

Study Skills Practised By (PTUK) Students of English Language Introductory Courses in Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to investigate about the study skills which are mostly practiced by (PTUK), freshmen and sophomores, Arabic –speaking students who are learning English language introductory courses, namely, Remedial English (no.15200099), English (1)- (no.15200106), and English (2)- (no.15200112). This study also aimed at investigating about the relationship between the mostly practiced study skills and the independent variables of (sex) and (College). To achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers built a 5- domain questionnaire with (30) items which was basically based on related literature; it was refereed and then was adapted and developed to correspond with the questions of the study and the learning environment of the PTUK. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of (340) female and male students representing colleges and different specialization of PTUK with a percentage of (percent30) out of the total of (1122) female and male students representing the whole population of the study consisted of. Results of this study indicate that the domain of "Scheduling and time management" was the first and the highest in level with a Mean of (3.53) and with a Standard Deviation of (0.75); the first and the highest practiced skill within this domain was item no. (1) "I attend lectures without any delay" with a Mean of (4.16) and a Standard deviation of (0.89); the least practiced skill within the domain of "Motivation and attitude" with a high degree was number (22), "During the lecture, I am wakeful, active, and interested in dealing with the information presented." with a Mean of (3.49) and a Standard deviation of (1.02). Results of this study also indicate that there are no statistical differences related to the variables of (sex) and (College). In accordance with the findings and results of this study, the researchers recommend that PTUK should offer more guidance and help to its freshmen and sophomore's students, who are learning English language introductory courses, through crediting a separate course of "study Skills" which can orient and help students anchor their study pursuit with an ultimate goal of being independent learners. The researchers also recommend carrying out further related studies in other universities in Palestine.

Keywords: Study Skills, Palestine Technical University (PTUK), English Courses, Freshmen and Sophomores, Independent learners, Remedial English, English 1, English 2, Arab-speaking learners.

INTRODUCTION

Every freshman and sophomore student of Palestine Technical University- Kadoorie (PTUK) must pass through three introductory English courses: Remedial English (no.15200099) which is a requisite course for students who fail to pass the PTUK's English entrance exam, English (1)-(no.15200106), which is a general English course through which students are exposed to varieties of English language patterns, skills, and structures that are needed when communicating in every-day situations, and English (2)-(no.15200112)

which is an ESP college requirement course. Students who normally study those courses, based on the researchers' mere experience in teaching the mentioned courses, lack different study skills such as (note-taking, organizational skills, and follow-up note-making skills) that can facilitate and, at the same time, enhance their English language learning; in addition, and as far as PTUK is concerned, there is no separate course that students can enroll to which deals with equipping students with the study skills they need while learning English language or even while learning any other courses because, seemingly, it is generally assumed that

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students had acquired those study skills while they were at school. Accordingly, the aim of this study was to identify and investigate about the study skills that are practiced by PTUK students who are studying the mentioned English language courses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this thematic literature review is to present three dimensions which are related to the purpose and questions of this study. The first dimension deals with previous literature findings that establish a connection between practicing study skills and the positive impact on students learning performance: for example [1]. Cited in [2], mentioned that "psychologists find study skills to be the most contributing factor in students' performance at the university level." Nonis, S.A. & Hudson, G.I. [3], cited in [4] mentioned that "the study habits or strategies that students use to learn, such as paying attention in class, being on time, taking good notes, completing homework in a timely manner, and reading the study material before a lecture are likely to impact their performance[5]." Mentioned that "Studies have showed that there is positive relationship between academic achievement and study skills of a student." [6] in [2], stated that "Students who are able to judiciously select and use the required study skills for various academic tasks are usually higher achievers as compared to the ones who are not able to do so [6, 7]", cited in Christin Thorpe: [8], stated that: "An extensive body of research indicates that the knowledge and appropriate usage of study skills (also frequently referred to as study strategies) is an important factor in academic success." Meneghetti *et al.* [6], cited in Christin Thorpe: [8] also found that "high achieving students are able to "recognize the utility of good strategies" and typically use good study skills over less effective study skills." Christin Thorpe: [8] suggested that "in order to increase learning and achievement, lower achieving students need to develop study skills, specifically those that involve higher order/critical thinking skills[7]." cited in Christin Thorpe: [8] found that "though several factors contribute to academic performance, a student's ability to effectively use study skills is a good predictor of academic success. Moreover, he found that study skills are strongly related to learning and achievement, and students should be taught basic study skills to increase their academic performance." [9, 6], cited in [2], stated "to achieve academic excellence, students need to possess essential study skills which include time-management, organization, note taking, reading and critical thinking."

Meneghetti *et al.* [6], cited in [2] stated that "Use of effective study skills is linked to positive outcomes across multiple academic content areas. Students who are exposed to a variety of study strategies and are able to execute them in an appropriate manner are typically higher achievers."

The second dimension deals with previous literature findings assuming that study skills are generally neglected or that students are supposed to have acquired study skills previously at school: for example: Sedita [10], believes that "study skills are an essential component of basic skills which for too long has been neglected." Thomas [11], stated that "It is not uncommon for students to progress through elementary, junior high, and high school with few hints about how to listen to lectures, take notes, write papers, or prepare for and take tests. When they reach college, these students often find themselves lacking essential skills needed for academic success. If they are unsuccessful in developing those skills, their college careers end abruptly [12]. "In his study which aimed at identifying the "degree of possessing study skills (SS) by the students of Tafila Technical (TTU) University from their perspective," indicated that "the degree of possessing study skills by students was mid and there are statistically significant differences attributed to the variables of gender and faculty." Alrefaai, AbdulRab, and Saiful Islam [13], Cited in [4], indicated that "the majority of students study in a haphazard, disorganized way and they just cram before exams." Lammers *et al.* [14], Cited in [2], concluded that "undergraduate students at a mid- southern university showcased only 53.0% of appropriate study behaviors. The study findings also revealed that "students mainly lacked the skills of note-taking, reading, and time management."

The third dimension deals with previous literature findings in accordance with independent variables of (sex) and (college): for example, (Ossai [15], Cited in [2], found that "female students possessed better study skills as compared to their male counterparts." [16], Cited in [2], "did not find any difference in study skills of Humanities and Science cohorts in an Indian university." _Iqbal and Shezadi [9], Cited in [4], in his research paper entitled "Study habits of female students of the university", concluded that "female students of all the departments lack good study habits as well effective study skills[12]." in his study which aimed at identifying the "degree of possessing study skills (SS) by the students of Tafila Technical (TTU) University from their perspective," indicated that": there are statistically significant differences attributed to the variables of gender and faculty."

METHODOLOGY

This study follows the descriptive approach to investigate about "Study Skills" that are mostly practiced by students of PTUK who are studying English Language Introductory Courses. To achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers built a 5-domain questionnaire with (30) items were basically based on related literature.

The questionnaire was reviewed by specialists in English, Educational Psychology, curriculum design, all of whom are members of the teaching staff in

PTUK; correspondingly, the questionnaire was modified and adapted so as to go with the questions of this study and the learning environment of the PTUK.

The validity of the inner content of the questionnaire was verified through the symmetry among the items and their dimensions and through calculating (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient) between each dimension and total level of the all items of the questionnaire; (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient) for the total level reached (0.81). The reliability of the questionnaire was verified through calculating (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient) as it reached a high value of (0.79)

The whole population of the study consisted of (1122) female and male students who are enrolling to English language introductory courses in PTUK during the second semester of the academic year (2018-2019) as stated by the statistics furnished by the Department of Registration and Admission in PTUK.

As shown in table (1), the questionnaire was distributed to a sample of (340) female and male students representing colleges and different faculties of PTUK with a percentage of (percent30) out of the (1122) female and male students representing the whole population of the study.

Table-1: Distribution of sample in accordance with the independent Variables

Percentage	Number	Type	Variable
40%	136	male	sex
60%	204	Female	
52%	177	Humanities	College
48%	163	Scientific	

Questions of the study

The aim of this study was to answer the following two questions

1. What is the level of study skills that are mostly practiced among students of PTUK who are studying English Language Introductory Courses?
2. Are there any significant statistical differences in the means of the study domains When ($\alpha = 0.05$) related to the variable of (Sex) and (College) of students of PTUK who are studying English language Introductory Courses?

The significance of the study

This study stems its significance from the following:

- This study targets a population of PTUK students, who are studying English language Introductory Courses, representing different faculties in different colleges, whom the Palestinian Society pins many hopes on the skills they are equipped with, especially, "Study Skills" that have a considerable effect on their achievement, accomplishment, long-term development, and daily-life.
- This study can orient higher education planners towards adopting strategies merging study skills within the curriculum of English language which, in turn, can lead to the development of evaluation techniques and teaching methods as well.
- As far as the researchers can view, the research in the field is limited especially the relationship between study skills and English language learning; as a result, this study can motivate other research on different phases and levels of the mechanism of studying and how universities can help students, who are studying English language Introductory Courses, become independent learners

which stands for the sole spirit of studying English language at university.

Limitations of the study

The study was carried out during the second semester of (2018-2019) in PTUK and was limited to those freshmen and sophomore students who were studying English language introductory Courses. This study was also limited in its instrument-questionnaire-which was basically based on the previous literature in the field, and which contained five domains of study skills so as to go the questions of the study and the learning environment of PTUK.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The researchers used the (SPSS) package to calculate total value of the Means (M) and the Standard Deviations (SD) for the students' responses to the five domains of the questionnaire in order to answer the first question of the study: "What is the level of study skills that are mostly practiced among students of PTUK who are studying English language introductory Courses?". The researchers also used the SPSS package to calculate the Means (M) of students' responses for each skill separately and in accordance with the Independent Variable (sex) and (college).

The researchers used (SPSS) package to test the null hypotheses that are stemmed from the second question of this study: "Are there any significant statistical differences in the means of the study domains When ($\alpha = 0.05$) related to the variable of (Sex) and (College) among students of PTUK?" Table (2) shows the statistical standard that was used to explain the students' responses to each item of the questionnaire.

Table-2: Statistical Standard that was used to explain the students' responses to each item of the questionnaire

The level of Study Skills practiced Among Students of PTUK.	Mean
Very low	From (1)- less than (1.80)
low	From (1.80)- less than (2.60)
Medium	From (2.60)- less than (3.40)
High	From (3.40)- less than (4.20)
VERY high	From (4.20)- less than (5.00)

The results of the first question of the study: "what is the level of study skills practiced by students of PTUK who are studying English language

introductory Courses", are presented downwardly in table (3):

Table-3: Means and the Standard Deviation for the students' responses to the five domains of the questionnaire presented downwardly

level	Standard Deviation	Mean*	Rank	Domain	Number
High	.64	3.74	1	Scheduling and Time-Management Domain.	1
High	.65	3.68	2	Note-taking and studying aids Domain.	2
High	.68	3.62	3	Memory and Concentration Domain.	3
High	.67	3.59	4	Writing Domain.	4
High	.75	3.53	5	Motivation and attitude. Domain.	5
High	.53	3.63		Total	

.*(5) Highest – (1) Lowest

As shown in Table (3), the total level of practicing study skills among the subjects of the sample in PTUK is (high) with a Mean of (3.63) and with a Standard Deviation of (0.53); Table (3) also reveals that the domain of " Scheduling and time management " was the first in the rank of practicing with a Mean of (3.74) and with a Standard Deviation of (0.64) which represents a high level. Table (3) also reveals that the

domain of "Motivation and attitude" came last in the rank of practicing with a Mean of (3.53) and with a Standard Deviation of (0.75).

The Means and Standard Deviations for each skill of the subjects' responses of the sample and for the rest of other domains are shown in Table (3).

Table-4: Means and Standard deviation for the subjects' responses for each skill downwardly listed according to Means and in accordance with the number of each skill in the questionnaire

Degree	Standard Deviation	Mean	Rank	Item	Number of the Item
High	.98	4.16	1	I attend lectures without any delay.	1
High	.91	4.09	2	I take into consideration surprising and urgent events such as sickness and other occasions.	6
High	.92	4.03	3	I allocate enough and needed time to complete studying.	4
High	1.02	3.92	4	I avoid any contradicting activity with my study schedule.	5
High	.98	3.89	5	I allocate enough time for each studying skill of English language.	3
High	.98	3.87	6	I invest my time when I am prepared to study English language.	2
High	1.00	3.82	7	I follow a specific system of jotting down notes on the margins of the English textbook.	19
High	1.11	3.80	8	I listen attentively to the lecture and take notes simultaneously.	16
High	1.12	3.79	9	I organize notes in a practical way to help me memorize them	14

High	.94	3.79	10	I review my notes in a regular manner.	18
High	1.02	3.76	11	I sort out and partition tasks and homework so as to easily accomplish and comprehend them.	15
High	.97	3.74	12	I review loudly what I learned loudly.	13
High	1.04	3.73	13	I Xerox lectures that I miss from my classmates.	17
High	1.09	3.73	14	I contemplate the material I learned and repeat it to focus my memorization	9
High	1.12	3.72	15	I listen attentively during the lecture.	10
High	1.07	3.71	16	I remember the material which I have comprehended.	8
High	1.04	3.66	17	I focus my attention and the follow-up on the studied material.	11
High	1.27	3.66	18	I can isolate audio-visual distractions.	12
High	1.12	3.65	19	I allocate enough time and suitable place to complete studying English language.	7
High	1.06	3.64	20	I review what I write in a critical way to spot errors.	29
High	1.04	3.64	21	I am able to express ideas in a written format.	27
High	1.17	3.64	22	My classmates Xerox my notes and summaries which will enhance my trust in myself.	30
High	1.05	3.63	23	Writing increases my ability to comprehend the required material.	28
High	1.03	3.59	24	I write a summary of the required material in a way that helps me remember it.	26
High	1.02	3.54	25	During the lecture, I sit in place through which I can participate and follow-up.	20
High	1.06	3.54	26	I build up a good relationship with the lecturer.	24
High	1.26	3.53	27	I I care about organizing information of the required material to help me memorize them.	21
High	1.08	3.52	28	I organize the material of study in a question-answer method so as to better comprehend and memorize it.	23
High	1.17	3.51	29	I motivate and reinforce myself through recalling human models who have achieved accomplishments.	25
High	1.02	3.49	30	During the lecture, I am wakeful, active, and interested in dealing with the information presented.	22
High	.53	3.58			

.Highest level (5) – Lowest Level (1)*

As shown in Table (4), the total level of practicing study skills was (High) with a Mean of (3.58) and a Standard Deviation of (0.53), and the first practiced skill with a high degree was number (1) "I attend lectures without any delay" with a Mean of (4.16) and a Standard deviation of (0.89); table (4) also reveals that the least practiced skill with a high degree was number (22) , " During the lecture, I am wakeful, active, and interested in dealing with the information presented ." with a Mean of (3.49) and a Standard deviation of (1.02).

In regard to the second question of this study, "Are there any significant statistical differences in the

means of the study domains When ($\alpha= 0.05$) related to the variable of (sex) and (College) among students of PTUK who are studying English language introductory Courses?", the researchers tested the null hypotheses stemmed from it as follows:

The researchers tested the first null hypothesis that is stemmed from question number (2) of this study: "Are there any significant statistical differences in the means of the study domains when ($\alpha= 0.05$) related to the variable of (sex)"; the (Independent Sample t-test) results, as shown in table (5), indicated that there are no significant differences among the responses of the sample of this study related to the variable of (sex).

Table-5

(a)	(t)	Level of Freedom	Standard Deviation	Mean	No.	Sex	Domain
.05	2.00	168	.53	3.90	136	Males	Scheduling and Time-management Domain. Note-taking and studying aids Domain.
			.51	3.74	204	Females	
.96	.04	168	.61	3.74	136	Males	Memory and Concentration Domain. Writing Domain.
			.72	3.74	204	Females	
.03	2.15	168	.56	3.92	136	Males	Motivation and attitude Domain Scheduling and Time- management Domain.
			.54	3.74	204	Females	
.01	2.48	168	.55	3.90	136	Males	Note-taking and Studying Aids Domain. Memory and Concentration Domain.
			.51	3.70	204	Females	
.07	1.83	168	.46	3.85	136	Males	Writing Domain.
			.46	3.72	204	Females	
.06	1.93	168	.46	3.86	136	Males	Total
			.45	3.73	204	Females	

The researchers tested the second null hypothesis that is stemmed from question number (2) of this study: "Are there any significant statistical differences in the means of subjects' responses on the domains of the questionnaire of this study, when (a= 0.05) related to the (College) variable among students

of PTUK who are studying English language introductory Courses?"; the (Independent Sample t-test) results, as shown in table (6), indicated that there are no significant differences among the responses of the sample of this study related to the variable of (college).

Table-6

(a)	(t)	Degree of freedom	Standard Deviation	Mean		College	Domain
.23	1.19	168	.54	3.79	177	humanities	Scheduling and Time-Management Domain. Note-Taking and Studying Aids Domain.
			.45	3.91	163	scientific	
.24	1.17	168	.61	3.71	177	humanities	Memory and Concentration Domain. Writing Domain.
			.84	3.86	163	scientific	
.53	.62	168	.60	3.81	177	humanities	Motivation and Attitude Domain. Scheduling and Time-management Domain.
			.35	3.88	163	scientific	
.26	1.11	168	.56	3.77	177	humanities	Note-taking and Studying aids Domain. Memory and Concentration Domain.
			.44	3.89	163	scientific	
.30	1.02	168	.49	3.77	177	humanities	Writing Domain.
			.37	3.86	163	scientific	
.22	1.22	168	.48	3.77	177	humanities	Totals
			.38	3.88	163	scientific	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of this study indicated that the domain of " Scheduling and Time- Management " was the first

in the rank of practicing among students of PTUK who are studying English language introductory courses, and the first practiced skill within this domain was number (1) of the questionnaire : " I attend lectures without any

delay" ;while the domain of" Motivation and attitude" came last in the rank of practicing and that the least practiced skill in this domain was number (22) of the questionnaire : "During the lecture, I am wakeful, active, and interested in dealing with the information presented."

The researchers can explain this result by stating that attending lectures is an obligation enforced by the regulations of PTUK which are applicable and valid to all registered students and for all courses without any exception; furthermore, students who are studying English language Introductory courses are always provided with a complete and a weekly scheduled course outline which they must follow while studying the mentioned English courses. This result can orient the attention to the fact that whenever study skills are more orchestrated and structured by the university the more helpful and fruitful they would be.

Results of this study also indicated that there are no significant differences in the level of practicing study skills related to independent variables of this study, namely, the variable of (sex).The researchers can explain this result by stating that PTUK students who are studying English introductory courses are mostly freshmen and sophomores approaching their first aspects of university life, females and males side by side ,which is something very different from school life when studying in segregation. This new attribute as "a university student" for both males and females may yield the same competitive dimension among the students. In addition, both female and male students may have the same desire, challenge, and expectations in regard to getting higher averages that can help both of them throughout their university life and in enlarging the prospects of getting a good job in the future due to the fact that English is an international language that may affects their future job. By the same token, this study disagrees with the study of (Ossai [15], Cited in [2] which found that "female students possessed better study skills as compared to their male counterparts." and the study of (Iqbal and Shezadi [9], Cited in [4], which found that "female students of all the departments lack good study habits as well effective study skills." Concerning the second independent variable (College). This study also disagrees with the study of [12], which indicated that "there are statistically significant differences attributed to the variables of gender and faculty."

This study agrees with the study of Sekar and Rajendran [16], Cited in [2], that there are no significant differences in study skills of Humanities and Science colleges in an Indian university. The researchers can further explain this result by stating that PTUK students who are studying English introductory courses are mostly freshmen and sophomores studying these courses as a mandatory university requirement and they are not yet classified according to their

colleges: all students of all colleges must study these courses before even studying other courses of their specialization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and results of this study, the researchers recommend the following: first, PTUK should offer more guidance and help to its freshmen and sophomores students, who are learning English language introductory courses, through crediting a separate course of "study Skills" which can orient and help students anchor their study pursuit reaching the ultimate goal of becoming independent learners. Second, the researchers recommend conducting further studies on the effect of practicing study skills on students' achievement in English Language Introductory Courses.

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