

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
King Faisal University
College of Arts
English Department



Graduation Project

Final Draft

The Effectiveness of Active Learning Strategies in Developing English Listening and Speaking Skills for Elementary School Students

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Field of Research	Linguistics
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I certify that all material in this proposal is my own effort.

Signature:

soal, November 4th, 2016

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Abstract:

This study focuses on the effectiveness of using active learning strategies in developing English language learning in elementary school in the west of Riyadh. It will verify whether these strategies help to improve listening and speaking skills for students or not. As such a pilote program will be conducted on two classes. Each one of these classes will contain 20 students from six grades. Both classes will have the same lesson content to learn in the same period of time, but the students from the first class will be taught using active learning strategies and the second class will not be. The student tool consists of a lesson plan, while the teacher tool contains a questionnaire and a class observation. The result will show improvement in student achievement in vocabulary acquisition.

Introduction:

Everyone knows how important the English language in the present day, whether it is in education, work or social life. Therefore, it is worthwhile to learn the English language from a young age intensively and effectively, to build a solid foundation in language skills. Students in Saudi Arabia start learning English from 4th grade with focus in reading and writing skills with less emphasize on listening and speaking skills. Therefore, students may know the vocabulary and grammar, but are unable to use them in a correct way, with a lack of confidence in asking questions, discussing and dialoguing. This problem can even continue with students to advanced and university stages. It shows more needs to speak and exchange views in English language. Therefore, it is highly recommended to start using the active learning strategies in elementary school at an early stage.

What is the active learning?

The active learning is a teaching method that gives the student a major role in the educational process and acquisition of knowledge. It also promotes memorable and deep continuous learning.

As an elementary school teacher and through my personal note with my students, I have found that the use of active learning strategies helps to enhance self-confidence and gives the ability to express and dialogue and infuse the spirit of sharing with entertainment and fun education.

There are a lot of strategies that contribute to the development of listening and speaking skills, some of which as follows:

1) Cartoon concepts:

It is a strategy widely used where the provision of characters is the main idea. The student represents the character or the concept in the form of cartoon drawing and talks about it loudly. This strategy is powerful for producing speech and helping construct sentences. According to Keogh, Naylor & Wilson (1998), for cartoon concepts to be successful, they need to have a relation to the everyday situations of student life by choosing a minimal amount of subject.

2) Listening triangle:

Start with groups of three students (speaker, questioner, note-taker) and work together. This strategy helps to develop speaking and listening skills and promotes students' consciousness of what establishes both an obvious explanation and active listening.

3) Who am I?:

The teacher puts a card on the back of every student where the term or concept was written on. Then each student moves around the classroom and asks, yes/no questions to the other students to discover what is the term on his back. In this way, they learn to build sentences and use all kinds of words.

4) Inside-outside circle:

This strategy can be used in any part of the lesson to construct meaningful conversation. The teacher divides the class into two circles, one inside the other stand facing. The student in the inner circle asks a question to the student fronting him in the outer circle and give him some time to answer. After that, the outer circle moves and ask again.

5) Jigsaw classroom:

Elliot Aronson (1997) suggests this strategy by dividing the classroom into diverse groups from 5 – 6 students and then give each group part of the lesson in the segment, for example, new vocabulary or picture. Give them time to discuss the segment and then talk about it with the rest of the classroom.

6) Storytelling:

The teacher narratives a story closely related to the topic of the lesson in an influential voice in front of students. After that, they discuss the story, ask questions and say their opinion. Hamilton, M. & Weiss M. (2005) note that, storytelling is interactive and motivating because the students are aware of the actual activity and a skill is well worth gaining. That is true when students are listening to or telling famous stories or their own stories.

7) Role-playing:

Present a simulation plan in an educational position or character by one student. This student must know the background information about the goal and exercise on it before presenting it in front of other students. He interacts with them within the limits of the role. That helps to understand himself and understand the others.

Benefits of active learning in developing listening and speaking skills:

- *Creates a good listener and speaker.
- *Increases student's motivation for learning.
- *Builds a student - teacher relationship.
- *Promotes peer communication.
- *Reinforces a good behavior for conversation.
- *Enhances discovery and self- learning.

Literature review:

The Florida State University in one of their handbooks (2011) referred that, the majority of research traditional learning the student was a passive receptor of concepts and information that a teacher gave him or found them in the course material. That easy acquisition led to a short memory for information and reading skill development only. Either, with active learning combined with classroom materials, the highest rate of students had the ideal approach which they cemented self-learning. They became able to apply what they learned with more than one skill and retrieve information from previous classes. They were able to understand new information and build on them. The successful teacher knows how active learning work with his students because active learning is not magic. There are some students who are not ready to relinquish the passive role, but between those who are self-motivated to learn. Probably a large group of learners with a help from their teacher will improve their performance in the long term.

Hall (2004) confirmed that, teachers must spend more time with students in small groups to allow them to personalize the curriculum. The effective teacher takes advantage of the opportunity to make learning more effective rather than adhere to the lesson plan. That could be by spending more time involving them in talks rather than formal reading form. Also give them meaningful opportunities to speak for various purposes by directing them to different types of speech. In addition, it is helpful to provide them with explicit instructions for activities within the context. Influence of speaking and listening skills upon the students, the teacher must have deep knowledge of his students, not only as students, but as individuals, their families and their communities. These teachers can build on the social and cultural background of the students. That makes the focus on creativity and self-expression include knowledge and skills in the social and functional context.

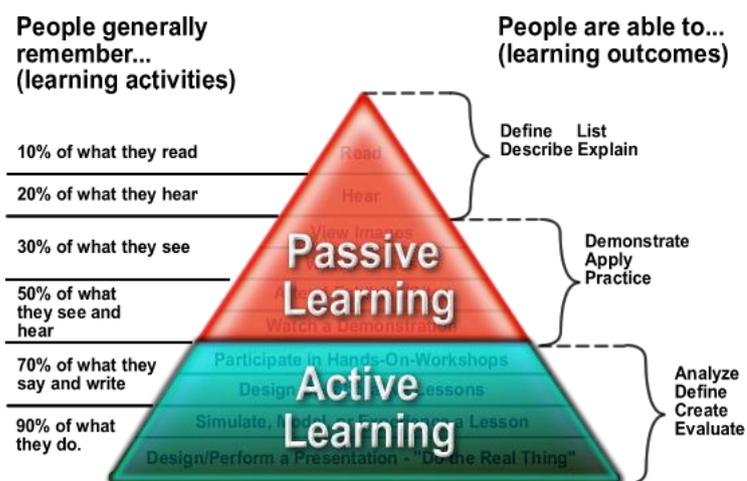
Depending on statistical report by Meyers and Jones (1993), the students in traditional learning lose their interest in 40% of the lesson time and 70% of them can keep the information in the first ten minutes but this number decreases to 20% in the last ten minutes. After four months later only 8% of those students still remember that information. For that the active learning presents chances for students to meaningfully speak, listen, write and read and then affect on the subjects and ideas.

All real learning is active. Which that means is not memory use only, but all the brain will use. It is discovery process which the student is the essential factor, not the teacher (Adler & Isaacs, 1983). Stimulation of active learning in English teaching contributes to develop listening and speaking skills. The students become able to interact, debate and use vocabulary and grammar which they learned correctly and consistently with enhanced self-learning for the student to improve the English language in future.

Significance of research:

In nowadays, speaking English is important and essential around the world. This study is significantly important because it refers to the positive effect of active learning strategies and how much they contribute to the development of learning English compared to traditional education methods. The teaching method, whether in the classroom or outside, is the basis in the educational process success. Active learning raises the academic achievement of students and helps them solve the problems they face with the curriculum. The recent trend to use the active learning strategies in schools confirms its success as an effective method rather than passive learning.

The diagram below shows the difference between the influence of passive and active learning.



<https://lo.unisa.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=610988&chapterid=101290>

Research question:

The study looked to answer the following questions:

1. Do learners who acquire the vocabulary and grammar with active learning strategies have much word than those who learned it with traditional way?
2. What is the effect of using the active learning strategies for improving English listening and speaking skills for elementary school students?

Research methodology:

The research tools used in this research are as follows:

For teacher:

1-Questionnaires:

This methodology is to gather data from English teachers. The questionnaire contained 8 points to share their opinion about the active learning strategies in the classroom and how to develop listening and speaking skills in English language learning.

2-Observation:

The same English lesson about "careers" subject would be observed during two classrooms, each one contains about 20 students. In the first class only pictures in the book and the blackboard are used, while in the second class active learning strategies are used. At the end of both classes, a test was done to collect data and compare to decide which class was more active and acquired more new vocabulary and grammar.

For student:

Vocabulary tests:

Two tests for the students were taken in the same classroom. One was a pre-test as a placement test (before using active learning strategies) and the other was a post-test as an achievement test (after using active learning strategies).

Each test contained 10 multiple choice questions (vocabulary and pictures) and then the results were compared.

Ethical consideration:

Permission and agreement from the school leader have been taken in executing the study. It included only elementary students, whereas other school levels were excluded. It was optional to reveal names and not require to answer all questions or declare any personal information. It was necessary to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for participants in this research.

Limitation of research:

The study followed the scientific research approach and it was done in two elementary schools for girls (150 – 330) in the west of Riyadh. In addition to the participation of teachers to answer the questionnaire about the effective use of active learning strategies in listening and speaking skill on the web.

Expected results:

The purpose of the study was to examine the degree participants that used active learning when they study English vocabulary in elementary school. The student's interaction during the active learning will certainly be useful in improving their language skills, especially their communication and comprehension, and break their shyness to use the English language. The students will also acquire more vocabulary and get a better pronunciation. After getting the results will recommend these strategies which are more fun and effective in teaching English in elementary school.

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Appendixes:

APPENDIX A:

Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher, this questionnaire contains (8) statements which require put (√) mark in front of the response that you choose in order to collect data about your opinion (on the using of active learning strategies in developing listening and speaking skills in elementary school) which supports my research:

Teacher Name (optional):

Questionnaire Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1- Elementary school students don't like using the English language in the Conversation.			
2- Many students who arrive at the university stage are unable to speak the English language proficiently.			
3- Listening and speaking skills are important as other skills in English learning in the elementary school .			
4- Students need listening and speaking skills in equally important as reading and writing skills in the future of their studies and social life.			
5- Elementary student has sufficient vocabulary to make simple conversation.			
6-The active learning strategies help the student acquire more new vocabulary and then develop his English rapidly and steadily.			
7- Developing the student's listening and speaking skills give him confidence and freedom of expression and dialogue .			
8- Active learning strategies make English class more fun and receptive.			

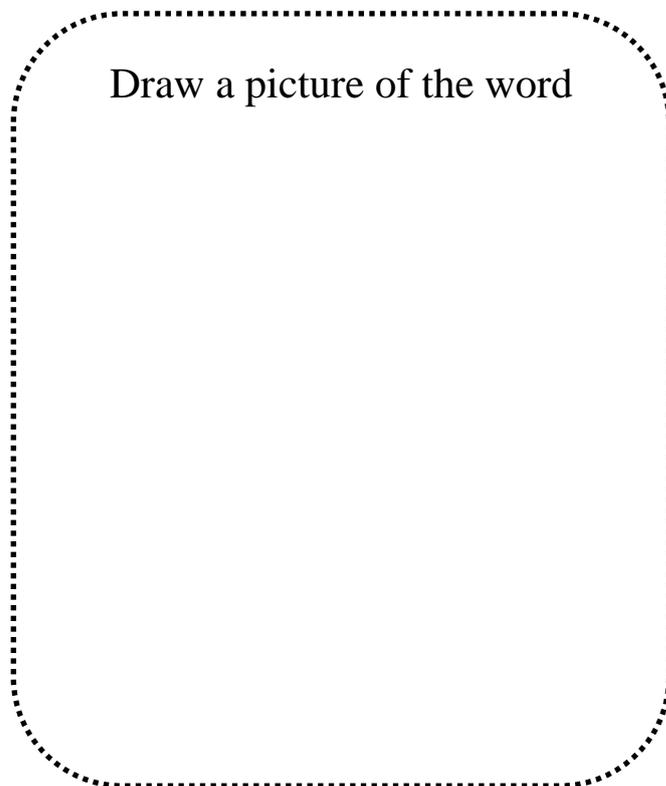
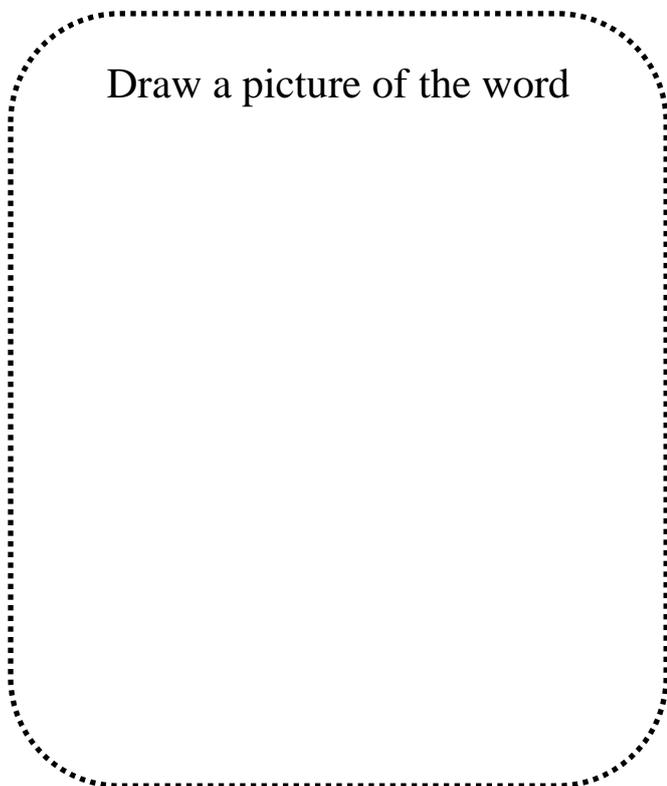
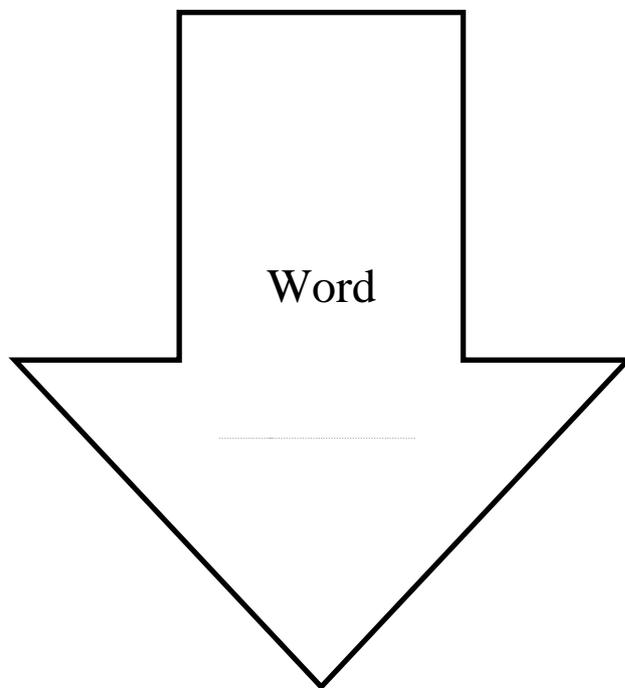
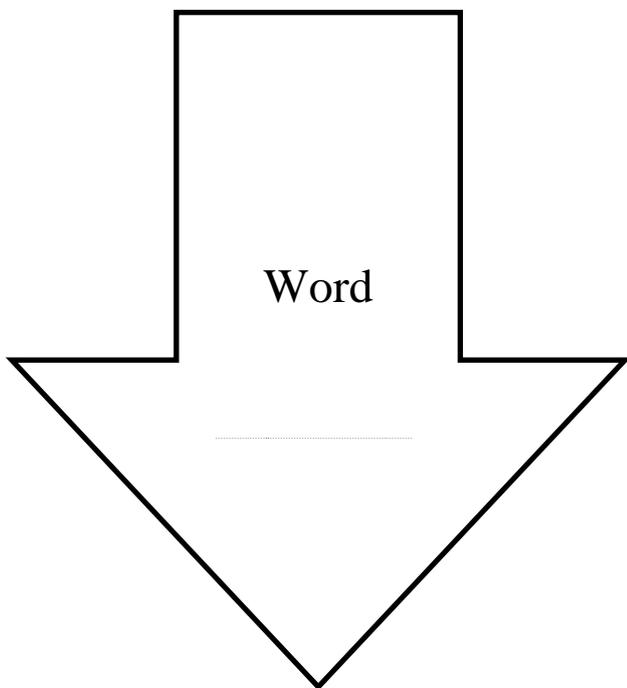
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APPENDIX B:

Observation Sheet

Name:

marks:



APPENDIX C:
pre-Test

Total Marks: 10
Obtained Marks: _____

Name: _____ grade: 6th

Q1) Write the correct word under each picture:

(Pilot _ teacher _ mechanic _ police officer _ doctor)



Q2) Match the pictures and words:

1.



a. puts out fires

2.



b. cooks food

3.



c. fixes teeth

4.



d. grows fruit

5.



e. takes pictures