

## ***Effect of Reading On-line Local Newspapers Headlines on Developing University Students' Reading Skills in English***

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This study investigates the effect of reading on-line English local newspaper headlines (Jordan Times) on university EFL students' reading skills in English. A survey questionnaire was distributed to check whether students are used to reading newspapers in English or not. The sample consists of 47 students of English Language Classroom Teacher major at Al-al-Bayt University enrolled in CALL course during the second semester 2007/2008. This sample is assigned to form two experimental groups and a control group who received training into three internet service labs at the University campus. The first group was trained to read and analyze the grammatical features of on-line local newspapers headlines in English; the second received training on how to read, and translate on-line local newspapers headlines via using the available on-line free machine translation systems; then to compare the output with its equivalent in local Arabic newspapers; whereas the control group followed the syllabus of CALL Course for EFL students. An achievement test was administered as a pre and a post test to measure the students' progress in English. The findings revealed that there are significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) due to the effect of reading on-line English local newspaper headlines on both experimental groups. In the light of this result, reading newspaper headlines via the internet is recommended for use in EFL classes.

**Key words: on-line newspaper headlines, reading skills, on-line machine translation systems**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **Introduction**

“Using newspapers in education is not new; it dates back to June 8, 1795” as Cornish (2007) stated in The Brownsville Herald Newsletters. He added that nowadays Newspaper in Education (NIE) is a nationally recognized collaboration between schools, local newspapers, and community sponsors. More than 950 newspapers across the United States sponsor a Newspaper in Education Program. Cornish also claimed that studies have shown that students who use newspapers score higher on reading comprehension tests and develop stronger critical thinking skills. Newspapers have been used in American classrooms for many years and have proven their worth as an educational tool as stated in Kossack and Sullivan, (1989) and Winters and Orr (1989). However, reading and understanding the headlines of newspapers in a foreign language is not easy, as headlines have a varying level of English that makes it difficult for readers to understand their contexts without adjusting the input to their level or to their previous knowledge.

### **Purpose of the Study**

As it is revealed in the results of the survey questionnaire used in this study, most of Al-al-Bayt University students are not aware of the importance of reading the daily newspapers online in Arabic or in English. This could be attributed to the fact that the students are restricted to use textbooks as the only source for learning English. In our situation in Jordan, students are very much stuck to the material in textbooks and course lectures to pass exams. They are not motivated to refer to go a little bit further than the course components. Furthermore, they are not trained to read newspapers in English. They are not used to going over the genre of newspapers headlines written in English as it is difficult for them to understand. The reason could be attributed to difficult vocabulary, different style and abridged sentence

structure of newspaper language compared with that of any other text they have ever met in their courses.

To the best knowledge of the researcher, no attempts have been made to deal with the importance of reading newspaper for learning English in EFL classes in Jordan. Courses in reading the Press or Journalistic English are not included as a reference or a requirement of the EFL academic courses at Al-al-Bayt the University in Jordan.

### **Rationale**

The rationale of this study stemmed from the availability and easy access to internet sites as a rich source of information coupled with the students' apparent interest in reading hot issues on-line in daily news. Nowadays foreign newspapers are available in many countries all over the world and may become a very valuable tool in the hands of EFL teachers who are always looking for authentic material. Most of these newspapers have a web-based version, therefore "all this material is quickly, cheaply and readily available from the comfort of our desks or homes" (Dudeney, 2000, p. 1). Hence, this study could be considered one of the rare studies dealing with reading on-line newspapers with Arabic context.

### **Significance**

The significance of this study emerged from the tendency of this digital age towards independent learning due to the current technological innovations and to the readers' needs of getting global and comprehensive information for personal purposes. This study, as proposed by the researcher, is believed to suggest reasons to integrate electronic newspapers content in college courses with regard to the effective role of electronic reading to develop students' reading skills. As printed newspaper readership is declining, especially among college students; reading on-line local and national newspapers in the classroom could be sources of varieties that may promote

critical thinking and help students develop their academic English.

### **Research Questions and Variables of the Study**

This study aims at answering the following two questions:

- 1) Are university students' reading skills in English improved due to reading and analyzing the grammatical features of the headlines of local English newspapers on-line?
- 2) Are university students' reading skills in English improved due to reading, translating; and comparing the content of the headlines with that in local Arabic newspapers, on-line?

The independent variable of this study is reading the headlines of local English newspapers on-line; and this variable has three levels: a) reading and analyzing grammatical features of the headlines of local English newspapers on-line; b) translating the headlines of local English newspapers on-line; and c) following the syllabus of CALL course for EFL students. The dependent variables are: The students' progress in English language and improving their reading skills.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

These two questions can be answered through testing the following null-hypotheses:

- There are no statistical differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in improving university students' reading skills in English due to the variable of reading and grammatically analyzing the headlines of local English newspapers on-line.
- There are no statistical differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in improving university students' reading skills in English due to the variable of reading, comparing with; and translating the headlines of local English newspapers on-line into Arabic.

## PREVIOUS STUDIES

Literature on reading on-line newspaper headlines as a teaching tool for improving readers' electronic reading skills in English has received dearth attention. The definition of electronic literacy reading skills comes from Shetzer and Warschauer's (2000) work on reading in an on-line environment which involve skills that are 'intimately bound up with searching and evaluating skills' and 'reading in the online realm by necessity becomes critical literacy'. Aweiss (1994) explored the effect of computer-mediated reading supports on comprehension during independent reading. The most significant finding of this study was that readers with access to computer-assisted reading aids scored significantly higher on the immediate recall protocol than those with no access to any reading aids.

Reading on-line introduces changes that affect the teaching learning processes. Jarvis (2005) examines the way in which computers have historically contributed to ELT with both pedagogical applications and by helping in understanding the nature of the language; however, it is suggested that the internet, and the resulting computer mediated communication (CMC) has now gone way beyond this to change the language itself because learning to use a computer provides a strong intrinsic motivation for learning English through activities on the internet.

Jarvis and Pastuszka (2008) stated that electronic literacy (EL) has changed significantly with the arrival of the WWW particularly in relation to reading and its associated skills. They employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Then, they classified the students who reported having "excellent" or "very good" computer skills as Higher Level Computer Skills (HLCS) and the remaining students who indicated "satisfactory" or "poor" levels as Lower Level Computer Skills (LLCS). The results indicate that the view that hypertext reading behavior of WWW users are different between LLCS and HLCS, the former being more inclined to explore hypertext and the latter, with more goal-directed behavior, tending to be more efficient, effective and thus successful due to the technology factor.

They assured that there has been very little work which has looked at the EL reading skills of non native speakers operating in English and in academic contexts.

Many EFL instructors are taking advantage of technology to provide students with opportunities to continue learning outside the classroom because, for instance, technology allows learners to work at their own pace and to have the freedom to choose their own materials. Technology and multimedia resource and web-based learning environments provide students with authentic and global environments and interesting tools to achieve learner autonomy or learner independence and offer them an opportunity to learn, practice and communicate with others in the target language outside the classroom (Pinkman, 2005). Furthermore, technology offers an authentic and global venue, which is an enormously motivating environment that inspires students to learn, perform in another language, and practice language skills (Hanson-Smith, 1997; Pinkman, 2005).

Jarvis (2004) states that information technology, despite its widespread prevalence and clear relevance at universities world-wide, has not yet established itself as a major EAP component, and this is reflected in a regrettable lack of literature on the subject. There has actually been little work in this specific area as Chun (2006) has noted, "What is striking is that the last 10 years, the great majority of studies dealing with technology or CALL and L2 reading have focused on the teaching and learning of L2 vocabulary" (p. 70). Similarly, Chun and Plass (1996) investigated the effect of multimedia on reading comprehension. They conducted three studies involving a total of 160 students of German using CyberBunch, a multimedia software application. The results of these studies showed that the use of multimedia facilitated overall reading comprehension and that vocabulary annotations consisting of both visual and verbal information were more effective than verbal information exclusively.

Krajka (2000) conducted a study that aims at finding out the extent of the effect of students' use of on-line newspapers' headlines on their language skills and their cognitive knowledge via performing network tasks. Twenty-

five first year engineering students at Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Thailand in 1998 tried out reading on-line headlines and translating these headlines by using free machine translation systems via the net. The study was repeated in the same year with thirty-two first year pharmaceutical science students of the same institute to obtain valid and reliable conclusions. The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data shows positive feedback of employing two net tasks to supplement the regular English courses.

Reah (1998) claimed that although the effectiveness of using the internet has triggered interest among educators in the issue related to web-based instruction, research on the effect of reading on-line newspaper headlines failed to reveal any studies or attempts on a similar field had been conducted so far. This could be attributed to the fact that the English of newspapers headlines has its own features and characteristics on the lexical, syntactic and rhetorical levels for its brevity, attractiveness and clarity. These language features pose a great challenge to foreign learners of English when they begin to read English newspapers. This is hardly surprising, as Sanderson (1999) points out, "this genre of language is not one that people actually use in normal, everyday speech" (p. 29). There is, however, a clear pattern in this special genre; once the rules and tactics are understood a lot of difficulties may disappear. Furthermore Toyoda (2001) observes that students' reading behaviors on the web depend predominantly on the level of EL with technologically less advanced students finding reading frustrating and difficult.

How to take advantage of on-line resources available via the internet to facilitate language learning has been a critical issue discussed by numerous researchers (Felix, 1999; Paulsen, 2001; Warschauer, 1995a). Apart from that, there is an enthusiastic trend for using newspapers in education for academic purposes. Sullivan (2002) confirms that studies on the importance of using newspapers in teaching and learning English proved that students who use a newspaper in school are better on standardized reading tests than students who did not. Khodabandeh (2007) conducted a contrastive analysis between

the newspaper headlines of English and Persian languages in order to find the major similarities and differences between them. She compared the English and Persian headlines as to the proportion of tense forms. The results of her study revealed that the English headlines had a higher proportion of present tense (79.61%) than the Persian ones (29.42%) while past was more frequent in the Persian sample (53.53%) than in the English (4.61%). The most important quantitative similarities and differences between the English and Persian headlines were also deduced.

Sullet Nylander (2000) described and analyzed the textual "genre" of the French newspaper headlines. According to him, the macro syntactic configuration of a press headline can be represented in four types of phrasal constructions, one of which is considered relatively "unmarked." The three other types, parataxis, noun phrase + prepositional, and single nonverbal phrase, are considered more specific of headlines. Scollon (2000), in a comparative study between English and Chinese newspapers headlines argues that the English headlines, following on general Western journalistic practice put the main point right in the headline in what has also been called a deductive rhetorical mode. The Chinese headline, on the other hand, uses the headline to establish the setting but do not provide any further information about the content of the talks, which is the inductive ordering of the topics elsewhere found in contrast between Chinese and English language news stories. In other words, the major difference lies in whether the headline focuses directly on the central topic found within the body of the story or the setting.

Taiwo (2007) conducted a critical discourse analysis of 300 Nigerian newspaper headlines which were randomly selected from six Nigerian newspapers; and they were examined for peculiarity in the vocabulary and rhetorical devices used in order to identify the ideologies that lie behind their constructions. The study generated two typologies of headlines based on the theme addressed and the surface structures. This critical study of the headlines revealed that the headlines have hidden ideological meanings, being divided along some ideological lines reflecting the views of those

whose interest is being served and those whose interest is being undermined. The study concludes that headlines are emotion-inducing strategy in the hands of the editor used to initiate, sustain discourse and shape the views of the readers on national issues. Develotte and Rechniewski (2000) discussed the theoretical and methodological issues involved in the discourse analysis of newspaper headlines which forms the basis of their research for comparing the Australian and French press. The researchers have also studied the grammatical features of both languages.

Chin (1998b) analyzed words used in Chinese news headlines of one-year corpus. The results of his study revealed that the characteristics of the words in Chinese news headlines are explored quantitatively and it is found that words in Chinese news headlines have two features; being disyllabic and geographical names have exceptionally high frequencies. Chin (2007) also studied subject ellipsis in Chinese news headlines, too. Chin (1998a) conducted another study that dealt with the social impact on lexical items in Chinese news headlines in which he compared of Hong Kong and Taiwan news headlines.

The issue of using on-line newspapers is dealt with in some details by Brown (1999). He claims that he uses newspapers in his class regularly, and once in a while he uses electronic papers, for students to practice their computer skills as well as to have a greater variety of choice. He uses e-papers as the source of information, benefiting from the easiness of searching, the variety of articles from different parts of the world and their free character. Among the benefits of using such sites outlined by Brown, some aspects need to be mentioned: that internet reading activity builds on students' reading skills helps them to enlarge vocabulary, forces them to infer unknown words from the context, develops their writing and speaking skills in creating and delivering the presentation to the class, and finally enriches their cultural awareness.

Mardh (1980) offers an exhaustive study of the characteristic features of the headlines of a range of English newspapers; such as, the omission of articles; the omission of verbs and of auxiliaries; nominalizations; the

frequent use of complex noun phrases in subject position; adverbial headlines, with the omission of both verb and subject; the use of short words; the widespread use of puns, word play and alliteration; the importance of word order, with the most important items placed first, even, in some cases, a verb; and independent 'wh-' constructions not linked to a main clause. Bell (1991) stated that although numerous studies have profiled newspaper readers and their uses of newspapers, fewer studies have looked at how readers cognitively respond to various elements of the news package. In discussing his results, Pasternack (1987) made an important point: "In the real world, headlines may be even more important than text because readers often will look only at a headline, skipping the story or skimming it" (p. 34). In particular, this study investigates the effect of reading electronic newspapers headlines on improving university students reading skills in English.

A review of the available studies showed that all the studies in this area compare the headlines of English newspapers with those written in their native languages, such as Persian, German, and Nigerian, French, Chinese, Spanish and others. It is also revealed that there are no studies that compare English newspapers headlines with those in Arabic. Most of these studies concentrated on the features of the headlines of newspapers.

## **METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Population**

The population of this study consisted of all students of English Language Classroom Teacher (219; 39 male and 180 female) during the second semester of the academic year 2007-2008. The sample included all students (62; 4 male and 58 female) specialized in English Language Classroom Teacher at Al-al-Bayt University who enrolled themselves in CALL course (1101444) during the second semester 2007/2008. Out of the 62 students, 47 were randomly selected to form two experimental groups and one control

group. Fifteen students dropped the course due to their absence.

### **Instruments**

Two quantitative research tools have been used to collect the data of this study: A survey questionnaire and an achievement test. The survey questionnaire (12 items) was built by the researcher to find out whether students are familiar with reading the Jordan Times, the local newspaper in English in Jordan, or not. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire it was rated by a jury of experts in the field of Education and Technology at Al-al-Bayt University. The jury's suggestions were taken into consideration for modifying this survey questionnaire. Reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was calculated by using Cronbach Alpha. It was 0.82 which indicates that it is convenient for the purposes of this study.

The second tool is an English language achievement test which was administered to measure the students' progress in English. This test consists of 50 multiple choice items of authentic English that included grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Validity of this instrument has been ascertained through submitting it to a qualified jury of 2 professors and 4 assistant professors at the University. To ensure reliability of the test items, it was applied as a pre test on a section of 30 students of English language and two weeks later as a post test. The correlation coefficient was computed ( $r=0.89$ ).

### **Procedures**

#### *The first stage*

This study used the descriptive survey research design through two stages. During the first stage the two instruments were administered and the data was collected by the researcher. The sample of this study (47 students) was asked to answer the 12 items of the survey questionnaire in the first week of the

second semester in CALL (1101444) sessions, so as to establish the extent to which they read on-line the Jordan Times, the local English newspaper printed in English. The items are as shown in the table below.

**TABLE 1**  
**The Items of the Survey Questionnaire**

No.	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1	Using the internet lab encourages me to read newspapers on-line.					
2	I read the headlines of some of the Arabic newspapers on-line in the computer lab.					
3	I read the headlines of the Jordan Times on-line in the computer lab.					
4	I read the headlines of the news in Arabic newspapers on-line first, and then I read the equivalent news in the Jordan Times.					
5	I feel that I need to read newspapers in English.					
6	I read newspapers in English to improve my English.					
7	I use the Jordan Times as a reference for my English courses.					
8	I find the language of the English newspapers difficult.					
9	Using on-line machine translation helps me a lot in understanding the language of headlines.					
10	I need to easily get some information about local affairs in English via the net.					
11	I feel that I need to read on-line what is written in the world about the hot issues.					
12	I like to learn much about the English language used in the daily e- newspapers.					

Responses, based on Likert scale, range from 5-1, where item 5 indicates highly range (always) whereas item1 indicates low range (never). The data was collected and analyzed. The students' responses ensured that they enjoy using the internet to read the newspapers on-line. Their responses also show that they use the internet to read headlines of newspapers in Arabic as the means of items 1 and 2 are the highest (4.82; 4.53); whereas item 3 scored the least (1, 89) among all the questionnaire items. This indicates that students do

not read The Jordan Times at all. In comparison, items 11, 5, 12 and 10 scored higher means (4.55; 4.48; 4.36; 4.19) successively. This indicates that the students feel that they need to read newspapers in English on-line. The content of these items (11, 5, 12 and 10) emphasize that the students' attitudes towards reading newspapers in English are positive. The mean of item 8 (3.53) indicates that more than half of the sample of the study found that the language of the English newspapers is difficult. This is revealed in the low means of items 6 and 7 (2.70; 2.55). This confirms the students' aversion to read English newspapers for improving their English. Furthermore, the mean of item 9 (3.14) reveals that students tried to translate the headlines of English newspapers via using on-line machine translation. However, they have no attempts to read the headlines in Arabic first, and then read the equivalent news in English as the mean of item 4 is very low (1.89). These results interpret the vital need for conducting this study to promote reading the headlines of English newspapers via studying the structure and the language of newspapers headlines. Table 2 shows the means and the standard deviations of each item as follows:

**TABLE 2**  
**Means and Standard for Each Item of the Survey**

Item number	No. of students	Minimum	Maximum	Means	S. Deviation
Item 1	47	4.00	5.00	4.8298	.3799
Item 11	47	3.00	5.00	4.5532	.5441
Item 2	47	1.00	5.00	4.5319	.7178
Item 5	47	2.00	5.00	4.4894	.8565
Item 12	47	1.00	5.00	4.3617	.8704
Item 10	47	2.00	5.00	4.1915	.6128
Item 8	47	1.00	5.00	3.5319	1.2310
Item 9	47	2.00	5.00	3.1489	.7512
Item 6	47	1.00	5.00	2.7021	1.0818
Item 7	47	1.00	5.00	2.5532	1.5008
Item 4	47	1.00	3.00	1.8936	.5608
Item 3	47	1.00	3.00	1.8936	.5608

### *The second stage*

The second stage started by giving the three groups the achievement test as a pretest to measure equality among them at the beginning of the third week of the second semester. The results of the pre test showed that the three groups are equal in their English level as there are no significant differences among their scores. At the beginning of the fourth week the three groups were assigned to receive training in three different classes in an internet laboratory in three successive sessions of three hours a week for each group. This lasted for 8 weeks. The following training program has been applied.

### *The Training Program*

This training program consists of activities and exercises based on Garrett's 'Newspapers in Education' Now I Get It! (2007) and on Beare, 'Your Guide to English as 2nd Language' (1997) The first experimental group received training on this program that aims at analyzing and studying the structures, (categories, word classes, constructions) styles, forms and features of the newspaper headlines. Then, the students were trained to read, study the grammatical features, the forms and the style of the chosen headlines. They were trained to analyze about 30 examples of on-line headlines of the local English newspaper in Jordan (Jordan Times) weekly. This training lasted for 8 successive weeks. Meanwhile, the 'discovery approach' and the 'can get it approach' were both used to find what grammatical points have been missed or misused in the newspapers headlines. In addition, a grammar-discovery approach was also used. This approach involves providing learners with data reading text to illustrate a particular grammatical feature and getting them to analyze it so as to arrive at an understanding of how the feature works. In effect, this requires learners to become active-thinkers in order to discover for themselves how the grammar of the language they are studying works. The grammar-discovery approach has a number of advantages. It is likely to be more motivating than the direct

approach - in general, learners find it more interesting to discover something for them than to be told it. It turns grammar into a 'content' that the learners can communicate about. In other words, learners can use the target language as the medium for discovering grammar. In this way, a grammar discovery task doubles up as a communicative task. After all, learners can just as well talk about grammar as the countless other things language teachers get them to discuss. Perhaps the biggest advantage, however, is that grammar-discovery tasks help learners develop the analytical skills they need to dissect language for themselves. In this way, they can continue to discover how the grammar of the language works on their own when they are outside the classroom (Ellis & Gaies, 1998).

The second group was trained to read on-line headlines in English and compare that with their Arabic equivalent in on-line local Arabic newspapers Al-Rai', Al-Dustoor and Al-Ghad. They were able to find what is written and what is missed in the headlines in both English and Arabic. During this task students were also asked to get the meaning of these headlines via using the available on-line free machine translation systems. Each student was able to study and compare five headlines weekly. They were asked to write down the output of their work in a table so as to write down what is missed in the target language. They were also asked to check if the free machine translation systems (e.g., Google translator) produce relatively accurate translation. Comparisons and discussions took place among the group which encouraged them all to talk about the experience that they gained. Meanwhile, the control group (15 students) was asked to read scraps of news of the local English newspaper in class to get the gist of the content. At the end of this training program students in the three groups were given the post achievement test.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To investigate the effect of reading on-line English local newspaper headlines on university EFL students' reading skills in English, a descriptive

statistical analysis was conducted where means and standard deviations of the students' scores in the three groups in both the pretest and the posttest were calculated according to group variable as shown in table 3 below.

**TABLE 3**  
**Means and SD of Pretest and Posttest: Estimated Marginal Means according to Group Variable**

GROUP	Pre test		Post test		Estimated Marginal Means	N
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Experimental 1	26.80	5.80	30.20	7.04	28.90	15
Experimental 2	22.76	3.68	26.71	4.30	29.34	17
Control group	27.20	7.98	25.53	7.27	23.85	15
Total	25.47	6.21	27.45	6.44	27.36	47

This table shows that there are statistical differences among the means and the standard deviations of the three groups. The mean of the first experimental group in the posttest (30.20) indicates that there is an effect of the training program of reading, analyzing the grammatical features, styles and forms of the newspapers headlines on-line. Similarly, there is an effect of comparing and translating the headlines of English newspaper on-line from English into Arabic and vice-versa, as the mean of the second experimental group in the posttest is 26.71; whereas the mean of the control group in the pretest was 27.20 and in the posttest was less (25.53).

To adjust the differences between the groups in the students' scores in English, ANCOVA covariance was used. Table 4 below shows the appropriateness of using it as it is considered a convenient device for the evaluation of the two null hypotheses. The analysis of covariance primarily reduced the error term, but it removed the bias in the means of the dependent variable that was caused by change group differences on the covariate. The obtained significant value of .000 in table 5 below achieved the .05 level of statistical significance. This led to the conclusion that there is indeed a significant difference between posttest means of the two experimental groups involved in the study.

**TABLE 4**  
**Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PRE	1496.907	1	1496.907	276.543	.000
GROUP	274.026	2	137.013	25.312	.000
Error	232.756	43	5.413		
Corrected Total	1907.617	46			

Results of the analysis of covariance show that when leveled on their pretest scores, the participants received training in the program in both the experimental groups score significantly higher than those in the control group. Table 5 below reports pair wise comparisons (post-hoc tests) between the different levels of the groups. This analysis used the LSD method adjustment to correct the significance levels for multiple comparisons.

**TABLE 5**  
**Dependent Variable: Post hoc, Pair Wise Comparisons Using LSD Method**

(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Experimental 1	Experimental 2	-.43	.615
	Control group	5.06*	.000
Experimental 2	Experimental 1	.43	.615
	Control group	5.49*	.000
Control group	Experimental 1	-5.06*	.000
	Experimental 2	-5.49*	.000

\* The mean difference is significant at the ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) level.

Based on estimated marginal means, table 5 shows that: Statistical differences were between Experimental 1 and Control group in favor of Experimental 1; and statistical differences were between Experimental 2 and Control group in favor of Experimental 2. This shows that there are statistical differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in improving university students' progress in English due to the two variables: studying and focusing on the grammatical features of the newspapers headlines; and reading and translating the headlines of local English newspapers on-line. Further analysis of the data showed that at the .05 level of significance there was noted a statistically

significance difference between the posttest scores of the subjects who read and analyze the grammatical features of the newspapers headlines as compared to the posttest scores of the subjects from the control group. Consequently the two null hypotheses were rejected.

The effect of the training program that focuses on the grammatical features of the newspapers headlines is apparent as the mean of the students' scores is the highest.

Analysis of Covariance, ANCOVA, indicates that there is a statistical difference at among the means of the three groups of the study as it is shown in Table 5 above ( $F=25.31$ ,  $p<.001$ ). So, through studying and analyzing what they read, students can get the meaning of the content of the headlines. This indicates that there are significant differences in the students' progress in English due to the variable of reading and analyzing the grammatical features of the headlines of local English newspapers on-line. So, students' progress has improved due to being trained on the activities and tasks of the training program.

The results of this study are consistent with Krajka's (2000), Jarvis's (2005) and Sullivan's (2002) results on the importance of reading on-line newspapers headlines as a good resource of improving students' reading skills.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is not meant to be a definitive one as there are some limitations on this investigation. The achievement test does not necessarily imply testing all the reading skills of the university students. In addition, the internet access may not develop the students' reading skills.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the results of this study proved that using the news headlines via the internet for teaching purposes at the advanced level is effective. Reading English effectively via electronic papers is a turning point in promoting learner-centeredness. Students find it very enjoyable to perform activities on-line alone. It is fun to learn without recourse to textbooks. This type of teaching could be considered a good model for students at the university level. It is recommended that teachers, educators and curricula designers are advised to encourage students to try online news headlines in English in their classes and perform activities on headlines. It is true that practice on using news headlines on-line might improve students' reading skills, enable them to react with the real language and content rather than the form, enrich their vocabulary, gain some cultural knowledge and political issues and be up-to-date with current situations around.

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