

The Effect of Using Educational Websites on First Year Students' Achievement in English Grammar in Badr Community college

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of using educational websites on the first year students' achievements in English Grammar in Badr Community college to improve the quality of teaching English language. To achieve the aim of the study, a pre/post-test assessment was constructed to measure students' achievement in English grammar. The test consisted of four questions (twenty items) selected from the curriculum of the course. The participants of the study consisted of 52 students distributed on two groups enrolling in Taibah university (Badr Community college) during the academic year 2013/2014. Descriptive statistical methods were used (means and standard deviations) for pre and post- tests of students' achievement in English grammar to experimental and control groups. Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the achievement mean scores of the learners of the experimental group who studied the simple present via explanations found in the educational websites and the control group who studied the same grammatical item using the traditional method in favor of the experimental group. Accordingly, the researcher recommended integrating the new technologies in the syllabi and citing websites relevant to language skills and encouraging English instructors to vary their methods, techniques and ways of teaching according to students' interests..

Keywords: websites, educational websites, Badr Community college, english grammar.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the Internet in education is a well-recognized fact. It provides access to many resources of information which are difficult to be obtained through other traditional means .The continuous improvements in Internet technologies are providing new learning environments that attract learners and motivate them to learn. The use of the internet in higher education is increasing and has become an important topic in many educational journals and researches. It plays an important role in facilitating and improving the process of English learning.

Modern Web-based learning provides the means for changing the way of thinking in which the learning materials are brought to learners. According to Medina (2002) using multimedia and web learning resources may enrich the learning environment, enhance the learning process, make education more widely available, and produce cost effective solutions for the dissemination of knowledge.

Many educational websites have nice features such as interactive examples, animation, video, narrative and written text. These websites are designed to provide students with a "self-help" learning resource to complement traditional textbook (Arsham, 2002). They make a wonderful environment for enriching and improving educational process through interactive hypertext, collaboration and communication and dynamic content (Taylor, 1997).

According to Karisiddappa (2002), these online media sources have been viewed as valuable sources of information that can assist learners in increasing their capacity for social interaction. They are seen to promote investigation and creativity through interaction of various forms of knowledge such as text, multimedia, graphics, photos, music, video, sound, animation, etc.

Instructors should use these websites to enhance learners' communicative skills in order to express themselves in the target language and give learners the opportunities to interact with others and effectively experience negotiation of meaning during classroom instruction (Sawadogo, 2004). Involving learners in authentic and meaningful interactions with learners worldwide via the internet may motivate learners to keep learning and support learners to become more responsible and willing to engage in their own learning, which is defined as learner autonomy (Toyoda, 2001).

Blake (2000) suggests that Instructors can encourage greater amount of interactions by using the internet tools both inside and outside the classroom. Shield and Weininger (2004) believe that learning is no longer restrained in time and space; rather, through the internet, learners are offered opportunities to communicate and learn collaboratively with learners worldwide. This new way of learning that engages learners in authentic social interactions can greatly

expose learners to the target language and practice what they have learned in the classroom. According to Shumin (1997), learners can also have more opportunities to participate in the target context and learn the pragmatic knowledge, which is very difficult to be achieved in EFL cultures.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The development of internet applications and educational websites has brought new possibilities in education and helped learners to develop more strategies and techniques in their teaching practices. Learning English grammar through using these websites can be of great help as they brings a lot of resources and authentic materials for learners. This gives them more and more opportunities to use the Internet in their learning practices. The present study determined whether the use of the educational websites improve the achievement of the first year students in English Grammar in Badr Community college.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of using educational websites on the students' achievements in English Grammar. Moreover, it will explore students' responses toward using these websites in their learning.

QUESTION OF THE STUDY

This study attempted to answer the following question:

Are there any significant differences in the students' achievements in English Grammar due to the kind of learning they are exposed to (website learning or traditional learning)?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study stems from the following considerations:

- 1.It may provide different insights into the effect of using educational websites on the students' achievements in English grammar to sensitize instructors, curriculum designers , and researchers to integrate new ways of instructions in English.
- 2.The findings of the study may help professors as well as instructors to choose and use the proper strategies in teaching English grammar to improve the quality of teaching English language.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Nutta (2001) Conducted a study comparing the computer-based grammar instruction and the teacher-directed grammar instruction .The results showed that for all levels of English proficiency, the computer -based students scored significantly higher on open-ended tests covering the structures in question rather than the teacher- directed instruction. They also

indicated that computer-based instruction can be an effective method of teaching L2 grammar.

Abu-Seileek (2004) conducted a study to explore the effect of a Computer Assisted Language Learning program on students' writing ability in English by teaching the program cooperatively and collectively. Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group, who studied via computer, and the control group, who studied in the traditional method in favor of the experimental group.

Al-Qumoul (2005) conducted a study to investigate the effect of an instructional software program of English language functions on tenth graders' achievement. Results revealed that the students who studied the English language functions through CAI lessons performed better than those who learnt by the traditional method.

O'Dwyer, Russell, Bebell, and Tucker-Seeley (2005) Examined the relationship between home and school computer use and students' English Language arts test scores. They found that fourth-grade students who reported greater frequency of technology use at school to edit papers were likely to have higher total English/language arts test scores and higher writing scores on fourth grade test scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) English/Language Arts test.

Obaidat (2006) investigated the effect of the computer chatting in the development of tenth grade students' reading and writing skills of the English language. The researcher employed chatting software to examine the effect of using the chatting as a new mode to develop the reading and writing skills. Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the achievement of the experimental and the control group in the reading and writing skills in favor of the experimental group which was taught via the computer chatting. Also, there were statistically significant differences between the achievement of the experimental and the control group in the writing skill in favor of the experimental group which was taught via the computer chatting.

Al-Sobh (2010) investigated the effectiveness of a web-based instructional program on Jordanian secondary students' performance. The researcher also investigated the students' opinions and their linguistic behaviors about a web-based instructional program. Results revealed that there were significant differences in the students' mean scores of the overall English writing achievement post-test in favor of experimental group. Moreover, they revealed that students who used the web-based instructional

program had positive opinions towards using the internet in learning the skill of writing.

Turki (2012) conducted a study to explore The effect of using an educational website on learning achievement of the students taking "Designing Educational Software" in the faculty of Teachers College in King Saud University. Results revealed that the experimental group was better in performance than the control group. The researcher recommended further educational research that investigates using the internet and its applications in education especially through distance learning.

The previous research studies support the idea that the technology and Internet facilitate students' English learning. In addition, all researchers asserted the importance of technology and web based language learning. It is clear from the studies that using the technology and web based curriculum is more beneficial and helpful than using the traditional methods. It is hoped that this study will lead to increase and improve students' achievement in English through using the educational websites in their learning process.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher discussed the procedures used to conduct this study. He described the study variables, population, sample, instrument, procedures and statistical analysis that were used in the study.

Variables of the Study

This study consisted of the following variables:

1. The independent variable : the method of teaching which has two levels: websites instructional learning and traditional learning.
2. The dependent variable: the students' achievement.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the students of first year enrolling in Badr Community College in Taibah University during the second semester of the academic year 2013/2014. They were 98 students.

The participants of the study

The participants of the study consisted of 52 students. They were divided into two groups. The control group consisted of 26 students taught in a traditional way while the experimental group consisted of 26 students taught through using the internet and the educational websites.

The participants were taught the third unit found in the English book called "*Interactions access Focus on Grammar*". It talked about simple present. There were numerous instructional websites to help learners in finding more information about their materials.

The researcher arranged these websites according to the items of the book and provided them to the participants. They were taught how to access these websites.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher developed a test based on the instructional material of the English grammar course. The test was prepared by the researcher. He validated it and made it reliable. All groups; the experimental groups and the control group were taught by the instructor of the course. The participants in all groups underwent a pre-test to determine their actual level before starting the experiment, and the same test was administered as a post-test at the end of the experiment to assess participants' achievement. The time interval between the pre-test and the post-test was (16) weeks; a period long enough to minimize the effect of the pre-test on the results and conclusions of the experiment; The test contained twenty right or wrong statements.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the test reliability, the researcher followed test/retest technique. The researcher administered it to a pilot sample of (27) subjects outside the study sample in the same college from which the participants were chosen with a two-week period between the pre-test and the post-test. The reliability of the test was concluded using correlation coefficient and found to be 0.84. The researcher considered this value acceptable for the purposes of the study.

Validity of the Instrument

The researcher constructed the test instrument taking into consideration the instructional material. The researcher validated the instrument by consulting four English language professors teaching at Taibah University and Al - Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and two instructors at Taibah University. The researcher followed the recommendations of the referees and made amendments accordingly. When producing the final version of the test, the remarks and recommendations of these English experts were taken into account.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

A short course of nine 50-minute periods was planned to teach nine different sections picked from the third unit found in the English book called "*Interactions access Focus on Grammar*". It talked about simple present. The researcher was the instructor to ensure authenticity and avoid unserious performance of any other English instructor. The course lasted a month, two period(s) a week .

The grammar course consisted of nine lessons. The researcher surfed and benefited from many English teaching websites and found a lot of websites that

explained the simple present section. He divided these websites and arranged them according to the sections in the grammar book.

At the beginning of the course, the researcher began with a common introductory lesson about the internet and its use in learning English and how can learners benefit from the internet applications. Later, he talked about the importance of educational websites in education as a whole and in teaching English grammar in particular. Then he divided the class into two groups according to their level in English, a websites group and a traditional group. Then, he conducted a grammar pre-test to explore their English grammar store and collected data needed for further analysis. Sheets were corrected and marks were registered.

In the coming periods, the researcher practiced teaching the selected sections through returning to the selected websites talked about simple present topics. He started the lessons with a warm-up, presentation, grammar activities, assessment and feedback, and a supportive homework. In the next period, he collected the homework sheets and gave feedback. He encouraged learners to work in pairs. In the last period, an overall grammar revision was performed.

The researcher tried to provide an easier alternative to course books. He copied the websites and the explanations on CDs and distributed them to each student in the experimental group.

At the end, a post-test was conducted to measure their grammar improvements. Sheets were corrected and marks were scored. To assure objectivity, the researcher pushed the pre-test and post-test sheets to three of English instructors in the Badr college to correct them again. Same marks were recorded.

Equivalent Test

Means and standard deviations were used to analyze data on the pre-test. In order to determine the equivalency of the two groups on pre-test, the means and the standard deviation were computed, as shown in table 1

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviation of Students' Scores on the Pre-test.

Method of Teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Traditional	26	61.62	14.291
Website	26	60.96	12.985
Total	52	61.29	13.523

Table 1 shows that the mean scores and standard deviation of pre-test were close to each other. This result proves that the two groups were identical on their achievements.

DATA ANALYSIS

To answer the question of this study, the researcher used SPSS program to find the means and standard deviations. He calculated their scores on the pre and post English grammar tests for both the experimental and control groups.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of using educational websites in evaluating students' achievement in English grammar. The researcher followed the equivalent pre /post test two group designs. Therefore, the means and standard deviations were used to analyze data as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Scores on the Pre/Post test.

Method of Teaching		Pre-Grades	Post-Grades
Traditional	Mean	61.62	65.54
	Std. Deviation	14.291	15.943
Website	Mean	60.96	70.12
	Std. Deviation	12.985	12.176
Total	Mean	61.29	67.83
	Std. Deviation	13.523	14.234

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviation of pre/post test for both groups. It reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores in the achievement test of both the experimental group who used the educational websites in their learning and the control group who were taught by the traditional method. The mean scores of the experimental group is (70.12) while it is (65.54) for the control group. The difference between the two groups' mean scores is (4.58).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that there are statistically significant differences in the achievement mean scores of the learners of the experimental group who studied the simple present via explanations found in the educational websites and the control group who studied the same grammatical item using the traditional method. This difference was in favor of the experimental group. As shown in table 1, there were no statistically differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre- test. The scores were (60.96) for the experimental group and (61.62) for the control group. This result indicates that the participants had the same background about the grammatical topic "Simple Present" before implementing the experiment. This also indicates that both groups had similar scores in the pre test. Accordingly, the extra academic progress in the achievements of the learners in the field of the simple present could be attributed to the method employed in teaching this item via internet. The total mean scores of the experimental groups in the post-test were (70.12), while it was (65.54) for the control groups, this

means that the achievements in the post -test for both the experimental and control groups is attributed to the treatment. It can be noticed that the extra gain in the experimental group's mean scores is higher than the extra gain in the control group's mean scores. This improvement is attributed to the method of teaching employed. In other words, the use of the Internet and educational websites in teaching simple present has improved the abilities of the learners of the experimental group.

In addition, this result answered the research question and proved that using the Internet and educational websites in teaching English grammar can affect language learning positively. It played a beneficial role during teaching periods. Moreover, language teachers can find this way of teaching of great importance to be used as an effective teaching tool. The results of Nutta (2001), Abu-Seileek (2004), Al-Qumoul (2005), O'Dwyer, Russell, Bebell, and Tucker-Seeley (2005), Al-Sobh (2010) and Turki (2012) confirm the results to which the present study ends up.

One possible explanation for the positive effect of using educational websites in teaching English grammar is that these websites require computers and modern technological tools that enable each individual to work according to his own pace. The learners used to think that these tools are forbidden in the educational setting and inside the classroom. Though giving them the chance to use these tools and enter the websites to find information about the target grammatical topic, they move freely from one component to another as they like according to their abilities and needs. This motivated them to gain a lot of information about the topic and thus performed better in the post test.

Another possible explanation is that most of educational websites are accompanied by animation, video pictures, colors, music and sounds. This makes students feel funny when they learn according to their abilities. In addition, it attracts their attention and make them learn more efficiently and effectively on their own with these resources which technology makes available.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study investigated the effect of using educational websites on the first year students' achievements in English Grammar in Badr Community college. The findings indicated that the experimental group that used educational websites was better than the control group that used traditional method in learning English grammar. It can be concluded that English grammar can be learned more effectively using technological tools such as educational websites in learning English than the traditional

techniques. Using this kind of methods may help, assist and motivate students to learn English grammar effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed above, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1. Employing the internet and educational websites in teaching English language skills and other components of English language.
2. Integrating the new technologies in the syllabi and in teaching practices and citing websites relevant to language skills.
3. Encouraging English instructors to vary their methods, techniques and ways of teaching, according to their students' interests.

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