

فعالية برنامج قائم على التعلم المختلط في المدارس الابتدائية لتعلم اللغة
الإنجليزية

**The Effectiveness of a Program Based on a
Blended learning at the Primary Schoolers for
Learning English**

منذر شاكر جوكي

By: Munthir Shakir Jokey

Lecturer Doctor

Muthanna University

College of Education for Humanities

Abstract:

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of a program based on a blended learning at the primary schoolers for Learning English. The participants in the present study were two classes of 58 pupils in sixth grade in Al-Shaymaa primary school in Samawa, divided into two groups. The first group (the experimental group) was made up of 29 pupils who used the proposed blended learning program. The second group (the control group) was made up of 29 pupils who were taught using the traditional method inside the

classroom. The two groups pre-post-test experimental design were administrated to assess the effectiveness of the proposed program. The results of the present study revealed that the developed blended learning program had significantly a positive effect on developing primary schoolers'.

Keywords: blended learning; achievement; attitude; English; primary stage; Iraq .

1. Introduction

English nowadays is no longer the property of the west, or a national language found only within established borders. On the contrary, English language becomes the major means of communication all over the world. It is the language of science, globalization, commerce, trade, politics, history, education, media and technology (Tsai, 2006:909). According to Abu-Rahman, the significant role has been reflected in English has been reflected in English language teaching and learning in Egypt. Many students still perceive that English is difficult subject and they look forward to

learning the subject in an easy and enjoyable way . The teachers are continually looking for better approaches to meet the students' demands for exciting ways to gain the language.

Arab students face many problems in learning English which are similar to those of other English as second language students. Fu (2003: 1) claims that students have difficulties in understanding academic researches and technical reports.

Students may lack the opportunity to practice the language outside the classrooms. Textbooks, topics of the English syllabus and learning activities are boring and not related to the students' concerns and interests. Students maybe shy and teacher in the classroom has a dominant role which can hinder students' participation. All factors create passive students and as many studies emphasized, students much be involved in the learning process (Al-Nafisah , 2001 : 13) .

1.2 The Problem of the Study

The problem of the study lies in the primary schoolers' achievement level which is low in spite of the vital importance of English language at primary stage. This research attempts to manipulate the use

of technology in classroom as we live in a high-tech age. Using a blended learning program may provide various benefits over using any single delivery media. Therefore, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the features of the effectiveness of a program based on a blended learning at the primary schoolers for learned English?
2. What is the effect of a program based on a blended learning at the primary schoolers for learning English in primary schools?

2. Review of Literature and Related Studies

2.1 Blended Learning

Blended Learning is a purposeful combination which is based on the use of any of multimedia-based instruction methods (Computer-led training/instruction) blended or mixed with face-to-face learning methods (Teacher-led training/instruction) to accomplish the same learning objectives so that each delivery method should be chosen for what it can deliver best in the light of the learning

components, target goals/aims/objectives, and specialist content of the program which are identified during analysis and design (Rosenberg ; Elsenheimer; Yoon & Lim; Alvarez 2008 and Douglis 2008).

According to Abu-Rahmah (1997:7), this significant role has been, and should be reflected in English language teaching and learning in Egypt. Learning English is very important in everyday life. Many students still perceive that English is a difficult subject and they look forward to learning the subject in an easy and enjoyable way. The teachers, on the other hand, are continually looking for better approaches to meet the students' demands for exciting ways to gain the language. These technological advancements and communication tools made it possible to create new learning environments, and new modes of delivery for learning English.

Arab students face many problems in learning English which are similar to those of other English as second language students. Fu claims that students have difficulties in understanding academic papers and technical reports, problems in communication

with foreign professors, limited vocabulary, and poor reading abilities.

1.1 ELT in Iraq

Abu-Rahman (1997: 13) indicates that the teaching of English in Iraq faces some problems related to the structure and the circumstances of the educational system as a whole which, in turn, hinder English teaching at all levels. There are, however, other problems related to teaching English language, e.g. low levels of proficiency examination-oriented teaching and focus on grammar only.

1.2 English at Primary Stage

The aim of teaching English at the primary stage is to help children acquire and use the language skills and vocabulary. The objectives of teaching English in the primary schools were intended to familiarize the pupils with the language in a stress free and fun loaded atmosphere to prepare pupils for more demanding tasks in the subsequent stages. Children should be given practice in using English in meaningful and realistic situations. Also, to encourage children creativity and maximize the use

of technology the in processes of teaching and learning in the classroom to support the education system **Ministry of Education (2014:18)**. The future vision for education in Iraqis based on using advanced education technology incorporated in the educational process (curriculum, textbook, school management and the educational system) **(Ibid: 19)**.

In addition, as an English teacher for twelve years, the researcher experienced that the Iraqi teachers normally manage quite large classes including from 35 to 45 pupils. This makes it difficult for teachers to provide all the pupils in the class with enough and appropriate feedback in the given time. Teachers can not evaluate how successful they have been getting their message across and figuring out where remedial work is required before proceeding further. A further problem is the inaccuracy of Iraqi pupils' performance in English. Because of time constraints, learning English in Iraqi schools is teacher-centered rather than student-centered. The teacher gives a lecture, and the pupils are simply taking in what the teacher dictates rather than engaging in the learning themselves. Moreover, the

teacher controls the pace of the English lesson and the pupils are expected to keep up with it.

It is necessary to adopt suitable strategy in teaching English and students must be enabled to use this strategy –based flexible learning environments.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The problem of present study lies at the primary schoolers' achievement level which is low in spite of the vital importance of English language at primary stage. This study attempts to manipulate the use of technology in classroom as we live in a high-tech age. Using a blended learning program may provide various benefits over using any single delivery media. The present study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the features of a blended learning program for the EFL primary schoolers?
2. What is the effectiveness of this proposed program on students' achievement in primary schools?

2. Review of Literature and Related Studies

2.1 Blended Learning

Blended Learning is a purposeful combination which is based on the use of any of multimedia-based instruction methods (Computer-led training/instruction) blended or mixed with face-to-face learning methods (Teacher-led training/instruction) to accomplish the same learning objectives so that each delivery method should be chosen for what it can deliver best in the light of the learning components, target goals/aims/objectives, and specialist content of the program which are identified during analysis and design .

Sahin (2007:115) defines blended learning as a kind of distance learning that is used to support face-to-face learning. Blended learning is a learning approach that comprises any combined use of electronic learning tools that supplement, but do not replace face-to-face learning (Duhancey, 2004).

Garrison and Kanuka identify blended learning as the thoughtful integration of classroom(face-to-face) learning experiences with e-learning such that they are not just adding on to the existing dominant approach or method, and any sort of multimedia based instructional applications.

A blending learning course is classified into two types: Fully face to face and fully via learning online environments.

2.1.1 Characteristics and Advantages of Blended Learning

The benefits of blended learning were identified by many ELT specialists (e.g. Sharma and Barrett, 2007: 10–12; Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal, 2004: 2 & Gould, 2003: 55). There are:

1. The increase of interaction of students and participation.
2. The development of learning students and performance.
3. The effect of approaches' teachers of other subjects.
4. The development of independent learners, a source of instant feedback, time saving and motivation to learners.
5. The increase of student learning outcomes and reduce delivery of instruction costs.

2.1.2 Levels of Blended Learning

Blended learning may occur at different levels as pointed by Graham , such as the student activity

level, course level, program level, and institutional level. The researcher points out that blended learning may occur at the institutional level. Students at different levels need a teacher to support their learning activities, but in all levels the teacher should soon draw back and emphasize student's self-regulation in learning. Al Fiky classifies the blended learning according to four levels : (1) component level, (2) Integrated level, (3) collaborative level and, (4) expansive level.

2.1.3 Models of Blended Learning

The models of blended learning differ according to the elements that are blended. There is a shortage in blended learning models that can be followed by instructors. There is considerable complexity in its implementation with the challenge of virtually limitless design possibilities and applicability to so many contexts as stated by Graham and Kanuka (2004: 96).

The models were identified by ELT experts (e.g. Dick et al's Model, 2001; Al Jazar's Model, 2002; Khan's Octagonal Framework, 2003 & Huang and Wang's Model, 2006).

The researcher adopted Dick et al's Model with some adaptations for the suggested blended learning program following all the seven phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, execution, evaluation, and feedback.

2.2 Blended Learning and Achievement of Students

Travers states that achievement is the result of what an individual has learned from some educational experiences. Tinambunan defines achievement as the student's grasp of some body of knowledge or proficiency in certain skills.

Al-Essawy et al (2006:13) identify achievement as a certain level of ingenuity in school work which is measured by teachers, or the assessment tests. The purposed measurement is to determine the level of academic achievement. It is the sum of the scores obtained by the student at the end of the school year, or the end of the first semester, or the second, and after passing tests and exams successfully. The results of the present study indicated that there was

a modest, positive effect of teaching and learning with technology on student outcomes. According to their results, teaching and technology processes can directly or indirectly impact student outcomes.

3. Method of the Study

The following methods:

3.1 The Design of the Study and Participants

In this study, the two-group pre-post-test experimental design were used in order to measure the effect of the independent variable (blended learning program) on the dependent variable (the achievement of primary schoolers). The subjects of this study were divided into two groups: the control group which was taught the English course traditionally and the experimental group which was taught the course in the computer laboratory using the developed CD program.

The participants of the study were from the sixth grade primary pupils in Al-Shaymaa primary schools in Samawa in the academic year 2017/2018.

Two classes of 58 pupils were selected, with 29 pupils in each class.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

1. There is statistical difference between mean scores of the pre- post-tests of experimental group in achievement test according of the post-test.
2. There is statistical difference between mean scores of the control and experimental group in post-tests in achievement test according to the experimental group.

3.3 Instruments

Three instruments were developed and used to collect the data as follows:

1. An achievement test was developed in light of the objectives of the course (three units 15, 16, and 17 from the second term in the grade six primary schools English for Iraq by Sarah & Sally Roll 2016) to investigate the effectiveness of the developed program on the pupils' achievements.

the pre- post-test used for both groups (experimental and control).

2. An instructional multimedia program for teaching specific units for the experimental group was designed by the researcher.

3.3.1 The Achievement Test

The purpose of the test is to measure the achievement of EFL primary schoolers in terms of listening, vocabulary, reading and writing after administrating the proposed blended learning program.

In the process of developing the achievement test, the researcher designed a test to suit the level of grade six primary school identified as suitable for primary school pupils.

The following guidelines were considered when setting the items of the test in order to identify the cut score (the acceptable performance level). The researcher depended on the viewpoints and suggestions of the jury members in the field of Curriculum and Instruction (Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language). All the jury

members agreed to a cut score of 60% as an external acceptable performance level for the achievement test. Then, the researcher calculated the mean of the amount of the time taken in answering the test.

The validity of the test was established through using content validity. It was established by the jury members who were asked to express their opinions regarding: appropriateness of the items to the level of the pupils, clarity of instructions and questions and if it measures the intended lessons. Based on the recommendations of the jury members, some changes were made to the test. Question 8 was deleted because the learning objective of this type of question was not one of the outlined objectives listed in the test. The final form of the test became 7 questions and some modifications were made to question 4 and 6.

Prior to its being administrated, the test was piloted on a group of pupils to ensure its reliability. The test was administrated to a pilot group of 49 learners in Al-Shaymaa primary school in Samawa. The researcher used Alpha Cronbach's coefficient to calculate the reliability. The stability coefficient

value for each question and the total value of the test were between (0.84, 0.93). The reliability value was statistically acceptable and proven which confirmed the reliability of this test.

3.3.2 The Proposed of Blended Learning Program

The main aim of the program is to enhance the achievement in language learning among six-year primary school pupils. For developing and implementing the activities of the present study and teaching the proposed units, Dick et al's (ADDIE Model) instructional design model is utilized.

1. Analytical Phase

The aim of this phase is to detect the learning characteristics and needs of the learners and to determine environment in which the learning is to take place and available resources. Also to identify the pupils' most needed language skills and to identify what is required from them to show competency. The researcher supports the idea through a pilot study. The study conducted on a group of twelve teachers in order to identify the students' needs and to identify the language level of

the students and also to investigate the skills which they need most.

2. Design and Development Phase

The design and development phase used for computerizing version of the content on a CD to combine with face-to-face learning in order to be applied on grade six primary pupils. The specified content was collected and divided into three units. Some activities accompanied by the different units in this proposed program (e.g. a simple video about each unit, pictures, and songs). Some activities were introduced through games. These games played a significant role in attracting young participants to be involved in the learning situation.

3. Implementation of the Proposed Blended Learning Program

The program in this phase involved the software of e-learning process building. The programs were used many software (e.g. text, sounds, images, videos and self-corrected questions). The program was developed and produced in its initial form according to the created storyboard and by

the use of the specified authoring tools as well as the produced, edited and available media.

4. Evaluation Phase

In order to make sure that the units were suitable for application, the initial production of the program was submitted to jurors, a group of experts and specialists in instructional technology, in order to make the necessary modifications and overcome the points of weaknesses in light of their experienced viewpoints and suggestions. Accordingly, the jurors provided their suggestions, and the researcher made the necessary modifications until the program appeared in its final form.

5. Data Analysis and Discussions

The data of the present study were:

1. The hypothesis one states that there is statistical difference between mean scores of the pre- post-tests of the experimental group in achievement test according to post-test.

The researcher compared the mean score of differences of the pre-post- measurement in the experimental group. Table (1) displays the

results of the pre- post- measurement that was administrated to the experimental group.

Table (1)

T-Test Value for the Differences Between Mean Scores of Pre-Post-Test Measurement of Experimental Group

Measureme nt	Number of Subjects	Mean scores	Standard Deviation	T- Value
Pre	29	28.20	5.33	5.12-
Post	29	34.24	3.42	

* Significant at (0.01)

The results in table (1) indicate that the mean score of difference of pre- post- measurement in the experimental group are significant. The mean score of the experimental group in pre-test was 28.20, which increased in the mean scores of the post-test to 34.24. This shows the pupils' improved achievement in learning English in the post-measurement than the pre- measurement.

Effect Size was estimated by using the T-Value of the achievement test. The table below shows the related results:

Table (2)

**The Effect Size Level of the Developed Program in
Light of Pre-Post-Measurement in the
Experimental Group in Achievement Test**

Measurement	T2 Value	DF	Effect size 2
Pre	26.255	56	0.702
Post			

In light of the referenced table of Effect Size, table (2) above indicates the high effect size of the developed program on 6th year pupils' achievement.

2. Hypothesis two states that there is statistical difference between mean scores of control group and experimental group in achievement post test according to experimental group.

To measure the effect of the treatment given to the experimental group and their understanding of the units described in the blended learning program and after the completion of the experiment, the researcher administrated the achievement post-test to the experimental and control group. Results are shown in Table (3) below:

Table (3)

**T-Test of the Mean Scores of the Post-
Measurement of the Control Group and the
Experimental Group**

Group	Number of Subjects	Mean scores	Standard Deviation	T- Value
Control	29	26.41	4.43	7.52
Experimenta 1	29	34.24	3.42	

* Significant at (0.01)

Table (3) demonstrates clear significant differences between the mean score of the post-test scores of the control group and the experimental group (T-value was 7.52) which is significant at the level of 0.01 in the favor of the experimental group. The mean scores of the control group in the post-test was 26.41 which increased in the mean scores of experimental group in post-test to 34.24. Table (1) demonstrates that pupils in experimental group had greater achievement and improvement in learning English in the post-measurement than the control group.

The Effect Size was estimated by using the T-value of the post measurement in achievement test of control and experimental group. Table (4) below shows the related results:

Table (4)

Effect Size Level of Developed Program in Light of Pre-Post-Measurement of the Experimental Group in Achievement Test

Measurement	T2 Value	DF	Effect size η^2
control	56.25	56	0.81
experimental			

In light of the referenced table of Effect Size. Table (4) above indicates the high effect size of the developed program on 6th year pupils' achievement. This clearly shows that the developed program had a high and positive effect on the achievement of the primary school pupils in learning English

Conclusion

The present study aims at achieving the hypotheses and effect of a blended learning program

on developing the primary schoolers' achievement towards learning English. The present study adopted the experimental approach where there were two similar groups: the experimental group and the control group. Two-groups pre-and post-test design were used. The study used a variety of blended techniques and activities that may increase pupils' motivation and encourage them to learn. The study used two tools to collect data (an achievement test and an instructional multimedia program). The results of the present study proved that there is statistical difference between mean scores of pre-post-measurements in experimental group in the achievement test according to post-measurement. Also, there is statistical significant difference between mean scores of control and experimental groups in post-measurements of the achievement test according to experimental group.

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