The Effect of Using IPod Technology on EFL College Students' Writing Skill

Thekrayat Ali Al-Subaihat

Ministry of Education || Jordan

Ahmad Mousa Bataineh

Al-AlBayt University || Mafraq || Jordan

Abstract: This study aimed to explore the effect of using IPod technology on EFL students' writing skill. It also aimed to investigate whether teaching writing via using IPod Technology is better than the conventional method of teaching. To carry out the study, 65 male and female undergraduate EFL students who registered for a Writing 2 course at, Al-alBayt University, in the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016 were chosen as participants of the study. They were assigned randomly into two groups: Group one consisted of 35 students, which was chosen as an experimental group and was taught writing using IPod technology and group two consisted of 30 students, which was assigned as a control group and was taught using conventional method of teaching.

Both groups were taught the same material, on the same days of the week, and on the same period. Both groups sat for a pre-post-test to assure that both groups have the same linguistic ability level in the aspects of writing. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to conduct the required statistical analysis of the data related to the objectives of the study. Means, standard deviations, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffe tests were used for all the variables of the study. Data were collected within eight weeks.

The findings of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and control group students' writing performance in favor of the experimental group. Thus progress might be due to using IPod technology. A number of related recommendations were presented to the Ministry of Education and the teachers.

Keywords: Ipod, EFL, Writing.

أثر استخدام تقنية الآي بود على المهارة الكتابية لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية

ذكريات علي الصبيحات

وزارة التربية والتعليم || الأردن

أحمد موسى البطاينه

جامعة آل البيت || المفرق || الأردن

الملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تفحص أثر استخدام تقنية الآي بود (IPod) على المهارة الكتابية لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية. كما هدفت الدراسة أيضا لمعرفة ما إذا كان تدريس الكتابة عن طريق تقنية الآي بود أفضل من التدريس بواسطة الطريقة الاعتيادية. لإجراء الدراسة، تم اختيار 65 طالبا وطالبة كانوا قد سجلوا لمادة الكتابة 2 في جامعة آل البيت في الفصل الأكاديمي الثاني من العام الدراسي 2015/2016 عشوائيا. وقد تم تقسيم المشاركين في الدراسة عشوائيا إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة الأولى تكونت من 35 طالبا وطالبة واختيرت كمجموعة تجريبية وقد درسوا مهارة الكتابة باستخدام تقنية الآي بود والمجموعة الثانية تكونت من 30 طالب وطالبة واختيرت كمجموعة ضابطة وقد درسوا مهارة الكتابة من خلال الطريقة الاعتيادية.

كلا المجموعتين درسوا نفس المادة العلمية في نفس أيام الأسبوع وفي نفس الأوقات. تقدم جميع المشاركين لاختبار قبلي وذلك للتأكد من أن كلتا المجموعتين لها نفس مستوى القدرة اللغوية في ميكانيكيات الكتابة. كذلك استخدم برنامج الحزم الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية للحصول على التحليل الاحصائي المطلوب للبيانات المتعلقة بأهداف الدراسة. جمعت البيانات في فترة ثمانية أسابيع. كشفت نتائج الدراسة بأن هناك فروقا ذات دلالة إحصائية بين درجات طلبة المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة يعزى لطريقة التدريس (تقنية الآي بود مقابل طريقة التدريس الاعتيادية) ولصالح تقنية الآي بود لتطوير مهارة الكتابة في الاختبار البعدي. وأخيراً، تم تقديم عدداً من التوصيات ذات الصلة إلى وزارتي التربية والتعليم والمعلمين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الآي بود، متعلمو اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكتابة.

Introduction

Writing has continuously been an important skill in English acquisition. This importance refers to the fact that it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary that educators try to show their students. It is the realm during which learners have to be offered adequate time to develop their writing skill. Thus more time should be dedicated to writing in lecture rooms containing EFL in order that they'll be ready to effectively communicate in reality yet as educational situations (Ismail, 2011).

Writing is a difficult and complex skill which requires the students' application of appropriate verbal information, intellectual skills, and suitable motivation (Tierney, 1989).

Writing is insufficiently researched in the foreign language (FL) curriculum, despite the significant amount of research in the foreign language (FL) learning in general, which may be ascribed to the lack of emphasis given to the writing skill in English as a foreign Language (EFL) teaching, as well as the difficulties related to the methods of research applied in studying writing skills (Greenia, 1992). EFL learners are challenged because of their incomplete command of grammar and vocabulary through which they express their thoughts and ideas. They tend to struggle with fluent written expressions because of their limited vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of grammatical structures. According to Nitta (2004), the concept of fluency incorporates such elements as organization, grammar, and vocabulary in communication, and not simply the number of words produced in a given period of time.

Teaching of English as a foreign language has recently been receiving a remarkable emphasis owing to the developments taking place in all occupations. New theories, publications and new teaching methods introduce the level of achievement of learners. Precisely, various educational research projects have called attention to the uniqueness of culture and its inseparability from language (Ryan, 1996).

The use of mobile devices like the iPod touch can facilitate the academic language learning vital for success in school through the access of authentic, contextualized resources. Community, family, and peer interactions, for example, are socio-cultural assets that can promote extended learning contexts beyond the classroom through the use of mobile devices (Borrero & Yeh, 2010).

Technology is an essential part of the educational world and, if used properly, can effectively promote successful language acquisition. One part of being a successful language learner is to be able to pronounce words correctly, which can be a very challenging task for some students. Role-playing is one of

the techniques that has been used by teachers for a long time and which engages students in active language use (Utulu, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Having educated many categories for teaching language at Jordanian colleges in Mafraq town, the researcher noticed that students most frequently write incorrect English words and sentences and a few academics still teach mechanics of writing skills mistreatment typical methodology and technique.

Moreover, after reviewing the related literature, the researchers (Reyes, 2014; Pegrum, et.al.; 2013, Wray, 2012; Diemer, et.al.2012) stated that tablets have a beneficial use in education both inside and outside of the classroom. The tablet enables teachers to send students an electronic copy of feedback. Therefore, this study based on introduces helping facilities to develop students' writing activities.

Purpose and Question of the Study

The aim of this study is to look at the result of mistreatment IPod technology aided with applications program as remote language students' aspects of writing. The previous studies on mistreatment IPod technology centered on developing writing performance in general No alternative study for the researcher's best knowledge, examined the result of mistreatment

IPod technology on developing students' aspects of writing specifically. Another innovation during this study is mistreatment applications program which might be regarded as an efficient tool for developing aspects of writing. Applications program has several options i.e. orthography checking whereas writing, mark the orthography

mistakes whereas writing, and synchronic linguistics checker. that encourage the

scientist to adopt it in his study to develop students' writing skill . The study tries to answer the question:

- Are there any significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' aspects of writing (punctuation, spelling, and grammar) at a= 0.05 due to the method of teaching (IPod technology vs. conventional method)?

Background and Literature Review

Galloway (1997) exposed the actual fact that the numbers of lecturers who utilized technology as a component of their educational ways conjointly benefited by the employment of technology in their personal lives. Galloway found that the effective integration of technology into instruction was truly thanks to the teachers' acquaintance and familiarity with these devices in their daily lives, highlight the actual fact that lecturers are then a lot of seemingly to use these tools for instruction.

Using IPod technology within the room will produce multiple opportunities for college students to speak with their peers and academics. Technology will expand the method that kids use oral

and written communication through interaction with others. There are many alternative applications and websites that provide on-line discussion boards and chats which will be enforced into the info for discussing subject topics. Implementing and adapting technology for the employment of oral communication can successively generate a brand new variety of accomplishment within which students still use and expand their language (Greenfield, 2015).

Mobile devices like cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), sensible phones, etc., are carrying powerful functions as do personal computers. as a result of these devices are little, smart, portable, and cozy to utilize, significantly to the digital natives, of these devices are thought to be teaching instruments within the mobile learning (ML). Besides, powerful options and functions of mobile devices provide mobile phone users like lecturers and tutorial designers nice

potential and feasibleness for educational use, particularly within the mobile learning, which is able to offer folks from various fields a replacement thanks to learn (Cui & Wang, 2008).

In addition to, Vess (2006) stressed the movability feature of the iPod, characterizing this as a positive facet for college students which may prove extremely instrumental in promoting their constant commitment to the course topics. In keeping with Vess, a student in her study explicit that "the proven fact that you'll be able to hear a podcast within the automotive, at the library, etc., makes it abundant easier to become immersed within the subject" (p. 488). Another good thing about exploitation the IPod for educational functions is that it permits students to avoid wasting time in performing arts academic activities, in order that they could use this beyond regular time in following extracurricular activities or for recreational functions (Vess, 2006). consequently, IPod might need the potential to be a good learning tool for college students to use outside of the room.

Studies that Discuss the Effect of IPod on Writing Skill:

Vrtis (2010) further noted that students using tablets in the classroom felt better prepared with their homework and that the technology assisted them with their note taking skills. The latter use was clearly evident during classroom observations at Long field, where a majority of students used their iPad for this purpose rather than pen and paper.

Borrero & Yeh (2010) conclude that iPad can be used effectively as tool that young children can navigate and use independently to develop literacy skills. Children use environmental print to navigate within and between apps, and can use the iPad to read, write, and talk about print. In light of these possibilities, the iPad could be a promising instructional tool for early childhood educators.

Osman and Chung (2010) investigated the feasibility of using IPod text messaging with communication technologies to support the collaborative acquisition of L2 English. Six students participated in the study for 10 days, half using a blog and half a wiki. They sent five types of messages at fixed intervals: update reminders, lesson reminders, multiple-choice questions, web links, and feedback

requests. The majority of the participants had positive attitudes towards the IPod technologies and agreed that their use could help them in learning English and develop writing skills.

Diemer, et. al., (2012) explored the effect of using ipads on language learners' engagement. The sample of the study consisted of 209 undergraduate students from several degree programs participated in the study by enrolling in a course for which ipads had been selected for deployment. ANOVA was used to compare perceived learning and perceived engagement among the three factors. Results revealed that students in the present study who were comfortable with e-learning and mobile technologies reported more learning and a greater likelihood to use ipads as instructional technology in the future.

Beschorner &Schmidt (2012) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the iPad for literacy learning with elementary students. Because iPads are relatively unexplored as a tool for literacy instruction, the researchers sought to gather information that would assist educators in making informed decisions in using mobile technology. They related the importance of integrating digital technology into literacy instruction in order to equip students with 21st century literacy skills. They pointed out that many teachers acknowledge the need for reading, writing, and communication instruction in digital environments.

Walsh & Simpson (2013) conducted a study in which they considered the reading and writing process for students as they interact with the iPad device through touch pads as the mode of gesture. They examined the cognitive and interactional processes that take place when students read digital text on a touch pad. They noted that there is little research available on this aspect of the touch screen and its relationship to effectiveness in literacy instruction.

Reyes (2014) examined the effectiveness of using iPad Apps based instruction in reading intervention programs for second and third grade students. Results indicated that all students in the study improved in literacy mastery by the end of the study. English language learners also demonstrated gains in literacy skills. In addition, the study demonstrated that the use of iPad Apps in building mastery of literacy skills of students in second and third grade has a positive effect. Under certain conditions, iPad Apps are useful in literacy instruction.

All the previous studies dealt with IPod as an independent variable. Several previous studies indicated that there is a strong relationship between IPod and its effect on the EFL students' writing skills.

Data Collection, Instruments and Data Analysis

The material used was a textbook loaded with writing skill exercises. It was prescribed for students of at Al-alBayt University in Jordan. The students studied three units of the book. The focus was on practical language use of writing skill. The textbook units were on different topics that test students' ability to write accurately. These topics include writing paragraphs and essays on various topics and fields

of life, and writing description were intentionally chosen to cover all the aspects of writing including the following: (punctuation, spelling, and grammar).

A pre-test was administered before the experiment to decide the actual level of both groups in the aspects of writing before starting the experiment. After two months, a post-test was administered to see if IPod has an effect on students' aspects of writing. To get rid of subjectivity, the total scores were distinguished logically among aspects of writing.

Design and Participants of the Study

This study is a quasi-experimental one in which the participants were 65 student. They were divided into two groups: experimental group, which was taught using IPod technology and consisted of 35, and control group, which was taught using the traditional method and consisted of 30. They were between 20-25 years old.

Validation

To make sure that the tool meets all the requirement of a good test, it should be valid, reliable and with an acceptable degree of difficulty. In order to ensure validity of the test, it was given to referees of three specialists who are well known for their long experience in the field of teaching EFL . According to their suggestions on the items concerning the distribution of scores among the writing skill, the researcher revised and adopted the scale of research on writing skill that ranges from 0 to 100 according to the suggestions of the referees.

Reliability of the Instrument

One of the techniques that can be used to find out test reliability is the test- retest method. Thus, to establish the reliability of the tests, the test-retest technique was used. A random sample of 19 students was selected from the same department from which the actual sample was drawn. They sat to the test. Two weeks later, the pilot group took the same test.

Variables of the Study

1- The independent variables of this study were:
   - Teaching method which includes:
   - Teaching aspects of writing by using IPod and
   - Teaching aspects of writing using conventional method.
2- The dependent variable was students' scores of both groups (experimental and control) in aspects of writing.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to conduct the required statistical analysis of the study. The means, standard deviation, T-test, One-way ANOVA, and Schafee were conducted for all the variables of the study.

Findings related to the Question

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a pre- test consisted of one part that is a written part was administered to the undergraduate learners to make sure that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups. It was administered at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016 to know the actual level and knowledge of students in writing skill before starting the experiment.

Table (1) Both Groups Students' Scores on the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	DF	Sig.
Control Group	30	48.60	11.35	0.17	28	0.39
Experimental Group	35	49.88	11.57			

Table 1: shows the absence of statistically significant differences at the level of significance $\alpha. \leq 0.05$ for the level and knowledge of students in writing skill before starting the experiment for pre-assessment due to group. The findings revealed that student' scores for both groups in the writing skill were almost equivalent in the pre-test before applying the experiment.

The first question was "Are there any significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' aspects of writing(punctuation, spelling, and grammar) due to the method of teaching (IPod technology vs. conventional method)". To answer this question, means and standard deviations of the two groups for the method of teaching were calculated. Table 2 clarifies this.

Table (2) Both Groups' Students' Scores on the Post-test

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.
Post-test	Control	30	54.68	13.78	2.69	44	0.00
	Experimental	35	73.22	16.29			

It is obvious from Table 2 that there is a statistically significant difference between the performances of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test. In other words, the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test were better than the control group. According to table 2, it is obvious that the mean scores of the experimental group on the post- test were higher than those of control group .The differences in this finding may be attributed to the method of teaching, suggesting that students used IPod technology performed better than those who used conventional method.

Table (3) Both Groups' Students' Scores in the aspects of Writing on the Post-test

Writing aspects	Group	No.	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Grammar 34%	Experimental	35	10.97	1.69	3.77	0.03
	Control	30	8.44	2.36		
Spelling 33%	Experimental	35	14.78	2.21	2.46	0.02
	Control	30	13.37	2.52		
Punctuation 33%	Experimental	35	23.86	0.97	3.32	0.00
	Control	30	16.29	1.34		
Mean scores 100%	*Experimental*	35	*72.22*	*3.89*	*5.97*	*0.00*
	Control	30	*54.68*	*4.55*		

* Significance(α =0.05)

Discussion of the Results

According to the results, it was clear that scores of experimental group were statistically higher than those of control group, and the performance of the experimental group on the mechanics of writing has improved after practicing writing via IPod over eight weeks, while there was a little improvement in the performance of the control group in the aspects of writing. After interpreting and analyzing the scores, the researcher found out that the experimental group students have developed a lot in whole aspects of writing. This progress might be due to the effect of IPod on the experimental group students' aspects of writing related to punctuation, spelling, grammar, because they practiced these aspects through frequent writing throughout the period of the experiment.

This finding agrees with Vrtis (2010) who noted that students using tablets in the classroom felt well prepared with their homework and that the technology assisted them with their note taking skills. The latter use was clearly evident during classroom observations at Longfield, where a majority of students used their iPad for this purpose rather than pen and paper.

The finding is also in harmony with Reyes (2014) who examined the effectiveness of using iPad Apps based instruction in reading intervention programs for second and third grade students. Results indicated that all students in the study improved in literacy mastery by the end of the study. In addition, the study demonstrated that the use of iPad Apps in building mastery of literacy skills of students in second and third grade has a positive effect.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that IPod technology is so important in teaching mechanics of writing. The findings of this study, from theoretical and empirical point of view, suggested that IPod technology had a positive effect on developing the mechanics of writing of undergraduate EFL learners. Moreover, IPod technology could be supportive to the learning of writing.

Developing writing skill through IPod technology is more permanent, which can be regarded as an effective tool to develop writing skill due to its useful features.

The following conclusions could be derived from this study:

- IPod technology could be supportive to the learning aspects of writing.

- Developing aspects of writing through IPod technology is more beneficial which can be regarded as an effective tool to develop writing skill due to its useful features

Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

Ministries of education should equip schools and universities with contemporary technology i.e., IPod technology so that students will have a chance to develop their aspects of writing to help them be able to write accurately. Ministries of education and higher education should encourage schools and universities to train teachers of English to deal with IPod technology and how to use them.

Recommendations for EFL Teachers

EFL teachers should be encouraged to use IPod technology in their classes. Train English teachers and instructors on how to use different IPod technology in their English classes. Train EFL teachers to train their students on how to use IPod technology in language skills learning.

References

- Beschorner, B., & Schmidt-Crawford, D. (2012). Exploring the use of the iPad for literacy learning. Reading Teacher, 66(1), 15-23.

- Borrero, N. & Yeh, C.(2010). Ecological English language learning among ethnic minority youth. Educational Researcher, 39(8), 571 -581.

- Cui, G.& Wang, Sh.(2008). Adopting Cell Phones in EFL Teaching and Learning. 1, (1), November, 2008.

- Diemer, T., Fernandez, E. & Streepey, J.(2012). Student Perceptions of Classroom Engagement and Learning using ipads: Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology, . 1(2), December 2012. pp. 13 – 25.

- Galloway, J.(1997). How Teachers Use and Learn to Use Computers. Technology and Teacher Education Annual Journal.

- Greenfield, S.(2015). Mind Change: How digital technologies are leaving their mark on our brains. New York: Radom House.

- Greenia, G.(1992). Why Johnny can't scriber: Composition and the foreign language curriculum. ADFL Bulletin, 24(1), 30-37.

- Ismail, S. (2011). Exploring students' perceptions of ESL writing. English Language Teaching, 4(2), 73-83.

- Nitta, R.(2004). Effects of technology- enhanced language learning on L2 imposition of university level. ProQuest Information and Learning Co. UMI No.3157491.

- Osman, M., & Chung, P.(2010). Feasibility study on mobile and communication technologies for language learning. IADIS International Conference Mobile Learning (pp. 265—268).

- Pegrum, M., Howitt, H., &Striepe, M. (2013) Learning to take the tablet: How pre-service teachers use ipads to facilitate their learning: Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 2013, 29(4).

- Reyes, M. (2014). The Effects of iPad Apps on Student Achievement in Literacy for Children in 2nd and 3rd Grade. Theses and Capstone Projects.

- Ryan, M. (1996). 'Socio linguistic goals for foreign language teaching and teachers'. Metaphorical Images of Culture Foreign Language Annal, 29, (4) 572-581.

- Tierney, R.(1989).The effects of reading and writing upon thinking critically. Reading Research Quarterly 25, 136-137.

- Utulu, S. (2012). Use of mobile phones for project based learning by undergraduate students of Nigerian private universities. International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT), 2012, 8(1), pp. 4-15.

- Vess, L.(2006). History to Go: Why I teach with ipods. History Teacher, 39, 479—92.

- Vrtis, J.(2010). The Effects of Tablets on Pedagogy. Paper for TIE 593, National Louis University.

- Walsh, M., & Simpson, A. (2013). Touching, tapping, thinking and examining the dynamic materiality of touch pad devices for literacy learning. Australian Journal of Language & Literacy, 36(3), 148-157.

- Wray, L.(2012). The motivational effects of using mobile devices in mathematics classrooms by students with exceptionalities. Unpublished master's thesis. University of Ontario Institute, Canada.