

Utilizing Round-table Strategy in Teaching Speaking

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Nowadays, teaching English has departed from employing the classical method of teaching into the wide range of teaching and learning activities provided by current modern teaching approaches such as cooperative learning in which learners work in small inside classroom .The present study aims at utilizing Round-table strategy ,as one of the cooperative learning approach or technique , in teaching speaking and the effect it bring to this productive activity. The participants of this paper is 2nd stage English language students at 'University of Baghdad', College of Education for Humanities - (Ibn Rushd).The instrument utilized is A close-end test. Results show that CL is an excellent teaching approach because it allows students to think climactically without depending on you for answers .

Key Terms : Round-table Strategy , Teaching Speaking

1.1 Introduction

Cooperative learning represents one of the effective techniques of education adopted to construct activities in classrooms into social and academic experiences. That is, the cooperative approach is based on the theory which suggests that learning is deemed as a social act where members participating in an activity talk to one another. Therefore, such an approach cannot be regarded as the easiest method to follow, that it can reactivate both students and teachers through preparing a structured setting to share some of the accountability for learning. Thus, students can acquire more information, getting entertained, and developing some more skills, like knowing the way in which they work with each other. Meanwhile, Instructors have to establish the ground and structures of learning to teach their students about such a new method and roundtable is one of the approaches to cooperative learning, which represents a sort of academic discussion. With this approach, equal rights are allocated for each individual to participate, owing to the circular layout normally employed in roundtable technique. Also, round table technique means each member of the team write an answer on a piece of paper which is passed around the table. Such an approach is very efficient with activities such as brainstorming and imaginative writing. It requires the participation of each student in group, and secures that students are sharing their ideas (i.e. every team number actively participates and shares their ideas).

1.2. Aim To find out the impact of Roundtable strategy on Iraqi EL students' Achievement.

1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 Teaching Speaking

It is Important to note that the speaking skill , among the other three ones, seems intuitively the most important one .That is, "people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers ' of that language , as if speaking included all kinds of knowing (Ur, 2012 : 117).In any language course , teachers usually introduce classrooms activities whose main goal is to develop students' ability to express themselves through speech .Thus , those activities are considered an important component of such a course .Mostly ,students seek to improve their fluency in formal conversational interaction .This really seems to be the primary aim .

Generally speaking, Ur (ibid.) sets two main goals for teaching speaking as:

-Students should actually talk a lot .

-The language used should be of an acceptable level .

For language teachers , namely EFL/ESL teachers , Ur (ibid.: 118-119) introduces practical principles for the design of speaking activities :

-Use Group or Pair Work :

This will increase the amount of talk among students and it supports and encourages each other to create a relax and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, taking their direction from the teacher (Thanasoulas, 2002:2).

-Base the Activity on easy Language :

Here, the teacher is recommended to use a level of language lower than that lower than this used in intensive language –learning activities inside the classroom .

-Make A Careful Choice of Topic and Task to Stimulate Interest :

Selecting a topic is the first priority of the teacher ,since the more the interesting the topic , the more the clearer the purpose of interaction will be .

-Make Students Aware of the Purpose of the Activity and Conditions for its Success :

This principle is essential in oral interaction in groups .Thus, "Students need to understand how important it is to talk a lot ,to make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak"(Ur : 119).

On the other hand , Ur (ibd.:119-120) puts some practical tips for teaching speaking inside classroom :

- Discussion Leaders :

This entails nominating one of the group to a discussion leader so as to allow everyone to take his/her own chance to participate.

- L1Monitors :

This tip includes inviting one member of the group (other than discussion leader) to act as monitor for each group whose main job is to tell the teacher about the L1 use and for other students to be more careful in using the foreign language .

- Pair Work :

This technique is actually more easier to organize than group work which involves only to turn to partner's face .

- Correcting Errors :

Practically speaking, this technique should be focused on errors only rarely committed by the students during oral fluency .

- Feedback :

This tip is mainly concerned with asking students to post their results either on a class website or on the classroom noticeboard .

1.4 Nature of Cooperative Learning (CL)

CL represents a method of teaching which "makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 192).

CL, according to Larsen-Freeman (2000) is seen as an approach where learners in class learn from one another in group works. Larsen-Freeman(2000:164) emphasizes the idea that the way teachers and learners in-group work gets activities cooperative not only the group configuration. She adds that "in cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively" .

CL is group-learning activity structured so that the act of learning is based on the "socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others" (Kagan,1991:8).

1.4.1 Cooperative Learning as An Approach

According to Slavin (1995 : 15), CL differs from a group-work activity, where she defines it as "structuring positive interdependence". Students are required to use in-group work to accomplish their tasks jointly towards academic objectives. Students who work in a comparative way take advantage of each other's competence and resources, (inquiring information from one another, assessing each other's ideas, and observing each other's work, etc.), which is not the case for learning individually that can be competitive in nature. Also, the role of the teacher alters from information-giving to assisting the progress of students' learning. An individual's success relies on the group's success (ibid.).

CL is a technique to working in groups being proven as efficient at differen educational levels, namely elementary and secondary (Ellis, 2002; Johnson and Johnson, 2002). CL generally necessitates that joint-ability student's act as a group in order to achieve a number of tasks. The size of the CL group diverges according to the goal to be reached. In general, cooperative groups are given considerable autonomy. Team members are given a considerable space of freedom to the extent that they can decide the way in dealing with the task assigned. Students are sometimes assigned roles and responsibilities by some instructors to be encouraged to work in a cooperative and full participation. Advantages associated with CL include:

- (1) Accomplishing higher academic outcome when compared to that of other ordinarily adopted methods.
 - (2) Developing better relationships among students.
 - (3) Increase in on-task time.
 - (4) Developing good attitudes of a student towards the class and subjects
- (Moore, 2000: 151-2) .

Successful CL tasks, according to Ross and Smyth (1995), are considered as intellectually-demanding, productive, open-ended, and involving tasks of higher-order thinking. In this image of a lesson,

the most important thing is the dynamic relationship among students, or between students and teacher. A lesson is “something which primarily involves cooperative social interaction, and which promotes the participation of all members of the class” (Ur, 1996: 15).

The concept of ‘cooperation’ means acting collectively to achieve common tasks. Persons, within cooperative settings, pursue results which are advantageous to them and for all the group’s participants. CL is the didactic implementation of small number of individuals jointly in a way that enable students to work collectively to boost their one another’s learning. this may be compared with competitive (where students against each other to achieve an academic goal like a grade of "A" where only a student or a few can get) and individualistic learning (an individual student works by himself to achieve learning goals away from other students’ goals). Teachers, with CL and individual learning, assess efforts of students on a “criteria-referenced basis”. In competitive learning on the other hand, teachers evaluate learners depending on the “norm-reference basis”. While there are “limitations on when and where the teacher may use competitive and individualistic learning appropriately, one may structure any learning task in any subject area with any curriculum cooperatively” (Johnson and Johnson, 2004:3).

Students, in CL, are required to assist, argue and discuss with one another, evaluate one another’s information, and bridge gaps in one another’s knowledge (Slavin, 1995:72).

First of all, cooperative learning represents an exemplary way in enhancing learners’ inspiration level and boosting their engagement in the process of learning. According to Loftus and Marshal (2003: 603), “people learn better when they learn together”. Johnson and Johnson (2000:1) argue that, “cooperative learning exists when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals”.

Cooper, et al. (2002: 2) point out that “Johnson Dewey who emphasized that education is a means for teaching people to live cooperatively in a social democracy, may be traced as the roots of CL”. Dumas (2002: 1) claims that “CL methods provide teachers with effective ways to respond to diverse students by promoting academic achievement and cross- cultural understanding.”

Cooperative learning "from a student centered philosophy by encouraging students to “take responsibility for their learning by involving students throughout the class and encouraging their collaboration in-group efforts outside of class” (Jacobs, 2004:3, 4). A teacher acts as a means and organizer instead of being a professional, which does not mean a teacher’s passive role. Cooperative learning needs on the part of the teacher a lot of preparation and planning in order to enhance the activity that can assist and instruct learners by means of the curriculum (Flowers and Ritz, 1994:16-17).

The idea of cooperative learning rests in the fact that members of a class are structured within groups of few members after the teacher giving them instructions. Afterwards, students, through the task, work till all the participants of the organization well comprehend and finish it (Blasco and Burrio, 1999:2).

In comparing CL to tradition learning (TL) one can conclude that the latter is deemed as “a banking model”. The teacher regards herself to be experienced (Ventimiglia, 1993: 7). The difference between the two is illustrated in Table(1) below :

**Table(1)
Comparing CL to TL**

Groups of CL	TL
Positive inter-dependence	No inter-dependence
Individual accountability	No individual accountability
Membership: Heterogeneous	Membership: Homogeneous
Shared leadership	One appointed leader
Shared responsibility	Separate responsibility

Task and maintenance emphasized	Only task emphasized
Directly-taught social skills	Social skills assumed or ignored
Teacher observes and intervenes	Teacher ignores groups
Group processing occurs	No group processing

Pupils who do not master the competence needed will not get embarrassed as cooperative learning can encourage them to discuss methods of solving problems that successfully act with instinctively structured groups (Paulson and Faust, 2002: 6).

In the atmospheres of cooperative learning classroom,” the students feel safe, and respectful; their questioning process becomes more open and honest” (Ventimiglia, 1993: 25).

It has been suggested that there is a four-element set of active learning presented as the pupils involve with one another in discussion (Rosseti and Nembhard, 1998: 68). They are required to understand what they are about to commence upon and this results in effective learning to act successfully, as illustrated in Figure (1).

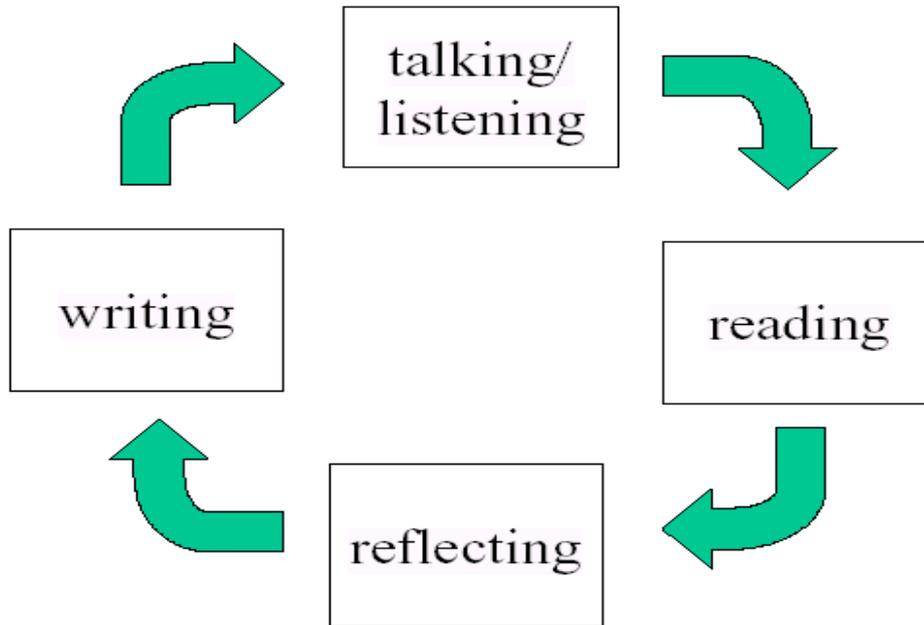


Figure (1)

Four Major Elements of Active Learning

1.5 Round Table Definitions and Its Concept

At first, Kagan (1991:135) defined a Round table as a “good cooperative structure and interactive activity to practice vocabulary, grammar, or even content. Students pass a paper around, adding an item according to the criteria you designate”. According to this strategy:

1. The class is divided into groups or rows.
2. For each group, a piece of paper is prepared, with the target language or on-top question.
3. The groups adopt the cooperative-structure Round table to alter vocabularies or phrases for the word underscored, or adding phrases or vocabularies to a list.

In this technique, each individual will write an answer on a paper the students pass around a table. Kagan (1989:12-15) adds that ‘round table’ is “highly effective with creative writing and brainstorming activities. This structure encourages responsibility for the group and team building”.

On the other hand, Jette and Peter (2011:40-45) define that round-table is seen as a method being appropriate for reviewing, brainstorming, or a skill-practicing. Both of them agree with Kagan that, for each team, pupils use a pen and one piece of paper. In each group, students will respond to a question or problem in turn through telling ideas in a loud voice just like they are written on the paper.

Also, Roundtable or Rally Table is defined in many studies as simple CL organizations containing a lot of material, developing team-spirit, and incorporating writing. The round-table comprises three steps to it; the teacher, in the first step, raise a multiple-answer question. In the next step, in each team, the first student will write a single answer on a piece of paper then pass it to the following student anticlockwise. In the third step, the groups of the highest correct-response number attain some sort of recognition. Such a sort of CL can effortlessly be employed in the classroom of science. For instance, at the end the teacher will reward the team with the best replies written down.

(Example: A picture is displayed by the teacher who then asks “what are various food chains found within the ecosystem of the picture”. One member of the group will write “a food chain” on a sheet of paper and pass it to other team students to write what they see of a food chain in the illustration. The team members goes on in passing the paper around till the teacher order them to stop the activity or till the team exhaust their replies) (Internet reference).

1.5.1 Round Table Technique (RTT)

Round Table Technique can be defined as a CL approach that stimulates students to work in a small team collectively through holding a turn in a round table. Collaborative learning itself explains a broader concept that covers all types of group work including that the teacher led or directed (Suprijono, 2000: 48).

Meanwhile, Felder and Brent argue that “Cooperative learning (CL) as referring to students working in teams on an assignment or project under conditions in which certain criteria are satisfied, including that the team members be held individually accountable for the complete content of the assignment or project”(Felder, and Brent ,2014 : 1)

Accordingly, it is inferred that CL is one of the organized learning activity which emphasizes student's group work in a heterogenic team that can give positive dependence so that it can elicit responsibility among members in a group. In cooperative CL, it is more students centered rather than teacher centered. In other word, students are stressed to be active and productive, rather than passive and receptive. Suprijono (ibid.) argues that CL is not similar to teamwork. Some aspects of collaborative learning distinguish it from another teamwork. Those elements are described by Roger and David cited by Suprijono (ibid.) as follows :

a. Positive inter-dependence

Team members are bound to rely on each other in order to fulfill the objective. If any member of the team misses doing his/her part, everyone faces the consequences.

b. Personal responsibility or ‘individual accountability’

Every student in a group is accountable work and to control all the learned material.

c. Face-to-face promoted Interaction

Though a part of the team work can be individually made, other should be interactively made, with students in the team giving feedback to each other, as well as disputing thinking and conclusion, most importantly, encouraging and teaching each other.

d. Interpersonal skill

Students in this activity can be motivated and assisted to build and attempt, leadership, trust-developing, communication, skills of conflict management and decision-taking.

e. Group processing

Members of the team put group objectives, periodically assess their work as a group, and recognize differences that will help them work more rigorously later.

In line with Suprijono, Felder and Brent argue that CL is not only an equivalent for students who work in teams. Learning exercises can qualify when collaborative learning in that the 5 elements shown earlier are given.

Felder with Brent state:

“As a teamwork cooperative learning can be used and applied in any types of assignment and skills because cooperative learning can give many benefits in the learning process. Some of the

cooperative learning benefits that taught students tend to exhibit higher academic achievement, greater persistence through graduation, better high-level reasoning and critical thinking skills, more in-depth understanding of learned material, more significant time on task and less disruptive behavior in class, lower levels of anxiety and stress, higher intrinsic motivation to learn and achieve, more exceptional ability to view situations from others perspectives, more positive and supportive relationships with peers, more positive attitudes toward subject areas, and higher self-esteem. Another nontrivial benefit for instructors is that when assignments are done in cooperation, the number of papers that are graded decreases by a factor of three or four.” (ibid.: 20).

From what is stated above, it can be noticed that a lot of methods in CL are available which could be used in order to assess the performance of students, some are “a jigsaw”, “think-pair-share”, “peer editing”, “peer-led team learning”, “problem sets”, etc. Round Table is one of those CL techniques which are applied in teaching speaking.

Kagan argues that the “Round Table Technique” is a CL approach that the pupils participate in forming responses, solving problems, or contribute to the project and sit in a round table (Kagan and Kagan, 2009,: 34) . Mccafferty cited by Ratnasari in and in line with Kagan argues that “Round Table Technique” is an approach used to allow each team member to participate and sit within the circle or take turn to make a round table (Ratnasari ,2016 :5).

1.5.2 Steps of Round Table Technique

The ‘Round Table Technique’ is designed for teaching writing, but in practice, it could be developed to teach many types of subjects and skills. According to Kagan, the steps of Round Table Technique are:

1. The teacher puts subjects or questions and allocates time for thinking.
2. All four members of the group react at the same time in, drawing, writing, or building somethings with manipulative.
3. Teachers devise time, or when members have ended the problem, they place thumbs up.
4. Group members pass projects or papers clockwise.
5. They go on, to add to what has been finished.
6. Go on , beginning with the third step. (Opcit. Kagan,:6.34)

Moreover, Kagan described that in a team of Round Table Technique, the student responds to his /her sheet of paper. Then team members deliver papers clockwise for every colleague adds to previous answers. Meanwhile, according to Lie, the Round Table Technique steps are;

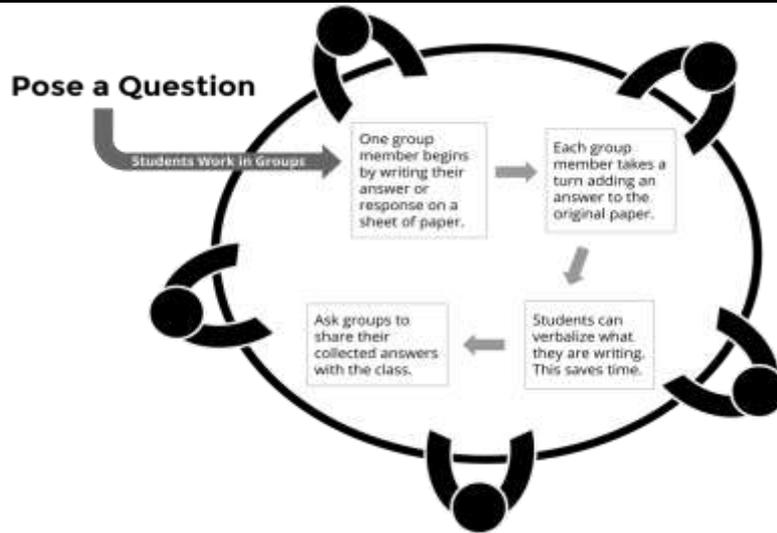
- a) One student in each group begins by giving views and thoughts on the task at hand;
- b) The next student has also contributed;
- c) Speaking can turn clockwise.

1.5.3 Steps of ‘Round Table Technique’ in Teaching-Speaking

1. The teacher put the students in groups where each group contains 4-6 students.
2. Every student sits within a group around the table and in a small circle.
3. Each group chooses one story that is given by the teacher.
4. Every member of the group starts telling a story by turns. It is arranging with the member collaboration.
5. In every group, a student can start to tell a story, and the following student also contributes from the first student and continue to other students.
6. Speaking can start in one direction like clockwise.

Harms and Mayers (2013 : 44) researched by using Round Table Technique to teach speaking and describe Round Table Technique as a “student-led approach to presentations .individually. Round of small groups with five students and every student with a specific role. The students rotate these roles throughout the semester that allow them to practice every part” (ibid.).

Figure (2) Roundtable steps



(Popescu, 2015:45)

1.5.4 The Value of Roundtables and Roundtable Discussion Questions

Roundtable environment permits for input from many experts with varying point of views and produces new thinking that challenges existing best practices. Although today's best practices for digital publishing and marketing are very different than those of just five years ago.

In fact , Roundtable is not just about getting your questions answered. The point of a roundtable is to speak with moderate, who are often experts and consults with broad knowledge, and listen to what other attendees have to share. Also there is a solid opportunity that at least one person in the class has experienced the same problem you face, and has solved it. May be some have found different solutions to your problem, which perhaps more or less suit for you.

There is another focal point of the moderation and attendance to round-tables is that teachers get unexpected very important knowledge, and she gets about difficulties which she has not yet encountered, but may in future. Though she might not be concious such a matter yet, knowing from other experts solutions can assist her to plan in an appropriate way.

Moreover, attempting to make a comparison to roundtable is just like when one compares bananas and cucumbers where these have a nutritional value, still they are dissimilar in terms of taste.

Also, as the teacher moderates a roundtable, he/she lays back facilitating responses from the audiences. He/she introduces any untold advice or breaks myths if necessary. Besides, he/she directs the interaction apart of any third party considerations which maybe lose the fairness of the solution and problem, that in translation something is likely to be lost. Finally, a significant thing should be recollected which is, within a roundtable, everybody in presences is going to be given certain consultation level, because they will get knowledge from the moderators and the shareholders as well.

(Nicholas,2018:online)

1.5.5 Small Group Discussion Technique

What distinguishes this strategy is the application of small groupdiscussion technique .In this sense , Kindsvatter (1996:242) claims "A small-group discussion dividing the large classroom into small groups of students to achieve specific objectives permits students to assume more responsibility for their learning, develop social and leadership skills and become involved in an alternative instructional approach". Gulley, (as cited in Hastoyo ,2010 : 33) states that "a group is more than a collection of individuals gathered in one place". Gulley goes on claiming that "the accomplishment of the group duties has required interaction". According to Hoover, (cited in Honang, 2015), "the discussion is the process of discussing matters over among persons, preferably face to face". He adds that "the ideal total discussion process is the collaborative effort where individuals work together as a group, thought orally, to some group aims. Risk states that discussion indicates thoughtful consideration of the topic or problem under study" (Honang :2015: 27).

Consequently, it is small group discussion technique which consists of two or sometimes more members in a small team to orally exchange ideas and accomplish an outcome in a group work, and, for

their learning, they can take more responsibilities, build social skills and leadership and engaged in an optional educational method.

1.5.6 Benefits of Round Table Technique

As cooperative learning, Round Table Technique contributes to making the learning process actively and interactively. Here they are some benefits of Round Table Technique according to Harms and Mayers (2013:22) :

- Strengthening classroom relationship
- Integrating speaking and listening skill
- Developing students' confidence and fluency in speaking
- Developing autonomy of students
- You are using time of class efficiently.
- We are conferring the student with multiple opportunities of speaking.

In conclusion, Harms and Mayers state that 'Round Table Technique' has been "a highly successful method of increasing confidence of a student, improving skills of presentation, and creating more stimulated independent learners. The rotating roles assist students in growing their faith and relating their listening and speaking skills and are practical to conduct in the classroom" (ibid.: 45).

1.5.7 The Disadvantages of 'Round Table Technique'

Muarivah points out that the disadvantages of RTT include:

- It is time-consuming
- One of the weaknesses of the roundtable technique is that when members of the group deliver thoughts around the class, they might reverse merely when realizing that the student sitting beside may look at what they write.
- Another weakness is when everyone "gets inspiration for their new idea of only one other person rather than from the entire group. This situation can occur if there is a low in knowledge student". He/she may copy the "idea that is displayed by their friend before them. It will make similar ideas" (TitikMurviah, 2015 , : 25)

2. Methodology

2.1. Introductory note

The present section aims at reporting the procedures, results and conclusion to accomplish the current research. That is to say, this section listed the following :

- Population and sample selection,
- Type of instrument used,
- The statistical mean used for analyzing the data, and
- Give a conclusion of the current study.

2.2. Population and sample-selection

In the current study, the population consists of 2nd stage English language students at 'University of Baghdad', College of Education, (Ibn Rushd). The total number of such population is 60 divided into 30 for 'Experimental group' and 30 for 'control group'.

2.3. Instrument

To accomplish the aim set in this research and to verify the aim adopted, the researchers have utilizes the following instrument :

A close-end test .

The test applied on 9th October,2018. It consists of a short composition with 6 items. The time is previously delimited by the researcher .So the answer time has identified for roundtables through 30 minutes. Then, The teacher takes the sheet paper of every group to discuss the current answer with all of them.

2.4. The statistical mean used for analyzing the data and results

The researcher has utilized the T-test as a statistical mean to analyse the data of answers. To achieve the aim of the current study that states : "The Impact of Round Table Strategy on Iraqi EFL Students' Achievement in English", and to verify the sole hypothesis that states : "There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the 'experimental group' in the achievement post -test ,and the mean scores of the control group", the researcher has conducted the achievement post -test on the two groups of the this study. Hence, the mean scores of the 'control group' is (2.78) with a standard deviation of (1.30) ,and that of the of the 'experimental group' is (3.26) with a standard deviation of

(0.83). Two –sample t-test has been used to find out the significance differences between these two groups in the achievement test as shown in table (2) below :

Table(2)

Two Independent Sample T-test of the Significances Differences between the EG and CG

Group	No.	Mean	SD.	Computed t- value	Tabulated t- value	Level of significance
EG	30	2.78	1.030	6.32	2.000	0.05
CG	30	3.26	0.830			

6As revealed by table (1) above , there are statistically significance differences between the two groups, in the value of calculated (t) is (6.32) that is higher than the value of tabulated (t) that is (2.000) which indicates significant statistical divergence between the control group's mean scores in the post-test which is (2.78) and the experimental group's mean scores in the post-test that is (3.26) and in favour of the experimental group .This leads to refuse the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one and there is an impact the round-table strategy on students' achievement .

2.5. Conclusions

The conclusion of this research is the following :

1. CL is an excellent teaching approach because it allows students to think climactically without depending on you for answers. It do not need long time to solve the problem or answer the task by students cause the working in groups is shorten the answer time. Students motivated discuss by each other's into the group. This feeling gives them comfort and fun in discus their own peers into the group to answer the task and achieve the goal of learning.
2. A Roundtable technique is one of the popular CL strategies, which is important and beneficial strategy because it gives students the opportunity to work together to solve the problem and ensures that students share their ideas. Furthermore, it promotes thinking skills, social
3. The current study findings have stated that there is no significant statistical divergence between the mean scores of the experimental group in the achievement post-test, and the mean scores of the control group. This leads to refuse the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one i.e there is an impact the round-table strategy on students' achievement.
4. With Roundtable approach, students are given more opportunities to try the spoken and written English language forms through activities of jigsaw lecture including: 'presentation of the reports', 'discussions', and debates which as a result can develop students' fluency and accuracy.
5. Roundtable technique encourages the critical thinking in students since they can express their opinion and ideas freely.
6. Roundtable helps students bring alive and nurture this concern of spirit for others everyday when they learn collectively.
7. Students in Roundtable-class seem more involved with the lecture, negotiating and assisting one another more than they do in traditional lessons.

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