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Grammar: Trello, Google Search Engine,

Classroom Form-Focused Instruction

Introduction

❖ Language teaching/learning is one of the areas that has been feeling the impact of the changes made by technology.

❖ Advanced technologies have become nearly ubiquitous in FLL in many developed and developing countries.

❖ In the field of teaching English, technology has provided an "adaptive learning" environment, which is defined as a strategy in bringing materials online.

Introduction

❖ Technology can help with making teaching materials more personalized, which can assist both learners and instructors in learning and teaching more effectively.

❖ Personalization, especially in teaching grammar, can provide the learners with an opportunity to learn in an authentic environment.

Introduction

❖ Teaching grammar has been greatly facilitated by using computers because computer-based instruction is capable of providing an optimal context for performing the related tasks and activities.

❖ Newly advanced technologies enable language teachers to design their teaching methods based on the learners' needs and develop a variety of pedagogical methods for teaching grammar.

Introduction

❖ Undoubtedly, grammar forms a basis for building a language, enables language users to convey a message, and is the central part of any language around which other parts such as pronunciation and vocabulary revolve.

❖ However, it does not seem to be an enjoyable part of language education for either students or teachers.

❖ Therefore, many language scholars and practitioners have tried to introduce some innovative learning strategies and pedagogical techniques to make this process more interesting for the learners.

FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

ROD ELLIS

❖The term "**form-focused instruction**" (FFI) is defined by Ellis (2001:2) as "any planned or incidental **instructional** activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic **form**".

Form-Focused Instruction

❖ The most familiar and common approach to grammar teaching adopted by many teachers in most L2 educational contexts.

❖ The concept of form is expanded "to include not only grammatical or syntactic forms but also vocabulary, pronunciation, and pragmatics".

❖ In F-F-I, L2 learners learn the language features systematically according to a structural syllabus which determines which features should be taught, and in which sequence they should be presented.

Google Search Engine

❖ Data collection, particularly at the higher education level.

❖ A familiar tool to the majority of students.

❖ Enabling language learners to "discover patterns in their authentic contexts".

❖ Resulting in a kind of incidental authentic learning, which helps learners acquire knowledge in authentic ways.

Trello lets you work more collaboratively and get more done.

Trello's boards, lists, and cards enable you to organize and prioritize your projects in a fun, flexible, and rewarding way.

Trello

❖ A useful technology which has not been given due attention in the realm of L2 grammar teaching: Trello Learning Management System (TLMS).

❖ A web-based technology which aims at improving learners' interactions by providing a collaborative environment for both learners and the teacher.

❖ Not only advantageous in managing the curriculum and training materials but also in providing certain evaluation tools to gauge learners' progress.

Research Question

❖ *How do the Trello LMS, the Google search engine, and classroom form-focused instruction compare in improving Iranian EFL learners' knowledge of present perfect and simple past tenses?*

Instruments

1. **PET**

2. A 30-item teacher-made grammar pre-test

3. A 30-item teacher-made grammar post-test

Paricipants

❖ 45 Iranian pre-intermediate female EFL learners

❖ 19-35 years old

❖ In three intact classes at a language institute

❖ Randomly assigned to three form-focused (EXI), Google (EXII), and Trello (EXIII) experimental groups

❖ The same teacher as their instructor

Procedure

1. At the outset of the treatment period: a Cambridge PET test and a grammar pretest

2. *Touchstone 3*: Units 3 and 4 (simple past and past perfect tenses)

3. Treatment Period: 6 weeks

Form-Focused Group

❖ A set of flashcards and diagrams downloaded from the Internet to clarify the concepts of the tenses

❖ A storybook (*Three* Adventures *of* Sherlock Holmes): highlighting the sentences including the target tenses of the study

❖ Reflecting in small groups on some of the verb aspects such as the question, negative, and passive forms in order to expand their understanding of the tenses

Google Group

❖ Using the Google search engine to search for some sentences or texts including the target structures of the study.

❖ Highlighting the examples, emailing the screenshots of the related sentences and texts to their teacher.

❖ The teacher collected all the highlighted examples and shared them in the class with all the students through the overhead projector.

❖ Followed by some questions and answers on the part of students.

Trello Group

❖ Trello LMS: A forum for grammar instruction.

❖ A set of PowerPoint and PDF files including the target structures.

❖ Introducing the LMS, how to work with it, and asking the participants to join the forum.

❖ Receiving the pdf and PowerPoint files in the LMS.

❖ The files included grammar lessons and tips as well as exercises for students to complete.

❖ The administrator answered the students' questions and provided them with constructive corrective feedback in the 'making comments' section of Trello.

Procedure (continued)

❖ At the end of the treatment, a post-test similar to the pre-test was administered to all the three groups to examine the effects of the treatment.

Data Analysis

1. Descriptive statistics

2. Threshold Loss Agreement reliability (0.83)

3. ANOVA

4. A post-hoc Tukey test

Conclusion and Discussion

❖ The participants of the form-focused group significantly outperformed the Google and Trello groups regarding the knowledge of the target tenses of the study.

Conclusion and Discussion

1. The negative attitude of the learners, teachers, and institutions towards using technology does not encourage students in their quest for language learning.

2. The findings can be attributed to the extraneous processing overload i.e., a situation in which the cognitive processing of extraneous material in the lesson is so challenging that there remains little or no cognitive capacity to perform key or generative processing.

3. The students' poor e-literacy might have functioned as an obstacle to better learning. In this study, the participants found the Trello LMS too unfamiliar and too difficult to handle.

Final Comments

❖ The findings of this study do not mean that the application of technology in teaching grammar should be limited.

❖ Teachers need to guide the students by providing more instructional support in order to minimize the chances of technological challenges which the students might have to deal with.

❖ Teachers also need to know that their students possess enough e-literacy and enthusiasm to embrace technology so as to choose more user-friendly and appropriate websites and educational technologies.

A Humble Confession

Not Doing it is better than overdoing it!!!!