Comparison of Rosetta stone English software vs. Tell Me More English software on Iranian EFL Student Achievement toward English learning

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Abstract. Tell Me More and Rosetta Stone are considered as two famous language learning soft-wares for learning English. To investigate the significant differences between the effects of Tell Me More and Rosetta Stone on the achievement of the Iranian EFL learners, a sample of 30 Iranian Intermediate level EFL students in Emam Ali Institute of Higher Technical Education Center of Kordkouy in Iran was selected. Then, the participants were randomly assigned to two different treatment conditions. One class received the Rosetta stone English software and the other one received the Tell Me More English software. Two separate Independent-Samples T-test procedures were employed to analyze the obtained data. The results showed that neither of the two groups significantly outperformed the other one in their reading and writing performance. The results also showed no significant difference between the members of the two groups regarding their speaking and listening performance. Thus, in this research study, none of the results could be claimed as significant.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Computer-based instruction, as a new trend and distinct field to language teaching, emerged in the 1950s and 60s on mainframe computers (Beatty, 2010). The role of technologies in language learning and teaching is defined as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Levy (1997) defines CALL as the search for and the study of applications on the computer in language teaching and learning. Beatty (2010) defines CALL as any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language.

Hubbard (2006) states that CALL does not mean merely the standard desktop and laptop devices labeled as computers. Rather all the networks connecting them, peripheral devices associated with them, and a number of other technological innovations, such as PDAs (personal digital assistants), mp3 players, mobile phones, electronic whiteboards, and even DVD players which have a sort of computer embedded in them are also included in this definition.

2. BACKGROUND

Computer-assisted language learning as a new approach to language teaching uses computer technology as an aid for the teacher in different parts of teaching-learning process such as presentation, assisting students, and evaluating material. Betty (2003, as cited in Hubbard, 2009) acknowledges CALL as a way to improve learning efficiency, learning effectiveness, learner's access to the material, learner's convenience, learner's motivation, and finally institutional efficiency.

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The reason behind CALL is defined as an approach with intent to challenge traditional methods of language teaching and learning. Early CALL research studies often focused on attempting to demonstrate the superiority of using computers over traditional language teaching (Hubbard, 2009). Box (2002) believes that language teachers, administrators, and learners will realize the importance of CALL in the teaching-learning process and the trend toward using it in the future. CALL finally will become invisible, serving the needs of learners and integrating in to every teacher's every practice.

Foreign language self-study materials are becoming easy to access by the use of Computers and the Internet, and now many marketed software applications are being used in terms of complete language learning solutions, such as *Rosetta Stone*, and *Tell Me More*. Novice learners simply find these commercial products as appealing, being impressed by some promising slogans like that they will help them achieve their language learning goals faster than they ever imagined possible (*Rosetta Stone*), or that their program can be believed as the most advanced language training program at hand (*Tell Me More*) (Nielson, 2011).

On the other hand, now, there is poor knowledge regarding learners' skills or learning effects while using computer assisted language learning (CALL) products as individual resources. Besides, these claims cannot be supported since there has been no autonomous observed research to support them (Ware, 2011).

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Iran's ministry of education, science, and technology published the general goals of English language instruction in the current system of education as developing and increasing the student's skill in comprehending each other and developing their reading and writing skills so that they can communicate their purposes correctly through the target language. In spite of those goals, unfortunately these goals have not yet completely achieved.

To the researchers, one of the most crucial problems refers to the method of English teaching in Iran. So far Grammar-Translation method has been used in Iranian schools and universities. The language that is used in classes is mostly the students' native language and the students have no control in their learning and almost all of the English classes are nothing but boring by origin. Consequently, despite the condition of passing English as a compulsory subject, which is mandatory, only a few of the students learn English at a satisfactory level. Computer-assisted language learning as an aid for teachers can help them to facilitate the process of language learning and teaching. Also, it improves learners' achievement and increases their motivation in learning.

CALL applications used in this study intend to meet students' English learning needs and enrich their learning experiences by removing the limitations of traditional instructions. The primary aim of this research is to find out whether there is any significant difference between *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software* and also the present study attempts to investigate whether the use of CALL softwares can improve learners' achievement in the procedure of English learning and also to compare the effects of Tell Me More and Rosseta Stone soft-wares on the achievement process of Iranian EFL students.

4. METHOD
4.1. Data and data selection criteria

In the present study, a sample of 100 Iranian EFL students studying computer at Imam Ali (PUH) Institute of Higher Technical Education Center of Kordkouy was selected. After the

administration of a subtest of the KET and taking the results into account, the number of participants was reduced to 30. The students' age ranged from 23 to 27. The participants were randomly assigned to two different classes. One class received the Rosetta stone English software and the other one received the Tell Me More English software.

4.2. Procedures of data analysis

The research design used in this study is a true experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to two groups, exposed to different treatments, and then they were post-tested. Posttest scores were then compared to determine the effectiveness of the treatments. In the groups who received computer-based instruction, the researchers explained briefly the content of the lessons which were taught before students use the software. After that, the researcher explained the way of using the software and then the software was installed and run. The learners were given the software and asked to work with it according to the instruction. The researcher then answered any possible questions during the study in order to facilitate the use of the software.

To analyze data and to answer the research questions, two separate Independent-Samples T-test procedures were employed: one to investigate the effects of Rosetta stone English software and Tell Me More English software on EFL learners' speaking and listening skills, another to study the effects of the same soft wares on the same learners' reading and writing skills.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will present and discuss the results of the present study as follows:

The first research question attempted to investigate whether there is any significant difference between achievement of students in English speaking and listening, who received *Rosetta Stone English software* and the students, who received *Tell Me More English software*. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, etc. are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the first Independent Samples T-Test.

	groupmembership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
speakinglistening	rosetta stone	15	25.0000	4.75094	1.22669
	tell me more	15	26.2000	6.32681	1.63358

As it can be seen in the table, the mean score of the Rosetta stone group members is 25, but the mean score of the other group members is 26. Thus, it can be claimed that control group members outperformed the other group members.

In order to see whether or not the differences among the means are statistically significant, an Independent Samples T-Test procedure was run. The results are given in *Table 2*.

Table 2. The Results of the T-Test procedure.

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
									Lower	Upper
speakinglistening	Equal variances assumed	1.621	.213	-.587	28	.562	-1.20000	2.04287	-5.38464	2.98464
	Equal variances not assumed			-.587	25.980	.562	-1.20000	2.04287	-5.39935	2.99935

Based on *Table 2*, since the Sig. level is not statistically significant, t (25) = 0.587, *p* >.05, it can be safely claimed that there are no significant differences between the groups. So, the first null hypothesis developed in chapter one is supported. Therefore, it can be concluded that *Tell me more* group members did not outperform the other group members on the post-test even though the mean score of *Rosetta stone* group is smaller than the mean score of the other group.

4. 3. Investigation of the second question

The second research question attempted to investigate whether there is any significant difference between achievement of the students in English writing and reading; those who received *Rosetta Stone English software* and those who received *Tell Me More English software*. To this end, another Paired-Samples T-Test was used. Descriptive statistics are given in the following table:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the second Independent Samples T-Test.

	groupmembership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
readinhwriting	rosetta	15	30.4667	6.35685	1.64133
	tell me more	15	32.6000	9.04591	2.33565

As it can be seen in *Table 3*, the Tell me more group participants have a higher mean (mean = 32. 60) in comparison with the other group (mean = 30. 46).

In order to see whether or not the observed differences among the means are statistically significant, another Independent Samples T-Test procedure was run. The results of the T-Test procedure are given in *Table 4*.

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Table 4. The Results of the second T-Test Procedure.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
readinhwriting	Equal variances assumed	2.370	.135	-.747	28	.461	-2.13333	2.85468	-7.98088	3.71422
	Equal variances not assumed			-.747	25.116	.462	-2.13333	2.85468	-8.01128	3.74461

Based on *Table 4*, since the T-value is not statistically significant, t (25) = 0.74, *p* > .05, we can safely claim that there are no significant differences among the means of the groups. So, the second null-hypothesis is also supported and we conclude that there are no significant differences in the performance of the language learners on their post-tests regarding their participation in the two aforementioned groups.

6. DISCUSSION

The present study attempted to investigate whether there is any significant difference between achievement of students in English speaking and listening who received *Rosetta Stone English software* and the students who received *Tell Me More English software* and also to investigate whether there is any significant difference between achievement of students in English writing and reading who received Rosetta Stone English software and the students who received Tell Me More English software.

The results regarding the first research question presented in this study indicated that neither of the group members outperformed the other group members on the post-test. The results of the present study are, thus, different from those of Fore and Corley (2012), who found the significance of inclusion tools, such as *Rosetta Stone* as a Visual Way to Teach Language and discussed that in too many classrooms, there is no expectation that learners with special needs will be able to learn and develop functional reading and writing skills applying more of a *Rosetta Stone English software* rather than *Tell Me More English software*.

The second research question in the present study focused on the investigation of the significant differences on the performance of the two groups of learners on reading and writing skills. The results did not show any significant differences among the learners considering their participation in Rosetta stone or Tell Me More groups. Therefore, the results of this study are in compliance with those of Healey and Johnson (2005) considering Rosetta stone and Tell Me More as two practical examples of computer-assisted language learning programs which bring more or less similar benefits to EFL learners' reading and writing simultaneously.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The present study attempted to explore whether there are any significant differences between achievement of the students in English speaking and listening who received *Rosetta Stone English software* and the students who received *Tell Me More English software*. Moreover, it

was an attempt to investigate whether there are any significant differences between achievement of students in English writing and reading who received *Rosetta Stone English software* and the students who received *Tell Me More English software*.

The findings of the present study revealed that there are not any significant differences on the speaking and listening performance of Iranian EFL learners who were taught by using *Rosetta Stone English software* and the students who received *Tell Me More English software*. The results showed that none of the group members outperformed the other ones.

The second research question was an attempt to investigate the significant differences on reading and writing achievement among EFL learners regarding exposure of such techniques as *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software*. The findings showed that there were no significant differences between the performances of those who were exposed to the techniques of the softwares.

The results of the present study indicated that applying such techniques, namely *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software* was equally effective on Iranian EFL learners' speaking and listening achievements. The findings of the present study also showed that there were no significant differences among the participants regarding applying such techniques, namely *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software* and thus, both of them were considered to be equally effective on Iranian EFL learners' reading and writing, as well and none of the participants participated in these two groups of learners outperformed the other.

Iranian EFL learners who were taught English by receiving *Tell Me More English software* had slightly better means in comparison with the ones who were exposed to *Rosetta Stone English software*, but the differences were not significant enough to make a significant difference in the performance of the learners in both groups.

Therefore, activity types designed on the basis of the Rosetta Stone English software as well as *Tell Me More English software* could be considered as equally effective on Iranian EFL learners' language achievement whatsoever.

To sum up, this study might have shed some light on some fields regarding Computer-Assisted Language Learning advances, such as applying new English softwares, like the ones utilized in this study, in addition to their effects on EFL learners' language learning. Nevertheless, it might also have potentiality to reply to more questions regarding the matter. The upcoming issues along with the already existing controversial issues surrounding the matter may warrant more research studies in an area waiting to be further explored.

The findings of the present study can have implications for both teachers and learners. The effects of the class activities in terms of new techniques, especially applying *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software* are undeniable. These advanced techniques not only facilitate the process of language achievement for language learners, but also make the language learning process much easier and more enjoyable for them. The present study can be useful for both teachers and learners to come to be acquainted with the significance of this new technology at hand. *Rosetta Stone English software* and *Tell Me More English software*, for example, are both considered as two of the most striking technology-mediated packages within which diverse teaching and learning behaviors can be designed to lend a hand to language learners with intent to develop their achievement.

The awareness of how effectual these activities are amplifies teachers' potentiality to judge their students' needs and the distinctiveness of the learning process they are connected with while utilizing these fractions of new technology. Hence, teachers might regard employing such angles of the most advanced technology in the world of language teaching and learning as, by some means, efficient techniques for the reason that they can make the foremost route of

language attainment more evocative and substantial. Above and beyond, educators' inspiration in devising language learning activities within the frameworks of such soft-wares as *Rosetta Stone English* and *Tell Me More English* in the environment of the classrooms, can not only recover their apprentices' knowledge, but also make the education process easier for them.

The findings of the present study can have implications for learners, too. By bringing such new soft-wares into play, students can take pleasure in the learning process naturally. The more advanced ones can have the occasion to presuppose accountability for their more fragile cohorts or associates. In this way, they can set up themselves for achieving the major assignment appropriately. They may also be trained to inspect the problems more cautiously, uncover answers to the problems, and select the finest answer, and finally hold responsibilities, intending to deal with the new technology within their reach.

For those researchers who are keen on performing research focusing on the aforesaid field of study, explicitly *Rosetta Stone English* and *Tell Me More English* soft-wares and their effects on the progression of four skills of language, the following areas of research are recommended:

This study investigated the effects of Iranian EFL learners' exposure to *Rosetta Stone English software* as well as *Tell Me More English software* on the achievement of four skills of English as a foreign language. Further research is needed to investigate the effects of the same soft-wares, as the symbols of the actual presence of the new technology within the confines of the learning environment, on their grammar achievement, vocabulary learning, and so on and so forth.

Furthermore, gender and age were not considered in the present study. Therefore, interested researchers can consider these two factors as two of the variables.

Also, the sample size in the present study was rather small. So, the same investigation can be duplicated with much larger samples.

Last but not least, the present study attempted to investigate the effects of the above-mentioned soft-wares on EFL learners in the Intermediate level. Further research is needed to provide much stronger evidence for the effectiveness of the mediation of such advanced techniques in the process of achievement of four important language skills on different levels of language proficiency, as well.

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