INFLUENCE OF MOBILE LEARNING ON STUDENTS` ESSAY WRITING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT: *The study examines influence of mobile learning on students` essay writing in English language. The main objective of the study is to determine the extent to which mobile learning influences students` descriptive, narrative and expository essay writings. Quasi-experiment design was used to determine the influence of mobile learning on essay writings of Kanembright College`s advanced students. The study involved 205 ESL students enrolled to study proficiency programme (2019) in the college. Four (40) advanced students were chosen to constitute the target population using purposive sampling technique. The students were categorized into 20 experimental and 20 control groups. Pretest and posttest were applied to determine their performance in essay writings. The data collected were analysed using ANOVA. The findings of the study revealed that mobile learning has significant influence on ESL students` essay writing. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers of English language should encourage active participation of students in classroom activities through use of mobile phones.*

KEYWORDS: Mobile learning, Essay Writing & English language

INTRODUCTION

Today, the teaching and learning of English language has taken new dimensions from the use of conventional classroom resources to the technological gadgets. This is because of the rapid growth of technology that cut across all spheres of human life. The use of technology in ELT is as old as the technology itself. Teachers of English language in the old days made several attempts to define, identify and theorize best approaches of teaching English language in schools. That led to the transitions from one method to another. Several methods and procedures were highlighted in the course these transitions ranging from direct method, to grammar translation and communicative language teaching etc.

The deployment of ICT facilities to simply teaching and learning of English came to being when Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) and Computer Aided Language Instruction (CALI) emerged. The advent of the microcomputer in the late 1970s brought computing within the range of a wider audience, resulting in a boom in the development of CALL programs and a flurry of publications of books on CALL in the early 1980s. Even in those days, language teachers were good users of technological gadgets. Gramophone records were among the first technological aids to be used by language teachers in order to present students with recordings of native speakers' voices, and broadcasts from foreign radio stations were used to make recordings on reel-to-reel tape recorders. Other examples of technological aids that have been used in the foreign language classroom include slide projectors, film-strip projectors, film projectors, videocassette recorders and DVD players (Côté, Narins & Connor, 1962).

On the similar dimension, mobile learning (m-learning) is seen as a learning model that gives learners opportunity to get learning resources anywhere and anytime they wish using mobile devices and the Internet (Lan & Sie, 2010). It is a learning technique using personal mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones to get learning contents and resources through mobile apps, social interactions and online educational platforms. It is a flexible learning system that allows students to access education at their convenience. One of the advantage of m-learning is that it gives way for learning institutions to impact skill, knowledge and learning content to students on any platform, anyplace and at the time of need. Students learning through m-learning use mobile apps and tools to complete and upload assignments to teachers, download course instruction and work in online social groups to complete tasks. The phrase mobile learning is most often used to describe the technology — the mobile devices and apps used in the classroom, however it may also be used to describe the support of always-on learning with mobile technology (Beal, 2019). Mobile learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge through mobile devices. This means that learning takes place anywhere and anytime. Its implementation apparently serves not as a new way to learn languages but rather as a complement to specific learning activities in the educative context (Robles, 2016).

The term mobile learning (m-learning) was traced to the pioneering work by Xerox a photocopier company in the early 1970s. Xerox developed Dynabook, a personal dynamic medium that was about the size and shape of a book that later on became unpopular. Around the year 2000, practical mobile learning became popular with the introduction of tablet computers (Smith, 2014). Discussion on the use of technology in classrooms had already started in the 1960s; at that time technology was mentioned as an instrument to facilitate the teaching of second language. Currently, technology in classroom has included the implementation of mobile devices to support the teaching and learning processes (O'Connell & Smith, 2007).

Essay writing is defined as piece of writing in which an author expresses his view, opinion or describe an incident. According to Fleming (2019) "Essays are brief, non-fiction compositions that describe, clarify, argue, or analyze a subject. ESL learners may encounter assignments concerning essay writing in any school subject and at any level, from a personal experience essay to a complex analysis of a scientific process in advanced levels". Essay writing is a skill required of every ESL learners at all levels. To distinguish between categories of essays is simply a matter of identifying the writer's goal behind writing the essay. There are great many types of essay writings but for the purpose of this study, three categories are chosen. These are: descriptive, narrative and expository. Many empirical studies were conducted to assess the effectiveness of mobile-learning or technology on ESL learners` writing. For instance Siddique & Nair (2015) in their studies found that other than being effective in teaching writing skills the use of mobile phone made the students more engaged and motivated towards writing skills. Idir & Iskounen (2018) examined the students'' attitudes and teachers'' perceptions toward the use of mobile technology in the EFL classrooms. The findings showed that both students and teachers had positive attitudes toward the use of mobile technology. They showed an agreement toward its effectiveness in the learning/ teaching process. Robles (2016) studied the type of texts and their features produced by a student after using mobile technology as a support to improve the development of the students' writing skills in a second language. The Functional Systemic Linguistic (FSL), Genre Pedagogical Approach (GPA), and mobile learning concepts were employed as theoretical framework. The

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participant of the research was a freshman student that belongs to an English narrative course in a private university of the Caribbean region, Universidad Del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia. This case study analyzed the student's writing during a period of eight-week course, which was then complemented with an interview conducted by the researcher. The results reveal that genre approach can be implemented with mobile technology to increase students' writing ability.

On the contrary, Saleem & Bakhsh (2017) in their study on effects of mobile phone usage on students' writing skills at the University of Peshawar found that the mobile phone usage has a negative impact on the writing skills of the students because they do not use standard language in text messages.

Statement of the Problem

ESL students encounter numerous challenges when writing essay. Vast majority of such students find it difficult to organize their thoughts and put them in a compositional form. Many factors are blamed for this issue; including their academic background, school factors, teachers` pedagogical styles and many more. Many researchers such as Siddique & Nair (2015), Zaki & Yunus (2015), Robles (2016), Saleem & Bakhsh (2017) and Idir & Iskounen (2018) conducted similar studies to examine the effectiveness of mobile technology and students` writing. However, few studies were conducted to look at the specific aspect of the writing of ESL students such as essay writings. Therefore, this study seeks to examine influence of mobile learning on students` essay writing of descriptive, narrative and expository.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to examine:
1.   Influence of mobile learning on students` descriptive essay writing
2.   Influence of mobile learning on students` narrative essay writing
3.   Influence of mobile learning on students` expository essay writing

Hypotheses

 The following hypotheses were tested

H_{o1}: Use of mobile learning does not influence students` descriptive essay writing

H_{o2}: Mobile learning does not influence students` narrative essay writing

Ho_3: there is no significant influence of mobile learning on students` expository essay writing

Scope of the Study

This study deals with influence of mobile learning on students` essay writing in English language. The focus of the study is on three categories of essay writings. There are: descriptive, narrative and expository essay writing. The study involved advanced ESL students of 2019 session in Kanembright College, Maiduguri. The study covered four months of first quarterly package offered from January-April, 2019.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative approach of quasi-experiment was used to determine the influence of mobile learning on advanced ESL students of 2019 academic session in Kanembright College, Maiduguri. Out of 205 registered ESL registered students, 40 learners in advanced class were sampled. The students

were divided into two set of groups; experiment and control groups. Pretest was conducted in the first week of the four months programme to determine their achievement in essay writing. Treatment which is audio and video lessons shared to student via their mobile phones was conducted throughout the program sessions. Questions of different essay writing were shared to students via SMS as well as WhatsApp to give enough time to brain storm and get prepared for the task. Students were allowed to conduct personal research on their mobile phones to browse and gather fact before engaging in any writing task. Posttest was also conducted at the end of the four month session. The data collected from the participants were analysed using inferential statistics of ANOVA.

RESULTS

The data collected through pretest and posttest were analyzed using one-way ANOVA. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of the significance.

Table 1: ANOVA on Students` Achievement in Descriptive Essay

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest: Students` Achievement in Descriptive Essay Writing	Between Groups	.100	1	.100	.003	.957
	Within Groups	1288.300	38	33.903		
	Total	1288.400	39			
Posttest: Students` Achievement in Descriptive Essay Writing	Between Groups	3258.025	1	3258.025	94.123	.000
	Within Groups	1315.350	38	34.614		
	Total	4573.375	39			

Table 1 presents results of ANOVA on students` achievement in descriptive essay. Both pretest and posttest results are presented in the table. The results indicate that there was no difference in the achievement of the students in the pretest at 0.957. In the posttest there was significant difference in the achievement of the students at 0.01 level of significance. This confirms that mobile learning has significant influence on the achievement of ESL learners in descriptive essay writing.

Table 2: ANOVA on Students` Achievement in Narrative Essay

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest: Students` Achievement in Narrative Essay Writing	Between Groups	1.225	1	1.225	.070	.793
	Within Groups	669.150	38	17.609		
	Total	670.375	39			
Posttest: Students` Achievement in Narrative Essay	Between Groups	4347.225	1	4347.225	163.050	.000
	Within Groups	1013.150	38	26.662		
	Total	5360.375	39			

Table 2 presents the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The achievement of the students in pretest and posttest are presented. The results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in the achievement of experimental and control groups. However, the posttest result

showed that experimental group achieved higher grades than the control group at 0.01 level of significance. This proves that m-learning has significant influence on the achievement of the students in narrative essay writing. When students taught using m-learning the achievement is higher and tend to write good narrative essays.

Table 3: ANOVA on Students` Achievement in Expository Essay

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest: Students` Achievement in Expository Essay Writing	Between Groups	.025	1	.025	.002	.968
	Within Groups	597.950	38	15.736		
	Total	597.975	39			
Posttest: Students` Achievement in Expository Essay Writing	Between Groups	4906.225	1	4906.225	168.759	.000
	Within Groups	1104.750	38	29.072		
	Total	6010.975	39			

Table 3 presents ANOVA on students` achievement in expository essay writing. The pretest results showed no scientifically significant difference exist between the two groups. The posttest result revealed that experimental group achieved higher grades after being taught using m-learning. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected at >0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study revealed that mobile learning has significant effect on students` achievement in essay writings. All of the three categories of essay writing; descriptive, narrative and expository essays found to have been influenced by m-learning. This findings is in line with the findings by Siddique & Nair (2015) who found that effectiveness of mobile learning on students writing skills as well as their motivation towards classroom engagement. This might be unconnected with the fact m-learning has lots of fascinating benefits to both learners and the instructor. Learners have the opportunity to access learning content, learning materials as well as multimedia documents at their convenient. That guarantees the flexibility of the learning as well as comfortably of the learning setting. However, Saleem & Bakhsh (2017) made contradicting revelation that the mobile phone usage has a negative impact on the writing skills of the students because they do not use standard language in text messages. This finding shouldn't be generalized to the disadvantage of this study because both studies looked at the m-learning at different perspective. When we consider the writing SMS etc on the mobile phones, students tend to use short hands and acronyms to minimize page space and timeframe. But when m-learning is used as approach to enhance students` learning to write quality essays, it drives home many advantageous results.

CONCLUSION

The use of m-learning as approach and method of teaching has significant effect on students` achievements in all categories of essay writings. ESL learners who use their mobile phones to download multimedia packages, surf via internet and read widely the available open access

materials achieve higher grades in essay writing. Thus, use of mobile learning enhances ESL learners` ability to write good compositions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers of English language should encourage active participation of students in classroom activities through use of mobile phones. Teachers should utilize the open access applications such as Google classrooms and their personal blogs to engage students with more compositional task.

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