Effectiveness of Tell Me More in Enhancing Communication Skills

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Abstract - Tell Me More is a language solution that contains modules of different topics and context that enable students to practice their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills incorporated in English courses. The study assessed the effectiveness of Tell Me More in enhancing the communication skills for measures to improve the implementation of the program. The participants of the study are 108,paramedical and non-paramedical students . A self-made instrument was utilized; the statistical tools include Weighted Mean and T-Test using PASW version 18.. Tell Me More is perceived Highly Effective in enhancing the listening and speaking skills of users while effective in enhancing the writing and reading skills. There is no significant difference between the responses of paramedical and non-paramedical students on the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE. Users disagree that they encounter problems and conflicts in the use of Tell Me More. English teachers are advised to explore and utilize the modules and units related to writing and reading in order to improve users' skills on the said areas. Additional or reinforcement activities may be given to complement the available modules. The yearly training or refresher course on the implementation of Tell Me More may be continued to ensure the smooth flow of the courseware utilization.

I. INTRODUCTION

The performance of students in English has been a great challenge to teachers nowadays since many examinations revealed that students do not show a very impressive level of competence. Since learners nowadays are technology savvy and computer literate, the use of a language courseware, Tell Me More has been considered by the university as a tool to reshape and improve learners' competence in English. It is widely acknowledged that students learn best when they see the value of the information presented in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to use a variety of teaching methods and make the classroom environment stimulating and interactive in order to help students reach their goals.

Due to the impact and influence of information technology on society and education, more and more colleges or universities start to employ computers for foreign language teaching and learning. Computer applied learning environment has been taken as an ideal way to facilitate second language acquisition in recent years (Li,2012).

One way to do this may be to develop an active teaching approach, using technology to stimulate the students' interest in English language learning .(Guemide & Benachaiba,2014).

Robyler (2007) had pointed out that it is the educator's task to consider means to fully incorporate technology as a regular part of their planning in the classroom. Successful teacher technology should be integrated to classroom instruction. However, Integrating technology in the classroom assumes the teacher's ability to use the digital tools in flexible way to accomplish educational objectives.

Dooley (2008) said that encouraging the use of educational technology in secondary language education has wider implications. She added that to prepare our students to be responsible citizens in an increasingly technologically advanced society, then our way of teaching our students must reflect this.

Tell Me More is a language solution that contains modules of different topics and context that enable students to practice their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. . Each module offers exercises and drills which students have to accomplish. The teacher, being the administrator of the software tracks the students performance through a server and may design a particular curriculum for the day for the class. Lyceum of the Philippines –University, the locale of the study adopted the TMM courseware as a tool in teaching English and has been integrated in subjects like Study and Thinking Skills(English 1), which focuses on

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reading and analytical skills and English 3- Business Communication, mainly on oral and written communication , catering both paramedical and non-paramedical courses. TMM is a language software, considered the perfect solution for language learning inside the classroom as well as the language lab. TMM offers students the latest in language learning technology while teachers can easily track progress , manage classes or customize learning paths.(TMM Manual)

Combining the proven instructional design of the communicative approach with state –of the art-technology, each TELL ME MORE LAN solution is equipped with advanced speech recognition, additional business and cultural workshops, interactive listening and speaking workshops, interactive reading and writing activities, grammar rules classified by level, 10,000 vocabulary words, printable job aids and detailed report sent to learners. (TMM Manual)

Lyceum of the Philippines –University is one of those schools which never goes out of the teaching trend. The software has been in the system for more than two years. Since the students are not very much immersed yet to the culture of using technology in learning English from a courseware like TMM, there have been both positive and negative feedbacks in the introduction of the software, thus, the primary reason for pursuing this study to determine as to whether it has been an effective tool of enhancing the communication skills of the users and solicit suggestions on how the implementation or use of software in English classes may be enhanced.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The researcher embarks on this study to assess the effectiveness of Tell Me More in enhancing the communication skills of its users in order to arrive at measures on how to improve the implementation of the program. Specifically, it aimed to (1) determine the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in enhancing the communication skills;(2) determine the difference between two groups of responses (3)present the conflicts/problems encountered in the use of the software , and (4) propose measures to improve the implementation of the software

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference on the level of effectiveness of Tell Me More in enhancing communication skills when grouped according to program.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology continues to be used for all sorts of specific language learning activities, such as oral practice and reading and writing skills development. However, ICT seem to be particularly successful when integrated into project-based language learning (Beckett & Miller, 2006), where English can be acquired naturally through themed activities and different subject disciplines. A typical scenario within the primary sector might consist of a sequence of content-driven, language-based activities that culminate in a significant event such as an oral presentation, or a specific task like writing a letter or essay.

There is also the recognition that there is a place for computer assisted language learning (CALL), particularly for independent, self-paced learning via assessable assets such as language games and drilled activities. This type of learning can be particularly effective due to the immediate feedback that is offered to the user, and indirectly the teacher, a highly significant attribute of visible learning. (Hattie,2009).

Computer-assisted language learning has received respectable amount of attention among researchers and language teachers. A study by *Mohammad et.al (2013)* study is primarily concerned with the students' attitudes towards computer-assisted language learning. Its main purpose is to investigate what the Iranian high school students' general attitudes are towards computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and using CALL for teaching EFL receptive skills including reading and listening. The methodology employed a replication design and questionnaire approach. The findings demonstrate that most of the students have positive attitudes towards CALL and using it in language receptive skills teaching.

Mushangwe (2014) examined the use of computer-assisted pronunciation practice in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The paper is based on the concept of de-foreignizing sounds for a foreign language. The results showed that after the computer-assisted pronunciation practice, over 75% of the students had better perception of the Chinese second and third tones which they were not able to differentiate before the computer-assisted pronunciation practice. It concluded that though this computer-assisted pronunciation practice might be time consuming, it can be also an effective method to stimulate students' interest in Chinese.

Liu (2012) investigated the attitudes towards, and practices of, computer-assisted autonomous learning in learning English of 160 students from three different

higher education institutions in China. To do this, a questionnaire was completed by 160 participants, and follow-up in-depth interviews were undertaken with six participants and six of their teachers. It revealed that the students have a positive view of computer-assisted autonomous learning. Also, it is believed that, with the development of Information Technology (IT), some English language learning problems, such as inefficient learning strategies and limited oral and listening ability that English teaching in China has faced for many years, may be solved. Both the students and the teachers have made favourable comments on the effectiveness of computer assisted language learning, which is more effective than other ways to learn English. Recommendations were made for enhancing teacher training, updating English coursebooks with relevant websites and investing more funds in learning facilities for higher education students.

Hurkmans and Goos (2013) initiated a study on the use of Smartschool as a electronic platform for blended language learning by motivated employees in the workplace had one major finding: attrition . It suggested that this approach is not likely to be an effective approach for improving overall language proficiency in this context, especially for 0-beginner.

In the study of Warchauer and Liaw (2011) ,all students in the program were provided MP3 players to "extend the class" beyond normal instructional hours, "address varying skill levels," and "individualize lessons" for students who worked in different hotel areas.. Podcast lessons included pronunciation or listening exercises geared to the particular needs of students, such as lessons on wines and spirits designed for a student who worked as a banquet server. A formal evaluation indicated that students in the program made substantial gains in both English and computer skills, resulting in many cases in increased career opportunities. Some educators report that students pay especially close attention to detailed aspects of their speech when recording such podcasts. Blogs are a potentially valuable tool for teaching writing in the students' second language. Their capacity for allowing users to publish and share their writings quickly, easily, and with only a minimum of computer knowledge opens a number of possibilities for the learning of second language writing.

Collaborative writing tools are valuable for promoting writing fluency and strategies and for helping students develop a more confident identity as English writers. In general, the tools may be less useful for promoting writing accuracy or basic writing mechanics, but that will depend in part on how they are used. In contexts where a focus on mechanics and accuracy is the principal goal, teachers or advisors can set up special activities using these tools to accomplish that goal (e.g., using wikis to find and correct mechanical errors in previously written texts) or supplement the tools with other resources, and other language structure tools

Wang (2011) embarked *on* investigating the students' perceptions of computer-assisted whole language instruction; (2) to examine the effectiveness of whole language instruction on students' reading improvement; and (3) to determine the difference between basic-level and advanced-level students' improvement in reading skills. A total of 212 freshmen (98 low level and 114 high level students) were quasi-randomly selected as the participants of the survey study. Instruments included a questionnaire and the English Entrance Examination. The results of the study indicate most students evaluated the instruction positively and revealed that integrated instruction is effective in improving students' reading ability.

Prathibha (2010) noted that students' motivation increases in the use of computers and enables learners to gain independence. Computer-Assisted Language strategy, student's language proficiency became much better than in normal classroom communication, and their grammatical competence increases. Students get meaningful reading practice. The web impacts on resource-based learning and access to real world information.

Kenning (2007) posits that the motivation for ICT integration into language education is significant because of the inherent role ICT plays in everyday communication. This is not confined to equipping learners with transferable skills such as electronic literacy, but entails "the fact that language, in today's world, tends to be experienced as mediated communication" .

DelliCarpini (2012)stressed that technology should be incorporated into teaching pedagogy so that students will not only effectively acquire a second language but will also develop electronic literacy skills and technology in language learning is not being used to its full potential and that inadequate teacher training and learner training are some of the main reasons for this.

Information technology may assist in the facilitation of learning or serve as the actual educational structure allowing learning to occur. Information technology benefits both traditional education institutions and online educational models in fundamental ways.

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Multimedia presentations, knowledge-management software, video conferencing, cloudcomputing and collaborative document editing are notable information technology services benefiting education. Now information technology has made it easy to study a swell as teach in groups or in clusters. (Rodinadze & Zarbazoia,2012).

Even with the most sophisticated language learning software available, with remarkable features motivational elements, unwillingness to experiment as language instructors will render the programme useless and leave the whole language learning experience of students in tatters. That said, the human factor cannot be discounted at any cost. No programme can be termed as be all and end all. Where necessary, the language instructor must and should complement the software in order to make the entire learning experience a worthwhile effort for the students. This holds very true for us as English language instructors. The faculty's role in ensuring the maintenance and usage of this software in an English classroom is of paramount importance too. Otherwise, the software might end up on the shelves of the language laboratories as another "white elephant". Failure to make use of an available programme will deprive our students of the experiences of enjoying a motivating learning experience.(TMM Manual)

Jayag et. al (2006) conducted a study to assess if there is impact when teachers and students use educational technology in teaching and learning Science subjects. The study revealed that teachers are normally using all the educational technologies considered in the study on their teaching specifically in Science. Moreover, both the students and teachers have the same level of understanding as far as the utilization of educational technology is concerned. The students' performance based on the learning gained via the use of educational technologies in teaching is on the average level. The teacher and students' perception as far as the amount of learning gained by the latter on the use of audiotechnology vary from one another. The researcher learned that the utilization of educational technologies in teaching bears no significant impact on student's learning. In view therefore, there could be other factors that directly relate with the amount learning gained by students. The researchers recommended that teachers should look for technology materials that could raise the amount of learning gained by students in a subject. The study also put forward on the frequent use of technology in teaching.

Hans and Rensburg (2014) studied the effect of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on performance in the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) listening module. Two groups of participants enrolled in the same major, had equivalent general English background and attended the TOEIC listening class twice a week with the same teacher – the researcher in 7 weeks at the College of Finance and Customs, in Vietnam. There were 25 students in the treatment group and the control group. The quasi-experimental method, questionnaire and post-test were used in this study. The material input was designed with the application of CALL introduced into the treatment group only whereas the control group still learned with the current textbook only. The results showed that there was difference in the performance on TOEIC listening test scores between two groups. The students in the treatment group used listening strategies more effectively than the students in the control groups. Moreover, CALL instruction and teaching method increased the students' TOEIC listening scores significantly.

IV. METHODS

Research Design

The study is a descriptive research which aims to describe the level of effectiveness of Tell me More as perceived by users. According to Brabury Jones et. al.(2010),descriptive studies help discover new meaning, describe what currently exists, verify the rate of which something occurs and categorize the information . Thus, the researcher chose this design for the study as it facilitates the precise actions. The researcher aims to achieve such as identifying any issues with current practice or justifying current practice.

Participants

The participants of the study are 108 TELL ME MORE users, out of 1,080 users of the software , both paramedical and non-paramedical groups.

Instrument

The self-made instrument consists of 45: 40 items on the first part which is about the perceived effectiveness of TELL ME MORE in enhancing the four macro skills , 5 items on the conflicts encountered in the use of TELL ME MORE .

The instrument was presented to faculty members administering the software for comments and suggestions. After the adjustments, the instrument was pilot tested to the researcher's students who are also

TELL ME MORE users. The first part used the scales 4- Very Effective (VE); 3- Effective (E); 2- Less Effective (LE); 1- Not Effective at All (NE). The second part used the scales 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Procedure

The researcher first read books, magazines and periodicals to capsulize the study. Afterwards, the proposal was submitted to the Research Center for approval. The assigned review committee refereed the paper and suggested for improvement. Thereafter, the modified form has been transmitted to the Research Center for final scrutiny. Instruments were distributed to the respondents with the help of English teachers. Data gathered were tallied, encoded and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The statistical tools used in this study include Weighted Mean for the level of effectiveness of the software in enhancing the communication skills and independent sample T-Test to determine the significant difference on the responses of the two groups of respondents. . The needed data were treated using PASW version 18 to further analyze the results.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing Listening Skills

Listening Skills	WM	VI	Rank
1. TMM provides various learning situations that make me receptive	3.59	HE	3
2. TMM makes me think critically as I listen	3.57	HE	5
3. TMM allows me to analyze as I listen	3.71	HE	1
4. TMM stimulates my creative thinking and imagination from the listening extracts	3.56	HE	6
5. TMM gives information as I listen.	3.58	HE	4
6. TMM enhances my notetaking skills.	3.21	E	10
7. TMM improves my memory.	3.53	HE	7
8. TMM allows me to deduce meaning from listened Information	3.34	E	9
9. TMM introduces me to various accents.	3.60	HE	2
10. TMM helps me cope to dictations.	3.50	HE	8
Composite Mean	**3.52**	**HE**	

Table 1 reveals the effectiveness of Tell Me More in enhancing the listening skills of users.

TMM is perceived highly effective, in the first spot, with a weighted mean score of 3.71 in allowing users to analyze while listening followed by its highest effectiveness in introducing users various accents as they listen(WM- 3.60) and in providing .In addition, TMM is also highly effective in providing various learning situations that make the users receptive, 3.59.

Meanwhile, in the last 3 spots, TMM is perceived Highly Effective in helping users cope to dictations(3.50), Effective in allowing users deduce meaning from listened Information and enhancing their notetaking skills, WM- 3.34 and 3.21 respectively .

Users find it difficult to understand spoken message due to the accents used in the software. They must be trained more and get used to listening activities. Focus is needed in order to understand and complete the TMM listening activities.

Table 2. Effectiveness of   TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing Speaking Skills

Speaking Skills	WM	VI	Rank
1. TMM contains situations that challenge my speaking skills.	3.69	HE	2
2. TMM allows me to interact with another speaker	3.55	HE	8.5
3. TMM teaches me pronunciations and proper enunciations	3.75	HE	1
4. TMM teaches me correct stressing of words	3.67	HE	3
5. TMM provides coaching on intonation	3.58	HE	5.5
6. TMM guides me on correct pausing and juncture.	3.45	E	10
7. TMM allows me to imitate foreign accents	3.59	HE	4
8. TMM helps me develop confidence in speaking.	3.55	HE	8.5
9. TMM prepares me to speaking challenges in the future.	3.58	HE	5.5
10. TMM involves me in dialogues and conversations.	3.56	HE	7
Composite Mean	**3.60**	**HE**	

Table 2 presents the effectiveness of Tell Me More in enhancing the speaking skills of users.

In topmost rank with a weighted mean of 3.75, TMM is perceived Highly effective in teaching

pronunciations and enunciations, for containing situations that challenge users' speaking skills (3.69) and for teaching correct stressing of words (3.67).

However, in the last few ranks, TMM helps users develop confidence in speaking, allows users to interact with another speaker, both highly effective in the same rank (3.55) and least in guiding for correct pausing and juncture (3.45).

TMM is rich in activities that will teach the basics in speaking where users mimic and imitate phonetic activities. Users do enjoy doing things like these. Users may not have enough opportunities where they can show the confidence they have obtained from repetitive exposure to the exercises. No text is provided by the software where users can see how they speak a long speech or text. Only words or phrases are used as springboard for speech enhancement.

Table 3. Effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing the Communication Skills in terms of Writing kills

Writing Skills	WM	VI	Rank
1. TMM provides review in grammar.	3.57	HE	2
2. TMM enables me to compose better write-up	3.44	E	5
3. TMM provides feedback on my write-up	3.67	HE	1
4. TMM helps me improve my written output	3.42	E	6
5. TMM introduces varied writing formats and styles	3.46	E	4
6. TMM improves my organization skills.	3.49	E	3
7. TMM gives review on outlining	3.33	E	8
8. TMM offers suggestions for a better write-up.	3.31	E	10
9. TMM stimulates my ideas for a better write-up.	3.32	E	9
10. TMM can be good source of possible research topics.	3.37	E	7
Composite Mean	**3.44**	**E**	

Table 3 shows the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in enhancing the writing skills of students.

It is noteworthy that TMM is perceived Highly Effective in the following aspects: providing feedback on users' write-up and providing review in grammar (3.67 and 3.57) , yet Effective only in improving organization skills (3.49). In the lowermost bracket, TMM is Effective in giving review on outlining,

stimulating ideas for better write-up and suggesting for the improvement of write-up(3.31-3.33).

Warchauer and Liaw (2011) posited that blogs are a potentially valuable tool for teaching writing in the students' second language.

Table 4. Effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing Reading Skills

Reading Skills	WM	VI	Rank
1. TMM makes me distinguish main ideas from minor details.	3.48	E	6
2. TMM enriches my reading comprehension	3.60	HE	1
3. TMM allows me to analyze passages	3.45	E	9
4. TMM enhances my creative reading skills	3.58	HE	2
5. TMM cultivates my memory	3.51	HE	3
6. TMM provides numerical presentations for analysis.	3.38	E	10
7. TMM enhances my comprehension to non-prose materials	3.46	E	7
8. TMM equips my comprehension in various subject matters.	3.50	HE	4
9. TMM uplifts my interest to read more on various topics.	3.49	E	5
10. TMM improves my summarizing skills.	3.46	E	8
Composite Mean	**3.49**	**E**	

Table 4 indicates the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in enhancing the reading skills of LPU users.

TMM is considered Highly effective in enriching users' reading comprehension(WM -3.60) , in the first rank , in enhancing their creative reading skills , in cultivating their memory in 2nd and 3rd rank respectively. In the interim, TMM is perceived Effective in improving summarizing skills.(3.46), in allowing users analyze passages and in providing numerical presentations for analysis.

Since the core of Study and Thinking Skills (English 1) is reading, TMM has been helpful to make readers enjoy this once boring activity since they are provided of visuals as they read, presenting reading in a multimedia format but the software has not enough activities for non-prose reading and materials for analysis.

Table 5. Difference of Responses on the Effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing the Communication Skills Between the Para Medical and Non-Paramedical Students

	group	Mean	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
listening	Paramedical	3.5352	0.409	0.683	Accepted	Not Significant
	Non-Paramedical	3.5074				
speaking	Paramedical	3.6222	0.682	0.496	Accepted	Not Significant
	Non-Paramedical	3.5722				
writing	Paramedical	3.4	-0.82	0.414	Accepted	Not Significant
	Non-Paramedical	3.4778				
reading	Paramedical	3.4889	0.105	0.917	Accepted	Not Significant
	Non-Paramedical	3.4815				

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 5 highlights the difference of responses on the Effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in Enhancing the Communication Skills between the paramedical and non-paramedical Students.

As seen from the table, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the responses of paramedical and non-paramedical students on the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in enhancing the communication skills is accepted. This means that there is no difference that exists and implies that the effectiveness of using Tell Me More is the same for the students of paramedical and non-paramedical.

The content of TMM is encompassing that activities and modules may be plotted and customized for the specializations or areas of users. Teachers/TMM administrators are trained on how to select or lift activities that will be appropriate to the needs of users.

Table 6. Conflicts/Problems Encountered in the Use of the Software

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Irrelevant Content and activities	2.48	D	1
2. Failure in Connections/System	2.25	D	3
3. Inefficient schedule scheme/intervals	2.30	D	2
4. Insufficient Training /induction to the software	2.10	D	4
5. Insufficient Assistance Provided by the Teacher and Technical Staff	1.96	D	5
Composite Mean	**2.22**	**D**	

Table 6 reflects the conflicts or problems encountered in the use of the Tell Me More software.

Users disagree that the content and activities of Tell Me More are irrelevant, that there is inefficient schedule scheme or interval in the use of the software and that they experience failure in connections and system.

Moreover, the users also deny that they received insufficient training and induction to the system and that there is insufficient assistance provided by the teacher and technical staff.

Both the teachers-TMM administrators and technical staff for English lab use and laboratory activities are aware of their responsibilities to the students in the administration of Dyned, ensuring that they provide and attend to the needs of students. Teachers are trained well about the software, has familiarity on its content and implementation while the technical staff share the same commitment.

DelliCarpini (2012) stressed that technology should be incorporated into teaching pedagogy so that students will not only effectively acquire a second language but will also develop electronic literacy skills and technology in language learning is not being used to its full potential and that inadequate teacher training and learner training are some of the main reasons for this.

Even with the most sophisticated language learning software available, with remarkable features motivational elements, unwillingness to experiment as language instructors will render the programme useless and leave the whole language learning experience of students in tatters. That said, the human factor cannot be discounted at any cost. No programme can be termed as be all and end all. Where necessary, the language instructor must and should complement the software in order to make the entire learning experience a worthwhile effort for the students. This holds very true for us as English language instructors. The faculty's

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role in ensuring the maintenance and usage of this software in an English classroom is of paramount importance too. Otherwise, the software might end up on the shelves of the language laboratories as another "white elephant". Failure to make use of an available programme will deprive our students of the experiences of enjoying a motivating learning experience.(TMM Manual)

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tell Me More is perceived Highly Effective in enhancing the listening and speaking skills of users while effective in enhancing the writing and reading skills. There is no significant difference between the responses of paramedical and non-paramedical students on the effectiveness of TELLL ME MORE in enhancing the communication skills. Users disagree that they encounter problems and conflicts in the use of Tell Me More. A plan of action to enhance the effectiveness of Tell me More in improving the communication skills of students is proposed. It is recommended that English teachers handling subjects that use Tell Me More must explore and utilize the modules and units related to writing and reading in order to improve users' skills on the said areas. Additional or reinforcement activities may be given provided for students in order to complement the available modules. The yearly training or refresher course on the implementation of Tell Me More may be continued in collaboration with technical assistants to ensure the smooth flow of the courseware utilization and delivery.

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