



An Action Research: Instruction Videos for Developing Writing Skills of Prep Students

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Abstract

Writing as a productive skill can have fruitful results if the class is supported with technology. There have been various applications related to writing and technology [1], [2]. Particularly, in the recent years, technology has contributed a lot to the development of writing skills when compared with traditional classroom settings [3]. Under these circumstances, a language instruction requires using technology to increase the achievement levels in the course of writing skill. Thus, the present study aims to shed light onto the effects of instruction videos to teach writing to university students. This study has been conducted with 60 university prep class students of the same linguistic level. The participants have been divided into two as experimental and control groups. The researcher as the instructor of the group taught how to write a reason essay before the actual classroom setting took place. In that sense, students in the experimental group had instruction videos as the pre class activity, while control group students had worksheets to compensate for that activity. At the end of the instruction, it has been found out that students who studied writing with videos created more successful essays than the students in the control group did. The results of this action research highlight the fact that technology is vital for developing the writing skill as a tool for pre class activities.

1. Introduction

Thanks to the advances in technology, language classrooms have witnessed a notable change. With the contributions of technology, language skills have welcomed new development ways as for the students. Throughout the last decades, there have been numerous applications of technology into language skills. Technology has proved to be beneficial for many language skills ([4], [5], [6], [7])

In line with the findings of the previous studies, it should be kept in mind that technology not only provides a tandem learning environment but also creates a non verbal communication opportunity for the students [8]. Therefore, technology is proper for developing writing skill. Among the studies conducted to identify the effects of technology on writing skill, it has been found out that technology contributed to the development of writing skill. Cahill & Catanzaro [9] arranged an online and a traditional classroom. According to Cahill & Catanzaro's study [9], technology helped students to attain higher levels of writing proficiency when compared with traditional classroom setting. Furthermore, Liou et al. [10] conducted a similar study via combining traditional classroom setting with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) properties. Liou et al. [10] put forward the idea that CALL is more helpful when it is used in addition to the traditional classroom setting. However, Matsumura & Hann [11] warns the practitioners about the feedback issues. Thus, Matsumura & Hann [11] points out the fact that teachers are responsible for identifying their students' writing feedback methods. Though writing through technological tools contributes a lot, students may feel unpleasant with the feedback published online.

2. Methodology

Method

As for the method of the study, pre-post test design has been used. Therefore, pre and post tests were given at the beginning and at the end of the study. The results were obtained as numerical data, and they were analysed through a statistical package program.

Participants

Participants of the present study are 60 university students who are prep class students of a private university in Turkey. The students are arranged into two classes.



Materials

For the preparation of the materials, two technological tools have been used. For creating instruction videos, screen recording software (see the References) has been used. On the other hand, for creating a virtual page, glogs (see the References) have been used.

Fig. 1. Screenshots from the instruction video

Technology needs to be used because of three reasons; communication, information about world and development of language skills.

- First reason is that technology helps us to communicate in an easier way.



As it can be seen from Fig. 1, instruction video included steps for writing a reason essay. In line with the topic technology, images have been chosen to identify the words in each reason. Thus, each sentence in the video has a visual to support as well as audio of the instructor to clarify the process of writing an essay.

Fig. 2. Screenshot from assignment (see the References)



As it can be seen from Fig. 2, the assignment for Class A has been given as steps for writing a reason essay on a virtual platform. The students have the chance to follow this platform with the group classroom in social software.

Procedure

As for the procedure of the study, the researcher as the instructor tried two methods in experimental (Class A) and traditional classroom (Class B). Class A has had the chance to have writing instruction videos before actual writing class took place, while Class B has used traditional worksheets for studying the writing task. Once the instruction videos have been published with the help of social software, students have begun to comment under the videos to prove that they have watched the



video and understood it. During the classroom instruction, the students in Class A have also watched the videos with the help of overhead projector. After the lessons, the students were asked to write an essay. The steps for writing an essay as well as the assignment of the week have been provided with a glog for the students in Class A, while the students in Class B have been provided with an assignment like a worksheet. The students in Class A have had the chance to check the assignment of the week while they are doing something else in social software. Following these steps, the essays produced by two different classes have been gathered. They have been read with a checklist, and they have been graded in line with the checklist.

3. Results

The achievement test results of the students in both classes are illustrated in tables below.

Table 1. The pre test results of Class A and Class B

Pre-Test	N	\bar{X}	t	Sig.(2tailed)
Class A	30	7.00		
Class B	30	7.25	-0.16	.862

According to the results in Table 1, there is not a significant difference ($p=.862$) between Class A ($M=7.00$) and Class B ($M=7.25$). These results illustrate the fact that the two classes have the similar linguistic levels to be used for writing skill. At the beginning of the study, the achievement levels were almost the same.

Table 2. The post test results of Class A and Class B

Post-Test	N	\bar{X}	t	Sig.(2tailed)
Class A	30	8.75		
Class B	30	7.50	2.956	.005

As it can be seen from Table 2, there is a significant difference ($p=.005$) between Class A ($M=8.75$) and Class B ($M=7.50$). In line with the figures in Table 2, it can be said that students in Class A, who studied writing skill via technology, got higher scores according to the post test results.

Table 3. The pre and post test results of Class A

Name of the Class	Test	\bar{X}	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Class A	Pre-Test	7.00		
	Post-Test	8.75	-.951	.001

According to the pre and post results of Class A, it can be said that there is a significant difference ($p=.001$) between pre and post test results of Class A. Thus, it is statistically obvious that studying writing skill through technology contributed a lot to the students' achievement levels.

Table 4. The pre and post test results of Class B

Name of the Class	Test	\bar{X}	t	Sig.(2-tailed)
Class B	Pre-Test	7.25		
	Post-Test	7.50	3,124	.275



On the other hand, when Class B is considered, it can be said that there is not a significant difference between the mean scores of it in terms of pre test (M=7.25) and post test (M=7.50). Therefore, it can be asserted that paper based instruction is of little help for the students.

4. Conclusion

The findings of the present research point out the fact that the instruction videos and other technological tools like glogs and social softwares are beneficial for the students. These results are consistent with the other studies in writing skill (Kutlu, 2013; Vinagre, 2005; Matsumuara, 2004). Dönük et al. (2010) also points out the effectiveness of glogs for language education

Furthermore, when students' needs in 21st century are considered, it is obvious that students enjoy every technological tool that they encounter in their daily lives. Thus, it will be of great help if the students are given the chance to use them for their language developing purposes. As for the following studies, the same tools can be used with more population, and the study can be conducted as both qualitatively and quantitatively. Last but not least, every language teacher needs to keep in mind that technology is vital for improving language skills.

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