AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF SOME ONLINE WEBSITES FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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- **ABSTRACT:**

Although there are many websites designed and published on the Internet for learning and teaching English, little use of them is done by both Egyptian EFL teachers and students. The textbook is usually their main concern and focus. That is why the present study draws more light on the importance of language teaching and learning websites and evaluates some of them so as to introduce them to both for use. This problem was tackled through answering the following questions:

1- What are the websites available online for learning and teaching English as a foreign language?

2- What are the points of strength and weakness of some of these sites?

3- How can these sites be utilized by the Egyptian teachers and students for teaching and learning English as a foreign language?

A 63-item evaluation criteria checklist was used to assess the six selected websites. It covered eight dimensions as follows: Authority, Purpose, Coverage, Currency, Objectivity, Accuracy, Technical Aspects (navigation, design and structure, and access), and Usefulness for TEFL Teachers and Students. The participants (n=17 – post-graduate students at Benha University) visited them and responded to the evaluation criteria checklist for identifying the points of strength and weakness of each website. The six websites, as a whole, were reported by the participants very useful for learning and teaching English. Based on the findings of evaluation, educational implications and recommendations for the utilization of these sites for teaching and learning English in Egypt were suggested.

- INTRODUCTION:

The Internet nowadays is a commonly-used tool for lifelong education in different fields. Its increased availability to individuals and the rise in the amount of time spent online makes it a powerful and suitable source by which to disseminate educational information. Many websites are available and have been designed in order to help individuals learn and teach the English language.

The present study aims at evaluating the English language learning/teaching websites and their contribution for developing the language skills. An evaluation criteria checklist was used to assess them. The study contributes to the literature of websites evaluation. Evaluation, said *Steimle* (2003:4), is necessary to document the value of a website, to gain information for a website's improvement, and to justify future investment into the website. In addition to studying website utilization, there are three important aspects. These are the content of the website, the way in which the website is delivered, and the usability of the website. The website should meet the needs of its visitors.

The necessity of website evaluation has been considered and experienced by some researchers. *Shackelford* (1999) assessed the strengths and limits of websites. *Marton* (2000) evaluated the Women's Health Matters Website. *Zhang and Von Dran* (2000) presented a two-factor model for web site design and evaluation. *Andrews* (2001) evaluated the Indiana Clearinghouse for Citizenship and Character Education's Web site. The paper finds that the format is simple and excellent, easily accessible and navigable. *Weis* (2001) evaluated websites for history teachers. *Dragulanescu* (2002) assured that it is necessary to critically assess the quality of websites and to determine the

extent to which they meet our needs and requirements. *Howitt et. el.* (2002) developed a rating instrument for assessing UK general practice websites, and evaluated them critically. *Jenkins and Robin* (2002) examined evaluation of an educational website *.Van Asten, Pieters, G. and Joos, S.* (2003) evaluated the quality of information on Dutch-language websites relating to depression. *Goolkasian, Wallendael and Gaultney* (2003) evaluated a web site in cognitive science. *England and Nicholls* (2004) examined an evaluation of the quality of websites. *Morrison, Taylor and Douglas* (2004) reported on the past, present, and likely future of one of the recommended approaches for evaluating tourism and hospitality Websites. *Murphy et al* (2004) carried out an evaluation of web-based information. *Shchiglik and Barnes* (2004) evaluated website quality in the airline industry. *Miller, Adsit and Miller* (2005) evaluated the Importance of common components in school-based websites. *Tsai and Cai* (2005) tackled the development and validation of an evaluation questionnaire for nursing websites. A total of 24 websites in the United States and Taiwan, including websites in 13 leading schools and 11 hospitals, were selected as test websites. *Beldona and Cai* (2006) carried out an exploratory evaluation of 50 rural tourism websites in the United States. *Fried* (2006-2007) studied the reflections on the Implementation of a course website maintained by multiple faculty members: its analysis, development, sustainability, and evaluation. *Buyukozkan and Ruan* (2007) presented a framework of website quality evaluation for measuring the performance of government websites. In his article, *Kral* (2007) discussed several guidelines for library media specialists to teach students about the necessity of web site evaluation. *Seock and Chen-Yu* (2007) examined website evaluation criteria among college student consumers in the US.

In the field of foreign language learning and teaching, there are some related studies. *Gottwald* (2002) summarized the content of existing websites devoted to second language research and indicates areas that need to be improved*. Kung and Chuo* (2002) investigated the potential role of English-as-a-Second/Foreign-Language (ESL/EFL) websites to supplement in-class instruction. *Murray and Reagan* (2003) discussed resources for students and teachers and provided a list of English-as-a-Second-Language textbook companion websites. *Rifkin (*2003) presented standards for assessing language-learning software and Web sites. *Nicholas, Debski and Lagerberg* (2004) devised a system for students to practice spelling individually through an online tool, which tests for the students' performance on individual rules of spelling. *Susser and Robb* (2004) evaluated ESL/EFL Instructional web sites. *Smidt and Hegelheimer* (2004) investigated how authentic web-delivered video can inform ESL online instruction and enhance the incidental acquisition of vocabulary and listening comprehension. *Kongrith and Maddux* (2005) studied the online Learning and second-language acquisition. *Hampel and Stickler* (2005) outlined a framework for tutor training, starting with a brief overview of benefits and challenges for online language tutors*. Simpson* (2005) investigated the learning that happens in the synchronous text chat forum of on online group of English Language learners and tutors. *Hampel* (2006) discussed a framework for the development of tasks in a synchronous online environment used for language learning and teaching. *Shield and Kukulska-Hulme* (2006) investigated the usability of e-learning websites, focusing on the example of foreign language learning. *Son* (2006) reported the results of a study that examined an online discussion group established for a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) course and investigated patterns of interactions generated through the online discussion and participants' attitudes toward

the computer-mediated communication (CMC) activity. *Yip and Kwan* (2006) reported a study of the usefulness of online games in vocabulary learning for some undergraduate students. *Furukawa et. al.* (2007) described how the SSS (Start with Simple Stories) Website supported individual learners to improve their communication skills in English through extensive reading. *Zapata and Sagarra* (2007) examined the effects of an online workbook and a paper workbook on L2 vocabulary acquisition.

- RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Although there are many websites for learning and teaching English as a foreign language, little use of them is done by both Egyptian teachers and students. Their main concern and focus is usually the textbook. That is why the present study draws more light on the importance of language teaching and learning websites and evaluates some of them so as to introduce them for use by both teachers and students. This problem can be tackled through answering the following questions:

4- What are the websites available online for learning and teaching English as a foreign language?

5- What are the points of strength and weakness of some of these sites?

6- How can these sites be utilized by the Egyptian teachers and students for teaching and learning English as a foreign language?

- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES:

In order to answer the first research question: "**What are the websites available online for learning and teaching English as a foreign language?**" the Internet, using Yahoo search engine, was searched to locate the English language learning/teaching websites. The result of the search showed 58,600 websites, a too large number for consideration in the present study.

Because of this large number of websites, a small number of them were carefully selected for evaluation according to the following criteria:

1- The website should be designed for teachers and learners. In other words, it focuses on English language teaching and learning.

2- It should be designed for English specifically. Other languages are not considered.

3- It should focus on the language skills learning and/or teaching.

Keeping these criteria in mind, the navigation on the Internet and the final selection of most relevant websites resulted in the following six websites:

1- www.go4english.com.

2- www.britishcouncil.org.

3- www.eslcafe.com.   (Dave's ESL café)

4- www.zozanga.com.

5- www.english-online.com.   (English for Everybody)

6- www.englishclub.com.   (English Club)

In order to answer the second research question: "**What are the points of strength and weakness of some of these sites**?", an evaluation criteria checklist was developed for evaluating the six selected websites, using some evaluation forms, questionnaires, articles and studies (*Kirk 1996 – Abdullah 1998 - Kapoun 1998 - Hunter 1999A and 1999B – Nackmias and Tuvi 2000 - Nowakowski 2001 - Brown , Hickey , and Pozen 2002 – Ng, Parette and Sterrett 2003 - Engle, and Cosgrave 2004 – Richard Bland College Library 2004 - Engle 2005 - Health Sciences & Human Services Library, University of Maryland 2004 - Grassian 2006 - Walden University Library 2006 - Beck 2007 - John M. Pfau library, California State University 2007 – Lesley University 2007 - Multnomah County Library 2007 -   Nova Southeastern University 2007 - Tufts University 2007 - University of Washington Health Sciences Libraries 2007*). It consisted of 63 items.

The evaluation criteria checklist covered eight dimensions as follows: (See Appendix 1).

1- **Authority** (items 1-6): It reveals that the person, institution or agency responsible for a website has the qualifications, experience and knowledge to create and publish it.

2- **Purpose** (items 7-11): The purpose of the information presented in the website should be clear. Some websites are meant to inform, persuade, state an opinion, entertain or someone.

3- **Coverage** (items 12-20): One author may present comprehensive coverage of a topic while another may cover just one aspect of a topic.

4- **Currency** (items 21-27): It is important to know when a site was created, when it was last updated, and if all of the links are current.

5- **Objectivity** (items 28-30): The objectivity of the website should be clear. Objective sites will present information with a minimum of bias, without the intention to persuade.

6- **Accuracy** (items 31-34): It is the responsibility of the reader to beware of the information presented and to be sure to differentiate fact from opinion.

7- **Technical Aspects** (items 35-47): It covers navigation, design and structure, and access.

8- **Usefulness for EFL Teachers and Students** (items 48-63): This dimension is the most important one for the present study. That is why it consisted of 16 items. The questionsof this dimension are expected to be answered with more understanding and perfection because it is most related to the sample's majors.

Six items in the checklist need negative responses, no. 20, 27, 28, 29, 46 and 47. They are as follows:

No. 20: Is the website too detailed?
No. 27: Have some of the links expired or moved?
No. 28: Does the content reflect a bias?
No. 29: Is the bias explicit?
No. 46: Does the website take too long to load?
No. 47: Do you have to pay a fee to access it or register to use it?

The evaluation criteria checklist in its final form was submitted to 17 students graduated from the English language section, Faculty of Education, Benha University, in order to evaluate the six selected websites. They were asked to visit each of the six websites and try to answer all the items by circling <u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>. In this way, each one of the students evaluated the six websites, resulting in 102 evaluation sheets (6 websites * 17 students). Six sheets (out of 17) were excluded after the checklist application because they were duplicated. As a result, the net number of students was 11.

- ## STUDY FINDINGS:

The participants' responses to evaluation sheets were recorded and tabulated for the six websites for analysis. The following table is comprehensive.

Table (1): Students' Responses on the Evaluation Criteria Checklist of the Six Selected Web sites

Websites	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Criteria	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
AUTHORITY	44	22	54	12	49	17	27	39	31	35	40	26
PURPOSE	45	10	40	15	49	6	42	13	51	4	40	15
COVERAGE	65	34	73	26	74	25	77	22	70	29	78	21
CURRENCY	42	35	38	39	44	33	43	34	39	38	40	37
OBJECTIVITY	18	15	16	17	15	18	17	16	24	9	17	16
ACCURACY	28	16	28	16	30	14	28	16	26	18	22	22
Navigation	36	8	30	14	30	14	26	18	24	20	34	10
Design and Structure	65	12	53	24	60	17	53	24	40	37	51	26
ACCESS:	15	7	18	4	16	6	17	5	4	18	17	5
USEFULNESS	153	23	131	45	120	56	148	28	146	30	160	16
Total	511	182	481	212	487	206	478	215	455	238	499	194

In the following section, the points of strength and weakness of each website were explained.

(1) www.go4english.com.

According to the participants' responses, this site was the first in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 511 (out of 693 – 73.7%). It has a high authority (n=44 – out of 66 – 66%), clearly-stated purpose (n=45 – out of 55 – 81%) , good coverage (n=65 – out of 99 – 65%), acceptable currency (n=42 – out of 77 – 54%), acceptable objectivity (n=18 – out of 33 – 54%), acceptable accuracy (n=28 out of 44 – 63%), very good navigation (n=36 – out of 44 – 81%), very good design and structure (n=65 – out of 77 – 84%), good access (n=15 – out of 22 – 68%), and excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=153 - out of 176 – 86.9%).

The points of weakness appeared in four evaluation criteria, mainly items no. 21, 22, 23 and 34 (yes = below 50%). The following table shows them.

Table (2): The points of weakness in the first website

FOURTH: CURRENCY				
21	Yes	4	No	7
22	Yes	5	No	6
23	Yes	1	No	10

SIXTH: ACCURACY				
34	Yes	3	No	8

Item no. 21: "**Is the date the information was first written given**?", item no. 22: " **Is the date the information was placed on the web given?**" and item no. 23: "**Is the date the information was last revised given?**" deal with the website currency. Item no. 34: "**Is a bibliography or reference list included?**" deals with the website

accuracy. The participants reported that these criteria were not available on the website.

(2) **www.britishcouncil.org**.

According to the participants' responses, this site was the fourth in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 481 (out of 693 – 69%). It has a very good authority (n=54 – out of 66 – 81%), clearly-stated purpose (n=40 – out of 55 – 72%) , good coverage (n=73 – out of 99 – 73%), acceptable accuracy (n=28 out of 44 – 63%), good navigation (n=30 – out of 44 – 68%), good design and structure (n=53 – out of 77 – 68%), very good access (n=18 – out of 22 – 81%), and good usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=131 - out of 176 - 74%).

The points of weakness appeared in two dimensions: currency (n=38 – out of 77 – 49%), and objectivity (n=16 – out of 33 – 48%), mainly in three items, no. 21: "**Is the date the information was first written given**?", item no. 22: " **Is the date the information was placed on the web given?"**, and item no. 23: "**Is the date the information was last revised given?"** (yes = below 50%) under the currency dimension and items no. 32: " **Is the information reliable? If the author is affiliated with a known institution, this could be a clue?"** and item no. 34: **Is a bibliography or reference list included?**" under accuracy dimension. The following table shows them.

Table (3): The points of weakness in the second website

FOURTH: CURRENCY				
21	Yes	3	No	8
22	Yes	4	No	7
23	Yes	2	No	9
SIXTH: ACCURACY				
32	Yes	3	No	8
34	Yes	3	No	8

(3) **www.eslcafe.com.**   (Dave's ESL café)

According to the participants' responses, this site was the third in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 487 (out of 693 – 70%). It has a good authority (n=49 – out of 66 – 74%), very clearly-stated purpose (n=49 – out of 55 – 89%) , good coverage (n=74 – out of 99 – 74.7%), acceptable currency (n=44 – out of 77 – 57%), good accuracy (n=30 out of 44 – 68%), good navigation (n=30 – out of 44 – 68%), very good design and structure (n=60 – out of 77 – 77.9%), good access (n=16 – out of 22 – 72.7%), and good usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=120 - out of 176 – 68%).

One point of weakness appeared in objectivity dimension (n=15 – out of 33 – 45%), mainly in item no. 30: "**Does the site avoid advertising that may be a conflict of interest with the content?**" (yes = below 50%). The following table shows it.

Table (4): The point of weakness in the third website

FIFTH: OBJECTIVITY				
30	Yes	5	No	6

(4) www.zozanga.com

According to the participants' responses, this site was the fifth in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 478 (out of 693 – 67%). It has clearly-stated purpose (n=42 – out of 55 – 76%) , good coverage (n=77 – out of 99 – 77%), acceptable currency (n=43 – out of 77 – 55.8%), acceptable accuracy (n=28 out of 44 – 63%), acceptable objectivity (n=17 – out of 33 – 51%), very good navigation (n=26 – out of 44 – 59%), very good design and structure (n=53 – out of 77 – 68.8%), good access (n=17 – out of 22 – 77%), and excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=148 - out of 176 – 84.9%).

One point of weakness appeared in authority dimension: (n=27 – out of 66 – 40.9%), mainly in four items, no. 1: " **Is it clear who developed and published the site?** ", item no. 2: " **Has the author clearly provided all contact information including: e-mail address, mail address, phone number, and fax number? Can you easily contact the author for clarification of information?**", and item no. 3: " **Has the author clearly stated their qualifications, credentials, or provided some personal background information, that gives them the authority to present the information on the site?**" and item no. 5: " **Is there an institutional affiliation?**" (Yes = below 50%). The following table shows them.

Table (5): The point of weakness in the fourth website

- FIRST: AUTHORITY				
1	Yes	3	No	8
2	Yes	2	No	9
3	Yes	1	No	10
5	Yes	5	No	6

(5) **http://www.english-online.org.uk/**   (English for Everybody)

According to the participants' responses, this site was the sixth in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 455 (out of 693 – 65%). It has a clearly-stated purpose (n=51 – out of 55 – 92.7%) , good coverage (n=70 – out of 99 – 70.7%), acceptable currency (n=39 – out of 77 – 50.6%), acceptable objectivity (n=24 – out of 33 – 72.7%), acceptable accuracy (n=26 out of 44 – 59%), very good navigation (n=24 – out of 44 – 54.5%), very good design and structure (n=40 – out of 77 – 51.9%),   and excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=146 - out of 176 – 82.9%).

The points of weakness appeared in authority dimension (n=31 – out of 77 – 40%)**,** mainly in three items, no. 1: " **Is it clear who developed and published the site?** ", item no. 2: " **Has the author clearly provided all contact information including: e-mail address, mail address, phone number, and fax number? Can you easily contact the author for clarification of information?**", and item no. 3: " **Has the author clearly stated their qualifications, credentials, or provided some personal background information, that gives them the authority to present the**

information on the site?" (Yes = below 50%). The following table shows them.

Table (6): The point of weakness in the fifth website

- FIRST: AUTHORITY				
1	Yes	3	No	8
2	Yes	3	No	8
3	Yes	3	No	8

(6) **www.englishclub.com**

According to the participants' responses, this site was the second in rank when compared with the other five ones. The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 499 (out of 693 – 72%). It has a good authority (n=40 – out of 66 – 60.6%), clearly-stated purpose (n=40 – out of 55 – 72.7%) , very good coverage (n=78 – out of 99 – 78.7%), acceptable currency (n=40 – out of 77 – 51.9%), acceptable objectivity (n=17 – out of 33 – 51%), acceptable accuracy (n=22 out of 44 – 50%), very good navigation (n=34 – out of 44 – 77%), good design and structure (n=51 – out of 77 – 66%), very good access (n=17 – out of 22 – 77%) and excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=160 - out of 176 – 90.9%).

The points of weakness appeared in eight evaluation criteria, items no. 1 and 5 (authority), 22 and 23 (currency), 32 and 34 (accuracy), 41 and 45 (design and structure) (yes = below 50%). Item no. 1:" **Is it clear who developed and published the site? ,** item no. 5: " **Is there an institutional affiliation?** ", item no. 22: "**Is the date the information was placed on the web given?"**, item no. 23: "**Is the date**

the information was last revised given?", item no. 32: **" If statistics and other factual information are presented, are proper references given for the origin of the information?",** item no. 34: "**Is a bibliography or reference list included?",** item no. 41: **" Is the layout of the text and graphics visually pleasing?"** and item no. 45: **Do all the links work?** The following table shows them.

Table (7): The points of weakness in the sixth website

- FIRST: AUTHORITY				
1	Yes	4	No	7
5	Yes	5	No	6

THIRD: COVERAGE				
20	Yes	5	No	6

FOURTH: CURRENCY				
22	Yes	4	No	7
23	Yes	5	No	6
27	Yes	4	No	7

FIFTH: OBJECTIVITY				
28	Yes	3	No	8

SIXTH: ACCURACY				
32	Yes	5	No	6
34	Yes	2	No	9
Design and Structure				
41	Yes	5	No	6
45	Yes	5	No	6

- ## Educational Implications for the Utilization of these Sites for Teaching and Learning English in Egypt:

In order to answer the third and last question: "**How can these sites be utilized by the Egyptian teachers and students for teaching and learning English as a foreign language?"** a careful description and analysis of each website will be presented in the following sections according

to their order rank, resulted from the participants' responses for the evaluation criteria checklist.

(1) www.go4english.com.

The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 511 (out of 693 – 73.7%). What is more important in this section is that the participants reported excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=153 - out of 176 – 86.9%). The website has six main themes: English in action, vocabulary and grammar, quizzes and games, teachers of English, fun for kids and test you level (See Appendix 2 for the website homepage). The first theme "**English for action**" presents English for everyday living. It aims at developing the learner's business skills, his skill for choosing right tenses, how to begin and end writing an e-mail, doing language tasks and activities to practice writing letters and making invitations. The second theme "**vocabulary and grammar**" was designed to help English language learner develop his vocabulary and grammar skills. It presents: ask and answer, language games and practice tests in grammar, vocabulary and reading. The third theme "**quizzes and games**" presents some word games and postcards designed to help the learner develop his English language. The fourth theme "**teachers of English**" is full of useful resources for all teachers. It introduces teaching tips, class management, guided reading and narrative tenses material, lesson plans, worksheets about Egyptian animals and course. The fifth theme "**fun for kids**" presents songs, games, listening and painting activity, postcards and stories related to environment. The sixth theme "**test your level**" deals with testing the English language learners' vocabulary, grammar, listening and reading.

This website covers language skills (listening, reading and writing) and language components (vocabulary, grammar and phonetics). In this way, it focuses on the English language learner. It also provides a section for teachers and presents some resources that can be used for classroom teaching or professional development.

(2) http://www.englishclub.com/

Although it is the second in rank order when compared with the other five ones, it has the highest number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria (499 out of 693 – 72 %). The participants reported excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=160 - out of 176 – 90.9%). The website helps the learner to learn English and the teacher to teach English as a second language. Access to all pages is free. The site visitor will find everything from lessons for students to jobs for teachers, including interactive pages such as forums, games, quizzes, chat, help and penpals. (See Appendix 3 for the website homepage)

This website is very useful for English language teachers and learners. For the teachers, it has lesson plans, teaching small and large classes, teaching pronunciation and language activities. For learners, it presents video language lessons for all levels, English tests and idioms, tenses, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

(3) www.eslcafe.com. (Dave's ESL café)

The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 487 (out of 693 – 70%). The participants reported good usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=120 - out of 176 – 68%). The website is

a meeting place for ESL and EFL teachers and students from around the world. It presents stuff for teachers such as: teacher training forum, teaching business English, teaching games, listening, pronunciation, reading, speaking, spelling, English for specific purposes, pre-school education, elementary education and activities and games. It also presents stuff for students such as: idioms, phrasal verbs, pronunciation power, quizzes and student forums. (See Appendix 4 for the website homepage)

(4) www.britishcouncil.org

The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 481 (out of 693 – 69%). The participants reported good usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=131- out of 176 – 74%). The website gives help for study in UK, taking an exam, learning English online in the learner's country, resources for English language teachers, professional development, teaching English, support for schools and English language seminars. (See Appendix 5 for the website homepage).

(5) www.zozanga.com.

The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 478 (out of 693 – 68.9%). The participants reported excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=148 - out of 176 – 84%). It is the free and easy website for EFL/ESL learners, students and teachers. It introduces grammar lessons and improves the English learning skills, vocabulary, listening, reading, speaking, pronunciation, business English writing, and idioms. (See Appendix 6 for the website homepage).

(6) www.englishonline.com.   (English for Everybody)

The number of "yes" responses to all the evaluation criteria was 455 (out of 693 – 65.6%). Although it is the lowest in rank, the participants reported excellent usefulness for EFL teachers and students (n=146 - out of 176 – 82.9%). The website focuses on English language learning online, grammar, phonics, teaching English, vocabulary, tips for improving English language skills, TOEL test, teaching English as a foreign language and   teaching English as a second language. (See Appendix 7 for the website homepage).

- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The present study examined six selected websites for learning and teaching English. The participants visited them and responded to an evaluation criteria checklist. Although the website authority, purpose, coverage, currency, objectivity, accuracy, navigation, design, structure, access are important dimensions in the evaluation process, its usefulness to EFL Egyptian teachers and learners were more important in the present study.

The six websites, as a whole, were reported by the participants very useful for learning and teaching English. It is recommended that their resources should be frequently used by Egyptian teachers of English in schools as well as at homes for professional development and lessons planning. They should advise their students to visit these websites to play language games, take quizzes, learn grammar and vocabulary and listen to songs so as to improve their language skills.

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APPENDIX (1)

CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING/TEACHING WEB SITES

Dear Student

You are kindly requested to visit each of the following six websites and try to answer ALL the following questions by circling <u>YES</u> or <u>NO</u>.

1- **www.go4english.com**.

2- **www.britishcouncil.org**.

3- **www.eslcafe.com**.   **(Dave's ESL café)**

4- **www.zozanga.com**.

5- **www.english-online.com**.   **(English for Everybody)**

6- **www.englishclub.com**

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

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- Title of Website: …….

- URL: …….

- Date evaluated: …….

FIRST: AUTHORITY		
1- Is it clear who developed and published the site?	Yes	No
2- Has the author clearly provided all contact information including: e-mail address, mail address, phone number, and fax number? Can you easily contact the author for clarification of information?	Yes	No
3- Has the author clearly stated their qualifications, credentials, or provided some personal background information, that gives them the authority to present the information on the site?	Yes	No
4- Is the site supported by an organization or a commercial body?	Yes	No
5- Is there an institutional affiliation?	Yes	No
6- Is there a copyright symbol © at the bottom of the page that indicates who has responsibility for the page/website?	Yes	No

SECOND: PURPOSE		
7- Is the purpose of the site stated?	Yes	No
8- Does the domain name of the site indicate its purpose?	Yes	No
9- Is the site well-organized and focused?	Yes	No
10- Are the links appropriate for the topic of the site?	Yes	No
11- Is the information geared toward a specific audience (teachers and/or students)?	Yes	No

THIRD: COVERAGE		
12- Is the site comprehensive?	Yes	No

13-Is the web site valuable compared to others on the same topic?	Yes	No
14-Does the site provide its own information instead of depending on outside links?	Yes	No
15-Does the site have relevant outside links?	Yes	No
16- Are the EFL teachers and students the intended audience?	Yes	No
17-Is the information relevant?	Yes	No
18-Do the links complement the documents' theme?	Yes	No
19-Does the site satisfy the needs of its intended audience?	Yes	No
20-Is it too detailed?	Yes	No

FOURTH: CURRENCY		
21-Is the date the information was first written given?	Yes	No
22-Is the date the information was placed on the web given?	Yes	No
23-Is the date the information was last revised given?	Yes	No
24-Is the site fully developed? (i.e. no construction signs)	Yes	No
25-Was the site updated recently?	Yes	No
26-Is the information still valid for your topic?	Yes	No
27-Have some of the links expired or moved?	Yes	No

FIFTH: OBJECTIVITY		
28-Does the content reflect a bias?	Yes	No
29-Is the bias explicit or hidden?	Yes	No
30-Does the site avoid advertising that may be a conflict of interest with the content?	Yes	No

SIXTH: ACCURACY		
31-Is the information reliable? If the author is affiliated with a known institution, this could be a clue.	Yes	No
32-If statistics and other factual information are presented, are proper references given for the origin of the information?	Yes	No
33-From the reading you have already done on	Yes	No

the subject does the information on the site seem accurate?		
34-Is a bibliography or reference list included?	Yes	No

SEVENTH: TECHNICAL ASPECTS

- Navigation:

35- Is the site easy to navigate?	Yes	No
36- Do links allow easy navigation throughout the site?	Yes	No
37- Are Standard multimedia formats employed?	Yes	No
38- Are there options for printing/downloading all or selected text and graphics.	Yes	No

- Design and Structure:

39- Is the Home page attractive, inviting and friendly, thus you may want to find out more about the site?	Yes	No
40- Is the site clearly organized?	Yes	No
41- Is the layout of the text and graphics visually pleasing?	Yes	No
42- Are the graphics well chosen and appropriately used?	Yes	No
43- Is an index or site map included on the home page and other pages in site?	Yes	No
44- Is it easy to read the text with the font types, size, colors and contrast with backgrounds?	Yes	No
45- Do all the links work?	Yes	No

- ACCESS:

46- Does the web site take too long to load?	Yes	No
47- Do you have to pay a fee to access it or register to use it?	Yes	No

EIGHTH: USEFULNESS FOR EFL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

48-Is the website useful and helpful to primary school EFL teachers?	Yes	No
49- Is the website useful and helpful to prep school EFL teachers?	Yes	No
50- Is the website useful and helpful to secondary school EFL teachers?	Yes	No
51- Is the website useful and helpful to university	Yes	No

level EFL instructors?		
52- Is the website useful and helpful to primary school pupils?	Yes	No
53- Is the website useful and helpful to prep school pupils?	Yes	No
54- Is the website useful and helpful to secondary school students?	Yes	No
55- Is the website useful and helpful to self-study EFL adult learners?	Yes	No
56- Is the website useful and helpful to university level EFL students?	Yes	No
57- Does the website include material for developing the learner's listening skill?	Yes	No
58- Does the website include material for developing the learner's speaking skill?	Yes	No
59- Does the website include material for developing the learner's reading skill?	Yes	No
60- Does the website include material for developing the learner's writing skill?	Yes	No
61- Does the website develop the learner's grammar?	Yes	No
62- Does the website develop the learner's vocabulary?	Yes	No
63- Does the website develop the learner's pronunciation?	Yes	No

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APPENDIX (2)
HOMEPAGE OF THE FIRST WEBSITE

http://www.go4english.com./

APPENDIX (3)
HOMEPAGE OF THE SECOND WEBSITE
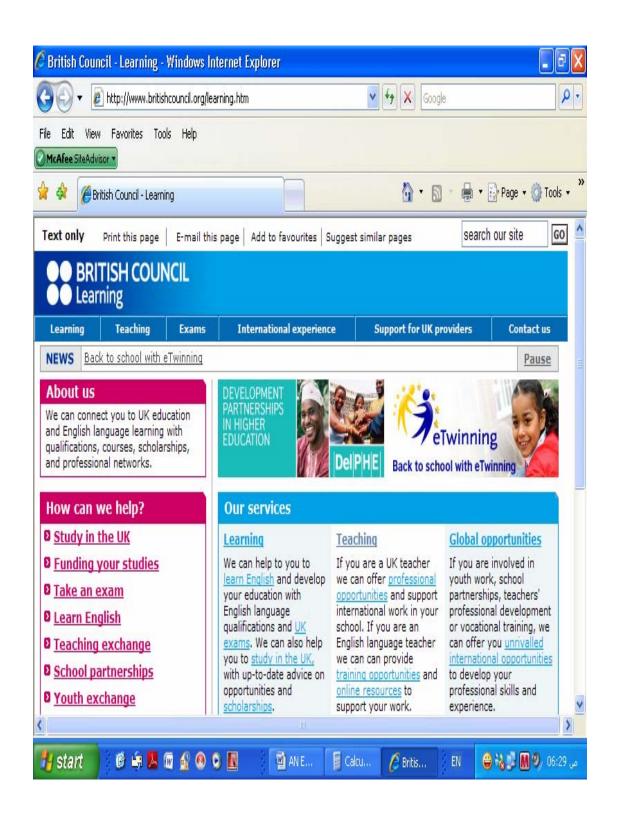# (www.englishclub.com)

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APPENDIX (4)
HOMEPAGE OF THE THIRD WEBSITE
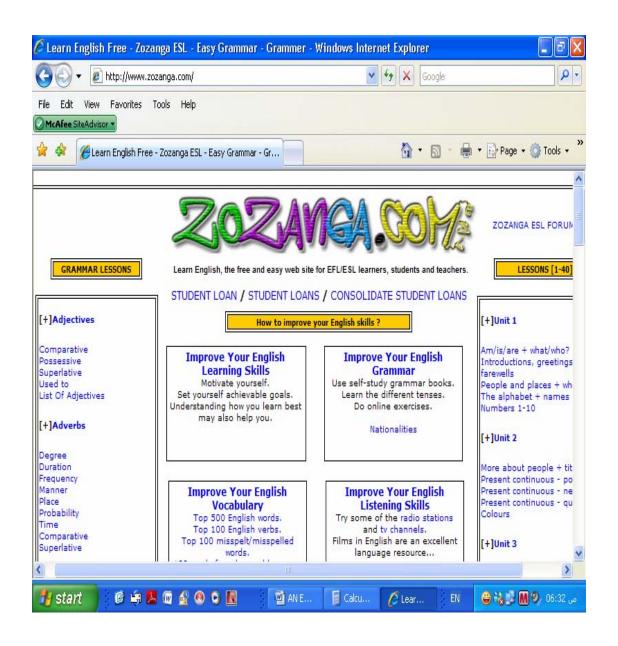**http://www.eslcafe.com/**

APPENDIX (5)
HOMEPAGE OF THE FOURTH WEBSITE

(http://www.britishcouncil.org/)

APPENDIX (6)
HOMEPAGE OF THE FIFTH WEBSITE
(http://www.zozanga.com/)

APPENDIX (7)
HOMEPAGE OF THE SIXTH WEBSITE
(http://www.englishonline.com./)

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