Effect of Edmodo on Students' Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT This study provides an assessment of the Edmodo e-learning platform for teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan. It focuses on a sample of ninth-grade students from King Abdallah School of excellence in the academic year 2021-2022. The main objective of the study was to find out the impact of Edmodo on the English-speaking skills of the students. A pre-test and post-test were adopted to assess how the performance and perceptions of the students changed with the use of Edmodo. Using a sample of 40 students and quantitative data analysis, it was found that the experimental group performed better than the control group. The Edmodo platform was found to be better at inculcating speaking skills in the students. There were significant differences in the four aspects of speaking skills where the vocabulary performance was lowest. Students' attitudes about the platform improved significantly after using it.

INTRODUCTION

The use of blended learning platforms is a key aspect of the education environment today where ICT contributes heavily to delivering lessons. Educationists use communication technologies and social media tools to open new avenues for education system development. This is in line with the changing level of technology and knowledge, which calls for fresh teaching methods to facilitate self-learning. ICT is an integrated component of any education system since it provides platforms for sharing materials over different locations and time zones. Additionally, it promotes self-learning because students can productively utilise the technology. The case of e-learning is that it provides a link between the students, teachers, and parents that can be accessed anywhere to support learning. According to Arkorful and Abaidoo (2015), communication technologies are used in different ways to support learning including blending with other traditional learning methods.

A key feature of e-learning is that it produces a virtual environment in which learning flexibility can be provided for the students. This enables them to access learning materials and interact with them in a self-paced manner to promote learning. The occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 and the subsequent closure of schools resulted in an increased need for the adoption of e-learning. Since schools were closed and face-to-face instruction suspended, reliance on virtual learning platforms was identified as the only way for learning to continue during the lockdowns.

One such model used for learning English skills is Edmodo, which was created by Nic Borg and Jeff O'Hara in 2008. They sought to develop an online community that would meet the connectedness needs of the 21st century. Students and teachers can use the network to connect and access communications as well as assignments. It also provides a platform for students to collaborate with colleagues and share ideas or problems to improve their activities. Qalaja (2015) argues that Edmodo is a social network much like Facebook that helps people with similar interests to interact along with the opportunities it provides for digital collaboration and virtual resources for education. As a result, it can aid in enhancing the speaking and reading skills of students at all levels. It may provide a wide range of benefits such as saving time and giving students better grammar, vocabulary, and confidence.

There is a need for particular studies to be undertaken on the issue to identify the effectiveness of Edmodo and other virtual learning tools in the Jordanian context. The current study sought to fill the gap by assessing the particular benefits that the platform can provide for students in the lower grades to gain different skills in the English language. Speaking skills are of particular importance because the virtual learning models are mostly focused on writing and reading comprehension.

Hankins (2015) aimed to ascertain whether Edmodo, an interactive digital platform that promotes collaborative communication between students and teachers, affects student accomplishment. After being provided the chance to obtain Edmodo training, teachers from a middle school in an urban southeast consented to take part in this study. 120 seventh-grade students who were not exposed to Edmodo were contrasted with a total of 207 pupils who were. The combined effects of demographics

(that is, gender, ethnicity, English language learner status, special education status, and age relative to grade), initial ability, and exposure to Edmodo on students' Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test reading scores were examined using an aptitude treatment interaction design applied through least squares regression. According to the study's findings, Edmodo had no discernible first- or second-order effects on students' reading proficiency. One of only the English language learner status was found to have a substantial impact on student achievement among the demographic categories investigated. The effectiveness of Edmodo may be influenced by the type and volume of its usage, as measured by a share score.

Objective of the Study

This study targets to find out the effect of Edmodo on Jordanian ninth-grade students' speaking and their attitudes toward using Edmodo.

Statement of the Problem

Most Jordanian students have problems when they are asked to speak English. This result has emerged that lots of English teachers do not spend much time teaching speaking. Others do not know how teaching speaking must be. Based on the researchers' experiences in teaching the language for fifteen years, students prefer learning speaking skills via e-learning tools. One of these is the use of the Edmodo platform, which paved the way to learn and teach speaking skills, namely many studies indicated that it is effective in the teaching and learning processes.

Questions of the Study

Two questions are answered in this study as follows:
1. Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the ninth-grade Jordanian EFL students' speaking skills attributed to the teaching strategy (Edmodo versus conventional instruction)?
2. What are the attitudes of Jordanian EFL ninth-grade students toward learning skills of speaking via Edmodo?

Purpose of the Study

The research objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Edmodo application as a learning platform in promoting the speaking skills of EFL students in Jordan. It compares the English-speaking skills of Jordanian EFL students in the ninth grade using Edmodo and those who did not use it to find out how the platform may have affected their performance. The aim is to highlight the significance or relevance of the platform in enhancing student outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

This section of the research explains the findings from prior studies to highlight what has been studied about the use of virtual learning tools for EFL students. It highlights the different aspects of the platform to highlight its applicability in the English classroom and present the research gap.

The use of interactive e-learning platforms in the classroom has been highlighted as a critical aspect of the 21st century. It involves the application of web 2.0 capabilities, electronic content management, and social networks. The teacher can share learning materials, issue lessons, allocate duties, and split the class into groups for more effective learning. Through platforms such as Edmodo, the teacher can administer examinations and the parents can communicate with the teachers regarding their children's progress. This has been cited as playing a major role in promoting high-quality educational outputs for students (Basak et al. 2018; Alqahtani 2019; Safriyani and Khasanah 2021).

The system is effective because it involves accounts for students, teachers and parents. Learning can take place through a computer, tablet or smartphone. It allows for the optimal adoption of advanced technologies for activities such as lesson planning and the sharing of different materials online. A critical advantage here is that teachers can use a wide range of media and tools for delivering their lessons such as videos, PowerPoint presentations, and animations. The effectiveness of these interventions and a variety of strategies on learning outcomes have been evaluated in several studies such as Vasbieva et al. (2016), which evaluated blended learning as a tool for teaching English and its different sub-skills. In the analysis, a comparison between using blended learning and traditional pa-

per-based learning was undertaken. The results indicated that blended learning aided students in enhancing their vocabulary and writing skills. In Al-Essa (2018), the application of Edmodo as a platform for blended learning was evaluated in Saudi EFL students. The focus was on the student's grammar competence level and perceptions about using the Edmodo grammar activities. The students were found to have positive attitudes towards Edmodo grammar activities and they scored higher in the posttest than the control group.

In Aljamaeen and Abusaif (2020), the use of Edmodo in teaching English courses towards the achievement of 21st-century skills was evaluated. Using a sample of students from the Jordanian English language centre, it was found that Edmodo increased the perceptions of students regarding 21st-century skills. The key factor cited in the study contributing to the better performance of these students was collaborative learning, which has also been highlighted empirically in Yagci (2015).

Similar studies such as Fauzi (2015) have focused on the skills of students at different levels to compose the language. In this study, the capacity of the students in composing recount tests was evaluated after using the Edmodo application. The writing skills of the students in recounting text were found to be significantly higher in the posttest following the use of the Edmodo application. A study involving a sample of 11th-grade students in an English classroom found that Edmodo had a significant effect on their engagement with literature. In this study, Edmodo was used for role-playing literary characters. The outcome was that it provides a very good collaborative space for the students with their characters and other students (Fauzi 2015).

In another study assessing the adoption of Edmodo as a virtual class for Palestinian 7th grades, Qalaja (2015) assessed its impact on their writing skills as well as perceptions about writing. It was found that the writing attitudes scale and the writing skills test for the students in the experimental group were significantly higher than for the control group. The same findings were also found by Shams-Abadi et al. (2015) in a sample of advanced-level female students in Iran. The effect on the writing performance of the students was shown to be apparent across learner groups of different advancement levels. A major issue in the reviewed studies is that they have highlighted the impact and significance of the Edmodo platform in enhancing language competence in general. A key gap in the research is that there are no studies targeting the speaking skills of students in particular. The study seeks to fill this gap by assessing the impact of the platform on the speaking skills of Jordanian EFL students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample considered for the study comprised 80 EFL Jordanian students from grade nine whose ages were between 14 and 15 years. The students were sampled from the King Abdallah School of excellence in the Irbid governorate. The students were engaged in the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The students were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The focus of the study was on their speaking performance, and hence the sample was selected based on their engagement in the EFL classes where they were instructed in English speaking. A pre and posttest technique was used in the quasi-experimental study where they were tested before and after the intervention to assess the impact of Edmodo (Leedy and Ormrod 2019).

Variables

The intervention of interest is the model and approaches adopted in teaching EFL to the students. Regular instructional methods were considered as the control while the use of Edmodo as an instructional tool was adopted for the experimental group. The independent variable was the adoption of the two instructional methods for delivering EFL instruction and content to the students.

The dependent variable is the score of the students in their speaking skills for both groups (experimental and control). A speaking skills test was administered before and after the intervention for both groups. Additionally, the perceptions of the students and their attitudes toward Edmodo were also assessed in the two groups.

Instruments of the Study

1. Speaking Skills Test

This test was developed by the researchers to assess the speaking skills of ninth-grade students. It is based on the four IELTS speaking band de-

scriptors consisting of the four main categories of fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation (See Appendix 1-3).

2. The Questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed by Rosenberg. It is a 20-item questionnaire consisting of Likert scale questions adapted from Alqahtani (2019) answered by the students. The responses are based on what they feel is the most representative of their views. The items are statements to which the students have to choose their responses (1 = not at all; 2 = a little bit; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very much; and 5 = extremely) (See Appendix 4).

The instruments were evaluated for reliability using the test-retest approach where a pilot study was undertaken using a sample of 20 students not included in the final experiment. The test reliability coefficient for the study was 88 percent for the test and the retest has been undertaken within 3 weeks.

Procedures for Applying the Study

The research procedure involved a sample of students getting instruction for English speaking in their separate groups. The students were tested at the beginning of the semester using the two research instruments. This was essential for determining their level of speaking performance before the study. They were then engaged in the studies using the two methods in separate classes. These procedures are as follows:

1. Experimental group is taught by Edmodo.
2. Control group is taught by traditional method of teaching.
3. Both pre and post- test are used before and after the treatment.

Teaching Methods for the Two Groups

The control group was taught using the traditional instructional methods while the experimental group was taught using Edmodo where the teachers shared content and engaged the students online. The experiment took place over a period of 8 weeks after which the post-test was administered to both groups. The students were notified that the results of both the pre and post-test would not reflect in their final class scores.

RESULTS

The pretest was undertaken to assess whether the control and experimental groups differed in any significant ways. The sample was split randomly into the control and experimental group. The results of the pre-test are presented in Table 1, which shows the mean difference between the two groups coupled with the results of the independent samples t-test.

Table 1: Mean difference between the two groups for the pre-test

Speaking skills pretest	N	Mean	SD	T-statistic	Sig.
Experimental	25	18.95	2.01	0.5823	.7038
Control	25	19.10	2.58		

Table 1 shows that there is no clear difference between the two groups. The independent samples t-test for the pre-test indicates that the two groups did not differ in terms of their speaking skills since the p-value of the t-statistic was .7038. So, to detect if there are any differences, a new statistical analysis was used, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent samples test post-test results of speaking skills

Speaking skills pretest	N	Mean	SD	T-statistic	Sig.
Experimental	25	29.75	1.89	5.931	.00
Control	25	23.38	2.35		

Table 2 shows that after determining that the groups were relatively similar, the Edmodo intervention was used for the experimental group while the control group was exposed to the traditional teaching methods. The results of the post-test for the sample are presented below.

Looking at the post-test results for the English-speaking skills of the students, it is clear that there was an improvement in speaking competence for both groups. For the control group, the mean test result increased from 19.10 (SD = 2.58) to 23.38 (SD = 2.35). For the experimental group, the mean test results increased from 18.95 (SD = 2.01) to 29.75 (SD = 1.89). Using the independent samples t-test, the t-statistic for the equality of means was 5.931 p-value = .00) indicating that the two samples were significantly different in terms of their means. Tables 3 and 4 show the differences among speaking skills.

Table 2 shows that the performance of the students in the different aspects of the speaking test was evaluated for the experimental group in the post-test. This involved assessment of the mean test scores for the experimental group in the post-test for the four aspects of the speaking test. One-way ANOVA was used for the analysis of the test results with the outcomes in Tables 3 and 4. Also, Table 3 shows that the speaking skill of specific pronunciation has got the highest mean score with 8.39, while vocabulary speaking skill ranked last with a 7.39 mean score.

Table 3: Posttest scores for speaking skills test aspects

Speaking test aspects	N	Mean	SD
Pronunciation	25	8.39	1.17
Fluency	25	7.68	0.93
Grammar	25	7.44	1.62
Vocabulary	25	6.05	1.28
Total	50	7.39	1.59

Table 4 shows that the F-statistic of 22.536 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the groups differ significantly. The ANOVA indicates that there are significant differences between the different aspects of speaking skills in the posttest. The post-doc test was undertaken to identify whether there are homogenous sets in the group. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 4: Posttest scores for speaking skills aspects

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	129.324	3	43.108	22.536	.000
Within groups	122.110	76	1.607		
Total	251.434	79			

Table 5 shows that the results indicate that the vocabulary skills of the participants in the post-test were significantly different from the other groups. It can be concluded that the vocabulary skills level and competence of the students in the post-test

Table 5: Posttest scores for speaking skills aspects

Speaking aspects	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Vocabulary	25	6.05	
Fluency	25		7.68
Pronunciation	25		8.39
Grammar	25		7.44

were significantly lower than the other speaking aspects at a significance level of 0.05.

To assess the perceptions of the students regarding the use of Edmodo in enhancing speaking skills, the views of the students in the experimental group were collected using the EFL self-esteem scale. The scale was administered to the experimental group alongside the pre-test. It was administered after the intervention on the same group and the results were compared to assess whether the application of the Edmodo platform changes the perceptions of the students about its applicability in enhancing their speaking skills. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6: Results of student attitudes

Students' attitudes	N	Mean	SD	T-statistic	Sig.
Pre-test	25	35.52	1.31	12.931	.00
Post-test	25	48.91	0.96		

Table 6 shows that the mean of the students' attitudes towards Edmodo improved significantly in the post-test compared to the pre-test results. The mean increased from 35.52 to 48.91 between the pretest and the post-test. The t-statistic for the mean of student attitudes in the pretest and post-test was 12.931 (p-value = .00) indicating that the attitudes of the students changed significantly.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the ANOVA indicate that the application of Edmodo as a tool for teaching English speaking to EFL students in Jordan can be considered to be significant and effective. The results show that the sample using the Edmodo platform had higher performance in the different aspects of speaking skills compared to those relying on traditional methods. These findings are in line with others such as Yagci (2015) who highlighted the benefits of e-learning in promoting collaborative learning. Utilising the Edmodo platform plays a major role in improving the performance of students in English speaking. The difference in scores for the two groups may be attributed to the fact that the platform provides a more interactive environment.

Another important issue cited in Fauzi (2015) is that young people are more skilled in using the internet for different activities. As a result, they may be more enthusiastic about using it as a learning

platform, especially where they can interact and share freely with their colleagues. E-learning models and Edmodo in particular have been shown to significantly improve the capacity of students to develop their grammar. This is apparent in the study where fluency, pronunciation, and grammar were found to be the main aspects of speaking skills that improved. The platform provides an opportunity for students to make attempts with their friends from the comfort of their homes hence its interactive nature and free sharing among classmates also allow them to engage in out-of-class activities over the platform greatly improving speaking skills (Kwok and Virginia 2015).

Moreover, the findings of this study are inconsistent with the finding of Hankins (2015) who stated that there is no evidence that the use of Edmodo worked. This means that there are no potential effects of Edmodo on students' achievement.

In conclusion, the Edmodo e-learning platform is a beneficial tool for determining the improving the speaking skills of EFL students. It was found to be significantly beneficial in promoting the speaking skills of ninth-grade Jordanian students. It also improved their perceptions of its effectiveness as a learning tool in promoting their English skills in general. Policymakers and teachers in Jordan can benefit greatly in improving the skills level of their students in the English language by utilising Edmodo. The platform can be beneficial as a complementary strategy of blended learning for EFL learning in Jordan. It also shows that teachers in this area need to identify better ways of teaching vocabulary to their students because their scores seem to be significantly lower than for the other sub-skills.

Based on the results of the ANOVA, it can be concluded that using Edmodo as a method to teach English speaking to EFL students in Jordan is significant and successful. The findings indicate that the sample utilizing the Edmodo platform performed better in all areas of speaking skills than the group using more conventional techniques. These results are consistent with those of others, like Aljamaeen and Abusaif (2020) and Shams-Abadi et al. (2015), who emphasized the advantages of online learning for encouraging collaborative learning. Students' performance in English speaking is greatly enhanced by using the Edmodo platform. The platform's more participatory environment may be to blame for the disparity in results between the two groups.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the use of Edmodo improved students' speaking skills and helped them to be confident during the speaking classes. These results also assure that using Edmodo raises their attitudes to learn the English language. To sum up, the Edmodo e-learning platform is useful for assessing how well EFL students' speaking abilities are progressing. It was discovered to be quite helpful in fostering the speaking abilities of Jordanian ninth-graders. Additionally, it enhanced their opinions of its usefulness as a tool for learning and enhancing their overall English proficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the reported findings in this study, several recommendations are put forth. First, conduct other studies that use Edmodo in teaching other skills such as reading and writing. Second, holding up courses that encourage teachers to teach all English skills via the Edmodo platform.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Speaking performance test

Speaking Test
The Boys' King Abdullah School for Excellence

| Name: | English Language |
| Class: 9th Grade | Time: 1 hour |

There are four questions in total on the test. Each student should provide an oral response to each one. (10 points for every question)

1. Could you kindly discuss your areas of English speaking weakness?
2. Describe your life's goals.
3. Which subject is your favourite? Why?
4. Describe the benefits and drawbacks of utilising the Internet.

Appendix 2: Grading system for speaking assessments.

Speaking skill	8-10	6-7	1-5
Sentence structure	High	Medium	Low
Fluency	High	Medium	Low
Words	High	Medium	Low
Pronunciation	High	Medium	Low

Appendix 3: Sample learning material

Discuss food.
You may find the following questions useful:
1. Are you a good cook?
2. Had any coffee this morning?
3. Have you had lunch yet?
4. Do you eat dinner with your family every night?
5. Do you regularly consume milk?
6. Do you regularly consume tea?
7. Do you consume beef?
8. Are you a daily bread consumer?
9. Do you always have breakfast?
10. Are you a daily fruit eater?
11. Do you always have lunch at school?
12. How much does lunch at the school typically cost?
13. Do you pack lunch for school?
14. Are you a daily rice consumer?

Appendix 4:Questionnaire

1. In the process of teaching and learning, Edmodo is crucial.
2. Comparatively fascinating to academic pursuits is Edmodo.
3. Edmodo raises students' speaking ability.
4. Students can study outside of class using Edmodo.
5. Through Edmodo, students may swiftly comprehend the textbook's subject matter.
6. Edmodo is time-saving.
7. Edmodo aids in improving grammar.
8. Edmodo helps students expand their vocabulary.
9. Edmodo aids in the improvement of fluency.
10. Through Edmodo, pronunciation is enhanced.