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The Effects of Online Grammar Instruction on Low Proficiency EFL College Students' Achievement

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Abstract
Technology is not currently used in EFL classrooms at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Therefore an online course was used in the teaching of English grammar from home. The aim of the present study was to find out whether integration of online learning in face-to-face in-class grammar instruction significantly improves EFL freshman college students' achievement and attitudes. Two groups of freshman students participated in the study. Pre-test means scores showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups in their grammatical knowledge. Following online instruction with Nicenet, comparisons of the post-test means scores showed significant differences in achievement. The study concluded that in learning environments where technology is unavailable to EFL students and instructors, use of an online course from home as a supplement to in-class techniques helps motivate and enhance EFL students' learning and mastery of English grammar.

1. Introduction

More and more instructors around the world are seeking to enhance their language instruction through activities and experiences made available through technology. Many have integrated a variety of technologies in the teaching of grammar in foreign and second language learning environments, such as websites and CD-ROM virtual environments (Bowen, 1999), a Cyber Tutor that allows students to annotate sentences while providing instant feedback and help facilities (McEnery and Others, 1995), the Learning English Electronically (LEE) computer software, which consists of 43 lessons emphasizing grammar concepts and accurate sentence structure, and covering topics such as employment, food, health, school, and transportation (Schnackenberg, 1997). In addition, explicit, implicit, and exploratory grammar teaching approaches that use word

processing packages, electronic dictionaries and grammars, the World Wide Web, concordances, electronic mail, computer games/simulations, and authoring aids were combined to overcome the "grammar deficit" seen in many British undergraduate students learning German (Hall, 1998). Corkhill (1996) used a computer software program consisting of a no-frills, user-friendly personal tutor with easy to locate and call up grammar topics for teaching and reinforcing a comprehensive range of grammar topics. Collaborative projects between L1 and L2 students were also utilized as a new approach to the teaching of grammar. Students in an immersion program in Australia were linked, via the web, with students in Canada and France to produce a web magazine containing articles written collaboratively in French by the Australian and Canadian students and in English by the French students (Matas and Birch, 1999; Matas and Birch, 2000). In Hong Kong, an interactive messaging system was set up on the Internet to enable teachers of English to discuss language-related issues as part of the TeleNex teacher-support network. Grammatical explanations based on the analysis of corpus data are routinely used to answer teachers' queries (Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1999).

Despite the glamour of technology, its use in language teaching does not guarantee students' success in skills acquisition nor higher levels of achievement than traditional classroom environments. The effects of technology on L1 and L2 acquisition vary. They depend on what kind of technology is used, how it is used, what is being taught, and for how long. The impact of technology on the development of language skills in general and grammatical development in particular by L1 and L2 elementary, high school and college students were the focus of several studies. Studies by Grant (1998), Nagata (1996), and Collentine (2000) found technology to be an effective tool in teaching and learning grammar. Grant (1998) conducted a study with two groups of 5th grade students in which one group received computer-based instruction in English grammar, and the other received computer-based instruction in mathematics. The instructional programs included drill and review. Results of the opinion survey revealed that the computer-based instruction increased students' interest in school and learning in general. Students reported an increase in satisfaction with learning with immediate responses. In a study with Japanese students, Nagata (1996) compared the effectiveness of Nihongo-CALI (Japanese Computer Assisted Language Instruction) with non-CALI

workbook instruction. The ongoing intelligent computer feedback was found to be more effective than simple workbook answer sheets for developing learners' grammatical skill in producing Japanese particles and sentences. In a third study, a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software containing user-behavior tracking technologies promoted the abilities of foreign-language learners of Spanish in generating indirect speech (Collentine, 2000).

Likewise, Zhuo (1999) examined the effect of hypermedia on grammar instruction and learning. She developed a hypermedia courseware through authoring tools such as Macromedia Authorware and Director. Post-treatment scores showed that participants' achievement significantly increased, confirming the premises that the hypermedia-based instruction is very effective for grammar teaching and learning. However, the proficiency level and instructional sections did not have significant effects on learning time. The performance of learners with different cognitive styles did not significantly differ indicating that hypermedia-based instruction could accommodate the needs and ability of different individuals.

At the high school level, Frigaard (2002) examined the performance of high school students' who participated in a computer lab on vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension in Spanish. Analysis of student surveys indicated that the computer lab was a beneficial tool, benefiting some students more than others. Some of students favored lab-based activities like the Spanish study Website and the grammar tutor. Other favorite classroom activities included flashcards and games. Most of the students believed that the computer lab improved their listening skills and made class more interesting and they enjoyed having regularly scheduled lab sessions. However, they preferred to learn vocabulary and grammar in the classroom and felt that having an instructor present in the computer lab increased their learning potential.

Use of technology in language instruction was also found to have varying effects on students' attitudes towards foreign/second language instruction. Chen (2004) surveyed a sample of 1,026 freshmen and sophomore students in Taiwan taking the required college EFL course. The students expressed significantly positive attitudes

toward educational technology use for EFL instruction. Likewise, Felix (2001) reported that on the whole, students were positively inclined to working with the web and found it useful, with the majority preferring to use the web as a supplement to face-to-face teaching. Very few significant findings relating to strategy strength were obtained. Significant differences for age and gender were found relating to clarity of objectives, number of hours worked, mode of delivery, perception of comfort and appreciation of graphics. Furthermore, intermediate level community college ESL students and teachers expressed very positive attitudes toward using LEE (Schnackenberg, 1997). Strengths of the program identified by teachers were the additional grammar practice available, the self-paced and non-threatening nature of the program, the inclusion of sound in the program, and the grammar topics being presented with content topics. The students enjoyed using the program and felt it helped them learn, and they liked having teacher supervision while using the program individually. Both students and teachers reported some weaknesses such as the slow response time of the computer in executing commands, difficultly using the mouse, starting and ending the program, and printing.

Although, thousands of students and instructors around the world are using Online Management Systems like Blackboard, WebCT, Online Learning, Moodle and Nicenet in teaching all kinds of courses including EFL and ESL, the effect of using online courses in grammar instruction was not investigated by prior research. As in many developing countries, use of online courses in EFL instruction in some higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia is not yet known due to insufficient numbers of PC's, lack of internet connectivity in some colleges, lack of trained instructors, and lack of administrative support. A few individual attempts are now available here and there. Several instructors are using OWCP and Moodle to teach writing, grammar, literature, linguistics and others. However, the effect of such practices on Saudi college students' achievement has not been investigated yet. This author has been using online courses as a supplement to in-class instruction (blended learning) since the year 2000. In the present study, EFL freshman students used an online course with Nicenet from home as a supplement to face-to-face in-class grammar instruction. It aimed to investigate the effectiveness of blending online instruction in in-class instruction on students' achievement in grammar. It tried to answer the following questions: (1) Is there a

significant difference between EFL freshman students registered in the online grammar course as a supplement to face-to-face instruction and those using face-to-face in-class instruction only in their achievement level as measured by the post-test? (2) Does the frequency of using the online course correlate with the students' achievement level, i.e. are active participants better achievers than passive participants, and passive participants better achievers than non-users? (3) Does online and face-to-face instruction (blended learning) have any positive effects on students' attitudes?

To answer these questions, two groups of EFL students participated in the study: One was taught grammar using traditional face-to-face in-class instruction depending on the textbook only and the other was taught using blended learning consisting of face-to-face in-class instruction and an online course with Nicenet. The impact of online and face-to-face in-class instruction on EFL freshman students' grammar achievement was based on quantitative analyses of the pre- and post-tests. The effect of online and face-to-face in-class instruction on freshman students' attitudes was based on qualitative analyses of students' responses to a post-treatment questionnaire.

2. Subjects

A total of 238 female freshman students were enrolled in their fist grammar course. All the students were majoring in translation at the College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They were concurrently taking listening (3 hours per week), speaking (3 hours), reading (4 hours), writing (4 hours) and vocabulary building (3 hours) courses in English as a Foreign Language.

The subjects were all Saudi nationals and were all native speakers of Arabic. Their median age was 18 years, and the range was 17-19. They all had 6 years of EFL instruction in grades 6-12 prior to their admission to COLT. They were all studying English in a segregated environment where all of the students and instructors were females. Therefore, findings of the present study may not be generalized to male freshman students at COLT taking the same Grammar I course and studying the same textbook.

Seventy-four students (31%) were registered in the online course; 164 students (69%) were not. Registration in the online course was optional as many students had no access to the Internet. Registered students constituted the experimental group, and unregistered students constituted the control group. Both groups were exposed to the same in-class instruction using the same grammar textbook. In addition to face-to-face in-class instruction depending on the textbook, the experimental group was exposed to online instruction (blended learning). Students in the experimental group had no prior experience with online instruction.

Results of the T-test presented in Table 1 showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups in their knowledge of English grammar before grammar instruction began ($T = 2.8$; $df = 236$; $P<.008$). The experimental group outperformed the control group (median = 26% & 23% respectively, with larger variations existing among students in the experimental group than the control groups as revealed by the standard deviation values presented in Table 2.

Table 1

Independent Samples Test (comparison of pre-test and post-test mean scores)

	t-test	df	Sig. level	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Pretest	2.686	236	.008	2.7521	1.0247

Table 2

Distribution of Pre-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in Percentages

	N	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Range
Experimental group	74	25.63%	26%	16.12	1.90	11-67%
Control group	164	22.88%	23%	13.78	1.08	03-61%

3. In-class Instruction

The experimental and control groups were exposed to the same traditional in-class instruction. The topics covered in class were: parts of speech, prepositions, prepositional phrases, transitive and intransitive verbs, linking verbs, regular and irregular verbs, adverb placement, information, tag, negative and yes-no questions, negatives, regular and irregular plurals, use of definite and indefinite articles, pronouns, subject-verb agreement, 9 tenses, modals, pronunciation of –ed, -s and -es at the end of verbs and nouns, spelling of –ing, -ed, -es. The students studied the same grammar textbook *Understanding and Using English Grammar* by Betty Azar (3rd Edition) and completed the same exercises and grammatical topics in that textbook. The grammar course was taught in Spring 2004 for 12 weeks.

Students in both groups did all the grammar exercises in class. While doing the exercises, the author monitored students' work and provided individual help. Only errors related to rules under study were highlighted. Feedback was provided on the presence and location of errors but no correct forms were provided. The students had to check the rules and examples in the book by themselves. Extra credit was given to students who could do all the items in the exercise correctly and within the designated time.

As for assessment, students in both groups were given two in-term tests. Tests were graded, returned to the students with comments on strengths and weaknesses. Words of encouragement were given. The slightest improvement was noted and commended. Answers were discussed in class.

4. Treatment (Online Instruction)

In addition to the traditional in-class instruction, the experimental group used an online course with Nicenet, because using the Nicenet course site did not require any special license or registration fees. It was easy to use. The experimental group used their own PC's and the Internet from home, as the Internet was inaccessible from COLT. The students were given the class key and they enrolled themselves. The author had to provide the online instruction herself.

Prior to online instruction, the students' computer literacy skills were assessed by a questionnaire. A tutorial was given to them for reference. The online course components were described and instructions on how to use certain course components were also posted in the "Conferencing" area. Online instruction was initiated by posting a welcome note, by starting a discussion topic and by sending a group e-card. The author continued to do so every now and then throughout the semester.

Every week, grammar websites (hyperlinks) related to the grammar topic covered in class was added in "Link Sharing". The links contained explanations, examples, exercises and quizzes and a daily grammar lessons. Questions that required use of a particular tense or grammatical structure were posted in the "Conferencing" area. In addition, the students could post short paragraphs on any topic of their choice. The students checked the specific grammar links posted under "Link Sharing", answered the quizzes and were encouraged to check the daily grammar lesson.

Throughout the semester, the author served as a facilitator. She provided technical support on using the different components of the online course, and responded to individual students' needs, comments and requests for certain sites. The author sent public and private messages to encourage the students to interact and communicate. She had to look for relevant websites and post them in the "Link Sharing" area. She had to post questions and discussion topics and write model responses every week. The author did not correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. She would point out the type of errors they made especially in the grammar threads and ask the students to double-check their posts. Using the online course was optional as 69% of the students had no Internet access and were not able to participate. Students were given extra credit for using the online course.

5. Procedures

Before instruction, the experimental and control groups were pre-tested. They took the same grammar pretest that consisted of questions covering the grammatical topics to be studied. At the end of the semester, both groups took the same post-test that covered all of the grammatical topics studied throughout the semester: These included the

following: (1) Fill in the blanks in the text with an article where necessary; (2) Write if each noun is Count or Non-count as it is used in the text. Use C or NC; (3) Write the part of speech of each word as it is used in the text. Use abbreviations; (4) Write the plural of each word as it is used in the text; (5) Write the plural form of the noun where necessary; (6) Write the singular form of the noun where necessary; (7) Use the correct tense of the verbs in parentheses or add a modal where necessary; (8) Read the following paragraph, then make questions as indicated; (9) How is -ed or -es pronounced in the following words; (10) Write the past participle of each verb; (11) Fill in the blanks with a pronoun; (12) Complete the following sentences; (13) Change nouns and pronouns to plural where necessary and make any necessary changes; (14) Underline the correct word; (15) Fill in the blanks with an expression of quantity or an indefinite pronoun. Most of the questions required production.

The pre- and post-tests of both groups were blindly graded by the author. The students wrote their ID numbers instead of their names. An answer key was used. Questions were graded one at a time for all the students. Marks were deducted for spelling mistakes.

At the end of the course, all of the students answered an open-ended questionnaire, which consisted of the following questions: (1) Why did you register and use the online course? (2) What did you like about it? What did you not like? (3) Did your English improve as a result of using the online course? In what ways? (4) Did it make any difference in learning English grammar? (5) If you did not post any responses or paragraphs in the online course? Why? (6) What problems or difficulties did you face in using the online course? How were those problems solved? (7) How often did you use the online course? (8) How much time did you spend using and browsing the online course? (9) Would you register again in a similar course in the future? Why? (10) Which links did you find most useful?

6. Test Validity and Reliability

The post-tests are believed to have content validity as they aimed at assessing the students' achievement in grammar. The tasks required in the post-test were comparable

to those covered in the book and practiced in class. In addition, the test instructions were phrased clearly and the examinee's task was defined.

Concurrent validity of the post-test was determined by establishing the relationship between the students' scores on the post-test and their course grade. The validity coefficient was .78. Concurrent validity was also determined by establishing the relationship between the students' scores on the post-test and their scores on the second in-term test. The validity coefficient was .72 for the grammar test.

Since the author was the instructor of the experimental and control groups and the scorer of the pre-test and post-test essays, estimates of inter-rater reliability were necessary. A 30% random sample of the pre- and post-test papers was selected and double-scored. A colleague who holds a Ph.D. degree scored the pre- and post-test samples. The scoring procedures were explained to her, and she followed the same scoring procedures and used the same answer key that the author utilized. The marks given by the rater were correlated with the author's. Inter-rater correlation was .99 for the post-test.

Furthermore, examinee reliability was calculated using the Kuder-Richardson formula 21'. The examinee reliability coefficient for the posttest was .85.

7. Data Analysis

The pre- and post-test raw scores were converted into percentages. The mean median, standard deviation, standard error and range were computed for the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. To find out whether there was a significant difference in ability between the experimental and control groups prior to instruction, an independent sample T-test was run using the pre-test scores.

Since experimental and control groups are unequal in size, significant differences existed between the experimental and control groups in their pre-test means scores before at the beginning of the semester. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was run using the post-test scores as the response variable and the pre-test scores as the

covariate to correct for chance differences that existed when the subjects were assigned to the treatment groups. This correction resulted in the adjustment of group means for pre-existing differences caused by sampling error and reduction of the size of the error variance of the analysis.

To find out whether each group had made any progress as a result of instruction, a within group paired T-test was computed for each groups using the pre- and post-test mean scores of each group.

To find out whether there is a relationship between the students' post-test scores and frequency of using the online course, the student' post-test score was correlated with the number of responses she posted in the "Conferencing" area using the Pearson correlation formula. Post-test scores could not be correlated with the frequency of using the hyperlinks posted in the Link Sharing, as such statistics are not provided by the Nicenet system.

8. Results

8.1 Effect of Online and Face-to-face on Achievement

Table 3 shows that the typical EFL female freshman student in the experimental group scored higher than the typical student in the control group on the post-test (medians = 62% and 55% respectively) with similar variations among students in the experimental and controls (SD = 17.98 and 18 respectively).

Table 3

Distribution of Post-test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups in Percentages

	N	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Range
Experimental Group	74	61.80%	62%	17.98	2.12	30-100%
Control Group	164	55.76%	55%	18.00	1.24	14-94%

Table 4

Comparison of the Pre- and Post-test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

		df	t	Sig level	Mean	Mean Difference	SD	SE of Mean
Ex Group	Pretest	73	27.09	.000	25.6%	25.6	8.08	.95
	Posttest	73	32.33	.000	61.8%	30.9	8.17	.96
Control Group	Pretest	163	42.46	.000	22.9%	22.9	6.90	.54
	Posttest	163	44.66	.000	55.8%	27.9	8.00	.62

Results of the paired T-test in Table 4 reveal a significant difference between the pre- and post-test mean scores of the experimental group at the .01 level, suggesting that student achievement in the experimental group significantly improved as a result of using a combination of online and traditional face-to-face in-class grammar instruction (T = 7.5; df = 73). Similarly, a significant difference between the pre- and post-test mean scores of the control group was found at the .01 level, suggesting that achievement in the control group significantly improved as a result of in-class grammar instruction which depended on the textbook only (T = 10.29; df = 163). Since the two groups are unequal in size, and significant differences existed between the experimental and control groups in their pre-test scores, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on adjusted post-test means revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups (F = 117.23; df = 236; P<.0001). The experimental group made higher gains in grammar achievement than the control group as a result of using a combination of online and face-to-face in-class instruction. The effect size was .49.

8.2 Correlation between Post-test Scores and Frequency Usage

Table 5 shows the total number of discussion messages posted together with the median and maximum number of messages posted. The study found a significant positive correlation between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the frequency of using the online course. The correlation coefficient was .40 and it was significant at the .01 level. This suggests that a student's achievement in the grammar course correlated with the number of contributions she made to the discussion topics and questions posted in the online course. This means that high and low usage frequencies

of the online course were found to correlate with high and low achievement levels as measured by the post-test. It can be concluded that using the online course did contribute to the students' overall performance level.

Table 5

Distribution of Discussion Messages Posted by Experimental Groups

	Total # of Group Messages	Median	Maximum # of Individual Messages
Grammar	364	6	50

8.3 Effect of Online and Face-to-face Instruction on Attitudes

Analysis of student comments and responses to the post-treatment questionnaires revealed positive attitudes towards online learning and the grammar course under study. All the students found the online grammar course useful and fun, and considered it a new way of leaning English grammar and doing homework. It heightened their motivation and raised their self-esteem. It created a warm-climate between the students and instructor and among the students themselves. They found the exercises posted in "Link Sharing" useful, as they provided more practice and gave instant feedback. The exercises helped clarify difficult points and helped the students review for the in-terms. They could use the online course any time and as many times as they needed. It made the class material easier.

Some of the negative aspects of online teaching in the present study are that some students do not post any responses if not prompted by the instructor and if the instructor does not post new topics and post a sample response. Some students start a new thread dealing with the same topic instead of posting a response under that topic. Some wrote "Thank you" notes and compliments instead of real responses. Others just browsed and read rather than posting messages.

Inadequate participation in the online course was due to lack of computers and Internet connectivity at COLT and at home. Some students did not take online

instruction seriously as it was not used by other instructors and students at COLT. The author could not make the online course mandatory and could not allocate a proportion of the course grade to it. Using the Internet as a learning tool was not part of some students' culture. Some were so used to traditional instruction that depended on the book. They indicated that they were not net browsers and preferred to read books and references. They also believed that online courses should be used for fun not for credit and serious studying. Many Saudi college students do extra work for grades only. If online learning is not part of tests and grades, they will not participate. The author did not have sufficient time in the classroom to brainstorm topics before and after posting and could not go through the material in the hyperlinks in class.

Other weaknesses are due to the Nicenet online course design. The instructor could not design her own tests and exercises and could not upload graphics and PowerPoint presentations.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

Significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups in grammar achievement as measured by the post-test, suggesting that achievement in the experimental group improved as a result of blending online and in-class instruction. This means that use of online instruction as a supplement to in-class instruction proved to be a powerful tool for improving students' achievement in grammar. Findings of the present study also indicated that active participants made higher gains than passive participants who in turn made higher gains than unregistered students (control group). This finding is consistent with findings of prior studies using other forms of technology in grammar instruction such as the Nagata (1996), Collentine (2000) and Zhuo (1999) studies. Nagata found the ongoing intelligent computer feedback to be more effective than simple workbook answer sheets for developing learners' grammatical skill in producing Japanese particles and sentences. Collentine reported that user-behavior tracking technologies promoted the abilities of foreign-language learners of Spanish in generating indirect speech. Zhuo concluded that hypermedia-based instruction was very effective in grammar teaching and learning. Nutta (1998) compared postsecondary English as a Second Language (ESL) students' acquisition of selected English

grammatical structures based on the method of instruction - computer-based instruction versus teacher-directed instruction. She found that for all levels of English proficiency, the computer-based students scored significantly higher on open-ended tests covering the grammatical structures in question than the teacher-directed students. No significant differences were found between the computer-based and teacher-directed students' scores on multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank tests. She concluded that computer-based instruction can be an effective method of teaching L2 grammar.

Unlike Frigaard's study (2002) in which the students preferred to learn vocabulary and grammar in the classroom rather than in the computer lab, students in the present study showed interest in learning grammar online. Moreover, the present study revealed positive effects of blended learning (online and face-to-face instruction) on students' attitudes towards the grammar course. This finding is also consistent with findings of other studies. For instance, Lin (2004) found that international students' attitudes towards ESL were positively related to their attitudes toward computers. Their attitude towards ESL was also positively related to their perceived computer competency improvement and their experience in ESL was positively related to their perceived computer competency improvement. In Chen's study (2004), freshmen and sophomores students in Taiwan expressed significantly positive attitudes toward educational technology use in EFL instruction. Moreover, Felix (2001) reported that on the whole, students were positively inclined to working with the web and found it useful, with the majority preferring to use the web as a supplement to face-to-face teaching. Furthermore, intermediate level community college ESL students and teachers expressed very positive attitudes toward using LEE (Schnackenberg, 1997). As in Schnackenberg's computer software LEE, online grammar instruction in the present study provided additional grammar practice, a self-paced and non-threatening learning environment. The students enjoyed using the online course and felt it helped them learn.

Finally, the present study recommends that use of blended learning (use of online instruction as a supplement to face-to-face instruction) be extended to other language course and other college levels. Students of different college levels (i.e., lower and upper class students) enrolled in courses focusing on the same skill such as reading

or writing can share the same online course together with their instructors. To encourage the students to participate, the instructor has to prompt and motivate them and rules for using the online course should be made clear. A minimum number of postings may be specified. Administrative support is also required in order for the students to take the online course seriously. Other Management Systems like WebCT, Moodle or Blackboard may be used instead of Nicenet to enable the students to edit, upload pictures and PowerPoint presentations, use online chat and to enable the instructor to design her own quizzes and exercises. The effect of grammar instruction delivered fully online using course materials and quizzes designed by the instructor is still open for further investigation.

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Appendix (A)

Sample Grammar Links

Daily Grammar Lesson

http://www.thebeehive.org/external_link.asp?r=/school/middle/subjects.asp?subject=12&e=http://www.dailygrammar.com/archive.shtml

Parts of speech

http://www.jiskha.com/english/grammar/parts_of_speech.html

Parts of Speech (Definitions)

http://www.cftech.com/BrainBank/OTHERREFERENCE/GRAMMARANDPUNCTUATION/PartsSpeech.html

Parts of Speech (Lessons & Quizzes)

http://www.eslus.com/LESSONS/GRAMMAR/POS/pos.htm

http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/partsp.html

http://www.cityu.edu.hk/elc/quiz/partspee.htm

http://www.cityu.edu.hk/elc/quiz/partspee.htm

Prepositions : Quiz

http://a4esl.org/q/j/ck/mc-prepositions.html

English Zone: Questions

http://english-zone.com/index.php?ID=30

Singular and Plural

http://www.better-english.com/grammar/sinplu.htm

http://www.better-english.com/grammar/sinplu.htm

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises/plural6.htm

Irregular Verbs

http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html

Tenses

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar_list/zeitformen.htm

Verb Tense Chart

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/esltensverb.html

Verbs

http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar_list/verbs.htm

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/exlist/exlist.htm

Quiz Center

http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/quiz/

Appendix (B)

An Unedited Sample Online Grammar Discussion Thread with Students' Responses and Comments

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FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/18/04 10:15 AM GMT -06:00)

SUBJECT: Practicing the Simple Present

Please write few sentences in which you tell us about what you and your family members do every Ramadan day or night. Make sure you use the Present Simple Tense. Use punctuation marks like periods and commas. Use a capital "I" for the pronoun "I". Thanks.

FROM: Maryam AL-Qassim   (10/19/04 11:45 AM GMT -06:00)

SUBJECT: Hello every one*****

I and my family sleep early .that because we wake up to eat a meal befor AL_FAGER prayer .Then ,everyone from us goes to his¥her work or universty.

REPLIES (1):

FROM: fatima abdulwahed   (10/21/04 5:52 PM GMT -06:00)
In ramadan especially, every one of my family tries to do something different.
Ramadan is a nice month. we usually visit our relatives. My little brother likes to eat so much cookies in ramadan , so he usually gets fat evey ramadan. it was just few 'separate' sentences.

FROM: Rasha khaled   (10/23/04 12:45 PM GMT -06:00)
SUBJECT: Practicing the Simple Present

I love Ramadan because it's a great month to be more closer to Allah. I and my family everyday get's together and eat the first meal after al-athan in the sunset . Ramadan is a special month to me and to all the muslem's in all over the world.

FROM: fatima al-abd ulmughni   (10/25/04 11:43 AM GMT -06:00)

I usually help my mom in the kitchen, after breakfast we watch T.V. I like staying at my room most of the time and draw, but in Ramadan staying with my family is more fun then being alone.

Fatooma

FROM: Hanan Abdel Monem   (10/27/04 6:59 AM GMT -06:00)
SUBJECT: My Habits in Ramadan.

Daily habits:

1- I pray fajr.

2- I sleep after fajr.

3- I get up little bit later.

4- I wash my face.

5- I sit to surf the net and study my lessons.

6- I work on translation tasks.

7- I attend the online courses.

8- I work on my assignments.

9- I check my mail.

10- I pray frud.

11- I talk to relatives by phone.

12- I prepare something to iftar.

13- we take our eftar.

14- we pray Maghreb.

15- we pray Isha and traweh.

16- we sit to talk.

17- I read Quran.

18- I sleep to get up early.

Weekly Habits:

1- I clean our house.

2- I visit rahem.

Monthly Habits: (after Ramadan)

1- I pay telephone bills.

2- I renew internet subscription.

3- I buy our house necessities.

Dr Reima if we use present simple, should we imagine that the speaker want to tell us at the end of his speech that what he said is his (daily habit or weekly habit or monthly habit or annual habit or hourly habit without writing this depending on the presence of this tense present simple in the sentence and not any other tense)and if the subject is solid can we imagine that there are words that are omitted like (everyday, every week, every month, every year, every hour)

REPLIES (1):

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/27/04 4:37 PM GMT -06:00)
Habits can be daily, weekly, monthly, annual and even things we do every 5 or 10 years, or things that happen every 100 years. For example, I can say:
I travel every summer.
I change my furniture once every 5 years.

FROM: Hanan Abdel Monem   (10/27/04 7:10 AM GMT -06:00)
SUBJECT: Question

If I am not persistent in doing the action I did I mean I did it but not everyday everyday may be I stop doing it then I redo it again then something else takes me but I return to do it again Can I use here present simple? can we call this habit? and if not what can we call it? and which tense all thes meaning without writing them explicitly?

REPLIES (5):
FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/27/04 4:42 PM GMT -06:00)
(1) Could you please add punctuation marks to your sentences.
(2) You need to use a mixture of tenses here. In real life communication situations, we use a mixture of tenses and we move back and forth among the tenses. However, when you teach beginners, you have to teach the tenses one at a time and have the students practice them one at a time. Once they master each tense, then we can proceed to practicing 2 tenses, then more. At the early stages, students should practice the tenses at the sentence level, and at a later stage they can practice them at the discourse level. But if a teacher requires that her students use all the tenses at the same time, they will not

master any. My students are in their first semester of college. This is their first grammar course; they will be taking 2 more: one in semester 2 and one in semester 3. In semester 2, they will be practicing the tenses at the paragraph level.

I hope this explains it.

FROM: Hanan Abdel Monem   (10/28/04 9:23 AM GMT -06:00)

Correction:

If I am not persistent in doing the action I did, I mean I did it, but not everyday everyday may be I (will) stop doing it. then I (will) redo it again. Then something else takes me (away). But I return to do it again. Can I use present simple (here)? Can we call (these) habits? and if not, what can we call them? Which tense applies to all these meanings without writing them explicitly?

Yes, Dr. but I remember in narrating something, they always told us to stick to one tense, whether present or past, it was really strange because sometimes there are things should be in other tenses, for that I have this idea that we can not change tenses throughout the text but it is really a big misery.

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/29/04 10:00 AM GMT -06:00)

It depends on what you are writing about. No hard and fast rules.

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/29/04 10:05 AM GMT -06:00)

Thanks for the exclusive list, Hanan. I am sure your friends will like them and will make a long list like it.

FROM: Hanan Abdel Monem   (10/30/04 5:30 AM GMT -06:00)

Thanks Dr. for correction.I try to encircle all what is called a habit in my life to know what "habit", that we say all the time, mean? I hope I successed.

FROM: Najla Faisal   (10/26/04 9:33 AM GMT -06:00)

Everything changes in Ramadan, The food, T.v, people, conversations and even the way u feel changes.

My Grandfather insists that we have breakfast at his house everyday, which is really nice, it gives us the chance of knowing him (and each other) better.

The food in Ramadan is another story, my mom makes the best pastries in the world, Not to mention her Gatayef (an arabic desert).
Just talking about it makes me droll !

Anyway, I think this year my basic Ramadan day will start by going to the university, watching Ramadan`s series`, having breakfast with my family, praying at the mosque (which I really want to make a daliy habbit), watching more T.V, studing (cause I have midterms in Ramadan) then sleeping.

So far, I think it`s going to be a great Ramadan.

Wishing u all a Great Ramadan Too :)

Najla :)

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/26/04 2:46 PM GMT -06:00)
This is an interesting paragraph. I like the informaiton and I like your writing style too.
Looking forward to hearing more about Ramadan from you and from your classmates.

FROM: amal amal   (10/28/04 11:57 AM GMT -06:00)
In Ramadan I read the Holy Quran and pray after 8:00 p.m .Ieat dats and water with some of food.

FROM: Malak Ajina   (29/10/04 5:12 AM GMT -06:00)
My daily list in Ramadan is change From year to another ,but I want to tell you what I do in Ramadan in this year. When I wake up at 9:00 (this is when our holiday started) Iclean my house with my sisters untill 9:30 or 10:00.Then I read Qura'an some hours unto my mother call me to help her in cooking. When the time come 4:00 I watch T.V, because thereis anice program in Kuwait Channel this program his arranger is

Mohammad Al-Aode. After it is finish I see another program about profet Mohammad by Tareeq Al-swidan. Then I go back to the kichin to my mother till to Magreb foretoken and all my family eat Fatoor. At 7:00 Istudy my Grammer Book each day Ireview 2 pages to 3 pages also my Vocabulary Book. When I finish those books Iread my favourite story which is (Jane Eyre) becuse I want to improve my Einglish languge and I hope read many stories in Ramadan befor the holiday finish. You know Prof. Reima now we rae in holiday so my small brothers want to shopping, travel, park or any place from 11:00 to 2:45.Then I eat Sahoor and go to Sleep.

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/29/04 1:42 PM GMT -06:00)
Dear Najla
I like your writing style. There is something special about it. I can see a great writer.
Keep on writing and let us enjoy more of your thoughts and reflections.

FROM: Prof. Reima Al-Jarf   (10/30/04 1:39 PM GMT -06:00)
SUBJECT: Your paragraphs

Dear Students
I enjoyed reading your paragraphs and learning about your Ramadan daily activities. However, I suggest that you type your paragraph using Microsoft WORD before you post it. MS WORD will underline spelling mistakes in red. It will also give you the options for correcting your mistakes. This way your English will improve. Try it and let me know what you think.