

Enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners' Critical Thinking Using Parody-Integrated Teaching Strategy

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Abstract

Improving students' ability to think critically has long been a major focus of educational research (Rezaei, Derakhshan, & Bagherkazemi, 2011). One technique to encourage students to think critically is through the use of parody. It is the goal of this research to see if incorporating parody into EFL classrooms aids in developing students' ability to think critically in English. A total of 36 EFL students taking an Academic English course at UTHM were used as a research sample utilising the purposive sampling approach. It was the researcher who instructed them, and she implemented a parody-integrated language education technique during her semester-long course. Three times throughout the semester, students took the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) Level X. (beginning, middle and end). After going through the parody-integrated teaching technique, we wanted to see if their critical thinking had improved. The students' scores from the CCTT Level X were analysed using repeated measures ANOVA to see if there was a significant improvement in their critical thinking abilities. The effectiveness of the parody-integrated language education technique on the critical thinking skills of EFL students was demonstrated in the study's findings.

Keywords: parody, teaching-strategy, critical thinking, EFL, humor

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Introduction

The study's goal is to see if students' critical thinking skills may be improved through the use of parody. One of the most major and prominent research areas in education has been the development of critical thinking skills in (Ohta, 2005)

One of the methods for teaching critical thinking to students is to incorporate parody into the teaching and learning experience. The use of parody in education can be seen in a number of different ways. For example, (Ohta, 2005) asked students in his media education class to make parody-integrated programmes such as news broadcasts and ads, which they then aired on the air. Students were shown examples of newspaper articles, news broadcasts, and TV commercials before they started working on their own projects. The purpose of this exercise was to familiarise the students with a variety of media genres and the issues they cover. The original works were displayed to the students in order to familiarise them with the styles and formats that they could employ in their news and commercial assignments. During media creation activities, (Ohta, 2005) found that students displayed their ability to think critically and creatively. In addition, they were tasked with deciding how best to convey their information, both orally and nonverbally. Intriguingly, (Ohta, 2005) discovered that the students parodied the original news, topics, and TV advertising in their presentations. Additionally, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the process of creating the parodic content.

The use of parody in the classroom has also been used by language teachers to help pupils develop critical thinking abilities and improve their language ability. (Stange & Wyant, 1999) asked his undergrads to create a parody of a well-known work of literature. Students' work, according to (Stapleton, 2002) supports his argument that the parody-integrated approach to critical reading and writing is a novel method. Students of English at the graduate level heard from (Mack, 2009) about her experience in creating a parody-integrated assignment for composition theory and rhetorical theory classes. She firmly believed that by making fun of a certain theory or school of thought, they were able to improve their critical thinking skills. Students in Zhu's English class were given the task of parodying texts they had acquired after finishing a learning module in an effort to improve the quality of English language instruction and learning. He found that the students' motivation to study English has been boosted by the use of parody-integrated projects. Pupils in Berk's class were asked to create parody music as a way of incorporating music into the classroom and helping students study better. When it came to teaching English to young language learners, (Palinkas et al., 2015) used parody songs. The students were tasked with creating original compositions by remixing well-known tunes. Inexperienced authors could use the older editions as a guide for their own work. Paraphrasing: By emulating the style of more established writers, parody serves as a scaffold to help language learners build their own style of writing on their own. To help language learners establish their own writing style, parody poems based on the original work of (Bintz, 2011) might be used as an instructional approach known as 'copy shift' (Stapleton, 2002).

Students have been able to demonstrate their 'unique voice' through the use of parody writing, as shown in the aforementioned teaching and learning strategies. Students benefit immensely from these activities since the ability to think critically requires the development of one's "voice" (Palinkas et al., 2015). Students must be able to freely express their thoughts, whether orally or in writing, in order to demonstrate their critical thinking ability, as there is a strong correlation between critical thinking and voice (Stapleton, 2002). Students' ability to develop critical thinking skills can likely be aided by allowing them to express themselves hilariously through parody writing. Overtly written essays were found to improve students' critical thinking skills, according to Condon and (Floyd, 2011) who conducted the study. "Students need to have a safe and creative atmosphere in which to ponder out loud with new concepts—to try them in a no-fault zone before navigating more formal papers," says (Mackey, 1999) Through the use of parody-based activities and assignments, teachers can help students develop critical thinking skills while also improving their linguistic competence.

Not many EFL teachers have tried incorporating parody into their courses, despite the fact that it can help students improve their critical thinking and linguistic skills. Critical thinking activities in language classes are notoriously difficult, which could account for this. Another dilemma confronts the young men and women of today's universities. Additionally, students must use critical thinking in a language which is unfamiliar to them (Bintz, 2011). When it comes to teaching and learning English as a second language (ESL), (Brislin, 1980) warned that many ESL educators may

become disillusioned because of the difficulty in implementing and motivating non-native English speakers to participate in critical thinking strategies and activities within the classroom.

Two groups of English language learners were involved in the parody-integrated teaching and learning projects and study described previously. In the first group, students had to be English native speakers, while in the second group, ESL students had to be fluent speakers of the language. Using parody as a teaching tool, (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2010) postgraduate writing and rhetorical theories. Students in Bintz's survey of children's literature were given parody homework. Since 2011, (Zhao & Zhu, 2012) has incorporated parody into the rhetoric course he teaches at the upper-level undergraduate level. (Paquette & Rieg, 2008) on the other hand, found that using parody in an Advanced English course helped undergraduates majoring in English learn the language better. Research on EFL students is scarce, so we set out to evaluate whether or not parody-integrated tactics might enhance the critical thinking and linguistic proficiency of EFL students.

Methodology

Research design

EFL students' critical thinking and writing abilities were assessed using a time-series quasiexperimental method in this study. As a way of "assessing the impact of a discrete intervention on social process," Campbell and Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Campbell and Stanley (1966) first proposed this approach (Marczyk et al., 2010; Mihara, 2011), Meidinger, & Hay Jr., 1980: p. 10). Conventional diagrams of the experiment are based on Campbell-idea. Stanley's:

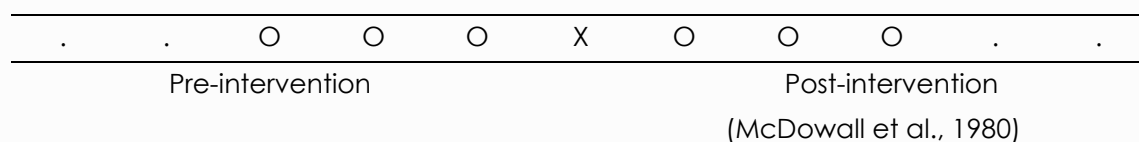


Fig 1: Quasi-experimental design

'O' stands for observations of one or more dependent variables, while 'X' stands for intervention action. There are many types of time-series experiments, but Glass, (Mack, 2009) referred to the above diagram as the most basic time-series experimental design. Pre-intervention and post-intervention observations are separated by this method. (Mihara, 2011) have offered a number of variants on this fundamental (Carrell, 1984; Cha & Kim) (Floyd, 2011; Guilherme & Dietz, 2015) 's single-group-multiple-I design was used in this study. "Successive introduction of two or more interventions into a process measured on a single experimental unit" is a general characteristic of the single-group-multiple-I design (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004; Duncum, 2009). According to these researchers, a "experimental unit" can refer to an individual, group of individuals, or even a sociopolitical unit. Interventions were implemented to a group of low-intermediate EFL students as an experimental unit in this study. EFL students' critical thinking and writing abilities were observed at the beginning of the semester by using this approach. In order to get a sense of the students' critical thinking and writing abilities prior to the first intervention period, this observation was conducted. It was noted a second time that the EFL students had received the initial intervention. The second intervention was then made. Following a second intervention, an evaluation of the students' critical thinking and writing abilities was carried out.

The design and flow of this research is summarized as follows:

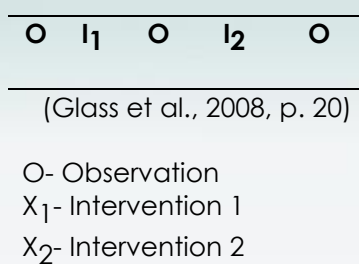


Figure 2: Single-Group-Multiple-I Design

Participants

Participation in this study was limited to 36 students from the UTHM's Parit Raja campus who were enrolled in the Academic English course. 30-40 students are typically in a single English lesson at this university. In educational research, (Cha & Kim; Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004; He, 2017) states that a sample size of 30 is adequate. Repeated measures data analysis was also utilised in this study's time-series design. Only 20 people are needed for a repeated measures study, whereas independent groups would require 20 participants for each condition.

The participants in the study were chosen using a process known as purposive sampling. In selecting individuals, homogeneity was the most important factor. Research that aims to describe a specific group in great detail use this criterion (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this study, a group of low-intermediate EFL learners were studied to see how a parody-integrated teaching technique affected them. UTHM students who scored at or below Band 3 on the Malaysian University English Test were invited to participate in the study (MUET). According to the Malaysian Examination (Stapleton, 2002) Description of Aggregated Score, these students fall under the 'Very Limited User' to 'Modest User' category. Random data sampling was not possible since the researcher was constrained in his selection of research samples. It was impossible for the researcher to select the volunteers in this quasi-experiment. For the semester, he was given the task of teaching a group of forty students who had signed up for the Academic English course. The researcher drew from this cohort to identify and select students who scored at or below Band 3 as research subjects.

Instruments

This study made use of a variety of tools. Students' critical thinking and writing abilities can be assessed using these tools. CCTT X and EFL student-written arguments were used in these assessments of critical thinking skills. In order to gauge the undergraduates' critical thinking skills, the researchers turned to the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) Level X. In order to create a standardised test, the CCTT was created by (Guilherme & Dietz, 2015; Rezaei et al., 2011) the process of rationally deciding what to believe and do" was taken from the researchers' conceptual description of critical thinking (Carrell, 1984). It was chosen for the study because its creators said it was a basic critical thinking test meant to gauge an individual's ability to think critically on a broad scale (Carrell, 1984). As low-intermediate English language learners, the test subjects' results could have been skewed by their inability to communicate effectively in English (Rezaei et al., 2011). Additionally, the EFL students who participated in the pilot study expressed their frustration with the English version of the CCTT, which they found difficult to comprehend. That is why we used Bahasa Malaysian for the translation of the CCTT Level X. Rashid and Hashim used a similar translated version in their Brislin's back-translation technique to translate the test (1980). Using a committee as a translator was another method employed (Cha & Kim; Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004). The participants' argumentative essays served as a secondary tool.

Data collection

The researcher taught UWB 10102 Academic English at UTHM for a semester in order to assist data

collecting. The Dean of the Faculty of Science, Technology, and Human Development, UTHM, received the application to teach the subject and undertake data collection in class. Classes were scheduled on Tuesdays from 8 to 11 a.m. for the researcher's benefit. The researcher had to develop materials based on parody because it wasn't already part of the course curriculum. Before and after the second observation, the parody-integrated teaching acted as interventions. As previously mentioned, the observations were conducted three times throughout the semester, once at the start, once in the middle, and once at the conclusion. Students were tested at each observation stage using the CCTT Level X. However, despite the usage of the translated version, the students were informed of the format of the test and the amount of time they were required to spend on each component of the test

Interventions

There were two stages of interventions throughout the research. During each intervention stage, parody-integrated strategy was applied in the teaching of Academic English to the EFL learners.

Intervention 1

Weeks two through six were dedicated to the first intervention. Pre-reading and reading activities served to introduce the students to the concept of parody. The pre-reading activities included watching parody video clips and listening to parody music snippets. They also had to exhibit some parody logos or brands and identify the issues that were brought up through the parody work by the students. In order for students to have a better understanding of the reading contents, the pre-reading stage is critical (Berk, 2008; Zhao & Zhu, 2012). They were introduced to the notion of parody, famous parodists like Weird Al Yankovic, and basic principles for creating parody work. Comprehension questions were also included in these reading materials.

Beginning in week four, students were instructed in the fundamentals of writing. A series of pre-writing activities exposed students to parody writing over the course of the course of these weeks. It's critical that students get a sense of what parody writing is like before they start creating it, just as they did before they started reading it (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004; Duncum, 2009). In the pre-writing activity, students used song lyrics to help them build literacy skills (Palinkas et al., 2015). This method of highlighting concerns that are normally talked about in the media, such as newspapers, was demonstrated to students through the use of songs. It was up to the students, with the help of parody song lyrics, to identify the concerns that were being referred to in the lyrics. They also compared and analysed the rhyme and rhythm of the parodies and the original music. This is critical, as students can't create a parody of the original if they don't comprehend the meaning and style of the original (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Other words and phrases used to highlight faults in the parody lyrics were also noted by the students. By filling in lyrics to parody songs with important words, they were able to work on their pronunciation and vocabulary.

Writing a parody fairy tale was another parody writing project. They were divided into groups and tasked with discussing a current issue with the other members of their group in order to assess it critically. Students' motivation could be boosted by critical debate of a popular topic in the classroom (Stapleton, 2002). Afterwards, the students discussed and debated the topic they had chosen. They were also asked to provide a list of words that were relevant to the subject. As a final challenge, each group was given a list of ten well-known English fairy tales and asked to read them all. To promote literacy, (Duncum, 2009) used parodying a fairy tale or short narrative, while (Floyd, 2011) used it in an EFL setting (2013). Students in this study were tasked with rewriting a fairy tale to spoof a current topic or piece of popular culture. The students were also taught how to use

Google Drive in order to support the group writing project. After class, they were able to continue working on the tale together since most of them lived in separate dorms. Week seven was the final week before the students went home for the mid-semester break, therefore the second observation was conducted then as well.

Intervention 2

Weeks eight through eighteen were dedicated to the second intervention. Writing skills were still emphasised, but they were joined by lessons on how to listen and speak. According to the course outline, this period of time was reserved for teaching the two skills at this point in the semester. Learning how to listen was the focus of Weeks 8 and 9. A parody-integrated listening material was used during this time. As they listened to the material, students were only required to fill in cloze passages. In the MUET Listening Component, you may be asked to fill in a cloze passage or write a brief response to the question. Information transfer, short answer, four-option multiple choice, and three-option multiple are all included in the component. Tenth through thirteenth were reserved for teaching speaking skills. In the parody-integrated speaking skill assignment, students were required to conduct parody news reporting verbally. Pre-activity assignments included reading current events in newspapers and other news sites. The utilisation of current events reports in language classes is not uncommon among ESL professionals. (Berk, 2008). The inclusion of news items in a language lesson can immediately increase the level of student interest in the material (Palinkas et al., 2015). This is due to the fact that the students are exposed to publications and news items from all around the world. Authentic news articles help students acquire a wide range of vocabulary and sentence styles. Formal and content schemas are two types of background knowledge or schema that (Carrell, 1984) categorised these exposures into An understanding of a genre's format or presentation is known as a formal schema. Content schema, on the other hand, gives information on the content of news. The learners were also introduced to a number of parody news portals and video clips on the Internet in order to give them with a formal schema for parody news writing and presentation.

Based on the pedagogy developed by (Berk, 2008) the parody news producing activities were In the beginning, the students were divided into groups and instructed to select and study different newspaper stories. Instructed to pay attention to the content and presentation of the news, they were informed. People's views and commentary on the issues also prompted the students to search for them. Students were able to better comprehend criticisms of the issues they were studying by analysing these examples. A parody news site was used in the second round of the experiment. In the same way as in the last task, the students were asked to identify the primary point of the spoof pieces. They also looked at the article's use of spoof news and how it was presented. In the next round, the students were tasked with creating their own parody news stories. As a starting point, the EFL students were given some news headlines that they may turn into parodies. A similar practise was devised by (Marczyk et al., 2010). who asked his students to write parodies on a variety of issues. Students at the university parodied news from around the country and the world in this project. After completing the parody activity, the students next turned the headline into spoof news stories. The students used a news item as a basis for their spoof news when writing the piece.

Data Analysis

The Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCT) scores were analysed using rANOVA (CCTT). rANOVA was used in this study because the same subjects were participated in all of the experimental conditions A total of three distinct observations were made of the low-intermediate EFL students when the results of the critical thinking exams were computed. rANOVA allowed the researcher to compare the critical thinking skills of the same set of learners at three different points in time.

Because the researcher was able to eliminate individual differences if two people were utilised in the observations, repeated-measures provided another benefit IQ, ability, age, and other relevant factors remained constant in repeated-measures since the same people participated in each condition (Guilherme & Dietz, 2015).

Results and Discussion

CCTT Level X students' critical thinking skills were assessed by doing a repeated measure ANOVA on their total results. The analysis was performed on the total critical thinking score for each of the three exams that were administered. Test 2 (Mean = 42.8) comes in second place, followed by Test 3 (Mean = 38.7) in Figure 3.

Total Critical Thinking	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	38.667	1.050	36.534	40.799
2	41.778	.934	39.881	43.675
3	42.694	1.135	40.390	44.999

Fig. 3: Mean scores of total score of critical thinking

Analysis of the means for the overall critical thinking scores of EFL learners was carried out to see if there was a significant difference between the means.

Measure: MEASURE_1							
Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
TotalCritical Thinking	.728	10.813	2	.004	.786	.816	.500

Fig. 4: Test of Critical Thinking Skill Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for Total Score

Mauchly's critical thinking test results are shown in Fig. 4, with the total score for critical thinking. $\chi^2(2) = 10.813, p = 0.004$ indicates that the sphericity assumption for the CCTT Level X total score was broken. This signifies that the discrepancies between two total critical thinking skill scores were not equal. Using estimations of sphericity from Huynh-Feldt ($\epsilon = 196.5$), the degrees of freedom were corrected. We used Huynh-Feldt since the epsilon value was greater than 0.75" (Field, 2009). It can be shown in Figure 5 that the overall scores of the CCTT Level X differed significantly from one another ($F(1.63-57.15) = 9.26, p = 0.01$). In light of these findings, it may be assumed that the overall critical thinking of the EFL learners has significantly improved over time. Parody-integrated teaching is shown to have a major impact on students' critical thinking.

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total Critical Thinking	Sphericity Assumed	320.907	2	160.454	9.264	.000
	GreenHouse Geisser	320.907	1.572	204.165	9.264	.001
	Huynh-Feldt	320.907	1.633	196.526	9.264	.001
	Lower bound	320.907	1.000	320.907	9.264	.004
(Error) Total Critical Thinking	Sphericity Assumed	1212.426	70	17.320		
	Greenhouse Geisser	1212.426	55.013	22.039		
	Huynh-Feldt	1212.426	57.151	21.214		
	Lower bound	1212.426	35.000	34.641		

Figure 5: Test of Within Subjects

Huynh-Feldt tests showed that the total scores differed significantly, thus a post-hoc analysis was performed. This was done to see which test had the greatest improvement in results (Marczyk et al., 2010). Bonferroni tests were performed on all available pairwise comparisons. Analyzing all pairs of means to determine which pair has a statistically significant difference is known as "pairwise comparison" (Condon & Kelly-Riley, 2004).

There were statistically significant differences between Test 1 and Test 2 ($p=0.04$) and between Test 1 and Test 2 and 3 ($p = 0.06$), according to Fig. 6. Test 2 and Test 3 were determined to be statistically indistinguishable ($p = 0.769$). This means that CCTT Level X's overall total score improved dramatically in Exam 2 and 3 when compared to the total score in the first test. However, as compared to the overall critical thinking score in Test 2, there was no significant improvement in Test 3's total critical thinking score.

(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
Total Critical Thinking	Total Critical Thinking				Lower bound	Upper bound
1	2	-3.111*	.895	.004	-5.362	-.860
	3	-4.028*	1.206	.006	-7.061	-.995
2	1	3.111*	.895	.004	.860	5.362
	3	-.917	.794	.769	-2.914	1.080
3	1	4.028*	1.206	.006	.995	7.061
	2	.917	.794	.769	-1.080	2.914

Figure 6: Pairwise comparisons

Conclusion

Generally, it can be concluded that, parody-integrated teaching strategy has significantly improved the EFL learners' critical thinking skill. The effectiveness of the strategy in enhancing critical thinking echoes similar findings by (Berk, 2008; Mackey, 1999). While the previous research focused on native speakers of English and second language learners, this study has shown that parody can also enhance critical thinking skill of EFL students. Despite the fear that EFL learners may struggle with the English language that is foreign to them (Floyd, 2011; Stroupe, 2006), the students seemed to have benefitted from the parody-integrated strategy as their critical thinking skill has significantly enhanced. In the parody-integrated teaching strategy, the learners were assigned to change or modify original work. The lyric of the YMCA song for an instance was modified so that the new lyric would be about motivating MUET candidates to take the exam. Thus, the EFL learners had to critically read and find precise words and phrases that would make the new lyric to have a completely new content and message. Furthermore, the parody-integrated also provided opportunity to work in a comfortable, safe and playful zone provided by the strategy (Mack, 2009). Parodying content from popular media such as TV programs and newspaper articles (Ohta, 2005) and songs (Berk, 2008) motivate the learners and create the positive environment as they work on resources that are familiar to them. The learners also do not have to produce from nothing as they have the original work that serves as a guide in their learning. This is in tandem with Paquette and Rieg (2008) who proposed that parody task functions as a scaffold to language learners in learning sentence structures

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