

# The Impact of Weblog on ESL Student's Academic Grammar Proficiency

Mansoureh Saeidpoor Sarcheshmeh<sup>1</sup>, Radhakrishnan Nair<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Kerala University, Department of Linguistics, Kariavattom P.O, Thiruvananthapuram Kerala. India.

**Abstract:** *Learning English through computer-based such as weblog makes easy to complete students' assignment from anywhere they have access to the internet, and also allows them to attend classes from everywhere in the world. The aim of this paper is to examine the use of weblog on Indian ESL Student's Academic Grammar Proficiency on part of speech; such as Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition and Conjunction in two different English classes which applied two different modes of teaching, which were the traditional face-to-face method and web-based learning method and also to determine the best method in learning grammar. The researcher has selected randomly 40 Female and male students for 4 weeks of instruction from the Linguistic department of Kerala university. The pretest-posttest study was conducted in both groups. For each subject, six questions each carrying one mark in the form of multiple choice items asked to be answered by the students, namely; 36 marks for the whole components of this study. By using ANOVA, Average standard Deviation, Regression, Multiple Classification Analyses, t-test; the data were analyzed in detailed. The results obtained from the tests showed that there is a direct significant effect in enhancing performance of the advance learners to ESL Grammar skill.*

**Keywords:** Weblog, ESL learners, Grammar Skill, Technology

## 1. Introduction

The world has changed a lot. Today is a very significant moment of change, living in 21st century, the age of information and communication technology, which is difficult for students and teachers, since they have demanded to improve their literacy and simultaneously to face up the technology. For English teachers are particularly confusing difficult times, they fall between the old and new orders and their students already seems more comfortable in the New Age, and also feel alien in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher should accept to modify their methods, techniques, theories, and materials for English language teaching, and start to give a new form to their way of teaching to learners and rectify to this new world and pay more attention to technologies that are useful for their students nowadays. Andrew Goodwyn (2000) in *English in Digital Age* asserts that the CD ROM is creating a niche for itself as a resource, it is robust, easy to use, fast, and encyclopedic in range; able to contain still and moving image, shareable, portable. It is beginning to be used for storing creative work and for archival, purposes as the technology becomes more accessible [1].

Carol Chapelle (2003) in his book which is entitled *English Language Learning and Technology* mentions the internet and other electronic sources make large quantities of English available to learners, and it connects learners to a wide range discussion and information. Internet speech communities clearly put a new twist on the constraints, learners feel about contributing in face to face communications. And also learners can avail themselves of a large amount of input, participate in interactions without revealing their true identity, and other web pages that unknown people may look at it (15-14). Learners can discuss opinions and information of others on specific topics, as well as news through it [2]. According to Tony Erben (2009), IT is used as a tool for facilitating learners. This includes setting up a virtual learning environment to post homework, announcements and other classroom information, and they receive online

work to do. Therefore, students become less of a passive receiver/ viewer of IT and more of an active user of IT [3].

Johnson (2004) points out that the application of blogs is a useful supplemental aid to teachers. From any computer connected to the Internet, teachers can create, edit, or delete their teaching handouts such as notes, homework assignment, and review materials. All these teacher's messages will be organized in a reversed chronological order with the latest postings on the top. (as cited in Wen-shuenn Wu, 2005) [4]. In 2014, Soliman expounds using e-learning on his study that increasing EFL students' language skills and independent learning are issues of paramount concern because the contact hours in traditional face to face classes are not enough to help students develop their language skills. The E-Learning Model is an interactive tool that could be used to address this issue, as it could activate and increase EFL students' language skills as they are exposed to the language outside the classroom and work independently on improving their language skills. E-learning is an essential tool that should be used to supplement the EFL face-to-face class. It includes various activities and resources that if used by the students and monitored by the teacher could enhance the students' language proficiency. As the world progresses, we need to utilize technology and to synchronize ourselves with it. The wide variety of activities and resources in the E-learning Model needs to be activated in the English language Modules to increase the time that students interact with the language and motivate them to work independently and thus eventually they become lifelong learners [5].

In 2003, Wagner explores the idea of turning learning logs into weblogs. The author provides an overview of weblogs. Weblogs are defined as "personal web pages written in a chronological diary form and maintained through web logging software". The author identifies the following benefits that weblogs offer as improved learning logs: students can share their results with others; students can focus on the content; students learn about web page creation in an intuitive way; students can jointly write a weblog,

which supports group learning; instructors can monitor published weblogs easily; and finally, the instructor does not need to convert student documents and publish them, as it is already done [6].

Weblogs or blogs have gained a noticeable place in the online community and gradually have been applied to educational goals as an aid to language learning and teaching (Campbell, 2003; Johnson, 2004); however, this new way of learning has been used in few EFL/ESL classrooms. Blogs have not been initiated for language learning, but they have potential values to use as a tool in EFL teaching. Campbell (2004) pointed out one of the major difficulties that EFL/ESL teachers using blogs in a class would face was “lack of participation from readers outside the classroom” [7].

Blogs have gained significant popularity in the past few years and their functions as well as their uses are quite varied. When considering how to integrate this form of technology into the foreign language setting, it is important to think back to the various real-life uses of blogs— from political campaign news to personal diaries— and structure tasks that would allow students to experience the maximum benefits of blogs (Ducate, Lomicka, 2005). Ferdig & Trammell (2004) outlined four benefits of student blogging: (a) students can become subject matter experts; (b) student interest and ownership in learning is increased; (c) students become active participants in a community of practice; and (d) blogging opens the doors for a multitude of diverse perspectives, within and outside of the course. Oravec (2002) added that blogging may foster critical thinking because students are encouraged to carefully evaluate what they read and write [8]. (See also in Ducate, Lomicka, 2005)

The potential of new technology such as weblog to provide the students with a means of developing and sharing the knowledge is one of the greatest advantages of a computer. There is a wide range of digital information to enable students to use, and they can share their ideas and assignments through the weblog. Weblog facilitates the process of grammar learning

## 2. Source and Sample of the Study

The study is mainly based on the data collected from primary sources collected from the Linguistic Department of Kerala university in India. Pre and post tests were used as the main instruments to measure students’ grammar skills and their achievement. In this Experimental study, 40 male and female students randomly selected and divided in two groups, namely 20 as a control group and 20 as an experimental group; and a course of 4 weeks of teaching conducted for each group using intended method of teaching. In order to be certain about the homogeneity of students, an Oxford Placement Test as a general proficiency test has been taken from students. Finally, a grammar achievement post-test composed of 36 multiple-choice items was administered at the end of the study to measure the variations in the participants’ grammar skills after the 20 sessions teaching.

## 3. Analysis of Data

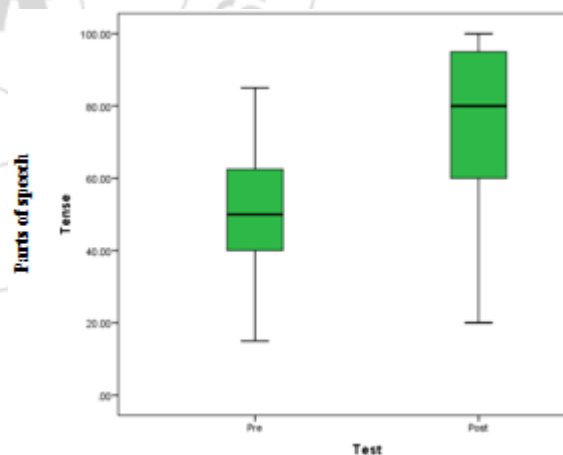
In this study, parts of speech category, such as Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition and Conjunction are the tested items. For each subject, six questions each carrying one mark in the form of multiple choice items asked to be answered by the students, namely; 36 marks for the whole components of this study and no mark for incorrect answer. So the maximum marks for pretest and posttest are 20 and the minimum is zero. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of pre and post-test marks for conversational skill.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of Pre and Post Test Marks for Parts of speech

	Pre	Post
Mean	51.10	75.80
Median	50.00	80.00
Std. Deviation	15.48	19.83
Skewness	-0.08	-0.67
Kurtosis	-0.28	-0.51
Minimum	15.00	20.00
Maximum	85.00	100.00

Source: Primary Data

According to Table 1, it can be seen that the mean mark for Parts of speech for the ESL students in pre-test is 51.10 percent with a standard deviation of 15.48 percent. The minimum mark for pre-test is 15.00 and maximum is 85.00. The median mark is 50.00, which is very close to mean mark indicating lack of high skewness in the distribution of marks. The mean marks for Verb Tenses for post-test is 75.80 percent with the standard deviation of 19.83 percent. The median mark is 80.00 which is comparatively higher than mean indicating the skewness of distribution of marks towards higher values.



**Figure 1:** Boxplots of marks for parts of speech in pre and post-test

Figure 1 illustrates the boxplots of marks for parts of speech in pre and post-test. From the figure it can be seen that marks for post-test is obviously higher than the marks for pretest as the whiskers and boxes of post-test are higher than those of pre-test. The lower box of post-test is found to be higher than the upper box of pretest indicating that 75 percent of students have pre-test marks lower than post-test marks of 25 percent students. The upper box of post-test is clearly above the upper whisker of the pretest indicating that

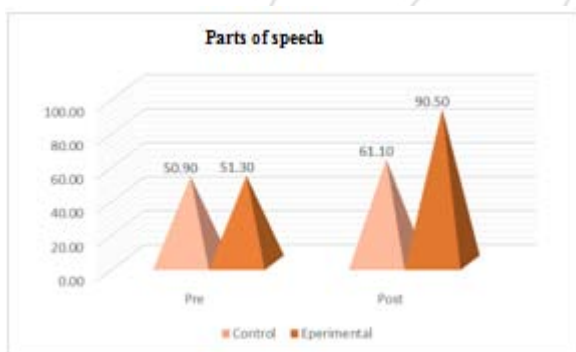
the pre-test marks of all students is lesser than the post-test mark of 75 percent students, The whiskers and boxes of pre-test is almost identical indicating normality of the data. While the post-test mark found to skewed towards higher values, as the upper whisker and upper box are comparatively shorter than lower whisker and lower box respectively. The result, hence indicates that the achievement of students in post-test is obviously higher than that in pre-test.

**Table 2:** Mean Marks for Parts of speech of Control and Experimental groups for pre and post-test

Test	Control		Experimental		t	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pre	50.9	13.35	51.3	17.49	-0.129	0.898
Post	61.1	16.91	90.5	8.22	-11.055	0.000

**Source:** Primary Data

Table 2 and Figure 2 illustrate the mean marks for parts of speech of Control and Experimental groups for pre and post-test. From the following table and figure, It is seen that for pretest there is no significant difference in the mark of control and experimental student groups as the significance level of t-test is greater than 0.05. It means that in the pre-test performance of the experimental and control groups are the same.



**Figure 2:** Mean Marks for Parts of Speech of Control and Experimental groups for pre and post-test

But the achievement score of the experimental group is significantly higher (mean score = 90.50) than that of control group (mean score = 61.10) as the significance level of the t-test is below 0.05. The result shows that teaching parts of speech through the weblog significantly improved the learning parts of speech of students compare\_to teaching through traditional method.

**Table 3:** Summary of the regression model for the effect of teaching method on achievement in parts of speech

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.549 <sup>a</sup>	.301	.294	22.31866

**Source:** Primary Data

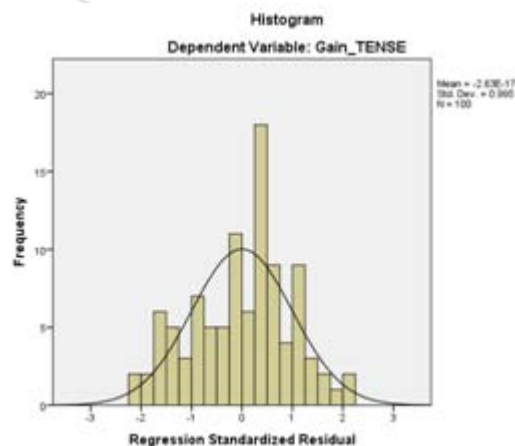
Table 3 shows the summary of the regression model for the effect of teaching method on achievement in parts of speech. From the table it is seen that the R square of the Regression model is 0.301. It means that 30.1 (0.301 x 100)percent variation in the marks for parts of speech is determined by type of teaching method.

**Table 4:** Result of ANOVA Test of the Regression Model for the Effect of Teaching Method on Achievement in Parts of Speech

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	21025.000	1	21025.000	42.208	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	48816.000	98	498.122		
Total	69841.000	99			

**Source:** Primary Data

Table 4 declares the result of the ANOVA test of the regression model for the effect of teaching method on achievement of parts of speech in grammar. From the table it is seen that the significance level of ANOVA is less than 0.05. The result shows that the fitted regression model for the effect of teaching method on achievement in parts of speech is valid for explaining the relationship between achievement in parts of speech and types of teaching method.



**Figure 3:** Histogram of Regression Standardization Residual of the fitted model

As presented in Figure3, it can be seen the Histogram of Regression Standardization Residual of the fitted model. The shape of the distribution of regression of standardization residual of the model is nearly normal, which satisfies all of the major assumptions of regression analyses.

**Table 5:** Coefficients of the Regression Model for the Effect of Teaching Method on achievement in Parts of speech

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	10.200	3.156		3.232	.002
Con_Exp	29.000	4.464	.549	6.497	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Gain\_TENSE

**Source:** Primary Data

Table 5 indicates the coefficients of the regression model for the effect of teaching method on achievement of parts of speech in grammar. The table shows that effect of teaching method on the gain in the score of tense is significant as the significance level of t-test is less than 0.05. The regression coefficient of the dummy variable representing teaching method is 29.000. The result reveals students studied in weblog method have an average of 29.000 marks higher than those studied in traditional method.

#### 4. Conclusion

Finally, teaching through weblog significantly increases the ability of students as the total achievement in parts of speech, such as *Noun*, *Verb*, *Adjective*, *Adverb*, *Preposition* and *Conjunction* on ESL learners with respect to their level of education. So, the result proved the weblog method is significantly better than the traditional method enhancing grammar proficiency on ESL learners.

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