



INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARD THE USES OF COMPUTER-BASED TESTING IN LEARNING GRAMMAR

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Abstract

Implementing technology in learning grammar is become innovative strategy for teaching and learning process. This study which was qualitative study, aimed at gaining insights into students' perspectives toward the uses of computer based grammar testing in learning grammar. Interviews and questionnaires were carried out during learning at course in this study. This study shows that the computer based grammar testing can motivate the students in learning grammar. Results from this study indicate that students feel more enjoyable and interesting in learning grammar by using computer based grammar testing.

Keywords: Technology, Computer based Grammar Testing, Grammar, Students' Perspectives, ICT

INTRODUCTION

The increasing of technology makes innovation of important applications that can be used in education. This innovation of technology comes from CALL. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a type of educational technology designed to serve as a learning tool. In simple terms, it refers to the use of computer applications in teaching and learning language. According to Chapelle (2001:3), "CALL in the 1960s was supported by mainframe computers connected to terminals on a single campus or by telephone lines to terminals off campus.... the mainframe computers and their general-purpose programming languages of the 1970s were able to support the basic interaction required to implement the instructional design for this era of CALL. Chapelle (2001:20) also explains that CALL activities had for the most part been developed around computer-learner interactions - even if more than one learner participated in those interactions at a time. Actually there are many computer applications from CALL. In an English as a Second Language (ESL) environment, communicative CALL programs often supplement and augment classroom activities by providing games for practice or word processing applications for compositions. In some English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs, computer programs may complement or completely supplant classroom instruction by providing instruction in a subject or skill not taught in the classroom (Nutta, 1998). Most of utilization of softwares are more efficient than using textbooks, especially in teaching grammar. They are six criteria for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) task appropriateness based on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) findings: (1) language learning potential, (2) learner fitness (presenting tasks "appropriate to learners' linguistic ability level"), (3) meaning focus, (4) authenticity, (5) positive impact (resulting in "effects beyond its language learning potential"), and (6) practicality (Chapelle in Ahluwalia, et.al, 2011). With these considerations and principles in mind, the researcher selected computer based grammar testing as the CALL activity that would best help the students.

Computer-based testing, online testing, e-assessment ... all of these terms refer to a phenomenon which has become increasingly visible in English language teaching in the last few years, that of taking tests and examinations via a computer (Dudeny & Hockly, 117). Those terms are tests

via computer rather than on paper. Amri (2008) give advantages of computer-based testing, CBT helps test developers to set the same test conditions for all participants. It also improves all aspects of test security by storing questions and responses in encrypted databases and enables testers to create randomized questions and answers from vast question pools. Moreover, offering different test formats and the immediate presentation of different types of feedback, either to students or testers, are other great advantages of CBT. By using computer-based paper, learners can be given a diagnostic test on a computer before they start a course. Tests are often included in the learner's coursebook CD-ROM or Test Master CD-ROM are available for teachers as editable Word files, so they can use ready-made tests or make new ones. Learners also can take internationally recognized examinations on a computer.

Dudeny & Hockly also explain advantages and disadvantages of computer-based testing. It offers flexibility in location and in timing, the mechanics of marking and feedback can be automated to a much greater extent, and results provided are quicker, marking certain items is more reliable by computer than by hand (Writing and speaking still requires human intervention), and the long-term costs are lower than face-to-face examining. In contrast, the main disadvantage is the reliability in the marking of extended pieces of writing and in assessing speaking, initial investment costs in computer-based testing tend to be high, and authentication with distant testing: it's difficult to assure that the person taking the exam is indeed who they claim to be, especially in the writing area.

With computer-based testing, students can learn grammar. A knowledge of grammatical rules is important for almost all foreign language, especially for undergraduates, because it is important for them to be in a high level of accuracy in the language. Nowadays, to learn about grammar, they are helped by technology. It has enabled teachers to apply web-based grammar instructions by accessing grammar websites in the internet or by computer applications. This allows students to practice a variety of grammatical items and language features presented to them in interactive activities (Baturay, Daloglu, & Yildirim, 2010). This, consequently, enhances students' ability to notice certain grammatical items in the presented contexts (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008). Hedge (2000) mentions that noticing items in a language enable learners to construct a relationship between the meanings and the forms of these language items resulting in learning the grammatical forms.

This paper examines students' perspectives toward the uses of computer based grammar testing in learning grammar. Computer-based testing used in this study are in form of TOEFL preparation. It used NST Toefl, Barron's Toefl, and Magic Toefl (See Appendix C). It will provide justifications for using these devices and highlight their effectiveness in the delivery of grammar instruction. Therefore, the writer want to see students' perspective in using computer-based grammar testing.

METHOD

Research Design

Qualitative method is used in this study. because it is more appropriate to the subject of the study. This study describe about students' perception in using computer-based testing in learning grammar.

Participants

The participants in this study are 6 students of private course. They are in different ages from 16-18 years old. In terms of their education , they are quite heterogeneous group. One of them are still in senior high school and others in university.

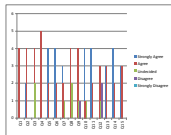
Instruments

The instruments used in this study include questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires are used in which students were first asked to provide their background information and then were asked the questions related to their view about using Computer based grammar testing (For the detailed form, see Appendix A). On the other hand, in conducting an interview with them, each interviewee spent 15-30 minutes with the interviewer to answer the questions. The criterion of the interview was based on important background information such as, gender, year of study English, learning strategy, and about using computer-based testing. This sample method seemed to be more representative because of the limited sample size.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study purposes to investigate students' perspectives toward the uses of computer-based testing in learning grammar. Students perspectives in the teaching and Learning of grammar using computer-based testing can be seen from this chart.

Chart 1. The Result of Questionnaires



From question 1, “I learn grammar easier by using computer based grammar testing”, two participants said strongly agree and four participants said agree with the statement.

From question 2, “I like learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing”, two participants said strongly agree and four participants said agree with the statement.

From question 3, “I often learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing.”, four participants said agree and two participants undecided with the statement.



From question 4, “I learn grammar easier by using computer based grammar testing”, one participant said strongly agree and five participants said agree with the statement.

From question 5, “Computer based grammar testing gives participants opportunities to practice grammar”, four participants said strongly agree and two participants said agree with the statement.

From question 6, “Computer based grammar testing is helpful in learning and using grammar”, four participants said strongly agree and two participants said agree with the statement.

From question 7, “Computer based grammar testing is easy to use”, three participant said strongly agree, two participants said agree with the statement and one participant said undecided with the statement.

From question 8, “Computer based grammar testing is very cheap and convenient”, four participants said agree and two participants said undecided with the statement.

From question 9, “I think I have no difficulty in learning grammar by using computer based grammar testing”, four participants said agree, one participant said undecided with the statement, and one participant said disagree with the statement.

From question 10, “I feel comfortable using computer based grammar testing”, four participants said strongly agree, one participant said agree, and one participant said undecided with the statement.

From question 11, “Learning by using computer based grammar testing is enjoyable and interesting”, four participants said strongly agree and two participants said agree with the statement.

From question 12, “I think I have no difficulty in using computer based grammar testing”, three participants said agree, one participant said undecided, and two participants said disagree with the statement.

From question 13, “I feel comfortable using computer based grammar testing”, three participants said strongly agree and three participants said agree with the statement.

From question 14, “Computer based grammar testing increase my grammar”, four participants said strongly agree and two participants said agree with the statement.

From question 15, “I prefer to learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing rather than book”, three participants said strongly agree and three participants said agree with the statement.

From the result of questionnaire, when students were asked if the use of computer-based testing helped with their learning, there were positive responses. Students felt that the process of learning was made easier, more enjoyable, more interesting. They found the material taught become attractive and easy to use. It also has explanation, therefore they felt easier to understand the questions. They also felt it is easier to understand and agreed that it is more fun to learn using computer-based testing. The products of learning improved as students found that they now understand better, understand more and learn more at the end of the lesson. However there was also one negative response on the kinds of questions. Students found the questions not really as many as they want, so they should have more than one application of computer-based testing in learning grammar. The students gave positive responses when they asked in using it. They said that it is easy to use it. And they have directly the answer and explanation and were happy to participate in the lesson by answering questions using the computer-based testing. Students felt that the level of grammar class increased with the use of computer-based testing in the teaching and learning grammar. They enjoyed using this application by doing the grammar test in computer, they just need to move the pointer and click it. Students were motivated in learning with the use of IWB. There were positive responses such as “more interesting”, “more interactive”, “more enjoyable”, and “can pay attention better”. The only



negative comment was “the question not really vary”. Students were also of the opinion that using the computer-based testing is also good for the environment as less use of paper and ink.

Thus, if this technology can be utilized effectively in classroom teaching, it will bring about an obvious increase in the level of learning as students would be motivated to participate in the lesson. From the interview to the students, five of them said that it was the first time they met this application, it was relatively new for them. Previously, they only know learning grammar by using thick book and make them boring. Much research is needed to assess the advantages and disadvantages of computer-based testing, to know whether all students can use this application whenever they want.

CONCLUSION

From this study, by applying technology in the teaching and learning process indicate that students interact more interesting, enjoyable, comfortable, and easier. Using computer-based testing allows learners to practice answering activities and revising learned grammatical items on their own pace and space. By practicing and revising, learners become more involved in their grammar learning. Technology helps students in enhancing their grammar, especially by using computer-based testing. Students think that learning grammar is not boring and they view grammar become interesting and fun.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on the Use of Computer based Grammar Testing in Learning Grammar

This questionnaire aims to examine the Use of computer based grammar testing in learning grammar.

Respondent Details:

Name : _____

Gender : _____ Male _____ Female

Age : _____ years old



1. I learn grammar easier by using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
2. I like learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
3. I often learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
4. I feel it is quite easy to learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
5. Computer based grammar testing gives participants opportunities to practice grammar.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
6. Computer based grammar testing is helpful in learning and using grammar.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
7. Computer based grammar testing is easy to use.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
8. Computer based grammar testing is very cheap and convenient.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
9. I think I have no difficulty in learning grammar by using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
10. I feel comfortable using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
11. Learning by using computer based grammar testing is enjoyable and interesting.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
12. I think I have no difficulty in using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
13. I feel comfortable using computer based grammar testing.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
14. Computer based grammar testing increase my grammar.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree
15. I prefer to learn grammar by using computer based grammar testing rather than book.
 Strongly agree agree undecided disagree strongly disagree

Appendix B

Interview on the Use of Computer based Grammar Testing in Learning Grammar

This interview aims to examine the Use of computer based grammar testing in learning grammar.

Respondent Details:

Name : ____

Gender : ____ Male ____ Female

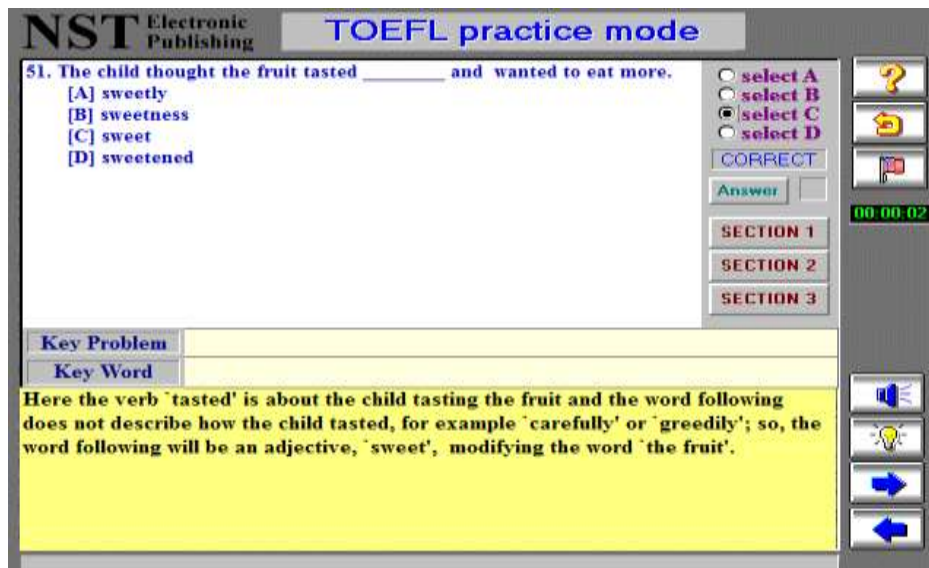
Age : ____ years old

1. When you first learn English, especially about grammar?
2. How is your learning strategies? (audio, visual, audio-visual)? Why?

3. Do you think learning grammar is important for TOEFL preparation? Why?
4. Do you like learn English grammar? Why?
5. Have you ever found the program like Computer based grammar testing before? (If yes, please mention it)
6. How often do you use Computer based grammar testing?
7. Do you think that Computer based grammar testing program help to improve your grammar? Why?
8. Do you feel more motivated learn grammar by using Computer based grammar testing program?
9. How do you think the best way to increase your grammar?
10. How many hours do you spend on Computer based grammar testing?

Appendix C

1. NST TOEFL



The screenshot shows the NST Electronic Publishing TOEFL practice mode interface. The main window displays a multiple-choice question: "51. The child thought the fruit tasted _____ and wanted to eat more." with four options: [A] sweetly, [B] sweetness, [C] sweet, and [D] sweetened. To the right of the question are radio buttons for each option, a "CORRECT" button, and an "Answer" input field. Below the question, there are sections for "Key Problem" and "Key Word". A yellow box contains an explanatory text: "Here the verb 'tasted' is about the child tasting the fruit and the word following does not describe how the child tasted, for example 'carefully' or 'greedily'; so, the word following will be an adjective, 'sweet', modifying the word 'the fruit'." On the right side of the interface, there are navigation buttons: a question mark, a home icon, a timer showing "00:00:02", and buttons for "SECTION 1", "SECTION 2", and "SECTION 3". At the bottom right, there are icons for help, a lightbulb, and navigation arrows.

2. BARRON'S TOEFL



The screenshot shows the Barron's TOEFL CD-ROM interface. The title bar reads "BARRON'S TOEFL CD-ROM" and "Copyright © 2007, Barron's". The main window displays a "Question/Answer:" section with the following text: "In simple animals, _____ reflex movement or involuntary response to stimuli." Below this are four radio button options: "behavior mostly", "most is behavior", "most behavior is", and "the most behavior". The third option, "most behavior is", is selected, indicated by a red arrow pointing to the filled radio button. Below the question is an "Explanatory Answer:" section with the following text: "Most is used before a noncount noun to express a quantity that is larger than half the amount. A singular verb follows the noncount noun. Choice (A) does not have a verb. In Choice (B), the verb is before, not after the noun. In Choice (D), the is used before most. (Refer to Patterns, Problem 72, page 166)." At the bottom of the interface, there is a navigation bar with buttons for "View", "Return to Where I Was", "Previous", "Help", "Answer Continue", and "Next".

3. MAGIC TOEFL



The screenshot shows a web-based TOEFL practice interface. At the top left, it says "3 dari 49 soal [37 sisa soal]". At the top right, a timer shows "00:00:38". The main content area displays a multiple-choice question:

03. _____ that gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill and that the California Gold Rush began

- A. Because in 1848
- B. That in 1849
- C. In 1848 that it was
- D. It was in 1848

Below the question, it says "Jawaban anda :". There are two buttons: "Soal sebelumnya" and "Soal berikutnya". At the bottom, it says "Tekan tombol 'Lihat Score' untuk melihat prediksi score toefl" and has a button labeled "Lihat Score". In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "INSPIRITA" with the text "INSPIRITA" in a stylized font and "GURU BERTALANTA" below it.