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THE USE OF E-TOOLS IN LEARNING ENGLISH BY EFL STUDENTS AT YARMOUK UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

The objective of this paper was to investigate English as foreign language students at Yarmouk University engagement in using e-learning tools in learning the English language. This study was conducted in Jordan. This mixed-method approach comprised 30 English Language and Literature students in their 1st Year of study selected randomly. This study used a single research instrument that included a 16 items observation checklist. The elicited data were analyzed using textual analysis coding and SPSS, complemented by descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses. The findings indicated that past experiences relevant influenced EFL Jordanian undergraduate students at Yarmouk University's use of e-learning tools / MOOCs when learning the English language.

Keywords:

E-Learning, EFL, MOOCs and Engagement.

Introduction

The rapid growth of Internet and computer technologies has changed the way of communication in teaching and learning and various aspects of human life and move to a new dimension (Goldin and Katz, 2018). The term e-learning is an umbrella that refers to several different names such as online learning, virtual learning, web-based learning; technology mediated teaching, and so forth. E-learning is upshot of the Information, Communication Technology (ICT) which is considered as very vital strategy for the growth of the knowledge

and economy of developing countries (Baxter & Haycock, 2014; Boogs, 2015). Generally, elearning refers to the use of electronic tools to facilitate a learning process.

Hence, it is evident that information and communication technology has reshaped our social life in several ways and shows potential to transform the nature of education – the role of teachers and where and how it takes place. As part of ICT, e-learning is believed to be one of the important norms in the field of education for several reasons. One of the reasons is the potentiality of e-learning to allow the freedom of learning from anywhere, any time and to acquire advanced IT usage skills. The arrival of latest generation internet technology provides multiple possibilities to make the e-learning system more effective than its current format. The current e-learning systems merely provide access to different learning environments in amass learning system, but such systems are not effective as it homogenises the learning environment despite heterogeneous behaviours and preferences of the learners (Kuo et al., 2014; Bernard et al., 2014).

E-learning implementation is alluring for organisations as a way to keep up with world trends (Web 4.0). However, many underestimate the changes that this implementation will bring about. One of the important changes that need to be recognised for effective planning of implementation is that of management structures and the changes in the use of Internet from web 1.0 to web 4.0. Web1.0 is the first generation of the web, also known as informational web. User only can read and share information over web pages. Web 2.0 is the read write networking platform, where the user can communicate among each other. Web3.0 could be defined as semantic web, personalization like my yahoo, iGoogle etc. It changes the web into a language that can be read and categorized by the system rather than human. Web 4.0 will be about a linked web which communicates with us like we communicate with each other. Web4.0 is called "Symbiotic" web which is very powerful and fully executing. Web 4.0 will be read-write-execution-concurrency web (Beth et al., 2015; Nath and Iswary, 2015).

The e-learning helps nurture the value of education and enhance teaching and learning as it can be a tool for transmitting the knowledge to the students, retrieving information and as a medium of communication states that emergence of various e-learning resources offer various multimedia tools such as images, animation, video and audio. Distinguishing the distinctive qualities of interaction that impacts the effectiveness of e-learning will help us amicably evaluate clearly which thus will enable us to create frameworks which will be cost effective, convenient and useful for teaching (Bolsen et al., 2016). Several ways are taken into consideration in which the emergent technological tools can be employed to restructure the traditional spaces of educational practice, and to identify dynamics frameworks that may be neglected in the wake of "virtualisation" (Crook and Bligh, 2016).

Literature Review

During the past few decades witnessed an extensive development in the fields of internet and information communication technology that made them rich area for research for both learners and teachers (Gunduz&Ozcan, 2017). The application of internet in education creates an essential platform for learners to obtain knowledge and information that are of great significance. Thus, scholars have defined the concept of e-learning differently. E-learning represents the focus of interest for many researchers. This is because internet includes a variety of applications, learning techniques and procedures (Ahmad, 2018; Fletcher& Bullock, 2015). Therefore, it is problematic to provide a particular definition of e-learning. That is, there are

many definitions of e-learning according to the field and area of specialisation (Zarei and Amani, 2018). In relevance, a considerable number of questions have been raised in order to conclude a common definition of e-learning. For instance, in an attempt to define e-learning states that; Is e-learning an on-line coursework for students at a distance? Does it mean using a virtual learning environment to support the provision of campus-based education? Does it refer to an on-line tool to enrich, extend and enhance collaboration? OR is it a totally on-line learning or part of blended learning?

Some researchers define e-learning as the process of online courses delivery using technology independently (Forbes &Khoo, 2015). In addition, e-learning is defined as the use of the latest technology and internet to develop the quality of teaching and learning by providing learners the chance to independently acquire knowledge and information. Therefore, e-learning relates to the application of internet knowledge and information communication technology to help learners' access online teaching and learning materials. It is the electronical learning that that comprises the use of digital technology by individual learners. Later on, the definition of e-learning was limited by some scholars to internet-based learning. E-learning is used in varied perceptions entailing distributed learning, distance learning, online-learning, blended learning and hybrid teaching.

Similarly, Shadiev& Yang (2020) define e-learning as the process of using information and communication technologies in different fields to aid academic institutions at all levels. It is the use of online and distance classes as supplementary teaching and learning materials. According to Albiladi&Alshareef (2019) e-learning is the use of knowledge and information that is mainly necessitated and provided by means of electronic devices. E-learning depends basically on internet and computer mediated learning, but it is probable to develop into systems including a considerable number of channels that target the learning process such as mobiles, laptops, tablets, satellites and personal computers (Buran &Evseeva, 2015).

On the other hand, Azamat Akbarov, Gönen and Aydoğan (2018) e-learning has become the essence of global learning and source of knowledge and information in which internet is a main database for teachers and learners. It provides flexible and accessible mode of learning that generates solid, grounded and appropriate educational environment for learners. Therefore, the concept of e-learning is defined as distance learning by means of using video presentations, online classes and distance learning classes. This means that the revolution in the use of internet and information and communication technologies has shifted distance learning into e-learning and blended learning as well (Duman, Orhon&Gedik, 2015).

E-learning is revolutionary method that assists the workforce to achieve knowledge and develop their individual skills required for getting the best of their learning process. For example, Dziuban et al., (2018) state that e-learning method focuses on the learner and its proposal as including a system that is collaborative, monotonous, self-paced and customizable. E-learning is the use of computer network technology depending mainly on internet to give learners the necessary knowledge and information required for achieving their targets (Fakhir, 2015).

Likewise, e-learning has been defined by Ghazizadeh and Fatemipour (2017) according to its characteristics including multimedia, different types of information and collaborative communication in which learners possess independent control over their learning situations.

They also state that e-learning provides learners with the necessary access needed for getting knowledge and information. Thus, e-learning permits learners to use internet and information technology systems flexibly and accessibly on varied types of computer operating systems. This modern educational and technological environment is focused on electronic networks which allow learners at higher education level possess independent support and also to entail learning schedules that is appropriate to all types of learners (Goldenberg and Romeo, 2015). This provides quality interaction between both learners and teachers compared to the conventional mode of learning. E-learning creates an effective learning, flexible, accessible, enjoyable and interesting due to the availability of the use of multimedia and internet-based platforms (Hoare & Hu, 2015). The basic characteristics that helped e-learning become the most significant educational technology involve the effective service, quality, speed and cost. It is very clear that e-learning can goals as well as developing their future careers without the need for attending class within a fixed timetable or restricted schedule (Liaw et al, 2007).

Ja'Ashan (2015) states that e-learning resulted in the development and increase of online classes and blended learning lessons at higher education levels. Other scholars define e-learning from three different dimensions including distance learning, technological and perspective of e-learning as pedagogy (Algahtani, 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that it is problematic to define e-learning in one single definition. Some scholars define e-learning as giving a full on-line course only which entails internet-based facilities for the delivery of instructive and provision processes.

In conclusion, it is in this researcher's opinion that EFL language teachers an learners in Jordan in particular and other countries in general can use e-learning tools not only as a research method for analysing their own learning and teaching practices especially EFL skills, but also as an analytical technique for investigating the communication and interaction process between language learners. The use of e-learning tools can facilitate language learners to discover what language is and how it is utilised to achieve interaction objectives in different communication contexts (Akdogan, 2017; Martín-Rodríguez et al., 2015).

In this regard, the present study adopts Model adopted from TAM Wigfield and Eccles (2000) Framework Models to analyse Yarmouk University English as a foreign language students' engagement in using e-learning tools in learning English. Since their use of e-learning tools plays a crucial part in the process of language learning, the researcher wishes to conduct a detailed investigation on the use of e-learning tools such as Moodle in learning English as a foreign language in a Jordanian setting.

Statement of the Problem

The use of computers and Internet has become part and parcel of every aspect in our personal communications, including learning and teaching (Allen, 2016). Learning using technology (often termed e-learning) has become a popular approach within higher education institutions due to the continuous growth of Internet innovations and technologies (Al-Adwan, Al-Adwan and Smedley, 2013).

In fact, the growth of various technological tools as part of the development of ICT strategy, immensely contributed to the growth of the knowledge and economy in developing countries. With this development, many universities and colleges across the world have incorporated elearning resources in their learning systems. E-learning resources are often supplemented or

replaced traditional methods, allowing students to engage with their learning alongside or instead of face-to-face delivery through various web technologies (Almarabeh, 2014).

However, the success of the implementation such resources in the field of learning requires an extensive understanding of the end user acceptance of resources which can be associated with their experiences in using the resources. E-learning was first introduced in Jordan by the Arab Open University (AOU) in 2002 (Abbad, Morris and De Nahlik, 2009).

The e-learning system adopted by this university is blended e-learning not distance. The university is using Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as e-learning system for online exams, student authentication to its grades, and teacher authentication to its contents (such as module description, student's names, and student's grades (Almarabeh, 2014). Recognising the importance of Internet and computers in the teaching and learning environment, most of the universities in the developing countries like Jordan were trying to improve their students' engagement in using various e-learning platforms and other computer related programmes. The present study will seek to find the level of students' engagement on e-learning in the selected university and their variation ability to use e-learning materials. It will suggest to the tutors ways to remedy the affected situation where there is need for intervention and planning to make education more effective using new technological tools in teaching English language skills to their students in various classrooms.

Objective of the Study

This study intends to investigate Yarmouk University EFL students' engagement in using elearning tools in learning English language. The present study intends to explore EFL students' engagement of e-learning tools at Yarmouk University in learning English.

Study Questions

This study addresses the following research question.

1. How do EFL students at Yarmouk University engage in using E-learning tools in learning English language?

Methods

This case study used mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) to investigate EFL students engagement in using e-learning tools in learning English as a foreign language produced by 30 students at the Dept. of English Language and Literature at Yarmouk University in Jordan for the academic year 2018/2019. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009:426) a case study research "is a qualitative research approach in which researchers focus on a unity of study known as a bounded system (e.g., individual teachers, a classroom, or a school)". In other words, it is an investigation of a phenomenon that occurs within a specific context that is bounded, identifiable and appropriately studied. The independent variable in this study is students' engagement with e-learning tools used by the participants, and the dependent variable is their progress in EFL classroom. This study analyzed e-learning tools to gain a deeper insight and thorough understanding of their use in learning English language by undergraduate students. The findings were categorized under two criteria: product-based and process-based criteria. In the product –based criterion, analysis on the use of e-learning tools, content and the overall rating of the 16 items observation checklists were provided. The present research adopts the approach of detailed analysis of the use of e-learning tools.

Discussion

The researcher used six-scale observation checklist, respectively; extremely unfavourable (1); unfavourable (2); slightly unfavourable (3); favourable (4); highly favourable (5) and very highly favourable (6). The observation checklist consisting of 10 items that varied in responses. Thus, it is realised that the analysis of the data showed that the Mean of the participants' responses on the questionnaires items was 832 - 1-1 for item (1), 1.833 - 2.665 for item (2), 2.666-3.498 for item (3) and 3.499 - 4.331 for item (4) and 4.332 - 5.164 for item 5 in which the total mean was 5-165-6 as viewed in Table 4.3. However, Table 4.3 displays the mean and standard deviations of the items 1-16 in the observation checklist

Table 1: The Means and Standard Deviations of the Survey Items (1-16)

STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN
1	1.1- 832
2	1.833 - 2.665
3	2.666-3.498
4	3.499 – 4.331
5	4.332 – 5.164
6	5.165 -6

Table 2: The Frequencies of the Participants' Responses on the Survey items 1-16

ITEMS	MEAN	FREQUENCY
1	3.900	4
2	4.222	4
3	4.667	5
4	3.300	3
5	4.200	4
6	4.700	5
7	4.000	4
8	4.222	4
9	4.400	5
10	4.500	5
11	4.600	5
12	5.200	6
13	4.100	4
14	4.700	5
15	4.400	5
16	4.500	5
TOTAL	4.35	5

As shown in Table.2, the analysis of the findings showed that 1 participant making about 10% responded that he found e-learning "favorable" and was clearly structured in class.8 participants stated that e-course instructor explained points at the end of e-learning class 80% in which their responses were "favourable". 6 participants said that the main points of the e-learning class were clear and understandable, representing about 60% of the participants who responded with "highly favourable". 5 participants stated that e-learning class minor points Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

given were understandable and clear, reporting about 50 % of the participants who responded with "slightly favourable".

Similarly, 4 participants responded with "favourable" and said that e-learning examples given were relevant making about 40% of the participants. 3 participants stated that e-learning examples given were interesting in which it recorded 30% of the students' responses as "favourable". 9 participants showed that the pace (speed) of the e-learning lecture was right for me, representing about 90% of the participants as "favourable". 3 participants stated that teaching material covered in the e-learning class was right for them recording 30% as "highly favourable". Also, 6 participants responded that e-learning lectures were clearly audible presenting about 60% of the overall responses as "highly favourable". 5 participants stated that teaching and e-learning aids were used effectively making about 50% who responded with "highly favourable". 5 participants showed that e- lecture seemed well prepared 50%. 5 participants stated that e-lecture was well presented presenting about 50% of the responses who reported that they are "very highly favourable" in terms of the way the e-lectures were presented.

In addition, 9 (90%) participants who said that e-lecture held my attention most of the time. 3 participants (30%) said that e-lecture was interesting responding with "favourable". 6 (60%) participants stated that the lecturer usually looked at and talked to the e-lecture group and not fixtures responding with "highly favourable". 5 (50%) participants reported that the lecturer summarized the main points of the e-lecture effectively responding with "highly favourable".

In conclusion, the analysis of the quantitative findings on research question two show that 90% of the participants revealed that they are in favour of using e-learning tools in learning EFL at the Dept. of English Language and Literature at Yarmouk University in Jordan despite of facing some challenges and problems when engaging with e-learning tools and use the internet in the classroom.

Consequently, in Jordan, EFL learners showed tendency of complaining about certain problems that they in the use of e-tools when learning EFL. In one hand, the findings of the data showed that despite of the effectiveness of the use of e-learning tools in terms of being flexible, easy and accessibly, it still has some challenges that include the need for teacher-specialists and professionals who are expert in implementing e-learning tools in the classroom. Also, the findings indicated that the students are very much conventional teaching methods oriented. They are stereotyped and cannot accept the use of new teaching methods very easily where the role of the teacher is to find a solution to this kind of challenge.

In addition, the issue of internet disconnection and computer software problems appeared to be one of the difficulties that they face when engaging in e-learning tools in learning English which causes interruption in the learning process. This is a challenge for both EFL teachers and learners to pay much efforts to eliminate this obstacle when engaging in the use of e-learning tools in the English classroom at the Dept. of English Language and Literature at Yarmouk University. Another problem emerges when learners are demotivated and are not welling to use e-learning tools when engaging in the English classroom as it necessitates learners to be independent in their learning process. This relates to EFL learners preparedness.

It deals with the students' readiness to do e-language learning. In this regard, the role of teacher is helpful to monitor student's progress regularly. By having a regular monitoring, the teacher can detect whether or not the student is less motivated. The use of the learning management system (Moodle) and social media (Facebook) are again helpful as media of online discussion and feedback. That is, EFL teachers do not provide enough attention to the significance of the use of e-learning tools, specifically Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)in language learning process. Therefore, they should put a great focus on findings a better way of incorporating new e-tools in language learning. They should put great effort to assist learners to use new technology in learning EFL which will result in adequate learning level (Aljaraideh& Al Bataineh, 2019). These findings of the study indicated that the 30 Jordanian undergraduate English Language Literature students at Yarmouk University were able to use e-learning tools very effectively in which 90% of the participants stated that the use of e-learning tools, particularly MOOCs in learning EFL is favourable. Most of them favoured using E-learning tools.

Conclusion

The findings of the present research showed that there is a variance in the use of e-learning tools in learning English as a foreign language. Also, the results revealed that EFL teachers should give enough attention to the use of e-tools. This agrees with the findings of Alzu'bi (2018) who states that there are some issues that associates with the time spent in front of the computer and the necessity for providing adequate computer labs. Also, the findings of the present research are constant with Zare et al., (2016) who indicated in their findings that e-learning is effective for knowledge and creativity acquisitions among chemistry students and the greater e-learning opportunities should be provided for wider audiences. Thus, EFL learners and teachers in Jordan lack the knowledge and skills for effective use of e-learning tools and delivery. EFL teachers who desire to effectively use e-learning tools "usually require support and assistance". This is particular when it relates to the use of e-learning tools' aspects and teaching materials' design.

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