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The Effect of Using STAD Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension to EFL Intermediate School Students

A B S T R A C T

STAD strategy is one of the cooperative strategies in which students work together and it is considered one of the beneficial strategies in teaching reading comprehension. This study aims at finding out the effect of using STAD Strategy in teaching reading comprehension to EFL intermediate school students, and if there is any significant difference between the experimental group's achievement at the recognition and the production levels in the posttest. It is hypothesized that there is an effect of using STAD Strategy in teaching reading comprehension to EFL intermediate school students, and there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's achievement at the recognition and the production levels in the posttest.

To verify the hypotheses of the study, the researcher has conducted an experiment, during the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023. Sixty four students from the second grade of Ghaza intermediate school for girls have been randomly selected. Thirty two students as a control group which have been taught reading comprehension by using the traditional method, and thirty two students as an experimental group which have been taught reading comprehension by using STAD strategy. Both groups have been taught by the researcher herself, and they equalized according to some important variables such as their age and level of parents' education, and their scores in previous year in English.

The statistical analysis of the obtained data revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and that of the control group in the posttest.

According to the findings, some conclusions, recommendations and suggestions are proposed for further studies.

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تأثير استخدام استراتيجيات شعبة إنجاز فرق الطلاب في تدريس الفهم القرائي لطلبة المرحلة المتوسطة
 في اللغة الإنجليزية - لغة أجنبية

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الخلاصة:

تعد استراتيجية شعبة إنجاز فرق الطلاب إحدى الاستراتيجيات التعاونية التي يعمل فيها الطلاب معاً وتعتبر إحدى الاستراتيجيات المفيدة في تدريس الفهم القرائي. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة تأثير استخدام استراتيجية شعبة إنجاز فرق الطلاب في تدريس الفهم القرائي لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة من اللغة الانجليزية – لغة اجنبية و إذا كان هناك فرق ذات دلالة احصائية بين تحصيل المجموعة التجريبية عند مستويات الادراك والإنتاج في الاختبار البعدي. افترضت هذه الدراسة أن هناك تأثير لاستخدام استراتيجية شعبة إنجاز فرق الطلاب في تدريس الفهم القرائي لطلبة المرحلة المتوسطة من اللغة الانجليزية – لغة أجنبية وتوجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين تحصيل المجموعة التجريبية عند مستويات الادراك والإنتاج في الاختبار البعدي.

للتحقق من فروض الدراسة أجريت الباحثة تجربة خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي 2022-2023. تم اختيار أربعة وستين طالبة من الصف الثاني من مدرسة غزة المتوسطة للبنات بشكل عشوائي. اثنان وثلاثون طالبة كمجموعة ضابطة تم تدريسهن الفهم القرائي باستخدام الطريقة التقليدية ، واثنان وثلاثون طالبة كمجموعة تجريبية تم تعليمهم استيعاب القراءة باستخدام استراتيجية تجريبية تم تدريسهن الفهم القرائي باستخدام استراتيجية شعبة إنجاز فرق الطلاب. تم تدريس كلتا المجموعتين من قبل الباحثة نفسها ، وتم تحقيق التعادل وفقاً لبعض المتغيرات المهمة مثل العمر ومستوى تعليم الوالدين ، ودرجاتهم في العام السابق باللغة الإنجليزية.

أظهرت النتائج للبيانات التي تم الحصول عليها وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أداء المجموعة التجريبية وأداء المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي.

وفقاً لهذه النتائج ، تم اقتراح بعض الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والاقتراحات لمزيد من الدراسات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية، قراءة، فهم، مفردات، نحو، طلاب.

Section One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study

In the educational domain, reading is one of the most common and often compulsory activities that students and academicians have to do all the time, all around the world. They are required to read many kinds of texts for various types

of purposes dealing with their assignments and other academic demands. Reading comprehension is an important life activity that can be refreshed Knowledge. It determines the success of any topic Theme. By comprehension reading, people can teach writing and speaking rules and any other material. Reading becomes too crucial and indispensable thing for students because by reading they can get information from a text that can increase their knowledge. Thus, it is reasonable to say everyone should be able to read (Patel and Praveen, 2008, p.113).

Therefore, in order to minimize the above problems, the researcher tries to create a situation where students can be active in the reading process. Student Team Achievement Division is an appropriate strategy to be applied. STAD strategy is an ideal teaching tool when it comes to teaching language. By STAD strategy students are trained to find and comprehend difficult concepts through discussion among their groups, students are able to question each other and share their comprehension with their groups in the effect of improving their comprehension. This learning strategy gives priority to the cooperation between groups in solving the problem and in applying the knowledge in order to reach the learning objectives (Arnadottir, 2014, p.23)

1.2 Aims of the Study

The study aims to:

1. Finding out the effect of using STAD Strategy in teaching reading comprehension to EFL intermediate school students.
2. Finding out if there is any significant difference between the experimental group's achievement at the recognition and the production levels in the posttest.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is an effect of using STAD Strategy in teaching reading comprehension to EFL intermediate school students.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's achievement at the recognition and the production levels in the posttest.

1.4 Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to:

1. Second-year intermediate students at Ghaza Intermediate School for Girls in the city of Samarra/Salah Al-Din Governorate.
2. Unit five, unit six and unite seven of **English for Iraq** textbook, during the academic year 2022-2023.

1.5 Value of the Study

The result of the study is hopefully can be useful for:

1. Teacher

For giving suggestions and helping the teacher to give an alternative way of teaching, to enhance students' understanding and interest in reading comprehension by using the Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) strategy.

2. Students

This study is also useful for the students to build an understanding, and enjoyment and enhance their motivation in learning reading comprehension cooperatively. Even, this strategy can build good interaction among students to support each other in academic field.

3. Further Researcher

Finally, for the further researcher, this study can provide some basic information about the Students Teams Achievement Division (STAD) strategy especially its effect on learning and teaching reading comprehension to students.

Section 2

Theoretical Background and Related Previous Studies

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 The Concept of STAD Strategy

STAD strategy stands for student team achievement divisions, it is a collaborative learning strategy in which small groups of learners with different levels of ability work together to accomplish a shared learning goal. It was devised by Robert Slavin and his associates at Johns Hopkins University (Innovative Learning, 2009, p.36), students are assigned to four or five member learning teams that are mixed in performance level, gender, and ethnicity. The teacher presents a lesson, and then students work together within their teams to make sure that all team members have mastered the lesson. Finally, all students take individual quizzes on the material, at which time they may not help one another.

According to Aryani (2016, p.47), STAD strategy is one of the simplest cooperative learning and has gone through under a lot of researches by previous scholars. STAD strategy is also commonly used to teach a wide range of subjects

and grades. The five basic key components of STAD are the class presentation, teams, quizzes, individual improvement scores, and team recognition.

2.1.2 Component of STAD strategy

There are five major components in the STAD strategy which proposed by Slavin (1995,p.71-73).

1.) Class Presentation

The material is presented in the classroom as a primarily phase of STAD strategy. In this case teacher gives the material directly or as a lecture discussion. Students need to pay a careful attention during the teacher presentation so that it will help them later on the quiz.

2.) Teams

There are about four or five students in each teams who represent a cross section in the class including academic performance, sex and race or ethnicity. The members use the worksheet or any devices to help each other mastering the material.

3.) Quizzes

The quiz is taken by students individually after they got the teacher presentation and team practice. Students are not allowed to help their friends of the team during the quiz in order to know they have responsible in knowing the materials individually.

4.) Individual Improvement Scores

Each student is given a base' score, derived from the student's average performance on similar quizzes.

5.) Team Recognition

The team which has reached the average score exceeded certain criteria will get the reward.

2.1.3 Steps of STAD Strategy

Murdani,etal. (2019, p.42) and Slavin (2005, p.112) mention the following are some steps of the STAD strategy:

a) Students are divided into small groups consisting of (4-5) members who have heterogeneity abilities

- b) The teacher gives the subject matter that will be studied by students, so that students can look for the information that will be discussed in the lesson (Before learning)
- c) The teacher begins the lesson by presenting the material to be discussed in advance. The material presented is not comprehensive only the subject matter and ends with a number of questions that must be discussed by students in the youth group.
- d) The teacher provides a student worksheet that matches the material and the teacher tells them that the worksheet will be collected after they have finished working on and understanding it.
- e) Students discuss answers from teacher questions with friends in one study group
- f) The teacher goes around becoming a facilitator in student learning group discussion activities.
- g) After the group discussion activities the teacher finished giving a quiz to measure the extent of students' understanding of the material that had been discussed.
- h) The teacher checks the results of the quiz and gives awards to students and groups who answer correctly and give appreciation to all students and other groups to be more motivated.

2.1.5 Procedures for Implementing STAD Strategy

The procedure of STAD strategy implementation consisted of the following steps:

1. The researchers divided the students into heterogeneous groups from different academic level based on the pre-test, though they were in elementary level in general. Each group was made up of one student with high achievement level, two learners with average achievement level, and one student with low achievement level.
2. The teacher explained the STAD rules. When the students were presented well enough about the procedure, the teacher started teaching procedure. She implemented this strategy only for reading comprehension skill.
3. Experimental groups were arranged to discuss over the subjects; they worked in groups collaboratively and did the assignment that was given by the teacher. They worked together until each member was sure their teammates would be able to

make a total score in the quiz. They were responsible for other members in their teams to understand the lessons.

4. The teacher gave them individual quizzes. Sometimes the quizzes were in the form of reading comprehension tests from, and sometimes the teacher asked oral questions from reading passages in their course book.

5. After the quiz, the teacher counted students' improvement score and determined a group score by adding up all individual improvement scores divided by the total number of members in each group.

6. In the end, she gave reward for group achievement. For example, teams with low improvement received a Good Team certificate, teams with average improvement received a Great Team certificate and teams with high improvement received Super Team certificate (Slavin,1995, p.79-80).

2.2 Concept of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a very complicated process where the brain is activated through noting a word, decoding it and identifying the related meaning. The reader constructs meaning by interacting with the text using his or her previous knowledge and experience that can be found in the texts. It means a students' ability to understand information that is presented through the written words (Storm, 2007, p.19).

It is considered one of the most complex activities humans can perform (Kendeou, et al, 2016, p.62). This complexity hinders the development of a comprehensive theory that can make precise predictions across readers, texts, and discourse contexts (Kendeou, et al, 2014, p. 353).

Comprehending reading text is a process of constructing and extracting meaning. Reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". By situating reading comprehension as a process of extracting and constructing meaning, that is the reader must make referential and logical inferences that are not explicitly made in the text. Thus, a reader interacting with a text is making meaning from term or concept that exists beyond the text is the extraction part of the process of constructing meaning.(Woolley, 2011, p.16)

Effective reading comprehension is based upon many factors related to the reader, the text, and the behavior of comprehension. The ingredients of reading comprehension consist of accurately decoding words, understanding the language to monitor reading, memory skills, vocabulary acquisition, previous knowledge,

and complicated reasoning skills (Whitaker, 2009, p.41). Reading comprehension has been presented as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002, p. 11).

Reading comprehension is understanding a written text that the author is trying to convey and extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. (Farris, 2004, p.321 and Grellet, 1998, p.3)

From all definitions above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is someone’s ability in understanding the message from the written text. The readers who are good in comprehension can organize between their background knowledge and the message in the text and deciding on the process needed to meet their purpose of reading. The comprehending process which is focused on how (the way) it works guides the readers to comprehend a reading text systematically. During this process, the reader combines his language skills, background knowledge and strategies to determine the meaning. Besides that, the reader emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge and reading skills in order to find information in the text. (Muchtar, 2016, p.9)

2.2.4 Types of Reading Comprehension

2.2.4.1 Extensive Reading

Extensive reading on the other side is reading program that will actively promote reading out of class. Class is always in short supply and the amount of reading needed to achieve fluency and efficiently is great than most students will undertake if left to themselves. An extensive reading is suitable for reading to have a general idea of a text. The skimming process takes a prominent role. Usually skimming relates to longer text, where there are words that need special attention. It is appropriate in reading a novel, magazine or another text, which does need full attention to a word or a sentence. However, some class time ought to be devoted to extensive reading, both to maintain interest in it and to train students how to deal with full-length text. (Nuttal, 1982, p.23)

2.2.4.2 Intensive Reading

Intensive reading involves approaching in text under the close guidance of teacher or under the guidance of a task, which forces the students to pay great attention to the text. The aim of intensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the text: not only of what it means, but also how the meaning is produced. Intensive reading is used to gain a deep understanding of a

text, which is important for readers. The process of scanning takes a more prominent role here than skimming. For this kind of purpose it is better to teach the students from a shorten text and develop step to a longer one. This called also reading for accuracy. (Nuttal, 1982, p.23)

2.2.4.3 Silent Reading

Silent reading is one of reading class performance, it is the way to read without produce any voice. So, the readers read the text by their heart. It makes people beside the reader doesn't hear the reader's voice. As silent reading can enhance reading capacity, learners must use it. This reading practice will save time when all students participate at the same time. As a result, improving reading speed is very helpful, and playing a significant role in enhancing student comprehension is essential. (Annisa,2010, p.12)

2.2.4.4 Aloud Reading

Reading aloud is a significant and magic way to develop students' oral English. Reading aloud is critical for improving pronunciation, oral communication, intonation, tension and enabling learners to gain fluency in the language. In other words, reading aloud is a vital aspect of English instruction because it sets the groundwork for sound pronunciation (Huang, 2010, p.87).

Section Three

Procedures

3.1 Experimental Design

The experimental design is a series of rules and procedures designated to treat the experimental units (Casler, 2015, p.693). The experimental design is the "blueprint of the procedures that enable the researcher to test hypotheses by reaching valid conclusions about the relationship between independent and dependent variables." (Best and Khan, 2006, p.177).

Brown and Rodgers (2002, p.210) explain the following characteristics for the experimental design:

- 1- Choosing two groups of students randomly distributing them into the experimental and the control groups.
- 2- Creating an equality of opportunity between the experimental and control groups of students.
- 3- Using the experimental group to administer the independent variable.

- 4- Instructing the control group with the similar instructional material as the experimental group, but in the traditional manner.
- 5- Two groups of students participated in the posttest.
- 6- Using statistical tools to analyze the collected data and get up with the results.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

3.2.1 Population

Creswell (2012, p.142) defines a population as a group of individuals with the same characteristic. The population in a research study includes all members of any well-defined group of people, things, or events. Because large populations are often inaccessible and cannot be studied directly, the researchers select a representative sample from the population selected for their study (Riazi,2015, p.241).

The population of the current study involves EFL Iraqi intermediate school students of second-year in Samarra city in Salah Al-den Government. The total number of second-year students' population is (224) as shown in table (1).

Table (1)

The Population of the Study

No.	School	Number of pupils
1	Ghaza Intermidate School for Girls	106
2	Al Afaf Secondary School for Girls	47
3	Samarra Secondary school for Girls	71
Total		244

3.2.2 Sample of the study

According to Ary, et al.(2018:148), a sample is a number of individuals, objects or events selected for a study from a population, usually in such a way that they represent the large group from which they are selected.

In order to achieve the aim of the study. The researcher has randomly selected Ghaza Intermediate School for girls to be the sample of the study, during the academic year 2022-2023. Second Intermediate School Students distributed into two sections (A, B). Section (A) has been chosen randomly to be the experimental Group, which consists of (32) students. Section (B) has been also chosen randomly to be the control group, which includes (32) students. Thus, the total number of the sample participants is (64) Female students who represent (26 %) of the original population, as shown in table (2).

Table (2)
The Sample of the Study

Sections	Groups	No. of sample
A	Experimental	32
B	Control	32
Total		64

3.3 Instructional Material

The material has been taught by the researcher herself from the textbook 'English for Iraq' for second Intermediate school students in the second course of (2022/2023), it consists of eight units and each unit has ten lessons. The researcher taught unit (5,6, and7). It is limited to narrative reading comprehension text.

The experiment of this study has been done in the second semester of the academic year 2022 – 2023. The two groups of study began on the twenty-first of February and continued for about nine weeks, and ended on the nineteenth of April 2023. The experimental group is taught by the using STAD strategy in teaching narrative texts, while the control group is taught by using the traditional method.

3.7 Validity of the Posttest

Validity refers to the exam's truthfulness, and it is essential because students need to be confident that the test is actually testing what it promises to test (Brown, 2001, p.388).It means whether a measure is truthful or genuine. In other words, a measure that is valid measures what it claims to measure (Jackson, 2009, p.71).

3.7.1 Face Validity

According to Mousavi (2009, p.247), face validity is the degree to which a test looks right, and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the testees who take it , the administrative staff who decide on its use, and other psychometrically simple observers

3.7.2 Content Validity

Weir (1993,p.25) has considering content validity as the process of declaring to what extent the test tasks being tested. In other words, content validity is a systematic investigation of the content of the test to be sure whether it covers the content of the material and the behaviors objectives to be measured

3.8 Reliability of the Posttest

Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of a measuring instrument. In other words, we want a scale to measure exactly the same way every time it is used. This means that individuals should get a similar score each time they use the measurement tool (Jackson, 2009, p.65).

A reliable instrument is one that gives consistent results. If a researcher tested the math achievement of a group of individuals at two or more different times, for example, he or she should expect to obtain close to the same results each time (Fraenkel, et al. 2012, p.112). The Alpha-Cronbach formula is used to determine the posttest-reliability. The coefficient of test is (0.81), which is considered as excellent.

Section Four

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1 Presentation of the Results

4.1.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis

To verify the first Hypothesis, which is, **"There is an effect of using STAD Strategy in teaching reading comprehension to EFL intermediate school students"**. An achievement test is applied for (32) students. Then, the calculated t-value and the tabulated t-value is achieved by using the T-Test formula for one independent sample to estimate student's performance . The mean scores of the students' achievements are 65.50 and the theoretical mean is 50 with a standard deviation of 11.371 respectively. The T-test formula for one sample is used. The calculated t-value is 7.711 which is found to be higher than the tabulated t-value, which is 1.70 at the 0.05 level of significance when the degree of freedom is 41, as shown in table (1).

This indicates that the achievement of the second intermediate school students in reading comprehension is above the average level. Thus, according to

these results there is statistical significant effect of using STAD strategy in teaching reading comprehension for EFL intermediate school students, so the first hypothesis is accepted.

Table (1)

The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and One Sample T-Value of the Students' General Achievement

Group	N.	Mean	SD.	Theoretical Mean Score	T-Value		DF	Level of Sig.
E.G.	32	65.50	11.371	50	Calculated	Tabulated	31	0.05
					7.711	1.70		

4.1. 2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

To verify the second Hypothesis, which is, **"There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's achievement at the recognition and the production levels in the posttest"**. An achievement test is applied for (32) students. Then, the calculated t-value and the tabulated t-value is achieved by using the T-Test formula for two paired sample to estimate student's performance. The mean scores of the experimental group's students' achievement at the recognition level and at the production level are calculated and compared to see if there is a significant difference between them. According to the findings, students' mean scores at the production level are 19.56 and their mean scores at the recognition level are 46.75. The t-test formula is applied for two paired samples, and the calculated t-value is 14.370, while the tabulated t-value is 1.70 at the degree of freedom 31 and level of significance 0.05, as shown in table(2)

The result shows that, there is a significant difference between students' performance at the recognition level and that at the production level for the benefit of the recognition level. As a result, the second hypothesis is also accepted.

Table (2)
Means, Standard Deviation, and T-Values of the Two Groups
In the Achievement Post Test

Groups	No. of Students	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
Recognition	32	46.75	8.405	Calculated	Tabulated	31	0.05
Production	32	19.56	7.866	14.370	1.70		

4.2 Discussion of the Results

The results of this study show that the using STAD have a positive impact on students' reading comprehension. This exemplifies the efficient use of STAD in enhancing students' ability to comprehend and develop positive and beneficial ideas. Based on the data analysis of the first hypothesis which that the students' mean scores in reading comprehension (65.50) were higher than the theoretical mean scores (50). It means that the use of STAD strategy can be applied in teaching reading skill as it can help the students to improve their reading comprehension by employing new habits to read frequently in English.

In the second hypothesis, the mean scores of the experimental group's students' achievement at the production level is 19.56 and the mean scores at production and recognition level is 46.75. According to the findings, the mean production scores and mean recognition scores show that there is a significant difference between students' performance at the recognition level and that at the production level for the benefit of the recognition level. As a result, the second hypothesis is accepted

Section Five

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be formed based on the findings of this study:

1. The students improved their reading comprehension through STAD strategy by discussing the issues proposed by the teacher in the reading text. Furthermore, they worked together in heterogeneous teams to get higher improvement point as their

goal in each cycle. This condition created the competitive atmosphere in the classroom. So, it increased students' motivation to comprehend the reading text.

2. Students of the experimental groups are better than students of the control group, which indicate that those students have positively responded to this strategy.

3. Creating active and interactive environments that make students actively participate in the learning process through interactive, creative, competitive, and collaborative learning situations.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The English teacher should make the situation of teaching and learning process interesting and enjoyable, so that the students learn at easy and comfortably in their class.

2. Select and present material according to the students' level and need. Therefore, an assessment is needed before deciding to what sort of material will be given.

3. In using Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) as a strategy to teach the students, the teacher must follow the suggested steps in Student Team Achievement Divisions (STAD) strategy. It can give the optimal result.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Since this study is only conducted on the female participants, a similar study can be done on the male gender or both together.

2. A study can be conducted to investigate the effects of Using STAD Strategy in teaching vocabulary skill to EFL Intermediate School Students.

3. A study can be conducted to investigate the effects of Using STAD Strategy in teaching speaking skill to EFL Intermediate School Students.

4. Since the current is only conduct on the intermediate school, a similar study can be done on the preparatory school.

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