كليـــة التربية للعلوم الانسانية
College of Education for Human Sciences

Using Electronic Platforms in Encouraging Students Towards English Language Acquisition

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A B S T R A C T

Electronic learning has broadened the concept of learning by moving beyond traditional methods and moving towards an environment rich in multiple sources. Electronic learning contributes to the provision of interactive materials, programs and functional curricula that benefit those who want to learn English according to their needs, goals, levels and circumstances. This paper aims to identify the effectiveness of using electronic platforms in encouraging students towards English language acquisition. A descriptive method is used to find out the study results. The researcher points out that electronic platform provides individualized learning opportunities in parallel to all students who learn English as a second language. It is realized that using these electronic means and modern technology will increase students' use of English through exchanging views with their peers, joining educational and cultural linguistic forums, and organizing meetings with other students using English. The study also clarifies that electronic platforms in their different kinds are useful and significant learning devices.

استخدام المنصات الإلكترونية في تشجيع الطلاب على اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية

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الخلاصة:

عمل التعليم الإلكتروني على توسعة مبادئ التعليم من خلال تجاوز الأساليب التقليدية في التعليم الى توفير بيئة تعليمية ثرية بتوظيف المصادر المتنوعة. كما يساهم التعليم الالكتروني بتزويد المتعلمين بمواد وبرامج تفاعلية، ومقررات وظيفية تفيد كافة المتعلمين الذين يرغبون بتعلم اللغة الانجليزية وفقا لاحتياجاتهم، و رغباتهم مستوياتهم أو حتى ظروفهم. هذه الورقة البحثية المرجعية تهدف الى الكشف عن فاعلية استخدام المنصات الالكترونية في تشجيع الطلاب تجاه اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية. تم توظيف المنهج الوصفي للوصول الى نتائج الدراسة . أشارت الدراسة الى أن المنصات الالكترونية تمنح امكانيات تعليمية فردية لكافة الطلبة الذين يتعلمون اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانوية. كما أشارت نتائج الدراسة الى أن توظيف هذه الوسائل التعليمية والتكنولوجيا الحديثة ستزيد من مستوى الاستخدام الفعلي للغة الانجليزية من

قبل الطلبة من خلال تبادل الآراء مع زملائهم، الانضمام الى منتديات لغوية ثقافية وتعليمية ،إضافة الى تنظيم اجتماعات مع الطلاب الآخرين الذين يستخدمون اللغة الانجليزية. كما أوضحت الدراسة أن المنصات الالكترونية على اختلاف أنواعها تعتبر كأدوات تعليمية مفيدة ومهمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنصات الالكترونية، اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية، التعليم الالكتروني، التكنولوجيا الحديثة.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary societies are undergoing radical technological changes that have imposed themselves on the nature of life and the working methods of their institutions, including educational institutions in public and higher education. Technology today plays a major role in these institutions, especially with the emergence of the Internet which has become a fundamental characteristic of the learning environment for learners and teachers alike (Batsila et al., 2014:53).

Electronic learning has broadened the concept of learning by moving beyond traditional methods and moving towards an environment rich in multiple sources. Interactive distance learning techniques play a key role in reshaping the role of the learner and the teacher. This is evidenced by the use of computer technologies in the management or selection of the learning process. However, Electronic learning is not a substitute for the teacher, but rather reinforces the role of the teacher as a mentor and supervisor in the learning process.

In particular, Web 2.0 technologies, such as social networking sites, wikis, and blogs, impose themselves on teaching and learning because of their potential, most importantly that most of them are free, easy to access and can be used without requiring special skills. Batsila et al. (2014:54) added that these technologies provide learners with a diverse context in which they can build their knowledge of all types, whether visual, auditory, audiovisual, spatial or textual (Adcock & Bolick, 2011:226).

The E-learning platforms are at the forefront of the second generation Web (2.0 Web) technologies, which are increasingly used by faculty members, due to

its vitality and fun they bring to the teaching and learning processes. Haron et al. (2015:81) stresses that Electronic learning platforms drives the learner to interact with the content provided through it. As well as with their peers and teacher, in addition to their involvement in a number of tasks that develop his skills.

Given the importance of using this technique in teaching foreign languages as indicated by previous studies (Soliman, 2014: 754; and Azmi, 2017:112), the current study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of using electronic platforms in encouraging students towards English language acquisition.

1.1 Research Problem

Learning English as a second language has always been a major challenge for low-level students because most of them do not have a strong motivation to learn it, and it has become increasingly clear that this problem has been growing. This is directly related to the existence of a non-interactive and fun-free learning environment. Therefore the development of technology and its tools has enabled education professionals to create a sophisticated, specialized and influential learning environment in the English language learning environment (Soliman, 2014:755). The interaction among students and modern technology reduces the sense of insecurity towards learning. Therefore, it is believed that the use of technology, or so-called educational platforms in the process of learning English, helps students acquire this language better than relying on the capabilities of teachers in traditional classes.

The problem of the current study is represented in the lack of methods used in teaching English to students, focusing on the teacher, which reduces interaction and participatory communication, and the exchange of ideas between teachers and students. New teaching methods focus on self-directed learning. In contrast, there have been increasing calls to use electronic platforms for

teaching. Therefore, this research comes to identify the effectiveness of using electronic platforms in encouraging students towards English language acquisition.

1.2 Research Importance

The increasing demand for learning and acquiring English calls for the completion of new and sophisticated programs and curricula (Rank, Warren & Millum , 2011: 18). These programs can respond to the needs and objectives of learners in the world, especially as their numbers are increasing and diversified. Shyamlee and Phil (2012) stresses and clarifies that the high number of those who want to learn English requires the provision of educational programs and curricula that respond to scientific and cognitive developments in the field of applied linguistics as well as in the field of information and communication technology. Therefore, the trend of E-learning was the prominent option to provide some effective solutions. E-learning contributes to the provision of interactive materials, programs and functional curricula that benefit those who want to learn English according to their needs, goals, levels and circumstances (Azmi, 2017).

The importance of the study comes from the importance of the modern technology that the study seeks to highlight its importance in acquiring the English language which is the E-learning platforms. Haron et al. (2015) clarifies that E-learning platforms are considered an important interfaces for designing programs and educational materials that contribute to enhance communication and interaction between the English language and its learners at different levels and needs. The use of electronic platforms in teaching is enhanced by the fact that they provide a collaborative environment for teachers and students alike, represent an effective insistence in education (Pacheco, 2006), help manage digital content, create motivation for participation, and develop critical thinking among students about a particular activity (Soliman, 2014:756), and facilitates

the mentoring process between the teacher and students. In more detail, the importance of the study can be summarised as follows:

1. Strive to introduce new methods that contribute to improving the quality of university teaching, and increase student achievement.
2. Keeping pace with contemporary global trends, through the use of a technological innovation in teaching.
3. This research is useful in providing decision-makers in educational organizations with insights into the methods of employing instructional technology.
4. This research will able the teachers to apply modern technology using a modern interactive electronic tool.
5. This research seeks to activate the role of the student, and make him participate actively in learning, and improve his electronic skills.

2. The Concept of E-Learning and its Advantages.

E-learning is the process of communicating and receiving information using modern technologies such as computers, mobile phones and tablets over the internet or wireless networks for education, training and knowledge management. Electronic learning aims to deliver educational content through a wide range of modern electronic technologies and programmed learning systems (Shyamlee and Phil, 2012). Electronic learning is also defined as a method of instruction in which technology is used in all its multimedia, including sound, image, graphics, and research mechanisms and electronic libraries, to deliver information to the learner in the shortest time and effort (Azmi, 2017).

E-learning is a modern method adopted in various fields of teaching and learning, including the field of teaching foreign languages. It has many concepts and varied terms. Other terms and concepts are often used interchangeably with the concept of "Electronic learning"; they refer to the same meanings, objectives

and applications, such as distance education or open learning or Digital learning (Rank, Warren & Millum et al., 2011: 37).

E-learning has a range of advantages, where this technique is relying on the use of flexible learning using technological innovations or multi-directional Internet information network equipment. Batsila et al. (2014) states that Electronic learning seeks to provide an educational material that deals with the interactions between learners, teachers, experts and software anytime and anywhere.

Smith and Baber (2005) points out that the use of E-learning in teaching English presents an appropriate space that enables learners to practice learning in attractive and flexible interactive ways. E-learning provides programs and curricula that encourage communication and encourage interaction (Azmi, 2017), improve thinking and analysis, and encourage participation and develop language skills and cognitive abilities (Smith and Baber, 2005).

More specifically, the importance of E-learning can be explained in the following points (Rank, Warren & Millum et al., 2011):

1. The ability to communicate with teachers or other students with ease, due to the variety of means of communication, which include the dialogue rooms, e-mail, or discussion boards.
2. Allow time for teachers to follow students and carry out their assignments.
3. Increase the number of students enrolled in the classrooms, while solving the problem of limited access and limited classrooms.
4. Increase teacher effectiveness.
5. Provide multiple teaching methods, making it easier for students to choose the appropriate way to receive lessons, reduces time and effort and increase the competencies in achieving educational goals.
6. The ability to provide student with feedback continuously, making it easier to see the progress.

7. Overcoming the obstacles that preventing students from accessing scientific materials.

From the above, it can be seen that Web 2.0 technologies and concepts of E-learning in foreign language learning have made the issue of language learning both easy and fun. The application of E-learning in language teaching has the additional benefits that the student in the regular class may not understand all the linguistic information received in the classroom. Thus, E-learning allows providing the students with additional space to understand the expressions and vocabulary and its uses, and it leaves a suitable space for the student to review and practice new information.

3. The Concept of Electronic Platforms and Their Importance

The concept of E-learning platforms refers to a variety of second-generation Web applications that offer different ways of learning over the Internet, in a diverse context, in which the study is synchronized or asynchronous. Online platforms are defined as an interactive learning environment that employs web technology, combines the features of e-content management systems and social networks (Facebook), and enables learners to disseminate lessons and objectives, and to develop assignments through instructional activities. Soliman (2014:756) clarifies that E-learning platforms also enables teachers to conduct electronic tests, distribute roles, and divide students into working groups. Pacheco (2006) adds that electronic platforms help to exchange ideas and performance among teachers and students, and to share scientific content; thus helping to achieve high quality educational outcomes.

The use of educational electronic platforms in learning English is not only useful, but also central to the world in which we live. Theoretical literature has pointed to a range of benefits that can be achieved (Pacheco, 2006). Electronic platforms provide individualized learning opportunities in parallel to all students who learn English as a second language. This method enables students to

discover their own teaching methods, which are suitable for them, through multimedia applications and multimedia (Rank, Warren & Millum et al., 2011:43).

Integrated education through E-platforms saves students time and cost barriers. This type of education gives students the opportunity to learn new information, enhances their self-confidence, and enables them to be creative in their field of specialization, through the applications that can be used in these platforms; therefore, lecturers should actively encourage students to use this language through an appropriate learning environment (Evans et al., 2009:174; and Soliman, 2014:757).

Smith and Baber (2005) mention that using these electronic means and modern technology will increase students' use of English through exchanging views with their peers, joining educational and cultural linguistic forums, and organizing meetings with other students using English. These means give students the opportunity to use the language, and therefore, their self-confidence enables them to strength their language, grow their language proficiency and rapidly, and develop the vocabulary of their linguistic more developed (Evans et al., 2009:175). Thus, when students have the opportunity to interact and use language programs through modern, elegant and flexible technology, they develop the four language skills; writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

4. English Language Acquisition Challenges

There are several challenges that could face the process of English language learning. A questing English language is a complicated process that could be negatively influenced with several factors, and such factors compromise the challenges of English language acquisition. The main challenge of English language a questing is the absence of active practice of English outside the educational classrooms. This could reduce students' motivation and enthusiasm

toward learning English as there is no any urgent need to learn English (Tabatabaei and Hosseini, 2014:114).

Additionally, there is no any clear strategy on how to improve a student English language even if he/she would like to find some. Some people would like to improve their English knowledge but could not find guidance on where to go or how to start; as little attention often paid to the learners efforts in developing their foreign language (Akbari, 2014:123; Jafari and Kafipour, 2013:25).

Furthermore, according to previous studies, students often believe that English is a complicated subject that consisted of several grammatical rules and a set of words that require a lot of efforts rather than considering it as a set of skills (Oxford, 2001:3).

Moreover, the absence of effective group work discussion is another factor that negatively affects English language acquisition, as such active discussion groups could help learners to efficiently learn English in a similar way of how they read or hear the language. But the different tendencies and motivations within the same group could make such groups inefficient, as some learners look to English as course that should be finished or a duty that must be completed and do not realize the significance of English language as a communication tool or as a basis for technological advancement (Amatobi & Amatobi, 2013:2).

This language is also considered as a general subject that learners could pass without paying full attention for such as other learning special subjects like math, chemistry, etc; as general subjects scores often less than special subjects so it receives less attention from learners.

As well as, the huge population of learners in each class could cause a huge problem to give all learners the same guidance and enable teachers to practice innovative teaching methods that could enhance their communication skills.

Furthermore, the general nature of English textbooks in different learning levels could negatively influence the process of English Language Acquisition. For example, the boring material, unattractive texts in English books are some of these challenges. Lack of transparency and correct coordination between the size of English books content and book purposes, in addition to the shortage of various new learning activities that could motivate learners could be considered as main challenges of English Language Acquisition related to English textbooks.

5. The Effect of Using Electronic Platforms on English Language Acquisition

Technology is considered as an efficient tool in the learning process. The idea of utilizing electronic platforms in education in its various kinds that include active communicating features, such as sounds and pictures, could attract learners' attentions which consequently could enhance the learning process outcomes. One of the electronic devices that could be used in English learning process is the online games. As online game attracts learners and enhance their motivation to learn, these learning platforms if it is employed efficiently in English learning process, it could develop students' vocabulary and pronunciation skills through playing some games that could enhance students vocal and reading abilities.

Internet and multimedia are other main electronic devices that could be efficiently employed in the learning process, as they considered as the main E-learning enabler (Nagy, 2005:81).

The idea of utilizing several kinds of multimedia such as videos, interactive texts and sounds could make learners self-directed toward learning English through these new technologies. Internet could offer an interactive learning

platform that could enable learners to speak with other English native speakers through offering chat rooms or chatting emails, which could develop learners' English language in a smooth, ease way. Utilizing internet in learning could enhance reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of learners. Teachers attempted to integrate internet learning as an essential learning style as it enhances the accuracy and fluency of learning English in various ways, such as emails chats could enhance the writing skills of learners.

Learners trust in themselves also increased in internet and web-based learning process. Furthermore learners' anxiety decreases in this learning manner. Kamnoetsin (2014:2) indicated that electronic platform such as Facebook improve the writing, grammar and vocabulary abilities of learners, as these interactive learning platforms could enable learners to acquire and share new knowledge. As well it enables learners to realize any update regarding their courses at once.

Learning through internet make learner more autonomous as it enables learners to choose their favorable method of English learning, schedule and organize their learning process within their suitable time, and provide learners with self-monitoring abilities (Zhong, 2008:148).

6. Conclusion

This paper investigates the effectiveness of using electronic platforms in encouraging students towards English language acquisition. E-learning has been defined as an instruction method in which technology is used in all its multimedia, including sound, image, graphics, research mechanisms and electronic libraries, to deliver English language information to the learner in the shortest time and effort. Aquesting English language is a complicated process that could be negatively influenced with several factors, and such factors could compromise the challenges of English language acquisition. The boring material, unattractive texts in English books are some of these challenges.

In conclusion, internet and other multimedia online learning platforms are considered as a powerful environment of learning which could significantly develop English acquisitions processes. We can also conclude from all above mentioned information, that electronic platforms in their different kinds are useful and significant learning devices when comparing it to the usual traditional teaching pattern. E-learning is a technological advanced learning pattern that positively influences English language acquisition and improve the English language skills and abilities of learners.

The study clarified that integrated education through E-platforms saves students' time and cost barriers. This study also indicated that Web 2.0 technologies and concepts of E-learning in foreign language learning have made the issue of language learning both easy and fun. Based on several relevant conducted studies, it was concluded that Internet could offer an interactive learning platform that could enable learners to speak with other English native speakers through offering chat rooms or chatting emails, which could develop learners' English language in a smooth, ease way. This study also clarified that internet and other multimedia online learning platforms are considered as a powerful environment of learning which could significantly develop English acquisitions processes.

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