
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

From Chalk and Talk to Interactive Learning: A Study on the Evolution of EFL Teaching Methods

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| ABSTRACT

This research study analyzes the history of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching strategies, comparing the classical methods with contemporary, interactive strategies. The EFL classroom has long been dominated by traditional methods, which are often teacher-centered and board-based. Furthermore, new studies claim that contemporary approaches such as communicative language teaching (CLT), utilization of digital tools, and artificial intelligence technologies lead to more effective and immersive learning experiences (Brown, 2017; Harmer, 2015). This study analyzes contemporary methods through a review of the current literature and claims that modern approaches are supposed to further enhance learner participation, motivation levels, and language skillset when compared to customary methods. The results suggest that real-time feedback and active participation from games, songs or multimedia tools improve learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This study has found that a transition from custom to interactive techniques has a great impact on EFL instruction and offers a discussion of the next research concerning the inclusion of AI in language courses to enhance personalized learning.

| KEYWORDS

EFL teaching, communicative language teaching, interactive learning, AI in education, and traditional teaching methods

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Over the past several years, there has been a shift in the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching that places more emphasis on interactive and engaging methods. The EFL classroom has long been dominated by traditional methods, which are heavily teacher-fronted, with an emphasis on board work (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). But such approaches might fall short of engaging students in more meaningful ways and encouraging deep retention of language. On the other hand, more recent approaches, including communicative language teaching (CLT) and the application of technology, games, and interactive activities, contribute to increased motivation, engagement, and general learning outcomes among students (Harmer, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

The present study compares the effectiveness of traditional (T1) and modern (T2) teaching methods in an EFL classroom setting, with a focus on teaching the simple past tense involving regular and irregular verbs to first-year Bac students. I taught a class of 42 students in two different ways: the way the researcher normally teaches, and the regular way. In the case of the modern method tools, such as Kahoot! game-based learning, intuitive processes such as Kahoot! However, both groups show divergent levels of participation and impact according to the results of this study. The traditional way was dull and resulted in low student understanding and the game-based way using Kahoot! Interactive activities, such as components of the lesson involving hands-on instruction, not only provided more active learning but also contributed to the fact that students had a better understanding of the lesson content.

This article aims to investigate the different EFL classroom outcomes with modern, interactive methods that integrate technology and games towards student learning compared to traditional ways. The research intends to show the benefits of student-centered approaches as well as the use of digital tools such as Kahoot in aiding language acquisition.

2. Literature Review

This new form of interactive strategies, in combination with our traditional, teacher-centred teaching methods, has developed into what we now know as English as a Foreign Language (EFL). With the aim of fostering students' learning engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes through this transition.

2.1 Traditional Teaching Methods

Teacher-centered methods of teaching EFL have prevailed for a long time since traditional EFL teaching is very much teacher-centered in which the teacher becomes the main source of knowledge and the students are passive recipients. These techniques often embody a direct teaching style, with the teacher lecturing and writing on the board (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Although these approaches have served as a core framework for language teaching and learning for decades, there is evidence that they do not necessarily enable deep learning in a transformative way (Brown, 2017). Consequently, students might lose interest and fail to retain the language subject matter (Harmer, 2015).

2.2 Modern Teaching Methods

Today, the focus of teaching has shifted toward active learning to increase engagement among students, whereby students explore concepts through meaningful communication and collaborative work. More content-based perspectives, for instance communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based, shift away from strictly in-curriculum timeframes for concentrated practice with the language, and allow students to practice the language in much more authentic contexts (Nunan, 2004). Furthermore, contemporary approaches involve the use of technology and multimedia tools for enhancing the learning experience (Tharp, 2016). These approaches can increase interest while also facilitating critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are integral to language development.

2.3 Game-Based Learning in EFL

During my research, I found one modern way of teaching that purposefully makes use of interactive and enjoyable activities to reinforce language concepts, and that was, of course, game-based learning. Platforms like Kahoot! are widely implemented in EFL classrooms as research indicated that such tools greatly increase student motivation, learning, and engagement (Gee, 2003; Deterding et al., 2011). Learning is achieved through active involvement and immediate feedback, which makes games act as a non-threatening and pleasant environment for reinforcement (Anderson & Dill, 2000).

2.4 Comparative Studies

There has been an increasing amount of research comparing the effectiveness of traditional vs modern teaching methods. Richards (2015) and Ur (2012) argue that modern methods with the integration of technology, interactive tasks and games value higher students involvement and achievement rates in comparison to the traditional method. In a similar vein, Ur (2012) showed that task-based language teaching and communicative activities resulted in higher fluency and accuracy levels in language production compared to traditional methods of instruction like lecture-based learning. In line with that observation, Harmer (2015) conducted a study in which it was determined that classrooms using interactive methods were more dynamic and student-centered, which was found to have a positive impact on faster learning rates and higher performance levels.

2.5 Challenges and Considerations

Though the advantages of contemporary pedagogical approaches are obvious, the efforts in this direction still face challenges. However, questions related to the accessibility of technology, the necessity of training for teachers, and the distractions caused by digital tools should not be overlooked (Wallace, 2017). In addition, the challenge of implementing modern techniques while preserving traditional methods can be especially difficult in contexts where access to resources is limited or students are more familiar with traditional education practices (Tella, 2020).

2.6 Conclusion

Most literature on EFL classrooms has discussed the moves from traditional to modern teaching orientations which have shown that the quality of teaching has significantly improved through interactive and students centered approaches. Using game-based learning, digital tools, and communicative language teaching has all demonstrated an increase in student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency. Yet these approaches will work only if they carefully take into account context, resources, and teacher preparation.

3. Methodology

The current study was conducted to compare the traditional way of teaching the simple past tense of verbs with modern methods of teaching it in EFL classrooms. A first study used two groups of 42 first-year Bac students, each randomly assigned to either the traditional method or an interactive teaching through a board game. The lesson took place on the same day, morning class at 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM and evening class from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The lesson, which lasted for two hours, was about teaching regular and irregular verbs in the simple past.

3.1. Participants

The participants consisted of 84 first-year Bac students at a Casablanca high school, Morocco. Students were randomly assigned to either the traditional teaching group or the modern, game-based teaching group. The two groups were comparable in age, language proficiency, and overall education level.

3.2 Teaching Methods

The traditional teaching session was given a traditional "chalk and talk" method, for such a session, I present the lesson on the board and explain the main rules for the simple past tense (both regular and irregular verbs) directly. In contrast, the modern cohort had been trained with an interactive and engaging approach, leveraging all sorts of games and digital tools. In particular, I have a verb-matching game in which I put simple past tense verbs and their base forms up on the wall, and students had to match them. This game was more active which made the lesson more hands-on.

And I added Kahoot, a digital quiz platform, to check students' understanding as they are learning. The Kahoot quiz included multiple-choice questions about the correct use of the past tense. The contemporary group responded to the quiz through their cell phones, racing one another to answer the questions correctly and rapidly. While the quiz was meant to reiterate important topics, it was also meant to create a fun, competitive learning environment.

3.3 Data Collection

I then measured the success of these two teaching modes against each other via student engagement, participation, and use of the simple past tense within the speaking elements. During the lesson, observation of the students showed engagement in the lesson, shots of enthusiasm, and excitement when they played the game and when they're in Kahoot! Quiz. Participation was assessed according to the level of engagement of each student in the group activities and discussions.

Also, students speaking skills using the past tense were evaluated by means of an assignment asking them to form sentences and compose short paragraphs using regular and irregular verbs in the past tense.

3.4 Data Analysis

I used both qualitative and quantitative analyses on student's engagement, participation and speaking skills' data.

For the Kahoot quiz, I documented how each student performed, both how accurately and how quickly they answered. This made it possible to compare how well both groups understood and retained the content of the lesson.

In addition to the Kahoot results, I conducted some further analysis of the assignments for signs of effective use of the past tense by students in both groups in their spoken and written production. This allowed me to assess not only their grammatical correctness, but also their functional use of the past tense in context as communicative interaction. Lastly, I took some

observational notes about the general engagement and excitement of both groups of students, which was a measure of the effectiveness of each teaching method used.

4. Results

The findings of this study indicate that the traditional teaching method was less effective than the current, interactive method in terms of student participation, students' speaking skills, student engagement, and instructor motivation.

4.1 Kahoot Quiz Performance

In the Kahoot quiz, the modern group performed significantly better than the traditional group, scoring higher on average and answering questions more accurately and quickly.

In contrast, the quiz results showed increasing importance of the interactive, game-based method in retention and recall of the simple past tense by students. In contrast, the traditional group had slower responses and more incorrect answers, reflecting less mastery of the lesson content.

4.2 Participation and Engagement

The modern group showed a much higher level of student engagement and participation. The engagement was overall decent for the traditional group, whereas the modern group tended to have more of a live participation. Throughout the lesson, most students in the modern group appeared quite engaged, especially in the verb-matching game and the Kahoot quiz.

They answered quickly, volunteered and worked in a group with the other kids. When comparing these results to the traditional group who were active in their participation for most lessons, although not all students were the same in their enthusiasm or engagement. By contrast, in the traditional group only a few students regularly raised their hands when questions were asked, indicating a less interactive atmosphere in the classroom.

4.3 Speaking Skills

Even in terms of speaking, the modern group had better past tense speech. The traditional combination of heavy descriptive and conceptual teaching paired with practical exercises is the most effective, as evidenced by the results supporting students who excel in fluency and in constructing sentences with regular and irregular verbs. They seemed more confident and made fewer mistakes with the past tense in spoken tasks. However, the students in the traditional group showed greater hesitation while using the past tense and made additional grammatical errors, indicating a less efficient processing of the material.

4.4 Motivation and Engagement

The modern group was significantly more motivated. Students in the modern group were noted as being very engaged, keen, and ready to volunteer throughout the lesson. Interactive activities, such as the Kahoot! quiz and the verb-matching game both appeared to positively correlate to this motivation. While the students in the conventional group were engaged, the levels of motivation seemed lower than the modern group, as fewer students showed interest in the lesson and fewer of them asked questions or volunteered.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to the growing body of research on the positive impact of modern interactive teaching styles in EFL classrooms that are reflected in improved levels of student engagement, participation, and learning outcomes. The kahoot! The modern group performed better than the post-modern. All of these factors; quiz, higher rate of participation, better speaking skills and higher motivation, are aligned with theories dealing with the importance of activity (Felder & Brent, 2009) and student centered learning.

5.1 Educational Theories and Framework

Among the frameworks that ground these findings is communicative language teaching (CLT), which supports the use of authentic communication and interactive tasks to develop more effective language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)., the verb-matching game and Kahoot!, align with CLT's focus on involving students in meaningful, real language use. In this study, the motivation and active participation of the modern group as compared to the more traditional group can be credited to the lesson's communicative and interactive nature that resulted in a more dynamic and student-centered environment.

Constructivist learning theory also supports the notion that learners create knowledge through active participation in experiential activities (Piaget, 1976). This dovetails with constructivist practices, in which students grapple with details, navigating the materials themselves and experimenting with what works and what doesn't — much like the games and quizzes the contemporary group employed. The students are able to construct meaning from their own experiences, thus making learning more robust

5.2 Implications for EFL Teaching

This study has several implications for EFL teaching practice. One way to achieve this is to include interactive, student-centered activities like games, quizzes, and group work that create a more engaging and participatory environment for students. The higher motivation levels and enhanced language skills of the new group showcase how a departure from traditional, teacher-centered pedagogy can greatly improve the learning of languages. Considering these results, EFL teachers should incorporate digital means such as Kahoot! and enjoy using digital media, including songs, animation, and interactive games, making lessons more engaging and language learning more fun.

In addition, the research underlines the importance of fostering a vibrant and engaging atmosphere in the classroom. Integrating technology and interactive approaches can help to promote engagement in learning, which is crucial in language learning, as motivation has been shown to be key in language learning success (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, we need them to transcend traditional education and adapt to novel learning pedagogy accordingly.

6. Recommendations

So, even though this study is informative and adds to the literature aiming to enrich modern teaching practices, there are limitations worth discussing. While you can cite further limitations, one limitation of the study was the sample size, as only 84 students were involved in the study. Given its small sample size, this study is not representative of the wider student population, and the results may not be generalizable to all EFL classrooms (English as a Foreign Language). Lastly, the study was done in one session, meaning that there was no opportunity to see how the teaching methods impacted participants over time. A larger study of multiple lessons over time would present a fuller picture of how these methods impact students.

A further limitation of the study context. For example, students may be more familiar with technology before starting the online assessment, or they may be uncomfortable with interactive assessment activities. Such research might examine what effect these factors have on the ease with which modern teaching methods can be applied to different educational settings.

By avoiding traditional, lecture-method teaching, teachers engage the students better as well as promote learning at a deeper level.

Yet future studies should quantify results based on the limitations of this study, including the small sample size and the short intervention period, to ensure more reliable conclusions. This suggests that formal language instruction in English language teaching and applied linguistics has played a significant role in shaping language learners and professionals in formally structured settings; however, further investigations into modern teaching approaches across a diverse array of students over a prolonged period of time may provide additional insights into how students learn and maintain second-language proficiency, especially in light of the fact that we are still learning how to accommodate success with cultural and socioeconomic differences and multilingual backgrounds.

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