

The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Pupils' Achievement in English Language and Cognitive Engagement

¹ Halla Turkey Hameed, ² Prof. Manal Omar Mousa (Ph.D.)

University of Tikrit, College of Education for Women, Department of English Language

halla.hameed23@st.tu.edu.iq

University of Tikrit, College of Education for Women, Department of English Language

momsh89@tu.edu.iq

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 20 Dec 2024	<p>The problem of the study is particularly pronounced in preparatory school settings, where foundational language skills are critical for future academic success. This study investigates the Effect of the (ECRIF) Strategy on EFL Preparatory School Students' English Language Achievement and Cognitive Engagement. The study aims to find out the effect of (ECRIF) Strategy on EFL Preparatory School Pupils' achievement in English language. In Addition, to find out the effect of (ECRIF) Strategy on EFL preparatory school pupils' cognitive engagement. While the hypothesis of the study indicated, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the posttest. "There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the cognitive engagement scale". "There is a significant relationship between the experimental group pupils' achievement in the posttest and their scores on the cognitive engagement scale". The study used a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test assessments for both experimental and control groups. The cognitive engagement measured by using a questionnaire for both the experimental and control groups before and after the experiment. This research was conducted on a sample of seventy-four fifth-grade students studying at Al-Karkh -Almahmuodia schools in Baghdad. It indicates the ECRIF Strategy dramatically enhances achievement and cognitive engagement for EFL Preparatory school students in English. The findings show also a strong positive association between the pupils' post-</p>
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test achievement test scores and their level of cognitive engagement.

Keywords: engagement, Preparatory, questionnaire, cognitive

1. Introduction

Over the years, ECRIF strategy has developed, being recognized to make great strides in the realm of education; most recently, because it has been so effective in teaching languages. Here is proof that with modern methodologies in teaching, students will improve greatly in general English and finally acquire a proficiency that allows them to use spoken and written English confidently and precisely—the greatest weapon their future professions will require from them. Despite the greater focus on more effective EFL teaching methodologies, learners around the globe still seem to struggle with acquiring the language. Strategy that is more traditional typically tend not to catch the cognitive interest of the students and thus never really lead to the intended language retention. Preparatory schools, where language skills are essential for academic achievement, are especially affected by this issue. Al-Saleem shows that ECRIF can improve EFL vocabulary acquisition and retention. This shows that ECRIF outperforms standard strategy in vocabulary achievement. However, few research have examined its overall effects on preparatory school English language achievement and cognitive engagement. Pupils³⁷). According to the issue raised above, the purpose of this study is to address a significant vacuum in the literature about successful teaching tactics in EFL contexts and to give insights that may be used to guide pedagogical practices in prep schools. The findings may help to improve educational outcomes for students by supporting more interesting and effective language learning activities. As a result, it is critical to analyze the influence of the ECRIF Strategy on the accomplishment of EFL preparatory school students in the English language and their cognitive engagement.

1.1. Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

1. Finding out the effect of (ECRIF) Strategy on EFL Preparatory School Pupils' achievement in English language.
2. Finding out the effect of (ECRIF) Strategy on EFL preparatory school pupils' cognitive engagement.

1.2. Hypotheses of the Study

This study hypothesizes at:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the posttest.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the cognitive engagement scale.

3. There is a significant relationship between the experimental group pupils' achievement in the posttest and their scores on the cognitive engagement scale.

2. Literature Review

One substitute for the PPP strategy (present, practice, and produce) was ECRIF. According to Josh Kurzweil, "one of the inherent challenges that I always had with it (PPP) is finding out who the actor is in the class" ¹³⁾. Josh Kurzweil quote, "in most situations, only the term "present" inspires professors to lecture or give a long presentation. As a result, it is exhausting to give lessons and give long presentations" ¹³⁾. Kurzweil was motivated to develop a new strategy that emphasizes learning and focuses on what pupils do to accomplish the objective at every point of their class because of the intricate adaption of PPP in planning.

2.1.ECRIF Strategy

While writing Understanding Teaching Through Learning for McGraw-Hill and the School for International Training in 2004 and 2005, Josh Kurzweil and Mary Scholl created the ECRIF stages. The ECRIF Strategy is an acronym that stands for five words: E=Encounter a problem ,C=Clarify, R=Remember, I=Internalize, and F=Fluently use.

Table 1: ECRIF Language Learning Strategy ⁴⁾

Stage	What the students are doing	What they may be thinking
E ENCOUNTER	Students see or hear new language and realize they don't know something.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's this? I <u>don't</u> know this?
C CLARIFY	Students distinguish the meaning and use of the new knowledge or skill. They ask questions and think about what is correct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oh I see what it means. Oh I see how to do this. What's the difference between this and that? Is this right?
R/I REMEMBER & INTERNALIZE	Students have a chance to move the knowledge or skill from short-term to long-term memory. They then can begin to personalize it and use it in different contexts. They connect it mentally to prior experiences with images, sounds, and feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Okay. I'm starting to remember this. Okay. I've got it in this activity. I'm making connection to my own life
F FLUENTLY USE	Students have a chance to use the new language to communicate their ideas. So work toward being able to spontaneously use the language in different contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool. I can use this skill or knowledge automatically. This is for real-world purposes. I don't have to consciously think about this

The ECRIF strategy, which stands for Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluently Use, is a versatile and effective strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Through this, the breaking down of learning into the five discrete stages aids students in going smoothly from first exposure to full mastery and actual use of the language abilities. Its ordered, yet flexible design makes it adapted to a number of varied EFL teaching environments serving students at different levels with diverse skills and learning requirements.⁵⁾

1. Encounter Stage in EFL

At the Encounter stage, students are exposed to new aspects of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and functional language, through real or semi-authentic material: texts, videos, or dialogues. Here, an EFL teacher might present new vocabulary in context with related pictures or possibly a short contextualizing video to introduce the words. This is a very crucial stage in capturing the interest of the students and building foundations for their learning.⁵⁾

2. Clarify Stage in EFL

During the Clarify stage, students develop a deeper understanding of the language through exploration into its meaning, use, and structure. The teacher guides this through activities like sentence pattern analysis, discussions on the meanings of words, and pronunciation practice. So, after a teacher has introduced some new grammatical structure, she clarifies it with its explanation and exemplification of its correct use⁶⁾.

3. Remember Stage in EFL

The Remember stage is all about reinforcing and practicing newly learned language through structured and guided activities. Activities such as fill-in-the-blank, matching games, and repetition drills will help learners consolidate their understanding of the new language and grow in confidence to use it effectively. This will provide a base for long-term retention by this stage's focus on repetition and memory⁷⁾.

4. Internalize Stage in EFL

At the Internalize stage, students begin to use the language in a more independent fashion in meaningful contexts. Students practice using knowledge in real-life communications through activities like role plays, pair work, and short writing exercises. This is the stage where there is a shift from guided practice to practical use of the language, developing both confidence and competence in the student⁸⁾.

5. Fluently Use Stage in EFL

The Fluently Use stage aims to ensure that learners can express themselves fluently and confidently in everyday situations. Activities at this point provide open-ended opportunities for them to display the language: debates, presentations, free writing, and so on. This stage nurtures creativity

and helps learners modulate their use of language in relation to context ⁹⁾.

2.1.1 Importance of ECRIF in Language Learning

ECRIF has proved to be a helpful tool in language learning, particularly in EFL settings. The entire learning process in ECRIF is divided into controlled, step-by-step, incremental stages; it enables the learner to progress from elementary exposure about the language and apply it instinctively in experiences connected with real life. Accordingly, large quantities of cognitive involvement are generated and students can acquire the language in meaningful, lasting acquisitions. This is underpinned by research and cognitive theories for ECRIF effectiveness in securing long-term retention and mastery: ordered intake, clarification, practice, and fluency ¹⁰⁾.

Another feature that makes ECRIF so important is its compatibility with cognitive learning theories, mainly in the aspects of memory consolidation. In this aspect, the "Remember" phase is the most crucial since it deals with the reinforcement of language recall by constant repetition and retrieval. Activities like quizzes, discussions, and vocabulary exercises at this stage all help shift knowledge from short- to long-term memory—a step that is utterly critical for an effective acquisition of language ¹¹⁾.

The "Clarify" stage—dedicated to the thorough teaching of language forms and meanings—provides increased effectiveness in ECRIF. Swain's output theory reveals that it is crucial for learners to produce language and receive feedback if they are to fully understand new structures ¹²⁾. It is during this phase that learners are given opportunities to actively link form with meaning for full acquisition of principles before attempting spontaneous application. Explicit teaching also reduces cognitive load, making it easier for students to assimilate smaller, more manageable bites of knowledge without feeling overwhelmed ¹²⁾. The "Internalize" and "Fluency" stages pay attention to the use of language in real-life, meaningful interactions, which is an essential function of language acquisition.

The concept of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is basically an area wherein a child, with assistance, can carry on doing some activities, otherwise quite impossible. With regards to the scaffold activities occurring in ECRIF's internalize stage—activities like role-plays, group discussions—the safe environment makes students more secure and builds them towards competence and high self-confidence. By the time learners reach the Fluency phase, they are better prepared to use the language spontaneously because they have practiced in meaningful ways. It is this focus on fluency that aligns with Nation's belief that real-world practice is necessary for effective communication in a wide range of contexts ⁷⁾.

ECRIF also fosters motivation and engagement in EFL learning by breaking down language acquisition into realistic, doable chunks. As Pintrich indicates, this strategy provides learners a sense of

progress and success, which acts as a powerful motivation to keep them continuing ¹²⁾. This would also help improve the confidence and determination of the learners by allowing them to make modest progress. The interactive tasks in each of the stages—Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluency—foster active engagement, increasing the learning experience and keeping the students motivated and interested ¹⁴⁾.

2.2. Concept of Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to the mental effort students invest in their learning, generally indicating active participation and a conscious effort to understand and apply knowledge. Unlike surface-level learning, such as simple memorization, cognitive engagement involves deeper thinking processes—analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information ¹⁵⁾.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris describe cognitive engagement as one of three fundamental elements of student involvement, along with behavioral and emotional engagement. This dimension emphasizes how learners actively absorb information, integrate existing knowledge, and engage in problem-solving, resulting in meaningful learning experiences highly related to academic accomplishment and skill development¹⁰⁾.

Cognitive engagement is strongly related to self-regulated learning, in which students take responsibility of their learning by planning, monitoring, and assessing their comprehension and performance ¹⁷⁾. Learners may create richer and more meaningful learning experiences by employing metacognitive tools such as goal planning and self-assessment. According to Pintrich and De Groot, students with greater levels of cognitive engagement do better academically because they seek help, clarify ambiguities, and persevere in the face of adversity ¹⁸⁾.

Intrinsic motivation is also important for increasing cognitive engagement. When students see activities as relevant and linked with their interests, they are more likely to expend effort and engage in deep cognitive processes¹⁾. Real-world-relevant tasks, as well as those that foster creative problem-solving, can greatly boost cognitive engagement. Educators may help by creating activities that challenge students' thinking, encourage cooperation, and spark interest, eventually enhancing academic achievement and instilling lifetime learning habits.

2.2.1 Cognitive Engagement in Language Learning

Cognitive engagement refers to the mental effort and active participation that students devote to their learning process. It is important in language acquisition because it allows for deep processing of linguistic information, which leads to enhanced retention, understanding, and language usage. Strategies that help learners to think critically, relate new information to current understanding, and

actively utilize the language in multiple settings are crucial for increasing cognitive engagement. Higher levels of cognitive engagement immediately improve language learning, since engaged learners are more likely to absorb the language and acquire better competence ²⁰⁾.

A crucial part of cognitive engagement in language learning is having meaningful interactions with the language. Swain's output theory points out that production helps learners engage more cognitively because it forces them to go beyond passively being exposed to linguistic forms and meanings ²¹⁾. Learner-engagement activities include speaking, writing, or a group discussion in the EFL setting. These activities increase fluency and accuracy because learners are exposed to the language. Activities in this kind really make students get into critical thinking about how they use language, hence improving knowledge and general ability in using the same.

Cognitive engagement is further nurtured through active learning, which emphasizes learners' taking responsibility for their own understanding. In language learning, this may take the form of challenges that will foster problem-solving, decision-making, and self-reflection. According to Zimmerman, learners who actively generate and process information are more likely to remember it and apply it effectively. In actual sense, activities such as role-playing, making decisions based on scenarios, and analyzing texts increase cognitive engagement since the learners are made to use their language skills in new and unfamiliar situations. This kind of active involvement not only aids in language learning but also fosters critical thinking skills, which are indispensable for lifelong learning ²⁶⁾.

2.3 Previous Studies

The next section discusses previous researches related to the present study on the ECRIF strategy and its effectiveness in language acquisition. The critical areas of vocabulary expansion, speaking abilities, and cognitive engagement addressed in the study are considered as major areas toward understanding how the ECRIF strategy facilitates language acquisition.

2.3.1. Mezied (2017)

Mezied in his research investigated the effectiveness of using ECRIF and PPP strategy to improve vocabulary learning for fifth graders retention. The present research consists of a total of 143 children, fifth graders were randomly divided into three classes: 41 in the experimental group using the ECRIF strategy, 42 in the PPP experimental group and 42 in the traditional control group that used conventional teaching methods. The instruments of this study are the pre-, post-, and delayed vocabulary tests and the content analysis card. Results of the study are presented in terms of vocabulary achievement; statistically, there were significant differences: The ECRIF group scored higher than both PPP and control groups on the post and delayed tests concerning vocabulary achievement. This study

gives support to the assumption that, really, ECRIF strategy is an effective strategy for students' learning of vocabulary.

2.3.2. Al-Saleem (2018)

Al-Saleem has written an article, "The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on EFL Seventh Graders' Vocabulary Learning and Retention." The objective of this study was to test the effectiveness of the ECRIF strategy on vocabulary acquisition and retention with a sample population of 225 EFL seventh-grade students, with 100 in the control group and 125 in the experimental group. The control and experimental groups were tested via pre- and post-vocabulary exams, and statistical procedures such as t-tests were performed on the results. Results showed large differences between the experimental and control groups, with the ECRIF group doing better in general. The present study demonstrates that the ECRIF strategy is very effective in improving vocabulary acquisition, where students pay more attention and show better recall of the vocabulary learned.

2.3.3. Caiza Aucapiña (2021)

The Effect of the ECRIF Framework on the Development of Speaking Skills in Students: Caiza Aucapiña's research work tries to explain how the ECRIF framework could help students improve their ability to speak a second language. The sample consisted of 32 children aged 12 to 14 years, from grades eight to ten. This study adopted a pre- and post-test design, along with a speaking rubric, in measuring students' speaking abilities after 10 virtual sessions using ECRIF and mobile technologies such as Zoom and WhatsApp. It found considerable improvement in speaking, mainly in the areas of fluency and spontaneity, after the implementation of the ECRIF model. While the study has shown ECRIF to be effective in improving speaking skills, it also showed that the students started with a low speaking ability, which implies the need for more practice and a variety of teaching methods.

2.3.4. Muñoz (2023)

Munoz used the ECRIF framework in an attempt to improve speaking skills in A1 level students at Instituto Tecnológico T'Sachila in Santo Domingo. The research consisted of 33 participants: 30 students and 3 teachers, aged between 17 and 40 years old. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, interviews, and questionnaires with the aim of eliciting the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework on the speaking abilities of students. The findings demonstrated considerable gains in students' speaking abilities, notably in pronunciation, intonation, grammatical accuracy, fluency, and communication methods. The study indicated that ECRIF significantly increased students' oral output in English at the A1 level, in line with the CEFR requirements. This study also emphasized the importance of instructors in ensuring the effectiveness of the ECRIF framework.

2.4 Discussion of The Current Study

The current study expects to find that the ECRIF strategy will improve English language achievement and cognitive engagement, contributing to a more holistic understanding of how the strategy enhances both language proficiency and student involvement in the learning process. However, the current study is unique in its focus on both cognitive engagement and overall achievement, which distinguishes it from the primarily skill-specific findings of the previous research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Experimental Design

In order to ascertain if a concept (or practice or Strategy) affects a dependent variable or an outcome, the experimental design is a "traditional strategy to conducting quantitative research" ²²⁾.

Table (2): The Experimental Design of the Study

Groups	Independent variable	Posttest
Experimental group	(ECRIF) Strategy	Posttest
Control group	communicative method	Posttest

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

According to Hanlon and Larget, a population may be defined as all persons or interesting units, making it challenging to have data accessible for every individual in the population²⁸⁾. The participants in this study are EFL Iraqi preparatory pupils from a Baghdad based high school for boys. The total population of this study is 279 participants from five preparatory schools in Baghdad city, Al-karkh-2 Almahmodia schools, as explained in table (2).

Table (3): The Population and Sample of the Study

Groups	No. of Population	No. of Pilot Pupils	No. of Sample Pupils
Experimental	37	12	25
Control	37	12	25
Total	74	24	50

3.3 Instruments achievement of the Study

The current study employs an instrument to attain its objectives. The researcher designed the achievement post-test. Furthermore, the cognitive engagement Scale adapted from Kashkool is used to collect the data.

3.3.1 The achievement Post-test

The achievement posttest is developed in order to accomplish the main objective of the study. In order to assess fifth-preparatory pupils' achievement with the English language and ascertain what is suitable for their level and interests, the achievement exam created with the fifth preparatory pupils' textbook in mind. These topics presented to the jurors in the ELT field. The researcher developed this test to assess pupils' cognitive proficiency in the English language. The test consists of five questions drawn from the English for Iraq Fifth Preparatory Pupils' Book.

3.4 Construction of the posttest

The instrument involves creating a posttest to measure the experiment's degree of success. According to Mcnamara, each question on achievement exams only covers a subset of the curriculum. Assigning aspects that pupils need to improve on in the future might be beneficial. Determining whether or not course objectives have been met at the conclusion of the instructional time is the main function of an accomplishment exam²⁹).

Davies asserts that the tool utilized to get the necessary data is one of the key factors in any educational research project's success. The accomplishment exam is a type of assessment that is used to evaluate the effectiveness of education as well as the pupils' ability to make progress toward meeting study objectives. An accomplishment test is a device designed to assess a pupil's progress over a certain amount of time³⁰).

When creating an accomplishment test, the educational materials' behavioral goals and content were taken into account. The following are the five questions;

- **Question 1/A** presents a funny and relatable story about Mr. Jones, inviting students to connect with the narrative. The multiple-choice questions are designed to test their ability to pick out specific details, like recognizing the shop's items, characters, and the order of events. This part encourages focused reading and ensures that students grasp the main themes and important details of the text. It also challenges them to differentiate between direct and implied meanings, helping to strengthen their interpretive and analytical skills.
- **Question 1/B** taps into students' prior knowledge, using familiar subject matter like the life and works of Jawad Al-Assadi. The question requires them to remember information from their studies and to

make connections, thus testing their understanding of central ideas, messages, and contributions that literature makes to society. This also helps deepen their appreciation for English and its use in different contexts.

- **Question 2** tests listening skills and looks into the students' capacity for picking up spoken English and, in understanding narrative situations, the account of Miss Williams and her class. The description is lively and realistic, making children pay attention to details like how many children went, weather, and sequencing events. The fact that gloves go missing creates quite a comic interlude that sustains the students' interest in the exercise.
- **Question 3/A:** This section requires students to do sentence correction, where they are supposed to apply the grammar rules such as tenses, plurals, conditionals, and sentence transformations. The correction of sentences like "If she (not wake)" requires great attention to the form of verbs and grammar. Tasks such as adding question tags or changing sentences with patterns like "so.that" increase the flexibility and creativity of using language.
- **Question 3/B:** This crossword puzzle, based on the listening section, includes visual and interactive elements. It revisits words from the story, like "gloves" and "winter," while engaging students in cognitive problem-solving through a fun activity.
- **Question 4** tests speaking skills, as the students are supposed to complete a dialogue, which allows them to be creative, spontaneous, and fluent. The conversation allows them to practice vocabulary and sentence construction in a real-life context. The topics of the weekend's plan, literature, and cooking are very familiar to students and thus easily identified with. Thus, the nature of the dialogue being open-ended encourages personal expression while testing one's ability to hold logical and relevant conversations.
- **Question 5/A:** Here, the student retells a funny story about Mr. Jones. In this case, the student practices the skill of summarizing information, retaining important details and clarity. It improves their skill in determining main ideas and communicating them—very important for good communication skills.
- **Question 5/B:** In this, the students are put into a creative writing activity in which, through the help of conjunctions, they connect phrases to pictures and come up with a logical story. It builds strong logical reasoning, event sequencing, and sentence connection. It is also a very good test for writing clear and engaging pieces—important skills both in academics and everyday life.

Table (4): The Specifications of the Contents, Items and Marks of the Posttest

Level	No. of Questions	Content	Behavioural objectives	Bloom's Taxonomy	No. of Items	Marks
Recognition	Q1	Unseen Story	To measure pupils' comprehension through a reading story	Classifying, Summarizing, Inferring, Comparing	10	25 M
Recognition	Q2	Matching	Ask pupils to match the answer with true or false.	Solve, apply, options	5	10 M
Recognition	Q3	Grammar and Vocabulary	Ask pupils to correct the sentences and complete the sentence by the puzzle	Do as required, Corrections, and Matching the puzzle	10	20 M
Production	Q4	Speaking	Ask the pupils to complete the conversation	Identify matches.	4	20 M
Production	Q5	Writing	Write story by using keywords. To evaluate the pupil's knowledge.	constructs, creates, synthesis	10	25 M
Total	5					100

3.5 Validity of the Posttest

"Validity" means a broad assessment of how well the theoretical reasoning and experimental data underpin the appropriateness and suitability of conclusions and actions derived from test results ²⁶⁾.

3.5.1 Face Validity

Face validity, according to experts in the field, is the extent to which a test, tool, or research instrument is apparently appropriate and relevant to its purpose when first viewed ²⁷⁾. This study ensured face validity by getting feedback from a panel of experienced teachers and experts in the English language teaching field. They viewed the lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment tools to be used for the implementation of the ECRIF strategy. The validators affirmed that they were relevant to the assessment of cognitive engagement in English language learning and appropriate for attaining the study's objectives. Their contributions were incorporated into the research to make the instruments more explicit and efficacious.

3.5.2 Content Validity

Content validity: This indicates how well an instrument represents all the important characteristics of the concept it is intended to measure. In other words, it assures that the instrument covers the whole scope of the subject or skill to be measured without excluding important elements. This type of validity is normally established through professional review and extensive analysis of the items of the instrument, so they have consistency with the target construct ²⁸⁾. In order to carry out an in-depth analysis of content validity for the instruments used in this study, a thorough review of the curricular purposes and dimensions of the ECRIF strategy was performed. A panel of experts in both educational assessment and English language teaching evaluated the test items, instructional materials, and critical variables of cognitive engagement for their alignment. Their feedback was integrated to make sure that the instruments really documented each dimension of cognitive activity—namely, reflection, problem-solving, and attention—according to the needs of those researchers.

3.6 Reliability of the Posttest

One crucial aspect of a quality test is reliability. According to Veram and Beard, a test is considered dependable if its level of accuracy is constant and steady when administered to the same sample of pupils under the same circumstances. Reliability is one of the essential qualities of a good test. The statement "reliability is the extent to which test scores are consistent" is made by Alderson. Ravitch provides an explanation of reliability. A measure of uniformity in testing. For instance, a person's results on two separate days should be comparable if they took different versions of the same test. ^{34, 3, 35)}

The test-retest process is taken into consideration in order to accomplish this goal. Therefore, the pilot sample of fifteen people has been given the identical accomplishment exam. Taking into account the time, location, and peacefulness of the test's administration on both occasions, the two administrations were completed in a span of thirteen days. The posttest's reliability is assessed using the Chi-square formula. The calculated coefficient of 0.90 is deemed satisfactory.

3.7 Analysis of the post-test Items

3.7.1 Difficulty Level of the Post-test

The difficulty level is specified as the ratio of the pupils who replied correctly to each item²⁾. The difficulty level of the present test items varies from (0.32) to (0.72).

3.7.2 Discrimination Power of the Post-test

Discrimination power means "calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test"³⁾. The test item discrimination power was found to have a range of (0.31) - (0.73).

3.8 Final Administration of the Post-test

The posttest is given to the experimental and control groups once the validity and reliability of the pilot administration have been confirmed. The posttest exam was scheduled for December 30, 2024, and there was a 60-minute time limit to finish the test. The intended test takers have been given the test papers by the researcher, who has asked them to carefully study the question instructions. All of the test papers were gathered at the conclusion of that period and assessed using the established scoring system.

3.9. Procedures of the Study

This study will employ the following procedures to validate its assumptions and accomplish its goal:

1. Choose a sample of fifth-grade preparatory school Pupils and split them into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Both groups are equal in age and the educational attainment of their parents.
2. The first group, known as the experimental group, is taught using the ECRIF strategy, while the second group, known as the control group, is taught using the conventional strategy.
3. Developing a questionnaire, pretest, and posttest.
4. Calculating the test's degree of difficulty, validity, reliability, and discriminating power.

4. Data analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1.1 Results related to the First hypothesis

Comparison between the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and that of Control Group in the Posttest.

To ascertain whether there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' posttest mean scores. Statistics showed that the control group had mean scores of 59.88 while the experimental groups had mean scores of 78.72. The tabular t-value is 2.011, while the calculated t-value, as shown by the t-test strategy for two independent samples, is 5.403 at the degree of freedom 48 and level of significance 0.05. This suggests that the achievements of the experimental group are very different from those of the other group. The first hypothesis, which states that the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the posttest do not differ statistically significantly, is therefore disproved, as table (5) shows.

Table (5): Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Values of the Two Groups in the Cognitive Engagement Test

Groups	No. of pupils	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
EG.	25	78.72	14.53	Calculated	Tabulated	48	0.05
CG.	25	59.88	9.63	5.403	2.011		

4.1.2 Results related to the Second hypothesis

Comparison between the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and that of Control Group in Cognitive Engagement Scale

to ascertain whether there is a significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores on the cognitive engagement measure and those of the control group. Statistics showed that the control group's mean score was 41.60 while the experimental groups' were 57.64. The calculated t-value, using the t-test strategy for two independent samples, is 4.305; the tabulated t-value, at the level of significance 0.05 and degree of freedom 48, is 2.011. This suggests that the achievements of the experimental group are very different from those of the other group. The second hypothesis, which states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group, is thus rejected, as can be seen in table (6).

Table (6): Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Values of the Two Groups in the Cognitive Engagement Test

Groups	No. of pupils	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
EG.	25	57.64	10.35	Calculated	Tabulated	48	0.05
CG.	25	41.60	15.48	4.305	2.011		

4.1.3 Results related to the Third Hypothesis

The Relationship Between Experimental Group's Pupils' Achievement in post-test and Cognitive Engagement Scale

In order to determine the correlation between "pupils' achievement in post-test and Cognitive Engagement." Pearson correlation coefficient is used to investigate the correlation between the two variables. The results reveal that the Pearson correlational value is 0.472 higher than the critical one 0.273 at a level of significance 0.05 and degree of freedom 48. This indicates that there is a positive significance correlation between EFL pupils' achievement in post-test and cognitive engagement. As shown in Table (7).

Table (7): The Correlation Value Between achievement posttest and cognitive engagement

Sample Size	Pearson Correlation Value	Critical Value	Level of Sig. 0.05
50	0.472	0.273	Significant

4.2 Discussion of the obtained Results

The study's findings shed fresh light on how the ECRIF method influences EFL preparatory school students' cognitive engagement with the English language. The findings suggest that the ECRIF stage's sequential phases—Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, and Fluently Use—effectively encourage a more ordered and engaging learning process. This suggests that there is a beneficial correlation between EFL students' posttest achievement and cognitive involvement. This is the phase in which learners are introduced to new subject in ways that are linked to past knowledge in order to motivate students towards active engagement. The early involvement of students would thus form a framework for deeper cognitive activity as they proceeded with other phases.

As learners moved into the Clarify and Remember stages, cognitive engagement continued to

rise. The hands-on and interactive nature of these stages developed critical thinking while making it easier for students to recall linguistic skills. They would go on to actively analyze language patterns and seek clarification, using what they had learned in practical tasks while showing their ability to transfer information from theory into real-life situations.

The Internalize stage was a very instrumental stage for kids to activate their cognitive skills. Some activities, such as group problem-solving, introspective activities, and using language in real-life situations, motivated participants to gain confidence and further develop knowledge. This was reinforced further in the Fluently Use stage, where students could apply language creatively and with flexibility, thereby engendering further drive and cognitive activity.

One also notices from the study how the ECRIF Strategy succeeded in its impact on motivation. Its interactive, supportive structure helped to remove anxiety and encouraged more active participation from those who were less adept. This increase in motivation caused the students to accept difficult assignments and engaging in metacognitive processes such as peer and self-evaluation, which led to a longer period of their cognitive engagement. Overall, the data suggest that the ECRIF strategy is consistent with fundamental indices of cognitive engagement, such as perseverance, active involvement, and in-depth information processing. This study supports Muñoz's findings that learner-centered strategies improve critical thinking, language competency, and student participation. Al-Saleem revealed, similarly to this study's focus on ECRIF's ordered stages, that interactive strategies boosted cognitive engagement and practical knowledge application. These studies demonstrate ECRIF's impact to boosting the cognitive engagement and academic achievement of EFL learners³⁷.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the ECRIF Strategy significantly improves EFL preparatory school students' English cognitive engagement. The encounter, clarify, recall, internalize, and employ fluently strategy enables students to acquire and apply knowledge in relevant settings.

Probably one of the most important findings in this study was that the ECRIF Strategy successfully activates students' prior knowledge, enabling them to become more involved in the learning process. It allows students to learn and use the language more successfully through self-evaluation, peer engagement, and hands-on experience. These findings show how the ECRIF Strategy may transform EFL instruction into an engaging, learner-centered experience.

The study has also pointed out that effective implementation of the ECRIF Strategy requires careful scaffolding and progressive changes to meet the needs of different learners. Those students more accustomed to active learning strategies may need additional guidance to gain appropriate benefits from

the strategy. Teachers have a very important place in such a process, making sure that no one gets left behind.

In conclusion, the ECRIF Strategy would seem to be a very good strategy for improving cognitive engagement in EFL sessions.

It has a controlled development, active learning, and real-world application that may give the student the skill and confidence to excel in English. Results strongly suggest that integrating the ECRIF strategy into EFL education is an especially effective method to generate meaningful and long-lasting cognitive engagement.

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