Cognitive Activation Strategy as an Innovative Teaching Trend to EFL Students in Writing Skill

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ABSTRACT:

Teaching is a difficult task. It requires a leader teacher to build an effective classroom environment. To be an efficient teacher in class, it requires him to create efficient teaching strategies which consider successful ingredients to improve the goodness of education. Successful teaching builds a rational thinking for competent based innovative education. Cognitive activation strategy is one of 21st century teaching strategies which stimulate the process of learning opportunities for students to be educated. This strategy generates successful learning environment where students can grasp a range of meanings. It determines what is happened in high –goodness teaching to prepare teachers innovate this strategy. In addition, teachers can plan for improving the quality of education to guarantee students successful achievement and attain their aims. A good teacher tries to take many roles and presents effective strategies to students to enable them participating in classroom activities and practices. A proficient teacher applies felicitous strategy with learners through sets of intellectual processes thus teaching is considered as processes where one person mediates between another person and the substance of this world to facilitate learning. This is one of the innovative trends of teacher roles. The present study aims at finding out the effect of CA strategy on Iraqi EFL university students' achievement in writing skill at one of Baghdad private university, namely Al-Sadiq in the academic year 2019/2020. The population of the study were 2nd year college students, male and female, and samples (80 students) were selected as two classes for the experimental groups and one for the control group. The study used quasi-experimental design. Data collection method was taken through testing the students to write wellorganized paragraphs in English according to teacher selected topics. The results showed that EFL students face difficulties and commit errors in writing paragraphs in English. Moreover, they need more training on the mechanics of writing to get rid these problems.

Keywords: Cognitive activation strategy, innovative, teaching, trend, writing skill

Introduction

Quora (2020) elucidates that one of the innovative strategies used by teachers in classroom practices is cognitive activation strategy. (CAS) is teaching strategy that associates with processes or steps to facilitate and motivate students acquiring knowledge to build communicative and cognitive constructions. So that the teacher could do his job, he makes use on certain sponsor strategies such as reflection, collaborative learning, guided discovery, and problem solving. Also, there are number of processes which connected to (CAS) in order to generate good learners' results such as read, paraphrase, visualize, hypothesize, estimate, compute, and check. **Therefore, teaching** strategy is a set of gradual steps, a process of plans, participating actions, altering learners' behavior and creating learning experiences and attaining learners' requirements.

Blaumert, J. (2010) suggests that teachers use the supreme art to negotiate with learners to awaken the pleasure in their job. They are the most professional and responsible characters in educational system since their great efforts influence the destiny of the future. Also, they access courses information and inspirations in classroom. Today teachers allow students to reflect their own thoughts and reasons behind their viewpoints. They make decisions and solving problems. Teachers motivate learners to build their cognitive thinking skills. They can encourage them to explore opportunities for new learning methods or strategies. They try to build an efficient student through concentrating on selected aspects of CAS processes as read the draw inferences from paraphrase, the text, comprehending through writing skills. These mental processes consider the keystone in this strategy. In addition, writing skill through verbal language has been acknowledged in cognitive theories of foreign language learning. Thus, successful and complicated processes will strengthen the material and standard of what is apprehended. As a good organizer and designer, teachers should start grading the art of teaching by embroidering students' prior knowledge and preparing curriculum to learn by either asking questions or setting purposes for learning. Another new perspective for teachers is encouraging students to inquire and explore information. At the same time, students learn how to get good at this activity (how to inquire). Combining complex sentences can be specifically not easy to comprehend and join because they need to focus on combining and writing correct sentences during cognitive strategy (Farch & Kasper, 1986:264). Today teachers try their best to seek for new and useful methods beneficial to their students. As a lesson planner or designer,

they are able to gather information of a language course of study, test information for comprehending what they collect, identify any difficulty or problem in teaching-learning process, deepen understanding and build a kind of awareness of teaching learning behaviors. Teacher has the ability to pose and refine questions related to one or more subjects that need more exploration. He continues such efforts over time and negotiates insights with others (Murcia, 2001:4 99). Also teaching students new and innovative strategies bound up with the maturation of them, i.e., with their experiential performance, their ability to line, cope, and grow in a high society. Another perspective, he stimulates students to visualize and evaluate their answers. Thus (CAS) draws basic concepts and steps for better future forecasts with the appropriate teaching methods and active manipulation of learning tasks (Alt, 2017).

Literature Review

CAS has a successful role in instructional systems designed for second language learner. It requires a complete control over learning experiences. Classroom teaching is creating dynamic environment. It means putting students together from various backgrounds with various abilities and personalities. A good teacher can prepare each student to involve him in innovative and creative teaching ways to meet his individual needs (Zzish, 2018). Teacher in class is a prerequisite for attaining teaching objectives and safeguarding the well-being of students for whom teaching and learning activities are centered (Ogunu, 2000). In classroom, teacher responsibility is to plan, supervise, control, and coordinate the practices and activities to students for they are essential in teaching- learning process. Good teacher fosters students questioning and explores good learning environment (Grieser, 2007). Also, successful teachers are the most important components in improving the quality of educational curriculum. They are responsible for improving the achievement of all students through closing the gaps of weaknesses. They use certain strategies to meet the growing needs of students' interest and lesson aims. This will enrich positive learning environment and build new and innovative roles for teachers in class. Moreover, one of the more significant skills in teaching and learning English is writing. It motivates students' thinking, obliges them to focus and arrange their ideas. Also, it cultivates their capability to summarize, analyze, and criticize. It stimulates them to develop and sequence of their ideas, attributing information, and outlining sentences. Students find that refining process is difficult one in English writing because it requires them to make use many cognitive and linguistic strategies. Therefore, writing through CA strategy is an efficient way to enrich students' imagination and starts their minds creating (Bello, 1997:60).

Meyers (2006:8) suggests that in CAS, writing deems an essential and difficult skill especially for those in a foreign language in academic context since they lack of summarizing and refining of these writings. A proficient is thought carefully about writing problems and solutions for EFL learners, so there is an urgent need to discover innovative teaching strategies to strengthen and improve learners' writing performance.

Keys for Teachers in Teaching Classroom

Stone (2018) elucidates that CA strategy is essential to students. It encourages such cognitive processes like questioning, summarizing, and predicting. These processes can use by learners while solving cognitive problems. Teachers motivate students to think profoundly to search for good solutions and to concentrate on the best method they apply to find the correct response. CA strategy will ask students to negotiate knowledge they have communicated. Associating thoughts, ideas will outcome the stimulated learning and fully understanding of this strategy.

Wheatear et al (2015) suggest that there is a connected relevance between the standard of challenge students' gain in their lessons and their performance. He focuses on such good feature's teachers have to activate and encourage students to acquire successful learning. They have the knowledgeable ideas; make class fun, attractive, motivating, and functional. Teacher applies certain strategies in class to make students hard working such as active learning, cognitive activation, and teacher directed instruction. Also, they present the lesson with no too much movement. They notice all the students all the time and are able to see the door from their seats. They arrange the class in a way to prevent chaos and irritating behaviors. They make their lessons pleasing and attractive by bringing aids and technology tools to lessons. They make classroom neat and organized by providing good models and examples to students. Psychologically they treat each student with respect and kindness. They reinforce some students at the end of the week for their good behaviors. They try to help students that they need for the help. They praise student's work in front of their classmates. They provide different learning experiences and opportunities to succeed as cooperative learning, small group classifications, and lectures. He uses humor to make class happy, with no pressure. He reinforces and motivates suitable and acceptable behaviors. He doesn't exaggerate issues to put student in embarrassed situation in front of his classmates Thus, he behaves fatherly with them.

Cognitive Activation Strategy

Klieme et al.,2009:4) elucidate that CA strategy refers to stimulating inner thinking of students to process information such as

raising questions in class, motivating them to reflect on problems, ask students to reflect their own procedures to solve complicated problems, and discover how students try to solve a problem and why they select that method.

Opfer (2016) presents that in the EFL classes teacher can present a number of key activities, items, or practices to reinforce and motivate high order thinking skills as creative thinking, problem solving and drawing conclusions. CA strategy enables students to build communication processes among themselves and with their teacher. The teacher can produce a summary of recently learned content. He encourages them in work in groups to find a good solution to the task or problem. This strategy has multidimensional. It focuses on the context they are applied. (CAS) signifies student's specific and general thinking strategy to improve successful learning by facilitating information processing. For academic success, the capability to utilize successful strategy is an essential skill.

This strategy could be applied to different tasks as in problem solving tasks. Montague (2011) emphasizes that (CAS) format: is as follows: Teacher (a) develop and activate background knowledge of students, (b)describe and discuss the content of the strategy, (c)model application of the strategy(d) support students' use of the strategy, (e)move students toward independent use of the strategy. This strategy has the effect on students' motivation toward learning. The teacher supplies practices until the students are able to master problem solving. (CAS)includes seven cognitive processes. They are read, paraphrase, visualize, hypothesize, estimate, compute and check. In this strategy, teacher explains and discusses why problem solving is essential to learners and the importance of becoming good solver of problem, therefore this strategy is used for identifying the goal of learning. Students are presented the routine and reached 100% mastery in these seven cognitive processes. Teacher draws a model through activating students to think of a problem using think- aloud process to show how the problem solved successfully. Students apply practices and become models for others (Montague, 2011). Teacher can use CAS with students either individually or small groups in classroom. This strategy applies in various academic domains and practices. It connects between successful strategy use and subsequent successful learning outcomes (Vaughn, 2011).

CA focuses on one of practices that assist the growth of students thinking. It searches for a cognitive way for what extent students are involved in lesson activities that activating their cognition (Kampen, 2019).

Teacher must choose CA strategy that is useful to students. Students focus on successful strategy to become independent across

situations and settings. That will reinforce them to use CA strategy appropriately. CAS considers the stimulating strategy. It is used to motivate students to learn language. It emphasizes on concepts and steps that are the most feasible for use in the classroom. CAS considers as an instructional agenda that teachers and students are expected to accomplish. It draws on stimulating students to learn English language. It depicts to primarily to the quality of students' cognitive engagement in a learning activity, but not the intensity of physical effort they devote to it. Brophy (2007) elucidates that CA considers a problem-solving strategy. This strategy makes students engage in meaningful and worthwhile lessons and tasks. They observe their classroom continually and answer the emerging problems before they get disruptive and when possible, they intervene in ways that do not disrupt lesson momentum or distract students who are working on assignments.

Moreover, CA strategy enriches learners to reverse a problem. It shows learners how to think for extended time. It helps students apply procedures to solve complicated problems. It provides problems in various contexts. It supplies many solutions to a problem. It enables learners to learn from their mistakes

Cognitive Activation Strategy and the Skills CA strategy is the vital teaching strategy that is positively connected with a number of skills such as reflection, collaborative learning, guided discovery, and problem solving:

Reflection

Shortage of reflection considers one of the major problems that faced learners in solving cognitive problems. When students offer a problem, they launch into it with a specific way or strategy, insisting with the strategy without returning. Students could be reflected their ideas in order to find solutions to the problem. Teachers stimulate and insist on students' reflection to a suitable solution to solve the problem (Grootenboer and Marshman, 2016).

Collaborative Learning

(CA) strategy provides learning opportunities for groups of students to collect information. Students themselves support and cooperate with each other, negotiate ideas and involve themselves in discussion. Teacher's role here is to manage these groups appropriately. Teacher can allow a kind of freedom in learning process to create a vital classroom climate where group discussion is fostered and in which students are required to clarify appropriate way of thinking and learn from their mistakes (Damsa, 2016). **Guided Discovery**

Here, the problem is familiar to teacher. He can encourage students to discover their learning. In learner centered method, students are

competing to solve problems. They are good discovery learners while the teacher is monitoring their discovery. This way of thinking is the most motivating students learning. It creates systematic classroom management and classy successful atmosphere (Grootenboer, 2016).

Problem Solving

It is a key for all complex skills. It means discovery new ways of intellect, habits and curiosity to be more confident in and out class. It is important for teachers to create a kind of challenges to build suitable experiences for solving problems (Burge, 2015). It is a plan of action which can be used to reach suitable solution. Also, it is a mental way to find solution to a problem. Teacher encourages students to be wonderful to have the capability to solve certain problems they face them successfully. This skill requires the faculty in identifying a local problem seeking appropriate generic material to be adapted and implementing the new solution (Mindmapper, 2020).

Processes Connected to Teaching CAS

Jitendra (2011) emphasizes that CAS creates an efficient learner. It focuses on flexibility. It depends on learners' needs, and their interests'. It builds an autonomous learner. It focuses on the following processes:

Read the problem or an obstacle. It refers to complex cognitive process that activating student's intellect to concatenate stock of textual knowledge. In this process, teacher stimulates students to comprehend the contextual meaning. He encourages them to draw inferences from the text. Comprehending what students have read rely on the way they activate their cognition. When they are reading profoundly, they produce correct sentences with sequential events.CA strategy focuses on the level of written material. Successful writes can identify and recognize what content they have read (Chen, 2017).

Paraphrase. It indicates that learners restate the meaning of a text using other words. It places the origin's statement in a paraphrasing form to make the context clearly appeared. It focuses on more detailed information than a summary therefore it is more preferred to be used in writing skill. It stimulates to reflect and take out the stock of input knowledge to access information related to CAS (Shardlow, 2014).

Methodology

Participants

The study included (80) participants. They were all second-year college students who were studying in the second semester of the academic year 2018 -2019 at Al –Sadiq University, college of Arts, department of English Language. They are male and female. Their age ranged from 20 to 24 years old. They had learnt English at school for at least eight years before they went to university. So, they had to

continue learning English as a compulsory subject at university. All participants were given explicit instructions. The instrument for data collection was testing students to write paragraphs in English.

Research Design

This study was using cognitive activation strategy as an innovative teaching trend to Iraqi EFL University students on paragraphs writing. Quasi experimental design was employed. The whole experiment was conducted in class. The instructional material has been selected for this study includes writing English paragraphs in Academic Writing by Zemack and Rumisek. The instructions started on 2/3/2019 and have finished in 16/5/2019. During two months and a half; the researcher taught the control group by traditional method. The experimental group was taught by using cognitive activation strategy. The data of the present study was obtained by using written test for students.

Data Collection

One method of data collection was used in this study which is posttest. The posttest was the instrument used to find out results. It includes a holistic scoring scheme (five components) of paragraphs writing. The material is taken from Zemach &Rumisek book entitled *Academic Writing*. The five components involve the following:

- 1-Choosing a topic (it focuses on size, level of difficulty).
- 2-Prewriting (it focuses on thesis statement, developing ideas, using description, consistent focus, narrowing the topic)
- 3-Organizing (it focuses on effectiveness of introduction, elaborating ideas, sequencing ideas, attributing information, outlining sentences).
- 4-Drafting (it focuses on installed introduction, topic sentence, essay unity, achieving coherence, cohesion, focusing accuracy (syntax, vocabulary, mechanics), and relevant concluding sentences).
- 5-Refining (it focuses on combining sentences, coordinating and subordinating ideas, using figurative language appropriately, using idiomatic English, and analysis and comment).

The posttest was presented to students. The approximate length of paragraph writing was 150 words (at least two paragraphs). Students had to pay attention to the structure of the paragraphs. To write successfully, their writings included the following structures: an introduction (topic sentence), supporting evidences, and concluding sentences. After presenting and explaining the idea of what have written clearly, students had to write and structure the paragraphs. Their writings are read and corrected by teacher. Their performance is assessed depending on a holistic scoring scheme.

Data Analyses and Scoring

This study was analyzed obtained data using CA strategy to test students' production for paragraphs writing. The posttest is divided into five main components. Each main component has sub components (items) as follows: a-choosing a topic (it focuses on size and level of difficulty), b-prewriting (it focuses on thesis statement, developing ideas using descriptions, consistent focus ,narrow the topic)c-organizing(it focuses on effectiveness of introduction, elaborating ideas, sequencing ideas, attributing information, outlining sentences),d-drafting(it focuses on installed introduction, topic sentences, essay unity, achieving coherence, cohesion, focusing ,mechanics), .vocabulary accuracy(syntax relevant concluding sentences e-refining(it focuses on combining sentences, coordinating and subordinating ideas, using figurative language appropriately, using idiomatic English, analysis and comment). Each of the five components of paragraphs writing has scores as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Holistic scoring scheme of writing posttest

Table 1 Housile scoring scheme of writing positesi				
Choosing a topic	Size, level of difficulty	2		
Prewriting	Thesis statement, developing	5		
	ideas, descriptions, consistent			
	focus, narrow the topic			
Organizing	Effectiveness of introduction,	5		
	elaborating ideas, sequencing			
	ideas, attributing information,			
	outlining sentences			
Drafting	Installed introduction, topic	9		
	sentences, essay unity,			
	coherence, cohesion, accuracy			
	(syntax, vocabulary, mechanics),			
concluding sentences				
Refining	Combining sentences,	5		
	coordinating &subordinating			
ideas, using figurative language,				
	using idiomatic English, analysis			
	and comment			
Tot		26		
al				

The total score of the writing posttest is 26.A score is assigned to any correct item and zero for incorrect one.

Results Related to Writing Posttest

The statistical treatment of the scores of the three groups of the study has shown that the mean score of the first experimental group is 43.41, while it is 45.77 for the second experimental group, and 28.34

for the control group. The standard deviations are 4.41, 5.91, and 6.19 respectively. Table 2 illustrates these values.

Table 2 *The mean scores and standard deviations of three groups on writing posttest*

Groups	Sample size	Mean	Standard
			Deviation
1 st experimental	30	43.41	4.41
2 nd experimental	30	45.76	5.91
Control	20	28.34	6.19
Total	80	117.52	16.52

To find out the significance of statistical differences among the three groups, (ANOVA) has been used as illustrated in Table3

Table 3 ANOVA for significance differences among groups

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Source of	Sum of	Degree	Mean	F-ratio	Level of
variance	squares	of	square		significance
		freedom			
Between	7203.413	2	3601.707		
groups				116.069	0.05
Within	3599.578	116	31.031		
groups					
Total	1080.991	118			

Table 3 illustrates that the computed F-ratio which is 116.06 is higher than the tabulated one which is 3.07 at 2,116 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences among the three groups on the writing posttest.

Scheffe test is used to identify the source of difference among the three groups on the writing posttest.

Table 4 Scheffe values for the comparison among the three

Groups	Mean difference	Critical scheffe
1^{st} exp. $/2^{\text{nd}}$	2.55	2.20
exp.	15.06	3.055
/Control		
2nd exp. /1st	2.3	2.20
exp.	17.42	3.55
/Control		
Control / 1st	15.06	
exp. /	17.42	3.55
2nd exp		

groups on the writing posttest

Table 4 shows that the comparison between the first experimental group and second experimental group, where the computed scheffe value for the difference between the mean scores of the first experimental group with control group which is 15.06 and for the second experimental group with control group which is 17.42. While scheffe critical value for the first and second experimental groups is 2.20 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the computed scheffe value for the difference between the mean scores of the first experimental group is higher than those of the second experimental group. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the first experimental group which is taught by CA strategy. The finding justifies the effect of this strategy as a classroom management strategy on EFL university students' posttest in writing. This finding indicates that there is a difference between the first and second experimental groups in favor of the first one. Therefore, teachers who are using the CA strategy are surprising to gain successful findings. From the findings analyzed previously, this study has investigated the effects of classroom management strategy on EFL college students in writing. With regard to the effects of this strategy, it was found that this strategy awarded a significant effect to EFL college students on writing at Al-Sadiq University. In the present study, the participants were followed the classroom instructions presented by teacher as precisely as possible. Also, the current study was analyzed the findings using statistical computation value of ANOVA. Applying this strategy assists students to create and write good articles accurately and creatively.

Conclusion

CAS has pointed as a cognitive strategy which is used by EFL teachers to enhance students' intellectual competency. It is one of cognitive strategies in ELT.It creates positive atmosphere to enhance students' thinking and reflection upon solving intellectual problems. So, CA strategy creates an opportunity to select successful solutions to get rid obstacles (Vieluf et al., 2012:15). Teaching CAS plays a fundamental role in cognitive development of learners by drawing opportunities to learn. Teachers must involve CAS in a wide educational discipline to enrich learners' experiences. Good teachers apply successful strategies to build the best classroom levels. researcher focuses on such teaching strategy and other skills essentially to build effective teaching and learning classroom environment. Cognitive Activation strategy is an innovative 21st century teaching strategy. It depicts a rational competency based on education for effective classroom lessons. It supports and facilitates successful academic teaching. It stimulates students to build communicative and cognitive constructions. Therefore, this strategy creates a supportive environment for the academic learning of students.

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المستخلص:

يعد التدريس من أصعب المهام. انه يتطلب معلم قائد لينشئ بيئة صفيه كفؤة. ولكي يكون الصف أكثر كفاءة، يتطلب ذلك من المعلم ان يستخدم إستراتيجيات صفيه تدريسية فعالة تعتمد على الكفاءة العقلية اساساً للتعليم لتحسين جودته. استراتيجيه التنشيط الفكري هي واحدة من إستراتيجيات التدريس في القرن الحادي والعشرين التي يستخدمها المعلم لتنشيط وتحفز أذهان المتعلمين. هده الإستراتيجية تخلق بيئة تعليمية ناجحة، حيث يمكن للطلاب فهم مجموعة من المعانى. أنها تمد المتعلمين بسلسه من الفرص والخبرات التعليمية التي تساهم في التعليم. وايضاً فالسلسلة تخلق بيئة تعليميه ناجحة حيث أن المتعلمين يستطيعون أن يتتبؤون بمدى واسع من المعانى. أذن فالمعلم الجيد يمكن أن يأخذ عدة ادوار في الصف الدراسي بما يتلاءم وحاجة المتعلمين له. ان هناك مجموعة من المهارات الفكرية وبالتالي يعتبر التدريس العملية التي يتوسط فيها شخص بين شخص اخر ومادة لتسهيل التعلم. الاستراتيجية واحدة من الاتجاهات الحديثة التي تبرز فيها دور المعلم. أن المعلم الكفوء بمد المتعلمين بإستراتيجيه عقليه من خلال عمليات التفكير وأشخالهم بها. وبذلك فالتدريس يعتبر كسلسلة تربوية حيث ان المتعلم يفكر او يتأمل بين الشخص الذي كتب النص والمحتوي للمادة التعليمية في هذا العالم ليفسر عملية التعليم. أن إستراتيجية التتشيط العقلي للمتعلمين سلسلة أو مجموعة خطوات تعلمية لتفسير وتسهل وتحفز المتعلمين لمفاهيم عقليه وتواصلية. لكي يؤدي المعلم هذه المهمة، يمكن أن يستعان بعدد من المهارات مثل التعليم التعاوني، التعليم بالاستكشاف وحل المشكلة تهدف الدراسة الحالية الي معرفة إثر إستراتيجية التشيط العقلي على تحصيل طلاب جامعة الصادق الاهلية في بغداد في مجال الكتابة عام ٢٠٢٠/٢٠١٩ ، المرحلة الثانية وتتألف العينة من (٨٠) طالبا تم اختيار مجموعتين تجريبية وواحدة ضابطة. استخدمت الدراسة تصميم شبه تجريبي. تم جمع البيانات من خلال اختبار بعدي. ظهرت الدراسة أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات ويرتكبون اخطاء في مهارة الكتابة، كما يحتاجون الى المزيد من التدريب للتخلص من هده المشاكل.