Utilizing a Suggested Program Based on Critical Discourse Analysis and Interactive Visuals on Developing the EFL Secondary School Students' Creative Reading, Critical Thinking and Critical Language Awareness

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بحث مشتق من الرسالة الخاصة بالباحثة

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the utilizing of using a suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals in developing EFL secondary school students   creative reading, critical thinking, and critical language awareness. Forty first-year secondary stage students were the participants in this study. The sample of the study was divided equally into control and experimental groups; they were assigned randomly to an experimental group (twenty) and a control group (twenty). The instruments were an EFL creative reading & critical thinking test, and critical language awareness questionnaire. The suggested program was designed by the researcher. The program was conducted in the first term of the academic year (2019/2020) and lasted for two months. On the other hand, the students of the control group received the regular instruction. By the end of the experimentation, the creative reading & critical thinking test, and critical language awareness questionnaire were administered to the control and the experimental groups. The scores of the experimental and control groups were compared and analyzed. Also, the pre and post scores of the experimental group were compared and analyzed. The results of the study indicated that 1-The experimental group surpassed the control group in the post administrations of the EFL creative reading & critical thinking test, and the questionnaire of critical language awareness 2- The experimental group did better in the post administrations of the creative reading & critical thinking test, and the critical language awareness questionnaire than in the pre administrations. Therefore it could be concluded that the suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and the interactive visuals has been effective in developing EFL creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness

Key words: critical discourse analysis strategy & interactive visuals, EFL creative reading skill, EFL critical thinking skill, and critical language awareness.

الملخص

استهدفت الدراسة الحالية البحث في تنميه مهارات القراءة الإبداعية باستخدام برنامج قائم علي استراتيجية التحليل النقدي للنص والمرئيات الفعالة لدي طلاب الصف الاول الثانوي حيث شارك ٢٠ طالب كمجموعه تجريبية من احدي مدارس اللغات الثانوية بمدينة ههيا , محافظة الشرقية , طبق اختبار لمهارات القراءة الابداعية علي الطلاب قبليا و بعديا, و اشارت النتائج الي تحسن الطلاب المشاركين في المجموعة التجريبية بعد دراستهم للبرنامج القائم علي استراتيجية التحليل النقدي للنص والمرئيات الفعالة.

Introduction:

Today most of us are aware that even with the most communicative approaches, a second language classroom are limited in its ability to develop learners' communicative competence in the target language. This is possibly due to the restricted number of contact hours with the target language, or the minimal opportunities to interact with native speakers. EFL teachers, therefore, are suggested to use discourse analytic techniques to investigate the interaction patterns in their classrooms to see how these patterns promote or hinder opportunities for learners to practice the target language.

Anyway, learners should always be the subjects in language learning. Apart from teacher s instructions, students can use the tool of discourse analysis to study language by themselves, i.e. to make themselves discourse analysts. By exploring natural language uses in authentic environments, such as watching videos and listening to the radio in the target language or practicing the language with native speakers, learners can gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the discourse patterns associated with a given genre or speech event as well as the sociolinguistic factors that contribute to linguistic variation across settings and contexts (Han, W. 2012).

Cots (2006) proposal to teach "with an attitude" exemplifies in a very practical way how critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be implemented in foreign language teaching in order to activate the learners' capacity to evaluate linguistic and social reality in a critical way. CDA defends the study of discourse as a tool for the social construction of reality, but also as an instrument of power and ideological control that "implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, 258). Van Dijk (2001, p. 96) defined CDA as discourse analysis with an attitude . The term critical distinguishes itself from the merely descriptive purposes of other analysts, such as Sinclair & Coulthard or Stubbs, whose method suffers from an inherent weakness of explanatory power (Teo, 2000, p. 12). Fairclough (2001, 4) talked of a critical purpose which aimed to examine the hidden connections between language, power and ideology.

Fairclough's (1989, 1995) model for CDA consists three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are

1 The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).

2 The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects.

3 The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

According to Fairclough each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis

1 text analysis (description),

2 processing analysis (interpretation),

3 social analysis (explanation).

Critical infrastructure analysis often involves overwhelming volumes of complex, heterogeneous, interdependent information. Human judgment is essential to the analysis as insights and understandings are synthesized from information that is often complex, dynamic, incomplete, diverse, conflicting and even deceptive. Yet, our ability to collect information is increasing at rates far beyond our ability to analyze it. Visual analytics the science of analytical reasoning facilitated by interactive visual interfaces can help analysts obtain better insights and understanding with greater efficiency (William J. Tolone, 2009).

In recent decades, attention has been drawn to just one communicative mode, verbal language. However, music and pictures are the basis for the meaning-making process in the audio and visual modes; the size, color and frame of a news report are important to guide the addressee's engagement with the text; the distribution of images and the timing of news are significant in TV and the press; body posture, gestures and the use of space help construct our text and talk (Hodge and Kress 1988; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

The present trend in approaches to media texts can be characterized by turning away from "text-internal readings, where readers are theorized as decoders of fixed meanings, to more dynamic models, where meanings are negotiated by actively participating readers" (Meinhof, 1994, p. 212).

Given the importance of visually displayed information in so many significant social contexts, there is an urgent need for developing adequate ways of talking and thinking about the visual   (kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 33).

Nowadays literacy has been understood as a social practice, as a complex set of reading, writing and technological skills which joins verbal, visual, and other meaning-making resources. (Williams and Hasan, 1996), (Rios, 2009) and (Kleiman and Baltar, 2008) point to the social nature of literacy processes. (The New London Group, 1996) also argues that "literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies".

Studies in many English-speaking countries have emphasized the relevance of visual grammar in English language contexts (Unsworth, 2001; Kress, 2003). The New London Group (1996), for example, refers to "the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on". Likewise, as suggested by (Andrews, 2004, p. 63), "... it is the visual/verbal interface that is at the heart of literacy learning and development for both computer-users and those without access to computers".

Visual literacy can be linked to multimodality, which refers to the use of different semiotic resources to produce or interpret meanings. In this article, following (Royce, 2007), first (Heberle.V, 2010) expands notion of communicative competence to include multimodal communicative competence as an important skill for ESL/EFL students to develop, in order for them to interact more effectively with members of English-speaking discourse communities. Then the author provides readers with a brief discussion on the relevance of multimodality in ESL/EFL teaching and offer suggestions on how to relate visual literacy specifically to teenage learners of ESL/EFL, as found in video games and advertisements, drawing attention to pedagogical, task-based activities which can be incorporated in the EFL syllabus.

Multimodal communicative competence involves the knowledge and use of language concerning the visual, gestural, audio and spatial dimensions of communication, including computer-mediated-communication. Literacy practices nowadays incorporate these semiotic meanings, which ESL/EFL learners should be familiar with. In a study of a Chinese immigrant's electronic textual experiences and the construction of his identity in ESL, for instance, (Lam, 2000, p. 458) emphasizes "the contextual nature of reading and writing and the way literacy is intimately bound up with particular socio-cultural contexts, institutions, and social

relationships". It seems that multimodal communicative competence will allow ESL/EFL learners to be better prepared for different literacy practices in their professional and socio-cultural experiences with native and non-native speakers of English. In classes where students have easy access to the Internet, teenage students may interact with other students around the world through ORKUT, Facebook, fotologs, blogs, and other e-environments. The experience with different kinds of multimodal texts in the English-speaking world can become a very productive means for developing students' multimodal communicative competence in English.

(O Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., Smith B. A., and Podlasov, A. in press, 2011). demonstrate how the interactive (multimodal) digital environment is one in which the discourse analyst can effectively draw upon different traditions of analysis, including   mainstream   and social semiotic traditions, as well as other traditions such as media studies, to interpret dynamic audio-visual media texts in a critically self-reflexive manner.

The study of multimodal discourse involving the interaction of multiple semiotic resources such as (spoken and written) language, gesture, dress, architecture, proximity (and in film for example) lighting, movement, gaze, camera angle, and so forth   received three major impetuses during the twentieth century.

While advances in computation have led to the adoption of corpus linguistics techniques for critical discourse analysis (e.g. Baker et al. 2008; Mautner, 2007, 2009), more recent advances in the development of software tools for the study of complex phenomena, particularly those taken up and developed in application to the physical sciences (including, importantly, data visualization tools), offer further opportunities for those attempting to account for the immense complexities of multimodal communication and culture.

In intensive (or creative) reading, students usually read a page to explore the meaning and to be acquainted with writing mechanisms. Hedge (2003) argues that it is "only through more extensive reading that learners can gain substantial practice in operating these strategies more independently on a range of materials" (p. 202). These strategies can be either text-related or learner-related: the former includes an awareness of text organization, while the latter includes strategies like linguistic, schematic, and meta-cognitive strategies (Alyousef.H.S, 2005).

Hedge (2003) states that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals for

1- The ability to read a wide range of texts in English. This is the long-range goal most teachers seek to develop through independent readers outside EFL/ESL classroom.

2- Building a knowledge of language which will facilitate reading ability

3- Building schematic knowledge.

4- The ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (i.e. skimming, scanning)

5- Developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English.

6- Taking a critical stance to the contents of the texts.

Most researches on reading now focus on the effective reading strategies that increase students   comprehension. Guthrie (1996) argues that most researchers study a single cognitive strategy, rather than conducting a long-term study of multiple strategies. Besides, few studies have addressed the issues related to   motivation   and   engagement . As Guthrie puts it:

Engaged reading is based on motivational and cognitive characteristics of the reader who is intrinsically motivated, builds knowledge, uses cognitive strategies, and interacts socially to learn from text. These engagement processes can be observed in student   s cognitive effort, perseverance, and self-direction in reading. (ibid, p. 404)

It is the teacher s responsibilities to motivate reading by selecting the appropriate materials and especially for those at the early stages of learning.

Willy Renandya, author of "The Power of Extensive Reading", argues that   the benefits derived from diverse studies on extensive reading in many different contexts are so compelling that it will be inconceivable for teachers not to make it an important feature of their teaching   (Renandya, 2007, p. 134). Clearly there is a place for the intensive reading of academic texts, and intensive and extensive reading should not be seen as being in opposition, as both serve different but complementary purposes (Carrell and Carson 1997; Nuttall 1982 cited in Renandaya, 2007:135). Nonetheless, intensive reading seems to have become the dominant mode of teaching reading in many language classrooms even though research shows   that intensive reading alone will

not help learners develop their reading fluency, a crucial skill that mature readers acquire only after repeated exposure to massive quantities of written text   (Renandya, 2007).

In the context of language learning reading is often considered as a skill. Perhaps this is why Small and Arnone (2011) point out that it is "often thought of as a skill, something to be learned and practiced" (p.13). However, they further go on to say, "But reading can also be considered a creative art, capturing the imagination of the reader in ways that result in creative thought and expression" (Small & Arnone, Ibid). According to the Arts Council report (Creative research, 24 April 2009), reading is said to be creative when there is a change in the reader during the reading of the book; when the reader is encouraged to enter the world of the characters in the book, imagining the scene and even becoming one of the characters. The report declares that because of this there will also be an emotional effect on the reader, such as happiness, sadness, fear, remorse, pleasure, etc. Therefore, some changes will have a long-lasting effect on the reader and can be beneficial, giving the reader insights into other worlds enabling them perhaps to change the way they look at things, and see them in a different and maybe a better way (Creative research, 24 Ibid).

Reading as a creative activity includes the reader s own interpretation of the work and could involve the reader discussing/writing about what they have read. Creative reading can include reading aloud, as one does, for example, to children, which can be rather like putting on a performance, and be creative because the reader tries to have different voices for characters and puts expression into his voice when describing something (Creative research, Ibid). When reading provokes discussion/writing and engages the reader it can be said to be creative, whatever the reading is: whether it is about travel, people s lives, facts, or fiction and the motivation to read creatively will be enhanced in an environment   that encourages selection autonomy, i.e. when students can choose the reading materials that are both interesting and meaningful to them   (Small & Arnone, 2011:14).

Opportunities for creative reading skill development should be included in the reading program for every child at every level. Several situations at various primary grade levels demonstrate classroom activities promoting creative reading are presented. Eleven suggestions for teaching creative reading are listed. Guidelines for teachers to use in developing a

program of creative reading instruction are presented. Six references are made to children's literature.

Abdul Latif (2006) summarized the creative reading skills as follows:

1- Suggesting questions about information not given in a text.
2- Recognizing reasons of incidents in a text.
3- Predicting from limited information
4- Adding information to a text
5- Changing the content of a reading selection.
6- Suggesting different new titles for a story
7- Suggesting some different ends for a story
8- Mentioning all characteristics of someone or something
9- Suggesting multiple solutions for a specific problem.
10- Suggesting a story using vocabulary mentioned in a text.
11- Personalizing many natural phenomena (see appendix A).

A brief survey of the literature reveals that the concept of creative reading has not been sharply defined. Creative reading and critical reading are frequently described in similar terms and with closely related example of behavior.

One of the major misconceptions is that creative reading should be delayed until later grades. Every child at every level can engage in creative reading. This is not to say that all children can think on the same level. Of course, individual differences exist. But, opportunities for the development of creative reading abilities must be included in the reading program at all levels. Creative reading is a complex skill which cannot be perfected in any one grade once and for all.

Reading is a creative activity in and itself. It encourages and provides stimulus. It links to other types of cultural expression and other art forms. It helps t helps young people to explore the world and enriched them educationally and emotionally. (Demos, 2004).

Related to properties of texts some studies focus on finding a way on improving reading comprehension skills of readers by using alternative texts instead of conventional texts. For instance, Lamano (2007) used graphic novels as an alternative text for adolescent high school students who are speakers of English. Lamano supported the study with various types of reading comprehension strategies like graphic organizers or vocabulary instructions. However, as mentioned in the study, the results do not suggest significant improvement on raising

comprehension level of students. Nevertheless, the study is appreciated as an initial effort for finding alternative texts to use at reading classes.

Two other studies researching on effects of graphic novels are Hammond (2009) and Gavigan (2010). The first one of those studies is examining graphic novel as a form of multi-modal literacy, and it ties to evaluate "how students construct meaning and respond to graphic novels" before and after the structure of the graphic novel is introduced. Hammond's results are theoretically supported with the idea of merging concept of reading / literacy as mentioned above that using graphic novel convention as a part of reading curriculum improved multi- modal literacy skills of students'. Similarly, Gavigan (2010) researched on motivational effects of graphic novels on struggling male readers in a case study which is also theoretically supported with the idea that readers' perception of text is changing. That the male struggling readers were motivated through graphic novels during reading classes, and it had improved reading engagement of those readers.

In addition, the technological revolution exemplified in computers, the internet, and other associated technology which gives the consumer the power to choose his/her entertainment, educational, and informational sources that provide the students with an interesting alternative to spend their leisure time. Further, most students do not understand the interrelationship between reading, speaking, listening, and writing and the relevance of reading to the other three skills. They may think that reading is an easy skill to master; which may explain why they think that improving speaking, listening, and writing is more important than improving reading (Al-Nafisah.K & Al-Shorman.R.A, 2010).

Statement of the problem

From the above   mentioned discussion and after reviewing the relevant literature and previous studies, it could be concluded that the first secondary year students lack the skills of creative reading, critical thinking and critical language awareness.

The main question could be as follows:

- What is the impact of a suggested mode based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals on developing EFL secondary school students' creative reading, critical thinking   and critical language awareness?

This question could be subdivided into these sub-questions:

1- What are the creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness required by the first year secondary students?

2- How far are these skills actually mastered by the students?

3- How can critical discourse analysis help in providing students with the opportunities to master the required creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness?

4- How can interactive visuals help in providing students with the opportunities to master the required creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness?

5- To what extent is critical discourse analysis effective in achieving these targets?

6- To what extent are interactive visuals effective in achieving these targets?

Significance of the study

This study was hoped to be of significance to:

1- The EFL first-year secondary school students: It could give those students a chance to develop their creative reading and critical thinking skills and develop their critical language awareness.

2-EFL teachers of English: This study might help those teachers to understand how to adopt suggested program activities for improving EFL creative reading and critical thinking skills. This study also may attract the attention of those teachers to the importance of psychological factors such as the awareness of their EFL students while learning to read creatively and think critically.

3-Curriculum developers and designers: This study would provide a model of a suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals for instructing the EFL creative reading and critical thinking skills.

4-EFL researchers: This study might pave the way for other researchers to conduct further studies on the suggested program, creative reading, critical thinking and critical language awareness in the EFL context.

Purposes of the study

1- Developing the necessary creative reading and critical thinking skills of the EFL first-year secondary school students. These creative skills are marginalized at the secondary stage despite their importance.

2- Helping the EFL first-year secondary school students develop their Critical language awareness as this passive awareness stimulates feelings of helplessness and lack of motivation.

3- Designing a program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals for developing EFL first year secondary stage students creative reading, critical thinking skills and their critical language awareness.

4- Measuring the effectiveness of the suggested program in developing the EFL first-year secondary stage students creative reading, critical thinking skills and its association to their critical language awareness.

Delimitations of the study

This study was delimited to:

A sample of first year secondary language schools students.

Creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness necessary for first year secondary stage students as jury members observe.

Procedures of the study

For answering the questions of the study, the procedures will be as follows:

Reviewing the relevant literature and previous studies related to Creative reading, critical thinking skills and critical language awareness.

Reviewing the relevant literature and previous studies related to critical discourse analysis and visuals.

Designing a training sessions based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals.

preparing creative reading &critical thinking test, and a questionnaire of critical language awareness.

Submitting the designed sessions, creative reading, critical thinking test and critical language awareness questionnaire to a jury of specialists to verify their contents and modifying them to be put into their final forms

Selecting a sample of first year secondary language school EFL students and dividing them into two groups (control and experimental).

Administering the pre-creative reading, critical thinking test and critical language awareness questionnaire to the students as a pre-evaluation.

Teaching the sessions to the experimental group.

Administering the post- creative reading, critical thinking test and critical language awareness questionnaire to the students as post-evaluation.

Carrying out the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results

Providing the study conclusions, recommendations and Suggestions for further studies.

Results of the Study

The following results were revealed:

1-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group; taught through the suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals, and the control group; received the regular instruction , in their performance of the post EFL creative reading test as a whole and its sub skills; in favor of the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in their performance of the pre and post administrations of the EFL creative reading test as a whole and its sub skills in favor of the post administration.

3-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group, and the control group in their performance of the post EFL critical thinking test as a whole and its sub-skills; in favor of the experimental group.

4- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in their performance of the pre and post administrations of the EFL critical thinking test as a whole and its sub skills in favor of the post administration.

5-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in their performance of the post administration of the EFL critical language awareness; in favor of the experimental group.

6- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in their performance of the pre and post administrations of the EFL critical language awareness in favor of the post administration.

7- The suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals is effective in developing the EFL creative reading skill of the experimental group.

8- The suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals is effective in developing the EFL critical thinking skill of the experimental group.

9- The suggested program based on critical discourse analysis and interactive visuals is effective in developing the EFL critical language awareness of the experimental group.

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