

The Impact of Using Fictional Story Strategy in Teaching English Language on Developing the Skills of Speaking and Reading Comprehension among Tenth Primary Grade Female Students

Taha Ali Hussein Dleime, Kholoud Ahmed Saa'd Bataineh

Email address: batainehkholoud@hotmail.com

Abstract— This study aims to measure the impact of using the fictional story strategy in teaching English on developing the skills of speaking and reading comprehension among tenth primary graders. The semi-experimental approach was used in this study. The study subjects consisted of (62) female students divided into an experimental group (32), who were taught using the fictional story strategy, and a control group (30) who were taught using the typical method. To achieve the study aims, two tests were prepared: The Speaking Skills Test and the Reading Comprehension Skills test. Three texts were selected from the 10th class English textbook and changed into fictional stories. The results of the study showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group, in favor of the fictional story strategy in developing the skills of speaking and reading comprehension. In light of this, it is recommended to adopt fiction-based teaching strategies when teaching English texts.

Keywords— Fictional Story Strategy, English Language, Speaking Skills, Reading Comprehension Skills, Tenth Primary Grade.

I. STUDY BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

Introduction

Any language consists of four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. No doubt that speaking is the most prominent aspect of expression, as it is man's means to express themselves, being the most frequently -used tool in their life, and the most valuable one in social interaction. Speaking is a skill that represents the functional aspect of any language, as it evokes ideas and produces them in the form of organized words, thus leading to self -confidence and self-reinforcement.

Speaking the different world languages is significant; nevertheless, speaking English has become a necessity since English is the language of modern age, and the most-widely used language in the world, being the language of science, technology, scientific research, economy, e-commerce and tourism, as well as being the language of studying at schools, universities and higher institutes in most countries of the world (Al-Dmour, 2017).

At the school level, speaking enables students to express classroom situations as well as social situations through exploiting the good command of language they have acquired; therefore, this good command should be developed, since it is vital to convey their message to the recipients loud and clear (Zayed, 2015). Hagman (2011) stated that languages are

distinguished by the range a language is capable to spread among speakers, which can be achieved by activating the language's oral aspect. In this case, the conversational structure of a language is mostly important in developing the ability to speak. In his regard, learners must be trained to practice all elements and components of a language to be able to create communication bridges with others.

Since speaking English or any other language has such significance, reading and comprehension of this language has more significance, as reading is a tool that provides learners with the linguistic resources and the information required for making speaking possible. Ruddell & Unran (2014), pointed out that the process of meaning building requires that a reader employs sound pronunciation and broad imagination to construct concepts and extract meanings from what is being read, in a way that allows interaction with the cognitive structure to take place. In this case, reading comprehension becomes one of the higher -order thinking processes, the tools of which are not only reading, but also listening and observation.

Durkin & Dolores (2015) identified the reading comprehension components as being: comprehending the vocabulary, sentence and paragraph. Vocabulary comprehension means understanding and interpreting a text vocabulary based on previous information, while sentence comprehension lies in recognizing the relations between the sentences after understanding the connotation of each sentence, and paragraph comprehension lies first in understanding the relations between these sentences by realizing their organization and sequence, in order to comprehend the full reading text.

Abul-Dhab'at (2007) pointed out that reading comprehension is a mental cognitive process that begins with understanding the meaning of the sentence and the paragraph, the ability to differentiate by realizing their linguistic implications, recognizing cause and result, perception of the value of what has been read, mastering language skills, and the ability to add new ideas and information to the ideas and information addressed by the author. All of these processes can't be achieved unless the reader becomes creative and critical.

It has become possible to develop the different language skills, including the English language skills by following

various strategies, methods and techniques. A fictional story is one of these strategies which Al-Dmour (2017) mentioned as being one of the most important strategies that provides learners with an appropriate chance to provoke their thinking and receive information in an interesting and exciting way. A fictional story also works on developing imagination and creativity skills, enriching students' language, increasing their conceptual outcome, and enhancing their positive values.

In fact, fictional stories are considered a teaching aid engulfed in entertainment and recreation, as they contain information about time, place and characters. In this way, fictional stories lead to memory development and self-regulation. For a story to play its role in the learning process, it should be appropriate for the learner in terms of vocabulary, technique, content, and meaning, in addition to being consistent and non-artificial, as well as providing learners with new experience and positive behavioral models (Briody & Garry, 2015; Jaber, 2016).

For a story to be fictional, it must be a fanciful invention, that is deviated from the framework of reality, as its events revolve around the heroes' supernatural behavior. The author of a fictional story colors its world with imagination, and so it is characterized by mystery, hesitation and unfamiliarity, thus going beyond logic and limits and arousing astonishment through its creation of legends and myths. This is called fiction literature, which presents a world that is fundamentally uprooted from the one we are familiar with (Scholes, 1996).

A fictional story takes the form of an epic, myths, adventure, parables, fables or science fiction. An epic is a long narrative poem composed in an elevated style recounting huge battles and supernatural heroes. A myth is a folk tale related to the life of a nation, and characterized by the folk imagination. Parables are tales whose hero is a human, animal, or inanimate object, which aim to tell a human connotation and moral significance. An adventure aims to uncover the unknown and explore the horizon. In a fable, one of the animals is the main character. Such stories usually address children to guide their behavior and develop their positive values. Finally, science fiction works on preparing the mind about other planets invading the earth or the landing of aliens on the earth (Abdul-Khaleq, 2017).

In this way, when a fictional story is changed into a teaching strategy, it works on developing learners' imagination, pushing them towards taking part in the conflict, developing their ability to appreciate and broadening their horizon and perception. In this way, learners become better at speaking and comprehension. Speaking is a means for the learners to express themselves, or to talk about any phenomenon they wish to talk about. This cannot be achieved unless one sets off his/her imagination, to perceive that linguistically and mentally, while at the same time comprehending what is being read, especially if that reading is fictional stories that bring one closer to the far and deep meanings.

Several studies had been carried out in this field. Salah (2002) carried out a study that aimed to identify the impact of a story – based program on the development of reading skills, including reading comprehension skills among primary stage

students. The study sample consisted of (38) male and female students in Egypt. A test in the skills of reading was prepared, with the results showing a statistically significant impact on the development of the skills of reading and comprehension in favor of the story – based program.

Abu-Kayed, 2004 carried out a study that aimed to identify the impact of narrative on the development of the reading comprehension skills among the 7th primary grade students in the governorate of Jerash in Jordan. The sample subjects were (100) male and female students. A test in reading comprehension was prepared, with the results showing a statistically significant impact on reading and comprehension in favor for narrative.

A study was carried out by Hassan (2012) to identify the impact of a program based on religious stories and social stories on the development of the skills of listening, oral expression, loud reading and silent reading among primary stage students in Egypt. The sample subjects were (46) male and female students. A test in the dependent variables was prepared. The study concluded that the stories were statistically significant in the development of oral expression, listening and the two kinds of reading.

Chin, 2013 carried out a study to identify the role of e-book reading in the development of the skills of reading in English including comprehension skills. The sample subjects were (89) male and female students. TOEFL test was used to measure reading comprehension. The results showed that e-book reading was statistically significant in the development of the skills of reading comprehension.

Al-Tatari, 2016 carried out a study that aimed to reveal the impact of using digital stories on developing reading comprehension skills. The study sample consisted of (74) students selected from the Gaza Strip. A test in the skills of comprehension was prepared and the results showed a statistically significant differences in the skills of reading and comprehension in favor of using stories.

Rab'I, 2018 carried out a study in which he used the short story to identify its impact on the development of Arabic language skills, including speaking and reading comprehension among 9th primary grade students in Jerusalem. The sample subjects were (104) male and female students. A test in language skills was prepared and the results showed a statistically significant differences in favor of using short story.

Upon reviewing the previous studies, it has become clear that all of them addressed the use of stories in their different styles to demonstrate their impact on the development of the skills of speaking or oral expression in some of them, and the development of the reading comprehension skills in others. All these studies concluded that the story has statistically significant impact on the development of these skills, with the exception of Chin's (2013) study which addressed e-book reading which also has an impact on the development of the reading skills in English including the reading comprehension skills.

The current study has benefited from the previous studies, in terms of the approach they adopted, selection of study subjects, test preparation, validity and reliability verification,

as well as benefiting from the procedures followed in presenting the study variables, the adopted design and statistical treatment. This study differs from the previous studies, as it is characterized by addressing the fictional story strategy and its impact on the development of the skills of speaking and reading comprehension.

Study Problem

The study problem stems from the apparent decline in the students' level in the different English skills, especially speaking and reading comprehension. Various studies pointed out to this decline. Suleiman (2005) found that there is a weakness in the different English skills, including speaking and reading skills in general and reading comprehension in particular. The study carried out by Habayeb (2011) concluded such weakness in the English language skills.

Study Questions

1. Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) between the experimental group and the control group in terms of developing speaking skills that can be attributed to the teaching method (fictional story strategy, typical method)?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) between the experimental group and the control group in terms of developing the skills of reading comprehension that can be attributed to the teaching method (fictional story strategy, typical method)?

Study Significance

1. Theoretical Significance: The theoretical significance of this study stems from the theoretical framework on the fictional story strategy, and from the lesson notes of changing some English language subjects into fictional stories.
2. Applied Significance: The applied significance of this study stems from the fact that planners of English language curricula will benefit from the results of this study. Teachers will also benefit from using the strategy of fictional story in teaching English. In addition, other researchers will be motivated to carry out more studies in this field.

Study Terminology and Procedural Definitions

- Story: Ahmad (2014) defines the story as: a form of literary heritage in which a literary style is used to address a topic with all its issues and its multi-relation problems, and in which facts are blended with fancy. A story is characterized by the ability to attract attention and suspense.
 - Fictional Story: Shahata (2012:62) defines a fictional story as: A type of story that is characterized by its easy style, and its mental material that helps to motivate the individual's imagination, and stimulates him to perceive the jest of the story.
- A fictional story is procedurally defined as re-formulating some topics in the form of a fictional story by altering a topic's aspects into the form of fictional events.

- Speaking: Abdul-Bari (2010:15) defines speaking as: "The ability to employ verbal, linguistic and phonetic skills, as well as eloquence skills to communicate with others, whether at the level of comprehension or the level of expression". Speaking is procedurally defined as the ability of the 10th primary grade female students to perform orally and linguistically in English language. Speaking is measured by a situational test prepared for the purposes of the current study.
- Reading Comprehension: Al-Najmi (2018:136) defines reading comprehension as: The learner's ability to know the meaning of the word and the meaning of the sentence, and to link both meanings in an organized, logical and sequential manner, and to retain these meanings and ideas to be employed in different life situations". Reading comprehension is procedurally defined as: The ability of the 10th primary grade female students to comprehend English texts. It is measured by the score each student achieves on a reading comprehension test prepared for the purposes of the current study.
- The 10th primary grade: the last grade of the upper primary stage which prepares for the transition of students to the secondary stage.

Study Limitations

- Place Limitations: The study was limited to Bint Adiy Secondary School for Girls in Amman.
- Time Limitations: The study was carried out during the first semester of the Academic Year 2019-2020, before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Human limitations: The study was carried out on a sample of the 10th primary grade female students.
- Topic limitations: Three texts were selected from the 10th class English textbook and changed into fictional stories that match with the topics of the lessons provided in the English language textbooks of the 10th primary grade. The topics were also limited by applying the tests of the Speaking Skills and the test of the Reading Comprehension Skills.
- The results of this study are limited by the nature of its procedures, in terms of the design of the two study tools, their validity and reliability, their psychometric features, and the lesson notes used to teach the content of the English language textbook of the 10th primary grade in accordance with the strategy of fictional story.

II. METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This part describes the method and procedures followed to implement the study. This includes the approach, study subjects and two tools, verification of the validity and reliability of the two tools, as well as the study procedures, variables, design and the statistical processing required for data analysis.

Approach

The semi-experimental approach was used, since it fits the purposes of this study.

Study Subjects

The study sample consisted of (62) female students randomly selected from the 10th primary grade enrolled in the first semester of the Academic Year 2019-2020 at Bint Adiy Secondary School for girls, affiliate to the Directorate of Education/ Liwa' al-Jama'ah in Amman, the Capital. The school was intentionally selected. Two classes were selected, one for the experimental group with a number of (32) female students, while the other was for the control group with a number of (30) female students.

Study Tools

The procedures of the current study require preparing two tests: the first is the Speaking Skills Test, and the second is the Reading Comprehension Skills Test.

First, speaking skills test

The speaking skill test was a situational test, where every student was asked to speak for three minutes about the topic: (I Looked for Something Deep in my Soul, I Find Nothing but Mom). The speech of every student was video- taped so as to be marked later on accurately. A seven-item criterion was used to score the skills with every item rating one skill of the following speaking skills: Correct pronunciation of the words, articulation of consonants from their correct place of articulation, correct use of body language, flow of words without interruption or hesitation, use of topic-connected ideas, idea order and sequence, use of appropriate imagery. Three scores were given to the skill of correct articulation of the letters, two scores for the skill of using body language, while five scores were allocated for each of the other skills with a total of 30 scores.

Validity of the speaking skills test

To verify the validity of the Speaking Skills Test, it was presented to a group of professors specialized in curricula and instruction, and professors specialized in measurement and evaluation. The test was a situational test, measuring the skills of speaking in English. Seven skills were determined as a criterion to correct the speech of every student. These criteria, along with the test were presented to a group of reviewers who agreed on the topic on which students were speaking of and on the criteria of correcting it with more than 80%.

Reliability of the speaking skills test

To verify the reliability of the Speaking Skills Test, the test-retest method was used by applying the test on a pilot sample consisting of (20) female students selected from outside the study sample, with a two-week interval between the two application times. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient, being (0.85). The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency method was used, with a reliability coefficient of (0.87).

Second, reading comprehension skills test

The Reading Comprehension Skills Test was prepared through benefiting from the literature review and the relevant previous studies. The test consisted of (9) questions, where two scores were allocated for each question. The questions were arranged after presenting a reading text, so that each question answers a skill of the reading comprehension skills as follows:

First, literal comprehension with its subskills: Giving the meaning of the words, state the main idea, state the minor ideas.

Second, inferential comprehension with its sub-skills: giving a suitable title, stating the author's goals, inferring the implicit meanings.

Third, Critical comprehension with its sub-skills: Distinguishing between cause and result, distinguishing between facts and opinions, giving a judgment about a certain situation.

Validity of the reading comprehension skills test

To verify the Reading Comprehension Skills Test, it was presented to a group of professors specialized in curricula and instruction, and professors specialized in measurement and evaluation. The paragraph on which 80% of the reviewers agreed was adopted. In this way, the content validity was verified to ensure that the test achieves the study aims i.e., to know the degree to which the tests measure the purposes for which they were designed. The reviewers' remarks of amending some paragraphs, and the linguistic wording of others were taken into account. The test remained as is. Through this procedure, the test validity was achieved.

Reliability of the reading comprehension skills test

To verify the reliability of the Reading Comprehension Skills Test, the test-retest method was used by applying the test on a pilot sample consisting of (20) female students selected from outside the study sample, with a two-week interval between the two application times. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient, being (0.83), and the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency method was used with a reliability coefficient of (0.82).

The Strategy of Fictional Story

Three texts were selected from the English language textbook of the 10th Primary Class and changed into fictional stories. These texts are:

- A Young Inventor
 - Emeralds in Egypt
 - Science and Scientists
- Appendix 1 illustrates these fictional stories.

Procedures of Study Implementation

1. Getting a letter from the Ministry of Education to facilitate the task of implementing the study.
2. Selecting a girls' school from the schools of the Directorate of Lewa' Al-Jama'h, which is Bint Adiy Secondary School for Girls at the Sport City Region.
3. Preparing the test of Speaking Skills and the test of the Reading Comprehension Skills and verifying their validity and reliability.
4. Changing the reading texts that are selected from the English language textbook of the 10th Primary Class into fictional stories.
5. Applying pre-test and post -test of the two tests, calculating and discussing results.

Study Design

The study included the following variables:
 Independent Variables: with two levels: fictional story strategy, and the typical method.
 Dependent Variables: Speaking and Reading Comprehension.

The following design was adopted:

G1	O1 O2	X	O1 O2
G2	O1 O2	-----	O1 O2

Where:

- G1: Experimental Group
- G2: Control Group
- O1: Speaking Skills Test
- O2: Reading Comprehension Skills Test
- X: Experimental Treatment: Fictional Story Strategy

Statistical Treatment

After collecting the information, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to carry out the data statistical treatment and to answer the two questions of the study. The means, standard deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) were used to identify the difference trends between the means.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results related to Question One: Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) between the experimental group and the control group in terms of developing speaking skills that can be attributed to the teaching method (fictional story strategy, typical method)?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the performance of the two study groups in the speaking pretest and posttest. Table (1) shows that:

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Performance of the Two Study Groups in the Speaking Pretest and Posttest

Variables	No.	Pre-Application		Post-Application	
		M	SD	M	SD
Experimental	32	13.02	1.632	18.97	1.263
Control	30	12.98	1.327	15.04	1.796

Table (1) indicates that the mean of the experimental group students' scores in the speaking posttest was the highest, being (18.97), while the mean of the group that was taught using the typical method was (15.04). To determine whether the differences between the means of the study's two groups were statistically significant at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) , the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was applied. Table (2) shows the result of this analysis.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance of the Performance of the Two Study Groups in the Speaking Pretest and Posttest

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F Value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Pre-Application	4.484	1	4.484	1.866	.177	.032
Method	549.713	1	549.713	228.747	.000*	.801
Error	136.980	59	2.321			
Total	720.983	61				

*Significant at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$)

Table (2) shows that (F) value of the teaching method (fictional story) was (228.747) at the significance level of (0.000). This points out that there are statistically significant differences between the means of the performance of the two study groups on the speaking post-test. To find out in favor of who the difference was, the adjusted means were calculated for the performance of the study groups in the speaking post-test. Table (3) shows those means.

Table 3: The Adjusted Means and Standard Errors of the Performance of the Study Groups in the Speaking Posttest

Teaching Method	No.	M	SE
Fictional Story Strategy Seg	32	18.97	.290
Typical Method	30	15.04	.280

Table (3) shows that the means of the experimental group which was taught using the fictional story strategy was the highest, being (18.97), while the mean of the group that was taught using the typical method was (15.04). When compared with the mean of the control group, the difference was in favor of the experimental group. To know the effect size, Eta Square (η^2) was calculated for the speaking test, being (0.801). Thus, we can say that 80.1% of the variance between the experimental group and the control group in the speaking test is attributed to the teaching method using the fictional story strategy.

The fictional story strategy superiority may be attributed to the plentiful advantages of this strategy such as developing students' imagination when they get immersed in the story plot, which is positively reflected on speaking about that role, or when orally narrating the events to their friends within or outside the school. This practice will definitely increase the ability to speak.

The reason may be, otherwise attributed to the story atmosphere which motivated the students to interact with the events, thus making them represent the text words and meanings, acquiring new vocabulary and linguistic structures that made them more capable of speaking, since a student needs language resources to enable her to speak fluently. This result may be attributed to the fact that the imagination has increased learner's concentration, and so, an idea or ideas are formulated about narratives. Fictional stories are characterized by providing many details, which is positively reflected on the intellectual wealth that a student requires when speaking about a particular topic.

The reason may be also attributed to the fact that the topics that were written using the fictional story technique require more participation of students when speaking about them. This led to the development of the different speaking skills. When comparing the results of the current study with the results of previous studies, it becomes clear that the results of the current study are consistent with the findings concluded by Hussein (2012) , that found an impact of religious and social stories on the development of oral expression skills. The results of the current study are consistent with the study of Rabi' (2018) which concluded that using short story has surpassed the typical method in the development of Arabic language skills, including speaking skills.

Results related to the Second Question: Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) between the experimental group and the control group in terms of developing the skills of reading comprehension that can be attributed to the teaching method (fictional story strategy, typical method)?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the performance of the two study groups in the reading comprehension pretest and posttest. Table (4) shows that:

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of the Performance of the Two Study Groups in the Reading Comprehension Pre- test and Post- test

Variables	No.	Pre-Application		Post-Application	
		M	SD	M	SD
Experimental	32	9.05	2.604	13.11	1.382
Control	30	9.02	1.673	11.01	1.736

Table (4) shows that the mean of the experimental group students' scores in the reading comprehension post- test was the highest, being (13.11), while the mean of the group that was taught using the typical method was (11.01). To determine whether the difference between the means of the two study groups were statistically significant at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$), an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was applied. Table (5) shows the results of this analysis:

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance of the Performance of the Two Study Groups in the Reading Comprehension Pretest and Posttest

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares (MS)	F Value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Pre-application	8.494	1	8.494	3.577	.064	.059
Method	440.980	1	440.980	185.722	.000*	.765
Error	135.341	59	2.293			
Total	585.333	61				

*Significant at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$)

Table (5) shows that (F) value was (185.722) at the significance level of (0.000). This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the means of the performance of the two study groups on the reading comprehension post-test. To find out in favor of who the difference was, the adjusted means were calculated for the performance of the study groups in the reading comprehension post- test. Table (6) shows those means.

Table 6: The Adjusted Means and Standard Errors of the Performance of the Study Groups in the Reading Comprehension Post- test

Teaching Method	No.	M	SE
Fictional Story Strategy	32	13.11	.286
Typical Method	30	11.01	.277

Table (6) shows that the mean of the experimental group who were taught using the fictional story method was the highest, being (13.11), while the mean of the group that was taught using the typical method was (11.01). The Difference was in favor of the mean of the experimental group compared with the mean of the control group. To find out the effect size, Eta Square (η^2) of the reading comprehension test was calculated and found to be (0.765). Thus, we can say that

76.5% of the variance in the reading comprehension test between the means of the two study groups is attributed to the teaching method using the strategy of fictional story.

This result may be attributed to the fact that the student, while reading the fictional story, has exploited all her sensory and intellectual capabilities in dealing with the events, which may be characterized by ambiguity at sometimes and contradiction at others. This leads to the expansion of the student's thinking capacity, which resulted in reading comprehension. Other reasons for this result are related to the activation of interpretation skills, as the events of the fictional story made the learner navigate beyond the superficial, expanding her perceptions, and exploiting her imaginative abilities, so she reads correctly, and understands the meanings in a better way. There is also another reason for the superiority of the fictional story strategy due to the fact that this type of story has developed curiosity among students that can be shown in questioning and inquiring. This makes the learning environment more exciting which resulted in more reading comprehension. It can also be attributed to the fact that fanciful imagination helps in building relationships between the text components to extract the meanings involved. This is an important goal in reading, as it requires the student to perform higher order mental operations, while reading this type of fiction, especially in a language other than her native language. As a result, this strategy has led to improving the skills of reading and reading comprehension.

Upon comparing this result with the results of previous studies, the findings of the current study are consistent with the findings of previous studies, such as the studies of Salah (2002), Abu Kayed (2004), Chin (2013) and al-Tatari (2016), whose results showed a statistically significant impact of following the narrative method in developing the skills of reading comprehension.

Recommendations

1. Guide the English male and female teachers to use the fictional story method, and include this technique in the Teacher's Book.
2. Hold training workshops and courses to train English male and female teachers on the latest strategies in teaching English; develop these strategies to adopt the narrative technique in teaching.
3. Carry out other studies on the efficacy of various types of stories on teaching English at different school stages.

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APPENDIX 1

Fictional Stories A Young Inventor

The old bird woke up terrified from his child's voice "Emily Cummins". Her father asked:

- What has happened my daughter?"

She replied that she invented new things, when she was only four.

'But how about now, when I got older?' She will make things from waste materials, like making toys from old things she found in her grandfather's garden.

-Tomorrow, I'll go to my school, the young birds' school, and I'll tell them that I have invented a lot of toys that can fly with them, especially a portable fridge.

Sally (Emily's friend): You'll help millions of people all over the world. In many parts of the world like Africa, people haven't got electricity.

Emily: Yes, my friend, I am working on a school project and I will fly with my small portable fridge to keep medicines or small food items clean, dry and cool.

This portable fridge is ideal, because it doesn't use electricity.

While Emily was heading to Africa, her friend Sam asked her:

Sam: How can your portable fridge work without electricity?

Emily: We can build it using old car parts and other objects from our homes.

Emily went with her friend to Africa to work on her design. She spent five months in Namibia testing out her fridge.

The little bird 'Emily' landed with her friend Sam where crowds of people gathered around them.

Emily: I will give the design to the people of Africa for free, so that they can produce their own portable fridges following my instructions.

I will also invent a special water carrier to help your women and children who often have to walk long distances every day to collect water, but they can only carry a few containers at a time. However, with my water carrier, they can carry up to five containers of water.

The people were bewildered from Emily's intelligence, specially when she invented the wheel out of tree branches and used old tyres to keep the containers in place. People can also use the product to carry firewood or other heavy things.

People there wanted to honour Emily for her efforts. So, they invited all the birds in the area and awarded her many awards, including the Bird of the Year In 2009 CE (Common Era) and 'Save-the-Planet' award in 2008 CE.

All the birds flapped their beautiful wings for her, and all the people clapped happily with the inventions of the little bird 'Emily Cummins'.

Emeralds in Egypt

All over the world ants live in kingdoms. There was a large kingdom for ants near the Red Sea in ancient Egypt. Once upon a time, on a rainy day, two small ants agreed to travel through the underground tunnels used by ants all over the world. When the two ants arrived to the end of one of the tunnels, they saw something shinning with a lighter green colour.

One of the ants said: My grandmother once told us that this land has many deep holes that were dug by human beings many centuries ago. These holes were called mines. In ancient times, many Egyptian pharaohs searched for stones called "Emeralds".

The other ant: Yes, my friend. I have read about the history of Egypt, where the mines were actually known as Cleopatra's mines, because Cleopatra liked to wear the stones. She wore jewellery made from emeralds and decorated many ornaments with the jewel. Cleopatra presented noble visitors with carved emerald sculptures that looked like the Queen.

Also, I have read that the ancient Egyptians believed that emeralds were not only beautiful but were also able to cure disease.

First ant: Yes, my cousin told me that through these tunnels, emerald extended from Egypt to Mexico, where the Aztecs live, and the Peru where Incas live, where the two people held the emerald in high regard.

While the two small ants were speaking about the emeralds, suddenly, a large weird ant appeared, and said:

-Don't be afraid. I am an old ant, and am from the historian who wrote about the emeralds that have great value. There were many emeralds in these mines. So overall the 'Cleopatra mines' were in use for over 1,500 years.

The old weird ant continued:

-I am feeling sad because there were no emeralds left in these mines in Egypt since the early nineteenth century. I've read that the majority of the world's emeralds can be found in Colombia.

At the end of the trip, the two small ants returned home sadly because of the lost emeralds.

Science Matters

Khalid was sitting in a garden near his house, reading a biology book about insects. Suddenly, a beautiful butterfly landed on a branch of a berry tree.

She said:

-What are you reading, Khalid?

Khalid was bewildered because of this butterfly; how does she speak? And how does she know his name?

Khalid: Why do you ask?

Butterfly: Because you people think that you, human beings, are the most intelligent creatures on earth. But, in fact, Allah has given all creatures a lot of knowledge.

Khalid (more astonished): I want to ask you a number of questions about the world around us.

Butterfly: Go ahead please.

Khalid: My first question is about the lightning that happened a few minutes ago over that forest.

Butterfly: The lightning can burn that forest, because its temperature is ten times hotter than the sun. Do you know that a hundred million micro-organisms live in your mouth?

Khalid (surprised): How did you know all this information?

Butterfly: Don't be surprised, let's have a scientific competition. We'll ask each other questions to know who has more knowledge.

Khalid: You start first.

Butterfly: What are the main areas of science?

Khalid: There are three main areas: biology, chemistry and physics.

Butterfly: If you want to study about me, in which field can you find me?

Khalid: Biology

Butterfly (laughing quietly): You are smart. It's your turn now.

Khalid: What fields does biology include?

Butterfly: Botany, Zoology, Ecology and Environmental of Science. Chemistry is the study of building blocks of nature and how they combine to form the solids, liquids and gases that make up everything.

Khalid: Slow down butterfly, you are very smart, tell me what does physics deal with?

Butterfly: Physics is the branch of science that deals with matter and energy and how they interact.

Butterfly: Now, try to answer these questions:

- Why do we see lighting before we hear thunder?
- Why do we need to breathe in more air during exercise?
- What do oil and coal come from?

Then, the butterfly flew away, saying:

- Ask your teacher, because you may not know the answers for these questions.