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The Effectiveness of A Suggested Computer–Based Program for Developing Some EFL Oral Communication Skills among Preparatory School Students

A THESIS
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(Curricula & Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

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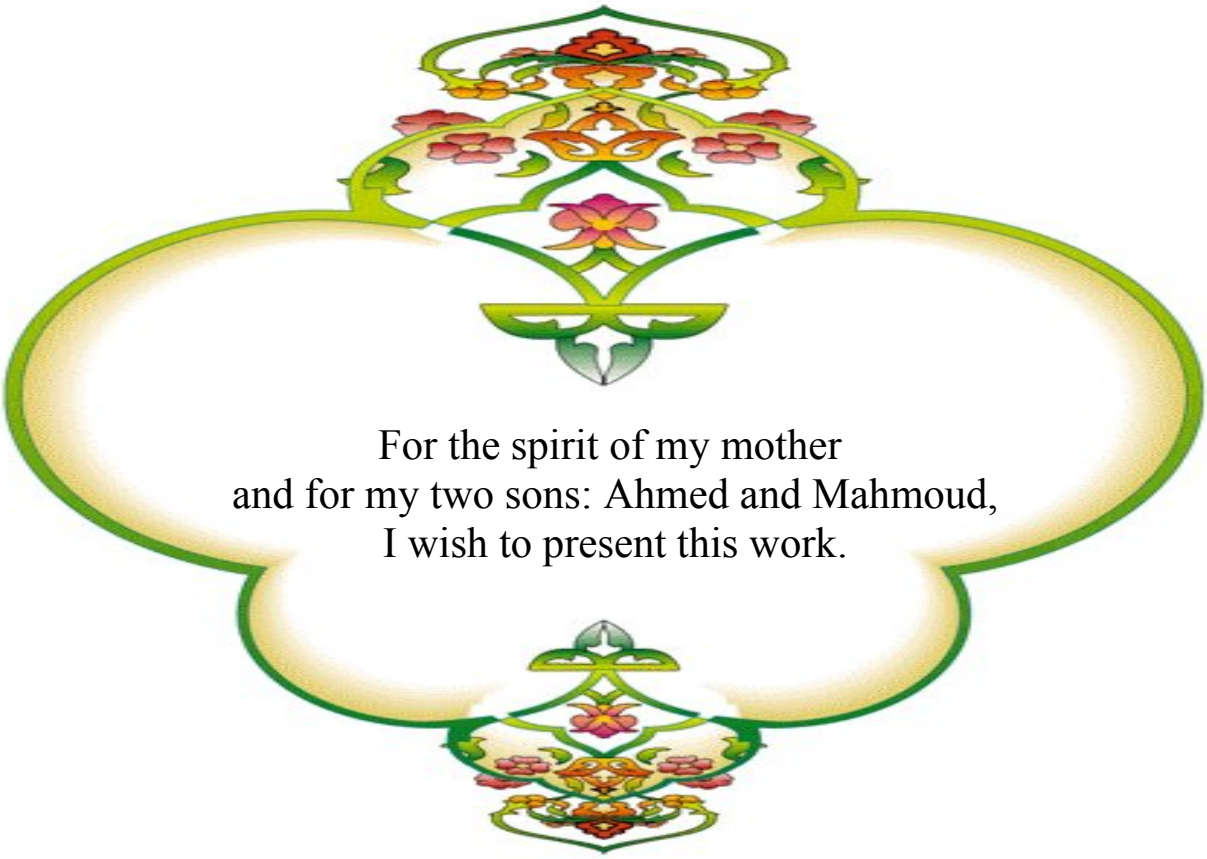
Dedication



For the spirit of my mother
and for my two sons: Ahmed and Mahmoud,
I wish to present this work.

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effectiveness of a suggested computer-based program for developing some EFL oral communication skills appropriate for a group of first year preparatory school students (n = 39). A list of oral communication skills (the listening comprehension skills and the speaking skills)was identified. An oral communication test (the listening comprehension and the speaking) and a suggested computer-based program of eight lessons were designed. The program was applied in the second semester of the academic year(2008/2009) and lasted for sixteen sessions for about one month and a half. The post-test was applied on the study sample and the findings were revealed. The findings indicated that the suggested program is effective in developing these oral communication skills. The study concluded that using computer-based programs is very helpful and effective in learning EFL oral communication skills and that these programs are more effective than the traditional teaching method. Recommendations included that there should be more interest for using computer-based instruction to learn different language skills in the classroom and the use of modern technologies can be helpful in the educational process.

- The Keywords:
  - EFL (English as a foreign language).
  - CBI (Computer-based Instruction).
  - CAI (Computer-Aided Instruction).
  -CALL(Computer-Assisted Language Learning).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page
• **Dedication……..**	i
• **Acknowledgement** ……	ii
• **Abstract**…….	iv
• **Tables of Contents**…….....	v
• **List of Tables** ……	ix
• **List of Figures**……..	x
• **Chapter (1): The Research problem and its context**…..	1-10
1.0. Introduction…… …….	2
1.1. Background of the problem…… …….	5
1.2. Statement of the problem……...	6
1.3. The significance of the study…….	6
1.4. Scope of the study……..	7
1.5. Tool of the study……...	7
1.6. Hypotheses of the study…….	7
1.7. The study procedures……....	8
1.8. Terminology……..	9
• **Chapter (2): Theoretical Background**…….	11-37
2.0. Introduction……...	12
2.1. Language learning and communication……	12
2.2. Oral communication skills……	13
2.3. The communicative competence……..	14
2.4. The main components of the communicative competence……...	16
2.5. The communicative approach……	18
2.6. The process of communication……..	20
2.7. How to improve the feedback in communication..	22
2.8. The language functions and the speech act……	22
2.9. Computer-based learning……...	26
2.10. The three different stages of CALL……	29
2.11. Types of computer programs ……...	30
2.12. Computer and oral communication……..	33

- **Chapter (3): Related Studies……...** 38-57

3.0. Introduction …….. 39

3.1. Studies on communication skills……..... 39

3.2. Comments on these studies…… 47

3.3. Studies on computer and oral communication skills……. 48

3.4 Comments on these studies…….. 56

- **Chapter (4): Method and Procedures** …… 58-77

4.0. Introduction…… 59

4.1. Tool and Materials…… 59

4.1.1. The EFL oral communication skills list…... 59

4.1.1.2. Purpose of the oral communication skills list……... 59

4.1.1.2. Sources of the list…… 59

4.1.1.3. Description of the EFL oral communication skills list in its in initial form……. 60

4.1.1.4. Description of the EFL oral communication skills list in its final form…… 61

4.1.2. The EFL oral communication test……. 62

4.1.2.1. The test objectives…… 62

4.1.2.2. Sources of the test……. 63

4.1.2.3. Test Description in its initial form …. 63

4.1.2.4. Test Validity…… 64

4.1.2.5. Test reliability……. 65

4.1.2.6. Test description in its final form…. 65

4.1.3. The suggested program ……... 70

4.1.3.1. The bases of the program……. 70

4.1.3.2. Constructing the form of the program. 70

4.1.3.3. The objectives of the program…….. 70

4.1.3.4. The content of the program……. 71

4.1.3.5. The instructive strategy of the program.. 71

4.1.3.6. The general Scenario for dealing with the program…… 72
4.1.3.7. Programming the content of the program 72
4.1.3.8. Describing the program…….. 72
4.1.3.9 Sources of the Computer-based program.. 73
4.1.3.10. Activities……... 74
4.1.3.11 Manipulation of the activities…… 74
4.1.3.12 The role of the teacher……. 75
4.1.3.13. Evaluation of the Program……. 75

4.2. The Experimentation…….. 76
4.2.1. Sample of the study……... 76
4.2.2. Procedures of the experiment……... 76
4.2.2.1. Time-duration of the Experiment…… 76
4.2.2.2. Pre-testing……... 76
4.2.2.3. Treatment ……..... 76
4.2.2.4. Post-testing…….. 77

• **Chapter(5): Study Findings, Conclusion & Recommendations**…… 78-96

5.0. Introduction……. 79
5.1. Study Findings ……... 79
5.1.1. Hypothesis (1)……. 79
5.1.1.1. Sub-Hypothesis (1)…… 80
5.1.1.2. Sub-Hypothesis (2)…… 82
5.1.1.3. Sub-Hypothesis (3)…… 83
5.1.2. Hypothesis (2)……. 84
5.1.2.1. Sub-Hypothesis (1)…… 85
5.1.2.2. Sub-Hypothesis (2)……..... 86
5.1.2.3. Sub-Hypothesis (3)…… 87
5.1.3. Hypothesis (3)……. 88
5.1.4. The total effect size of the (C.B.P)……. 90

5.2. Discussion of the Findings..... 92
5.3. Conclusions……..... 94

5.4. Recommendations……..... 95
5.5. Suggestions for further research ……. 96

- **References**……..... 97-109
- **Appendices**…….. 110-233

Appendix (A) The list of oral communication skills……... 110-117

Appendix (B) The oral communication test……. 118-132

Appendix (C) The suggested program……. 133-185

Appendix (D) The teacher's guide …….. 186-208

Appendix (E) The Manipulated material of the student's book 209-228

Appendix (F) The list of the jury members……. 229-231

Appendix (G) Official document……..... 232-233

- **Arabic Summary……**…….. 1-7

LIST OF TABLES

No.	Title	Page
1	The specification of the oral communicative skills test	66
2	Scoring of the oral communicative skills test……	69
3	Findings of the pre-and post-test(listening comprehension)	79
4	Findings of the pre-and post-test (vocabulary)……	81
5	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Grammar)…….	82
6	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Comprehension)..	83
7	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Speaking skills)..	84
8	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Vocabulary)…….	85
9	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Grammar).....	86
10	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Fluency)……..	87
11	Findings of the pre-and post-test (Overall oral communication skills)……..	88
12	The total effect size of the program(η^2) …….	90

Tables of Figures

No.	Title	Page
1	The three stages of the acquisition of communication skills…….	19
2	The communication process……...	21
3	Notional categories or "Notions"……..	23
4	A frame work for investigating language learning and teaching…….	28
5	A flowchart of how to deal with the program…	73
6	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in listening comprehension…	80
7	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in vocabulary…….	81
8	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in grammar…….	82
9	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in comprehension……...	83
10	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in speaking skills……	84 .
11	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in vocabulary…….	86
12	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in grammar. …….	87
13	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in fluency ……..	88 .
14	The scores mean of the pre-test and the post-test of the study sample in overall oral communication skills……	89

15	ŋ² of the overall listening comprehension skills……	91
16	ŋ² of the overall speaking skills……	91
17	ŋ² of the overall oral communication skills……...	92

Chapter One

Research problem and its context

Chapter one
Research problem and its context

1.0 **Introduction**

In the past , people usually talked about the aims of learning in terms of the so-called “language skills” ; listening, speaking , reading and writing and their main aim was to have drill and practice only on these skills. But, recently teaching English has been called upon to provide students with the basic ability to use the language to communicate . The English language derives its universality from its wide range of use all over the world and learning English nowadays has become one of the most important attitudes for every learner to be part of this world .

English is an international language, used or understood in most parts of the globe and in a great variety of circumstances. In today’s world, It serves as a means of expression and communication not only among people who have acquired it as their mother tongue but – on an even more remarkable scale – with and among non-native users, whose mother tongues are many and various : and this needs to be recognized in deciding upon the aims and procedure of teaching and learning . English as a world language doesn’t belong to mother-tongue speakers of English alone, but to all those who can make effective use of it.(Wallwork 1985:131)

Language is commonly known as a form of human social behavior through which man can communicate or record his ideas , thoughts and feelings. This form of social behavior is either spoken or written. Also language may be “intentionally” learnt; as it is the case with foreign languages which enable man to communicate with other people for business or study purposes. However, of all languages, English has become the accepted medium for international communication. Therefore , its learning has become a must (Mohasseeb 1992:1).

In view of the complexity of meaning potential for communication, whether in the native or in a second or a third language, It is unfortunate that the term “Communicative language teaching ” seems to have been preempted for a somewhat narrow view of basic needs in communication in a restricted set of situations. Johnson speaks of the need for inventories specifying semantic and pragmatic categories

which are arrived at by considering presumed communicative need of the students (Rivers 1983:44).

A well-organized communicative class is a strain-free class that puts on pressure on the students, Thus, Communication based on real-life situations is not enough, however, the teacher must energize the students' rich imaginations. Breaking through the restrictions of time and space , the conversation stream can flow everywhere. A wide range of authentic material and the popular scientific knowledge students get outside of their English classes can be fully used and the information shared by all. Learning becomes amusing ,more joyful, and more free . (Wang 1990:37).

Before 1993, a great deal of belief has been placed in technologies as a means of shoring up perceived weaknesses in education. This is clear in the amount of technology-based research around teaching and learning especially in EFL field. Technology has the potential to play a major role in foreign language learning and instruction. However , the development of this potential is in the early stages, Issues on which the realization of this potential depends include the shift from thinking of technology as assisting instruction to thinking of it as supporting learning .(Higgins 1993:2)

When one thinks of technologies in language education, many things generally come to mind : the video cassette recorder (VCR) and the microcomputer. Indeed, these are the basics in terms of equipment for numerous technological approaches to language instruction. Add to this picture , the capabilities of closed –captioned video, optical-disc technology such as compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM) for microcomputer, interactive video disc systems, a plethora of software programs, as well as the possibilities offered by satellite transmission, and the view that emerges is a complex set of technological applications that are increasingly available and popular in education settings. Technology is the state of the art in English language teaching and well informed language (Forrest 1993:316) .

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is also a great method to add variety, fun and excitement to the learning process by making students fascinated by using the computer as a new language equipment. Using the computer as an aid is characterized by its great potential in audio-visual storing of information as well as by the trait of interactivity. Thus it leads to learner-autonomy which helps the learners to develop many foreign language skills which avoiding memorization (