The Effect of E-Learning on Iraqi EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency and Their Motivation

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Article Info	Abstract
	E-learning is the application of new multimedia technologies as well as the internet to develop the learning quality by easing access to sources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration. The current quasi experimental study has examined the effect of E-Learning on Iraqi EFL learners' oral proficiency and their motivation. Therefore, to this end, 40 EFL learners were selected based on OPT test from Wassit city, Iraq. The participants whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean score were selected as participants of the study and were assigned to two homogeneous groups. However, one class was allowed to follow up their learning process using the E-learning based instruction, downloading the related materials and follow up online learning, while the learners in the control group followed up their learning process through similar teacher- student learning. The results revealed that the average scores of students in the test before and after using E-learning-based treatment and the average score before using E-learning-based treatment in the experimental group is 72.40 and after that was 77.05 Besides, based on the participants' mean scores in the motivation in pre-test and posttest, the learners' motivation in the experimental group was also higher than those in the control group. The central implication of the current research will alarm the educational policy makers, curriculum designers, and material developers for implementation of the E-learning-based instructions

Background to the study

The concept of E-learning, despite its popularity, is defined here as a kind of learning facilitated under the phenomenon of computer-enabled learning. Nowadays, this naturally includes the internet usage and computer assisted learning as a useful means for learning and teaching in the EFL contexts, both as a chief or additional instructive source. There are also bulks of evidences concerning the relative latent advantages of this kind of technology usage, for both students and teachers and all those were directly or indirectly dealing with the language. As an example, it is recommended that E-learning paves the way for the removal of the temporal and spatial limitations implemented in traditional learning contexts. Besides, some of the applications specific to E-learning allow the students to learn the English in order that they can willingly reach the favorable language sources and directly communicate with native English speakers. Besides, the students, using the E-learning technology, can study English listening, verbal communication, reading, and written communication skills in authentic contexts (Debski & Gruba, 1999; Al-Qahtani, 2016).

In the past, language courses were taught in classrooms, and students engaged in discussion via role-playing. Nevertheless, language learning outside of a classroom is now accessible due to technological advancements and an increase in the usage of mobile devices.As a result, learning a second language in context has become much simpler (Lin et al, 2016). Before getting into the weeds, it's important to provide the groundwork for a clear picture of what Mobile Learning is and how it benefits language learners. Learners utilise their mobile phones to study English outside of the classroom and in non-educational settings and also in a real-world environment. ML is described as this technology.

The majority of people throughout the globe plan to use their mobile phones to access educational resources rather than acquire new technologies. While computers and other electronic gadgets still outnumber mobile devices, this presents an opportunity for English language instructors to update their techniques and resources so that pupils in their classrooms are energized. (Kadhim, W. A, &, Dakhil T. A, & Yahya A. A. 2022).

In brief, E-Learning was defined by many researchers who have concentrated on it. For example, Waterhouse (2003) defined it as a means of computer technology that can be used to progress the application of learning and teaching. Besides, The European Commission (2001, p.23) defines e-learning as "the application of new multimedia technologies as well as the internet to develop the learning quality by easing access to sources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration". Considering a narrower concept, Rosenberg (2001) considered that e-learning help data saving, updating and sharing while Horton (2006, p.9) considers that e-learning paves the way for building up of "learning experiences of information and computer technology". It is so significant to point out that all definitions consensus that e-learning include using computer technology as well as mobiles to ease and improve learning. E-Learning that is the focus of this study refers to the E-Learning that is used by institutions or other apps to enhance teaching and learning and to motivate students' independent learning.

What makes managing a class by an EFL teacher has become central issue in teaching English as foreign language and of significant importance is that he/she wants to reach maximum productivity in teaching English.When language exposure is not much available outside the classroom, English teacher apparently has significant roles in the class. A good English teacher may know not only what to teach and how to teach it but also understand how to build rapport among students, especially for high school students who may have different learning goals such as jobs, immigration, teaching, etc. Most important of all is how to motivate learning, which can be said that it is the driving force for learning a foreign language. Thus, the present study examines the correlation between teachers' management of the classroom and students' language learning and motivation.(Sakran, I.S, & Dakhil, T.A & Yahya, A.A & A. Vallejo, A. J & Abbood, H. M & Koban, H. J. 2022)

Similarly, Debski and Gruba (1999) also proposed that though the positive insertion of E-learning for both teaching and learning of EFL is quantifiable or can be measured, true measurement methods that uphold both the insights of students and teachers towards technology usage still call for consideration. Accordingly, the English teaching centers

throughout the world both privately and publically, are hoping to take advantage from E-learning, and have increasingly urged its implementation for studying EFL, particularly in high schools and English private teaching centers. Therefore, it sounds that there is an urgent need to discover the principal beliefs and attitudes of both students and teachers concerning the E-learning adoption for academic purposes. Besides, oral proficiency refers to the point of skill, which students can use the language. According to Taylor: ''the latter term, the concept of Oral Proficiency igniting something like the ability to make use of competence ...Competence can be regarded as a static concept, having to do with structure, state, or form, whereas proficiency is essentially a dynamic concept, having to do with process and function.'' (Taylor, 1983, p. 166). The concept of proficiency is the ability to use language effectively to ensure the communicative objectives. The general definition of Oral Proficiency in English is the learner's ability to speak and use English for interaction with others. For the development of proficiency in oral English must acquire vocabulary, earn grammar rules, and upgrade an understanding of the subtle semantics of English. At the same time, acquiring proficiency in English involves learning how to communicate with others. However, as the next variable of the study, here are many different definitions for the term motivation. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) define motivation as the learner's orientation regarding the goal of learning a second language. According to Ellliot and Covington (2001), motivation gives the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behavior or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa. Pardee (1990) said that a motive is what encourages the person to act in a certain way or develop an inclination for particular behavior.

Nevertheless, as stated by Gardner (1985), motivation is the combination of attempt plus desire to obtain the aim of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language. Oxford and Shearin (1994) defined motivation as a desire to gain an objective, combined with the energy to work towards that objective. Narayanan (2006) said that motivation is the reason or reasons behind one's actions or behaviors. Motivation is the

reasons underlying behavior (Guay et al., 2010). Broussard and Garrison (2004) defined motivation as the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something.

Despite the literature available concerning the studies conducted on E-learning and its related concepts, the present study may be helpful to explore the effect of E-learning on Iraqi EFL learners' oral proficiency and their motivation. Therefore, the present study, aims to uncover the impact of E-learning on Iraqi EFL learners' oral proficiency and their motivation.

Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, people of different social classes, ages, nations, and professions show a tendency towards learning foreign languages. It is maybe the result of their communication needs through another language, their job requirement and so forth. However, reporting from their point of view, lots of obstacles prohibit them from achieving their goals. The first and the most serious one is the lack of time also there are a variety of other reasons that many people look for new and interesting ways of learning or teaching languages. Furthermore, from among other problems, is the learner's likely outlook about the cliché physical class environment, not liking the teacher, class atmosphere can be mentioned. Therefore, new technologies can compensate for troubleshooting these problems and is regarded as a good resolution.

Significance of the study

The results of the current research are valuable since they manifest more empirical data concerning Technology Learning (TL), E-Learning (EL), and Web-Based Instruction (WBE) known as key concepts in area of language learning and, on the other hand, the concept of E-learnig has become the multitudes of repose and advantages for all the communities in last two decades. These technologies help students perform successfully in particular tasks, such as reading and guiding the students. Moreover, the findings of the current study are beneficial since it aims to encourage the language learners and benefit from E-learning teaching and could take advantage from learning the language in a different context and also, enjoy language learning in a real environment with a teacher in their pocket.

Besides, the present study is beneficial since it uncovers the available literature and shed much more light on the concept of E-learning. Therefore, as information technology rapidly develops and spreads, there is an increasing body of literature that concentrates on the importance of introducing E-learning to facilitate the studying of English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) depending on country or context (Allam & Elyas, 2016). This is particularly the case conducted in the context of Iraq. The E-learning term, even though a challenged notion, is defined throughout this research as computer-enabled learning of EFL. Nowadays, this naturally includes using of the internet as a means for teaching and learning, both as a chief or supplementary educational source. There is also bulk of evidences concerning the relative potential advantageous of this type of technology implementation, for both students and teachers. For instance, it is recommended that this study is beneficial since it provides the option to remove the temporal and spatial restrictions that apply in traditional learning contexts. Besides, some E-learning applications permit students learning English to readily access beneficial language resources and communicate directly with native English speakers. Furthermore, students can acquire English listening, verbal communication, reading, and written communication skills in authentic contexts (Debski & Gruba, 1999; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Al-Hassan & Shukri, 2017).

Consequently, as it was mentioned by Deghanpour (2015), the technology incorporation into the academic context, mostly for L2 Iraqi language learners, encourages the significance of examining its effect on learning development as well as teaching. In fact, there is scarce of researches conducted on the role of E-learning or technology based-learning peculiarly in upgrading the oral skills and motivation to speak fluently. To this end, the findings of the current study intended to uncover the benefits of using the E-learning for improving the oral skills as well as the motivation of Iraqi EFL learners.

The objective of the study

One of the fundamental needs of the EFL learners, is to access to some authorized sources which can be improved through a variety of media available. It can also shift the EFL learners' simple observation to the complex prediction, description and generalization as well as using online activities that can increase EFL learners' retention. The present

research intended to study the effect of E-learning on Iraqi EFL learners' oral skill and their motivation. In fact, this study aims at exploring the probable statistical affects that the e-learning strategy of teaching can have on Iraqi EFL learners' motivation and oral proficiency. To achieve this aim the following research questions were raised:

Literature Review

Theoretical foundation on E-learning

 The existence of models and guidelines recommending pedagogical sounds practices for incorporating Internet-based materials, is a major concern that the number of such examples remains limited. Likewise, guidelines offering a reading course via Internet are similarly few and limited in number.

   Digital technology is quickly transforming how it was read and written. The electronic text provides new text formats for students to comprehend and new ways to interact with new rules. It is important that students learn the new rules involved in texts and that teachers incorporate these new rules into their curriculum so that students learn the skills necessary to use these rules in the real world.

Electronic Learning

When the World Wide Web was launched in 1991, there was a surge of interest in the possibilities of learning through the web or e-Learning. Bowles (2004, p. 3) indicated that "the use of Web as an educational medium was hailed as a harbinger of profound changes for communities, organizations and markets. Therefore, there is still a lack of consensus about what e-Learning represents. "For all the publicity it has received in recent years, e-Learning remains something of an enigma, and its boundaries are far from clear" Bowles (2004, p. 3). According to Gerhard Casper, outgoing president of Stanford University, "how Internet learning will shake out, I really do not know. But I am utterly convinced that over the next ten years we will see shifts from in-residence learning to online learning" (as cited in Muller, 2002, p. 284).

In July 2003, the Department for Education and Skills in the UK stated in its consultative document 'Towards a Unified E-Learning Strategy,' 'If someone is learning in a way that uses Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), they are using e-Learning' (as cited in Clark & Mayer, 2003, p. 4).

The term e-Learning applies to a broad range of ways computing and communication technologies can be used for teaching and learning. Some uses are effective – magnificently so, others are not" (Allen 2006). Allen further explained that e-Learning is the delivery of carefully constructed instructional events through computing technologies. Horton (2006, p. 1) described e-Learning as the "use of information and computer technologies to create learning experiences." These definitions seem very open-ended allowing complete freedom as to how these experiences are formulated, organized and created.In brief, new technologies, including computer networks, interactive-media, digital technologies, and the internet significantly increase the reach of e-learning provision. It enables and allow students to connect and interact with each other, and with their teachers, at any time, and it has opened up a universal market. Thus, many institutions have been attracted to e-learning systems and the e-learning market has grown continuously (Harun, 2001).

E-learning is a distance education method: Most of the authors working in this field have accepted that the conceptual idea of the term e-learning indicates distance education or education delivered online***.***

 E-learning is transactions facility on the web: Some writers have highlighted that the facilities offered via the Learning Management Systems (LMS) exemplify a second e-learning big success. The LMS proposal is an extensive set from the options and communication tools to service the lecturers and their students' interactions and implement daily activities that help improve the learning process.

E-learning is electronically facilitated learning:

The domain relates to the material of e-learning courses itself, rather than the electronic system, whereas it focuses on the material design of the e-books, CD-ROMs and Web sites, to assessment and electronic tests. Even though there are natural differences in all of those tools, they are all mediated electronically (Zemsky & Massy, 2004).

 Piskurich (2003) explains that another problem is that e-Learning is a still-evolving discipline, and what might be considered a good definition today may not even be in the ballpark tomorrow. While there is still debate about what e-Learning is, the growth of the industry is unquestionable and its emergence as a force for transformation has become

inexorable. Call it e-Learning, I Learning, online training, web-based training, or just another tool – whatever we call it, it's still here and it's here to stay. The question isn't what to call it but how to make it work and put it to use." For nations, industry sectors and major geographic regions, e-Learning has become a significant vehicle for collaborating, building knowledge and increasing organization's ability to adapt to change" (Bowles, 2004, p. 21).

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted with a random sample of 60 EFL male and female Iraqi EFL learners with age range between12 to 18, in two EFL English Institutes of *The British Cambridge institute for teaching English language* and *AL-Farabi center* for training in Wassit, Iraq. In this study, in order to homogenize the learners, BABEL test was administered to the EFL Iraqi language learners. The BABEL test was given to learners and based on this; those participants with standard deviation above and below the mean (i.e. mean±1) were selected for this study and then, based on the criteria mentioned earlier, 40 EFL learners were selected for this study. Then the participants were assigned into two groups of experimental and control group.

Instrumentation
The instruments for this study are as follows:

Language Achievement Test

A standard language test, BABEL language proficiency test, was considered for this study. This test is used to determine language students' speaking proficiency level. Its validity and reliability were 0.91 and 0.81, respectively.

The procedure of data collection

In order to collect the required data in this study, first the researcher distributed the standard Babel Test in order to homogenize the learners and after the homogeneity test, 40 EFL learners were selected from among the 60 participants and went under the treatment. For the next step, during a period of 12 sessions that is a regular teaching session at institute centers, the researcher who was also a teacher started to teach the American File (Book One) to the EFL participants in both groups. The EFL learners in the experimental

group kept on their class sessions and beside their physical attendance in the class, they reached a plethora of online sources, related clips, video files online and so on so forth. For example, the participants in the Experimental group, were provided some chances to practice on their oral proficiency outsides of the class. On the contrary, the EFL learners in the control group were banned of Electronic learning and just they were restricted to their text book and all the dialogues and explanations of the class and no more than that. At last, the researcher designed an oral speaking proficiency test which taken from the covered materials in the class, was validated and given to the participants of both groups. Then, the correlation coefficient was run and the related results between both groups were specified. Besides, in order to answer the second question of the study, the Motivation Scale was distributed among the participants in order to obtain their opinion about the E-learning and also the level of their motivation when they are depending on the E-learning-based tools or not using them.

Results

In the present section, the collected data from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) scale as well as the BABEL Test were used to test the research hypotheses. The SPSS program 26 was used to describe the data and do the test hypotheses. In the present study, a questionnaire consisting of 104 items was filled up and the required data were collected in two groups before the treatment (not using E-learning) and after (using E-learning). In order to review the research questions and to explain the information obtained, first descriptive statistics was used and then to test the research hypotheses independent samples *T*-test were used.

A)descriptive statistics related to AMTB's questionnaire for learners in two modes of pre-test and post-test for the control and experimental groups are shown in the following diagrams.
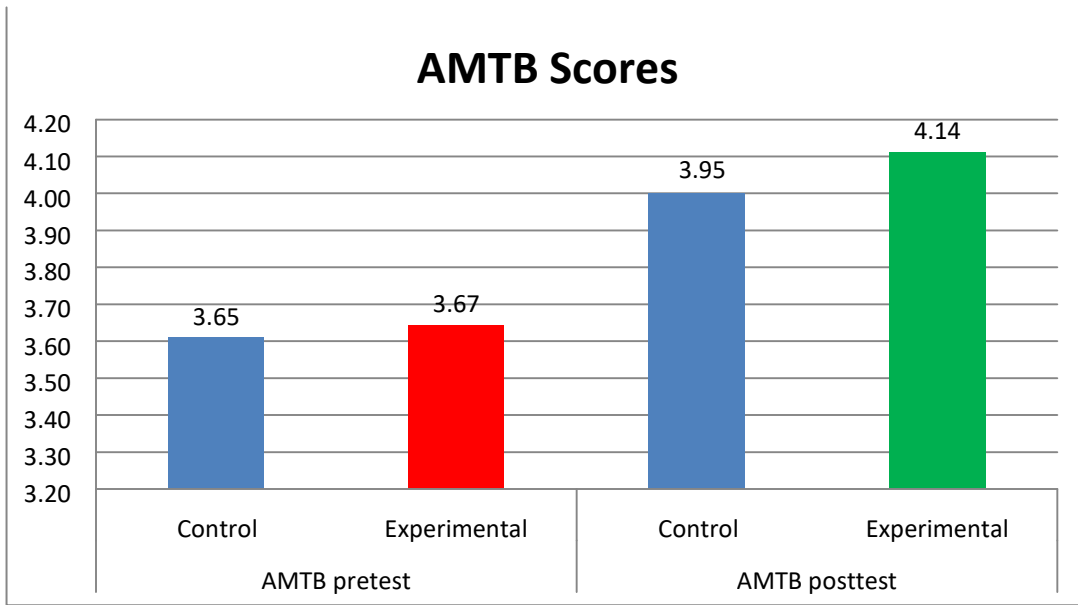
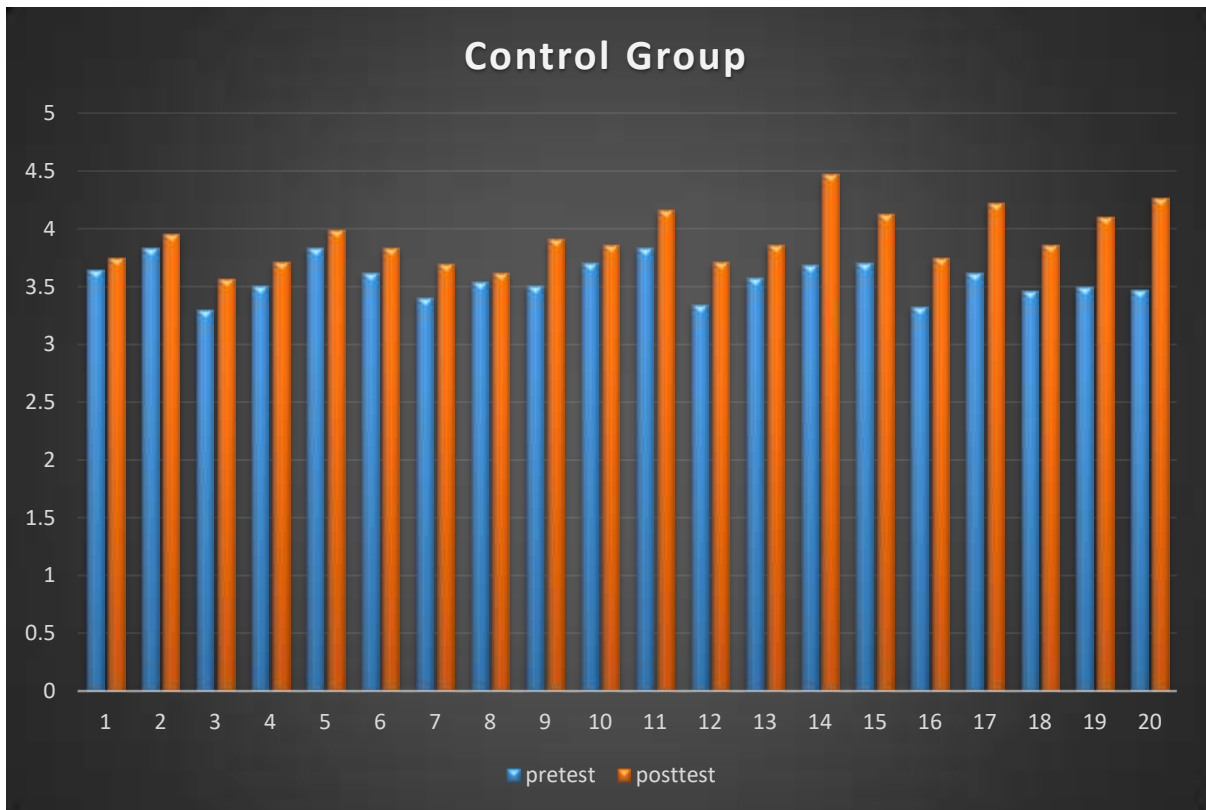*Figure 4.1*. Motivation score distribution in CT score concerning the two groups

Figure 4.2. Score distribution based on pre-test and posttest in control group

As it was depicted in the diagram, the motivation questionnaire scores in the post-test are higher than the pre-test. Besides, based on the provided information in the first diagram, the mean scores of both control and experimental groups in the pre-test are almost equal and, in the post-test, the mean scores of the experimental group are higher. Besides, based on Figures 4.1 and 4.2, it can be revealed that the questionnaire scores in the post-test are higher than the pre-test for both control and experimental groups.

A)The BABEL Test relating to the descriptive statistics for language learners in both pre-test and post-test phases and for both control and experimental groups are shown in the following diagrams.
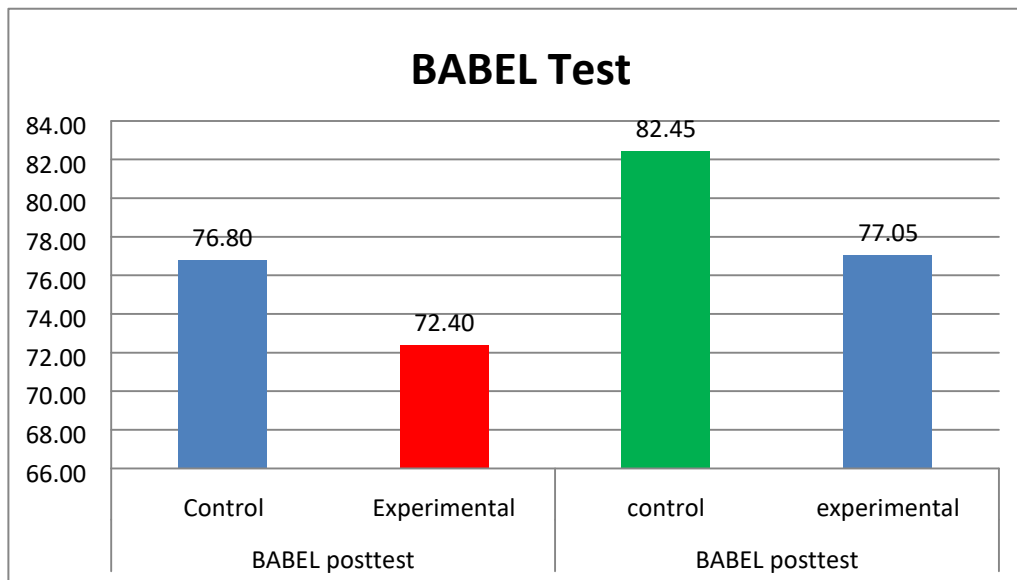

BABEL Test

76.80	72.40	82.45	77.05
Control	Experimental	control	experimental
BABEL posttest		BABEL posttest	

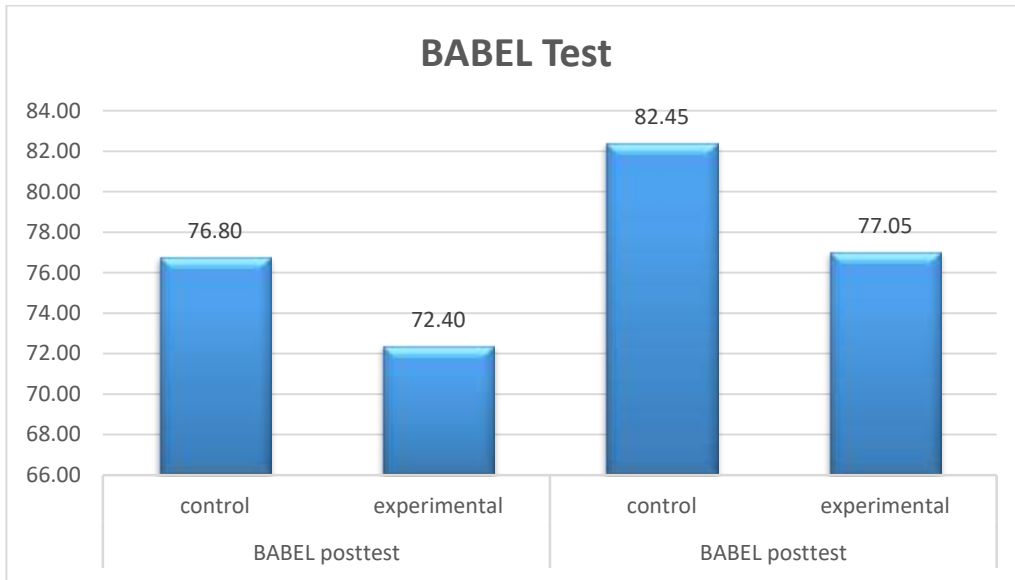*Figure 4.3* Language learning score distribution based on pre-test & posttest

Figure 4.4. Pretest and posttest language learning scores in the experimental group
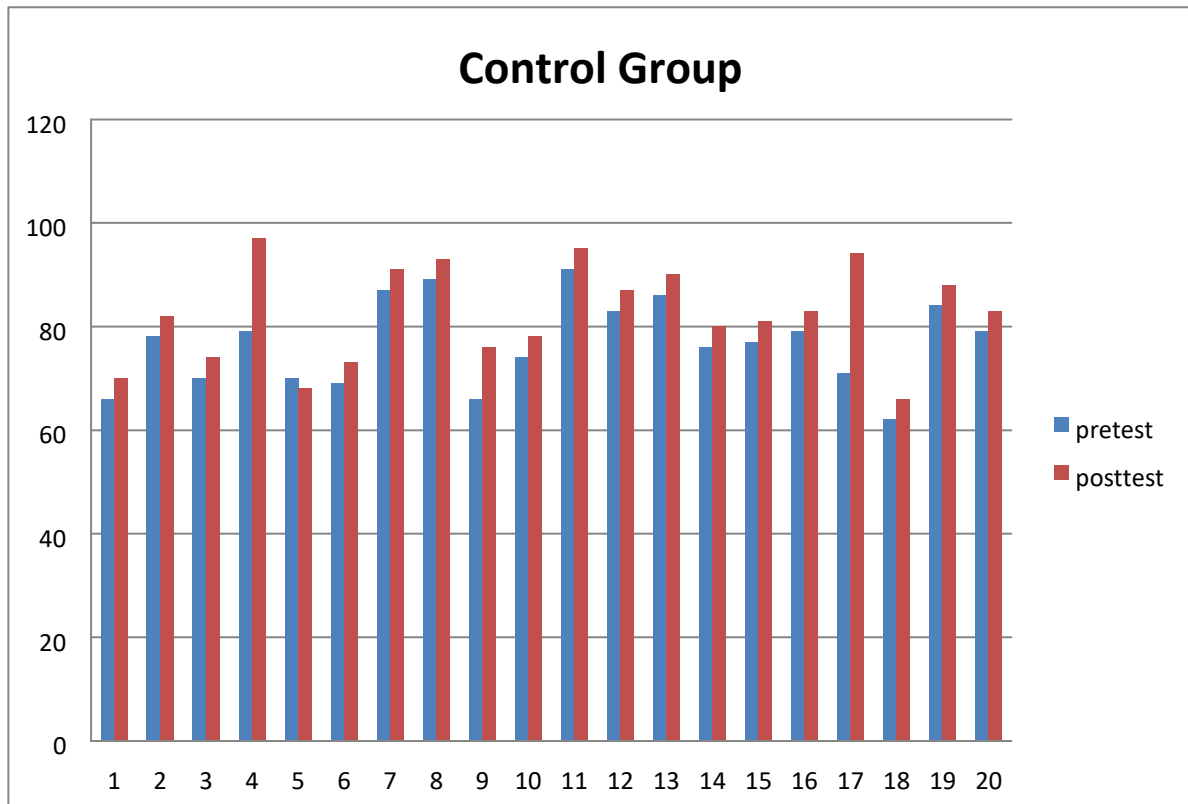
Figure 4.5. Pretest and posttest language learning scores in control group

According to Figures 4.4, the scores in the post-test are higher than the pre-test for both control and experimental groups .To assess the differences in scores of the AMTB questionnaire between the control and experimental groups before and after using E-learning, Independent-samples *T*-test was used.

Discussion

the researcher has provided related statistical findings in the quantitative phase of the study plus the extended and the related explanations in discussing and responding to the two suggested research questions of the study. Consequently, by doing different measures for obtaining some possible answers to the proposed questions in this study, the researcher was to uncover and see if there could be any significant relationships between Iraqi EFL learners' E-learning, motivation and their oral proficiency.The first research question asked: Does using the E-learning technology have any significant impact on the Iraqi EFL learners' speaking proficiency?   In order to answer the first research question of the study, the researcher conducted the oral proficiency test as a posttest after treatment in both classes, the results in tables (4.6, 4.7, & 4.8 revealed that the average scores of students in the test before and after using E-learning-based treatment and the average score before using E-learning-based treatment in the experimental group is 72.40 and after that is 77.05). Moreover, based on the findings in the Table (4.8), the level of significance in Levene's test is 0.011 which is less than 0.05 which suggests a significant difference between the variances of the scores. Thus, the level of significance of independent samples test with equal variances not assumed can be used for analysis. Its amount is 0.023 that is less than 0.05, thus, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in the oral proficiency test. This reveals that the experimental group has outperformed the control group in their oral proficiency test. Accordingly, in concordance with our findings, Sajeva (2006), conducted a study and measured the effects of E-learning on successful learning in general. It was indicated that E-learning plays a significant role in fostering the education. The definition of the term e-learning is still a

work in progress due to the fact that technologies are evolving every day and it is difficult to improve teaching methodologies or to adapt traditional methods to a new or already existing educational model.

Besides, in another similar study and in agreement with the present research findings, the effect of the media and technology on reading comprehension improvement was conducted. Therefore, for this end, the randomized control-group pretest-posttest model, which is a true experimental design, was utilized. The study group consisted of 60 students, who were attending the 5th grade of a public elementary school in Sakarya. The results showed that the reading motivation levels of students who read the texts from the screen were significantly lower than those of students who read the printed material, both in the subscales and the overall scale. Therefore based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that e-learning is beneficial, not only for improving oral proficiency but also for some other language skills such as reading. Similarly, in a related study in agreement with our findings, the advantages of the e-learning and its role in enhancing "English Foreign language" (EFL) students' language skills and independent learning was conducted by Shahi (2016). However, the purpose of this study was to expose a group of the students to an e-learning program and find out the effects of this exposure on their learning skills. The study conducted claims to identify and understand the relationship between multimedia techniques in language teaching and learners' language learning. Its results also suggest that a multimedia environment can increase students' achievement. Finally, in a related study and in agreement with our findings, the EFL students' attitudes towards e-learning as well as the effect of online course on students' success in English were conducted by Erarsalan (2017). It was found that the students have partly positive attitudes towards online course; however, online course does not help students in terms of their overall success at preparatory class. It means that e-learning can generally help students to enhance their learning because students have positive attitudes towards this kind of learning.

Conclusions

In the current study and based on the previous related studies' results, it is noticeable that comparing the views of students and teachers demonstrated that the former seemed more informed than the latter about e-learning technology. The implication is that teachers might lack the requisite knowledge to bring together the two pedagogies (traditional and E-learning). This suggests a clear need to offer training for teachers regarding how to apply such technologies to the educational curriculum. The study therefore prescribes Hampel and Stickler (2005) seminal series of skills, ranging from technological to pedagogical, that teachers could be encouraged to acquire for effective teaching using E-learning. This is supported by Hung (2016), who contended that for users to use E-learning effectively, they require skills, such as the ability to identify resources for learning, selecting and implementing learning strategies, monitoring personal performance, and effectively applying skills and knowledge to reach learning objectives.

Therefore, the research outcomes establish the importance of setting realistic E-learning systems to meet students' and teachers' expectations to promote learning EFL- based instructions in the context of Iraq. As a result, the findings in the present study indicated that implementation of the E-learning-based education can both develop the oral proficiency as well as the motivation of the Iraqi EFL learners. More significantly, the Iraqi EFL teachers and students had positive attitudes toward using E-learning based education.

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