



The Effect of Compensatory Strategies on EFL Pupils' Achievement

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Abstract

The current study aims at investigating the effect of compensatory strategies on EFL Iraqi pupils' achievement. To achieve the aims of this study one hypothesis assumes to be established. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of experimental groups who is taught by compensatory strategies and control group who is taught by traditional method in post achievement test. For carrying out the aim of the study, and validating its hypothesis, a sample of fifty pupils have been randomly chosen from the fifth-preparatory class in Al-Alam Secondary School for Boys, during the academic year 2021-2022. The two groups are equally divided into, group (A) represents experimental group that consists of (25) pupils who has been taught according to compensatory strategies. Group (B) signifies control group which also includes (25) pupils who has been taught according to the traditional method. Making a pre and post achievement test. Both groups have been equalized in such variables from educational level of parents, English marks achievement in preceding schooling year, and the pretest of both groups. Five questions are composed to combine a post-test. Alpha-Cronbach techniques have been used to confirm the reliability coefficient. The discriminating power and difficulty level for each item have been determined via statistical analysis of the items. The entire sample has been exposed to the post-test as a result. The data gathered from the post-test findings have been statistically examined using the formula for the T-test of two independent and paired samples. According to the results, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group who taught by using Compensatory Strategies and the control group who taught by using the traditional method; there is also a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post achievement test. Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, appropriate recommendations and suggestions for future studies are made.

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1. Introduction and Problem of the Study

There are many problems in teaching English language. Most teachers depend on the traditional method which has a great effect on the achievement of pupils in learning the target language, there is a weakness in communication, sometimes the pupils fail to express their thoughts. Finally, the lack of motivation in learning English is another defect. So, the main purpose of teaching English as a foreign language for pupils is to be able to communicate and express their ideas professionally in the four skills of English language. Furthermore, pupils who are learning English in non-English countries often face a lot of difficulties since they need to learn a large amount of vocabulary as well as proper grammar usage and word pronunciation.

In Iraq English language is considered as a foreign language, so pupils encounter numerous challenges in learning the language and are unable to develop the higher levels of practice, in which they will not be able to convey their thoughts or communicate easily because they think in their mother tongue. As a result, they do not achieve a high level of proficiency and acquisition in the TL. They often lack the required vocabulary they need to produce the full meaning in communication, they cannot keep the interaction going for a long time, and they do not contact to real life situation, so there is a vague of communication with native speaker. Then, they have difficulty with all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. With the development of globalization, nowadays everyone must study the language and be able to speak and communicate in it. It is used for communication between countries around the worlds[1].

Therefore, there are many new strategies and techniques of teaching English that teachers can use it for teaching pupils to acquire or communicate in the TL easily. One of these strategies is compensatory strategies which play an important role in teaching English language, these strategies help pupils to overcome any gaps and limitations in knowledge of the language. It also used when pupils try to solve a communication problem [2]. While [3] describes CpSs are strategies that help pupils to use the TL for either comprehension or production even there are several restrictions in the acquisitions of that language. Likewise, it used by pupils to compensate the misunderstanding of the TL. Guessing the meaning when pupils do not know and using signs are examples of CpSs, miming games and description of activities such as picture are two ways that support pupils to understand the target language.

The researcher has found that teaching EFL in Iraq needs patience because there is no environment of English language. Pupils do not take it as a serious topic because the major goal of teaching English in schools is to help pupils achieve their English language skills in depending on the textbook only, so this method of teaching leads pupils to face many difficulties in learning because the practicing can be just in the classroom. In addition to that, in recent years pupils face problems in their teaching especially the circumstances of war and COVID 19 that occur in all of Iraq areas has affected the achievement of the

pupils, moreover most of them do not complete the material and do not take exactly time to finish the curriculum and finally they enter the examiner class and the results sometimes are failure. Consequently, they lose interest in English language and consider it the most difficult subject.

1.1 Aim of the Study

This study aims at investigating the effect of compensatory strategies on EFL Iraqi pupils' achievement.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

This study hypothesizes that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of experimental group who is taught by compensatory strategies and control group who is taught by traditional method in post achievement test.

1.3 Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to:

1. Fifth year (scientific branch) at Al-Alam Secondary School for Boys in Al-Alam.
2. Using compensatory strategies in teaching unit one, two and three of the “English for Iraq” text book in the first semester of the study.
3. The academic year 2021-2022.
4. The model of the study is Rebeca Oxford’s model (1990).

1.4 Value of the Study

The value of the current study can be summarized in the following points:

1. This study could be valuable for pupils who have many difficulties in learning English language.
2. Practically, this study could be useful for English language teachers in the preparatory schools because it will give them an opportunity to think about new ways and techniques in teaching English language.
3. The current study helps the EFL teachers to attract the attention of the Iraqi preparatory pupils to study material, assists teachers in shifting from the conventional instructional methods that are still common in teaching to the most up to-date ones, and helps them to present the educational material effectively.
4. Teachers need to implement new strategies in their teaching English language in schools.

1.5 Procedures of the Study

The following procedures are followed to achieve the aims of the study and verify its hypotheses.

1. Presenting a literature review of the compensatory strategies.
2. Selecting randomly two groups: one as experimental group and one as control group.
3. Applying written pre-test to the two groups for the sake of equalization.
4. The experimental group is the group which is exposed to compensatory strategy.
5. Two groups are exposed to a post-test to know the effect of compensatory strategy on pupils' achievement.
6. The results of the post-test and the data have been presented and have been analyzed through using suitable statistical methods.
7. Stating results, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

1.6 Definitions of the Basic Terms

1.6.1 Effect

Effect is defined as an exchange that happens in a person or a thing caused by another person or thing. In other words, an effect is a result or the outcomes that has an influence in developing the person or anything else [4].

1.6.2 Compensatory Strategies

Compensatory strategies are strategies that a language user employs to manage his intended meaning when he becomes aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic weakness [5].

1.6.3 Achievement

They express that achievement is an effort which determines how much of a language pupil or anyone has learned with reference to a specific course of learning, textbook, or programmer of teaching or instruction [6].

2- Literature Review for Compensatory Strategies

2.1 Compensatory Strategies (CpSs)

Compensatory Strategies also known as Achievement Strategies. It helps in dealing with communication difficulties which caused by missing information while communicating in the objective language [7] and [8]. As a result, when a pupil is unable to convey the message, he compensates for what is missing to succeed in the conveyance of the message; a pupil might repay the missing information by using nonverbal communication or fillers, or new words can be generated on occasion. They state that is the reason of motivation behind the investigation of CpSs focuses on the accomplishment of these specific procedures because it is very common to discover in the EFL study specific pupils who face many difficulties while conveying a message and attempt to discover the best approach to transmit it. However, lack of information or even non-verbal communication for being prevents their messages from being understood [9].

As previously stated, CpSs are a subsection of Communication Strategies that enable pupils to enhance their communication procedure; furthermore, the main problem is that pupils in the early stages of the learning EFL fear talking and experience consistent feelings of fear to speak in front of others, and with the use of this specific strategies of CpSs, the pupils would benefit from outside assistance to adapt to their communication problems and will turn out to be increasingly sure speakers [10].

While [11] indicate that CpSs enable pupils to use them as a problem-solving strategy to address a specific difficulty; it may also contribute to a higher level of language skills. So, the focus on CpSs is considered as the key goal in language correspondence to get suggestions by allowing pupils to use the language to communicate while reducing the language limits provided in the early stages of the learning procedure.

In addition, [12] are the first who use the term CpSs for achievement strategies. They define CpSs as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (p.92).

2.1.1 The Role of Compensatory Strategies in Language Education

CpSs should be introduced in the language classroom for these obvious principles. For example, [13] offers concentrating on activities for practicing paraphrase and approximation. On the other hand, [14] supports circumlocution and appealing for educational assistance. Although there is not a single strategy of CpSs that can be applied with all language skills in every situation, the opportunity of mixing various strategies for a considerably better outcome than observing to just one is always available. Circumlocution and paraphrase need a wider and more structured mental vocabulary to work with, strategies like miming, appealing for assistance, and approximation are less demanding and serve the same goal of communication.

In addition to that [15] claims that teaching CpSs are helpful for pupils for the following purposes: First, using of CpSs can lead to recall vocabulary that previously lost from both participants in communication, especially when appealing for assistance. This can be said about circumlocution, paraphrasing also the use of synonyms and antonyms. Second, by applying such strategies, both users have a greater chance to increase their opportunities for continuing their conversation without feeling uncertain in his speech. Finally, pupils can resolve communication problems while achieving their aim by their own ideas. It should also be noted that by achieving the intended communicational objective on their own or by seeking support, the use of CpSs has a high possibility of leading to a more conscious use of language while enhancing one's self-confidence and increasing pupils' independence.

2.1.2 Principles for Compensatory Strategies

There are several principles for CpSs that any teacher or lecturer should follow it. The following principle should be considered by the teachers in the classroom:

1. The pupil's age.
2. Pupil's interests and hobbies.
3. Levels of language proficiency.
4. additional abilities such as grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence
5. Pupil's relationship to the other pupils
6. The environment and the atmosphere of the classroom and school in general.

Based on my experience, the teacher must be conscious of the change of communication that happen in the classroom and outside the classroom. The pupils should feel confident that if there is any mistake in their speech in the FL, there is no problem because they are speaking to develop their communication abilities. So, every pupil should get an opportunity to speak something in the EFL.

[16] state five main principles for CpSs which were defined to achieve the goal of learning the EFL.

1. The main aim of the teacher is to prepare a lesson consisting of all elements that highlighted on communicative competence which is interrelated to CpSs to fill the gaps in knowledge.
2. The second principle emphasizes that every pupil has his/her communication needs, so, each pupil should utilize the FL as much as possible in a communicative situation in or out the classroom.

3. This principle relates to the previous one that the FL pupil may be given a chance to participate in meaningful communicative interaction with the one whose language ability is at a high level.
4. Additional, at the beginning of teaching EFL is important for developing young pupils' awareness about the target language. Teachers should be ready to provide pupils with exercises which are suitable to their age and language proficiency.
5. The EFL pupils should get specific information about the language that they study it and every teacher must develop the sociocultural knowledge in order to make the pupils differentiate between the words that they are used it in communication.

2.1.3 Types of Compensator Strategies

[17] states that CpSs are divided into two main types, each with two sub-divisions.

1. Conceptual Archistrategy: It means solve the problem that faced it through communication by thinking of the meaning of the word and trying to convey it in another way. They are sub-divided into:

a. Analytic Strategy: When the pupil tries to separate the meaning of the word into its components and then transmit the parts individually to convey the meaning.

b. Holistic Strategy: When the pupil thinks in the meaning of the word as total and attempts to use a word that is the nearest approximation to the original meaning of the word.

2. Linguistic Archistrategy: Here, the pupils return to the use of internal language resources like:

a. Morphological Creativity: One option is to create up a word with appropriate ends and hope it works.

b. L1 Transfer: Pupils might transfer a word from the first to the second language in the hope that it will exist in the new language.

While [18] defines compensatory /achievement strategies that pupils can exchange the problems of the communication by using these strategies. He divided it into ten sub categories:

a. Circumlocution: Pupils try to improve the intended unknown word by describing or illustrating it.

b. Approximation: Pupils replace the unfamiliar word with the closest meaning of the one that they want it.

c. All-purposed Item: Pupils try to repeat insignificant words.

d. Word Coinage: Pupils create new words in the target language.

e. Literal Translation: Pupils translate the word into the target language immediately.

f. Foreignizing: Pupils pronounce the L1 or L2 word like the target language.

g. Code Switching: During communication, pupils switch to their L1.

h. Repetition: Pupils usually repeat their last words or phrases.

i. Non-linguistic Means: Pupils employ non-verbal device.

j. Appeal for Help: Pupils ask for assistance from their teachers or friends.

3- Methodology

3.1 Experimental Design

[19] an experimental design is a conventional approach of conducting quantitative research or testing an idea (or practice, or procedure) to see if it affects a dependent variable or result. While [20] states that a common and widely utilized research strategy is experimental design as a subset of scientific study. The core of experimental design, and perhaps the most important reason why researchers choose to design and perform experiments, is the precision with which one can assess the relationship between and among variables while remaining as objective as possible. The experimental design of this study is two equivalent groups post-test.

As a result, the study's sample consists of two groups of fifth scientific (biological branch) preparatory school pupils. The researcher examined the test results for the dependent variables in both groups to see if there were any significant differences. The experimental design of the study is shown in the following table1.

Table 1. The Experimental Design of The Study

Group	Pre-test	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Post-test
Experimental	Pupils' Achievement	Compensatory Strategies	Iraqi Pupils' Achievement in EFL	Pupils' Achievement

Control	Pupils' Achievement	Traditional Method	Iraqi Pupils' Achievement in EFL	Pupils' Achievement
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3.2 The Population and the Sample of the Study

[21] state the population is a large group of people to whom researchers are interested in generalizing the findings of a study.

According to [22] a population is defined as all participants who pass a given condition for a research project. The population of the current study is involved of EFL Iraqi preparatory pupils in Al-alam fifth scientific (biological branch). The whole number of the fifth-class pupils' population is (306) boys dispersed into six preparatory schools for boys in Al-alam.

While sample means a group of people who share the characteristic of population [23]. But [24] define that sample is a subgroup of a population. The sample contains (50) pupils who have been from fifth scientific class (biological branch) at Al-alam Secondary School for boys. Sample (A) has randomly been chosen to be the experimental group, sample (B) as the control group. Each section consists of (25) pupils.

3.3 Test Construction of Post-test

To measure the experimenter's level of achievement, the instrument includes preparing a post-test. So, the researcher is used a post-test to verify whether there are statistically significant changes between experimental and control groups. Therefore, the purpose of the test is to assess if the course goal has been accomplished at the end of the instructional time.

3.4 Face Validity

Face validity is the extent to which a test seems to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to examine. This is dependent upon an observer's subjective assessment [25].

3.5 Content Validity

[26] Content validity is the systematic examination of the test content to see if it covers a representative sample of the behavior area to be analyzed.

3.6 Reliability of the Post Achievement Test

The reliability of a test is a critical characteristic of a good test. It is said that a test is trustworthy if the degree of accuracy of the exam is stable and consistent each time it is administered under the same conditions to the same sample of pupils [27].

3.7 Pilot Study

[28] state that pilot testing is the process of creating a test for a small group of test takers in order to assess the suitability and usability of the tools used in the study, specify the instructions, ascertain how long it takes to complete each question, evaluate the test's level of difficulty and discrimination power, compute the test's reliability, and administer the test items in their final form.

For the current study, a pilot test is greatly needed and favored due to these benefits, thus the researcher selects (15) pupils randomly from two sections of Al-Alam Secondary School for Boys. The (15) pupils take the pilot exam on January 10, 2022, in a typical setting and classroom setting. The pilot test results show that the typical amount of time needed is (60) minutes, and the test's offered instructions are unmistakable and clear.

3.8 Item Analysis

Item analysis refers to the process of examining test items based on their level of difficulty and discriminating power. Item analysis is demonstrated by [29] as a strategy for aiding test writers in discovering test content and evaluating how tough or easy an item is, with the purpose of separating better from poorer pupils.

3.8.1 Difficulty Level

Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears to be complicated or facilitated for a given number of tests. It just reflects the percentage of pupils who respond correctly to the object. The most suitable test item will have item difficulty varying between 0.15 and 0.85 [30].

3.8.2 Discrimination Power

Discrimination power means "calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test"[31]. This means that an object is deemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly scored by high-skilled pupils as well as low-skilled pupils.

Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has the good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good pupils

and the wrong answers from the bad pupils. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all. The results obtained indicate that the test item DP ranges from (0.29) - to (0.71). The following table 2 shows the test items in DP and DL.

Table 2. The Difficulty Level and Discrimination Power

Question	Item	Higher	Lower	Difficulty	Discrimination
Q1/ A	1	21	14	0.66	0.33
	2	21	12	0.69	0.43
	3	21	10	0.63	0.52
	4	20	11	0.65	0.43
	5	18	8	0.67	0.48
Q1/ B	1	14	8	0.55	0.43
	2	12	8	0.60	0.29
	3	12	8	0.54	0.29
	4	12	6	0.43	0.43
	5	10	4	0.30	0.43
Q2/ A	1	21	15	0.50	0.29
	2	21	13	0.43	0.38
	3	21	12	0.56	0.43
	4	18	10	0.68	0.38
	5	18	8	0.55	0.48
Q2/ B	1	14	8	0.46	0.29
	2	14	6	0.48	0.38
	3	12	6	0.45	0.29
	4	12	4	0.66	0.38
	5	10	2	0.40	0.38
Q3/ A	1	7	5	0.56	0.29
	2	6	4	0.33	0.29
	3	6	3	0.37	0.43
	4	6	2	0.31	0.57
	5	6	1	0.45	0.71
Q3/ B	1	7	5	0.63	0.29
	2	7	4	0.42	0.43
	3	7	4	0.44	0.43
	4	6	2	0.65	0.57
	5	6	1	0.60	0.71
	1	21	12	0.65	0.64

Q 4/ A	2	21	12	0.65	0.64
	3	19	10	0.67	0.64
	4	18	8	0.50	0.71
	5	18	8	0.43	0.71
Q4/ B	1	21	12	0.33	0.64
	2	19	12	0.70	0.50
	3	18	10	0.35	0.57
	4	15	8	0.39	0.50
	5	13	8	0.37	0.36
Q 5/	1	138	60	0.44	0.56

4-Analysis of Results and Discussion

4.1 Comparison Between the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and that of the Control Group in the Post-test.

All mean scores are obtained and compared to find out if there is any significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in the post-test. Statistics show that the mean scores of the experimental group is (76.40) and that of the control group is (54.88). By using the t-test formula for two independent variables, the calculated t-value is found to be (8.807), while the tabulated t-value is found to be (2.01) at the degree of freedom (48) and level of significance (0.05). This mean indicates that there is a significant difference between the achievement of the two groups and in favour of the experimental group. Thus, the first hypothesis, which states that there is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post-test, is rejected, as shown in the following table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviation, and T-values of the Two Groups
in the Achievement Test

Groups	No. of students	Mean	SD.	T-value		DF	Level of Significance
				Calculated	Tabulated		
EG.	25	76.40	9.28	8.807	2.01	48	0.05
CG.	25	54.88	7.94				

4.2 Discussion of Results

The goal of the current study is to determine whether compensatory strategies have an effect on EFL Iraqi pupils' achievement or not. It also aims to determine whether there are any distinguished changes between the experimental and control groups in terms of pupils' achievement.

The results indicate that the English language achievement of the experimental group, which are taught by using CpSs, is higher and better than the control group, which are taught using the traditional methods.

The following factors can be related to the significant differences in pupils' English language achievement while teaching English using CpSs:

1. Pupil's achievement in the experimental group who have been exposed to CpSs get better scores than the control group who have been taught using the traditional method in the post-test.
2. CpSs assistance pupils learn contents of the unit after they have achieved it.
3. CpSs make the pupils able to keep the new words or phrases that they acquire it in their memory.
4. CpSs help the pupils to learn the essential skills which lead to the development of the next unit.
5. CpSs support the teacher in identifying and correcting areas of weaknesses, thus stopping the cycle of failure.
6. Pupils learn new ideas, analyze, and understand their content of the lesson. This will develop the pupil's skill and ability to access ideas, link between vocabulary and know how to communicate easily.
7. The use of non-linguistic form such as pictures and cards increase pupils' interaction and motivation to participate in answering the correct reply.
8. CpSs enhance pupils' confidence in their learning process.
9. To use the CpSs in the teaching-learning process encourages pupils to be more active, monitor, and self-evaluate their learning.
10. Pupils prefer utilizing the CpSs in class to reinforce their engagement with others and their teacher.
11. The teacher provides pupils the chance to freely express thoughts without hesitation, that improve the relationship between pupils and teacher.
12. Analyzing and asking questions help pupils find relevant information.

5- Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.1 Conclusions

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Based on the result, compensatory strategies are adopted in this study. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of CpSs on the achievement of EFL pupils. After analyzing and collecting data, the results of the scores indicate that pupils who are taught by CpSs outperformed those who are taught by traditional methods.

The use of CpSs encourages pupils to be more interested in studying EFL by enhancing the connection between the pupil and the teacher. Teachers should use a variety of strategies while teaching English, such as creating an active environment that encourages pupils to participate in class. It has been approved that communication creates a positive interaction between pupils and the teacher, it also helps pupils to overcome shyness and hesitation as well as it makes them more self- confident.

The teaching materials are appropriate for pupils' levels of learning and requirements because they understand the development and improvement of their language and communication abilities are increased. The teaching procedure according to the CpSs give a chance to communicate in English, ask questions and use word or phrase to convey the meaning through classroom communication. So, different strategies and skills can enhance pupils' ability in learning EFL. In addition, using various techniques in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and start investigating their own ideas, which help them improve their problem-solving skills and learn how to communicate easily.

5.2 Recommendations

Some recommendations are made based on the study's results:

1. This strategy could be used to improve pupils' communication skills when teaching English.
2. The teachers have to supply their teaching with interesting material.
3. Pupils are encouraged to practice CpSs to understand what they learn.
4. It is suggested that Iraqi English language teachers use CpSs during teaching.
5. To keep pupil's attention in learning activities, teachers must choose attractive topics in the classroom that are appropriate for the pupils' level.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

Since this study is concerned with the effect of CpSs on pupil's achievement, there are various aspects that researchers should investigate, as shown below:

1. This study is only conducted on the preparatory school; a similar study can be done at the English department in the Iraqi Universities.
2. Since this study is only conducted on the male participants, similar research can be done on the opposite gender or both together.
3. A study can be conducted to discover the effect of CpSs on the achievement of pupils in speaking.

4. A study is recommended to examine the effect of CpSs on pupils' four language skills in different academic stages.

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