

Internet-based Medical Articles in EMP

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Abstract

Background: In recent years, the explosion of knowledge and internet access seriously challenged traditional language teaching and learning methodologies. Most teachers and experts recognize the need for a kind of teaching method using Information & Communication Technology (ICT) facilities.

Purpose: The current study has assessed the students' English for Medical Purpose (E.M.P.) learning in the two approaches of traditional text-based and internet-based articles.

Method: This quasi-experimental study was conducted on 60 second- year students of medicine having ESP courses. They were assigned into two groups based on their average scores: one group attended a class, materials of which were chosen from the latest published medical articles on the Internet and the other one attended a traditional text-based class. Care was taken to select texts with the same level of readability. The students' language proficiency was measured by English Language Battery Test (ELBA Test).

Results: With the Internet-medical English articles, the students achieved better results compared to the traditional text-based method. The students were mostly satisfied with the former method (77.2%), they were willing to continue with this method (72.3 %), and some 75% of them achieved good scores in final exams.

Conclusion: ICT Specialized article-based instruction is a more effective method of teaching EMP to the students of medicine linguistically and methodologically.

Key Words: ICT, EMP, ESP, medical students, methodology

Introduction:

One of the most important techniques in teaching a foreign language is adopting a method in accordance with objectives, learners and contents (3,4). Research points out that language learners learn more and at a faster rate when they are stimulated enough (5). By means of

improved teaching techniques specially with applying network and internet applications language teachers may achieve more goals in English for Specialized Purposes (ESP) than was previously thought (1). In teaching English for specialized purposes, teachers should know that the participants need English for educational purposes to pursue part or all of their studies (7). A course for someone who needs English in order to do his/her job must take into account the environment, social relationships and last but not least authenticity and up to date language (7,9).

The present study evaluates the effect of a class using articles selected from the Internet in ESP courses in a medical university compared to traditional method using ESP text.

Table 1. Frequency of ESP learning level in case and control groups (P=0.1)

Learning Level	Case (%)	Control (%)	Total (%)
Good	24 (75%)	8 (28%)	32 (53.3%)
Moderate	6 (18.75%)	14 (50%)	20 (13.3%)
Poor	2 (6.25%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (13.3%)
Total	32 (53.3%)	28 (46.6%)	60 (100%)

Method:

A quasi-experimental study was conducted on 60 second- year students of medicine having ESP courses. The students were divided into case (n= 32) and control (n=28) groups according to their grade average. The data was collected from a pretest, post test and a questionnaire for demographic information. A pretest was given to both groups two weeks prior to the beginning of semester. In one group, the students were taught the traditional book, English for the Students of Medicine. At the same time, the other group was taught E S P thanks to using articles chosen from the Internet. The subjects and texts of the same level of readability were studied in both groups, and students’ proficiency was measured by English Language Battery Test (ELBA Test). To minimize contact between the two groups, the post test was taken a few days after each semester. The difference between the pretest and post test was considered as their learning level and was categorized into three levels viz. poor, moderate and good.. Test validities and reliabilities were determined by content validity evaluation and a pilot study respectively. All the tests were done with SPSS software. The scores of both groups were compared by T test.

Results:

In each group the posttest scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores. The majority of the students achieved good learning level in case group (75%) and moderate learning level in the control group (50%) [Table 1].

Table 2. Percentage of students’ attitude towards ICT-based teaching ESP in case group.

	Yes	No	Not specified
Are you satisfied with ICT based teaching EMP?	77.2	12.1	10.7
Are you willing to attend ICT-based teaching again?	72.3	10.1	17.6
Is ICT-based instruction effective?	81.1	9.2	9.7
Dose ICT based instruction motivate you enough to continue EMP learning ?	83.2	9.8	7

In the case group, 77.2% considered ICT-based articles instruction satisfactory and 72.3% preferred other courses to be presented in the same way. In addition, 81.1% of the students

found this method an effective one and 83.2% believed that ICT-based EMP class encourages them to continue studying ESP (Table 2).

Discussion:

The books using traditional method for teaching ESP are less attractive than the specialized articles chosen from the Internet. The latter is continually updated, so that the articles are always new, while the ESP books were written at least one decade ago. Students show more interest when they find the materials real, authentic and new (8). Sciences change rapidly and the material chosen to teach them should be up to date (11); once we talked about Crimean- Congo haemorrhagic Fever, and now about Ebola, yesterday it was SARS, and today some other matters are the current matters in medicine. The language taught in ESP classes must be up to date since students learn it for their near future occupations (10), and nowadays the Internet can meet this need. When students find the language and subjects presented in class the same as those presented on T V or in the press, they are encouraged to participate in class activities (11). Teachers who use both informal and formal language approaches are successful in reinforcing all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing (6).Some researchers limit the use of articles from the Internet only to those written by experts and having scientific value. They believe that this matter is of value only when monitored by teachers (2).

It may be concluded that English medical articles chosen from the Internet and controlled by the teacher can replace costly books, containing last decades' articles and materials. Therefore, regarding cost effectiveness, learner's motivation and output of teaching ESP based on articles presented in the Internet, this method can facilitate ESP teaching and learning where lack of ESP books is most pronounced.

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