

The Result of the EFL Students' Use of E-Learning Newton TLT Software as the First Trial

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Abstract

This study demonstrates the effects of learners' use of an e-learning software at two private universities in Japan. The software called Newton e-learning Testing Learning Training (TLT) was used in the study. One semester trial for utilizing Newton was carried out to improve learners' listening and reading English abilities. Pre-posttest of the Web Test in the TLT and the learners' portfolios were used for the analyses.

Keywords

E-Learning, TLT software, TOEIC

Introduction

Many people who study languages in Japan have been using e-learning systems (e.g., ALC Net Academy, Classi, English Central, Newton, Smart Learning, Super English, and u-Cat) in academic domains. In this study, Newton TLT software is used to examine the effects of learners' listening and reading abilities in English. The introduction part contains the definition of TLT and its characteristics.

1 English learning TLT software

1.1 A characteristics of the TLT

E-learning TLT offered by Newton is a software wherever you can access online. Many schools and universities in Japan have adopted the Newton TLT as one of e-learning systems officially in order to develop their command of English. It has unique characteristics that granted a patent between in Japan and in the U.S. (i.e., No. 3820421 for National Patent, No. 5888071 for U.S. Patent). Newton also offers Graphic Science magazine overseas in China and Korea. The TLT has three functions of its use, which are learning contents, learning record database, and learning control program. These are integrated into one system, which enables learners and teachers to conduct

e-learning more easily and effectively. The materials in the TLT are on web-based training. Regarding the TLT, several courses including TOEFL (words practice), TOEIC, Metamorphosis learning (learning English in English without Japanese translation), Medical English, Medical Term, Basic English, Intermediate English, English for National Center for University Entrance Examinations are offered depending on the purpose of its use. In this study, the TLT practice for TOEIC was focused on.

1.2 The procedure of using the TLT

The TLT has three functions. First, it has 'flexibility' of its use. A learner can access it through tablets, smart phones as well as PCs. Second, it has 'automatic repeat function' in learning system. When a learner gives a wrong answer, the question is repeatedly shown on the system until the learner gives the right answer. Third, it has a function of 'weak item extraction'. If a learner gives a wrong answer, such question appears again in an 'extra' box after completing all the training to overcome the learner's weakness towards mistaken questions. In conclusion, there is an unique training system in the TLT that can repeatedly master one's weak points.

1.3 The content of the TLT software

The TLT software has three levels in TOEIC course ranging from A to C accordingly, as shown in Table 1. In this study, the learners are assigned to the A2 course, whose levels are basically between TOEIC 350 to 500, aiming for above 550. However, some of them are assigned to B course, depending on their proficiency level (For more information, see *Notes* in Table 1).

Table 1 Overview of the TLT Newton course

TOEIC Course	# of the Q	Average Time
A course	22,400	150 h
B course	18,700	400 h
C course	2,900	70 h

Notes: A1 course equals to below TOEIC 350. A2 and A3 courses equal to between TOEIC 350 to 500 (A goal for A course is above 550). B1 and B2 equal to TOEIC 500 to 600 (A goal for B course is above 750). C course corresponds to above 600 (A goal for C course is above 850 in TOEIC test score).

1.4 Previous Study in e-learning

Kodera and Yoshida (2007) compared two e-learning systems, Really English and u-Cat through the results of the questionnaire, concluding that the students evaluated more in a use of Really English. ALC Net Academy was utilized by Takashima's study (2006), demonstrating that the learners obtained their TOEIC IP test scores by 60 points on average, although there was no correlations between the study time and the TOEIC test scores, however only task completion percentage had a correlations with TOEIC test score. Watanabe and Aoki (2011) investigated the relationships between the TOEIC test score gains, average task completion rate (quantity), and time on task (quality). It is concluded that their listening score increased more than reading score. At the same time, the study revealed that unsuccessful learner's likelihood of 'improper' study was higher than that of successful learners. Such superficial learning by clicking a random answer without any consideration for understanding the topic was one of the issues to be considered as well as the case of last minute cramming to complete the required task on time.

2 Methodology

2.1 Objective of the study

Objective of the study is to investigate the effects of learners' improvement of English ability in TLT and to examine how learners are able to make use of e-learning effectively. In other words, how the TLT software can be applicable to their learning English. Two research questions are as follows. The first research question is whether or not the students' scores in TLT increased during the semester. The second question is whether or not the learners have any characteristics on e-learning training regarding question styles, that is, questions of each section in the TLT.

2.2 Participants

For the first research question, 175 Japanese students (grade 2 to grade 4) in two private universities in Japan attended in the study. They took pre-post 60 minute Web Test including Listening and Reading during the semester to examine the development of the test score. Average scores of the pre-posttest were compared. All the students were required to do 15 minute e-learning out of class in order to obtain further learning time. The students were assigned to be in the appropriate level of the TLT course such as A, B, C courses after having a diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester.

For the second research question, the TLT e-learning for each part of the TOEIC section was examined whether or not the score of each section increased. In addition, we analyze the students' portfolios to understand what and how they commented on their mistaken questions for their analyses.

3 Results and Conclusion

The result of the study will be announced in the coming conference due to the issue of putting additional data into one for statistical analysis after the end of the spring semester in 2016.

References

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