

Analyzing postsecondary
students' feedback towards the
use of online grammar quizzes
on wh-questions to prepare for
an institutional grammar test

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Introduction

- Many studies have investigated the use of online quizzes for understanding subject knowledge and self-assessing their understanding in different subject areas for tertiary learners at university level.
- **Research Gap**
- But there are few studies which investigate the use of online grammar quizzes to improve students' proficiency in grammar at postsecondary level in Hong Kong.
- Rajaretnam (2004) states that more qualitative and quantitative studies should assure whether online grammar quizzes would actually help improve the students' proficiency of grammar and motivate them to learn English.
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- At the same time, more qualitative and quantitative studies should be carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of using online grammar quizzes to improve the ESL students' overall language proficiency as well as their motivation to learn English. (para., 23)

Research Question

- 1. Does practising with online grammar quizzes help improve students' proficiency of using Wh-questions?
 - 2. What do students perceive to be the benefits and difficulties after using online grammar quizzes?
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Methodology

■ Participants

- An experimental group (N=10) from a class of 34 students from a postsecondary institution in Hong Kong participated in the study from February-March 2008. The participants were from a class (Class PA) of postsecondary students who completed their Form 5 education and achieved poor results in their Hong Kong Certificate in Education Examination (HKCEE). They did not achieve five passes for their HKCEE to be eligible for Form 6 places. The English course that they were currently taking was one of the courses in a postsecondary programme which provided students with an opportunity to achieve an equivalent of five passes for their HKCEE. They were chosen based on low proficiency scores of a previous grammar test.

Reason for control and experimental group

- Why experimental group (N=10) and control group (N=24)
- The storage capacity of the course management system can only register 10 students.
- Both groups receive the same lectures.
- Different arrangements
- Experimental group only had access to online grammar quizzes on wh-questions for practice.
- Control group only did paper-based grammar exercises on wh-question for practice.

■ Method

- 1. The experimental group was given access to a course management system containing links to a website which provided flash quizzes for English study at <http://a4esl.org/q/f/>. The website contains online grammar quizzes in Flash and JavaScript for students to practise their grammar for different parts of speech such as question words (Wh-questions) in the form of multiple-choice and open-cloze formats. The whole length of practice allowed for the experimental group was one week, and it aimed to help them with their institutional grammar test on wh-questions.
- 2. The experimental group was given a pre-test on Wh-questions (10 open-cloze questions) to measure their proficiency before the treatment and a post test after the treatment to measure whether any learning took place.
- 3. Structured interviews were conducted in Cantonese with the 10 students from the experimental group regarding the usefulness of online grammar quizzes.

Data Analysis

- In the study, all statistical calculations were calculated by SPSS software. A probability level of .05 was considered to be statistically significant, 0.05-0.10 to be borderline significant, and higher than 0.10 to be insignificant for the study.
- The experimental group was given a pre-test on Wh-questions to measure their proficiency before the treatment and a post test after the treatment to measure whether any learning took place.
- A paired t-test was conducted with the mean scores of the experimental group to see whether there was any significance between the mean scores of the pre- and post-test.
- All qualitative data was recorded from structured interviews.

_1.Does practising with online grammar quizzes help improve students' proficiency of using Wh-questions?

-Paired t-test results

- The experimental group (N=10) who practised with online grammar quizzes did improve their proficiency in using Wh-questions as they achieved a higher mean score in their post test (M=49) than their pre-test (M=22) with a mean change score showing the learning gain (MCS=27). Also, paired t-test shows that the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test on Wh-questions by the experimental group was statistically significant ($p=.002$, $t=-4.303$) at well below the .05 probability level which mean that the effect of practice of using online grammar quizzes may have an influence on their proficiency in the post-test on Wh-questions.

- . What do students perceive to be the benefits after using online grammar quizzes?

- **Post interviews**

- There were various themes that were repeatedly mentioned from the students of the experimental group regarding usefulness of the online grammar quizzes: 1) convenience; 2) instant feedback; 3) extra practice and reviewing; 4) many exercises and 5) environmentally friendly.
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Convenience (N=9)

- **Student A:** More opportunities to learn English! Using online grammar quizzes is better than paper based online grammar quizzes as you can just go online at anytime and do the online grammar quizzes. But for paper based quizzes, you may not find it that convenient.
 - **Student B:** Convenient and I could arrange my personal time to learn.
 - **Student C:** It can give more choice for me to learn at my own time.
 - **Student D** We could use the computer easily. I mean go online and I could do the online grammar quizzes
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Instant feedback (N=9)

- **Student A:** For paper based online grammar quizzes, you are like carrying something. But for online grammar quizzes, you can press the button very quickly to get the answer.
- **Student A:** For paper-based grammar quizzes, we need to wait for the teacher to go through the answers. I might forget by the time when I wait for the teacher to go over in the lesson. But for online grammar quizzes, I could know what answer was right or wrong from the fast answers.
- **Student D** The fast answers let me know if I was right or wrong. I could check my understanding.
- **Student J:** Yes! You can know your answers quickly to the questions. It is like a person who is teaching you at home when there are answers

Extra Practice and review after class

- **Student A:** Online grammar quizzes help me to review what I have learnt. When the teacher taught me the grammar, I can review and see how much I understand when I go back home.
 - **Student A:** I could practice online grammar quizzes at home.
 - **Student B:** We can learn at our pace and time to learn grammar. Usually we go out to work. But when we go home we can practise and try to improve our grammar. There is a time of freedom to help you to learn.
 - **Student F:** I didn't need to revise the notes. We could quickly do the online grammar quizzes for revision.
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Q and A

- Thank you and God bless!

