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## **Students Perception on the Role of Computer Abilities for Improving English Communication Skills at Tobruk University**

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### **Abstract**

In this study, the students were asked about their perception if the technology they are using helped in improving their English communication skills. In particular the computer skills involved included basic computer operation, word processing and presentation software. The respondents were 3rd and 4th year nursing students, currently enrolled or recently finished computer course and English courses for use in their formal public speaking or case presentation. The result showed competency of the nursing students as they perceived in their computer skills with a mean score of 3.59, 3.48 and 3.21 for basic computer operation, word processing and presentation software respectively. They also believed that computer skills helped in improving their English communication skills with a mean score of 3.34. No significant difference was shown when they were grouped according to year level. The result of the study can be used to improve the English and Computer education of Tobruk University. Further study is needed to advance the result.

**Keywords:** Computer; Communication Skills; English; Perception.

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## **1. Introduction**

The globalization of English and a growing demand for good English speaking skills in English teachers place a great emphasis in the collection of methods of techniques to interact with something in the real world [1]. It allows the user to communicate with computer or allows the computer to communicate with the user. Computer operation is both taught and used especially in improving English Communication skills [1]. The steps to success begin with the commitment of instructor in identifying, monitoring and addressing students' needs. Technology covers information, communication and technology itself [2]. New technologies such as radio, television, VCR, DVD and computers have dramatically changes the context of human interaction [1]. People no more rely on direct communication and lectures rather they now have. Language is an instrument for communication used only by human beings to share their ideas, views, knowledge, and experience with each other [3]. It is impossible to imagine the world with no communications since it is the start for all human activities. Oral and written communications are other forms of communication and the most accessible and widely used means of communication, which is practiced just by word of mouth [3]. As a result, students of different levels learn to improve their oral fluency and communication skills through the use of computer learning.

Teaching is the act of guiding the students on the specific knowledge that they will learn, and the doer of this act is what we called as "teachers" or "professors" and there are many types of teaching methods that can be done [4]. Teaching methods are actions made in order to accomplish a particular goal of education, and this teaching method varies on the expected outcome to be engaged in subjects during classes, help retain information, and achieved better comprehension [4]. In order to learn computer operation learning to improve English Communication we required input and output devices. The user interface allows the user to enter data via input devices such as keyboard, mouse and allows the computer to interact with user in the form of displaying output on screen with help of monitor Human – Computer Interaction for most part provides communication between human and computer. Still the computer is tool, which is controlled by human [5] to exchange mouse, showing symbols or graphs on the display [6]. Computer is now a common tool in education students' attitudes to computer represent their feelings, desires, aversions, fears, convictions and other tendencies that predispose them to act the way they do. Students' attitudes to issues or actions are not inherited, but a result of learning [7]. A student does not just deliberately set himself or herself to like or dislike a subject, but it is because of the sort of experience he or she had with the subject [8].

Another technology, the use of visual aids can better convey what words alone cannot explain abstract concepts, help retention of information, and can maintain audience's interest [9]. Visual aids are known to help students to be more engaged in subjects during classes, help retain information, and achieve better comprehension [9] over the last few decades, the world we live in has witnessed significant changes both in the way of communication and in the approach to teaching and learning at colleges, due to the development of information and communication technologies. The constantly increased media in the classroom makes education present a multimodality trend [10]. Use of Computers can be used to develop the writing skills of English language learners despite difficulty as the use of computers and graphics-based programs can make the writing task much easier and enjoyable, and can make them express their thoughts more clearly [11]. Grammar skills can also be

improved with the aid of word processing programs as the learner can highlight a specific part of the text through underlining, bolding, italicizing, or changing the font size and color of the text and with the aid of these programs to automatically check the spelling and grammar [12]. This makes the use of the computer as a tool in studying grammar is much more motivating for the student than the process of traditional manner of writing with a paper and a pencil [12].

The term *New Technology* includes communication techniques for language teaching in which the personal computer plays a central role [13]. There are other technological tools that can be utilized in language learning besides computers, however, in order to use these techniques successfully, the student should be familiar with using computers and internet, and capable of interacting with these techniques [14]. The effect of technology has become huge that the role of the instructor together with the role of the technology can lead to advanced learning results [14]. Thus technology and English language education becomes related to one another [15]. The students' skills can be enhanced by encountering more practical drill problems, although this technique was actually tedious and boring for learners [15]. Reading is the process of understanding a written text by the learner, it is an important input skill which depends on the vocabulary and background knowledge of the learner in the second language [16]. Using reading-based computer programs can enhance the word vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension of the students. [12]. Computers can also be utilized in correcting answers for the learners, and to simulate tests in an easy to understand manner [17].

In this study the researchers will find the students perception on the role of computer abilities for improving English communication skills at Tobruk University. Specifically to get the students self-assessment on their computer skills and their perception if the said skills were helping them to improve their English vocabulary. The respondents are 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year students of nursing at Tobruk University. To test the difference of the mean score between year level an independent t-test and p-value would be computed. The objective in the research is to present and analyze the actual perception of students in computer skills and English language for the promotion of education together with technology in the University's educational system. The study is limited to the current students of Nursing College and to their perception in terms of computer skills they possess and if such skills educate them in English skills.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The research employed a descriptive non-experimental design. Sampling assessment respondents will be the students in College of Nursing. The study used the questionnaire method of research among 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The study aims to find out the nursing students perception on the role of their acquired computer ability for the improvement of their English communication skills at Tobruk University.

### **2.1 Study Sample**

The respondents were seventy five nursing students who have taken English and Computer subjects already. The proponents selected 30 4<sup>th</sup> year students and 45 3<sup>rd</sup> year students as study participant. Purposive sampling was utilized in the study.

**2.2 Research Tools/Instrument**

The researcher created a self-made tool for students self-assessment in their basic computer operation skills including Word processing and presentation software and their perception if this skills have helped them to improve their English communication skills.

**2.3 Data Measures**

To permit ease of analysis collected data were tallied and organized into tables. Measures of central tendency like weighted mean and standard deviation were used to look for variation in the relative contribution of individual data values to the mean. Independent t-test was used to compare the means of perception between 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year students.

After which, the computed results are then analysed with the use of an interpretation with specific mean score ranges and a subsequent descriptive rating. Shown below is the interpretation used for study in terms of self-assessment in their computer ability and said acquired computer skills being helpful in communication skills perception.

**Table 1:** Interpretation of student’s self-assessment in their Computer Ability

Scale	Range	Adjectival Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	Very Good
3	2.51 – 3.50	Good
2	1.51 – 2.50	Needs Improvement
1	1.00 – 1.50	Poor

**Table 2:** Interpretation of students Perception on the Role of their Computer Abilities for Improving English Communication Skills

Scale	Range	Adjectival Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	Very Helpful
3	2.51 – 3.50	Helpful
2	1.51 – 2.50	Less Helpful
1	1.00 – 1.50	Not Helpful

**2.4 Software Tools**

The researchers used Microsoft Excel as a tally sheet and permit the data to be computed using function average

for mean, stdev for standard deviation sample size.

Tallied values undergone data analysis tool pack to get the difference of mean between 4<sup>th</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students by computing for t-test and p value.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Collected data were structured using table to permit ease of investigation. Measures of central tendency like weighted mean and standard deviation were presented together with equivalent adjectival rating for the student's self-assessment of their computer ability and perception on the role of computer skills in improving their English communication skills. For comparison of data between 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year student's independent t-test and p value were used.

#### 3.1 Weighted Mean of Respondents

**Table 3:** Weighted Mean of Students Self-assessment in their computer ability

<b>Basic Computer Operation</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Adjectival Rating</b>
1. I know the name of the device (mouse, keyboard etc.)	3.69	0.49	Very Good
2. I can open, shut down, restart the computer	3.55	0.60	Very Good
3. I know how to manage files and folders (create new, rename, delete, copy)	3.60	0.57	Very Good
4. I can open and use basic software application	3.49	0.60	Good
5. I know how to use cut, copy and paste commands	3.57	0.68	Very Good
6. I can save or save as a file in the proper folder	3.64	0.56	Very Good
<b>Basic Computer Operation Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Word Processing</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Adjectival Rating</b>
7. I can type words and sentences	3.43	0.72	Good
8. I know how to change the text formats like font, size, color, styles (B, I, U)	3.55	0.60	Very Good
9. I know how to use paragraph tools like numbering, bullets and alignment	3.21	0.66	Good
10. I understand and know how to use tables, rows and columns	3.49	0.68	Good
11. I know how to insert pictures, clip arts, word art and shapes	3.64	0.69	Very Good
12. I know how to change page layout in terms of margins, orientation, paper size and columns	3.53	0.79	Very Good
<b>Word Processing Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Presentation Software</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Adjectival Rating</b>
13. I know how to make slides and select themes	3.19	0.86	Good
14. I can modify font and text styles	3.33	0.85	Good
15. I can change colors and size of text to a readable form	3.45	0.68	Good
16. I know how to insert objects like pictures, clip art, table, graphs, videos and sound	3.43	0.82	Good
17. I know how to use a proper presentation design/ template	3.15	0.83	Good
18. I can apply transition and animations properly	3.01	0.86	Good
19. I can perform proper slide show	3.17	0.84	Good
20. I know how to operate the projector in sync with my presentation slide	2.92	0.91	Good
<b>Presentation Software Operation Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Good</b>

As shown in Table 3 the students believed they are very good in operating the computer with a mean of 3.59 and a variation of 0.44 showing a high confidence level on their computer skills. This indicates they learned and understood their computer subjects and perhaps technological advancement in the community were most household have a computer device. Knowing the name of hardware device gets the highest mean of 3.69 as the presence of the device becomes imminent despite not being used.

In terms of word processing software tools the students perceived that they are good in using the application with 3.48 overall mean, with the highest score garnered in inserting objects like pictures, clip art and word art. This might indicate their being more visual and graphical than textual in nature.

The presentation software skills of students as believed is at 3.21, standard deviation of 0.59 showing they are competent enough to use and perform the tool. The same software was being used in all of their oral presentation. As presented in the table it shows that the students like to insert objects and change text color and size as it gets the higher mean of 3.43 and 3.45 respectively. Despite the differences with the other procedure, the adjectival rating is the same for all at Good.

**Table 4:** Weighted Mean of Students Perception on the role of computer skills in improving their English communication skills.

<b>English Communication Skills</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Adjectival Rating</b>
1. My English comprehension improve after learning how to operate the computer	3.56	0.59	Very Helpful
2. Computer terms and functions was added to my English Vocabulary	3.39	0.63	Helpful
3. Learning word processing software improve my written English Communication skills in terms of spelling	3.48	0.66	Helpful
4. Learning word processing software improve my written English Communication skills in terms of sentence and paragraph construction	3.35	0.74	Helpful
5. The name of the toolbar I used in computer was added to my English vocabulary	3.20	0.67	Helpful
6. Knowing how to use tables improves my English Analysis	3.28	0.76	Helpful
7. Learning how to use pictures, clip art, shapes and word art broaden my English visualization	3.28	0.81	Helpful
8. Knowing how to operate a presentation slides improves my confidence level in English	3.27	0.77	Helpful
9. I can express more of myself in English words because of my presentation slides	3.24	0.75	Helpful
10. The challenge in creating documents and slides broadens my interest in learning English	3.25	0.73	Helpful
11. English learning retention improve when I make document and slide files	3.23	0.78	Helpful
12. I understand English more after learning computer skills	3.36	0.81	Helpful
13. I (will) enjoy my Case presentation (spoken in English) because I know how to use the computer	3.43	0.73	Helpful
14. I am more prepared in Public Speaking because of my computer skills	3.43	0.75	Helpful
15. I'm ready for any formal presentation in English because of my computer skills	3.44	0.70	Helpful
<b>Overall Perception that computer skills help them in English Communication Skills</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>Helpful</b>

Table 4 shows weighted mean of student’s perception on the role of computer skills in improving their English communication skills with an overall mean of 3.34 and variance of 0.48. The students believe that their computer ability helps them in their ability to understand English language more and it boosted their confidence in expressing the language [11]. In the tool they believe that their English comprehension improve after learning how to operate the computer with a mean of 3.59 or to connote that learning computer is very helpful in English. Notable points they perceived is that learning word processing software improve their written English communication skills in terms of spelling (3.48), they enjoy Case presentation (spoken in English) because they know how to use the computer (3.43), they are more prepared in Public Speaking because of their computer skills (3.43), and they are ready for any formal presentation in English because of computer skills (3.44) all indicating a Helpful rating. Although the rest of the tools show slightly lower mean, the adjectival rating is the same. The result of students perception proved that technology and education is related to one another [15].

**3.3 Differences in Responses between 4<sup>th</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Students**

**Table 5:** Differences in Responses between 4<sup>th</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students

<b>Perception</b>	<b>WM (4<sup>th</sup> year)</b>	<b>WM (3<sup>rd</sup> year)</b>	<b>t-stat</b>	<b>p value</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Basic Operation	3.68	3.60	1.535	0.129	NS
Word Processing	3.50	3.46	0.369	0.713	NS
Presentation Software	3.32	3.13	1.464	0.147	NS
Communication Skills	3.44	3.28	1.610	0.112	NS

The mean of 4<sup>th</sup> year students in terms of basic computer operation, word processing and presentation software differs slightly higher compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, this might mean that since 4<sup>th</sup> year students has longer formal experience in computer usage required in their case presentation and nursing research subjects, their confidence level was higher. Although the t-stat and p value results show no significant difference in their mean.

The same can be said with student’s perception on the role of computer skills in improving their English communication skills were 4<sup>th</sup> year has 3.44 mean which is slightly higher than 3<sup>rd</sup> year with 3.28 mean, indicating the effect of more experience in oral and written formal English communication. With a t-stat of 1.610 and p value of 0.112, no significant difference was observed thus accepting the null hypothesis.

**4. Conclusion**

College of Nursing students of Tobruk University from 4<sup>th</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year level were confident in their computer skills in terms of basic computer operation, word processing and presentation software tool; believe to be a fruitful observation that students were suited up to the advancement of technology in the future generation. The said skills they also thought to be helpful and had a role in improving their communication skills in any form expressed in English language.

Generally the students believe that technology will help them a lot in their English vocabulary [11]. The role of teachers together with technology will aid in English learning and education as a whole [14, 15].

The null hypothesis is proven that there is no significant difference in the mean result if they were grouped in the year level. The data generated in the research will be a helpful tool and basis in promoting computer skills and English communication for the improvement of quality education in the College.

## **5. Recommendation**

Further study was needed to address factors that may affect the result. More respondents and including other Colleges in the study for comparison purposes would advance the result. It is suggested that the faculty members ensure adequate training and proper education in English Language and Computer to supplement the student skill [14]. Lecturer should encourage their students to use technology in developing both language and computer skills. Furthermore, the level of computer literacy and competency should be also enhanced by the university management through improved and modernize facilities in laboratory to support teaching process [11].

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