

# Using Google Classroom as a Tool for Teaching and Learning from Perspectives of EFL Teachers and Students in Iraq

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## Abstract

In recent years, the world is witnessing the emergence of modern technological innovations that have widely affected people in many fields, including the educational field which is one of the most important areas that have become binding to keep up with the technology and use it in the educational process. Google Classroom is one of those innovations that could facilitate the connection between teachers and students especially in the teaching and learning process. The study aimed to investigate using Google Classroom as a tool for teaching and learning from perspectives of EFL teachers and students. The researchers adopted a mixed method approach, and in order to achieve the aims of the study, two questionnaires and face to face interview were prepared. Their validity and reliability were confirmed. The first sample of the study consisted of (100) EFL students in English Language Department/College of Basic Education in Mustansiriyah University, whereas the second sample consisted of 18 EFL teachers. Both of the questionnaires consisted of 16 items to identify EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards using Google classroom in teaching and learning. The results of the study revealed that EFL students have positive perceptions towards learning through Google classroom, whereas EFL teachers have negative perceptions towards teaching through Google classroom platform. Conclusion and Recommendations for further studies have also been drawn.

**Keywords:** E- learning, Google Classroom, perspectives

## "استخدام صف كوكل الدراسي أداةً للتعليم والتعلم كما يراه معلمو وطلبة اللغة الإنكليزية لغةً أجنبيةً في العراق"

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### المستخلص

شهد العالم في السنوات الأخيرة ظهور ابتكارات تكنولوجية حديثة أثرت بشكل كبير على البشرية في العديد من المجالات، بما في ذلك المجال التعليمي الذي يعد من أهم المجالات التي أصبحت ملزمة لمواكبة التكنولوجيا واستخدامها في العملية التعليمية. يعد صف كوكل الدراسي أحد تلك الابتكارات التي يمكن أن تسهل الاتصال بين المعلمين والطلاب خاصة في عملية التدريس والتعلم. هدفت الدراسة إلى التحقيق في استخدام صف كوكل الدراسي أداة للتدريس والتعلم من منظور معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية وطلابها بوصفها لغة أجنبية. اعتمد الباحثون طريقة المنهج المختلط، ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة أعد استبيانين ومقابلة للمدرسين وجهاً لوجه. تؤكد فيه صدق أدوات الدراسة وثباتها. تكونت العينة الأولى من الدراسة من (١٠٠) طالباً وطالبة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/كلية التربية الأساسية في الجامعة المستنصرية، بينما تكونت العينة الثانية من ١٨ مدرسا للغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية. تتألف كلا الاستبيانين من ١٦ فقرة لتحديد تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والطلاب تجاه استخدام صف كوكل الدراسي في التدريس والتعلم. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية تصورات إيجابية تجاه التعلم عبر صف كوكل الدراسي، في حين أن لدى مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية تصورات سلبية تجاه التدريس عبر منصة كوكل كلاسروم. واستخلصت الاستنتاجات والتوصيات، بالإضافة إلى المقترحات للدراسات المستقبلية.

الكلمات الدالة: التعلم الإلكتروني، كوكل كلاسروم، منظور.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, undergraduate students increasingly prefer new techniques for learning. This point encourages the researchers and web designers to develop many new techniques and applications that can be used in E- learning. According to Al Bataineh [1: 77] the new technology is desired and preferred for most learners and usually brings changes to their lifestyle. As a result of students' complaining of time shortage, online learning platforms could save time, teach social skills and self-study, and keep in touch with the new trends of learning. Google Classroom (henceforth GC) is considered a new reliable system and one of the most valid platforms for learning and teaching. It has been adopted and accepted by the academic institutions as a platform to reinforce the E-learning experience[2].

Based on the above-mentioned introduction, the study problem can be formulated as EFL teachers and learners' responses on the use of GC in English Language Department/College of Basic Education in Mustansiriyah University.

### **1.2. Aims of the Study**

The present study aims at:

- 1- Identifying EFL students' perceptions towards using GC as a tool in their studying.
- 2- Identifying EFL teachers' perceptions towards using GC as a tool in their Teaching.

### **1.3. Hypotheses of the Study**

It is hypothesized that:

- 1- There is no statistically significant difference at level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores and theoretical mean of the total sample of students.
- 2- There is no statistically significant difference at level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores and theoretical mean of the total sample of teachers.
- 3- There is no statistically significant difference at level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores and theoretical mean of the total sample of students due to the gender variable.

### **1.4. Limits of the Study**

The current study is limited to EFL college students and teachers at the Department of English Language/ College of Basic Education in Mustansiriyah University during the academic year 2020-2021.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The study aims at obtaining beneficial results for EFL teachers and learners as well as the researchers themselves and other researchers as follows:

- 1- Teachers of English language departments.

It is hoped that this study will be useful for EFL teachers particularly in terms of selecting the appropriate technology for E-learning.

- 2- Students of English language departments.

It is hoped that this study will help learners to express their attitudes and feelings in using GC as a tool for learning EFL.

- 3- The researchers themselves.

It is hoped that the researchers can benefit from this study to enable them choosing the suitable E-learning tool in teaching EFL.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. The Concept of E-Learning**

According to Agarwal and Pandey [3:4] E-learning is being familiarized in the beginning of the third millennium. It provides learners with access almost everywhere via internet. Using E-learning can also promote and optimize students' participation in the classroom. It focuses on using technology and indicates the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning process.

As for Guri- Rosenblit [4:481] E-learning refers to the utilization of online platforms for a range of educational purposes. It is a full substitution of traditional learning into online learning.

The above definitions are supported by Muslimah [5:7] who mentioned that E-learning is a type of learning that invests technology for learning educational curriculum

instead of traditional classrooms. It makes the learning process easier such as sharing materials and files, sending assignments, and setting exams.

As regards the mentioned definitions, it can be concluded that E-learning was applied in many educational institutes in which teachers and learners can communicate easily. Teachers can also send feedback for the assignments given to learners via online class platforms.

## 2.2. Google Classroom

GC is basically a tool for teaching and learning which helps to simplify the process of setting and grading paperless exams and assignments. On the other hand, this application helps both learners and teachers to communicate with each other so as to engage beyond teaching and learning in the classroom [6: online], [7: online].

GC is designed specifically for teaching and learning and it can be used directly by installing it in the smart devices or computers as a desktop version. If tikhar [8: 3] states that GC aims to achieve the learners' assignments in a paperless environment, and takes benefits from the framework of Google Docs, Drive and other Apps. This application enables teachers to spend more periods with their learners and less on the paper environment.

The users of GC application can join as long as they have Google account. A teacher can create GC easily and provide his learners with the class code, and then learners incorporate directly in the specific teacher's class [9].

## 2.3. Characteristics of Google Classroom

It is obvious that Google company does its best to provide distinguished services to assist users in achieving their daily duties. Aljarrah [10:321] and Citra [11:online] mention that GC application has many characteristics and advantages. They are as follows:

- 1- Internet-based application: The application is used directly through the Internet, which allows its users to access their classrooms and manage the educational process from any place or any time the user wants.
- 2- Cloud-based app: Cloud computing allows users to download files and access to the GC from anywhere in the world without cost or special equipment, and take advantage of all other features of cloud computing.
- 3- Support for all world languages, especially Arabic: The application supports all world languages, especially Arabic, without the need for subscriptions or special updates.
- 4- All types of files can be downloaded.
- 5- User-friendly control panel for learner, teacher, and system administrator.
- 6- Allows teachers to make announcements, calendars, download assignments, and correct them either directly or online by reloading them and setting the exams directly.

## 2.4. Benefits and Limitations of Google Classroom

GC consists of various options and facilitations for its users. It is an educational platform which characterized by user-friendly and time saving. Designers of GC deliberately simplified its instructions interface and options that are used for sending and receiving assignments and dealing with them properly [12:online].

By using GC, both teachers and learners can save time and take benefit from its integrated applications such as docs, slides, drive, and spreadsheets. Furthermore, the

whole process of administrating assignments, scores, evaluations, and feedback are simplified and streamlined [12:online],[13:online].

On the contrary, GC has some limitations; some of its buttons are only familiar with its users. New users might feel confused or need much time to deal with them. Besides, GC lacks automated update; that makes learners miss important announcements unless they refresh the application regularly. Another limitation is that learners cannot share their documents with each other without getting permission from the teacher. However, learners are allowed to keep or delete any part of the assignment given to them[14:online].

Despite the drawbacks of GC, it can be concluded that it is a good platform since it is easy to use, effective and interactive, and good for environment. Moreover, it provides good atmosphere for collaboration between teachers and learners through which they have flexibility to access anytime and everywhere the internet service is available. It also enables teachers to create announcements, assignments, set exams, or send files to the learners.

## **2.5. Related Previous Studies**

The researchers relied on the educational magazines and periodicals, and Arabic and foreign theses that dealt with the impact of using Google classroom application on education by reviewing the most important previous studies related to the subject of the present study.

### **2.5.1. Kasula 2015**

The study aimed at exploring GC readiness for learning English language. The researcher conducted personal interviews with teachers in the United States to demonstrate the extent of their use of GC which was produced in 2014. The researcher indicated that this free application allows its users to connect all Google services such as email, Google Drives, and Google forms. Besides, it provides all the requirements that the teacher needs in the classroom. It also contributes to the communication between teacher and learner in facilitating the learning process [15].

### **2.5.2. Crane (2016)**

The study dealt with the extent to which the University of Rhode Island in the United States of America has benefited from its adoption of Google's educational applications. The researcher interviewed 10 people from the officials in the Department of Technology and Information Services at the university, and asked them several questions via email, leaving them free to choose how to answer, meet face to face, record their answers, or respond to an email. The study concluded that the biggest advantage of using Google educational applications is ease of use and managing educational classes through Google virtual classes and collecting responses automatically in Google Drive. In addition to the integration that exists between all Google educational applications with each other. At the end of his study, the researcher praised the great advantage of these applications that provide the greatest effort on the educational institutions, which is the use of educational Google applications, does not need to create or build an infrastructure; the administrators of Google provide all services for free [16].

### **2.5.3. Ghanim (2016)**

The study aimed to find out the impact of using Google Apps on developing sixth grade students of scientific concept and their attitudes towards technology acceptance. A

quasi-experimental design was used in this study. The participants of this study were 140 students; they were selected randomly and divided into two groups: 70 and 70 control. The experimental group was taught by using Google applications, whereas the control group was taught using the traditional method. To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher designed a website, achievement test, and an attitude scale for technology acceptance. The results revealed that there was no significant statistical difference at level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of the control group in the achievement test [17].

### **3. Methodology and Procedures**

#### **3.1. Population and Sample of the Study**

According to Arikunta [18:41] population is the overall subject of the research. In view of the nature of the study and in order to achieve its aims, the population of the study was identified and consisted all EFL students and teachers at English Department/ College of Basic Education in Mustansiriyah University. Sample is a part of population which has same characteristics [18:43]. A random sample has been chosen and involved 100 EFL students from second, third and fourth stages, and 18 teachers at the Department of English Language/ Mustansiriyah University.

#### **3.2. Description of the Instruments**

To fulfill the objectives of the study, two questionnaires have been prepared to cover the areas of the study. Besides, semi-structured interview was used to explore teachers' perceptions towards GC in teaching process. They were based on an assessment of the literature and previous research; their items included a wide range of topics related to GC, including familiarity, awareness, impact, efficacy, and reflection on its use. The first questionnaire, which has 16 items, has been applied to explore EFL students' perceptions towards using GC in learning process. The second questionnaire that has 16 items that has been applied to identify EFL teachers' perceptions towards using GC in teaching process. Both of the questionnaires have five alternative answers (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree). To back up the results of the second questionnaire, EFL teachers has also been interviewed to gain precise results.

#### **3.3. Validity**

Instrument can be valid if it really measures what is proposed to measure. In other words, it is allied to a large extent to the "accuracy" [19:51]. Instrument can have a high degree of validity when it fulfills its purpose. Testing face validity can be achieved through jury members. The study instruments have been checked by jury members in methodology and applied linguistics. Some items were modified due to the jury suggestions and all jury members agree upon their validity.

#### **3.4. Reliability**

The instrument is considered reliable if it provides the same outcome when it is applied several times [19:60]. However, it is unreliable if repeated implementations of the instrument give different results. In order to verify the reliability of the instruments, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was applied to measure their reliability. The results reveal that the students' and teachers' questionnaires are reliable with value of (89.0) and (91.0) successively.

### 3.5. Final Administration of the Instruments

After finding out the validity and reliability of the instruments, they have been applied on the 20th of January, 2021. The aims of the instruments were explained to the study samples, and their answering sheets were gathered to calculate the results. The sample of EFL teachers has also been interviewed to explore their perceptions towards GC in teaching process. They were also told that they might refuse to answer any of the questions that had been posed to them. Interviews were organized at their convenience after they gave their agreement. All of the interviews were conducted in the participants' faculty offices. An interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English language.

## 4. Results, Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

### 4.1. Results Related to the First Aim and Verification of the First Hypothesis

To achieve the first aim and verify the first hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant difference at level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores and theoretical mean of the total sample of students, the mean scores and the standard deviations of the instrument were calculated and compared to the theoretical mean. Then by using one sample t-test, the results are found out to be as shown in table (1).

**Table (1): The Results of T-test for One Sample Due to the Responses of the Students' Questionnaire**

Sample	Mean	S.D.	Theoretical mean	t-value		DF	Level of significance
				Computed	Tabulated		
100	79.74	13.27	48	2.73	2.01	99	0.05

Table (1) reveals that the mean score of the total sample response on students' questionnaire is 79.74 with a standard deviation of 13.27. The computed t-value is 2.73 and the tabulated t-value is 2.01 at level of significance 0.05. Since the computed t-value is higher than the tabulated one, and the theoretical mean is lower than the mean score, then difference between the two means is significant. This rejects the first hypothesis and proves that the students' perceptions towards using GC in learning English language is positive.

### 4.2. Results Related to the Second Aim and Verification of the Second Hypothesis

To achieve the second aim and verify the first hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score and theoretical mean of the total sample of EFL teachers' questionnaire, The mean scores and the standard deviations of the questionnaire were calculated and compared to the theoretical mean. Then by using one sample t-test, the results are found out to be as shown in table (2).

**Table (2): The Results of T-test for One Sample Due to the Responses of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

Sample	Mean	S.D.	Theoretical mean	t-value		DF	Level of significance
				Computed	Tabulated		
18	38.40	11.69	48	-2.89	1.96	0017	0.05

The mean score of the complete sample response on the teachers' questionnaire is 38.40 with a standard deviation of 11.69. As shown in Table (2), at a level of significance of 0.05, the computed t-value is -2.89, while the tabulated t-value is 1.96. The difference between the two means is not significant because the computed t-value is lower than the tabulated one and the theoretical mean is higher than the mean score. This supports the second hypothesis, demonstrating that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores and theoretical mean of the complete sample of teachers at the 0.05 level of significance.

Teachers regarded GC positively and negatively. According to the interviews with teachers about using GC, the following are some of the themes that were identified:

- 1- It was challenging to make the transition from traditional teaching-learning to GC once since many teachers are not used to using ICT and e-learning platforms in their regular teaching-learning. Teachers had little or no experience using GC.
- 2- During the interview, the majority of teacher participants stated that they lacked enough or sound skills to run GC and had never participated in it before, but a few teachers guided a few hours of the Google class workshop. The workshop facilitators, according to the participants' professors, lacked content knowledge, delivery abilities, and expertise in using GC to teach-learning. Due to the pandemic, they were forced to adopt such measures.
- 3- Some teachers were concerned about how mobile phones and technology were being used in the classroom. It's tough to tell if students are checking their social media notifications or utilizing their phones for study reasons in the classroom. Excessive use of these technologies can cause issues.
- 4- The interview also highlighted some important difficulties concerning the GC, such as students duplicating assignments and homework from their friends, textbooks, or the internet. The majority of teachers agreed that their students duplicate work from friends, textbooks, or the internet. They were also caught off guard due to a lack of plagiarism detection tools. They also say that most of the assignments submitted in GC were in JPEG format, with a few of them in PDF and DOC format.

#### **4.3. Results Related to the Third Aim and Verification of the Third Hypothesis**

A t-test of two independent samples was used to achieve the third aim and verify the third hypothesis. The mean score for male students is 43.61 with a standard deviation of (7.77). Female students, on the other hand, had a mean score of (47.44) with a standard deviation of (10.56) and a degree of freedom of (58). Following the use of statistical tools, it was discovered that the computed t-value (-1.39) is lower than the tabulated t-value (1.98) with degree of freedom 58, as shown in table (3).



**Table (3):The Results of T-test for Two Independent Sample Due to the Gender Variable**

Sample type	Sample	Mean	S.D.	Theoretical mean	t-value		DF	Level of significance
					Computed	Tabulated		
Male	50	43.61	7.77	48	-1.39	1.98	98	0.05
Female	50	47.44	10.65	48				

Table (3) shows that the gender veritable had no statistically significant effect on the mean scores. This supports the third hypothesis, according to which there is no statistically significant difference in mean scores attributable to the gender variable.

#### 4.4. Conclusions

Based on the above-mentioned results, it can be stated that GC is a successful learning tool since it allows students to actively participate in online discussions and tasks, allowing them to improve their learning. The findings exposed that the majority of participants viewed GC as a convenient and valuable learning tool that allows students to learn anywhere and at any time without having to interact with teachers or in-person. It is popular among students because of its ease of use in assisting their learning. Furthermore, GC can enable participants practice English outside of the classroom, which was really beneficial.

According to the results of the teachers' questionnaire and interviews, GC has had no substantial effect on overall classroom instruction. It has been efficiently used for submitting assignments, administering classrooms, and engaging with students; however, its general utility is limited to only these features, whereas GC has a lot more to offer.

GC is still in its early stages, and familiarity with this platform will improve over time, which is currently a substantial barrier for students and teachers. One of the study's key findings was that teachers do not believe Google Classroom's interface to be user-friendly. If administrators can increase the convenience of use and make it simpler with some extra features, such as video streaming, Google Classroom's efficacy will be noticeably increased.

#### 4.5. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Working on training and educating students about the benefits of using various digital printing to expand their awareness, students use both computer and software.
- 2- Conducting training and development courses for teachers' skills in software and digital educational applications, as well as digital multimedia.

#### 4.6. Suggestions for Further Studies

Since the study was done in the higher education context, the results cannot be applied to other sectors. A similar study might be undertaken in primary or secondary schools to see if the results match the research. Quantitative methods and a mix methodology approach could be used in future studies to improve the validity of the findings. Comparing the effectiveness of Google Classroom to that of other educational platforms can also be done as part of a comparative research.

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

**There are no conflicts of interest**

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**Appendix (A)**  
**Students' Questionnaire**

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The assignments will be finished early by using Google Classroom.					
2	Google Classroom Application increases students learning performance.					
3	Google Classroom Application increases productivity of learning.					
4	The feedback provided by the lecturer is useful.					
5	Tutorial lessons is need on how to use it Google classroom application					
6	Google classroom application is available on my Smartphone.					
7	Students feel comfortable of using Google Classroom Application in learning process.					
8	Google Classroom allows me to get immediate feedback from my lecturer.					
9	When lecturer absents, I can easily access class material and assignment through Google Classroom.					
10	Uninterrupted internet connection is required for proper working.					
11	Google Classroom saves time and effort by doing and submitting assignment electronically.					
12	Google Classroom provides quick and easy access to assignment.					
13	I get frustrated by using Google Classroom because of the slow speed internet on my mobile phone.					
14	I dislike using Google Classroom because the small sized screen causes me difficulty in typing.					
15	Google Classroom requires long time to master its use.					
16	Using Google Classroom in all courses that have assignment is better than paper-based assignments.					

**Appendix (B)**  
**Teachers' Questionnaire**

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Google classroom application helps me become more effective.					
2	Google classroom application helps me become more productive.					
3	Google classroom application is useful.					
4	Google classroom application saves time when I use it.					
5	Google classroom application is easy to use.					
6	Tutorial lessons are need on how to use it.					
7	Google classroom application is my first choice in active learning compare to other method.					
8	I use this application without written instructions.					
9	I can use recover instantly when making mistake.					
10	Uninterrupted internet connection is required for proper working.					
11	I easily remember how to use it.					
12	I am satisfied with this application.					
13	The feedback provided by this application is useful.					
14	This application works as expected.					
15	I use this application regularly.					
16	Google Classroom is more suitable for a blended learning experience than a fully online program.					

**Appendix (C)**  
**EFL Teachers' Interview**

- Q1) Do you use Google Classroom regularly?
- Q2) What are the features/menus of Google Classroom do you use the most?
- Q3) How do you promote collaborative learning?
- Q4) What are the benefits of using Google Classroom?
- Q5) What would you do to make the use of Google Classroom better?
- Q6) Do you believe that GC is useful in facilitating teaching and learning in both inside and outside classroom?
- Q7) What is your opinion on creating and using Google Classroom? Is it easy or difficult to use?
- Q8) Do you need an extra help and training creating and using Google Classroom?

**Appendix (D)**  
**The Jury Members**

- 1) Prof. Dr. Yahya, Eman F. (College of Basic Education/ Mustansiriyah University)
- 2) Prof. Dr. Hassan, Dhuha A. (College of Basic Education/ Mustansiriyah University)
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