

THE EFFECT OF USING WEB QUESTS ON IMPROVING JORDANIAN EIGHT GRADERS' GRAMMAR LEARNING

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the effect of using Web Quests on improving Jordanian eight graders' grammar learning. The participants of the study were 45 females students from two sections of eight grade students from a public school, Dahiyet Al Hussein Elementary School for Girls in Amman, Jordan in the first semester of the academic year 2016\2017. Those participants included the two intact groups of the study: (1) the control group which included (23) girls who were taught by the traditional method, and (2) the experimental group which included (22) girls who were taught by the Web Quests. The instrument used to collect data was a grammar pre-test and a grammar post-test. Results showed that Web Quests was not effective in improving Jordanian eight graders' grammar learning. The study also indicated that there were significant differences due to the GPA of eight graders' female students in favor of high GPA.*

KEYWORDS: Web Quests; Jordanian EFL learners; Grammar learning.

INTRODUCTION

It is said that Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is considered an important tool in education because it facilitates learning a foreign language (Alshumaimeri, 2008; Kern, 2006). There is no doubt that computers are used in most schools and universities as a part of the learning process. The use of computers is allowed the students to interact with language speakers, and gives them access to a large number of authentic learning resources (Alshumaimeri, 2008; Kern, 2006). Finding useful information on different websites can easily be gained by using computers, but this process is required learners to evaluate the text content, select relevant information, and synthesize materials to construct meaning (Crawford & Brown, 2002).

According to Glennan and Melmed (1996), computers play a vital role in the teaching learning process as they increase students' achievement and motivate them to be engaged in the teaching activities. So, recent methods which activate the use of computers in teaching should be invented and activated (Carlson, 2005). Therefore, teachers should seek to find new methods and strategies in their teaching that taking into the account learners' needs and attitudes.

Web Quests are one of the CALL strategies that involves students in teaching a foreign language (March, 2004). Web Quests are one of the solutions to involve the students in authentic instruction, real assessment and inquiry-oriented activities through web-based resources (Lipscomb, 2003). In addition, Zheng, Stucky, McAlack, Menchana and Stoddart (2005) claimed that Web Quest allows students to acquire new skills in a supportive and scaffolded learning environment.

Web Quest focuses on scaffold learning, which is used to provide students with links to learn the authentic materials. This process leads to motivate students for investigating and participating in groups (March, 1998).

Recently, Web Quest has been given an important attention from educationalists and researchers who indicated that this strategy is so effective in enhancing students' language skills (Sen & Neufeld, 2006).

It has been observed that a vast number of Jordanian English language teachers face a lot of problems in teaching English grammar, and they always complain that their students suffer a weak level achievement in this skill. Those students do not like English grammar classes and describe them as traditional boring ones. Irzawati and Asiah (2013) indicated that Web Quest is a recent teaching strategy which can be used to motivate students to participate in the various activities of grammar classes.

There are a plethora of studies that have been conducted in dealing with the use of the Web Quest as an effective instructional tool which can facilitate learning language skills. For instance: Al-Shamisi, 2016 who examined the effect of the WebQuests on reading comprehension of twenty eight Emirate EFL eleventh grade students. However, few studies have focused on using Web Quest for enhancing the language aspects, especially grammar. Therefore, the current study seeks to identify the effect of using Web Quests on improving Jordanian eight graders' grammar learning

Problem of the Study

The world has been witnessing a huge scientific and technological revolution as the teaching learning process is no longer limited to knowledge and information transfer from the teacher to the student. Hence, English teachers are more called to find new methods and strategies to engage their students in inquiry activities. One of the new method is that asking students to look for a topic using web -based resources. Web Quests have become dominant in English Language teaching, but there are not enough studies that have investigated the effect of the Web Quest in teaching grammar.

In light of the above discussion, and starting from the need for developing teaching learning process. There is an urgent need for developing modern instructional strategies and for employing new educational advancements that are accessible for both teachers and students nowadays. The present study seeks to identify the effect of using Web Quests on Jordanian EFL learners' grammar learning.

Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the effect of using Web Quests on EFL students' grammar learning.

Questions of the Study

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are there statistically significant differences in eight graders' grammar learning due to the teaching strategy (Web Quests, traditional)?

- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences in eight graders' grammar learning due to the GPA (High, Medium, Low)?

Significance of the Study

This study may be significant since it investigated the effect of Web Quests instruction on Jordanian EFL eighth grade students' grammar learning. Few studies were carried out on the Jordanian EFL school students to explore the effect of employing Web Quests while teaching and learning. The results of this study could be helpful for Jordanian EFL teachers in utilizing the Web Quests in their teaching. The results may also help textbooks designers think about integrating Web Quests into the materials or textbooks.

Operational Definition of Terms

Web Quest: is " An inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. Web Quests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation." (Dodge ,1997)

Learning Grammar: It can be defined as how words are put together to make correct sentences (Xin, 2010).

In this study, it is measured by a participant's aggregate score on the grammar test.

Eighth Grade Students: are between 13- 14 years old who have studied English for 8 years. It is one of the grades of the primary stage in Jordan

GPA: The grade achieved by the students at the end of one semester and is measured by gathering the sum of their grades during one semester of the same year.

Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of the findings of this study can be limited by the following factors:

- 1- The study was restricted to the students of the eighth grade in a public school in Amman Directorate of Education during the first semester of the academic year 2016/2017. So, the results could be generalized to the students studying in similar conditions or contexts.
- 2- The duration of the study lasted for only three weeks. A longer duration may have different results.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview of Web Quest

Bernie Dodge and Tom March were the first people who introduced the Web Quest. The Web Quest was built based on constructivism which promoted cooperative learning and scaffolding of instruction. According to Dodge (1997), students get the whole information from the web as an inquiry-oriented lesson design. Web Quests do not permit students in language learning to construct their knowledge of the language through exploring structured web resources on

their own (Laborda, 2009), but also help students become better learners by increasing their autonomy and providing them a sense of fulfillment (Lou, 2010).

According to Dodge view that (1998) there are six components of a well-designed Web Quest. These components are the introduction, task, process, resources, evaluation, and conclusion. The introduction introduces the topic by providing a schema for the background information for the whole quest. The task and process sections provide descriptions of the task that students have to do. The sources required to do the task are found in the resources section. These sources may include links, documents and videos. The form of the rubric is used in the evaluation section to evaluate students' work. The last component of the Web Quest is the conclusion which reminds students of what they have learnt and call them to spread the experience into other situations.

There are two forms of Web Quest. The first form is short term which focuses on the learners' knowledge acquisition, and it needs three hours for completion. The second form of Web Quest is long term which emphasizes on the learners' ability to extend knowledge, and it takes one week and more to complete (Dodge, 1997).

The purpose of using the Web Quest is that Web Quest has given students the different opportunities to notice content in a meaningful way. Moreover, giving students the chance to make an activity which leads to integrate them into the topics. This process makes students an active learners because they can discover new information that can be used to improve their own understanding and then presenting the new understanding to others in a meaningful way. (Turville, 2008)

According to Solis (2006), Web Quests have different characteristics. These can be stated as the following:

1. The crucial question is used to attract the attention.
2. Authenticity resources are presented to the learners.
3. Realistic assessment is used.
4. Students play an active role in learning.
5. Using the scaffold learning and constructivism to promote higher order thinking.
6. Connecting between prior knowledge in order to build a new schema.

Learning Grammar and Web Quests

It is said that using Web Quest has several benefits in learning. One of these benefits is to use it in an effective way. Second, the links can be used by both students and teachers in order to search information in an organized efficient style. Third, using Web Quest is important in increased higher mental thinking skills (Halat & Peker, 2011). Having new approaches in language learning, which means that enhancing the communicative interaction among the learners (Ellis, 2000).

Additionally, the use of the Web Quest in the teaching and the learning process is considered as an inquiry orientated activity which are found in different topics. These include web

resource uses and the improvement of higher thinking processes in a collaborative setting (Torres, 2007).

It is thought that learning grammar is uneasy to learn for most students. Some of them consider grammar a boring aspect while the others stated that grammar is difficult. These notes may decrease students' motivation towards learning grammar. As a result, it can influence on students' understanding and achievement in grammar because they have little motivation which improves their ability. It is assumed that learning grammar rules are better when they are presented in context rather than formula (Xin, 2010).

One of the possible learning strategy is Web Quest. It can be used to students' motivation in learning grammar. Web Quest consists of motivated and authentic material tasks (Zheng, Perez, Williamson, & Flygare, 2008) cited in (Alfadda, Almasri & Alshumaimeri, 2011). Furthermore, Web Quest as a beneficial tool, motivating students who can recall the lessons very quickly through the use of the Web Quest than through the traditional methods of learning (Hassanien, 2006). In other words, Web Quest is a motivator to raise students' motivation towards learning grammar which leads to improve their understanding and achievement in grammar.

The researcher reviewed previous literature and studies pertaining to the use of the Web Quest and found that there is a paucity of previous studies that dealt with Web Quest and its effects on grammar learning.

In this regard, Ahmed (2016) investigated the effect of using a Web Quest on sixty Egyptian EFL school students' reading and writing skills. A pre-/post test was administered. The results revealed that Web Quest instruction helps EFL learners to improve their reading and writing skills.

Al-Shamisi (2016) examined the effect of the WebQuests on reading comprehension of twenty eight Emirate EFL eleventh grade students. A pre-/post test and questionnaire were administered. The results indicated that the experimental group' participants improve in reading significantly higher than the control group. It was concluded that there are positive attitudes towards using the Web Quests are stated.

AL-Khataybeh and AL-Awasa (2016) investigated the Web Quest use of one hundred EFL Jordanian seventh grade female student in Jordan. The instrument used was a pre-post test of students' writing skills. The results showed that a significant improvement of the experimental group's writing skills.

Awada and Gaith (2014) examined the Web Quest used in writing proficiency of forty two Lebanese EFL school students. The experimental group received a Web Quest whereas the control group did not. The instrument used was a pre-/post-test. The findings showed that using Web Quest helps EFL learners to improve their writing performance.

Samara (2013) examined the effect of the Web Quest on Jordanian EFL students' achievement. The participants were forty students that were classified into an experimental and control groups. A pre-/post test was used to gather data. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant difference between control and experimental groups in the use of the Web Quest in favor of the experimental group.

Irzawati and Asiah (2013) investigated the effect of Web Quest instruction to enhance learning grammar among seventy-two Turkish EFL university students. Data was collected according to questionnaire and interview. The results indicated that the participants' perception toward learning grammar through the use of the Web Quest improved

Al Fadda, Almasri and Alshumaimeri (2011) investigated the effect of the Web Quest on the writing skills of sixty three female Saudi EFL learners. Pre-/post test was used to gather data. The results of the study indicated a significant improvement of the experimental group's writing performance.

Concluding Remarks

After reviewing the literature on the Web Quest, the researcher has drawn various conclusions as the followings:

1-Studies were shown statistically significant differences in the method of teaching in favor of (Web Quest) like: Ahmed, 2016; Al-Shamisi, 2016; AL-Khataybeh & AL-Awasa, 2016; Gaith & Awada, 2014; Samara, 2013; Irzawati & Asiah, 2013; Al Fadda et al., 2011).

2-All of the previous studies were used Web Quest to detect reading skill, writing skill and achievement, whereas one study that dealt with Web Quest in learning grammar.

3- According to the Jordanian context, few studies were conducted to examine the use of the Web Quest among Jordanian EFL learners (particularly, AL-Khataybeh & AL-Awasa, 2016; Samara, 2013. The first two studies focused on the writing skills while the last study focused on the achievement. All these three studies were carried out on the schools' students.

Thus, the current study is an attempt to fill a gap in the area of Web Quest teaching in Jordan. It is, to the researcher of this best knowledge, one of the studies seeks to examine the effect of the Web Quests use on Jordanian EFL school students. Despite the fact that there are several studies that seek to examine the effects of Web Quests in different school subjects, the use of such a teaching strategy and its effect on English learning grammar was not fully investigated, particularly in Arabic countries. Moreover, the results reported in foreign studies cannot be generalized to the Arabic culture as there are many cultural and social discrepancies between the two cultures.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The quasi- experimental method was used by comparing the experimental group achievement, which used Web Quests with the control group which used the traditional method. This study has also investigated the effect of the Web Quests, on the high achievers and low achievers.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were purposefully selected. They were 45 female EFL eighth grade students at Dahiyet Al Hussein Elementary School for Girls, a public school in Amman Directorate for Education. The school was intentionally chosen due to the availability of resources, tools and equipment and facility needed for the study.

The participants were divided into two groups; the experimental group included 22 students, whereas the control group included 23 students. The control group was taught using the conventional method according to the textbook whereas the experimental group was taught through the instructional program by using the Web Quests. Table (1) shows the distribution of the groups according to the variables of the study.

Table 1: The distribution of the study groups according to the study variables.

Variable Level	Teaching Strategy		GPA		
	Web Quests	Traditional	High	Medium	Low
Number	22	23	20	18	7
Percentage	49%	51%	44%	40%	16%

Results Related to the Equivalence of the Study Groups

Equivalence of both study groups was checked in terms of the teaching strategy (Web Quests and traditional teaching) before the intervention was administrated. A pretest for students of both groups was administrated. Table (2) shows means, standard deviations, T- test values to identify differences in the pre-test mean scores of the experimental group taught by using the Web Quests and the control group taught by using the traditional teaching.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, T- test values for the performance of the two groups on the pre-test according to the strategy applied

Strategy	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Web Quests	22	7.41	2.856	0.072	43	*0.943
Traditional	23	7.35	2.854			
Total	45	7.38	2.823			

**Not significant at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)*

Table (2) shows that there is no statistical significance at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) due to the method of teaching while T. Value was (0.072) with a significance level of (0.943) which is insignificant at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), meaning that both study groups were equivalent.

Instruments of the Study

To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher used the following instruments:

Pre-/Post-Tests (See Appendix A, p 21-22)

To measure students' learning grammar, pre-/post-tests were prepared. The test contained fifteen multiple choice items covering all the aspects of the grammar in the module. Each item

was given one point (total points=15). The time for the completion of the test was set at (30 minutes). Coefficients have been calculated the difficulties for the test which ranged between 0.25%-0.63%, while discrimination coefficients ranged between 0.24-0.60.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Validity of the Grammar Test

To achieve face validity, the researcher distributed the first version of the grammar test to a panel of experts who reviewed it and their comments were taken in consideration in preparing the final version of the test.

Reliability of the Grammar Test

To ensure the reliability of the test, the researcher conducted it on as a group of student as a pilot study. After two weeks the test was conducted on the same group of students. The reliability coefficient of the test was (0.81) which indicted acceptable reliability.

The Instructional Program

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher designed an instructional program to improve the participants' grammar learning. The designed grammar Web Quest covered some important items in grammar such as: present simple and present continuous. The Web Quest could be accessed by students at zunal.com. The teacher gave the link and asked students to follow instructions that need to be done in Web Quest. For instance: the teacher asked students to open <http://www.zunal.com/webquest.php?w=324830> for helping them to learn more about the grammar. It has been modified into five main parts, namely: introduction, process, task, evaluation, and conclusion.

The validity of the learning material was established by giving it with all the learning activities to specialists in learning and information technology, English, instructional methods and measurement and evaluation at Al Hashemite University, University of Jordan, and Yarmouk University and some experts from the Jordanian Ministry of Education. Each of these experts was given a copy of the developed learning material and were asked to provide their opinions. Moreover, they were asked to judge the adequacy of the linguistic content and its appropriateness. Based on the experts' remarks, which mainly focused on the learning material sequence, the harmony between the colors and language structure and their remarks were taken into consideration as some adjustments and adaptations were performed on the learning material and the final format of it was prepared. The instrument was also administrated to a pilot sample selected from out of the original sample of the study totaling (25) 8th grade students for three weeks. This was a measure of the learning material appropriateness of the study. The students were asked about the difficulties they encountered while working on the developed learning material, and to give their opinions in terms of the material found difficult for them. The pilot study subjects reported that the learning material was easy and interesting. Thus, it was finally prepared for use with students.

Procedures of the Study

1. Reviewing the theoretical literature and previous studies, which were relevant to the current study.
2. Designing the material using Web Quest.

3. Constructing a grammar test and ensuring the validity and reliability of the test
4. Assigning the sample of the study (experimental and control).
5. Applying the grammar test before applying the study to verify the equality of the two study groups; experimental and control group.
6. The control group was taught the module using the traditional method, while the experimental group was taught by the Web Quest
7. The experimental group used this website which was prepared by the researcher <http://www.zunal.com/webquest.php?w=324830> to learn the grammar, then the students in both groups answered the activity which was on the activity book.
8. By the end of a week, the two groups were tested again at the end of the experiment by means of a post-test which was originally used as a pre-test to check the effect of using Web Quest on grammar achievement.
9. The findings of the study were analyzed and discussed using the appropriate statistics.
10. The researcher inferred the results.

Design and Variables of the Study

The present study adopted the experimental design in terms of using one experimental group and one control group. The independent variable was used under study, namely Web Quests and traditional and GPA, which had three levels as follows 80-100 high, 67-79 medium, 50-66 low while the dependent variable was the participants' scores on the grammar test.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Findings Related to the First Research Question

The first research question asks whether there are statistical significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the experimental and control groups in the post-test results due to the teaching strategy.

To answer the question, the means and the Std. Deviation, T- test values were calculated for the sample on the post test. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Participants' Scores on the grammar Post-Test due to the Teaching Strategy

Teaching Strategy	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Web Quests	22	8.00	3.464	0.470	43	0.641
Traditional	23	7.57	2.711			
Total	45	7.78	3.074			

It can be concluded from the results of Table 3 that there is no statistical difference between the two means of students' scores on the post-test due to the teaching strategy. The mean scores of the experimental group (Web Quests) are (8.00), whereas the mean scores are (7.57) for the control group (Traditional). It is evident that the instructional program of using Web Quests does not have enough a positive effect on the grammar learning of the Jordanian EFL students of the eighth graders.

Results Related to the Second Question:

The second research question asks whether there are statistical significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) between the experimental and control groups in the post-test results due to the GPA.

To answer the second question, Kruskal-Wallis Test was calculated for the performance of the study sample in the pre - post test according to the GPA variable. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4: Kruskal-Wallis Test for the performance of the study sample in the pre - post test according to the GPA variable

Test	GPA	No.	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	Low	7	16.14	6.512	2	0.039
	Medium	18	19.69			
	High	20	28.38			
Post-Test	Low	7	18.86	12.795	2	0.002
	Medium	18	16.06			
	High	20	30.70			

Table (4) shows that there are statistically significant differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the post-test due to the GPA in favor of high GPA with significant level (0.000) which is less than ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results of table (4) indicate that the students with a GPA (High) got the highest mean in the post-test of (30.70) and the students with a GPA (Medium) have got the second rank with a mean of (16.06) while the last rank is GPA (Low) got a mean of (18.86). These means scores indicate that the achievement of the student with a High GPA in English grammar is better than the groups GPA: Medium, and Low.

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions of the Findings Related to the First Question of the Study

The first research question asks whether are there statistically significant differences in eighth graders' grammar learning due to the teaching strategy (Web Quests, traditional)?

The results of the study indicated that there are no statistically significant differences due to the teaching method (Web Quests, traditional) among the means of the study sample. This means that the two teaching methods are equal in introducing the material.

Although the mean scores of Web Quests method are higher than the traditional method. This result may be accounted for by the fact, using Web Quests might be inefficient due to the relatively short duration of the treatment which lasted only for three weeks.

A possible explanation of this result is that the students who were taught by Web Quests were faced difficulties in dealing with technology that limited their learning. In addition to this, weak equipments that public schools have in teaching process may be not suitable to launch such a Web Quest which based on internet websites, and ask learners to search through these websites finding what the learner needs. Also, the negative attitudes that students may have towards using and utilizing technology in their learning, preventing them to be engaged in the instructional process

The results of this study are inconsistent with each of the following studies: Ahmed, 2016; Al-Shamisi, 2016; AL-Khataybeh & AL-Awasa, 2016; Gaith & Awada, 2014; Samara, 2013; Irzawati & Asiah, 2013; Al Fadda et al., 2011 which show the contrary.

Discussions of the Findings Related to the Second Question of the Study

The second research question asks whether are there any statistically significant differences in eight graders' grammar learning due to the GPA (High, Medium, Low)?

The results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the eighth grade female students' achievement of English grammar due to the GPA in favor of High GPA. The results may be due to the fact that the students who got higher scores than others have more tendency to study the grammar using Web Quests because Web Quests have contained a variety of stimulants. These are ideal for their high academic rank and their tendency to learn more than the lower grade students. The students who got higher score have more motivation to learn which is reflected on their learning grammar, and their interaction among the students make their achievement much better lately.

The researcher interprets this result to the fact Web Quest as a new strategy allows the students to learn in cooperative learning which motivates them in communicating.

Based on the mentioned above, the students with a GPA (High) move to learn with this strategy which increases their motivation and activity in learning grammar leading them to be better in the grammar achievement than other the groups GPA: (Medium, and Low).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results reported in this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

- 1- Organize training programs for teachers and students to acquire the needed skills to utilize Web Quest effectively.

- 2- Similar future research investigating the effect of the Web Quest on students' learning grammar in other grade levels based on students' gender and their attitudes towards this teaching strategy is needed.

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(APPENDIX 1)

The achievement test in its final shape.

- 1- The movie..... at 9 pm.
a. start b.starts c.is starting d.was starting
- 2- Look ! The boys now.
a. played b.plays c.are playing d.is palying
- 3- They usually early.
a. get up b.gets up c.getting up d.is getting up
- 4- Sara her homework at moment.
a. do b.does c.is doing d.are doing
- 5- My sons T.V daily.
a. not watch b. are not c. don't watch d. doesn't watch
- 6- you on holiday with my plane sometimes ?
a. Do / go b. Does / go c. Are / going d.Is / going
- 7- Why She now ?
a. is / cry b.is / crying c.does / cry d.do / cry
- 8- In the evening , Faten's girls are to concert.
a. go b.goes c.are going d.going
- 9- The box24 cans of soda.
a. are containing b.is containing c. contain d.cotians
- 10- Mazento live in his house by the sea when the weather is good.
a. likes b.like c.liked
- 11- At the moment, our teacher..... an exercise
a. are explaining b.is explainging c.explained d.explaines
- 12- We see lightening before we thunder.
a. hear b.hears c.are hearing d.is hearing
- 13- She three bikes.
a. Own b.owns c.is owing d. are owing
- 14- Omar and Sally how much you enjoy school.
a. are knowing b. is knowing c. know d. knows
- 15- Women living in a big house.
a. prefers b. prefer c. are preferring d. is preferring

Appendix (2)**The Answers of the test item**

Item NO.	A	B	C	D	Item NO.	A	B	C	D
1		×			9				×
2			×		10	×			
3	×				11	×			
4			×		12	×			
5			×		13		×		
6	×				14			×	
7		×			15		×		
8				×					