The Effect of Using Oral Summary Short Stories on Iranian EFL Learner's Speaking Ability

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ARTICLE INFO
ABSTRACT

Article history:
Received 23 August 2013
Received in revised form 24 September 2013
Accepted 13 December 2013
Available online 4 January 2014

Key words:
Speaking, Oral summary, OPT, Short story, EFL learner

This research investigated the effect of using oral summary short stories as a kind of classrooms activity on Iranian EFL Learners' speaking ability. This investigation decided to explain whether using oral summary short stories activities in speaking classrooms might increase a good level of this ability on Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level. To achieve the answer of the question in this study, 60 intermediate language learners in Zabangostar Language Institute in Hachirood were randomly selected by using an OPT administration to 130 language learners. After OPT administration, they divided into experimental and control groups. Then, a pretest based on speaking test that involve 10 questions was administered to both groups. Answers should be presented on oral way. The experimental group was educated speaking by oral summary short stories while control group was taught just by common English text book. After 20 sessions of treatment in experimental, the post test of speaking was administered in which participants on both groups. For finding the obvious result based on this investigation and analysis of data collected on both groups, researcher used ANCOVA coefficient. Findings that achieved by this study to indicate significantly difference between two groups. According this analysis using oral summary short stories had positive effects on Iranian EFL speaking ability.

INTRODUCTION

The researcher has found several resources that explain and clarify speaking as follows: Speaking is to express or communicate opinions, feelings, ideas, etc, by or as talking and it involves the activities in the part of the speaker as psychological, physiological (articulator) and physical (acoustic) stags (Oxford Advanced Dictionary, 1995, p. 13). [6] stated that "speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts"(p.13). Bryne (1998, p. 8) also said that, "speaking is a two way process between speaker and listener and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding". The most important language skill is speaking because people explain their thought, feeling, opinion and knowledge by using language also it has especial importance in teaching and learning. At the past time, language learners used to repeat the activities and grammar without creativity thinking for language learning but it is necessary that language learners learn to use it in different social situations and communicative positions or contexts. Many reports and observations in different studies have shown Iranian EFL learners have a lot of problem and weakness in speaking and listening and they weren’t able to speak in real social situation. This claim was supported by Mansoor Tavakoli & Zahra Amirian (2012). According [13], most students studying English as a foreign language share a common problem with organizing and communicating their thoughts and ideas orally. This may be due to the fact that learners do not benefit from sufficient practice and opportunities to speak in the classroom. Second, learning to speak is a complex process not readily known to the learners; learners are not familiar with the skills and strategies they can use to develop their speaking ability. Third, EFL skills and strategies they can use to develop their speaking ability. Third, EFL learners have little opportunity to develop the skills for arranging their ideas cohesively and coherently while speaking. Fourth, they are not familiar with the criteria by which their oral performances are assessed. According to [21], it seems...
that for adults it is very difficult to learn to speak a new language simply because they feel need to cope with many different aspects at one time, and in real conversation that seems to be impossible. According pre-test based on IELTS, Ramezanee (2004) measured the students level of speaking ability in English language institute in Abadan, Iran. Findings were shown these learner did not have good level of this skill. Language teachers used to different methods for overcoming this problem and facilitate speaking skill by improving functional activities and suitable techniques. Good language activities and techniques can be effective more and more on foreign language speaking as well as other skills. Attention to using oral summary short story as cognitive strategy and effective interactive activity has been studied.

2.1 Background and Literature Review:
Advocates of storytelling as a pedagogical tool claim many advantages. The most frequently mentioned advantages in the research literature are effective benefits: storytelling interest students, lowers effective filters and allows learning to take place more readily and more naturally within a meaningful interactive communication context: Holt and Mooney comment on the importance of stories to teach multiculturalism: “stories tell of your similarities and difference, our strengths and weaknesses, our hopes and dreams. They have the power to teach us understanding and tolerance. This is powerful tool” (1994, P.9).

2.2 Short story and language skill reinforcement:
advantages of using short stories in EFL class and their implications It is common way that to use short story in language class as authentic material for EFL learners language scholars always point and discuss on short story benefits in educational setting and academic system. Therefore, it isn’t strange that foreign language teachers use and apply it for reinforcement of their learners. As you know short story has powerful potential advantages. Short stories allow teachers to teach the four skills to all levels of language proficiency. [15] indicates that “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency”. According to him, short stories could be very beneficial materials in ELT reinforcement by using them in learning activities such as, discussion, writing and acting out dialogues.

(A) Reading and Speaking:
A short story is very useful in the trials to improve students’ vocabulary and reading. The results of Lado and Krashen’s (2000) study which compared the reading achievement between a group of students that read literary texts and a second group that read non-literary texts at a university in Hong Kong revealed that the group who read literary texts made better improvement in vocabulary and reading. Using “Bill” (see the appendix), three activities can be conducted to help students to acquire more vocabulary. These ac High-intermediate and advanced students also profit from literary texts. What they read gives them the opportunity to come up with their own insights and helps them speak the language in a more imaginative way. They become more creative since they are faced with their own point of view, that/those of the main character(s) of the story and those of their peers. This process leads to critical thinking. He confirms, “Focusing on point of view in literature enlarges students’ vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways a situation can be seen” [17]. This could happen because when students read, they interact with the text. By interpreting what they read, they can work toward speaking English more creatively. As Ellis and McRae (91) make clear, there is a case for introducing a wider variety of reading experience to help students improve their fluency and develop better reading skills. One of the best options is to supplement courses, whenever possible, with imaginative fiction in the form of authentic courses, whenever possible, with imaginative fiction in the form of authentic short stories. There are a number of reasons for suggesting such an initiative:
From a practical point of view, a well-selected short story provides the opportunity for students to read an imaginative text in its entirety, even though only certain extracts may be examined in detail in the classroom. There may be a need to provide support in dealing with new vocabulary and structures, but a story can normally be selected that will be accessible for students in terms of theme, language and cultural relevance. This story can provide engaging reading material that will naturally develop their reading skills and widen their linguistic knowledge. In the same respect, Nunan (2003, p. 48) agrees with [5] that speaking is the productive oral skill and it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning and authentic short story provides quality course content. In addition, Lado and Krashen (2000) present the result of a comparison between a group of students that read literary texts and a second group that read non-literary texts at a university in Hong Kong. The group who read literary texts showed improvement in vocabulary and reading.
(B): Speaking and listening:

According to [20], short stories can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, reenactment, and discussion are some effective learning activities which center on a short story EFL classes can use for enhancing these two skills. Asking students to read stories aloud can develop their speaking as well as listening skills. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation.

According to [7], there are four main reasons, which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment, and personal involvement. In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context.

Short stories allow instructors to teach the four skills to all levels of language proficiency. Murdoch (2002) indicates that short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency (p. 9). He explains why stories should be used to reinforce ELT by discussing activities instructors can create such as writing and acting out dialogues.

2.3 Benefits of Using Short Stories in the EFL Context:

A. Motivating students:

Since short stories usually have a beginning, middle, and an end, they encourage students at all levels of language proficiency to continue reading them until the end to find out how the conflict is resolved. [8], for example, affirms that literature motivates advanced students and is “motivationally effective if students can genuinely engage with its thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities” (p. 197). He stresses the importance of developing student–response (individual and group levels) and competence in literature.

In addition, one of the reasons [22] lists for using literature with students is that literature motivates students “to explore their feelings through experiencing those of others” (p. 1).

To choose stories according to students’ preferences, stories should have various themes because, as Akyel and Yalçın (1990) point out, variety of themes will offer different things to many individuals’ interests and tastes [1]. But the themes should be “consistent with the traditions that the learners are familiar with.”

B. Teaching culture:

Short stories are effective when teaching culture to EFL students. Short stories transmit the culture of the people about whom the stories were written. By learning about the culture, students learn about the past and present, and about people’s customs and traditions. Culture teaches students to understand and respect people’s differences.

C. Motivating higher-order thinking:

Among of all the benefits of short stories, higher-order thinking is the most exciting one. High intermediate/advanced students can analyze what they read; therefore, they start thinking critically when they read stories. [23] discusses the use of children’s stories to introduce critical thinking to college students. He believes that “stories have two crucial advantages over traditional content. [11] agrees with the use of short stories to teach critical thinking. He points out that instructors have the responsibility to help students to develop cognitive skills because everyone needs to “make judgments, be decisive, come to conclusions, synthesize information, organize, evaluate, predict, and apply knowledge.” B reading and writing, students develop their critical thinking skills (p. 24).

Theoretical framework:

Summarizing strategy and activities:

Rubin (1975) defined strategies as “the techniques or devices, which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (p. 43). Later, Rubin (1981) conducted a study to identify cognitive strategies in second language learning and introduced the distinction between direct and indirect language learning strategies. In 1987, Rubin proposed, “language learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly” (p. 23). She also suggested that language learning strategies include “any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information” (p. 19).

Bialystok (1978) defined language learning strategies as “optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language” (p. 71).

In order to make oral summary as effective as possible, the students must be able to process the ideas of the passage and consider how they are related to one another. This strategy helps readers associate text concepts into their schemata and can extend cognitive capacity (Friend, 2001).
Summarization is the restating of the main ideas of the text in as few words as possible. It can be done in writing, orally, through drama, through art and music, in groups and individually. There is extensive research that shows that summarization is among the top nine most effective teaching strategies in the history of education (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001). Teachers who start a lesson by summarizing the big points in the day’s lesson and end by having students summarize their learning see gains in the retention of the material. The strategies the teacher uses can be fun and enjoyable, and at the same time achieve academic goals. Teachers should choose activities that enhance students learning, and avoid ones that are a waste of teachers’ and students’ time. Good & Brophy (2000, p. 30) state that “learning should be fun and motivation problems appear because the teacher somehow has converted an inherently enjoyable activity into drudgery.” It can therefore be concluded that interesting and fun strategies can be used to promote speaking in the EFL classroom. According to Brown (1994), if strategies are intrinsically motivating and appeal to students’ goals and interests then it can have a positive impact on their speaking.

3. Objective of the study:
As mentioned at previous section, Iranian English foreign language learners had shown speaking problems that it was explained at last section. The most essential aim of this research is finding answer for this question: Does using oral summary short stories facilitate Iranian EFL learners speaking ability?

Hypothesis:
H0: On the above-mentioned question, the following null hypotheses is proposed: Applying oral summary of short stories does not affect Iranian EFL learners’ speaking skill.

4. Methods:
4.1 Participants:
Researcher used OPT (oxford placement test) for selecting homogenous participants among 130 language learners in Zabangostar Language institute in Hachirood, Iran. The researcher selected 60 intermediate learners according OPT. After this test, researcher specified sample of learners. She computed mean then select60 learner (-1, mean, +1). They were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. There were 30 learners in each group.

4.2 Materials And Procedure:
Materials were used in this study were different kinds at different stages. 60 questions were at this exam. Score was 50 on vocabulary and grammar, 10 question on reading and 10 question on writing for determination intermediate group. Researcher selected 60 intermediate learners according OPT. Score above 31 was accepted as participants at this research.

First stage: OPT was used for proficiency. 60 questions were at this exam. Score was 40 on vocabulary and 10 questions on reading and writing for determination intermediate group. Researcher selected 60 intermediate learners according OPT.

Second stage: pre-test was included 10 speaking questions that were asked participants to response orally way on both groups, experimental and control. This pre-test was on based Asaei’s test, 2011.

Third stage: treatment was short stories that were selected on based of some important criteria. It was taught in experimental group. Researcher used to apply short stories in class then wanted to ask for students to present oral summary short stories.

Fourth stage: Post –test was included 10 speaking questions based on Asaei’s test (2011) as same as pre-test. It was asked for to answer oral way.

Oral summary short stories was treatment in experimental group. Researcher instructed or used this treatment in addition of text in English Language class that called experimental group in one semester of educational year. There were 20 sessions in each term but she instructed just text or original book on control group. It was said learners some notices on evaluation and scoring their oral summary. Some elements were important for evaluation as scoring criteria such as vocabulary, structure, pronunciation fluency and comprehension.

Researcher instructed to focus main and general point in short story and on Researcher read one short story in experimental group in English class at every session and asked for students recall summary of this short story. This chain was continued in each session. Students should enjoy from learning by oral summary short stories. Teacher knew them about foreign culture and new words and correct pronunciation. Teacher instructed them how summary new information and delete extra information for recalling at early stage but after this she wanted use of their sentence for recalling and speaking they should practice to speak in subconscious way by presenting oral summary short stories. Researcher was used of Farhadi’s rating scale (2000).
4.3 Data Analysis:

The ultimate goal of the research is to obtain general conclusions and generalizations that may define phenomena and predict future events applied. Researchers to achieve the answer of research questions and test their hypotheses need able to analyze and interpret data are available to study the relationship between research issues. Data analysis as part of the process of scientific research methodology as part of the study, is one of the main pillars by which all the activities necessary to reach a conclusion to the investigation, control and being directed. Data collected of this study were analyzed by ANCOVA that was administered between pre-tests scores and post-tests scores of both groups experimental and control. In order to characterize the resulting data, the parameters of frequency, percentage, cumulative frequency distribution, central tendency and dispersion of the variables in the form of the following tables is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1-1: Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posttest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-test and post-test values in the above table relates to the ability to speak English students are provided.

(1-1): Pre-tests diagram for speaking ability of EFL learners to distinguish groups

This diagram was shown experimental and control group had good and same distribution on speaking ability because it had important effects on the reliability and validity of tests results.

(1-2): Post tests diagram for speaking ability of EFL learners to distinguish group

The difference of these two diagrams was shown the experimental group had positive and significantly difference on speaking ability than control group.
Inferential Analysis of the Data:
To attention on these data that were obtained by pre –tests scores and post-tests scores, Anova analyses were used for interpretation and test of research hypothesis. The procedure for using ANCOVA, the two main preconditions be met. Professionals before performing this test the homogeneity of the regression and the linear relationship between random variables and the dependent variable to be tested. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method that allows the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable are examined. While the effects of other variables have been removed or destroyed. Analysis of covariance of the random variable contribution limits or eliminates.

Research hypothesis: Applying oral summary of short stories does not affect Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. To test this hypothesis, data from measurement tools have been evaluated through analysis of covariance and the results are presented in the table below. Factors between subjects are detailed in the table below.

Table 1-2: Between-Subjects Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value Label</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: posttest

Table 1.3: homogeneity of regression slopes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>138.694</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46.231</td>
<td>36.859</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>34.679</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34.679</td>
<td>27.649</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>11.247</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.247</td>
<td>8.967</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>12.706</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.706</td>
<td>10.130</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group * pretest</td>
<td>6.530</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.530</td>
<td>5.206</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>70.239</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15314.000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>208.933</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. R Squared = .664 (Adjusted R Squared = .646)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above results indicated that the interaction was not statistically significant. To attention (F=5.206) and (p ≤0.05). Homogeneity of regression slopes was confirmed and the interaction between the auxiliary random variable and the independent variable was not significant. After checking the homogeneity of the regression slopes of the linear relationship between the random variable and the dependent variable, results of it was presented at this diagram.

Diagram -Regression lines for the auxiliary random variable and the dependent variable

The above diagram shows that the linear regression lines, but the lines are parallel or nearly parallel. After consideration of the above, then the covariance analysis, and the results are presented in the following tables.
Table 1-4: Levine’s Test of Equality of Error Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: posttest</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. 

a. Design: Intercept + pretest + group

The results indicated that due to the significant level of 0.05 was more so, given the assumption of equality of error variances weren’t not questioned.

Table 1-5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>132.164†</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.082</td>
<td>49.065</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>32.088</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32.088</td>
<td>23.825</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>14.564</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.564</td>
<td>10.814</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>109.617</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109.617</td>
<td>81.389</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>76.769</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15314.000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>208.933</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .633 (Adjusted R Squared = .620)

The first row shows the results highlighted that the auxiliary random variable (F=10.814 ) at the level of perception (p ≤0/01) significantly correlated with the dependent variable. After considering the results of the second row highlighted in the table below is a summary of results.

Table 1-6: Adjusted mean and standard error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>17.223a†</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>16.798</td>
<td>17.649</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>14.510a†</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>14.085</td>
<td>14.935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest = 14.7667.

There were adjusted averages in this table. The effect of the auxiliary random variable was statistically removed. After adjusting for pre-test scores, there weren’t any Significant effect between subjects factorF( 57,1) = 30/136 , P ≤ 0/01 Partial $\eta^2 = 0/588$). Adjusted mean scores suggests that experimental group equaled 17.223 had significantly higher marks than control group with 14.510. It explained that using oral summary short stories has positive effect on speaking of Iranian EFL learners. Data was taken by administering tests were included numbers. Researcher used Ankovasoft ware to analysis data and get conclusion .Pre tests and Post – tests were accounted for finding the results of hypotheses .Analytic data showed significance difference observed between the results of speaking tests of two group and this difference showed the positive effects of using oral summary short stories on EFL experimental group than control group.

Conclusion And Recommendation:

The results of this research explained and prove that using short story especially oral summary short stories had positive effects on EFL speaking ability. At first stages,learners tried to present the main and exact points in the story but they learned to present new sentences and make sentence on their feelings and ideas. This summary strategy allowed learners to be creative and interested for learning more and more. EFL learners enjoyed to learn by presenting oral summary short story ,they tried to pay attention to their speaking and correct mistakes for themselves.

They tried to present as native language especially in speaking skill and correct pronunciation.

Step by step,they learn to make new sentence and phrase in English language.

The summary strategy caused students to pay attention to all of skills simultaneously in unconscious way. They motivated to learn more and more and participate to speak more.
Investigators are suggested to research on effects using oral summary short stories on EFL learner’s listening. Other researchers can be used of that research title in large population for more validity and reliability. Researchers can involve genders and repeat this research in separate groups for evaluating treatment on different gender. This activity and strategy (using oral summary short stories activities, summary strategy) can be helped both teachers for facilitate of teaching and EFL learners for best and facilitate speaking learning and they become more able to communicate in real situation. Of course, English teachers for selecting of best and useful short story should pay attention some criteria.

REFERENCES