

Iraqi EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Using Scamper Strategy to Enhance their Reading Comprehension

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Abstract:

SCAMPER is a practical strategy often manipulated to stimulate creative thoughts. It was developed by Robert Eberle in 1996 and the acronym represents a series of thinking processes based on the notion that everything that is new is a change of something that is already in existence (Eberle, 2008). This paper aims at investigating the effect of using SCAMPER on enhancing reading comprehension. A survey questionnaire of two parts (language learning in general and reading strategy in particular) (based on previous studies) is designed and administered to a sample of 60 university students during the academic year 2019/2020. The students' responses to the questionnaire items reveal that the use of scamper has a positive effect on the students in reading comprehension.

Key words: SSCAMPER strategy, questionnaire, reading comprehension, Iraqi EFL learners .

استقصاء وجهات نظر الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية تجاه ستراتيجية سكامبر في تعزيز أستيعابهم القرائي

المستخلص

تعد سكامبر هي أستراتيجية عملية غالبا ما يتم أستخدامها لتحفيز الأفكار الأبداعية. لقد تم تطوير هذه الأستراتيجية من قبل روبرت أبريلي عام ١٩٩٦ و أن أختصار كلمة سكامبر SCAMPER يمثل سلسلة من العمليات الفكرية و التي تستند على فكرة أن كل شيء جديد قد تمخض أصلا من تغيير قد طرأ على شيء موجود .

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى أستقصاء الأثر من أستخدام هذه الأستراتيجية في تعزيز الأستيعاب القرائي. لقد تم تطبيق أستبانة على عينة من ٦٠ طالب و طالبة من طلبة المرحلة الرابعة قسم اللغة الانكليزية -كلية التربية ابن رشد للعلوم الانسانية خلال السنة الدراسية ٢٠١٩-٢٠٢٠ .

أظهرت نتائج الأداة أن أستخدام أستراتيجية سكامبر SCAMPER كان لها الأثر الأيجابي على الأستيعاب القرائي للعينة .
كلمات مفتاحية : أستراتيجية سكامبر, أستبانة , الأستيعاب القرائي ,الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية .

1. Introduction

Teachers are often observed to affirm the fact that Iraqi EFL students indeed face difficulties in reading comprehension, perhaps due to the methods they follow in teaching primary pupils. In addition, the difficulties are attributed to the limited exposure to the foreign language and that most of the pupils do not use the language outside the school. Another cause for this deficiency is linked to the poor reading skills the students possess which makes understanding reading passages and the learning of new vocabulary very challenging. Yet, a third cause is pertinent to the shortcoming of the little practice students have as they do not even do any outside

reading besides having a very limited knowledge of the meanings of the words constituting the reading passage.

Conceivably, the most important cause that hinders the students progress is their lack of interests in the material and that the students only strive for marks and nothing else. Most of the EFL teachers blame themselves, as they do not improve themselves, update their methods and strategies of teaching; they stick to the same outdated styles of teaching, and also, they do not acquaint themselves with new strategy that could potentially improve their pupils. They also blame the environment of the school (which is often not promising) from which those students had graduated from and the Ministry of Education as it does not provide an optimal learning environment that motivates and engages the learners in their learning processes.

In correlation with the above discussion, it becomes so necessary to adopt a new strategy for teaching primary school pupils reading comprehension, a task that the present paper tends to take the responsibility of applying SCAMPER strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension. In other words, integrating any strategy improving pupils' English in the classroom can enhance the learning experience, motivate the learners much more, and engage the pupils with the material. Hence, using SCAMPER strategy within English language lessons has been suggested, as it is believed that it would radically increase their acquisition capabilities of reading comprehension. Particularly, this paper intends to give an answer to the following research question:

- To what extent is the use of SCAMPER effective in reading comprehension?

2. Literature Review

There have been many programs that help in developing innovative thinking. One of these strategies is SCAMPER program. The present paper is an attempt to define, and describe its objectives and applications. This will entirely depend on what reference, which is “Special Guide to Scamper and its Games” written by Al-Husseini’s (2006), stated as follows:

2.1 Development of SCAMPER Strategy

Scamper strategy has developed on stages till it becomes in its present form. It started with Alex Osborne in 1963 when he proposed a list of ideas generation, which included the key words or sentences whose initial letters form the word SCAMPER to be a helpful strategy during brainstorming sessions.

Then, Richard de Miley in 1967, presented a book entitled “Put Your Mother on the Roof” which aimed to develop the imagination of young generations. After that, in 1977 Frank Williams and his colleagues presented, when he worked as a manager of the National Schools Project, a number of methods which helped children to be innovative. In short, these methods were based on two main dimensions, which are as follows:

- 1) The cognitive process (originality, flexibility, fluency, and a tendency to detail), and 2) the emotional or affective processes (curiosity, willingness to deal with risks, preference for complexity and intuition).

Then, Bob Eberle (1996) mixed all of those previous experiences and merged them with each other to build Scamper program, represented by Osborne's efforts, especially, the Ideas Generation List, where he defined each word in an accurate and procedural way, adding it to

Williams' methods; he had a model called scamper to develop innovative imagination. It is a three-dimensional cube. He also formulated games and activities according to De Meili's method in developing innovative imagination, so that he has the following (scientific model, practical method, activities). The first version of SCAMPER was released containing ten games. Then, another version, SCAMPER ON, was released which contained ten games as well. This program or strategy may have several editions, but the edition depended in the Arabization of the program and developing it into the Arabic language, was the last edition which was issued in 1996.

2.2 Definition of SCAMPER Strategy

The word SCAMPER means “starting, running and having fun like a child”. This word is a descriptive word that describes the process of searching cheerfully for the ideas for which the games are designed. This word is made up of the first letters of a group of words or sentences that form the word scamper, and these words are in a form of a list to generate exciting and original ideas. These words are:

- **S...UBSTITUTE**
- **C...OMBINE**
- **A...DAPT**
- **M...ODIFY**
- **P...PUT TO OTHER USES**
- **E...LIMINATE**
- **R...EVERSE**

2.3 Philosophy of SCAMPER Strategy

Due to the activities involved in attaining SCAMPER strategy, SCAMPER's philosophy is based on the following pillars:

-Firstly:

Training on imagination in a fun, playful manner and conducting mental treatment by “List Generating Ideas” contributes to the development of innovative imagination which, in turn, contributes to the development and promotion of innovation. This is achieved when trainees are exposed to SCAMPER program.

-Secondly:

There are two main trends in thinking learning; each has its bases and justifications.

The first trend focuses on the importance of programs and activities which aim to teach thinking independently of the regular curricula that it becomes an independent curriculum taught like any other subject in school.

The second trend is concerned with the importance of presenting these activities within the regular curriculum and within its content. In this regard, it can be said , in general, that SCAMPER program adopts the first trend.

-Thirdly:

There are two famous points of view in teaching thinking; each has its own bases and justifications. The first opinion emphasizes on the direct development of skills through training by shedding light on the skill which is to be developed. The second opinion adopts the integration of skills into a specific content or subject without

highlighting or announcing it, so that training is executed indirectly after placing it in different contexts. In this regard, we can say that Scamper program adopts the second opinion which supports presenting games and activities during training meetings.

-Fourthly:

There are several methods for teaching thinking and developing innovation. Scamper strategy adopts the following method:

1- Strategy of Pre-training procedures

1. The trainer must be proficient in the program enough to read the program's content and games deeply.
2. The venue for training meetings must be convenient and comfortable for the trainer and trainees alike.
3. In the first training meeting, the trainer should present a brief presentation about innovation and its importance, simplifying relative terms and concepts. Then, he quickly reviews the ideas generation list, Scamper.
4. The trainer must ensure that all trainees master the program instructions after explanation, and then practicing one of the training games.

2- Strategy of Training Procedures

1. The trainer presents the game title, and then offers a short intro or game introduction.
2. The trainer provides some educational aids and helping tools, such as pictures or figures according to the game to be played with the trainee.

3. The trainer asks the trainees if they have any questions in order to answer them.
4. He should be reminded of the program's instructions before starting the game, or resuming any part of it whenever the need arises.
5. The trainer should start to read the text of the game in an expressive way, and upon the completion of the game or one of its parts. He directs the trainees to the relevant activity card in the trainee's guide, to implement the applications.

3– Directing the Trainees during the Training Meeting is fulfilled through:

1. Direct training and supervision should be done by the trainer.
2. The trainer motivates the trainees to produce original ideas and practice innovative imagination by listening to and interacting with the texts of the games.
3. The trainer displays activity cards that help to convert these innovative ideas and fantasies into behaviors that can be monitored, and provide feedback about them.

4 - Creating Opportunities for Trainees to Train through Play, and Motivate them to Generalize the Acquired Experiences in Different Life Situations.

5- Target Group for SCAMPER Strategy

SCAMPER program targets a large group of society. The original program and in more than one place, the program's author Bob Eberl indicates that it is suitable for use starting with children.

3.4 Skills of SCAMPER

SCAMPER is teaching technique or strategy used to solve problems based on the list of questions stimulating ideas (Serrat, 2009:2). The seven skills derived from the term (Scamper) by combining the first letter of the name of each skill as illustrated in table (1) below:

Table (1): Meaning of SCAMPER Strategy

N	L	SCAMPER Strategy
1.	S	(Substitute - replacement) is to think about replacing part of the problem or product with something else, or the performance of the person to the role of someone else, or replace the idea of another alternative, and consider to alternatives that can be used, or to use something specific instead of something else to develop new ideas, and the possibility of changing things, places, procedures, people, and even emotions.
2.	C	Combine is to think about collecting two or more problems to produce a different product or process, or to group things together to be one thing, that one combination of two items gives us a new one that differs in its characteristics from the previous two .This has a great deal of creative thinking, which ensures the combination of previously unrelated ideas. Combining means synthesis two or more ideas in order to create something new or a different product, combining between two rules in English can be very helpful in making pupils able to master the rules being taught through becoming aware of the different uses of the specified rules.

		that differ from the original goal. Applying a teaching strategy in one context can be very helpful in helping pupils to accurately behave in other contexts. Pupils are supposed to reach the level of mastery in using the rules of present simple and present progressive tenses in different contexts; now the teacher will give pupils the opportunity for using brainstorming techniques.
6.	E	Eliminate is the elimination of inappropriate ideas by thinking about what might happen if a dispute arises from the particular idea, that is, to bring down the components during the process of cutting ideas, materials, processes, or something, The characteristics of something that dispenses with certain elements of something or an idea that produces ideas or a new situation.
7.	R	(Reverts: Turn or Reverse) of the problem or product or process is working on the opposite or thinking about what you can do if it is part degree, or make it in a position contrary to work in a different order, and here the object is turned or rotated with the aim of returning and organizing ideas. The logical sequence of the different elements involved in the teaching process is considered as a necessity. Sometimes, we need to reverse or rearrange the order of things to make them better to understand (Ederle, 1997; 40).

2.5 Creating New Ideas inside Classroom with SCAMPER's Strategy

The following steps have been summarized by Farj (2009: 18) to create new ideas when implementing SCAMPER Technique:

1. Identify the problem (topic) and discuss it: The teacher will share with the learners the problem or the desired product by collecting information and facts about the given problem. The problem is selected to ensure that all learners understand the problem, the audiovisual or selected means. Through such means, the trainer will make sure that everyone is familiar with it.
2. Re-crystallize and format the problem: In this step, the selected problem will be reformulated. So that solutions can be sought, and it can be used by means of documentaries, cartoons and illustrations on the problem.
3. Presentation of ideas and solutions: This step is the main part of the lesson and is based on the scheme presented to the learner using the provocative questions stimulated creativity to motivate them to think and stir up their talents and innovations, and make sure that it is not necessarily to use the Scamper all in one activity, but depends on the nature of the situation or problem.
4. Brainstorming and Evaluation: The teacher asks learners to choose the best solutions (such as originality, cost, applicability, social acceptance (Ederle, 2008:7-8).

5. The SCAMPER Strategy can be used in many areas. It offers a unique approach to the creation and development of new and useful products. It is a framework of organizational processes to understand problems and generate many different and unusual ideas.

2.6 Ways of Teaching Learners via SCAMPER

There are many ways than one can follow to teach learners through scamper, these are:

1. Generating creative ideas about a topic or issues that are presented to them.
2. Developing the skill of generating new ideas and raising curiosity and taking risks.
3. Activating their role in educational situations.
4. Developing the skill of thinking in general and productive thinking.
5. Developing their skills in raising different motivational questions.
6. Formatting positive attitudes towards science learning and study.
7. Developing imagination and especially creative imagination.
8. Providing them and teaching them to practice the methods of generating ideas contained in the Scamper strategy.

9. Building positive attitudes towards thinking, imagination, innovation and the process of learning and teaching.
10. Applying the insights gained in different life situations after presenting them in different contexts.
11. Utilizing the ideas of others through their development and construction (Eberle, 2008 : 3).

3. Methodology

Methodology in this paper involves three phases: population and sample selection, instrument (questionnaire) utilized for attaining the objectives of the study and research method (qualitative and quantitative) for detecting students' responses to the questionnaire.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this paper are Iraqi EFL University students .Specifically, they are (60) 4th year university students of the University of Baghdad, College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, Department of English.

3.2 Instrument

In order to gain information about the EFL pupils' opinions about using SCAMPER strategy and its impact on reading comprehension, a questionnaire (of two parts) has been constructed to be the main instrument.

3.3 Method

The research method utilized in this paper involves both qualitative and quantitative practice as the former is concerned with providing

exploration and description for the data collected in terms of correlating it with the aim stated at the start of the paper. The latter endeavours to account for the frequency of the answers made by the participants supported by numbers, percentages, tables and figures.

4. Pilot Study

After ensuring the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot version is administered to a sample of (20) EFL students, other than the actual sample, taken from same Department of English. Regarding the time allotted for answering the items, it has been found that pupils require (45) minutes to respond to the questionnaire items.

5. Validity & Reliability

Validity is accounted for in terms of exposing the items of the questionnaire to a jury of experts in ELT and linguistics. The members all agreed that the items are suitable and they can accomplish the researcher's aims. Reliability refers to how consistent evaluation results are from one measurement to another (Grolund, 1976:102). Using Alpha-Cronbach formula, the reliability of the questionnaire records 92%.

6. Scoring Scheme

Suitable and accurate scoring procedures should be adopted in order to get proper results to ensure objectivity and reliability (Harrocks & Schannover, 1968:76). In order to achieve aim of the study, the questionnaire is intended to be answered according to a three points scale (*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree*), as shown in table (2) below.

7. The Questionnaire

In order to collect data and according to the related literature and the two researchers' own knowledge and experience in the field of ELT , a two-part questionnaire has been designed to identify the students' opinions towards the application of SCAMPER in general and the application of SCAMPER and its influence on reading comprehension. The first part of the questionnaire involves 20 items surveying items related to teaching process while the second part includes 10 items particularized for showing the effect of using SCAMPER on reading comprehension as shown in table (2) below :

Table (2): Iraqi EFL Learners' Attitudes toward Using SCAMPER Strategy and its Impact on Reading Comprehension

Components and Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A) Scamper Method					
1. SCAMPER helps developing creative thinking skills.	13	25	14	3	5
2. SCAMPER helps developing critical thinking skills.	23	20	9	7	1
3. SCAMPER encourage finding solutions to problems.	34	10	13	3	0
4. SCAMPER aids me in becoming more active in the lecture.	32	15	5	8	0
5. SCAMPER should be applied in all learning stages.	33	15	5	4	3
6. I think SCAMPER may be too difficult for me.	11	10	39	8	0
7. I think SCAMPER expand my knowledge during the lecture.	25	20	8	7	0
8. I prefer to brainstorm ideas with my classmates using SCAMPER.	20	23	5	5	7

9. I find difficulty in understanding and using SCAMPER.	26	26	2	2	4
10. SCAMPER should be used in all kinds of fields in life, whether private or work.	4	1	5	9	41
11. SCAMPER should not be used as a teaching method.	44	12	3	0	1
12. SCAMPER challenges my way of thinking.	30	23	7	0	0
13. SCAMPER aided me in developing my vocabulary.	34	16	2	8	
14. SCAMPER taught me how to properly convey my thoughts.	26	26	4	2	2
15. I still am unsure about conveying my thoughts using SCAMPER.	5	4	45	4	2
16. SCAMPER makes me realise my weak points.	33	16	10	1	0
17. SCAMPER helps me work on my weak points.	32	18	8	1	1
18. I think my scores got better after using SCAMPER.	39	12	2	7	0
19. I do not like to discuss in class using SCAMPER.	2	5	2	25	26
20. SCAMPER aided me in reaching my goals as a pupil.	25	25	5	2	3
B) Reading Comprehension					
1.I take an interest in reading English texts and literary pieces.	25	16	8	6	5
2.My vocabulary increases when reading and translating English texts.	34	14	10	2	0
3.I find difficulty in reading and understanding English texts.	4	10	42	2	0

4.I like discussing the English text with my teacher and other Pupils.	30	22	2	6	0
5.I prefer to read the English text alone.	43	10	0	7	0
6.I am discouraged in reading the English text out loud.	45	5	7	3	0
7.I think discussing the text with other pupils helps me understand the text better.	19	34	2	5	0
8.I feel confident in my English skills when I try to answer the questions with other pupils.	33	7	20	0	0
9.The teacher's instruction is understandable.	9	7	40	2	2
10. I look forward to English reading comprehension classes.	33	23	4	0	0

8. Results and Discussion of Results

In order to identify and classify the effectiveness of SCAMPER on pupils' performance in reading comprehension, the collected data reveals that Iraqi EFL students mostly have tendency towards the implementation of SCAMPER in teaching EFL in general and in reading comprehension in particular.

A glance at **the first part** of the questionnaire in table 2 above reveals that those students strongly agree or agree to 17 items, they strongly disagree or disagree to 2 items to 2 items and they only express their doubtfulness about item no. 6. In other words students strongly approve or approve that SCAMPER if properly and suitably applied, it can help them develop creative and critical thinking skills, find solutions to problem they encountered , become more effective

in learning stages and in lecture activities and expand their knowledge in learning EFL. Yet, they affirm that they find difficulty in understating and using SCAMPER. Further, they agree or strongly agree that SCAMPER should be used as a teaching method as it challenges students' of thinking; it aids them in developing their vocabulary and conveying their thoughts more properly. SCAMPER helps them realize and work on their weak points, get better scores and finally reach their goals. They disagree or strongly disagree that SCAMPER should be used in all fields of life and that they could not discuss matters in class using SCAMPER. They are neutral to the idea that SCAMPER cannot easily be applied to language teaching.

For the **second part** of the questionnaire, it seems that students show preference or strong preference for the items found in the questionnaire. Put another way, they strongly agree or agree to 8 items. That is, with the application of SCAMPER, they express their favourite for reading texts alone in English and this may increase their vocabularies. They further like discussing texts with their teachers and other students to help them understand them, this in return makes them feel more confident to answer the questions directed to them; therefore, they look forward to reading English texts. Yet they are discouraged to read texts aloud. However, they are not sure (neutral) whether they find difficulty in reading and understanding English texts; they doubt whether the teachers' instruction is understandable.

9. Conclusions

With reference to the analysis of the two-part questionnaire in terms of the application of SCAMPER Strategy to enhance pupils' reading comprehension, the findings revealed that the use of SCAMPER has an encouraging effect on the pupils' ability in language learning and in reading comprehension in particular. Their replies on the items of

the questionnaire lead to the fact that they all have tendency towards the use of SCAMPER to develop their reading comprehension and to enhance their abilities in other activities (discussing texts with peers and reading for interest). All the steps followed in SCAMPER are promising in a way that they intend to help pupils to comprehend reading more enthusiastically and more efficiently. Due to SCAMPER's procedures, all students seem to be willing to learn and seem to be more active to accept information in classroom teaching. However, the following are further conclusions associated with the implementation of SCAMPER to enhance students' reading comprehension.

1. It has been found that the sample of the study had faced in dealing with implementing SCAMPER strategy based on their perspectives as well as those of their teachers' .Thus, it is of high importance to subject the students on some examples before asking them to proceed in with this strategy.
2. Actually, specific challenges have been encountered by the sample of this study regarding grammar accuracy, knowledge of a number of vocabulary, and pronunciation.
3. Other challenges concerning SCAMPER strategy is circulated around time management, lack of some visual aids as well as availability of some technical devices inside the classroom.
4. Devices such as LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) and OHP (Over Head Projector) had raised the students' efficiency in dealing with SCAMPER strategy .In other words , both devices saved efforts and time of the students that led to highly facilitate their pedagogic tasks .

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