

Importance of Technology in Teaching EFL

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ABSTRACT

In the recent years the computer has established itself as an important feature of modern life. A common fact for the use of computers in language teaching and learning is that it is said to promote learner autonomy. It is recognized that many English foreign learners have difficulties in determining the correct placement of the stress in the word. Thus, this paper aims at using the computer as a technique in teaching stress and reducing the student's difficulties in determining the correct placement of the stress as well as its role in making technology an effective learning opportunity. It compares between the role of the computer and teacher in stress teaching and whether the first is better than the other or both are a complement to each other. A test has been given to twenty four Iraqi EFL students and their responses have been analyzed. Test validity and test reliability are the main procedures of the test. Their responses have shown that the using of the computer has an important role in improving the teaching of stress. However, it is hoped that this new technique can overcome the problems of EFL in stress.

Section One

1. 1 The problem of the study:

It is known that many English foreign learners have difficulties in determining the placement of the stress in words especially complex and compound words. Thus, the problem of this

study is that most EFL learners make errors in placing the correct stress in the words.

1. 2 Aims of the study:

1. showing the role of the computer as an educational aid that can help the students in determine the stress in words.
2. comparing the role of computer and teacher in language teaching and indicating whether the first or the second is better than the other or both are a helpful means to each other.
3. presenting the computer in the classroom as a new technique that makes students deal with easily when needed.

1. 3 Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that:

1. using the computer technique as a means for improving the efficiency of students in determining the stress can reduce their difficulties in stress.
2. using the computer technique in the classroom brings out significant difference in language learning compared to the teacher. So, there is a great difference between the role of the computer and teacher in language teaching.

1. 4 Limits of the study:

- 1- It is limited to the second year students of English department, at the College of Education –University of Tikrit for the academic year (2010-2011)
- 2- It is concerned with the using the computer as a means for improving the English students, in their determining of stress.

1. 5 Purpose of the study:

In this study, the researcher wants to examine EFL learners in their determining the stress and whether the role of the computer in stress teaching is better than the role of the teacher or both of them are helpful means to each other.

Section Two

2. Introduction

2. 1 Classroom's Language with Computer

It is important to mention that the computer has the following major roles in the language classroom:

1-Computer's role as a teacher

It is known that computer becomes as a necessary means that can be used instead of the teacher especially with the appearance of the much more sophisticated kind of computerized teaching using multimedia CD -ROMS. In such programs, students can listen to dialogues or watch video clips. They can click on pictures to call up the names of the objects they see. They can speak into the microphone and immediately hear a recording of what they have said. The program can keep a record of their progress, e g. The vocabulary learned and offer remedial help if necessary. Many of these CD-ROM programs are offered as complete language courses. They require students to spend hours on their own in front of the computer screen, usually attached to a microphone headset. (Internet &ELT Eastment, D. 1999)

2-Computer's role as a tester

The computer is very good at drill and practice. It will tirelessly present the learner with questions and announce if the

answer is right or wrong. Many early drill and practice programs were very unsophisticated, either multiple-choice or demanding a single word answer. They were not programmed to accept varying input and the only feedback they give was Right or Wrong. So for example, if the computer expected the answer "does not" and the students typed "doesn't" or "doesnot", she (he) would have been told she(he) was wrong without any further comment. (*Ibid*)

3-Computer's role as a tool

The computer has achieved great success in language teaching. Spreadsheets, databases, presentation slide generators, concordances and web page producers all have their place in the language classroom, particularly in one where the main curricular focus is task-based or project work. But the most important role of the computer in the language classroom is its use as a writing tool, (Egbert, J& Hanson-Smith, E (eds)1999).

It has played a significant part in the introduction of the writing process, by allowing students easily to produce multiple drafts of the same piece of work. Students with messy handwriting can now do a piece of work to be proud of, and those with poor spelling skills can, after sufficient training in using the spell check, produce a piece of writing largely free of spelling mistakes. (*Ibid*)

4-Computer's role as a data source

The internet is regarded as a provider of information as when anyone who has done a search on the world wide web will know that there is already more information out there than an individual could do in a hundred times. (Sperling, D. 1998)

5- Computer 's role as a communication facilitator

The internet is the principal medium by which students can communicate with others at a distance, e. g. by e-mail or by participating in discussion forums. In fact, at Frankfurt international school, the single most popular use of computers by students in their free time is to write e-mails to their friends. Some teachers have set up joint projects with a school in another locations and others encourage students to take part in discussion groups. There is no doubt that such activities are motivating for students and allow them to participate in many authentic language tasks. However, cautious teachers may wish to closely supervise their students' messages. Recent research has shown up the extremely primitive quality of much of the language used in electronic exchanges. (Ibid)

2. 2 Computer Use in the ESL Classroom

The computer has a number of advantages when it is used in the classroom. It offers privacy for the students who may be embarrassed in front of their classmates because of their mistakes . It allows learners to work on their own, in their own time and, most importantly, at their own pace. This is valuable not only for those who, because they have been ill or because they are slow learners, have fallen behind and need to catch up with the rest of the class, but also for the better pupils who always finish early and need extra materials to stretch. The computer is patient and will tirelessly go over the same points for as long as is necessary. Finally, the computer is consistent unbiased and has no off days. (M. J. Kenning, 1983:3)

Moreover, Khorshid (1985:4) divides the advantages of computer into three types: those which are part of its inherent

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nature, those which benefit the teacher and the learner. We begin with the inherent advantages of the computer.

- 1- It can handle a much wider range of activities, and much more powerfully than other technological aids
2. the computer can offer interactive learning. More than just this, it can also display messages, take the students through subsequent attempts at a question, and even take the student to different section of the package, depending on the nature of the response
3. The computer can do many processes very quickly. Its response is practically instantaneous. It can repeat an activity without errors. It can handle a very large volume of interaction and can deliver to the student feedback of some subtlety, at more frequent intervals than would be possible for a human teacher in all but individual tuition sessions.
- 4) it is flexible in a number of significant ways. It often happens that students cannot attend a class because of illness, time -table clashes, and other problems. This presents no difficulty for the computer. In addition, a computer is available, the students can come at any time, and spends as long time as is needed to gain full benefit from the material. (Ibid.)
- 5) From the point of view of the teacher, the computer presents several aspects of particular promise. Prominent among these its versatility in handling different kinds of material. The simplest is the one- way presentation of information, in the form of text, graphics, audio and video.
- 6) The computer can also handle questions and answer routine, simulated dialogues, hypothesis testing, and many other types of exercise. It can branch to different parts of the package, depending on many different factors and can do so at any point.

When the student has completed the session, the computer can record results, errors, success rates, the time spent, and much more information for the teacher to view at a later time. As a result of this information, the teacher is able to revise and refine the materials at any stage. Unlike the text book lesson, which the teacher cannot change and to which at best some subsidiary materials can be added, the computer exercise can be easily modified.

(Khorshid, 1985:4-5)

- 7) For the student tool, the computer offers many advantages. First among these is that their tool access the computer's flexibility of time allows the student the choice of when to study particular topics and how long to spend on them. It can also allow students to take courses or parts of courses at distance. Distance teaching is eminently feasible by computer. Many computers can be linked by telephone lines or special land-lines. Also, teachers can send tapes or discs of their materials through the post. Whatever the factors of time and distance, the computer retains its potential for personalized instruction. (Ibid)
- 8) According to (M. J. Kenning, 1983:3), the computer offers the opportunity to make better use of time and expertise. By taking over tedious mechanical tasks like the correcting and marking of simple exercises, it allows the learners to spend more time on preparation and on activities such as discussion, simulation, or project work. By providing a means of usefully occupying part of the class, it opens up the possibility of small group activities.

Moreover, Computers should be used as a language learning tool just as any other piece of equipment (tape recorder, VCR blackboard, etc). It is important that the computer should not

become as the center of attention of the lesson. There are situations when activities in the computer can become the center of attention, however these situations should be avoided and left to the students to decide when, and if, they want to utilize such activities, in self-access.

2. 2. 1 Computer as a language learning Tool

The use of computer for listening exercises often provides not only sound, but also visual input providing students with more contextual clues. Students can interact with a computer using motor skills as well which can have a strong reinforcing effect on the learning process by connecting physical action (clicking –typing) with desired results. Students are also allowed more control over their own learning process as they make the decisions when to repeat questions, exercise and sequences based on their own.

Probably the strongest argument for the use of the computer in the classroom environment is that the students can employ a computer to record themselves to compare their pronunciation to a target pronunciation. This can be repeated endlessly until student is satisfied with his /her result. These pronunciation exercises are often combined with visual aids(such as intonation graphs or stress)to help the student recognize how his /her pronunciation is composed to the target pronunciation. Common tools such as spell checking can also provide the student with valuable self-analysis instruction.

Finally, with the aid of the Internet and CD –Room based materials, teachers can quickly access documents addressing individual student needs. (Internet and EFT Eastment:1999)

2. 2. 2 Make the student comfortable with the technology

There are few principles that should be followed in order to help the student and the teacher feel more at home using the computer.

- 1- The computer should always be turned on, booted, and the program loaded before the class begins. In this manner, students focus on doing the task at hand rather than getting to the point where they can do the task.
- 2- Students who are not comfortable using computers should be placed with students who feel comfortable using computer. These students should not be forced to use the mouse or type at the keyboard. As they become more familiar with the technology, they will often begin to play a more active role – even if they don't, the ability to use the computer is not the issue.
- 3- Students who feel more comfortable with the computer should be strongly discouraged from using other resources available in the program itself, or in other program. These students should be encouraged to explore these resources on their own by taking advantage of self –access programs. (Internet and EFT Eastment:1999)
- 4- using the computer should be phased instead of introducing a complex series of exercises to be done for a lesson. Teachers should begin by doing a limited amount of work with the computer (one listening exercise followed by an interactive quiz). (Internet - www.stgeorgesschlcologne.de)

2. 2. 3 The procedures of using computer in class

- 1- Selecting target structure or function by deciding what students need to focus on considering past lesson and future goals.
- 2- Selecting computer materials to be used.
- 3- Planing the lesson in the typical four areas:warm up, introduction of materials, class work, summary, divide the computer section of the lesson into at least two sections.
- 4- Makeing sure that you prepare the computer before you enter the classroom. This means loading the computer with the chosen material ahead of time.
- 5- When you begin to use the computer in class and remind students that more experienced computer users should be patient and helpless experienced users.
- 6- Students who are not comfortable using computers should be placed with students who are.
- 7- when students work on the first task , communication should be encouraged as working with a computer is a great task for conversation.
- 8- After task is finished, discuss specific language skills and /or objectives with students.
- 9- when the students work on second task, they can repeat the above steps. (Internet, 33-34)
- 10- Use the computer as a springboard for discussion. For example, ask students to explain to other students what they have just read in reading comprehension. (Ibid)

Trips

- 1- It is important to keep the objectives in mind. It is extremely for students to begin exploring the infinite world at their finger tips and that can be counterproductive.
- 2- Don't insist that students who are not comfortable with computers use them. Let other students dominate if necessary.
- 3- Students more comfortable with computer should be strongly discouraged from using other resources available in the program itself or in other programs. Also we need computer appropriate software and preparation time. (Ibid)

2. 3 Teacher vs. computer in Language Teaching

The computer is a servant and its role in education is that of a medium. It is totally dependent on the teacher in many ways:for example, it does not have ability to create educational materials without a human to direct it. All the linguistic material and instructions for its presentation must be specified by the teacher. It is the teacher, then who can make the computer assume various roles. (Ahmed, etal, 1985:2-3)

In addition, the computer can be physically situated in the classroom. It can be in a special laboratory, or as part of a language laboratory or in a specially designated area of a library or in any other convenient location where the student or small groups of students can work uninterrupted. The computer can even be located in the students' home. The teacher decides that a certain part of the curriculum can be handled on the computer. (Ibid)

The teacher can wish to adopt the computer to develop certain learning skills. The computer can be used as the mainstay of a course or for back up, revision, reinforcement, extension, or a

variety of other purposes. It can communicate with the student, visually by displaying text, graphics or video images on a screen. It may also present sound in the form of speech, music or other audio output.

The computer gives the students the opportunity to benefit from material carefully designed or selected by the teacher, without his or her actual presence. (Ibid)

2. 4 Computers and Testing

The computer in educational institutions serves the magister, not the pedagogue. It stores data and calculates scores, and may even be the direct medium for taking the test if the institution is rich enough to afford a bank of machines for the purpose. But such uses make only trivial demands on computer power. (Higgings, 1988:92).

Section Three

3. procedures

3. 1 Introduction

This section attempts to test the hypotheses concerned with how the computer technique can overcome the difficulties in determining the placement of the stress in words. Besides, the role computer will be compared with the role of the teacher to show which is the best in teaching stress.

However, this section deals with the practical procedure of the current study which includes: the sample selection procedure, procedures of the study, the scoring scheme, test validity, test reliability, test administration and statistical methods.

3. 2 The sample selection procedure:

To achieve the researcher's aims of this study, the sample is the second year students of English department at College of Education in the academic year 2010-2011.

The total number of students (i. e. the 2nd year students) is (24) students. The researcher, who had taught and applied the test on the students of the class, is their English teacher in the department and she is known to them. The class is an already existing group of students so no random selection is occurred.

3. 3 The procedures

An experiment has been designed to achieve the aim of the study and to verify the hypothesis which derived from it. The students are given a detailed lecture about stress and its placement on different words like the simple, complex and compound words. Besides, giving examples are very important to show that change can be found on different words and that the teacher will pronounce the stressed and unstressed syllables in the words to show the difference between them. After that, the students are given (20) words containing the simple, complex and compound words and are asked to place the suitable stress on them. The same group are given another detail lecture in stress but it is explained through the computer. Here, the lecture is prepared for the students in the computer about the stress and its placement with examples but the students are listening to the stressed syllables of the words by the native speaker showing the difference between the stressed and unstressed syllables in the words. The teacher will explain to the students how to use the computer to answer the items of the test can be found in the computer. Then, the same test that includes

(20 words) is given to the students through the computer and asking to place the suitable stress on the words

3. 4 The Scoring Scheme:

The students' responses are corrected by the researcher herself. The same test has given to the students twice and the difference between them is that in the first time of the lecture is explained by the teacher while in the second time, the lecture is explained by the computer. However, the responses are either correct or incorrect. When the *testee* has stressed the syllable of the word correctly, it has scored five mark (i. e. correct response). But, when the response is incorrect, the word has scored zero (i. e. wrong place of the syllable). There are no biased scores. When a word or phrase is left (i. e. the testee has not answered), it is counted incorrect and it is scored zero. So, the total marks of the test are (100 marks).

3. 5 content and face Validity

There are three important characteristics of a good test which are: validity, reliability and practicality. Content validity and face validity of the test have been submitted to the note and correction of the jury members.

Harrison (1983: 11) defines the validity of the test as “ the extent to which the test measures what it is intended to measure ”. There are different types of validity, the most prominent of them are face validity and content validity. Face validity is one aspect of validity. A test is said to be valid if it a assess correctly what it claims to assess. In other words, a test is said to include content validity if its contents constituent a representative sample of

language skills (AL-Hamash and younis, 1975:24), and (Hughes, 1989:22).

Face validity is emphasized on what teachers and students think of the test. The best way to discover face validity is to expose the test to jury of experts. While content validity is based on the objective of the course taught. content validity on the other hand is another aspect of validity which is based on the degree to which a test affectively and sufficiently quantifies the accurate skills or behavior that it sets out to asses (Mousavi, 1992: 26).

Also, Heaton (1975:154) says that content validity deals with “ an important analysis of the language being test and of the particular course objectives ”. The test should include samples of the course, the relationship between the test items and the course objectives always being apparent. content validity usually indicates the notion between test content and detail curriculum aims (Davies, 1968:32).

In order to achieve the test validity, it is given to the jury of experts in English department. They are asked to study the test to add, modify, or change anything they consider scientifically or theoretically necessary. However, certain suggestions and modifications have been made by the jury on the test, which are taken into consideration. All the members have agreed that the test is suitable to achieve the aim of this study.

The jury of experts are as follows:

1. Asst. prof. Nawfal S. Majeed (phD) College of Education/
University of Tikrit
2. *Nagham. K. Al Sammarri (Phd) Instructor College of
Education/University of Tikrit*

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3. M. A Shrooq A. Ali Instructor College of Arts /University of Baghdad
 4. M. A Zaineb A. Ali Instructor College of Arts /University of Tikrit
 5. M. A Hadeel K. Ali Assist. Instructor. College of Education / University of Tikrit

3. 6 Test Reliability

Test reliability is an important feature of any good test to measure the ability of the students. In this case, Harrison (1983: 11) defines reliability as “ the consistency with which a test measures the same thing all the time ”. Therefore, reliability consists of three aspects: the place in which the test is produced, the way in which it is marked and the unity of the assessment it makes.

Lado (1962: 31) admits that reliability is general rather specific. When the scores of a test are stable or steady, that is, reliable, they remain the same scores regardless of what we test. In addition, he believes that the reliability is measured by correlation between the scores of the same set of students on two consecutive administrations of the test.

Also, it means the consistency between the scores of a test when the same test or its versions are administered to the same group of testees twice or more in a certain period (Ozcan, 1998:4)

The researcher has used split- half method to compute the reliability of the test. So, Anastasi (1976: 114) says that split - half reliability provides a measure of consistency with regard to content sampling. This type of reliability required a single administration of a single form. The test was divided into two halves by putting the

odd - numbered items in one half, and the even -numbered ones in the other.

The Pearson correction coefficient formula has been used to compute the correlation coefficient of the two “ half - length tests ” (Glass and Stanley, 1970:114). It is then corrected by Spearman formula in order to get the reliability coefficient of the test item.

$$r = \frac{\sum x_1 x_2 - n \bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{(\sum x_1^2 - n \bar{x}_1^2)(\sum x_2^2 - n \bar{x}_2^2)}}$$

Spearman Brown formula has been used to correct the reliability coefficient.

$$R_{xx} = \frac{2r_{hh}}{1+r_{hh}} \quad (\text{Ferguson, 1966: 378})$$

The results of applying the split- half method are presented in Table (3).

Table(1)

Reliability Coefficient of Split - half method and its correction by Spearman Brown Formula

N. of Sample of students	Split - half Correlation Coefficient	Spearman Brown Coefficient
24	0. 74	0. 85

The results above indicate that the test is highly reliable.

3. 7 Test Administration:

The objectives of the test are explained initially to the students by the researcher herself. The sheets of the test are distributed to the testees, and they are given some instructions to help the students to know how they can use the computer to show the items of the test in order they can answer the test.

Besides, the test has been administrated on (24) students in English department, college of Education , at University of Tikrit. The test is given twice to the same group.

After that, the researcher has collected the test papers by herself. The answer sheets of (24)students on (20) different words (simple, complex and compound)words have been checked. And the students' responses have been corrected and analyzed by the researcher.

Table(2)

Num. of the students	The students' mark before they had listened to the computer	The students' mark after they had listened to the computer
1	50	60
2	45	50
3	40	70
4	55	60
5	75	90
6	ZERO	60
7	5	45
8	35	60
9	65	85
10	35	60

Num. of the students	The students' mark before they had listened to the computer	The students' mark after they had listened to the computer
11	50	65
12	50	65
13	40	50
14	65	65
15	65	65
16	85	70
17	40	35
18	85	60
19	45	30
20	60	55
21	50	40
22	65	60
23	60	40
24	65	40

3.8 Statistical Means:

The researcher has used different statistical means in order to achieve the purposes of the test:

1. The mean score is used. Heaton (1975: 169) defines the mean score as “ is the arithmetical average: i. e. the sum of the separate scores divided by the total number of testees The mean is the most efficient measure of central tendency ”.
2. Standard Deviation (SD) is used. Heaton (1975: 170) indicates that standard deviation “ is another way of showing the spread of scores. It measures the degree to which the group of scores deviates from the mean”. One method is used to calculate SD is shown in the formula below:

$$SD = \frac{\sqrt{\sum d^2}}{N}$$

N is the number of scores and d the deviation of each score from the mean.

(Butler, 1985:37)

3. T. test is a method used to measure and count the important difference between the results of the one group of students (Glass and Stanly, 1970: 295). So, T. test method for dependent samples is used in this study. It can be estimated by the following formula:

$$T = \frac{\frac{\sum (x-y)}{n}}{s(x-y)/\sqrt{n}}$$

section four

Analysis of Results

4.1 Introduction

This section aims at analyzing the results of the test which have been mentioned previously. So, in order to clarify whether there is a significant difference between the role of the teacher and the role of the computer in teaching stress in the test scores, the researcher has used difference statistical tools such as: means, standard deviation and “ t” test for independent samples which was mentioned in section three.

4.2 The comparison between the role of the teacher & the role of the computer

The differences between the role of the teacher and the role of the computer can be summarized as follows:

- 1-The given lecture by the computer gives a chance to the students to get benefit from materials which are carefully designed or selected by the teacher, without the actual presence, whereas the given lecture by the teacher does not give developing materials and the lecture must be prepared by the presence of the teacher and it depends completely on the teacher.
- 2-By using the computer, the learner can listen to the lecture more than one time and in any time the student likes whereas the lecture can be explained by the teacher in a definite time and place .
- 3-By using the computer , the student will listen to the native speaker pronounces the stressed and unstressed syllables of the words clearly and correctly in which the student can imitate them at once concerning the teacher , the student will listen to the teacher who may make mistakes in pronouncing the stressed and unstressed words and the students may not hear the teacher's voice clearly that enable them to imitate immediately.
- 4-It is found that the students have enjoyed listening to the lecture by the computer rather than the teacher since the computer is regarded as an interesting and enjoyable technique.

However, throughout the application of the test, we can say that the role of the teacher is very significant and a complement in directing the students how to open and use the materials found in the computer. But in the teaching process of the stress, the computer

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is absolutely can alone develop the students' abilities in determining the correct placement of stress.

Table (3)

	Mean	S. D	T-Value Calculated	T-Value table	
Before	48.68	13. 78	2. 206	2. 064	significant
A after	62.11	22.66			

4. 3 Discussion of Results:

By using the statistical analysis of results, the researcher explains that the mean of the results in teaching the stress to the students by the teacher is (48. 68) whereas the mean of the results in teaching the stress to the students by using the computer is(62. 11)This shows that the computer has an important role in improving the student's performance in stress. Besides, the standard deviation after using the computer is (22. 66)which is higher than the standard deviation before using the computer which is (13. 78).

Also, it is noticed that T-value calculated is(2. 206)which is higher than the T-value table(2. 064). This means that the students have got benefit from using the computer in reducing their difficulties in stress.

5. Conclusions:

In the light of the previous discussion of the results , the researcher has concluded the following:

- 1) It seems that some students get benefit from the using the computer as a means to teach the placement of the stress. This indicates that the role of the computer is better than the role of

the teacher in teaching stress and it is unquestionably enormous potential as an educational aid that provides new learning opportunities. This belongs to many reasons:

- a) the computer is regarded as enjoyable technique which encourages the students to use and understand as well as hear the shown materials by the native speaker clearly and easily. They can answer the test directly and quickly.
 - b) this technique makes the students to be familiar especially with those who have not used before or at least takes a knowledge about the computer.
- 2) It is noticed that some students did not get benefit from the computer in that they make errors in placing the stress and this may belongs to the following reasons:
- a) the students have not used the computer before or encountered difficulties in using this technique that affects their understanding the stress.
 - b) The students have errors in placing especially on the stress simple and complex words. This may belong to a fact that the students have difficulties in transcribing the words phonetically especially the vowels in the words which are very important in determining the syllables of the word. Besides, concerning the complex words, the students have difficulties in determining the grammatical structure of the word, i. e, they can not distinguish whether the word is a verb or a noun as far as it is concerned with complex words.

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The Test

Q1-Put the stress on the suitable syllable of the following words:

- 1-abstract A
- 2-abstract V
- 3-conduct N
- 4-conduct V
- 5-alive
- 6-design
- 7-money
- 8-bad –tempered
- 9-three-wheeler
- 10typewriter
- 11-potato
- 12-refugee
- 13-mountaineer
- 14-portguese
- 15-cigarette
- 16-picturesque
- 17-comfortable
- 18-advantage
- 19-potato
- 20-quantity (Roach. Peter, 2007:234)