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Research Article

Non-english major university students' perceptions of blackboard as a learning management system (lms) in learning basic english grammar

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study was to identify non-English major university students' perceptions of blackboard as an online method and a learning management system (LMS). In this study, blackboard software was used to deliver Basic English grammar course for non-English major university students in Qassim University, KSA. Students were asked to use discussion board, do assignments, see announcements, answer quizzes and identify course documents posted by the instructor. The students used the blackboard software most of the time to get access to their homework and exams. There were different optional resources such as external links and course syllabus. The study adopted a quantitative approach to examine non-English major university students' perceptions of blackboard (LMS) at college of science and Arts, Qassim University within Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the results of the current study showed that most of the students felt that using blackboard as a management learning system was useful and enjoyable.

INTRODUCTION

Students of the current decade don't believe that the classroom is the only source in learning English language. Using technology has been becoming a big requirement in teaching or learning English language. This helps students to learn at any time and in any place. In the last decades, most educators have changed their trends from the traditional ways to using web-based instruction. Also, Rabea (2016) sees that Rapid progress of technologies has affected language pedagogy and language use. This, in fact, creates new attitudes towards integrating technology in learning and language scholarship in particular. This may explain the need to investigate the learners, or teachers' attitudes towards using technology in oral communication teaching.

In addition to, Weinraub (1998) sees that quick advances in instructional software allow instructors to develop their own personal instructional applications and resources for their students. Moreover, using e learning in education has a good merit as it helps in delivering knowledge (Rosenberg, M., 2001).Also, JelisavetaŠafranj(2012) proved in his research that using blended learning with English language help students as it encourages them to be active learners in the learning process. Moreover, Ghasemi, Hashemi & Barani (2011) claimed that the students are up-to-date data and vast amount of information when they use internet. Also, Tafazoli & Chirimbu(2013) proved that using computer materials in a classroom had a big positive effect on the students' pronunciation skills.

Purpose

The goal of the present study was to identify non-English major Saudi university students' perceptions about using the blackboard system as a learning management system (LMS) in learning basic English grammar.

Literature/Theoretical Underpinning
ICT Integration and Education

Information and communications technology (ICT) integration into education is an important feature of the education in most countries of the world. According to, Yusuf (2005) ICTs play an important role not only in the field of education but also in teaching, learning, and research. According to UNESCO (2002) information and communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of 'Informatics technology' with other related technology, specifically communication technology. ICT has the merit of flexibility of delivery in education as learners can acquire knowledge anytime and from anywhere. Students can be affected by technology tools in their way of learning. Moreover, Almas & Bilsen(2006) & Barton, Haydn (2006) see that availability of ICT tools in learning process, it will influence on the learners positively.

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Learning management Systems with Learning

Nowadays, it is clear that using LMS (learning management systems) are very essential not only in education and teaching in most universities in Saudi Arabia but also in most universities in the world. LMS were called by other names like course management Systems (CMS) or Virtual Learning Environments. The term CMS (course management system) was replaced by the new term LMS (learning management system).

Learning management systems (LMS) are considered good examples of the technological revolution in learning English language. Learning management systems have been available in their current form since the early 1990s. Internationally and within New Zealand, LMSs have become nearly ubiquitous across the higher education sector as a core component of e-learning (also referred to as blended learning) (Pina, 2010). Learning management systems are software environments that help students to be perfect in the management and delivery of learning content and resources. In other words, Ellis, Ryann K. (2009) see a learning management system (LMS) is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) courses or training programs .Moreover, collaborative learning support systems, institution resources management systems, test-authoring systems and virtual classroom management systems are widely used in modern learning (Meiselwitz & Sadera, 2008). The effectiveness of the LMS can be noticed through the flexibility and availability of the content and through the students' engagement with and contribution to the subject. Collaborative learning through discussion and e mails are also part of the effective use of LMS in teaching (Brown, A., 1997)

Using LMS has a big effect on the content of the subject through its continuous flexibility and availability. The main aim of those LMS is to support teaching and learning activities. They include different features that can help college staff to share learning materials as well as providing interaction with their students both synchronously and asynchronously (Vovides *et al*, 2007). Many Studies have linked LMS usage with student satisfaction (Naveh *et al*, 2012). They proved that the Increasing of LMS usage, the increasing of levels of students' satisfaction with courses. Also, the learners who are satisfied with using LMS usually complain less (Tarigan, 2011) and like to study other courses through LMS (Booker & Rebman, 2005).

According to Palmer and Holt (2009), satisfaction has clear evidence that learning outcomes will be with quality. Technologies based on web have an important role in increasing lucidity, availability and pliability of education; find a suitable way to teaching and learning due to quick feedback, autonomy of the learners and collaboration, effectively process, store and present information. (M. S. Lyashenko & I.A. Malinina, 2014)

Blackboard system is a kind of learning management systems (LMS) as it is considered one of the most commonly used and useful types of e-Learning systems for both students and instructors in academic institutions (Sun *et al.* , 2008; Liaw, 2008; Cheng, 2014). It is also one of the effective tools that can be used through e-learning features. Blackboard system improves students' online communication with their instructors and peers by motivating them to play an active role in the Learning process, rather than playing a passive role of receiving information through traditional methods, such as instructors and textbooks (Tella, 2011).

In this current study, the suggested LMS is the Blackboard system. It is available in Qassim University, KSA. The university presents this LMS (blackboard system) to help its staff members and students. The staff members can upload their courses' contents, communicate and develop their students learning easily and effectively. The students can study at any time and any place, communicate with their teachers and classmates, and do their assignments easily.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Fifty students participated in the English language course responded to a questionnaire uploaded through the blackboard. This course was conducted at Qassim University in the year 2015-2016 spring semester.

Instrumentation and Validity of the Instrument

The researcher developed the items of the questionnaire. It has 20 items. The students' responses for this instrument were marked directly on the questionnaire. The aim of designing the questionnaire was to identify students' perceptions towards the use of blackboard during learning basic English grammar course. Also, questions were intended to gather information about students' difficulty and satisfaction towards the use of Blackboard software to deliver course materials and as a communication tools.

The researcher sent the research instrument to five of jury members to insure the validity of the research instrument. Those members were asked to evaluate the questionnaire instrument and recommend any changes that could help the study. Comments were sent back which ensured the validity of the instrument and made some recommendations which were taking into consideration.

Data Collection Method

The study was conducted in four months (from February to May 2016). The aim of this questionnaire was to identify students' perceptions towards the use of distance learning as methods for course delivery using Blackboard software. The students were surveyed through blackboard. The survey consisted of 20 items.

Data Analysis

The researcher used SPSS database. The t-test was used to determine statically significant differences. Also, Descriptive analysis was used to compute the means and the standard deviations for variables and items of the questionnaire instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 using the blackboard software for the first time or not

using the blackboard software for the first time	Cumulative Percent	Valid percent	Percent	Frequency
			96%	
Yes		96%	4%	48
No	96%	4%		2 2
total	100.0	100%	4%	50
			100%	50
			100%	

According to using the blackboard software for the first time or not, Table 1shows that 96% replied that they used blackboard software for the first time and 4% replied that they used blackboard software before. The responses of the survey were analyzed to describe students' perceptions towards the use of blackboard as a learning management system. The mean and the standard deviation were calculated for each item in the questionnaire (Table2 shows). The descriptive analysis for the twenty items of the questionnaire was used to describe students' perceptions. The result revealed that the overall mean score was 3.77; Which indicated that a high students attitude toward the use of blackboard.

Table 2 Shows the descriptive analysis for items of the questionnaire

Question number	Std.deviation	Mean
Q.1	.77	3.58
Q.2	.64	3.68
Q.3	1.34	4.28
Q.4	.93	4.60
Q.5	1.36	4.22
Q.6	1.53	4
Q.7	1.26	4.38
Q.8	1.46	3.26
Q.9	1.53	3.9
Q.10	.66	3.80
Q.11	.83	3.50
Q.12	1.37	4.40
Q.13	1.36	3.18
Q.14	1.69	3.12
Q.15	.86	3.36
Q.16	1.12	3.32
Q.17	1.24	4.32
Q.18	1.33	3.30
Q.19	1.50	3
Q.20	1.05	4.26

The results of the questionnaire were reordered according to the highest mean value as shown in Table 3. The most important item was item 4 with mean value4.60"Using blackboard software was useful and enjoyable at the same time**.** ". It was noticed that questions 3, 4,5, 7,12,17,20 were very important and have a highest means (4.22- 4.60).

These results described their attitude towards the use of blackboard, and they indicated that most of the students enjoyed with using the course, which was delivered through the blackboard software. Students felt comfortable for using the course documents, announcements section, and drop box to submit their assignments and homework's.

Table (4) shows that questions 1,2,6,9,10,11,15 have means between 3.36- 4. This showed that the students hope to use the blackboard software in other courses as it will be useful for them. Also, they felt comfortable during their use of discussion board to communicate with other students and with the instructor. Course information and instructor information were useful according to students' responses. The communication between students and the instructor through the blackboard was not strong enough since it has low mean value (3.62).

Table 3 The responses for the questions were reordered based on the highest mean value

Question	Question#	Std. deviation	Mean
Using blackboard software was useful and enjoyable at the same time.	4	1.26	4.60
Blackboard software helped me to receive clear activities.	12	1.37	4.40
The course topics were clear on the blackboard.	7	1.26	4.38
Blackboard software helped me in doing my homework.	17	1.24	4.32
I was updatable of the course requirements by the announcement section on the blackboard.	3	1.34	4.28
I could read the course materials through the course document section on blackboard.	20	1.05	4.26
Using the blackboard software will be useful in my other courses.	5	1.36	4.22

Table 4 shows that questions 1,2,6,9,10,11,15 have means between 3.36- 4

Question	Question#	Std. deviation	Mean
Using the blackboard software in other courses will be useful for me.	6	1.53	4
The course objectives were clear on the blackboard.	9	1.53	3.9
The way of displaying the course curriculum was clear and attractive.	10	.66	3.80
The instructor used to update the course in a regular way.	2	.64	3.68
I am aware of how to use the blackboard software.	1	.77	3.58
Using blackboard was helpful in communication with the instructor.	11	.83	3.50
I communicated with the instructor and other classmates through discussion board.	15	.86	3.36

Table 5 revealed that items 8.13,14,16,18,19, have very low means between 3-3.26. It was not clear for students how to get extra information. Students also faced some problems during their use of the blackboard software. It was found that the presentations were displayed through the blackboard software were not important according to most students responses.

Table 5 revealed that items 8.13,14,16,18,19, have very low means between 3-3.26

Question	Question#	Std. deviation	Mean
The instruction about the use of the blackboard software was useful.	8	1.46	3.26
There were no problems when I used blackboard software.	13	1.36	3.18
The course evaluation method was clear.	14	1.69	3.12
Using blackboard software helped me to get information from extra resources.	16	1.12	3.32
The information about the instructor that was display through the blackboard was useful.	18	1.33	3.30
Using blackboard software helped me to display different presentations in the course.	19	1.50	3

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is clear that the blackboard software is a useful tool in learning English language as most of the students were enjoyable during using the blackboard in learning. Generally, the results of the study showed that the students enjoyed with using technology in learning basic English grammar course and they hope to use the blackboard software in other courses. The researcher suggests that more studies in other specializations should be conducted. Also, it is recommended that more studies with a large sample size should be applied in other universities.

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