The Impact of Utilizing Skype as a Social Tool Network Community on Developing English Major Students' Discourse Competence in the English Language Syllables

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Abstract
The importance of this study comes from the fact that foreign language learners suffer from traditional ways and methods of teaching and learning. They are looking for new ways of teaching and learning specially methods which integrated with technology. What makes this study important is that using one of the most familiar software for learners that is Skype. The researchers intentionally chosen this software to bring motivation into classrooms and to bring easiness for learners to use this integration of technology with to teach and learn English language. The aim behind investigating this study was to explore the effect of using Skype as a Social Tool Network Community and see its effect on Developing English Major Students' Discourse Competence in the English Language syllables. The study adopted an experimental approach to investigate the impact of utilizing Skype as a social tool network community on developing English major students' discourse competence. Skype is an umbrella term which refers to human communication via computer networking. The sample of the study consisted of 70 males and females freshman at Yarmouk University in Jordan, during the second semester of the academic year 2015/2015. It can be implemented in two groups. These two groups were assigned as experimental group (40 students) and control group (30 students).. The experimental group was taught how to write effectively by using the modern technological tools mainly Skype whereas the control group was taught traditionally. The study utilized Skype as a research tool. A pre-writing test was applied for the purpose of examining the students' levels of both groups. The researchers busily engaged the students of the experimental group in different writing tasks focused on teaching the main features of writing which are mechanics, usage and sentence formation. At the end, pre-writing test was also applied for both groups to check enhancing. The Data collection was done through an exam. The participants' exchanges in the Skype group and their replies to the examinees were analyzed. The results showed that Skype chat had a positive impact on the English major learners' discourse competence. Learners who studied Skype chat performed better on the discourse aspects of English post-test than those who did not. Additionally, the finding of study revealed that students acquired writing and speaking skills in Skype chat more efficiently and effectively than in the traditional method.
Keywords: Skype and Discourse Competence.

1. Introduction

Canale (1983, 1984) described discourse competence as mastery of rules that determine ways in which forms and meanings are combined to achieve a meaningful unity of spoken or written texts. The unity of a text is enabled by cohesion in form and coherence in meaning. Cohesion is achieved by the use of cohesion devices (e.g. pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel structures etc.) which help to link individual sentences and utterances to a structural whole. The means for achieving coherence, for instance repetition, progression, consistency, relevance of ideas etc., enable the organization of meaning, i.e. establish a logical relationship between groups of utterances. In support to this important view, discourse competence refers to the way ideas are linked across sentences (in written discourse) or utterances (in spoken discourse). Accordingly, two main aspects should be used to understand the discourse competence: Cohesion: refers to how we link ideas linguistically. For example, we use pronouns to refer to what or who has been mentioned previously, e.g., he, it, one, none, that, and this. Another example includes the use of an auxiliary verbs as a substitute for the main verb, e.g., 'Do you work here?' 'Yes, I do.' Similarly, coherence refers to how we link the meanings of sentences or utterances in written or spoken texts. A:It's hot in here. B: I'll open a window.

Although Canale and Swain (1980) initially viewed discourse competence as part of sociolinguistic competence, which was believed to be composed of both socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse, Canale's (1983) revised definition of discourse competence views it as an element entirely independent from sociolinguistic competence, comprising "mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres" (Canale 1983: 9). Additionally, discourse is constructed in specific sociolinguistic settings and, therefore, depends on a number of sociolinguistic factors. These might include the gender, age, region of residence, nationality, ethnic and class membership of the discourse maker. For example, in that gender may have an effect on the construction of discourse is a daily observation. Linguistic variation attributable to the speaker's sex can materialize in tone and pitch of voice. In support to this form, there is a relationship between learners' social class and their language use. This claim is in

large part intuitive, although it also has some justification in sociolinguistic studies. Yet, as was the case of the gender-vs.-discourse relation, a common overgeneralization is repeatedly committed, that is, of directly indexing a certain discourse variation to a specific social group.

Its distinction from sociolinguistic competence, however, generates some controversies. It could be claimed that "unity of text involves appropriateness and depends on contextual factors such as status of the participants, purpose of interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction" (Schachter 1990: 43). Discourse competence then could still interfere with the conception of sociolinguistic competence. In addition, Canal (1983) defined the discourse competence is the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse to form a meaningful utterances. That means discourse can be perceived e.g. as social practice in which discourse makers implement unique sociolinguistic discursive routines through the contextual factors and conventions of interaction. There are a number of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors which have an effect on the construction and development of discourse. Sociolinguistic factors include individual variables such as gender, age, social class or nationality. Psycholinguistic factors include affective states, such as anxiety, self-confidence, as well as motivation and personality. All of these factors involve in advance the learners' discourse competence.

2. Problem of the study
From the researchers' experience as teachers of English, learners face difficulties in learning the foreign languages regarding communicative competences such as discourse competence. Hence, throughout this study, the researchers will try to utilize technology in teaching English language so as to help learners to take the advantages of this integration to develop their language.

3. Questions of the study
1. Are there any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the group taught using Skype-based method and the group taught using traditional methods?
2. In which discourse aspects (Coherence, Cohesion, Pragmatic, and functions) did the experimental group students develop more as a result of using Skype?
3. In which skills (productive or receptive) did the experimental group students develop more as a result of using Skype?

4. Hypotheses of the study
H01: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the group taught using Skype-based method and the group taught using traditional methods at $\alpha. \leq 0.05$.
H02: Skype has no effect on the development of the discourse aspects (Coherence, Cohesion, Pragmatic, and functions) of the experimental group at $\alpha. \leq 0.05$.
H03: Skype has no effect on the development of the productive and receptive skills of the experimental group at $\alpha. \leq 0.05$.

5. Methodology
5.1. Participants
The participants in this study was selected of 164 all males and females who study English as a foreign language at Yarmouk university in Jordan. The average age of students was from 22 to 23. The participants were randomly divided into two groups: Experimental group who consisted of 40 students, and control group which consisted of 30 students. The control group never used computer in their learning process.

6. Instrument
In order to address the research question the researchers utilizes the following instrument:

6.1. An Achievement Test
The test of this study consisted of four questions that tested learners' ability to write, read, listen, and speak appropriately. It was given to the learners at the beginning and the end of the experiment.

6.2. Skype as a tool of study in an experimental approach
Video calling can also be used closer to home, to build and develop local connections, for example supporting transition by providing learners with additional opportunities to see their new schools and talk to current students. Skype can be used to connect to further education providers, universities and businesses, and to support careers advice or mentoring programs. Skype can also be used to support a range of other approaches to progression. It can be used to connect to an audience for learners to present individual or collaborative presentations, to formalize and make final presentations. Presentations can augment and focus work by giving learners an external audience to communicate what has been learnt (Fraser, 2013).

7. Procedures

Both experimental and control group classes were held 40 sessions (one hour) per day lasting for 8 weeks. Both groups had no experience in learning through the use of Skype, and no distinction was made between them .The teacher was the same for the control and experimental groups. Both groups studied the same material. They also have the same days of the week. The experimental group accessed to the computer lab at university. (Table 1).

8. Operational Definitions

Skype: It is a video activity was effective and useful. In addition, it gave opportunity to communicate with native speakers. Moreover, it was slightly stressful due to technical, pairing, and scheduling issues. Nevertheless, it was a new and enriching experience for the students, teachers, as well as the researcher (Bataineh and Al-Abdali, 2015).

Discourse Competence: It is the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse to form meaningful utterances (Canal,1983). In addition, discourse competence - the ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive texts (e.g., political speech, poetry) (Celce-Murcia and Ddrnye, 1995).

Cohesion: is the area of discourse competence most closely associated with linguistic competence (see Halliday & Hasan 1976, 1989). It deals with the bottom-up elements that help generate texts, accounting for how pronouns, demonstratives, articles and other markers signal textual co-reference in written and oral discourse. Cohesion also accounts for how conventions of substitution and ellipsis allow speakers/writers to indicate co-classification (Celce-Murcia and Ddrnye, 1995).

Coherence: is concerned with macrostructure in that its major focus is the expression of content and purpose in terms of top-down organization of propositions. It is concerned with what is thematic (i.e., what the point of departure of a speaker/writer's message is). The speaker (and even more so the writer) must use linguistic signals that make discourse cohere, which means not only using cohesive devices such as reference markers and lexical or semantic repetition or entailment but also a sequencing or ordering of propositional structures which takes into account social relationships, shared knowledge, and genre, and which generally follows certain preferred organizational patterns: temporal/chronological ordering, spatial organization, cause-effect, condition-result, etc (Celce-Murcia and Ddrnye, 1995).

9. Review of related literature

In second language learning, Wang (1993) compared the discourse of ESL students' dialogue journals written in both e-mail and traditional paper format. She found that the students using e-mail journals wrote greater amounts of text, asked more questions, and used different language functions more frequently than did students writing on paper.

Hussein (2015) investigated first, the use of web-cam chat   on EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Second, the effect of presenting pragmatic through two delivery systems face-to-face, in-class activities and computer-mediated communication (CMC) via web-cam chats i.e. Facebook and Skype was investigated in this study. The results showed that web-cam chat had a positive impact on the EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Learners who studied via web-cam chat performed better on the pragmatic aspects of English post-test than those who did not. The findings also indicated that technology can be a valuable tool for delivering pragmatic instruction. Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that students acquired the speaking and listening skills in web-cam chat more efficiently and effectively than in the regular communicative method.

In the same vein, Elttayef (2015) effectiveness and usefulness of using web-cam chat via Skype. The researchers inquired if Skype can be a potential channel to deliver authentic culture. The findings of his study revealed that Skype was a good tool in teaching and learning. Not only to teach culture, but also to develop learners' language skills.

10. Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test analysis of achievement test held as a pretest. It can be clearly seen that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the achievement test on the pretest. This means that both groups are equivalent in their knowledge before starting the experiment. (Table 2).

Table 3 shows both groups' mean scores in the pre and posttests. It is obvious from table three that the performance of the experimental groups improved a lot in the posttest comparing their scores in the pretest. In other words, the mean scores of the experimental groups in the pretest (40.65), whereas their scores in the posttest (56.88). This might be due to the new method of teaching which enabled the experimental group students to interact with native speakers of English. Additionally, they have chances to develop their skills with the help of technology. Accordingly, the hypothesis which says that "There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the group taught using Skype-based method and the group taught using traditional methods at $\alpha. \leq 0.05$." was rejected. (Table 3).

Table 4 shows mean scores of the experimental group students in each discourse aspects in the posttest. It is obvious from table four that the performance of the experimental groups improved a lot in the discourse aspects in the posttest due to using Skype-based method. The mean scores of the experimental students in coherence in the pretest (15.44). Their mean scores in cohesion (14.72). Their mean scores in pragmatic aspect (speech act and Politeness) (13.52). Whereas their scores in the functions (13.25). This might be due to the new method of teaching which enabled the experimental group students to interact with native speakers of English. Additionally, they have chances to develop their writing skill with the help of technology. They became able to write coherent and cohesive texts. More obviously, their language use and usage were improved when they became able to use language appropriately. Accordingly, the hypothesis which says that "Skype has no effect on the development of the discourse aspects (Coherence, Cohesion, Pragmatic, and functions) of the experimental group at α. ≤ 0.05." was rejected. (Table 4).

Table 5 shows mean scores of the experimental group students in the productive and receptive skills. It is clear from table five that the achievement of the experimental groups improved a lot in the productive and receptive skills with favor to productive skills. the experimental group students gained high scores in writing (16.67) and in speaking (15.47), whereas their scores in reading (13.32) and in listening (11.42). All in all, the researchers can say that both productive and receptive skills are developed in the posttest in comparison with the pretest. This might be due to the new method of teaching by which the experimental group students interact with native speakers of English. Additionally, they have chances to develop their writing skill with the help of technology. They became able to write coherent and cohesive texts. Additionally, their language use and usage were improved when they became able to use language appropriately. Accordingly, the hypothesis which says that "Skype has no effect on the development of the productive and receptive skills of the experimental group at α. ≤ 0.05." was rejected. (Table 5).

11. Conclusion

The researchers come to conclude that, discourse competence relates to collection, re-ordering, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a cohesive, cohesion, and meaningful spoken or written text to avoid unnecessary repetition and to put each signals in its suitable position. To summarize, discourse competence is one of the most important aspect of the communicative aspects of language. Additionally, the researchers conclude that Skype which is one of technologies which help to develop aspects of discourse English language. Also, Skype chat had a positive impact on the English major learners' skills such as writing, speaking in particular, and reading listening in general.

12. Recommendations

The researchers recommend miseries of education and higher education to adopt technology in general and Skype in particular in the educational operation. More importantly, the researchers recommend other researchers to investigate similar studies with different variables and a large number of populations on different levels, that is to say, not only on university level, but also on intermediate and preparatory school levels.

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Table 1: Table the Design of the Participants of the Study

Group	Method of teaching	Number
Experimental	Skype-Based Method	40
Control	Regular Instructional Method	30
Total		70

Table 1 shows the distribution of Participants of the Study.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pretest

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	DF	Sig.
Control	30	39.23	11.12	0.19	29	0.77
Experimental	40	40.65	13.23			

Table 2 shows the equivalent of learners on the pretest before applying the new method.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation of the Two Groups in the Pre and Posttests.

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	D.F	Sig.
Pre-test	Control	30	39.23	11.12	0.19	29	0.77
	Experimental	40	40.65	13.23			
Post-test	Control	30	41.78	14.43	0.12	24	0.00
	Experimental	40	56.88	12.17			

Table 3 shows the scores of both groups on pre/post test. This table explains the differences in the mean scores before and after applying the new method.

Table 4: The Experimental Group Students' Results in Each Discourse Competence Aspect of Language on the Post-Test.

The discourse competence aspects	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Coherence aspect out of 25%	15.44	8.02	24	0.12	.000
Cohesion aspect out of 25%	14.72	12.23	24	0.12	000
Pragmatic aspect (speech act and Politeness) out of 25%	13.52	10.14	24	0.12	.001
Functions out of 25%	13.25	12.04	24	0.12	.002
The average score out of 100%	56.88	12.17	24	0.12	.000

Table 4 shows the differences in each discourse competence after applying the new method. According to this table, learners developed a lot in all the discourse aspects.

Table 5: The Post-Test Results of Experimental Groups in Productive and Receptive Skills

Skill	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (p)
Writing	16.67	1.13	12	0.2	.000
Speaking	15.47	1.26	12	0.7	.000
Reading	13.32	1.21	12	0.12	.002
Listening	11.42	1.13	12	0.4	.003
Total	56.88	1.37	12	0.11	.000

Table 5 shows in which skills did the experimental group learners developed alo as a result of using Skype. It clearly shows that experimental group learners developed a lot in all the language skills with favor to writing and speaking skills.