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Developing preparatory stage pupils' fluency in writing through using a SCAMPER strategy- based program

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Abstract

The current study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using a SCAMPER strategy-based program to develop preparatory-one female pupils' fluency in writing. The researcher used the quasi-experimental design with one group that contains 28 girls from El-Wleediah Prep Female School, Assiut Directorate. The instrument of the study included a fluency in writing test. The researcher dealt with the collected data statistically using t-test. Results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administration concerning fluency in writing favoring the post administration.

Keywords: SCAMPER strategy- creative writing- writing fluency-EFL

مستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية الي التحقق من فعالية برنامج قائم على استخدام استراتيجية SCAMPER في تنمية مهارة الطلاقة في الكتابة كونها احدى المهارات الفرعية للكتابة الابداعية . وقد أجريت الدراسة على ٢٨ طالبة من تلميذات الصف الاول الاعدادي كونهم يمثلون هذه الفئة من الطالبات. وقد تكونت أداة الدراسة من اختبار قبلي بعدى لمهارة الطلاقة في الكتابة لطالبات الصف الأول الاعدادي. وقد قام الباحث بتطبيق البرنامج لمدة عشرة أسابيع. وقد عولجت البيانات التي تم جمعها عن طريق اختبار الطلاقة في الكتابة باستخدام اختبار- ت. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة- بعد تطبيق البرنامج المقترح - بتحقيق مجموعة البحث مستوى أعلى في التطبيق البعدي لامتحان الطلاقة في الكتابة عن التطبيق القبلي . وقد أكدت النتائج - بعد معالجتها إحصائياً - فعالية البرنامج القائم على استراتيجية SCAMPER في تنمية مهارة الطلاقة في الكتابة لتلميذات الصف الأول الاعدادي.

Introduction

Language plays a major role in people' life. It is a means to communicate with others, find out knowledge and to reflect ideas and thoughts. Language helps people to understand each other efficiently. It is considered a primary means for learning, working, or even entertaining in life. It is needed for culture, business, individuals, societies and personal communication. It is seen as an essential part of humans' life. It helps different people to express themselves. It is characterized by its diversity and variety. It is a social convention that is acquired through learning, and that pushed many linguistics and educationalists to pay more attention to language learning.

Learning a foreign language has become one of the necessities of modern life. This because no one can use only his mother language if he looks for a bright future. It is necessary to learn foreign languages to help us interact with other people, use modern technology and to convey our creativity to a wider world. It becomes one of the requirements that should be obtained in order to participate actively in any meeting or event. Most international conferences are held based on using different international languages. It is difficult to imagine how life would be if a person uses only his mother tongue. Learning a language is a complex process that requires dedication, persistence, and hard work .To learn a language, one should practice the four skills of a language which are: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Writing is one of the linguistic skills that should be acquired in order to achieve better communication with others. It is needed for any aspect whether formally or informally. Writing is an important part of communication. Good writings allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. It is required to text friends, to deliver a message or even to comment on a certain topic. It is a means to translate ideas into a tangible thing to be read, understood, and dealt with. One field of writing that is given due attention is creative writing.

Creative writing is urgently needed for most communicative activities nowadays. Creativity is one of the 4 Cs of the 21st century skills which are: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Creativity is required in most roles of the educational process. It is wanted for the case of helping the pupils to be adequate learners. Also, it is needed to help the community to produce good citizens. It is thought to focus on students' self-expression. It is recommended to start training pupils to practice creative writing from their early ages. It is seen as one factor that helps learners to be innovative generally in life. So, creative writing is one field of these creative skills.

Creativity in writing can be seen from many aspects. Pelcová (2015) thinks that it reflects the pupils' abilities in writing what depicts their own thinking and imagination, to deal with new unexpected situations and to use what they have already learnt in new unseen contexts. Harmer (2004) claims that creative writing helps learners to better present or convey their imaginative writing ability compared to other kinds of writing. Pupils who are trained on practicing creative writing are more skillful in writing than those who focus only on producing complete accurate sentences regardless of their own ideas. In creative writing, the pupils are encouraged to think differently, produce unique works, and conduct practices that help to develop their problem-solving skills for issues that they have not encountered before.

There are many characteristics for creative writing. Creativity in writing concerns with novelty and originality. Bayat (2016) sees it as one's putting his feelings and ideas about a particular topic on paper using imagination freely. It involves going beyond the ordinary without deviation from the normal values, creating ideas that are different from everyone else's ideas with the help of one's imagination, achieving originality and writing fluently while taking pleasure in the act of composing. In the same vein, Maley (2014) announces that creative writing is characterized by originality and imagination rather than truthfulness or standardization of thoughts. It requires organization, planning and discovery of thoughts, and rejects the restrained thinking. Another characteristic for creative writing is uniqueness. Senel (2018) declares that creative writing means the ability to produce a component that is new, authentic, suitable for purpose, high quality, innovative and has a real value. She thinks that everyone is innovative in some ways, and that there is no person that is completely not innovative.

Fluency is an essential component in the creative writing ability. There are many characteristics for writing fluency. Latif (2013) clarifies that it refers to a writer's ability to quickly and easily express themselves in a way that's also easy for their audience to comprehend. The fluent writer should have knowledge of spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar rules. Fluency in writing, or more specifically sentence fluency, makes your text easy to read. It gives your writing a smooth, easy-to-follow flow. It is writing that flows easily from one idea to the next and utilizes proper capitalization, grammar, syntax, sentence structure, and word choice.

There are some rules for learners to become a fluent writer. Kim et al. (2018) declares that some of these rules are: first of all, to study spelling and vocabulary. When a writer has good spelling skills, they use less energy and time to spell a word, which makes it easier for them to focus on choosing the right word. Then, to practice free writing. It means to write without stopping for a certain amount of time without worrying about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Finally, to engage in real casual conversations to be familiar with common idioms, phrases, and even collocations to use them while practicing writing, and consequently, it helps to use the appropriate words that match with the given context.

SCAMPER is a Promising strategy. Eberle (2008) considers it as an acronym for substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to other uses, eliminate and reverse. Hany (2013) highlights that it is one of the active learning strategies that calls for developing thinking skills, creation, imagination and increasing motivation for learning. Michalko (2010) thinks that it is a group of procedures which are used to help pupils to generate new ideas through creative and divergent thinking according to fixed steps by posing many questions.

SCAMPER can be seen as a teaching strategy. Özyaprak (2016) declares that it helps the students to analyze the knowledge in a creative form and helps the teacher to make the learning process creative and interesting. It focuses on using various questions to arouse the mind to come up with something new. Serrat (2017: 225) declares that SCAMPER may be seen as "Creative procedures that include brain storming activities to renew and form stimuli for limitless opportunities for creative thinking".

Context of the study

While working as an English language teacher, the researcher noticed that the first preparatory stage female pupils were poor at writing in general and particularly in writing fluently. To make sure of the problem, the researcher informally interviewed some pupils and their teachers of English and supervisors and found out that they rarely deal with fluency in writing; Pupils are provided with model texts related to the current events that are given to them ready-made from the teachers.

To make sure that it is a real problem that needs further investigation, the researcher carried out a pilot study on the first preparatory female graders (n= 17). The results of the pilot study show that:

- Out of 17 pupils, only five pupils demonstrated an ability to write fluently (30%).
- Twelve pupils didn't master the fluency skill in writing. They wrote stereotyped sentences that didn't reach to fluency in writing.

Moreover, the researcher reviewed literature such as the study of Hamid (2016);Al-Khataybeh & Al-Tarawneh (2017); El-Shaer (2018); Sayed; Kotb& Shehata (2020); Al Shdaifat, (2021) that recommended using other new strategies to improve the pupils' fluency.

Statement of the Problem

First preparatory female graders of Al-Wleedia Preparatory School were poor at writing in general and particularly in practicing fluency in writing; they lack the ability to use the fluency skill in writing to express their feelings or thoughts towards a certain topic. Hence, the researcher investigated the effect of using a SCAMPER strategy-based program to develop their fluency in writing.

Aim of the study

The present study aimed to develop preparatory – one female pupil's fluency in writing.

Question of the study

The present study attempted answering the following question:

What is the effect of using the SCAMPER strategy – based program to develop the preparatory – one female pupils' fluency in writing?

Hypothesis of the study

The present study attempted to test the following hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant difference at 0.05 levels between the mean scores of the treatment group in the pre-post administration of the fluency in writing test favoring the post administration.

Delimitations of the study

This study is delimited to:

- Twenty eight of the first - year preparatory female pupils at Al Wleedia Preparatory School, Assiut Directorate.
- Some fluency sub-skills in writing that are suitable for preparatory - one female pupils: writing as many sentences as possible regarding a certain topic, writing a large number of items concerning the given topic, and writing a lot of suggested alternatives to solve a giver problem.
- The fifth unit of preparatory – one English syllabus New Hello! (Holidays).
- The seven strategies of SCAMPER which are (substitution, combine, adapt, modify, put to other uses, eliminate and reverse).

Significance of the study

The present study is expected to be significant for:

A) The pupils

- 1- It may help in developing the first preparatory female graders' fluency in writing.
- 2- It may provide the pupils with some more activities to practice some of the creative writing skills.

B) The teachers

- 1- It may help to provide teachers with a new approach for developing their pupils' fluency in writing.
- 2- It may help teachers to avoid the traditional methods of teaching.
- 3- It may provide teachers with a different strategy to practice while teaching the pupils.

C) Course designers

- 1- It may lead to design a SCAMPER strategy- based program to develop the pupils' fluency in writing.
- 2- It may help course designers in implementing new strategies while planning for the preparatory stage pupils.
- 3- It may lead to conduct further studies for developing pupils' creative writing skills.

Definitions of Terms

Creative Writing

Creative writing has so many definitions. Bayat (2016: 618) mentions that "creative writing is the activity of reconstructing current knowledge, images, and dreams in the memory and associating them with each other to create a new piece of writing that is the transfer of an individual's feelings and thoughts about something into paper, done freely, through imagination".Termizkan (2011: 933) thinks that creative writing means

"one's putting his / her ideas and feelings about a particular topic on paper by using his /her imagination freely".

The researcher defines it as "writing which reflects the writer's own character and his / her attitudes towards certain topics and justifies his point of view concerning these topics".

Fluency in writing

Khater (2015: 400) sees that "fluency in writing refers to the pupils' ability to generate large number of ideas. It means writing with speed and accuracy. To write fluently, the writer should own several aspects, including developing a good sense of writing, creating proper sentence structure, understanding grammar, using proper word choice". Sayed; Kotb& Shehata (2020:4) indicates that "fluency in writing include the ability to produce a large number of ideas quickly".

The researcher sees it as the skill that should be seen in the preparatory- one female pupils' writings to be judged as a fluent learner.

SCAMPER strategy

There are some definitions for the SCAMPER strategy. Michalko(2010:72) defines SCAMPER strategy as "an acronym for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate and Reverse all steps". In addition, Eberle (2008:10) considers the SCAMPER strategy as "an effective brain storming tool of generating ideas and solving problems that provides a creative and effective environment while learning a foreign language". Also, Serrat (2017: 225) defines SCAMPER strategy as "Creative procedures that include brain storming activities to renew and form stimuli for limitless opportunities for creative thinking".

The researcher defines it as a set of seven strategies (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate and Reverse) integrated with each other to produce a large number of creative ideas that can be used for the purpose of developing preparatory one female pupils' creative writing.

Literature Review

Fluency is one component of creative writing skills. It is an essential skill that needs to be improved. This appears clearly in many studies such as:

The study of Al Shdaifat, (2021) investigated the effect of using story mapping strategy on fifth grade EFL students' creativity and performance in writing. The participants of the study consisted of (40) fifth-grade students from al Robaae' School for Girls at Al Mafraq. The researcher used the two-group design; group (A) consisted of (20) students, which were assigned as an experimental group. Group (B) consisted of (20) students; they were selected as a control group. The results of the study showed the experimental group improved their creativity and performance in writing more than the control group.

The study of Ali (2018) aimed to design a program based on visual thinking (VT) to develop the adult learners' English Language Fluency (ELF). The researcher designed the research program, and the instruments of measuring the learners' progress including the WF components list, the pre / posttest, the rubric, and the participants' questionnaire. Participants were 14 adult learners (N= 14), with Arabic as their first language; enrolled at the upper intermediate level, Both quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed the positive effect of using VT on developing the adult learners' English language fluency.

Ali (2018) conducted a study to investigate using a blended learning strategy to enhance official language prep school students' English creative writing skills. Instruments of the study were: a list of creative writing skills, creative writing test, rubric for assessing students' performance in creative writing, and a blended learning program in creative writing, the research design was one group (pre-post research design). The participants were twenty-four from third year prep graders from Nile official school for languages in Beni Suef. The results showed that the blended learning could refresh the atmosphere of learning and increase the students' motivation, cooperation, and develop creative writing skills

The study of El-Shaer (2018) investigated the effectiveness of using paragraph hamburger strategy in improving the Palestinian 12th graders' creative writing and their attitudes towards writing. To achieve the study aims, the researcher adopted the experimental approach and conducted an experiment on (52) female students from Alazhar Institute. The participants were divided into two groups; the experimental group and the control group .Each group included (26) students. The researcher used 2 instruments to collect data: 1) a Creative Writing test. 2) An attitude scale. Results revealed that paragraph hamburger strategy is effective in improving the creative writing skills of Palestinian 12th graders.

Senel (2018) detected the impact of creative writing on the success level of students in academic writing. The participants were 15 students (ten females and five males). The researcher used the pre posttest experimental one-group design. The t-test results obtained from mid-term and final exams indicated that students' success level in academic writing has been improved and that creative writing helped in developing critical thinking skills. Moreover, findings also reflected that when SCAMPER strategy is used, students' problem solving skills are promoted.

The study of Al-Delimi (2016) aimed at building an educational program based on Free Writing, and examining its effect on Binary-Thinking Skills and Writing Fluency for elementary female students in Jordan. This study was applied on 50 students in sum from two public schools in Amman's qasaba. Two groups were used. The searcher prepared two tests: one in Binary-Thinking Skills and one in Writing-Fluency Skills. Each has 30 open-ended questions. The results showed statistically significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) in the level of Binary-Thinking and Writing Fluency skills of the experimental group that was studied according to the educational program.

Participants of the study

The study participants involved 28 female pupils. They were randomly chosen from among the 1st preparatory graders who were enrolled in Al-Weleedia Girls' Prep School, Assiut. Their ages ranged between thirteen and fourteen years old. They passed their primary stage from public governmental schools and who started studying English as a foreign language in primary-one grade. They were of the same cultural and linguistic background because they came from the same district. This means they were homogenous.

Design of the study

For the purpose of the current study, the researcher used the quasi-experimental design to identify the effectiveness of employing the program as an intervention to develop first preparatory graders' fluency in writing. The researcher applied the one group pre-posttest design; the participants were first pretested through using the fluency in writing test, then, the researcher administered the program, and finally, they were post tested through using the same instrument.

The fluency in writing test

Identifying and describing the test

The fluency in writing test was prepared by the researcher aiming at finding to what extent the first prep female graders master the fluency in writing skill before and after using the SCAMPER strategy- based program. The test includes mainly one question. The test assessed pupils' fluency in writing through which they were asked to write as many sentences regarding specific topic within specific time. The total mark for the test was 50 marks.

Constructing the test

The researcher constructed the test according to the following procedures:

- 1- Reviewing literature related to creative writing.
- 1- Constructing the list of the fluency sub-skills.
- 2- Consulting some TEFL experts concerning the suitability of the list
- 3- Writing the test in its primary form
- 4- Presenting it to the jury members to ensure its validity, its suitability, and the accuracy of items.
- 5- Modifying the test according to the jury members' feedback.
- 6- Piloting the test to measure the reliability of the test.

Validity of the test

The test was submitted to a group of seven of the juries who are experts in TESOL/TEFL, and educational specialists in order to make sure that the test is valid. The jury members suggested some modifications to the form of the question in which it required rephrasing.

Reliability of the test

Piloting the test was conducted about a month before the administration of the program to estimate the validity and reliability of the test. A group of 28 first year preparatory pupils who were excluded from the experiment were selected randomly. The reliability of the test was determined by the test-retest method. The researcher administered the test and part of the program on first year preparatory graders in Al-Wleediah Female Preparatory School. The test was administered again on the same group after two weeks. The Correlations between examinees scores were calculated by using the SPSS program (Cronbach's Alpha). The reliability of the test was computed and proved to be reliable at (0.77).

The raters of the test

Three raters were involved in the process of marking: the researcher and another two teachers of English. The raters were met previously to discuss the rating scale. The researcher clarified that each sentence is marked with five marks distributed as follows: one for spelling, one for grammar, one for punctuation, one for the sentence structure, and one for original unrepeated sentences. The researcher computed the average of the raters' scores. The coefficients were calculated to identify the degree of agreement among the raters.

Instructions of the test

The researcher provided clear and easy instructions to simplify the process of testing. They were put including the assigned time of testing, and that they should be restricted to that time, the answer will be in the same paper, and that they are asked to write clear new unrepeated sentences paying attention to the use of punctuation marks.

Duration of the test

To calculate the needed time for the creative writing test, the researcher calculated the time needed for himself to answer the fluency in writing test, then he multiplied the taken time by two and adds another five minutes for providing the instructions for the test. The researcher used the following equation:

The test time = Time taken by the teacher \times 2+ five minutes more

Results

Testing the hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study predicted a statistically significant difference at (0.05) level between the mean scores of the pupils on the pre-post administration of the fluency in writing test favoring the post administration. The following table shows the results of pre-post pupils' performance in the fluency in writing test.

The means of scores, the standard deviations, and the "t" value in the pre posttest of fluency in writing

	Group	Number of Pupils	Mean Scores	Standard Deviations	Degree of Freedom	T-Value
Fluency	Pre	28	20.71	2.39	27	**31.91
	Post	28	39.79	1.99		

Total score (50 Marks)

****t-significance 0.05**

The above table shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the scores obtained by the participants in the pre-post fluency in writing test in favor of the post testing. The result of the t- test shows that t value is (31.91) which is significant at 0. 05 level. This supports the hypothesis which predicted that the pupils' fluency in writing improvement was a result of using the SCAMPER strategy- based program. It can be concluded that the SCAMPER strategy- based program improved the pupils' fluency in writing.

Discussion

The findings shown in the above table reflect that there is an improvement in the pupils' achievement towards fluency in writing. Before using the SCAMPER strategy, the pupils could hardly practice fluency in writing; they could write just separate sentences which they used to memorize for the exam paper, they could hardly provide an end to a story, they couldn't come up with various unique titles to a text, they were only able to write few traditional questions to manage and complete a dialogue between two speakers, they were not able to use the words they have learnt in new contexts, they were weak in practicing.

Also before using the program, the pupils couldn't form new combined sentences; they could use only simple phrases such as: I like----, there is-----, I can see-----. Moreover, they were used to work individually; there were no new ideas that might result in cooperation and brainstorming.

On the other hand, after being trained on using the SCAMPER strategy, the pupils' fluency in writing had been improved. The improvement in the pupils' fluency writing might be attributed to many factors:

Using the SCAMPER strategy- based program might be the main factor in improving the pupils' fluency. The SCAMPER strategy helped the pupils to mention a lot of items and also to write many sentences related to a given topic. Above all, the researcher thinks that using the SCAMPER strategy enhanced their skill in producing large number of coherent sentences to express their viewpoints regarding a situation and to justify their views. While practicing the fluency skill, the pupils could write various alternatives to the given problems, each group of the pupils were

asked to write as many different solutions to some surrounding problems. They could describe pictures using many sentences and to write large number of objects related to a certain topic.

The pupils became able to combine sentences together; they could change simple sentences into complex or compound ones and vice versa. This ability in using the language enabled them to be engaged in some unseen situations without being afraid of making grammatical mistakes or paying more attention to spelling rather than delivering their ideas, and this concept is greatly matched with the principles of the modern pedagogical approaches that call for connection rather than correction. Moreover, being fluent in writing supported their ability in being engaged in different written exercises looking for alternatives to solve a problem; they could change the situation to suit their abilities.

Conclusion

The SCAMPER strategy proved to be effective in improving preparatory-one female graders' fluency in writing. The participants had the chance to practice more creative writing activities. It made the pupils more active and ready to participate in the learning process. It changed the pupils' roles from being passive learners to active writers. The pupils practiced the SCAMPER strategy to: come up with new ideas and to change them into written forms, enjoy the learning process, feel free from memorizing definite sentences to be written in a paragraph and to use the new thoughts and ideas that are generated from the new topics in new unseen contexts.

Challenges

- 1- The researcher dealt with the seven strategies of SCAMPER and that required too much time and effort from the pupils. If the researcher focused only on three or four strategies of SCAMPER, the results would be remarkably effective.
- 2- The researcher started directly towards practicing fluency and this took much time because they needed to revise some basics for writing accurate complete, well-developed sentences.
- 3- Some activities were designed based on the pupils' cooperation with their peers, but unfortunately, few slow learners preferred the individual work in order not to be embarrassed when they make mistakes.

Recommendations

- Basic writing skills are needed before being engaged in practicing fluency in writing.
- Pupils should be provided with the effective environment that helps in improving their fluency in writing.
- More time is needed for the pupils to be able to think freely to come up and write new ideas.
- Shy pupils should be encouraged to be more engaged in the creative writing activities.
- Pupils ought to be convinced with the importance of practicing fluency in writing.
- Teachers should provide their pupils with the suitable atmosphere that allow the pupils to be fluent in writing.

Suggestions

In the light of the results of the present research, the researcher suggests the following:

- Using the SCAMPER strategy for developing preparatory stage pupils' flexibility.
- Using the SCAMPER strategy for developing preparatory stage pupils' originality.
- Using the SCAMPER strategy for developing preparatory stage pupils' elaboration.
- Using the SCAMPER strategy for developing preparatory stage pupils' summarizing skills.
- Using the SCAMPER strategy for developing preparatory stage pupils' figurative language.

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