	0.0%	4.62
4- Does learning speaking English language help you improve other skills (e.g. listening, reading, and writing)?	15.1%	23.8%	50.4%	2.8%	1.8%	3.47
5- Does the speaking lessons you are studying make it easier for you to communicate with native speakers of the language?	21.2%	23.8%	33.6%	11.5	9.9%	3.35
6- Does English films, music, etc. help you improve your speaking performance?	18.5%	21.2%	43.3%	10.6%	6.4%	3.35
7- Do you have a desire to learn to speak English language within yourself?	53.9%	24.7%	13.3%	5.3%	2.8%	4.22

8- Do the materials of teaching speaking English language suit your needs?	4.4%	11.5%	36.3%	30.1%	17.7%	2.54
9- Do the EFL teachers create a positive and active classroom environment for you during speaking classes?	7.9%	14.1%	51.3%	20.3%	6.4%	3.48
10- Do they provide speaking oral activates (role-play, presentation) to accomplish?	7.9%	23.8%	45.1%	18.5%	4.8%	3.54
11- Do they distribute all of you into groups during speaking lessons?	11.5%	18.5	38.9%	24.7%	6.4%	3.4
12- Do they encourage all of you to work in pairs or groups collaboratively during teaching speaking?	10.6%	19.5%	39.8%	23.7%	6.4%	3.4
13- Do they use technological devices (e.g. data-show, DVD, CD player, etc.) during teaching oral classes?	15.1%	17.6%	36.3%	23.1%	7.9%	3.8
14- Do they have an appropriate, friendly relationship with all of you?	11.5%	20.3%	33.6%	23.8%	10.8%	2.98
15- Do they connect teaching speaking materials with the students' daily life?	7.9%	15.9%	38.1	24.7%	13.4%	2.80

16- Do they give all of you enough chance to express your own ideas?	14.2%	31.8%	37.2%	12.4%	4.4%	3.38
17- Do they offer rewards and grades on all students' academic performance?	4.4%	13.3%	40.7%	22.1%	19.5%	2.61
18- Do they monitor all your performance and progress in speaking English language?	4.4%	21.2%	47.7%	20.5%	6.2%	2.97
19- Do they encourage you all to think critically during speaking lessons?	9.7%	17.6%	50.4%	14.2%	8.1%	3.7

It can be said that the majority of the students think that motivation is a great power, they always like to learn to speak English language because they believe that speaking English language is useful. Nevertheless, they think that learning to speak not always, 'but sometimes' motivates them to improve other skills and sometimes their speaking lessons help them to be able to speak with a native speaker. The reason of this is that materials of teaching speaking sometimes 'not always' suit their needs.

Moreover, all the students think that using motivational strategies are important and the teachers should use motivational strategies not only to improve speaking skills, but also to develop other language skills. Likewise, they believe that without using motivational elements, students cannot focus on the class and feel boredom. According to the students' opinions, punishment and reward theory is an essential way to be used in general, introducing the topic at the beginning by showing short videos and group work during the speaking classes.

Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that the strategies such as applying role-play, debating and problem-solving, employing group/pair work discussion and providing friendly learning environment are very important for engaging students in speaking activities. The teachers also reported that providing students with different activities, asking them to do presentation, adopting student-centered approach, paying attention to individual needs and preventing students from using L1 are among strategies that can be used for helping students engage in speaking activities. Also, the majority of the students was motivated and think that motivational strategies are important to improve one's speaking skills. Also, the students believe that a friendly relationship, group work and creating enjoyable atmosphere are the most effective motivational strategies for developing students' speaking skills.

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The Impact of Educational Games and Gender on Five Year old Iraqi Efl Learners

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the impact of educational games as a significant learning technique in teaching English vocabulary to five-year old Iraqi EFL learners. The sample of the study was 32 preschool children at Wano private kindergarten. They were divided into two different groups; the experimental group which were taught by using educational games and the control group which were exposed to the traditional methods of vocabulary teaching; there were 16 students in each group (8 males and 8 females). A checklist was used as the data collection instrument which consisted of 36 items vocabulary. At the beginning of the study samples were given a pretest to measure their vocabulary performance. Then, after six weeks of treatment, they were post tested. The outcomes showed a significant difference between experimental group and the control group in terms of posttest achievement in English vocabulary scores. Therefore, the educational games proved to be useful in teaching English vocabulary. Furthermore, the influence of gender on five-years-old Iraqi preschool kids in learning new English vocabulary with educational games in the experimental group and without educational games in the control group was examined by means of independent sample t-tests. The analyzed data showed no significant gender effect for both groups in learning new English vocabulary.

Keywords: *English as a foreign language, vocabulary teaching, educational games, very young learners, early childhood education, Total Physical response, five-year-old children*

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Eğitim Oyunlarının ve Cinsiyetin Beş Yaşındaki Iraklı Öğrenciler Üzerindeki Etkisi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın hedefi, eğitsel oyun tekniğinin beş yaş, okul öncesi öğrencilerinin İngilizce kelime öğrenimi üzerindeki tesirini araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın örneklemi ise 16 erkek ve 16 kız olmak üzere beş yaşında olan toplam 32 özel anaokulu öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. İki farklı gruba ayrıldılar. Her grup için 16 öğrenci vardı (8 erkek ve 8 kadın). Veri toplama aracı, hazırlanan 36 maddelik Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Kelime Performans Kontrol Listesi’den ibarettir. Altı haftalık bir süre içinde iki gruba Tümüyle Fiziksel Tepki metodu ile resimli kartlarla 36 kelime öğretilmiştir. Deneysel grupta eğitsel oyunları kullanılmıştır ve kontrol grubunda ise eğitsel oyunları kullanılmamıştır. Deneyin nihayetinde t-test incelemesi yapılmış ve eğitsel oyunları aracıyla öğrenen deneyde konu olan grubun lehine olarak iki grup arasında İngilizce kelime başarısı açısından tesir büyüklüğü aşırı derecede açık bir ihtilaf bulunmuştur. Ayrıca yabancı dil olarak İngilizce kelime öğrenimine, bahsedilen deneysel grupta eğitsel oyunları ve kontrol grubunda eğitsel oyunları olmaksızın, cinsiyetin tesiri olup olmadığı konusu da t-testler aracıyla incelenmiştir. Son olarak, bu iki grup için İngilizce kelime öğreniminde anlamsız bir cinsiyet tesiri bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, kelime öğretimi, eğitsel oyunlar, çok küçük öğrenciler, erken çocukluk eğitimi*

Introduction

Teaching a new language to very young learners can involve various techniques such as storytelling, videos, finger plays, singing, and educational games (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). In fact, these techniques and educational games are recommended for every individual who is learning a new language, however, especially for very young learners due to the fact that games offer student-centered context, motivation, little stress, fun, competition, collaboration, inspiration, active and social participation (Jafarian, 2017, Deesri, 2002; Fisher, 2004).

Using educational games as an instrument to improve the process of language learning, especially learning English as a foreign language, was examined in several studies such as Yip & Kwan, 2006; Cheng & Su, 2012; Aslanabadi and Rasouli, 2013; Riahipour and Saba 2012; Efendi, 2013 and Alemi, 2010. The results of these studies shows that using games, especially educational games in learning English as foreign language is very useful and it helps the learners to acquire the knowledge of the target language in an easier way.

The process of learning a language (either first or foreign language) starts with learning sounds and vocabulary as McGlothlin, (1997) states. Vocabulary is the collection of the total words of a language (Merriam-Webster, 2016), and there are two types of vocabulary which are Expressive and Receptive. Expressive vocabulary includes those words that a child could use them by uttering or expressing them while receptive vocabulary is about understanding what is said to the child or in other words, understanding the meanings of the words (Brownell, 2000).

Vocabulary is a prerequisite for the improvement of foreign language since vocabulary development or learning new words accounts for the most of the understanding (Bromley, 2007). Vocabulary comes in first place while teaching an additional language to very young students since naming objects is important at the beginning. Nevertheless, very young children are able to comprehend with the help of concrete contexts, therefore teaching vocabulary for them requires visual and concrete representations like picture cards (Gordon, 2007). Educational games are the games which are designed to be played in the teaching environment to help students gain information regarding specific objects or acquire new skills as they play.

Educational games can involve individual or group activities that are used for supporting very young children in the learning process.

Educational games have an important role in creating a low stress, relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for learning new words and vocabulary items. Using play activities and language games help students remember new words and vocabulary more easily (Taheri, 2014, Jafarian, 2017).

Moreover, the influence of the gender on foreign language teaching and learning was investigated in several studies such as Aslan, 2009; Olszewski-Kubilius & Turner, 2002; Swiatek & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2000; Dursun, 2007. The result of these studies supports the superiority of females in learning foreign language compared to males. In other words, female scores were higher and better than male scores in learning the target language. In contrast with these studies, there are also a few studies which have resulted with male superiority (Vahdat and Rasti- Behbahani, 2013; Cross, 1983). The results of these studies revealed that males achieved higher scores than females. In other words, the findings of both studies support the superiority of males in learning foreign language while in the studies of Burgoyne, Kelly, Whiteley and Spooner, 2009; Grace, 2000 non-significant difference between the two genders were found.

The present study aims at finding out the impact of educational games on five-year-old Iraqi EFL learners. Furthermore, another purpose of the current study is to investigate the influence of gender on five-years-old Iraqi preschool kids in learning new English vocabularies.

This study has tried to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group achievement scores which was taught by educational games, and the control group which was taught without educational games in learning English vocabulary, of Iraqi EFL preschool learners or not? Also, whether there is a statistically significant gender effect on Iraqi five-years-old EFL vocabulary learners in the experimental group which was taught by educational games, and the control group which was taught without educational games, with respect to learning new English vocabulary?

Methodology

The samples of the present study included 32 five-years-old children, including 16 male children and 16 females, studying at Wano private preschool in Kalar district. All of them were five-years-old. The children were divided into two groups equally; the experimental group and the control group; each group consisted of 16 children (see table 1). The realization of the current study included educational vocabulary games which fits the intended behavioral objectives of the research. Thus, four different games were implemented with different aims; the games were Hear and Jump by Cratty (1971), Musical Fingers by Drinkwater (2008), Elodie's Vocabulary Games by Drinkwater (2008) and Vocabulary Hunt by Drinkwater (2008).

Table 1: The samples of the study

Groups	Samples		Total
	Male	Female	
Exp. Group	8	8	16
Con. Group	8	8	16
Total	16	16	32

A checklist was used as the data collection instrument in agreement with the Total Physical Response (TPR) lessons' content. Burk (2005) argues that checklists are a fast and easy way of collecting data and it plays an assessment tool role in the field of language learning. Thus, a checklist was prepared in different topics such as animals and foods so as to be suitable for the participants level, age and the content of the lesson.

Table 2: Checklist

Performance Indicators	Performed (1)	Not Performed (0)
The child pointed to the apple.		
The child pointed to the bird		
The child pointed to the butterfly		

Procedure

The students' parents were informed about their children's participation in this research and the aims of the study. After that, a schedule was fixed in cooperation with the preschool administrator (see table 3). Both groups were given two, 30-minutes long lectures per week.

Table 3: Vocabulary items taught to both experimental and control group

Weeks	Days of week	
	Monday	Thursday
1	Cat, Dog, Bird	Banana, apple, cherry
2	Lion, Horse, Bear	Carrot, pear, watermelon
3	Deer, Goat, pig	Potato, strawberry, orange
4	Sheep, Goose, Duck	Tomato, grape, corn
5	Frog, Rat, Butterfly	Egg, honey, kiwi
6	Fish, Camel, Turtle	Milk, yogurt, pizza

Following that, the researcher administered the pretest on Thursday, the 9th of November, 2017 by utilizing Vocabulary Performance Checklist. Thus, every child was tested alone so as to keep the internal validity. Then, three flash cards were shown on the ground and the researcher asked the child in English language to 'point to....' waiting for fifteen second until the child responded, if he/she pointed to the right card the researcher marked it as 'performed' and he/she was given 1 mark, if he/she pointed to the wrong card the researcher marked as 'not performed' and he/she was given 0 mark. If a child did not respond, the researcher asked him/her again in child's native language, if he/she did not perform the task, the researcher marked it as not performed and she/he was given 0 mark (See table 4).

Table 4: Vocabulary performance checklist procedure

	Situations		
	Performed	Not Performed	No Response
Command in English “Point to the turtle!”	1 point	0 point	The child is asked again in Kurdish
Command in Kurdish (except the target vocabulary) “Kama ‘Apple’ pishan dadat!”	1 point	0 point	0 point

Then, the researcher collected all the results of the pretest and graded them. Next, the process of giving the treatment started according to the schedule that was prepared. The treatment continued for six weeks. Furthermore, after giving the treatment to the experimental group the researcher post tested both groups.

Result and Data Analysis

Descriptive and Independent T-test Results of the First Research Question

The descriptive statistics of the Vocabulary Performance Checklist as a pretest shows that there are 16 participants in the experimental group ($M=2.63$, $SD=3.55$) and there are 16 participants in the control group ($M=4.88$, $SD=4.17$) see Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of both groups in the Pre-test

	Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-scores	experimental	16	2.63	3.55	.889
	control	16	4.88	14.17	1.044

The independent t-test of Vocabulary Checklist as a pre-test shows that there is not a statistically significant difference between the control group ($M=4.88$, $SD=4.17$) and experimental group ($M=2.63$, $SD=3.55$), $t(30)=1.64$, $p=.111$ (two-tailed) because the significant value of independent T-test 0.111 is greater than 0.05. as a result, in terms of pre-test both groups are equal (see Table 6).

Table 6: Independent samples T-test of both groups in the Pre-test

Independent Sample Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.620	.437	1.640	30	.111	2.250	1.372	-551	5.051
Equal variances not assumed			1.640	29.256	.112	2.250	1.372	-554	5.054

Descriptive and Independent Samples T-test Analysis as a Post-test

The analyzed data of the descriptive statistics as post-test show that there are 16 participants in the experimental group (Mean= 27.82, Std. Deviation= 2.68) and there are 16 participants in the control group (Mean= 19.94, Std. Deviation= 3.31). In other words, there is not any missing data in the posttest, see Table 7.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of both groups in the posttest

	Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
postscores	Experimental	16	27.81	2.68	.672
	Control	16	19.94	3.31	.829

The independent t-test as a posttest shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the control group (Mean= 19.94, Std. Deviation= 3.31) and experimental group (Mean= 27.82, Std. Deviation= 2.68), $t(30) = 7.37$, $p = .00$ (two-tailed) because the significant value of independent T-test 0.00 is smaller than 0.05. as a result, in terms of post-test, the two groups are not equal and there is significant difference between the two groups score achievement (see Table 8).

Table 8: Independent samples T-test of both groups in the post-test

Independent Sample Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	F	Sig.	t	df					
Equal variances assumed	.287	.596	7.379	30	.000	7.875	1.067	5.695	10.055
Equal variances not assumed			7.379	28.379	.000	7.875	1.067	5.691	10.059

In the Table 8, it can be seen that the significant value of independent measure T test is 0,000 and due to the fact that this value is not greater than common alpha 0.05 there is significant difference between the score achievements of the two groups. Furthermore, the arithmetic score of the experimental group in the post-test is 27.81 while the arithmetic score of the control group in the posttest is 19.94. The two groups' mean reveal that there is a statistically significant difference in the participants' achievement scores.

Descriptive and Independent Sample T-test Results of the Second Research Question

In this section, the results of gender effect on EFL vocabulary learning with / without educational games in the experimental and the control group for Iraqi five-year-old EFL learners were presented.

Descriptive statistics and Independent Measure T-test were used to analyze the effect of gender on Iraqi EFL preschool students' vocabulary performance scores in the experimental group which received educational games in learning vocabulary.

The descriptive statistics of the experimental group as posttest shows that there are 16 participants in total including 8 males (M=26.75, ST= 2.31) and 8 females (M=28.88, ST= 2.71), see table 9.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of the experimental group as posttest regarding gender

Groups		N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Postscores Gender	Male	8	26.75	2.31	.818
	Female	8	28.88	2.71	.972

The independent t-test of Vocabulary Checklist shows that the significant value of independent T-test is 0.117. Since the analyzed value, 0.117, is greater than 0.05; it is concluded that there is not a statistically significant difference between males (M= 26.75, SD= 2.31) and females (M= 28.88, SD= 2.77). As a result, in terms of the effect of gender both groups are equal and there are no significant differences between the achievement scores of males and females (see Table 10).

Table 10: The independent t-test of the experimental group regarding gender

Independent Sample Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	.196	.665	-1.673	14	.117	-2.125	1.270	-4.850	.600
Equal variances not assumed			-1.673	13.606	.117	-2.125	1.270	-4.857	.607

Descriptive and Independent Sample T-test Results of the Gender Effect in the Control Group.

Descriptive results (see Table 4.7) show that there are 8 males (M=21.25, SD= 3.24) and 8 females (M= 18.63, SD= 3.02), and in total 16 five-year-old Iraqi preschool students in the control group which did not play educational games in learning vocabulary items.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of the control group as posttest regarding gender

Groups		N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Postscores Gender	male	8	21.25	3.24	1.146
	female	8	18.63	3.02	1.068

The analyzed data of the independent t-test show that significant value is 0.116. Since the analyzed value is greater than common alpha which is 0.05; it is concluded that there is not a statistically significant difference between males (M= 21.25, SD= 3.24) and females (M= 18.63, SD= 3.02). As a result, in terms of the effect of gender both groups are equal (see Table 12).

Table 12: The independent t-test of the control group regarding gender

Independent Sample Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	F	Sig.	t	df					
	.280	.605	1.676	14	.116	2.625	1.0566	-734	5.984
Equal variances not assumed			1.676	13.932	.116	2.625	1.566	-736	5.986

Conclusion

The analyzed data showed that the two groups are not the same in terms of posttest vocabulary learning achievement score. This demonstrates that the difference between two means was significant. Thus, it can be said that the results of the study have proven that teaching English vocabulary by using educational games helped the participant of the experimental group to develop their vocabulary learning, and it is an effective technique to teach vocabulary for Iraqi EFL preschool learners. Also, it can be observed

that the learners who were taught by educational games got higher scores than the learners in the controlling group in the posttest.

Also, the impact of gender on Iraqi EFL preschool students were investigated in both groups separately. The outcome of the analyzed data of the post test showed that there was no statically significant difference between females and males' achievement scores in the experimental group. Also, the outcome of the analyzed data of the post test showed that there was no statically significant difference between females and males' achievement scores in the control group. In other words, non-significant gender effect was founded in this study and a significant gender effect was not present and both groups were equal.

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and Richardson 52-57).	NOTE: If there are more than three authors, name only the first and add et al. or name each author.	
No Author Given	(A Handbook of Korea 241-47).	A Handbook of Korea. 4th ed. Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nathaniel Hawthorne'un Arthur Dimmesdale Karakteri ile Daniel Defoe'nun Robinson Crusoe Karakterinin Emerson'un "Self-Reliance-Özgüven" Makalesine Göre İncelenmesi

An Emersonian Interpretation of the Two Significant Fictional Characters: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Arthur Dimmesdale and Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe

Hande İSAOĞLU AKBIYIK

An Action Research Study: Benefits of Using Active Learning Strategies and Activities in Speaking Classes

Bir Eylem Araştırması: Konuşma Derslerinde Aktif Öğrenme Strateji ve Aktivite Kullanımının Faydaları

Sanaz Moaezzazi, Hülya YUMRU

İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Akademik Yazma Konusunda Karşılaştıkları Zorluklar

Efl Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing

Bayan MOHAMMAD ALNURES, Hülya YUMRU

Iraklı Yabancı Dil Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Konuşmaya Teşvik Edilmesinde Motivasyon Stratejilerinin Rolü

The Role of Motivational Strategies in Motivating Iraqi Efl Students to Speak English

Kosrat OMAR, Akbar Rahimi ALISHAH

Eğitim Oyunlarının ve Cinsiyetin Beş Yaşındaki Iraklı Öğrenciler Üzerindeki Etkisi

The Impact of Educational Games and Gender on Five Year Old Iraqi Efl Learners

Akram AL-ZANGANA, Akbar Rahimi ALISHAH

