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UTILIZING JOLLY PHONICS SONGS AND FLASH CARDS TO TEACH IRAQ EFL PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' LANGUAGE LEARNING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims at finding out the effect of utilizing Jolly phonics songs and flash cards to teach Iraq EFL primary school Pupils' language learning skills. Therefore, the researcher used the experimental design and post-test as a data collection tool. Two groups of first class primary school pupils, experimental and control, were selected to be the sample of this study, which consists of (36) students in each group during the academic year 2018/2019. The two groups were equalized in terms of many several variables that may effect on the independent variable (Jolly phonics songs and flash card). Then, suitable statistical tools were applied on analyzing the data and to achieve the aim of this study. The findings of this study showed that jolly phonics songs and flash card has effectively improved the students' language learning skills since that there is a statistically difference in EFL students' oral achievement in favor of the post-test scores of the experimental group. Based on the results obtained, a set of conclusions are put forward.

Introduction

In the early stage of learning a language, pupils needs to be able to differentiate between the letters sounds and names, to imitate pronunciation, to recognize what is being heard, to name things, and understanding of the left to right direction. Teaching English as a foreign language for first primary schools pupils needs to provide an interactive learning environment to facilitate the process of learning foreign language. In addition, teaching language-learning skills for primary school's pupils

is not an easy task and demanded many efforts to achieve the goals of learning. EFL teachers should address each of the four basic language skills: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The aim of this study is to find out the effect of utilizing Jolly phonics songs and flashcards on teaching Iraqi EFL primary school pupils' language learning skills. It hypothesized that there is a significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group students who are taught English language learning skills by jolly phonics songs and flash cards and those taught English language learning skills by the conventional method in the post- test. It is limited to the first primary schools' pupils in Al Fawz primary school in wasit in the academic study year 2018/2019.

Providing a joyful and interesting learning environment is the one of the important steps which EFL/ESL teachers should start with to help the young learners to acquire a FL/SL. Since that, teaching foreign language for non-native learners takes more efforts and time. A relaxed learning environment will motivates the students and facilitates the acquisition learning process. Moreover, many studies assured that pupils, in their early stage of their learning, could learn their second language the same way they learn their first language. Therefore, using Jolly Phonics songs and flash cards in teaching English language learning skills provide such environment for pupils.

2-Theoretical Background

2-1 Jolly phonics

Jolly phonics is a teaching method used to enhance the young learners' literacy. It is created in the United Kingdom in 1989 by Sue Liyod and christopher. It is used to teach the pupils the sounds of the letters instead of the names of the letters. The system of this method divided the sounds as follows (Sequencing of the sounds according to Jolly Phonics):

- 1 . s, a, t, i, p, n
- 2 . c k, e, h, r, m, d
- 3 . g, o, u, l, f, b
- 4 . ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or
- 5 . z, w, ng, v, oo, oo
- 6 . y, x, ch, sh, th, th
- 7 . qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar

(Morales, 2018, Fig. 1, P. 30)

Jolly phonics is defined as " a method of teaching English reading which first the letter sound are taught and then build up blending these sound together to get a full pronunciation of whole words" (Consuegra, 2018, p. 10). Jolly phonics, as a teaching method, consists of series of books, which are used to enhance pronunciation "practice decoding ", to develop the learners' vocabulary. In addition, it contains different worksheets to improve different learning skills such as "identification of sounds and blending" (Ruiz, 2014. P16). This method aims at teaching the sounds of the letters through the using of gestures, songs, cards, worksheets, and stories. Using these teaching materials of jolly phonics can assist the teachers to teach and improve more than one skill at the same time such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Using songs with actions and flash cards (which are the focus of this study) of this method help the pupils" to improve their language learning and develop the habit of learning the English language with more passion." (Alefshat, 2019. P 2) and will help the teachers to provide an attractive learning language environment and to make the content easy to learn and understand. Wood (2011) assured that the function of using songs in English classes is to engage students in speaking and understanding the English language, while reinforcing the fundamentals of language and communication. Songs contain lyrics that are easy for students to follow and memorize.

Thus, using songs in EFL\ESL classes makes learning languages interesting and joyful through singing songs with actions. There are many advantages of using songs in teaching, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1- The repetitive nature of singing and learning them.
- 2- As students repeat lyrics, they begin to understand the meaning of words until it becomes a natural act.
- 3- The students can understand the way English is used without even realizing they are learning.
- 4- It is a great way to introduce principles of speaking, hearing and understanding the English language. (wood, 2011)

From the other hand, using flash cards also have a great importance in teaching especially the young learners, since they helped to make the content more memorable and attractive. In this respect, Budden (n.d.) states that

Flash cards can be bright and colourful and make a real impact on visual learners....., Flash cards are a really handy resource to have and can be useful at every stage of the class. They are a great way to present, practise and recycle vocabulary and when students become familiar with the activities used in class, they can be given out to early-finishers to use in small groups.

3-Methodology

3-1 The sample of the study

The sample of the current study is the first primary pupils, Al-Fawz primary school for boys during the academic year 2018/2019. The total number is (55) pupils, and they are divided into three classes, there are (18) pupils in each class. The sample of this study was randomly chosen and consists of (36) pupils. Thus, group (A- 18 pupils) was chosen to represent the experimental group, while group (B -18 pupils) is set as the control group.

The equalization of these two groups is checked in terms of participants' intelligent, pre-test, and the academic achievement of the first semester in English language material (mid- year exam). See table (1)

Table 1

The equalization of the experimental and control groups in Intelligence, first semester achievement, and pre test.

Variable	Groups	No.	M	Variance value	t-value		d.f	Level Of Sig.	Sig.	
					computed	critical				
Intelligence	Exp.	18	35.120	78.010		0.210	2.310	34	0.05	No sig. differences
	Cont.	18	34.960	76.610						
Achievement	Exp.	18	7.530	2.360		0.720	2.0315	38		
	Cont.	18	7.260	2.450						
Pre-test	Exp.	18	7.586	4.879	23.8004*	1.860	2.0315	34		
	Cont.	18	7.999	4.897	23.980 *					

***SD value**

3-2 Teaching Materials

1-The researcher taught the same syllable of the textbook of the English subject of the first class at the primary school, so the material is (English for Iraq) by (Quintana and O'Neill), published by Garnet Education.

2- Recording of Jolly phonics' songs.

3-Jolly phonics flash cards.

3-3 Data Collection Tools

The researcher used **post-test** to collect the data, which can accomplish the aim of the current study.

3-3-1 Post-test

The post-test (oral test) consists of four main questions. Each question tests a specific skill of language learning skills. The first question consists of four items test

the pupils' listening skills which focus on the ability to concentrate on what is being heard, ability to imitate pronunciation, ability to carry out TPR task, and degree of what is being heard. The second question consists of four items test the pupils' speaking skills that focus on the ability to respond to questions, the ability to name (people, colours, and objects), pronunciation, and the ability to respond in English. The third question consists of two items to test the pupils' pre-reading skills focus on recognition of alphabet, numbers, and words, and understanding the sounds of the letters. In the last question, the researcher focuses on the writing skill and consists of two items.

3.3.2 Scoring scheme

For scoring purpose, one score for each correct answer and zero for each incorrect answer and when no answer is provided for the first, third and forth questions' items. While the second question, which consists of four items, half score for each correct answer and zero for each incorrect answer. The total score of the oral test is 10 marks.

3.3.3 Validity of the test

Richard and Schmidt (2001) define validity as "the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure"(p.575). While Harris (1969) states that, the face validity of the test refers to the way it looks like to the testees, administrators, educators and the like (p. 21). To achieve the face validity of the posttest, and its scoring scheme, and the lesson plan are displayed to a jury of instructors specialized in TEFL from different Iraqi Colleges. According to their judgments, they are found valid. Some of their items are reformulated according to their suggestions.

3.3.4 Reliability of the test

Richard & Schmidt (2002) state that "reliability is a measure of the degree to which a test is gives consistent results. A test is said to be reliable if it gives the same results when it is given on difficult occasion or it is used by different people" (p.454). The researcher used test-re-test to estimate the test reliability of the present study. Ninety students (female) were randomly selected to be the reliability sample from Al- Shaheed Adnan primary school for girls. The reliability value is found (0.92). The test is considered a good test if it its reliability is more than (0.70).(Van Esetal,1984, p.317). Thus, it is considered acceptable and good.

3-4 Procedures

To achieve the aim of this study, the researcher used the following procedures

- 1- In the first lesson the researcher explains and clarifies the diffirence between the sound of the letters and their names using flash cards. In order to pave the way for the pupils to understand the songs and to be able to focus on what is being heard, the researcher plays the songs more than time and with the using of flash cards.
- 2- In addition to improve their ability to imitate pronunciation the researcher asked the pupils to sing the songs of jolly phonics and they should do action for sound: e.g.

the |s| is represented by snake and they should "weave their hand" to form 's' like snake. If it is necessary, the researcher can do some amendments in the songs in order to make the songs easier for the pupil's level. In addition, facial expressions and movements can be used with the songs.

3- The teacher showed the flash cards of words or things started with words or things started with: e.g. |s|.

4- The researcher reviews the new vocabularies.

The experiment started on Monday 7/1/2019 and ended on Wednesday 6/3/2019. This means the experiment of this study lasted for (9 weeks), two lectures per week for each group. At the end of the experiment, the post-test has been administered to the control and the experimental groups. The test has been administered to (36) students of the first class/ Al- Fawz primary school on Wednesday 6/3/2019.

3-5 Data analysis

The scores obtained from the post-test are analyzed by applying the (SPSS), and T-Test for two independent samples, which is also, used for the equality of the experimental and control groups' intelligence, pre-test and the academic achievement (mid-year examination). In addition, T-Test for two independent samples is used to analyze the results and discussion of this study. Person formula is used to find out the reliability of the post-test.

3-6 Results and discussions

In order to test the null hypothesis of current study, the data obtained are analyzed by applying T-Test for two independent samples, and the researcher compared the mean scores of the post-test of the control and experimental groups to achieve the aim of this study.

Table (2)

The mean, standard deviation, and T value of the experimental and control groups' scores in the post- test

Group	No of subjects	Mean	Variance Value	S.D	D.f	Level of significance	T – value	
							Computed	Tabulated
Exp.	18	7.086	5.076	25.765	34	0.05	3.860	2.0315
Cont.	18	4.059	3.877	15.031				

As shown in table (2), the mean, standard deviation, and T value, of the experimental and control groups' scores in the post-test have been compared to find out whether or not there is a statistical difference between the two groups in the post-test. The mean score of the experimental group is (7.086), while the mean score of the control group is (4.059) in the oral post-test. This indicates that the jolly phonics songs and flash cards have a positive impact on the students' language learning skills

and there is a statistical difference between the two groups in the oral post-test. Since the computed t-value (3.860) is higher than that of the tabulated-T value (2.0315) at (0.05) level of significance and (34) degree of freedom.

It is clear that the difference is in favor of the experimental group students who are taught English subject with jolly phonics songs and flash cards. Therefore, the null hypothesis of this study is rejected which indicates that there are no statistical differences between the mean scores of post test of the control group and the experimental group in English language subject. These results may relate to many factors:

- 1- Using songs in teaching English helped to provide an attractive and motivated learning environment for young learners. In addition, it works to increase their motivation and enthusiasm in the learning process.
- 2- Doing actions and movements while singing the songs provide an interesting and joyful environment and pave the way for them to be active learners and make the songs more memorable.
- 3- Using flash cards increase their attention and understanding of what is being heard.
- 4- Using songs and the flash cards improve the pupils' participation during the lessons.
- 5- Moreover, using flash cards can be bright and colourful and make a real effect on visual learners.

The findings of this study are in agreement with the results of previous studies [3], [5], and [6] which confirm the effectiveness of using Jolly phonics. Thus, it is proved statistically and experimentally that the pupils of the experimental group are better in post-test, after nine weeks experiment, than those pupils of the control group. The researcher hoped that the findings of this study would be beneficial for further studied to develop the scope of his study and to examine the effect of using Jolly phonics on pupils' motivation, performance and literacy, and to investigate the effectiveness of applying Jolly phonics at other levels of study, i.e. intermediate and preparatory. Moreover, the researcher hoped that the findings of this study would encourage the EFL teachers to use such attractive methods of teaching to provide effective opportunities for their students to participate during the lessons and get better learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The researcher concludes that the students' of the experimental group achieved and performed better than those of the control group. Since that, the using of the songs and flash cards have a positive impact on the students' achievement in the oral post-test and these results support the fact that utilizing the Jolly phonics' songs and flash cards in Iraqi EFL classes can provide interactive learning environment for the pupils to be interacted and engaged during the process of learning. Moreover, the researcher concludes that Jolly phonics songs and cards pave the way for the teachers to improve their pupils' comprehension, which will lead to better acquisition. Finally, they (the

songs and the flash cards) have proved their efficiency in developing Iraqi EFL primary pupils' language learning skills and suggested to be used in Iraqi EFL classrooms.

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