

Learning English in Tandem on



**A Strategy to Promote Online
Communication Skills**

Virtual platforms make it possible for Algerian learners to interact with Native speakers of English using social media or language learning sites

The online tool tested is Skype

Means of Research

Action Research

Objective

to evaluate how effective it is the use of Skype in informal communication environment to develop learners' oral proficiency, conversational and communicative abilities of English language

Results

some implications are provided to foster virtual community-building based on Skype Tandem language learning and encourage educators to employ Skype in Classroom – a strategy to raise higher the standards of teaching and learning foreign languages at Algerian Universities

Tandem?

Language Tandem is a method of *intercultural* and *autonomous* learning with partners

Principle of Autonomy

learners develop their own language learning objectives and collaborate in Tandem activities

Principle of Reciprocity

mutuality i.e. both partners make use of their native languages and invest equal time and effort in learning the target language

Outcomes

Exchange knowledge about language and culture, opinions about life matters as work, love, dreams

Correct mistakes

Suggest ways to improve

getting engaged into activities as watching movies in the original language or online videos, etc

Communication?

Information



*Effective/Intelligible
Received knowledge = to the one sent*

Communication?

Vygotsky

Zone of Proximal Development (1978)

peers being able to offer feedback and stimuli to their counterparts

Lave and Wenger (1991) -- Community of Practice
people from divergent and protruding communities get involved into activities that promote cultural exchange share similar concerns and through regular interaction

Salmon (2000) E-Moderation model

Five stages

enables moderators to facilitate online communication among learners through dialogues

Online Communication

Asynchronous

Delayed-abilities
anywhere and anytime

E.g. attached files,
emails, bulletin board,
newsgroups, threaded
discussion

Synchronous

real-time
actual time instructions,
including slide shows
and multimedia
presentations, sharing
application and data,
whiteboard sharing, live
chat, in addition to audio
and video conferencing

Cultural

**behavior, shared and learned values,
the beliefs of a particular group of
people interacting with other
communities**

Intercultural

**a symbolic, interpretative,
transactional, contextual process**

Formal vs. Informal Communication

Formal Communication	Informal Communication
Scheduled in Advance	Unscheduled
Arranged participants	Random participants
Participants in role	Participants out of role
Preset agenda	Unarranged agenda
One-way	Interactive
Impoverished content	Rich content
Formal language and speech register	Informal language and speech register



**Application
Software**

free download

**sky peer-to-peer
Skyper
Skype**

**Installed on computers, smartphones or tablets
running Mac, Microsoft Windows and Linux, in
addition to Blackberry, Android, IOS, etc.**

Skype tools

instant text messaging,

file exchange,

desktop distance sharing

*free Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
system that offers audio and video calls*

Is Skype a Social Networking or a Social Tool

Social networking

forms of electronic communication

through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)

Google+, Twitter and Facebook, and so does **Skype**

Social Tool

a downloadable software

enables users to share files and desktops to converse via voice or video conferencing calls by creating social groups

Means of Research and Participants

Action Research

qualitative, participative, cyclic and reflective

Focus group Observation

7 participants volunteered to attend Skype conference calls and share their attitudes

Research Journal computer file for data collection

Online Survey

Quantitative

<http://www.qualtrics.com/>

Discussion

Information Technology awareness

- ❑ **Participants ---- 21-24 --- Generation Y (1982-1994) (new advances in internet and mass communication)**
- **Ability to use technological devices**
- ❑ **Access to the internet, technological difficulties: slow internet connexion/internet breakdowns ends the conversation suddenly**
- **Educational reasons of internet use: once to 2 or 3 times a week**

Algerian Learners Perspectives over Skype and Tandem Partners

learners are more in favor of voice over video conferencing calls via Skype

Meaning 10%
Delivery Style 20%
70% bodily Language, non-verbal expressions

Conversing with Native speakers who are not necessarily certified tutors

Online Communication Skills: Strengths and Weaknesses

Participants are more confident

Satisfied about their pronunciation and fluency of performed English

dissatisfied regarding the accent and listening discrimination skill

experienced language barriers as the accent (southern American accent, etc.) or slang (English spoken is different from the English taught)

cultural differences may cause misunderstandings and confusion (as a particular concept may mean something in one culture and it means something else in another culture

Online Communication Skills: Strengths and Weaknesses

socio-cultural topics as

Islam and its relations to scientific research, Muslim women role in society as: work, driving a car, Hijab, education, Western and Islamic civilizations connections, religious holidays, ethnocentrism, living with the parents above the age of 18 whether married or single, haram and halal food, taboo expressions and behavior, polygamy, Islam and terror.

Recommendations on the Use of Skype in Education

Faculties must integrate the use of Skype in the classroom in order to expand the objectives of the curriculum and take learning and teaching at University to international levels

Allows autonomous learning and reduce the need for instructor's help

Connects classrooms with the outside world

Partnering with other schools can enable all learners to broaden their horizons and knowledge, across all subject areas, by working together, and through exploring and understanding differences and similarities

Teachers can motivate the students to read a book and provide an opportunity to meet and converse with the author online

Recommendations on the Use of Skype in Education

Teaching on Skype allows instructors to teach at their spare time either at home, in office or even waiting in the traffic

Teachers can develop their professional skills dealing with diverse students regarding language level, cultural variety, regional and geographical status.

Using Skype in educational setting promotes learners social interaction and rise their awareness and develop their skills in using safely the technologically devices online

Learners conversing have to stick to the point and master turn-taking

Arab learners have to watch their tone and bear in mind the intonational differences between English and Arabic as they may express a wrong meaning using inappropriate tone

One of the Languages learning sites that make use of Skype is *italki*, in which the teachers are certified

Gaining online communication skill is a matter of practice and keeping the conversation alive for a long time

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THANK YOU