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Rethinking Conventional Teaching In Language Learning And Proposing Edmodo As Intervention: A Qualitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, educators are urged to transform the techniques in conducting language learning by incorporating technological tools because new technologies stimulate an explosion of new methods for teaching and learning. This article emphasizes the conventional teaching pedagogy and the urgency to rethink its practice in language learning while proposing a possible platform for learners' and teachers' needs. I outline the perceptions of future teachers on conventional teaching, shifting of teaching style from conventional to digital designs and the possibility of implementing Edmodo to curb the concerns arising. The argument set forward is regarding conventional teaching that hinders potentials of students, followed by participants' hopes for teaching approaches and the likelihood of implementing Edmodo to assist in the language learning classroom with grammar, vocabulary, self-efficacy and target language and practice.

Keywords: *Edmodo, Conventional teaching, English language learning, perceptions and TESL (Teaching English as Second Language).*

INTRODUCTION

Conventional teaching's limitations

Teaching today's generation calls for a change in education approach from conventional to a more comprehensive, communicative and technological way. Conventional teaching methods make students uninterested in class, discouraged, bored, stop trying in accomplishing tasks given, and do poorly in tests (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Godleski, 1984; Oxford, 1990; Smith & Renzulli, 1984). In the language acquisition classroom, the focus is typically on form, practice and repetition of structure (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983). In many conventional classes students have been asked to memorize English grammar rules and vocabulary and apply their translation skills (Wang, 2001). Hinkel and Fotos (2002) both claim that grammar teaching has been an issue among teachers, educators, ESL/EFL professionals and methodologists. Grammar should not be taught in a stand-alone lesson as students are unable to apply its rules when speaking or writing spontaneously (Ellis, 1997; Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011).

Moreover, conventional teaching forces students to demonstrate knowledge and content mastery via a test which can be jeopardizing to their learning because they only have minimal control over this matter (Teemant, 2010); this is because what they produce will not be what they know about the language, rather it will be what they memorize. Planned, restricted, gradual and artificial are the types of exposure to second language learning (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983). Instead of permitting students to acquire target language using natural and communicative approach, teachers emphasize teaching of sounds where the goal of instruction is to acquire native like pronunciation. Krashen (1989) argues that the best language learning pedagogy is not when lessons are grammatically sequenced and provided abundantly; rather the input supplied should

be arousing, comprehensible, relevant and accessible. In his republished book, Krashen (2009) maintains his stance but adds that students should be made aware of the language acquisition process in order to continue improving on their own. Taking what Krashen said into consideration, we need to allow second language learners to access and experience the target language in a natural manner, particularly by utilizing technology which has been progressing rapidly to facilitate the learning process (Stracker, 2011). In this way, students are subconsciously learning and knowledge learned will be retained over longer periods.

Researchers have urged educators to transform their classroom teaching to be more student-centered and inculcate collaborative learning. Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli (2004) posit that technology integration requires close collaboration between academicians and the technical units (institution, government, parents and other stakeholders). However, incorporating technology in teaching is not a popular option in Malaysian schools as teachers still prefer the old fashioned way of teaching (Hedberg, 2003). Raman and Yamat (2014) also revealed teachers' hesitancy in integrating ICT is due to heavy workload, lack of time, teaching experience and age and lack of ICT skills. Consequently, the common adopted pedagogy in today's language learning remains the same; through conventional approaches. Beyond doubt, no technique is superior to another. Nevertheless one ought to realize the limitations of practising solely conventional teaching methods. There has also been paucity of research in discovering through which channels learners and instructors engaging in a virtual classroom; email, social network, official university website or any e-learning tool?

As Malaysia wishes to advance in becoming a developed country, the Malaysian Ministry of Education has formulated three policies for ICT, namely: 1) using ICT as an enabler to reduce the digital gap between rural and urban schools, 2) emphasize the role and function of ICT in education as a teaching and learning tool, 3) using ICT to increase school management system productivity, effectiveness and efficiency (Chan, 2002). Another initiative is the establishment of Malaysian Smart Schools which can be defined as "a learning institution that has been systematically reinvented in a sense of teaching-learning practices and school management to equip children for Information Age" (Ministry of Education, 1997). Additionally, virtual universities and courses offered by numerous public universities have been booming in recent years. Despite these initiatives, application of the frameworks concerning technology use in the classroom has not been encouraging (Hedberg, 2003; Raman & Yamat, 2014) because of persistent execution of conventional approaches. Therefore, we must first rethink the limitations and effects of conventional pedagogy and propose a possible solution in language learning. This article illuminates the perceptions of future language teachers on the weaknesses of conventional teaching and discusses the possibility of assisting language learners via an e-learning platform called Edmodo.

What is Edmodo?

Edmodo is a social learning platform dubbed as 'Facebook for schools' or 'Facebook lookalike' by teachers, parents and students alike. Edmodo was founded in 2008 and according to MALCat (2016), a website housing literary works conducted by researchers in Malaysia, there is a paucity of studies pertaining to Edmodo as a learning platform. Meanwhile, according to an internet site overview by Alexa Internet, the United States triumphed to rank in first in having the most number of users on Edmodo (Alexa Internet, 2015). As of 2015, Edmodo has over 52 million users worldwide and counting.

Redman and Trapani (2012) claim that Edmodo is a portal presenting information in an engaging and motivating way which in turn becomes a controlled environment suitable for peer tutoring. Through Edmodo, students will be working with peers and inevitably required to collaborate with others (Buescher, 2010); regardless of whether doing pair work, small group work or within the class. It has the ability to cultivate skills, empathies and attitudes needed for online civic involvement (Crowe & McDonald, 2013). Via Edmodo, students are able to make use of the information they are learning and discuss with others to make connections to interrelated subjects and situations beyond the classroom (Buescher, 2010); for example, debates on world crises, current issues, human rights, global warming, religious views and others. On another note with regard to making personal and worldly connections through Edmodo; novelties of tasks, interactivity of the site and platform friendliness are some of the key points students prefer when completing assignments online (Pop, 2013) which later may draw them in to be more involved and connected.

What is more, the social learning platform emphasizes student collaboration, sharing and learning (Chandler & Redman, 2013; Lu & Churchill, 2013) that subsequently results in becoming a catalyst for teaching strategy. Pop (2013) posits that Edmodo caters for pools, alerts, quizzes, homework, grammar sheets, reading materials and sub-groups where all of these can be done effortlessly and be accessed by students at any time. Students are capable of developing higher order thinking skills to analyze and respond to tasks posted on Edmodo while teachers facilitate the process (Buescher, 2010). In retrospect to the present state of affairs, it is imperative to propose a platform that will help to assist teachers with teaching-learning delivery. Consequently, this study also seeks to discover possible connections between previous studies and participants' perceptions.

METHODOLOGY STRATEGY

The study stems from the curiosity of discovering views and concerns regarding conventional teaching which consequently triggered an interest in exploring an intervention scheme for English language learning. The article focuses on perceptions of future teachers pertaining to conventional teaching and potentials of implementing Edmodo in a language classroom. Crotty (1998) states that in constructivism meaning is not discovered but constructed and people derive meanings differently despite being exposed to the same phenomenon; which consents participants to eloquently make meaning out of their own experience with Edmodo. In this sense, they are encouraged to freely express perceptions without any prior expectations or predetermined views. Meanwhile, hermeneutics (Crotty, 1998) is participative and cannot be produced by the researcher. Hermeneutics as one of the theoretical background permits participants to project their own thoughts on Edmodo through their works, comments and encounters on the platform which later are gathered for analysis. Symbolic interactionism on the other hand focuses on interpretations of environments through actions (Crotty, 1998); that allows me to catch the process of interpretations on the subject matter through which the participants construct their actions (i.e., body language, facial expressions and gestures). All of these theoretical frameworks are suitable for the purpose of this study in disclosing meanings and perceptions of participants via interviews, projection of thoughts on Edmodo and interpretations by means of actions.

Purposive sampling is employed in order to yield the best understanding of this study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Therefore, four 3rd Year TESL students namely; Rose, Fatin, Farah and Emme from the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya are selected as participants. The research draws heavily on qualitative study that focuses on examining perceptions of participants. Spielmann and Radnofsky's (2001) qualitative study found that students' overall positive perception of the learning experience was due to the prospects to reinvent themselves effectively in the target language. In addition, Yan and Horwitz (2008) stated that few studies dedicated to studying anxiety from the learners' perspective, which later encouraged them to interview students in order to establish a connection between learners' perceptions and levels of anxiety. Furthermore, researchers are advised to conduct interviews to gather qualitative data because perceptions collected in quantitative representations do not clearly ascertain students' reasons for their beliefs (Gamble et al., 2013).

The instruments are: researcher (Yin, 2011), interview protocols (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012) that serves as a mental framework and consists of open questions and photographs (Dzakiria, 2008) which encompasses hermeneutics theoretical background. Interview protocols are illustrated as follows:

Scaffolding:	After experiencing Edmodo:
1. How do you define online/e-learning?	1. What do you think about using Edmodo as a channel to do assessments?
2. Have you ever enrolled for an online course?	2. Where and when did you manage to access Edmodo? How was your exploration on Edmodo?
3. What do you feel about online education?	3. Why do you think Edmodo is an effective/ineffective platform?
4. Have you faced any problems with online discussion?	4. How is it any different than what you did in schools or university?
5. Where and when have you experienced e-learning?	5. How can Edmodo be used as a platform in the teaching and learning process?
6. Why did your lecturer use e-learning?	6. Will you implement Edmodo in your teaching career? Why?
7. Share your experiences regarding this topic.	7. What are the drawbacks of Edmodo?
8. Share your thoughts on traditional approach and current teaching practices.	

Figure 1. Interview protocols for the study.

This study looks into the subject matter with interpretive and naturalistic approach in order to explore the participants' views in the most natural manner. I employ the use of inductive logic that will allow issues, categories and themes to emerge from the experiences of participants in this study (Dzakiria, 2004). It is crucial to approach the phenomenon in a natural setting, without any presumptions to ensure neutrality in reporting the data. In order to comprehend participants' views better, qualitative research provides the appropriate approach to tap into the subject matter. Further, Creswell (1998) comments on qualitative study as an inquiry process of understanding that explores an area of study.

The study executed open coding to identify the emerging themes, axial coding which focused on finding the themes' consistency and selective coding whereby core categories are selected in order to explain the Edmodo phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding is a process involving naming and categorizing a phenomenon via intense examination of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). As this study includes photographs, I skimmed through the data and roughly categorized it into possible main points that would connect it to the interviews' central ideas. The next advancement in data classification is known as axial coding, where I attempted to make all the categories fit together nicely. According to the highlighted main concepts found during open coding, I triangulate the data to confirm the interrelationships and consistency. This process is similar to open coding but with more details and attempts to narrow down the categories, sub-categories and their properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). Selective coding is an action of choosing core categories that would represent the related smaller categories and sub-categories. These core categories in which each has its own smaller elements and central ideas have the ability to answer all the research questions and accomplish the objectives of this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Throughout the process of perusing the data and findings, I adopted interpretive method (Walsham, 1993) that allows me to read between the lines while revealing multiple realities of the participants involved. Interpretive perspective lies on the notion that qualitative research should reveal multiple realities of the people involved, as opposed to capturing the objective reality. This is because objective reality can never be captured (Denzin, 2010). In order to establish stronger validity and reliability of the study, I cross checked the emergent themes with the participants by inquiring if my analyses and interpretations reflect their perceived views on the subject matter. Below is the confirmation for triangulation;



Rose 18 Nov (7 days ago) ☆ [reply] [dropdown]

to me ▾

Wlkmslm and hi,

I have read through the chapters and hereby confirm that I am in agreement with all of the presented findings as those were what i meant to say.

Thank you and best of luck.



Munierah Ainaa Mukhtar 18 Nov (7 days ago) ☆ [reply] [dropdown]

to me ▾

Hi Alia

I have consented all the analysed data (but seriously did I really make that many grammar errors during the interview lol)

Regards,
Emme



Farah Aida Fadzil 20 Nov (5 days ago) ☆ [reply] [dropdown]

to me ▾

hello alia!

congrats on your work! hehhe

i have read thoroughly and I confirm the statements made during the interviews.



fatin farhana 15:56 (4 minutes ago) ☆ [reply] [dropdown]

to me ▾

Hi Alia,

First of all, sorry for the late reply.

I find it funny reading my name and opinions all over your thesis hahaha but anyways, I confirm the statements made during the interviews after reading it and I agree with the presented findings. I also have no problem regarding interpreted data and constructive feedback and comments made by you.

Good luck and sorry for the delay!

Figure 2. Confirmation on Results Produced

Narrative approach becomes the technique in conveying information, ensuring factuality that mirrors upon the participants' point of views (Lauritzen & Jaegar, 1997).

RESULTS

Why are we rethinking conventional teaching?

In light of the emerging theme on mismatched learning and teaching styles, participants are noticeably apprehensive when the value of learning relies merely on securing excellent grades in language assessments and face to face interaction becomes the main approach in teaching while students of this age need a newer platform with different learning strategy. Both Farah and Rose believe that when students learn for the sake of securing good grades, the value of education becomes meaningless. Farah additionally asserts that teachers will be pressured, consequently causing them to focus on teaching students how to score in examinations instead of imparting practical skills and knowledge. Meanwhile, Fatin comments on impractical dependency on face to face interaction as students these days require the latest platforms to support their learning curve.

"Conventional approach normally puts focus on examination results but I think it should not be merely on academic achievements at the end of schooling, particularly when English is concerned. When that becomes the focus, teachers will be evaluated based on how many A's their students manage to get and indirectly [this] influences how teachers teach. Some teaching strategies can be effective but unfortunately are not getting implemented in schools."

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Education has to be meaningful; this is the missing crux in the process of teaching and learning in Malaysia. The depth of education itself is an issue; as in are the students learning to obtain A’s for English tests or to acquire knowledge for [their] own benefits? The delivery of the lesson has to change because if students have any interest in it, that’ll change the way of how the students view the lessons.”

Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Face to face interaction is important but not all of us can meet after classes because maybe some students have other commitments or something else to do. Hence, I think conventional approach alone where face to face interaction is essential may present some hindrances and thus demands for a newer platform or method for students to discuss about their group’s task wherever they are.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

Fatin later highlighted the issue on activities and lesson plans that are teacher-centered rather than student-centered in her response;

“Problem is that some teachers are not focussing on their students. Lessons are more teacher-centered, that is why the lesson can be boring and students are not paying attention in class.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

Further, I probed for pressing issues regarding English language learning resulting from conventional pedagogies which have been executed for decades. The emphasized problem they set forth is pertaining to the inability of Malaysian students to converse in the target language, English. According to them, university students refuse to speak in English publicly owing to many internal and external factors.

“There’s a reason why Malaysian students are very shy when they want to speak in English, it started when they don’t get much chance to speak in the language, be it in class or outside. The issue is whatever vocabularies and input you’ve learned so far, you need to apply those. In the scope of language learning, the point of learning it is to be able to use it.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“The problem is students cannot speak well in English and I’m not sure if it is due to the lack of confidence or something else entirely. In terms of knowledge, they have the capability to understand the language but less practice and exposure have made them unable to speak in English fluently. Students are commonly receptive towards anything explained and delivered by teachers, but if teachers just provide the knowledge and students are supposed to be like [a] sponge and take everything in, how can students learn effectively?”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Memorizing contents cannot be adequate for students to apply in real life situations. In many English language classrooms, students learn the language through a conventional lecture that ends with question-and-answer format and during the lecture, the teacher writes on the blackboard and students simply jot down whatever is written on it (Markee, 2002). Such practice is unhealthy and thwarts the learning outcomes. Participants of this study and social scientists in the language field agree that we need to adopt changes to teaching pedagogies or else students will still face the lack of fluency, errors in grammar and inability to converse in the language learnt (Ellis, 2008; Goh & Chapman, 2006; MacGowan-Gilhooly, 1991; Ortega, 2009).

In some cases where corrective feedback is applied, Thomas (2010) postulates, students usually do not read the corrective feedback left by teachers because they only care about submitting assignments successfully. On the contrary, teachers should be addressing the mistakes made by students instead of circling grammar errors, missing punctuation and others. Explaining what they have done wrong will help them to rectify their mistakes and improve the learning experience (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). Similarly, students who are not proficient should be encouraged to invest more efforts in learning; in all

probability the teacher could apply communicative teaching involving e-learning tools, quizzes, role plays, presentations and discussions. Gradually, learners will be more engrossed in the lessons and acquire additional vocabulary items along with skills needed in language learning. Because of its limitations conventional teaching practice must be reevaluated.

From conventional to digital teaching designs

Comprehending issues related to conventional approach and English language learning helps us to curb the concerns set forth between the former and the latter. I believe it is sensible to tap into the hopes that participants have on current and future teaching-learning delivery. By looking into their expectations, we will be able to learn from suggestions they make and their relevance to the concerns previously discussed. I asked them to share, as future English teachers, what their hopes are for future teaching pedagogies that might work for this generation and the next.

“It is important for students to have their opinion taken into consideration as usually they have [their] own views on particular topics or poems taught in classrooms. Students have to be able to think and learn independently.”

Rose/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Language is not learnt through memorizing; it requires skills that you have to obtain it progressively and applying what you have learned is crucial too. Therefore, students need to be given more chances to speak up and teachers must put in more effort in designing appropriate lessons”

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

As the conventional approach becomes the main teaching approach in schools, teachers think that the most appropriate and efficient approach for English language learning is by repeating language items in drills (Tang, Eunice, John, Chun, & Cecilia, 2012). Participants evidently disagreed to these methods and shared the same ideas on acquiring proper language skills and allowing students to utilize the knowledge learnt instead of drilling students during English lessons. Contrary to such practices, learners should be equipped with input and subsequently be permitted to conduct their own discovery learning, produce new information and have more chances to use the language in daily life/lessons.

“Students must be given a chance to take control of [their] own education. I wish to teach by having the whole process still be facilitated by me and I get to see how well they’re doing, but the outcomes and the processes will depend on their efforts.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Farah aspired to teach through facilitation while leaving her students to make efforts; her aspiration is a condition described by Little (2007) as a development of language learning comprising deliberate effort and conscious reflection. When asked what type of method will work for students and how it can change the environment of a physical classroom, Farah and Fatin suggested student-centered approaches in the following replies:

“Teaching-learning process should be a mixture between communicative approach along with reading and writing assessments, for instance, role plays and application of the language itself.”

Farah/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

“Collaborative learning will be most effective. When students interact with their friends, they have more opinions and ideas on the subject matter, instead of being spoon fed.”

Fatin/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Farah stated that besides reading and writing assessments, students should be given tasks involving communication where they may use the target language. Likewise, Fatin proposed collaborative learning which mainly encompasses application of the language learnt as students communicate and express their opinions with peers on the topics assigned.

What could be the medium in tackling the concerns set forth? As argued by Emme, she strongly believes that digital teaching designs help students keep pace with recent technology progress, parallel with the needs of today's learners:

"Youths and teenagers alike prefer to go on the internet rather than go to school. Therefore, we need to rethink the system in education that we have now as we cannot rely only on teaching of reading and writing skills and just drill students. We need to incorporate technology in education in one way or another."

Emme/SCAFFOLDING/Interview

Proposing Edmodo as an intervention

The participants were assigned with tasks related to the four skills in language learning (namely speaking, listening, reading and writing) while the process simultaneously led them to discover the features on the platform. Regarding one of the features of Edmodo, participants explored the use of 'backpack/library' that allows extended storage on the site (i.e., documents, files, images and others). Besides storage, the participants found other applications such as quiz, poll, assessments and quick buttons as useful in enhancing students' learning experience.

"Students can find information or links and keep it in 'backpack' and when it is time to submit or when they are done with the assessment/task, they can put up the link or whatever they found as a reference."

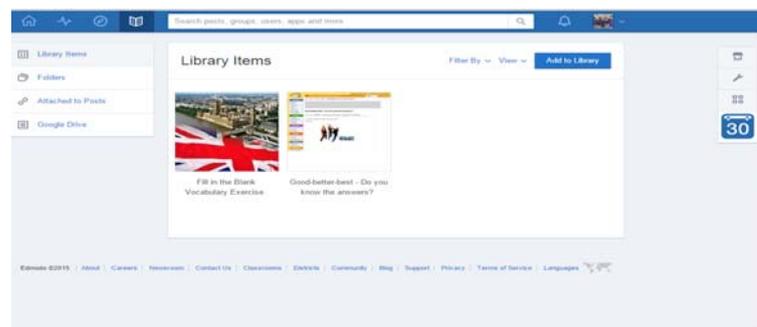
Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

"I can store my assignments in 'backpack' as a backup file."

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

"Backpack is convenient especially now there's a virus issue affecting technological devices. It also makes lessons easier for teachers and students. Learners get to learn more materials compared to in classroom where teachers alone provide materials. Students too can suggest materials they found online by sharing it."

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview



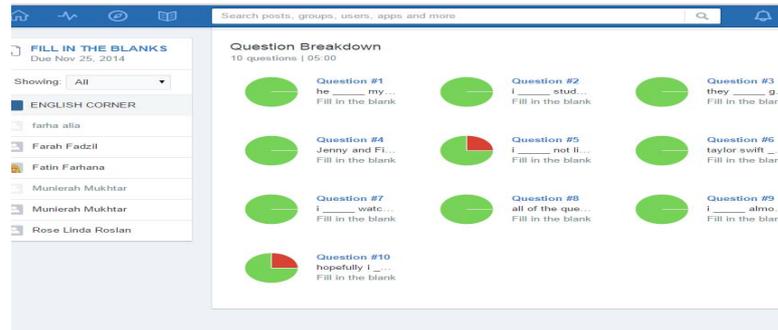
Backpack or Library Feature/WEBSITE/Photograph

"You can post questions for poll, quizzes, audio clips, reading assessments and fun learning using songs. Learning takes a new level as it uses different methods than in conventional class."

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

"Learning in class alone might present limited methods and materials during lessons, or some schools might not have proper facilities (projector in class) or there may be other constraints, but by using Edmodo teachers can create tasks to overcome these issues in [the] physical classroom."

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview



Feedback and Correction/WEBSITE/Photograph

"Quizzes help make learning interactive. You (the researcher) gave us the fill-in-the-blank task, I think such assessment gives an exciting new experience while at the end of the task they'll also know about their overall performance."

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

"Quizzes added new experience to the learning curve and the 'poll' feature is also noteworthy because you can get quick opinions just by voting."

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

Earlier, the participants commented on mismatched teaching and learning styles whereby the focus of conventional teaching is to prepare students for examinations while students of this digital age need different learning strategy to retain information longer. Therefore, in terms of language learning enhancement through the use of Edmodo, the participants found several ways for the platform to assist.

"On Edmodo, you have to answer questions given to you or you will not be given marks. This way, students are more responsible with [their] own learning process. By using Edmodo it makes learning more attractive to students because it's student-centered while teachers only facilitate, observe and assess; I like that the most about Edmodo. Students are in charge of what they do on Edmodo."

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

Contrary to rote learning, Edmodo provides a plausible solution by enhancing learners' learning curve and offering diverse options in assigning tasks while maintaining the focus and aims of the lessons through content analysis, grammar and vocabulary improvement and students' self-efficacy.

"My proficiency in English can be enhanced by giving me more chances to be exposed to English materials (audio, video, authentic materials, websites, quizzes and others). Directly or indirectly, I'm learning the language. Definitely Edmodo may help in time, mainly because of the materials and learning experience."

Rose/EDMODO 2/Interview

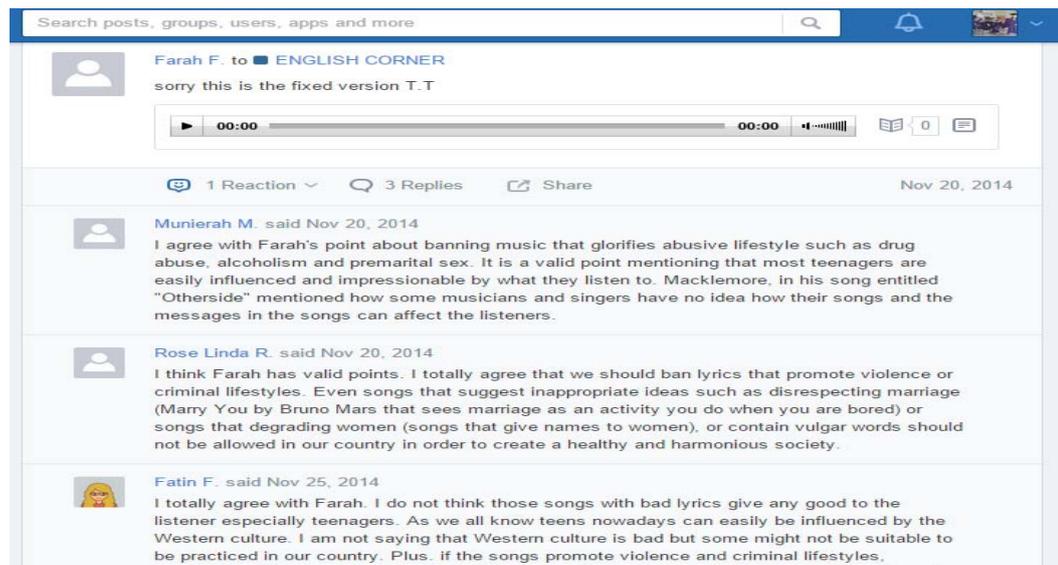
"I think Edmodo is good in indirectly acquiring knowledge about grammar and sentence structure because these things shouldn't be taught in class by memorizing and drilling, for example before I answer the questions you (researcher) posted on Edmodo, I read others' replies to see how they write their responses, how they use grammar items and finally I try to apply what I've read in my reply. In a way, I am learning grammar and vocabularies by looking at other comments."

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

"It strengthens English acquisition through writing and reading, because you can do tasks assigned effectively on the portal. I think the fact that everyone will be able to see your answer/response makes you more cautious and give extra attention to it, for example I don't want to commit grammar mistakes so it makes me more careful of my replies. You will want to write the best that you can because of the competitive situation. My vocabulary can also be improved as I get to read other comments and learn new words from

them. I can learn from peers at the same time.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview



Discussions/WEBSITE/Photograph

Formerly, participants shared the importance of applying knowledge learned and execution of approaches where students have to interact and utilize the target language to be better speakers and users of the language. In review after experiencing Edmodo, will the platform and its features be able to help them attain their aspirations? Does it stand a chance to be implemented in Malaysia?

“I think Edmodo is very appropriate to be used for [the] teaching process outside the classroom because it gives the opportunity for the teachers and the students to discuss.”

Rose/EDMODO 1/Interview

“There’s a huge possibility that I will implement Edmodo. I will make use of the features I have discovered, for instance quizzes, fill in the blanks, poll, discussions, content sharing and others. If I have finished teaching in class and I would like to know how much have they learned and understood, instead of conducting assessments in the next class, I can post a quiz on Edmodo because it gives immediate feedback/results. By looking at the immediate results of assessments, I too can do a reflection to evaluate how my teaching strategy has worked on them.”

Farah/EDMODO 2/Interview

“I think it’s beneficial because it’s an online site. Students can learn English not only by doing tasks or assessments on this site but also find their resources online. If it’s in class they need to rely on limited sources, face issues relating to time constraint and sometimes depend on their friends’ ideas.”

Fatin/EDMODO 1/Interview

Further, the participants posited that Edmodo’s features may help in teaching-learning processes while in many ways support their aspiration for future teaching strategies and outcomes. Fatin added that implementation of Edmodo might not be difficult as students are already proficient users of technological devices. Emme further proposed that Edmodo needs to be introduced gradually to the educators in Malaysia if its execution was to take place in a bigger context. Introducing this site and demonstrating its features are important if educators wish to weigh the pros and cons and later decide whether they want to implement it in their classrooms.

“Students today are more technology savvy and good at handling technology, therefore they will be more comfortable to learn using a platform such as Edmodo. It will attract them to use it because of familiarity and learning preference.”

Fatin/EDMODO 2/Interview

“Edmodo is a good platform for teachers and students because of the abundance [of] materials that can be obtained from around the world, especially when teachers can connect and exchange ideas on the site. I think if we were to use Edmodo in [the] Malaysian classroom, we need to first and foremost, introduce the site to [a] bigger audience; teachers, parents and students.”

Emme/EDMODO 2/Interview

According to the views and results in this study, Edmodo as an intervention has the potential to produce promising results on students' self-efficacy. We need to look into all options available for the students of today because 21st century skills need to be cultivated in shaping future world citizens. Participants manifested their support after experiencing first-hand what Edmodo can do.

DISCUSSIONS

Keeping up in this information age is essential for our very own survival; teachers need to make rapid changes in the curriculum to cope with the different needs of learners and complex classroom conditions (Cirocki, Tennekoon, & Calvo, 2014). Edmodo inverts the conventional practice of rote learning through its collaborative effort in empowering students to undertake discovery learning autonomously (Wallace, 2013). Through the use of features and functional buttons such as quiz, poll, multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks and others (Buescher, 2010), these assessments become an engaging alternative to hand-writing homework questions (Wallace, 2013).

As postulated by participants, students may get out-of-class learning experience by practicing English on Edmodo. Proper approaches to learners' education ensures enhancement of language skills and critical thinking (Pr, 2012). Chandler and Redman (2013) similarly agreed that Edmodo extends discussions when time in class is limited, therefore allowing learners to be connected to their language education. Digital methods such as Edmodo serves as a 'social' space that fosters interaction and cooperation among students (Crowe & McDonald, 2013) which can be difficult to achieve in a physical classroom. Dobler (2012) asserts that learners are keen to participate in the learning process when they are allowed to explore the multimedia resources.

As photographs and interview transcriptions have conveyed, we can observe how the participants carefully wrote and replied on the thread by applying proper spelling and proper language items. Language learning can be enhanced through Edmodo, especially in the aspect of grammar, vocabulary and practice of the target language. Teachers on the other hand can facilitate and conduct student-centered activities (Buescher, 2010), which are recommended by multiple scholars in order to enhance self-efficacy in language acquisition.

Moreover, applications available on Edmodo as elucidated by the participants are able to facilitate collaboration and virtual teamwork among students to accelerate the learning process, making students proficient in handling tasks online (Edmodo, 2014). Supplementing a face-to-face instruction with web-based activities will also increase interaction and creativity among students while leading to self-learning (Amrein-Beardsley & Toth, 2007; Vernadakis, 2012). In light of the insights shared by participants, we can conclude that Edmodo may assist in language learning as it inverts the practice of conventional teaching.

CONCLUDING POINTS

Generally, every tool and platform designed for the teaching-learning process is worthy to be examined and scrutinized so that we may learn from its weaknesses and strengths as well as implement those digital designs in classrooms if proven suitable. Ravenscroft (2001, p. 134) aptly asserts that:

“we cannot truly transform educational practice for the better through implementation of new technologies unless we examine the roles that computers can play in stimulating, supporting, favouring innovative learning interactions that are linked to conceptual development and improvements in understanding”.

Every classroom has diverse and dissimilar environments, facilities and students with their own pace of learning; thus a tool might work excellently in one class but cannot be an efficient instrument in another. Regardless, I am proposing the use of Edmodo in the language learning classroom as intervention to overcome the limitations of conventional teaching.

Thus far, we have established the notion that the conventional approach is not the most relevant teaching strategy for implementation because researchers proposed technology incorporation does have a tremendous relation to students’ learning style preferences hence enhancing academic performance (Ahmad, Mohamad, & Saat, 2004; Dille & Mezack, 1991; Simuth & Sarmany-Schuller, 2014). Another compelling reason to consider students’ preferred learning styles is that students are most likely to learn under apt educational conditions (Pasch, Langer, Gardner, Starko & Moody, 1995). Edmodo converts teaching and learning into a more interactive, innovative and creative experience. Through the course of experiences participants are urged to rethink conventional teaching methodology in language learning and later posited Edmodo to be a one of the suitable platforms for 21st century learners.

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