

The Effect of a Proposed Model Based on Using Digital Platforms on Enhancing Linguistic Competence among EFL Sinai Higher Institute Students

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Abstract

The use of digital platforms has become an increasingly effective tool in enhancing linguistic competence among (EFL) learners. This paper examines how digital technologies—such as language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Babbel), virtual classrooms, online discussion forums, and multimedia content—support the development of core language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These platforms offer interactive, learner-centered environments that encourage active participation, immediate feedback, and authentic language use. For ESL learners, digital tools also provide increased exposure to native speech patterns, cultural context, and real-time communication with speakers around the world. The study concludes that integrating digital platforms into ESL instruction not only improves linguistic competence but also enhances learner engagement, autonomy, and confidence in using English in diverse contexts. This study aimed to explore the impact of a proposed teaching model that incorporates digital platforms to improve the linguistic competence among EFL students at Sinai Higher Institute. A Quasi-experimental design was employed, involving one experimental group and one control group. The participants were first-year EFL students from Ismailia city during the academic year 2023/2024. A checklist and an achievement test were utilized as pre- and post-tests. The teaching model was developed by the researcher to teach the linguistic competences where as the control group (taught traditionally). Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the posttest in the overall linguistic competences favoring the post scores. It was concluded that the proposed teaching model was effective in enhancing some linguistic competences.

Key words: *proposed teaching model, Digital platforms, Linguistic competences*

أثر استخدام المنصات الرقمية لتنمية بعض الكفايات اللغوية لدى طلاب شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية
المستخلص:

تعتبر الكفايات اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية أساساً يعزز من مهارات اللغة. فهي عملية منظمة يقوم من خلالها الطالب بعرض المعلومات وفق ترتيب منطقي للأحداث، وتُعد شكلاً من أشكال اللغة التي تعتمد على القدرة على توضيح المفاهيم والنقاشات الموجودة في النص، مما يساعد على اكتشاف الرسائل التي يسعى المتحدث أو الكاتب إلى إيصالها.

يهدف تعزيز الكفايات اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية إلى تزويد المتعلمين بالمعرفة الأساسية حول قواعد اللغة ومبادئها. ومع ذلك، يُعتبر تدريس اللغة في المستويات المتقدمة تحدياً للمعلمين، حيث غالباً ما يبتعد عن الكفاءة والفاعلية بسبب اعتمادهم على أساليب تدريس تقليدية، بالإضافة إلى نقص في الكفايات اللغوية والموارد المتاحة.

لذا، يجب أن يتضمن تدريس الكفايات اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية أساليب تدريس مثيرة للاهتمام، تركز على المحتوى والمضمون. ومن هنا، يهدف البحث الحالي إلى دراسة تأثير استخدام نموذج تدريس مقترح في تنمية بعض الكفايات اللغوية لدى طلاب شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية. و تضمنت نتائج الدراسة الإرتقاء في مستوى طلاب الدراسة في الكفاءة اللغوية بناءً على استخدام المنصات العملية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نموذج تدريسي مقترح – المنصات الرقمية- الكفايات اللغوية

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Introduction

In the modern era, the development of linguistic competence has become increasingly intertwined with the use of digital platforms. These platforms, which range from language learning apps and social media to online educational websites and forums, could offer new chances for language learners and educators. This paper explored the role of digital platforms in enhancing linguistic competence, analyzing their effectiveness, advantages, and challenges in the development of language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, it could provide perceptions into how digital tools foster engagement, facilitate personalized learning, and bridge the gap between formal and informal language acquisition environments (Aryani, 2019).

(Byram & Golubeva, 2020) stated that Linguistic competence refers to the ability to use and understand language effectively in a variety of contexts. Traditionally, language learning has been arranged around formal classroom settings and physical textbooks. However, with the rise of digital technologies, language acquisition has increasingly shifted to online environments, creating diverse avenues for learning and interaction. The proliferation of digital platforms—ranging from online courses and apps to social media communities—has transformed how language is learned. There are various studies that investigated the reasons of students' low performance in linguistic competences.

(Kim 2018), stated that EFL students experienced difficulties in conveying their opinions fluently in class discussions and responding clearly to questions directed to them. They often need oral English communication skills for expressing opinions, making arguments, offering explanations, transmitting information, and making impressions upon others in their personal lives, future workplaces and social interactions, (Rahman, 2010).

To help English-oral communication proficiency, technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) and teaching have been proposed to be used in the English classroom during the post-covid19 period. However, it seems that TELL fails to create sufficient opportunities for interaction in the English classroom based on limited interaction between

teachers and students and limited usage of digital platforms in learning technologies. Oftentimes, when it is time to speak, most students cannot correctly produce the target language (Abdul Razak et al. 2018).

Additionally, (Almalki 2019) suggested that enhancing students' linguistic competence is achieved through providing them with a variety of course activities and encouraging them to have more exposure to the target language through listening to the media. Students should be required to seek opportunities to speak English in real situations, which may result in promoting their speaking skills and self-confidence (Aryani 2019).

This research aimed to explore how digital platforms could contribute to developing linguistic competence by providing learners with flexible, accessible, and engaging tools to enhance their four basic language skills. The study examined various digital tools, their pedagogical benefits, and the challenges that may arise when integrating these platforms into language education (Alakrash 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' methodology and techniques in teaching linguistic competence are not effective as they mostly focus on rote teaching without using technology. Practice is given less importance, It is also felt that the methodology as presented in the teacher's books is being mostly ignored or perhaps there is no awareness of this aspect. Sinai Instructors of English still adopt the traditional methods such as dictation approaches to teaching linguistic competence. This approach results in having weak learning outcomes. As for students, they usually complain about the difficulty embedded in teaching. Conducting a linguistic competence checklist in April, 2024 as a pilot study to identify the difficulties facing EFL students in the first year at Sinai Higher Institute. The result of checklist has shown that there is a lack in EFL students' mastery of linguistic competence as follows:

1. Phonological competence 20%
2. Morphological competence 24%
3. Syntactic competence 30%
4. Semantic competence 32%

Research Questions

The problem of the study arises out of the following questions:

- 1- What are traditional and innovative methods of teaching linguistic competence?
- 2- What are the actual linguistic competence problems among EFL students at Sinai higher institute?

3- What is the effectiveness of using digital platforms in developing students' four linguistic competences at Sinai higher institute?

Research Hypotheses

1. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of student teachers of the experimental group and control group in the four linguistic competences in the pretest.
2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of student teachers of the experimental group and control group in the four linguistic competences post-test in favor of the experimental group.

Significance of the Study

The current research may effectively contribute to :

- 1- Identify the students' weak points in acquiring linguistic competences. In addition, it provides a motivation to raise these skills when they feel that they are important in the field of their work.
- 2- Direct the attention of those concerned with teaching linguistics to EFL Sinai higher institute students, especially at the first year.
- 3- Pave the way to future studies related to the development of the linguistics in the other higher institutes for language and translation learners engage with language.

Literature Review

This part introduced the theoretical background, and the related studies that are relevant to the research's main topic.

Digital platforms support the development of all aspects of linguistic competence:

Phonological competence : Interactive tools such as speech recognition software and virtual language exchange sessions allow learners to practice speaking and receive instant feedback, aiding pronunciation and fluency. Podcasts, audio-books, and video content help learners improve listening skills through exposure to diverse accents, colloquial language, and real-world conversations.

Syntactic competence, Semantic competence: E-readers, online news articles, and blogs offer learners access to a wide range of written texts, enabling them to improve reading comprehension and expand vocabulary.

Morphological competence: Platforms like Grammarly or language forums provide support for writing, offering real-time corrections and suggestions, while also facilitating creative writing through online communities (Byram & Golubeva 2020)

1.1. Types of Digital Platforms

Language learners today have access to a variety of digital platforms that

provide to different aspects of language learning. These platforms can be categorized into:

- **Language Learning Applications**
- Apps such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise offer modified experiences that help learners develop vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills.
- **Social Media and Online Communities:** Platforms like Twitter, Reddit, and Facebook provide informal spaces where learners can engage in real-life conversations, practice writing, and receive feedback from native speakers.
- **Educational Websites and Online Courses:** Websites such as Coursera, EdX, and YouTube offer video lessons, interactive quizzes, and opportunities for learners to practice listening and speaking with a global audience.
- **Virtual Language Exchange Platforms:** Websites like iTalki and Tandem connect learners with native speakers for conversation practice, enhancing both fluency and cultural understanding (Aryani 2019).

2. Advantages of Digital Platforms in Language Learning

2.1. Accessibility and Convenience

Digital platforms offer flexibility, allowing learners to engage in language acquisition anytime, anywhere, making language learning more accessible than ever before. This is particularly beneficial for individuals who may not have access to traditional language courses or formal classroom settings (Eisenlauer 2020).

2.2. Personalized Learning

Many digital platforms use processes and data analysis to create personalized learning pathways, adjusting to the learner's pace, strengths, and weaknesses. This customized approach helps learners focus on areas that need improvement, increasing engagement and ensuring effective skill development.

2.3. Engagement and Motivation

The interactive and modified nature of many digital tools makes learning enjoyable, boosting learners' motivation. Features such as achievement badges, points, and leader-boards make it easier for learners to track their progress and stay motivated.

2.4. Cultural Exposure and Authentic Interaction

Platforms that connect learners with native speakers or immerse them in authentic content provide opportunities for cultural exchange. This interaction enhances learners' understanding of language in its cultural context, improving their pragmatic language skills and deepening their

understanding of idiomatic expressions, slang, and non-verbal communication (Kim 2018).

3. Case Studies of Effective Digital Platforms

3.1. Duolingo

Duolingo is a widely recognized language-learning app that uses a modified approach to teach vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills. The platform's personalized lessons and real-time feedback have been shown to improve learner engagement, making it a popular choice for language beginners.

3.2. iTalki and Tandem

These language exchange platforms connect learners with native speakers, allowing for real-time conversation practice. Studies show that engaging in regular conversations with native speakers significantly improves learners' speaking fluency, pronunciation, and cultural competence (kasbi 2017).

3.3. Memrise

Memrise uses spaced repetition techniques and real-world videos from native speakers to help learners build vocabulary and improve pronunciation. Research indicates that learners who use Memrise consistently perform better in language recall tests compared to those using traditional methods.

Digital platforms have transformed the way language learners develop their linguistic competence. With their flexibility, accessibility, and interactive features, these tools provide unique opportunities for learners to acquire language skills in diverse contexts. However, challenges such as lack of face-to-face interaction and over-reliance on technology must be addressed to ensure a balanced and comprehensive language learning experience. As technology continues to evolve, future advancements may further enhance the role of digital platforms in fostering linguistic competence and empowering language learners worldwide (Alakrash & Razak, 2022).

The researcher is concerned with assuring and investigating the weakness of the linguistic competence for EFL Sinai higher institute students. The study focuses on the following linguistic competences:

1. **Phonological competence:** The ability to recognize and produce the sounds (phonemes) of a language. This includes understanding how sounds combine to form words and sentences.
2. **Morphological competence:** Understanding the structure of words and how morphemes (the smallest units of meaning) combine to form

meaningful words. For example, recognizing the difference between "walk" and "walking" as related forms.

3. **Syntactic competence:** The ability to understand and produce grammatical structures, such as how words are arranged in sentences. This skill allows people to form grammatically correct sentences and interpret their meanings.
4. **Semantic competence:** Understanding the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. This involves knowing how context influences meaning and how to interpret both literal and figurative language (Byram & Golubeva 2020).

The Method

This part introduces information about the method of research including the sample, data collection, instruments, the training program ..etc

1. The Method/ Methodology

2. Participants No& Gender

3. duration of the training, No of sessions &Semester & academic year

4.Instruments of the Study, test Validity & Reliability

5. Session of the Training & a Sample of the sessions

Delimitation of the Study

This research is limited to the following:

Four linguistic competences for EFL Sinai higher institute students.

- Traditional vs. innovative approaches (i.e. using digital platform) to teaching linguistic competences to EFL students.
- A research sample of 20 participants (N=20).
- The experiment is administered on a simple random sample that consists of 10 students for the control group and 10 students for the experimental group.

Research Methodology

The Quasi-experimental method was selected. According to Brown and Rogers (2002) “quasi-experimental allude to studies which are comparing group behavior in probabilistic terms under controlled conditions using intact group”. In this direction, the subjects were randomly selected. The randomly chosen group of 20 students from the Sinai higher institute was divided into two groups: one control group of 10 students, and one experimental group of 10 students. The four linguistic competences took 6 weeks.

Procedures of the Research

The researcher carried out as a pretest for both groups. Then, the 12 lessons selected from units 1, 2, and 3 were taught to the control group in

the traditional method, while the experimental group was taught the same lessons through active participation and excessive practice by digital platform. The pretest and post-test scores for the four competences were compared to show how the different methods adopted had various outcomes.

Participants

The subjects of this study are 20 EFL first-year students at Sinai higher institute, randomly chosen. They were divided into two groups: 10 students for the control group and 10 students for the experimental one.

Instruments

The researcher selected (8) lessons from the official English syllabus for Sinai Higher Institute EFL students. The lessons were selected because they contained linguistics sections. A rubric (see Appendix 1) was also developed by the researcher to assess the performance of the sample groups in both the pretest and post-test in the Four competences.

Data Collection

The answers of the students to the tests administered functioned as the source of data for the present research. The scores of the pretest and post-test were compared.

Results and Discussion

This part introduced both the results of the current study, and the discussion of those results according to the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis1. ‘There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of student of the experimental group and control group in the four linguistic competences in the pretest’

Table (1)

Pretest Results: Descriptive statistics for the pretest of Control and Experimental groups

Group	Control (n=10)	Experimental (n=10)
Mean	4.87	5.10
Standard Deviation	1.39	0.74

Discussion of the Results as shown in the table

The Effectiveness of Using digital platforms in Teaching linguistic competences to Sinai higher institute Students. Data were collected over a 6 week period in two classes, showing two conditions: Group A known as Control Group (n=10) was taught through traditional methods such as dictation and reading out loud, while Group B known as Experimental Group (n=10) was exposed to digital platforms. All EFL learners completed the pretest and post-test. The score retrieved from the

treatment period, the pretest and post-test were utilized for juxtaposing the differences between the two groups to see whether or not there was a significant between treatment and control groups. Statistical computations were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 11 for Windows. The alpha-level of significance $p < 0.05$ was used throughout the study which is generally accepted standard for all statistical analyses. Mean score differences were considered significant whenever the p-value obtained in the collection were less than $P = 0.05$.

Hypothesis Two: stated There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students of the experimental group and control group in the four linguistic competences post-test in favor of the experimental group.

The following tables show the statistical results of the pretest and post-test:

Table 2: Post-test Results: Means of EFL learners in Control and Experimental groups for the post-test Group

group	Control (n=10)	Experimental (n=10)
Mean	4.70	6.20
Standard Deviation	1.49	1.03

Participants in Control group, who did traditional exercises, had an overall mean change of 0.17. As for Experimental group, subjects had an overall mean change of 1.1. Although the improvement in performance from the pretest to the post-test for all groups is evident, what remained to be seen is whether the differences between the pretest and the post-test for the group were signified to the different to the post lessen practice methods. Therefore, additional statistical analyses were directed; this was achieved via paired-sample t-test which juxtaposed the mean score of the post-test with that of the pretest at the beginning of the experiment.

**Table 3:
Pre-posttest paired-sample t-test result within Control group and Experimental group**

	t	df	Sig.(2.tailed)
Control group	-3.18	9	0.01
Experimental group	4.61	9	0.000

* Significant at $P = 0.05$

From the above tables, it is clear that there are differences in means were found between the experimental group and the control group. The t-test analysis for experimental group showed that the increase in the means between the post-test ($M= 6.20$, $SD= 1.03$) and the pretest ($M= 5.10$, $SD= 0.74$) was statistically significant ($t=- 3.18$, $df= 9$, 2-tailed $p<.05$). As for Control group, the t-test analysis showed that the increase in the means between the post-test ($M= 4.70$, $SD= 1.49$) and the pretest ($M= 4.87$, $SD=1.39$) was not statistically significant ($t= 4.61$, $df= 9$, 2-tailed $p>0.05$). As such, one can conclude that from the finding that, there was a significant improvement in subjects' performance between the Control and Experimental group and the Experimental group achieved a higher significant difference than did the Control group.

Discussion and Conclusions

It is obvious that there are several problems with teaching linguistic who used tapes but did not use them effectively. Teachers did not use competence for EFL Sinai higher institute students, these problems include teachers who did not use tape recorders in teaching linguistics and even activities in teaching linguistics competences. Moreover, teachers did not do any modifications to the new syllabus tasks to suite their students' level and interest. Teachers were not aware of the importance of teaching linguistic competences and of the use of the authentic materials in teaching English. Most of the teachers, as models, had problems in pronunciation, reading and speaking especially in dealing with the tape script. No specific courses for teachers to develop teachers towards the importance of teaching linguistics.

Teaching linguistics for EFL students, especially Sinai higher institute should focus on using technology. The use of technology should enhance the four skills discussed in this paper. To improve teaching of listening, the teacher must encourage the students to develop their confidence in their ability to deal with linguistic problems. It is important for the teacher to give feedback so that s/he can judge where the class is going and how it should be guided. Teachers must also teach students how to learn to understand that individual words can be learnt best in context of sentences.

linguistics materials, tasks and activities should be graded according to the students' level, and provide authentic materials because the final aim of listening classes is to understand natural speech in real life. Furthermore, the teacher may try to find visual aids or draw pictures and diagrams associated with the listening topics to help students guess or

imagine actively. Finally, different kinds of input should be provided, such as radio news, films, TV, everyday conversation, English songs, storytelling, and so on.

Suggestions for further researches

- 1- Replicating the present study on a larger sample that belongs to different governorates and universities inside Egypt.
- 2- A longitudinal study which will allow students ample time to adjust to this new method of instruction.
- 3- The effect of administering the proposed program to other skills needs to be assessed.
- 4- Designing other programs for primary and preparatory stages and investigating their effectiveness on developing students' linguistic competences.
- 5- Designing other programs for pre-university levels that aim at nourishing the value of tolerance in our students.
- 6- Designing other programs for developing university students' critical thinking in general.

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