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Faculty Of Education

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***The Effect Of Using A Computer – Based
Program On Developing EFL Reading And
Writing Skills Of The Fifth Primary Stage Pupils
In The Light Of An Interactive Approach***

A thesis

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in Education**

**(curriculum and methods of teaching English as a foreign
language)**

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Abstract

Pupils at primary stage in this century need to learn how to get the information by themselves, they need to control the process of learning. One of the main aims of (Hello 2) is to teach the students how to learn, and it contains a part (**learn how to learn**) but the teachers ignore it completely as if it never exists. So there are a lot of poor readers and writers at the primary stage who don't possess the knowledge and skills necessary for creating critical readers and effective writers. So there is an urgent need to address pupils, poor performance in reading and writing in a non-traditional way. The pilot study conducted by the researcher in workshop training of teachers to use computer as an interactive mean in their classroom (**Basic IT proficiency workshop**) Indicated the desire of the teachers to use nontraditional ways in their classroom. Therefore, the study implies a computer program for developing the reading and writing skills on the light of the interactive approach without neglecting the role of the teacher as a guide. The researcher came to the conclusion that the proposed program used in the present study has achieved observable improvement in pupils' reading and writing skills. This was reflected in the high scores of the pupils of the experimental group obtained after being exposed to the proposed computer program, which was based on the interactive approach. This indicates that the proposed program was successful in developing reading and writing skills of the 5th primary stage pupils.

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Abstract

Pupils at primary stage in this century need to learn how to get the information by themselves, they need to control the process of learning. One of the main aims of (Hello 2) is to teach the students how to learn, and it contains a part (**learn how to learn**) but the teachers ignore it completely as if it never exists. So there are a lot of poor readers and writers at the primary stage who don't possess the knowledge and skills necessary for creating critical readers and effective writers. So there is an urgent need to address pupils, poor performance in reading and writing in a non-traditional way. The pilot study conducted by the researcher in workshop training of teachers to use computer as an interactive mean in their classroom (**Basic IT proficiency workshop**) Indicated the desire of the teachers to use nontraditional ways in their classroom. Therefore, the study implies a computer program for developing the reading and writing skills on the light of the interactive approach without neglecting the role of the teacher as a guide. The researcher came to the conclusion that the proposed program used in the present study has achieved observable improvement in pupils' reading and writing skills. This was reflected in the high scores of the pupils of the experimental group obtained after being exposed to the proposed computer program, which was based on the interactive approach. This indicates that the proposed program was successful in developing reading and writing skills of the 5th primary stage pupils.

Key words: reading, writing, computer program, interactive approach

المخلص

التلاميذ في المرحلة الابتدائية في هذا القرن في حاجة لمعرفة كيفية الحصول على المعلومات في حد ذاتها انهم بحاجة إلى السيطرة على عملية التعلم. أحد الأهداف الرئيسية لكتاب (هالو ٢) هو تعليم الطلاب كيفية التعلم ، وأنه يحتوي على جزء (تعلم كيف تتعلم) ولكن المعلمين تتجاهله تماما كما لو لم يكن اصلا موجودا. لذلك هناك الكثير من التلاميذ في المرحلة الابتدائية الذين لا يملكون المعرفة والمهارات اللازمة لخلق القراءة والكتابة الفعالة. لذلك هناك حاجة ملحة لمعالجة ضعف الأداء في القراءة والكتابة بطريقة غير تقليدية. الدراسة التجريبية التي أجرتها الباحثة في ورشة عمل تدريبية للمعلمين لاستخدام الكمبيوتر باعتباره وسيلة فعالة في الفصول الدراسية الخاصة بهم (ورشة عمل الكفاءة الأساسية لتكنولوجيا المعلومات) أشارت إلى رغبة المعلمين في استخدام طرق غير تقليدية في صفوفهم. ولذلك ، فإن الدراسة الحالية تنطوي على برنامج كمبيوتر لتطوير مهارات القراءة والكتابة في ضوء المنهج التفاعلي دون اغفال دور المعلم كمرشد. توصلت الباحثة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن البرنامج المقترح المستخدم في هذه الدراسة قد حقق تحسنا ملحوظا في قراءة التلاميذ ومهارات الكتابة. وقد انعكس هذا في درجات تلاميذ المجموعة التجريبية التي تم الحصول عليها بعد تعرضهم لبرنامج الكمبيوتر المقترحة ، التي كانت تقوم على أساس المنهج التفاعلي. وهذا يدل على نجاح البرنامج المقترح في تطوير مهارات القراءة والكتابة لتلاميذ الصف الخامس الابتدائي.

كلمات دالة: القراءة, الكتابة, برنامج كمبيوتر, المدخل التفاعلي.

Chapter one

Research problem

Introduction:

In this chapter the researcher is going to explain the importance of reading and writing as integrative skills and the lack of mastery of reading and writing skills in EFL classroom; in addition, the role of using the computer-based program in developing reading and writing skills in EFL classroom. The study problem, its rationale, hypotheses, limitations, significance, procedures and definition of terms are managed in this chapter.

1.1. Back ground of the problem:

Teaching English has become increasingly important because English is an international language that people all over the world use in communicating ideas. In addition, the tremendous progress of modern science, the revolution of information, modern technology, the internet and the closer political and industrial links have highlighted the value of cross-culture communication, a fundamental part of which is learning English (Abd El Moaty, 2002).

Reading is one of the most important skills in English and other languages knowledge. Reading is also important for students, as it is a means of enlarging their information and helping them achieve progress in all subjects. Teaching reading should enable almost every student to be able to read fluently, to reach high level of comprehension ability and to enjoy and learn from reading (Abdullah 2003).

Writing is also a tool for the creation of ideas and the consolidation of the linguistic system by using it for communication in an interactive way. Thus writing implies the successful transmission of ideas from an addressor to an addressee via a text, and this exchange of information becomes a powerful means to motivate and encourage the development of language skills. (Mostafa, 2002).

So, language teachers often emphasize the importance of writing as the documented skill. (Helmy, 1993). Writing helps students think, feel and play with language as they make order out of their chaotic lives. Doing writing exercises helps students generate ideas and take control of their censor. (Keller, 2001). Writing is essential in learning in general. Logically, senses are used while learning. The more senses are used; the more effective learning is achieved. (Helmy, 1998) .

However, writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and nonnative speakers alike, because writers must balance multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling,

and mechanics such as capitalization. Writing is especially difficult for nonnative speakers because they are expected to create written products that demonstrate mastery of all the above elements in a new language. In addition, writing has been taught for many years as a product rather than a process. Therefore, teachers emphasize grammar and punctuation rather than making decisions about the content and the organization of ideas. (Abu Rass, 2001).

Lee (2002) is of the opinion that reading and writing are interconnected. Writers read and re-read their drafts to improve them. Readers, on the other hand, paraphrase and summarize in writing what they have read. Thus, reading and writing are integrally connected. For both readers and writers, meaning does not reside solely in the text; instead, they engage themselves actively in the texts, interpreting and constructing meaning at the same time. Meta-awareness of coherence, Lee believes, enhances the comprehension process and equips students with strategies to go about their own writing.

Similarly, Jabr (1998) believes that we cannot isolate the teaching of reading and writing, for the following reasons:

- 1- Increasing motivation.
- 2- Maximizing interest in content and product.
- 3- Assisting students to think clearly and logically.
- 4- Acquiring information and experience.
- 5- Ensuring efficiency.
- 6- Allowing students to organize and develop their ideas.
- 7- Emphasizing a process approach.
- 8- Familiarizing students with audience experience.

Many approaches and methods have been developed to teach reading and writing. The interactive approach is one of them; it is a way in which emphasis is placed on meeting students' needs both in gaining control over the conventions of written English, and in obtaining opportunities for self-expression. Interactive approach is the core of communication in which students can act together in small-groups inside the class and so, they can increase their knowledge in a real and authentic situation that is reflected on the outside world.

Reviers (1990) clarifies the importance of interaction in language learning situations when it indicates that through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to, or read authentic materials, or even the output of their fellow students in discussion, join problem-solving tasks, or dialogues. In interaction, students can use all

what they possess of the language in real life exchanges where expressing their real meaning is so important to them. They, thus, have experience in creating messages from what they hear since comprehension is a process of creation.

At the level of language theory interactive teaching has a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base. Following are some of the characteristics of this interaction view of language:

Language is a system for the expression of meaning.

The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.

The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

The emphasis in interactive teaching is on the processes of communication rather than mastery of language forms. It leads to different roles for learners from those found in more traditional second language classrooms.

Learners' role within interactive teaching in (Breen and Candlin, 1980) was described as following:

- As a negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes.
- The implication for the learner is that s/he should contribute to gain, and thereby learn in an interdependent way.

Students are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher, and correction of errors may be absent or infrequent. The cooperative (rather than individualistic) approach to learning stressed in communicative language teaching (CLT) may likewise, be unfamiliar to learners. Interactive teaching methodologists consequently recommend that learners learn to see that failed communication is a joint responsibility and not the fault of speaker or listener. Similarly, successful communication is an accomplishment jointly achieved and acknowledged.

Several roles are assumed for teachers in interactive language teaching. The importances of particular roles being determined by the view of CLT are adopted. (Breen and Candlin, 1980) describe teacher roles in the following terms:

The teacher has two main roles: **the first** role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts.

The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities. **The third** role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organization capacities. (Richard and Rodger, 1995).

Here, the present study will use additional methods and techniques to enhance pupils' learning and make it more efficient. These are Total Physical Response, Whole Language Approach, Cooperative learning, Authentic learning, and Communicative Approach.

From what has been presented, it is clear that Interactive Approach, total physical response (TPR), Whole Language Approach, Cooperative Learning, Authentic Learning, and Communicative Approach form a connected and complete chain to develop students' reading and writing skills. Students need something to write about. This thing emerges from their experience which stems from authentic learning and that can be presented by using the computer, trying out the experience that involves using total physical approach, i.e. acting the situation. After that students need to communicate together to reach to what they will write down together as a group. Reading what has been written down comes as a final step to ensure students' effective learning.

In recent years, Computer use has established itself as an important feature of modern life. It is no longer a large, expensive machine used exclusively by specialists in major industrial corporations, government and the military. Many of us use computer daily, sometimes without even being aware of the facts. Banking, traffic control, word processing, social security applications, accounting and record keeping, design, office management, computer games, various hobbies, these are merely a few of the applications where computers are now a part of our every day life. The computer revolution, as it is commonly known, is more than just a technological development. It may well change society as radically as did the industrial revolution. (Muffoletto, 2001).

It is important to look to how best both teachers and learner can use the strength of information technology (IT) to enhance the language learning experience. “The computer is a tool, as itself incapable of action”. Instead of the teacher being replaced, what happens is a change in the role of the language teacher, from the traditional know-it-all authoritarian to a facilitator or a guide in the language learning process. Nevertheless, Clifford’s causation is that while “computer will not replace teacher, teachers who use computer will replace teachers who don’t. (Clifford, 1998).

Reading is one of the areas of the curriculum where computer assisted learning holds the greatest promise. (Wyatt. 1983). Electronic text or the hypertext, which provides students by a new mode of reading and the act of clicking that present a reader with a new screen and often an entirely new topic, calls upon readers to approach meaning construction in a different way. For this we can use different strategies such as: Scavenger hunts, reading responses, hypertext writing, and online convention.

Writing is another area of the curriculum where computer assisted methods can make an immediate and extensive impact. Appropriately used, the computer can relieve both the student and the teacher or much the drudgery usually associated with writing classes. At the same time, since many writing activities involve free expression, there are definite limits to the role that the computer can play. (Wyatt, 1984).

As River (1990) clarified the importance of the Interactive Approach as an effective way on developing reading and writing skills, we should use new technology in the age of globalization to ensure the best results and to confirm the best education; so the researcher will use the computer as a means to achieve students' interaction. The computer is a way not only to achieve interaction among students but also between the student and the hypertext in front of them.

Lwer (1997) clarifies that the teacher should examine the program before s/he uses it and suggests this group of standards to determine the quality of the program: -

1) Educational standards: -

These mean the general educational principles that should be regarded in the educational material: -

a) The clarification of the educational goals and its relevance to the curricula.

- b) The correction of the content and its specification.
- c) The suitability of the program language to the students.
- d) The clarification of the program instructions.
- e) Motivating the students.
- f) The suitability of the program price.

2) Educational material treatment standards: -

This is about what should the computer program should be better than the educational subjects.

- a) Making use of computer ability presenting the educational subject.
- b) Presenting the educational subject in a way that is different from the schoolbook.
- c) Controlling the speed of the program by the student.
- d) Arousing student thinking to reach to the correct answers.
- e) Giving suitable feedback to each student.
- f) Using pictures, drawing, colors and sounds in educational situations.
- g) Encouraging the communication between the student and the presented subject.
- h) Providing a portfolio for the student shows its progress in the subject from time to time.

3) Standards of use: -

These standards make the use of the program easy.

- a) Providing educational guide shows how to study the subject.
- b) The ability of the Teacher to change the content and its sequence.
- c) Helping the Teacher to record a portfolio for each student and for the group as a whole.
- d) The ability to use alternative interesting means.
- e) The ability of not needing to change the disk.

- Boswood (1997) ensured that there are advantages of using computer in training as follows: -

- 1) Facilitating the process of learning and making it easier.
- 2) Developing cognitive skills like analyzing data.
- 3) Giving students the opportunity to be familiar with information treatment and measurement, and that make them able to live in on advanced technology environment.
- 4) Training the students on self-learning and independent work.
- 5) Attracting the students' attention to words the subject as a result of what the computer presents from colors, movement and music.
- 6) Facing the difficulty in dealing with some phenomena because of its time or place distance by imitation.