

THE EFFECT OF LEARNING BASED - BLACKBOARD SYSTEM IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of learning Based on the Blackboard System in improving students' performance in learning English in the department of English at Al-jouf University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A group of 60 female students of the university participated in a quasi-experimental study for approximately eight weeks. The experimental group learned English from the two carefully selected with Blackboard system discussion board and virtual classes, while the control group learned English through activity-based lessons. A pre-test and post-test were conducted in the first and eight weeks. The findings indicate that the experimental group outperformed the control group statistically in the post-test. The students in the experimental group generally preferred learned English supplemented with Blackboard application discussion board and virtual classes to conventional activity- bases lessons. The teachers believed highly of the Blackboard system-based instruction virtual classes and discussion board, but they expressed concern that extra support was required if the virtual classes and discussion board were adopted as a core part of the teaching and learning process.*

KEYWORDS: blackboard system, learning English, students' performance

INTRODUCTION

Modern technology has contributed to change the features of the whole educational process system, so many higher education institutions have created e-learning systems and its various technologies such as Synchronous Learning, Asynchronous Learning, Collaborative Learning, Interactive Learning, Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI). These technologies enable groups of students to participate in a learning activity together at the same time, from any place in the world. In addition to helping and improve students' performance in learning English as well as teachers' performance and the quality of education. Most universities nowadays, used the Blackboard system in teaching and learning English. This technology (i.e. Blackboard system) involves chat, video, audio, animation, virtual class, discussion board. In order to facilitate the development of students' skills and knowledge in learning English, teachers may use a variety of teaching techniques and methods to provide learners with better learning opportunities. In this study, teachers may use Blackboard technology as a tool to aid learners to be more motivated and actively involved in the learning process. Blackboard is a Web-based learning tool to post information, documents, assignments, and announcements. It may allow real-time activities such as chat rooms that can be used for student-to-teacher and teachers-to student document transfer (Servonsky,

Lawrence, & Bretha, 2005; Larkin & Belson, 2005). In order to facilitate students' learning, instructors may use a variety of teaching techniques and methods to provide learners with better learning opportunities. In this context, instructors may use Blackboard technology as a tool to aid learners to be more motivated and actively involved in the learning process. Blackboard is a Web-based learning tool to post information, documents, assignments, and announcements. It may allow real-time activities such as chat rooms that can be used for student-to-instructor and instructor-to-student document transfer (Servonsky, Lawrence, & Bretha, 2005; Larkin & Belson, 2005). Thus, facilitating the development of students' skills and knowledge in learning English. The Blackboard system is widespread among colleges and across universities. Moreover, it provides great and easy to utilize for educational instruction, communication, and assessment, it has several features that support the teaching and learning process. One of these features is its ability to enhance interaction between the teacher and their students. It offers also a good opportunity to involve students in learning outside the classroom anywhere and at any time.

Blackboard system

Blackboard is defined as “a software package designed to help educators create quality online courses” (Choy et al.2005, p. 130). Blackboard is one of the major prevalent Learning Management Systems adopted by universities (Chang 2008). Blackboard comprises helpful tools to run the content of the courses and communication flexibly, such as Announcements: Allows faculty member to post announcements for students to read and to do. Personal Information: Allows to edit personal information to be contacted. Discussion Board: Allows students and faculty members to create a discussion board and reply to them. Send Email: Allows students and faculty members to send emails to one another within the system and external Email.

Virtual Session: Allows students and faculty members to chat and teach in real-time with other students in their virtual classroom. Course content: Allows faculty members to post course materials, documents, assignments, photos, videos, and more. Calendar: faculty member can use it to submit important dates like assignments submission tests. My courses: Allow faculty members to submit several online classes or lessons for students to access. Assignments: Allows faculty members to submit assignments and students submit them online. Goals and Assessments: Allows faculty members to send quizzes and tests and allows students to access them online. My Grades: faculty members can send grades on the system, and students can view them.

Learning English

Almost every country around the world cares a lot about the learning process and education in general. The quality of this process is measured in terms of the ratio of students to that of teachers: English language, however, are excellent tools for communication between people of different nations, and the vehicles of multi-cross cultural exchanges. This made English Language education a must; especially in this time of huge progress in communication technologies, present in almost every modern home. What is difficult about learning the English Language, may, sometimes, be like the language itself, its socio-cultural contents, teaching methods, teaching environment, problems related to the teachers, and /or the students. One of the obstacles is the oral practice, which is not easy because of the scarcity of opportunities to speak with native or other people talking the same foreign language, as it is the case with Saudi students learning English. Also, we

can add the difficulty of the in-sufficiency of in-service training for teachers, the late introduction of English languages in the curriculum, among many other factors. The relatively short time spent in teaching/learning the English language and the “old fashion” methods depending on spoon-feeding by teachers and keeping by heart by students are among other obstacles. The state much pays more attention to the formation and training of teachers and every possible support to teaching aids and to make the best of the available new teaching technologies, to ameliorate the teaching/learning processes of foreign languages.

The importance of learning English

The importance of learning English to humans is countless, particularly in daily communication and interaction. English language functions as an interactivity instrument and a communication tool in most parts of the world, Language is a powerful tool of control used by the colonial powers. Due to Danladi, the English language functions a fateful role in the social, political, and economic life support of humankind. According to Olusoji, the English language contributes greatly to agile growth and development in the world. Salahuddin et al. stated that English is the controlling language of international business and economic development, and that dominance continues to grow with the continued globalization of business through incorporations and international investment and extends to teaching and learning fields.

Nowadays, the English language is considered as an international language because there has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English. It has a special role to play in the countries where it has been accepted as the official language and is being used as a medium of communication. The statistics collected by David Crystal (1997: 61) shows that nearly 670 million people use English with fluency and since 1990. English now occupies a significant position in every field of people's activities. It is an immensely important contribution to all the developments in the world. The matter for English has been overrunning virtually all the domains of national life such as travel and education, media, international relations, politics and communication. Most of the earlier scientific innovations were made in Britain and are now continued in America are in English and the progress in Science and Technology and their use have been clearing up an immediate effect of the language. The significance of the English language in education is obvious because many countries in the world have made English an official language. Therefore, English language teaching and learning has become one of the main growth industries in the latter years around the world. To sum up, the English language plays an important role as the dominant language in the modern world.

The traditional teaching method emphasizes grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and translations of texts. The teacher dominates everything and does a lot of grammatical analysis and translation (Chien, 2004). Based on Chang and Huang (2001) senior high school English teachers in Taiwan explained that they had confirmed reading and grammar skills than listening and speaking skills. In the teacher-directed speech, the most common activity was teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (Cohen, 1994). To better understand cooperative learning, the comparison of the differences between a cooperative learning environment and a traditional environment is necessary. Due to traditional teaching methods, the procedure of English teaching is less flexible. Most of the teaching methods in the EFL classroom still confirm teacher-centered,

teacher-directed instruction. With a big class in teaching, teachers still make use of traditional teaching methods; there is little interaction between teachers and students. Of course, the teacher usually spends some more time speaking and explaining the syllabus in class. Students are demanded to seated passively and listen to the lesson mindfully. Students inclined to memorize English grammar rules, rote new words and vocabulary, and translation skills from the textbooks (Liu, 1997; Wang, 2001). To get good marks in English, the teacher might bring the competition into the classroom. Such a conventional instructional method causes competitive learning and individual performance in classroom teaching (Robert Eg (Robert E. Slavin 1995). However, too much competition might bring unfavourable depending and reduces the teaching effects. The Difficulties of the teacher in the Traditional Teaching Method is that the traditional method is teacher-oriented. The teacher talks a lot and manages student learning. The learning process in traditional teaching is just one-way communication. The students just receive what the teacher instructs, moreover activities, and discussions between peers are scarce. There is no interactive skills rubric. Students fail to listen and speak English because there are too much teaching and too little communication (Lian, 1996). The teaching process is boring and stodgy. To conclude the modern methods of teaching, can highlighting the student-centred interaction which is relevant to the engagement of the students and involvement in everything happening during the class, and here the teacher's role is not controlling and causing the learning process, but helping to learn to happen by choosing the suitable activities for his learners, to lead them in the lessons and to engage them to activate the language effectively. The modern methodology consists of plenty of variety of methods that involve students and similar to real-life situations.

Learning English via Blackboard as one of the modern methods

Unlike traditional methods, modern methods are much more student-centred. According to Jim Scrivener, the teacher's main role is to "help to learn to happen," which includes "involving" students in what is going on "by enabling them to work at their speed, by not giving long explanations, by encouraging them to participate, talk, interact, do things, etc." (Scrivener 18, 19). Broughton adds that "the language student is best motivated by practice in which he senses the language is properly communicative, that it is appropriate to its context, that his teacher's skills are leading him forward to the fullest competence in a foreign language" (Broughton 47). Succinctly, to engage the students are the most active element in this process. The teacher here is not to explain but to engage, encourage and help students to explore, try out, make learning interesting, concerning productive skills, writing and speaking, and if there are some important difficulties to mention too. While students practising production skills, a teacher using modern methodology is aware of a discrepancy between accuracy and fluency. According to Jack C. Richards, "fluency is natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations on his or her communicative competence" (Richards 13). The Blackboard-based learning system offers robust learning and teaching tools that required new proficiency and understandings from both learners and teachers. This may lead to good results of effective teaching measured by traditional teaching methods. This creates a healthy learning atmosphere regardless of place and time. These facilities and many other tools are means to reinforce language learning in general, and collaboration particularly, which enhancing learning interaction to increase students' opportunities to use the English language effectively.

Students' performance

The Blackboard system is increasingly popular among colleges and universities across the globe. The system has many features that support teaching and learning (Al-Naibi et al. 2015). One of these features is its ability to promote “interaction between students” and their professor “as well as among students” (Al-Naibi et al. 2015). The system also provides great opportunities to engage students in learning outside the classroom anywhere and at any time (D’silva and Reeder 2005) using various tools provided for the students to access the course contents and interact with them. Besides, learning English via the Blackboard system may increase student engagement, collaborative learning, and assessment. Thus, how classroom technologies—blogs and online peer and self-assessment tools, in particular—can encourage student-to-student collaboration, student-to-faculty collaboration, student-learning outcomes, peer and self-assessment, and overall evaluation of the Learning English itself.

Blackboard system help students to learn the English Language

Students' reaction when using the Blackboard system in learning English, the majority of students enjoy assignments via this technology, particularly when they are successful. Some students report that learning English through the Blackboard system makes them feel powerful to have control over the planning and timing of major the assignment. Moreover, the advantages and the benefits Capper (2001) stated the following benefits: a) any time: a participant can access the learning English program at any convenient time. b) any place: the participants do not have to meet. c) asynchronous interaction: interactions can be more succinct and discussion can stay more on-track. d) group collaboration: Blackboard system messaging creates new opportunities for groups to work together by creating shared electronic conversations and discussions. e) new educational approaches: many new options and learning strategies become economically feasible through online courses. Online courses can also provide unique opportunities for teachers and learners to share innovations in their work with the immediate support of electronic groups. Meanwhile, Bouhnik and Marcus (2006) stated that students' learning via the Blackboard system dissatisfaction was based on the following disadvantages: a) lack of a firm framework to encourage students to learn. b) a high level of self-discipline or self-direct is required. c) absence of a learning atmosphere in Blackboard learning systems. d) the Blackboard learning format minimizes the level of contact, as well as the level of discussion, among students. In other words, the Blackboard learning system lacks interpersonal and direct interaction among students and teachers. e) the learning process is less efficient. When compared to the face-to-face learning format, the Blackboard learning system requires students to dedicate more time to learn the subject matter. Moreover, the impact of obstacles on the use of the Blackboard system was medium, and the most important obstacles were the difficulty of uploading files to the English E-courses website and the difficulty for transfer and exchange files among learners using smart devices.

Problem Statement and Objective

The Blackboard system is widespread among colleges and across universities. it provides great and easy to utilize for educational instruction, communication, and assessment, it has several features that support the teaching and learning process. One of these features is its ability to enhance students' performance in learning the English language and interaction between the

teachers and their students. It provides also a good opportunity to involves students in learning outside the classroom anywhere and at any time. Based on the researchers' assessment tests with EFL learners, it has been noticed that they have certain concerns and sometimes abilities in dealing with the use of technology in the classroom in general and with the Blackboard system in specific. Many learners have difficulties with the Blackboard system and its features and functionalities. Others have concerns related to the impact of the Blackboard system on learning the English Language. They need to be aware of the characteristics of the Blackboard system so that they can use it effectively. The researchers believe that it is worthwhile to investigate the Blackboard system to be better effective to enhance students' learning the English Language.

Research Questions and hypotheses

This study attempts to answer the following question and hypothesis:

- To what extent can the use of the Blackboard system impact on learning the English language?
- The use of the Blackboard system can effectively help improve students' performance in learning English.

Significance of the Study

The results of this paper will be important to:

- EFL learners to utilize the suggestions presented to enhance their performance in learning the English language using the Blackboard system.
- The Quality Assurance and Development Unit to consider the challenges EFL learners encounter while using the Blackboard technology in their plans of students' learning development of the English Language.
- EFL learners to consider conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study to develop their abilities to use the Blackboard system to learn the English Language.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

This part provides an overview of the previous studies that are related to the use of the Blackboard system in English Language learning. Many studies have attained the effects of using the Blackboard system on improving performance in English language learning are reviewed. Thamer Alhussain. (2017) "Measuring the Impact of the Blackboard System on Blended Learning Students" the study measures the impact of the Blackboard system on students at Saudi Electronic University (SEU) in order to help improve the quality of the existing learning environment. The results of this study indicated that Blackboard is influencing individual performance. Talal Mohammad Al Meajel and Talha Abdullah Sharadgah. (June 2017) " Barriers to Using the Blackboard System in Teaching and Learning: Faculty Perceptions" This study investigated faculty perceptions of barriers to using the Blackboard system in teaching and learning. This study was conducted at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia during the 2015/2016 academic year. Findings showed that academic rank, experience, gender, and training had statistically significant effects on faculty perceptions regarding barriers to using Blackboard in teaching and learning. The study also showed that 'technological barriers' and 'institutional barriers' were the most highly identified barriers among the four categories of barriers explored in this study. The student barriers

category came as a third important factor, while the faculty barriers category ranked at the lower end. (2017) . Rawda A. Omer and Zahrah A. Almasabi“ The Effectiveness of Using Blackboard Mobile Learn Application in Developing the Attitudes of Najran University Students Towards Mobile - Learning ” Findings indicated that students' attitudes were neutral in the pre-measurement, whereas they become positive in the post measurement. The use of the Blackboard Mobile learn Application was effective in developing students' attitudes towards Mobile Learning. Jamilah A. Alokluk. (2018) “The Effectiveness of Blackboard System, Uses and Limitations in Information Management” the study revealed that the world of information management is always in flux as it is being impacted by the learning technology such as the Blackboard system. The Blackboard system has a recognized presence in the information management of the education system. The result also showed that a comparison between Blackboard and other LMS such as Moodle to explore the effectiveness and limitations of the Blackboard for better academic information management. Many studies have provided evidence that using the Blackboard system has a direct impact on students’ learning (Servonsky et al., 2005; Liaw, 2008). Servonsky et al. (2005) found that the Blackboard system allows for synchronous, real-time activities such as chat rooms, and asynchronous, delayed, activities such as discussion boards and digital drop boxes that can be used for student-to-instructor and instructor-to-student document transfer.

Liaw (2008) investigated learners’ satisfaction, behavioural intention, and the effectiveness of the Blackboard learning system. The results revealed that perceived self-efficacy is a critical factor that influences learners’ satisfaction with the Blackboard learning system. Perceived usefulness and perceived satisfaction both contribute to the learners’ behavioural intention to use the Blackboard system. Furthermore, e-learning effectiveness can be influenced by multimedia instruction, interactive learning activities, and Blackboard learning system quality. other studies were conducted to investigate the perceived usefulness (pu) of Blackboard LMS (Limayem & Cheung, 2008; Lee, 2010; Roca et al., 2006; Sjørebø & Sjørebø, 2009). Limayem and Cheung (2008) have found that pu significantly influences satisfaction and continuance intention to use the Blackboard system among first-year business students in one university. Similar results have been obtained from Lee (2010), who has found that pu influences satisfaction and continuance intention among students who are offered e-learning services in the continuing education program of National Pingtung University in Taiwan. In this study, they hypothesized that the more useful the Blackboard system is, the more university teachers will be satisfied and also inclined to continue using it. Furthermore, the use of the Blackboard system in learning English has a positive impact on students’ performance.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the researchers describe the methodology followed to collect and analyze data. It shows how the population and sample of the study were identified, how the validity and reliability of the study instrument were checked, procedures followed to conduct the study, and statistical analysis used to analyze the data.

Population and Sample Selection

The study population comprised of 160 EFL students in the preparatory year at Al jouf University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The sample was A group of 60 female students of the university who participated in a quasi-experimental study for approximately eight weeks.

Instrument of the study

The researchers adopted empirical and analytical research method in order to study, investigate and assess the students' performance in learning English using the Blackboard system.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

It can be argued that the instrument is valid since it has been developed and used by specialists in this field. However, six EFL specialists were kindly requested to check if the tests were appropriate and relevant to the domains and context. Also, they have suggested some valuable remarks about the tests, and the researchers responded to that.

Study Procedures

The researchers formally requested the approval of the preparatory year dean to conduct the study and distribute the tests to the EFL learners. The instrument was checked for validity and reliability. Having the consent of the participants, the tests were distributed and collected after being filled in. The researchers processed the results using the appropriate statistical methods to get the findings. Based on the findings, relevant conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

RESULTS THE TESTS ANALYSIS

Study experiment

There were actually two classes in this study. The first one was the experimental group while the other one was the control group. They all studied English for the same amount of time and used the same textbooks. The students in the two groups were taught the English Language from their textbook for one month. The main difference between the classes, in terms of how they studied, was that the researchers used the system for teaching English. The aims are to help students develop performance in learning English and provides great opportunities to engage students in learning outside the classroom anywhere and at any time, to quickly the results showed that there was a strong positive correlation between the pre-test and post-test:

Pre-test: 879

Post-test: . 758

Furthermore, to increase the validity and reliability of the test, the researchers gave two tests as pre-test and post-test at different intervals of time. Taking more than one sample of students' work, according to Weir²⁹ "can help reduce the variation in performance that might occur from one task to task". Thus, the researchers decided to take at least two samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the experiment will focus on answering an important question: To what extent can the use of the Blackboard system impact on learning the English language? To answer this question, computed the mean, standard deviation, standard error and ranges for the pre-test- and post-test of both experimental and control groups. To find out whether the group had any progress as a direct result of instruction, T-test group was computed for each group using the pre-test and post-test mean scores of each group.

Table (4- 1) Distribution of pre-test and post-test Scores.

Group		Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Experimental Group	Pre-Test	28.8000	20.9243	3.5063
	Post- Test	38.7000	20.9243	3.8202
Control group	Pre-Test	32.000	19.2056	2.6848
	Post- Test	32.4222	20.2056	3.5067

Table (4- 2) T-test comparing the results of the two groups.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-observed	Df	Sig.(2- tailed)
Experimental Group	30	6.967	2.0621	.3822	18.234	29	.000
Control group	30	6.300	1.3168	.2403	26.203	29	.000

Table (1-4) clearly shows that when the Blackboard system was used in learning the English language within the experimental group, it scored higher than those in the control group on the post-test (mean = 38 and 28 respectively) with similar variations among students in the experimental and controls (SD = 20. 93 and 20. 20 respectively). Since both the experimental and control groups were equal in size, no significant differences existed between the groups based on their pre-test mean scores previously at the beginning of the program. Results of the T-test in Table (2) shows that the mean scores of both control and experimental groups were (6. 967) and (6. 300) respectively, as shown in Table 4-2 Comparison of mean scores for the groups yielded a difference of (+0.668) between experimental and control. Further, the results of the T-test yield at the .001 level ($p < .001^{***}$) meaning that the difference between the experiment and control scores were statistically significant. This suggests that student performance in learning English via Blackboard system within the experimental group improved significantly as a result of using various tools provided for the students to access the course contents and interact with them.

Through observations, we can state that the results within the table (1-4) show that while all the classes improved, the results of the experimental group improved more than the control group. The control group's improvement was not expected though, as the students studied intensely for one month, and may have not applied the Blackboard system in learning English. Both groups show improvements but the experimental group showed a marked improvement with the highest scores

when compared to the slight improvements achieved by the control group. These results clearly illustrate the strongest evidence we have found in the experiment and supports our original hypothesis: The use of the Blackboard system can effectively help improve students' performance in learning English.”

CONCLUSION

This study tried to find out whether the use of the Blackboard system impact on learning the English language or not. As hypothesized: The use of the Blackboard system improves students' performance in learning English. The results of this study showed that students' performance on learning the English language within the experimental group improved as a result of introducing the various tools provided for the students to access the course contents and interact with them.

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