ENGLISH MAJORS' RESPONSES TO SUPPLEMENTARY GRAMMAR EXERCISES IN GOOGLE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: *This study explores the effectiveness of supplementary grammar exercises provided through Google Classroom for first-year English majors. By integrating technology into grammar instruction, the study aimed to enhance students' learning experience and improve grammar proficiency. Over a 12-week period, students completed online exercises, followed by a survey and interviews to assess their perceptions. Findings revealed that the majority of students found the exercises useful, appropriately challenging, and beneficial for self-regulated learning. The study highlights the advantages of incorporating technology into grammar instruction and suggests minor adjustments to optimize learning outcomes.*

1. Introduction

Supplementary exercises are a good means to help learners improve their language skills. Building up supplementary grammar exercises using a digital platform, Google Classroom, is the aim of this study to help students learn grammar better. The application of those exercises needs feedbacks from students, who do them, for future improvement. The significance of the study is the combination between teacher's material development and application of technology. In this study, when the grammar course, a mandatory component for English majors at Hong Duc University, was delivered, supplementary grammar exercises were designed online for students to complete, alongside paper-based ones. Upon completion of the tasks on the virtual platform, students' evaluations were collected, using two methods: questionnaires and interviews. The information drawn from students' feedback would contribute to upgrading the exercises later on in terms of both exercices contents and the way to conduct them.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The role of supplementary materials with technology in language learning

Technology has become an integral component of modern education, particularly in language learning. Supplementary materials enhanced by technology provide learners with additional opportunities for practice, engagement, and self-regulation. Research has

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demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating digital tools into supplementary learning resources, making the language acquisition process more effective and accessible. Materials design in digital platform help to bridge formal and informal learning environments, enhancing engagement through e-learning platforms, from that, it addresses learner needs and supports self-directed learning [3] [4] [5] [6] [14]. In English grammar learning, it improves grammar proficiency [2]. Specifically, in the study by Dangan & Ortega-Dela Cruz (2021). digital supplementary materials provide solutions by offering content specifically designed to target learners' weaknesses. For Ayado & Berame, 2022, the use of technology in supplementary materials facilitates self-directed learning, particularly through internet access and digital devices. Dauletova, 2022 discovered that, from the supplementary online materials, the transition between structured learning and independent study reinforces knowledge retention and fosters long-term proficiency. He stated that "The use of technology has received increasing recognition as a means capable of bridging formal and informal settings in the target language learning and enabling students to actively and effectively use technology both inside and outside the classroom [6; p.190]. Meanwhile, Van & Hoang (2022) observed that the Moodle platforms provide structured, interactive exercises that encourage student engagement and motivation. Positively, (Ali, Ahmed, & Ariannejad, 2024) demonstrated that supplementary materials significantly improve language proficiency, especially in grammar learning. "This progress was attributed to the use of supplementary materials, which increased engagement and motivation among learners, provided better resources, and offered more opportunities for practice [2; p.12]. It is obvious that, the integration of technology into supplementary materials is a powerful tool in language learning. It enhances self-regulated and self-directed learning, improves grammar proficiency, addresses individual learning needs, and bridges the gap between formal and informal education. With the continued advancement of educational technology, educators and students should embrace digital supplementary materials to create more effective and engaging learning experiences.

2.2. The tole of self-regulation in learning English grammar

Self-regulation plays a crucial role in mastering English grammar, as it enables learners to take control of their learning process, set goals, monitor progress, and apply self-corrective strategies. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of self-directed learning, metacognitive awareness, and independent study in improving grammar proficiency. Several scholars have obeserved that self-regulation in language learning brings about great benefits to learners [1] [8] [9] [11] [12]. Of which the role of self-regulation has been analysed and evaluated through statistics of learning outcome of students. However, some authors also observe the role of teacher support in self-regulation According to Aghayani and Janfeshan (2020), "while each of the phases of self-directed learning is very significant for effective self-directed learning, students need help if they are to succeed in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning" (p.87). Van Hout-Wolters, Simons, and Volet (2000) argue that "active learning is defined as learning in which the learner uses opportunities to decide about

aspects of the learning process" (p.21). Salihoglu (2022) highlights the role of technological tools and learner autonomy in language acquisition, asserting that "although formal education is still the popular one on a global scale, learning needs more than ever autonomous and responsible students with the emerging power of technological developments shaping the world at a high rapid" (p.21). Lynch and Anderson (2012) emphasize the significance of self-study techniques in mastering grammar, stating, "Grammar is one of the three main systems of language, the others being vocabulary and pronunciation. Many students have been taught to think of learning English as expanding their knowledge of these systems" (p.2). Meanwhile Hačatrjana and Linde (2023) found that teachers who piloted problem-solving materials reported their effectiveness in promoting self-regulated learning. This suggests that learners who engage in structured exercises and reflective grammar practice are more likely to develop stronger language skills. In short, self-regulation is essential in learning English grammar as it empowers learners to take control of their studies, employ problem-solving strategies, and leverage technology for effective practice. By fostering autonomy, self-directed learning, and active engagement, students can significantly enhance their grammar proficiency and overall language competence.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

In the Grammar course for first-year English majors, we focused on using exercises on the Google Classroom to help learners practice their grammar skills. The experimental program lasted 12 weeks. The total number of participants was 34, out of which there were 7 males and 27 females who were around 18 - 19 years old.

3.2. Exercises implementation procedure

First, students were asked to create a Gmail account. Then, they were guided to do the first sample exercise and explained to them the importance of completing both online and offline exercises. Students completed all exercises in the grammar book that accompanied each topic of the lesson. The online exercises were intended to further hone students' grammar skills, and at the same time, help them to view their results and progress spontaneously. The grammar applied content in the course included 10 topics. For each topic, after studying the theory, students had to complete exercises in the textbook, 25 question online exercises in class, and 40-question online exercises at home. All exerices questions were multiple choice or short answer ones. The difficulty level of the vocabulary in the exercises ranges from A2 to B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The grammar difficulty level ranges from A1 to C1 [7]. The reseasons underlying the choice of language and grammar level originated from the first year students' language proficiency level of A2 to B1, and the compulsory contents of grammar course. Students mainly did exercises in the textbook at home, because the classtime is not enough for them to cover all those contents.

3.3. Data collection

After applying grammar exercises on Google Classroom, at the end of the semester, we created a questionnaire to find out students' evaluation of the grammar exercises they had done on the software. We focused on 4 basic aspects: The usefulness of the exercises, here we wanted to see if the designed exercises were useful for improving their grammar skills. In addition, we also let students evaluate the difficulty level and the time allocation it took them to complete these exercises, in order to make adjustments later, if necessary. We also asked questions to assess how they felt doing this exercise, in order to find out whether similar exercises put too much pressure on them. The levels we set for each question were based on a Likert scale, at 4 or 5 levels, depending on the questions. In addition, to further understand students' views on the exercises designed on Google Classroom, we gave three interview questions to six out of 34 students in the experimental class. In the data analysis pseudonyms were used for confidentiality. We focused on issues such as: (1) the support that those grammar exercises brought about, (2) the relevant volume of exercises, and (3) the suitability of exercises from students' view. The results of the questionnaire and interviews are analyzed in the following sections.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Students' opinions on the application of Google Classroom through the survey question

4.1.1. The usefulness of grammar exercises

We sought to understand students' evaluation of the usefulness of exercises on Google Classroom. The usefulness levels ranged from *Very useful* to *Not useful*. The results are shown in the following diagram:
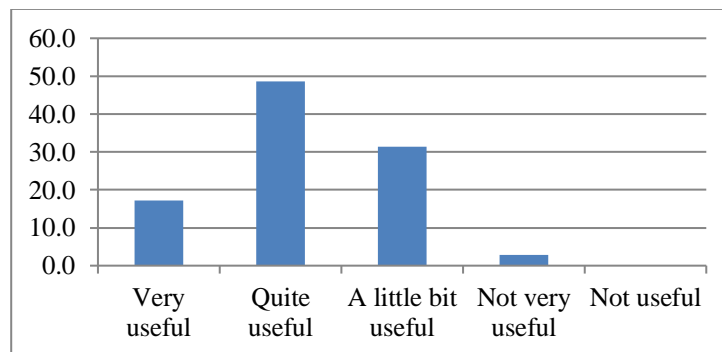

Figure 1. The Usefulness of Grammar Exercises

The chart shows the students' opinions on the usefulness of the grammar exercises, with a total of 35 students, of which 23 students (65.7%) rated the exercises as useful or higher. Specifically, 6 students (17.1%) said the exercises were very useful, 17 students (48.6%) commented that the exercises were quite useful, accounting for the highest percentage. This shows that the majority of students found the exercises to have a positive impact on their grammar learning. Meanwhile, 11 students (31.4%) said the

exercises were only somewhat useful, and only 1 student (2.9%) rated the exercises as not very useful, no students (0.0%) said the exercises were not useful. The data shows that the exercises are useful for students, although there are opinions that the exercises are not very useful, but this number is not large, which allows us to conclude that, in terms of usefulness, these exercises are completely applicable.

4.1.2. Difficulty level of grammar exercises

We also get information about whether the grammar exercises were difficult for students or not. The difficulty levels we set consisted of 5 levels, from *Very difficult* to *Easy*. The results are shown in the following figure:
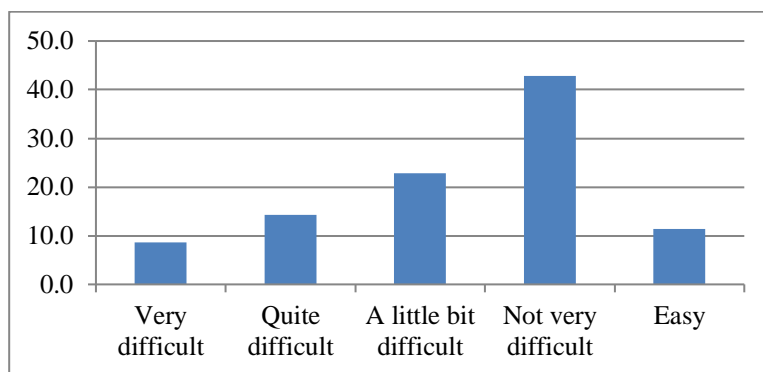

Figure 2. *Difficulty level of grammar exercises*

It is shown from the data that 16 students (45.8%) felt that the exercise was somewhat difficult, choosing a level from *A little bit difficult* or higher. The number of students who rated this exercise as *Very difficult* accounted for 8.6% with 3 students. 5 students (14.3%) said that the exercise was quite difficult, 8 students (22.9%) commented that the exercise was a little bit difficult, meaning that it was challenging but not too difficult. Overall, nearly half of the students felt that the exercise was a little bit difficult or higher. At the *Not very difficult* level, 15 students (42.9%) chose this level, showing that they were able to complete it without too many obstacles. Meanwhile, 4 students (11.4%) commented that the exercise was easy. Thus, when we apply the i + 1 principle proposed by Krashen (1994, p.46), the current level of difficulty is basically suitable for most learners.

4.1.3. Assessment of the quantity of grammar exercises

In addition to studying the difficulty level of grammar exercises, we also studied students' assessments of the quantity of grammar exercises, which were classified into 5 levels from *Too much* to *Little*. The results are shown in the following chart:
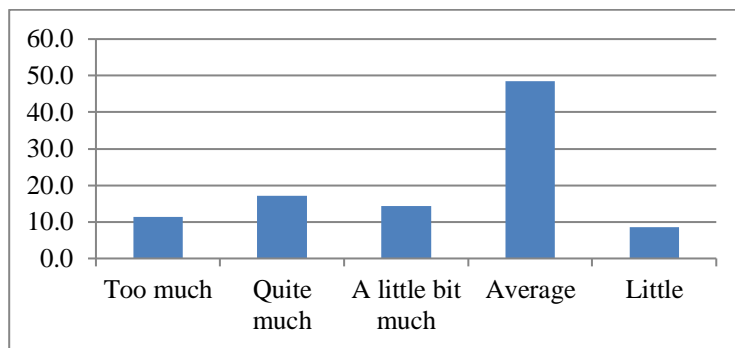
Figure 3. *Assessment of the quantity of grammar exercises*

The data shows that 15 students (42.8%) rated the amount of homework as *A little bit much* or higher, of which 4 students (11.4%) said that the amount of homework was too much, this situation could put pressure on the learner, 6 students (17.1%) commented that the amount of homework was quite much, which was still at a high level but acceptable, 5 students (14.3%) rated the amount of homework as *A little bit much*. This shows that nearly half of the students felt that the amount of homework was currently too much and could be adjusted. However, 17 students (48.6%) said that the amount of homework was average, which was suitable for their learning ability. This was the group with the highest percentage, showing that the majority of students were satisfied with the amount of the supplementary exercises. In particular, 3 students (8.6%) commented that the quantity of exercises was little, which may not be enough for them to practice and consolidate their knowledge, or they might want more exercises to practice online. The data shows that the amount of online grammar exercises in the course can be considered appropriate.

4.1.4. Impression of exercises on students

In addition to 3 questions to get an insight about students' evaluation of some basic aspects of the exercises such as: usefulness, difficulty, and quantity, we also asked about their feelings when doing these exercises. We wanted to consider whether these exercises put pressure on students or they still felt comfortable when completing these exercises. The results are shown in the following chart:
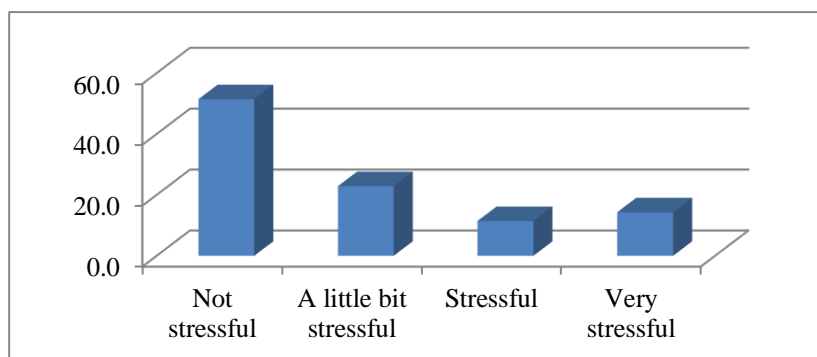

Figure 4. *Impression of exercises on students*

The data shows that 18 students (51.4%) did not find the exercises stressful, which was the largest group. This shows that more than half of the students did not have much difficulty in doing grammar exercises. 8 students (22.9%) felt a little pressured, meaning that they had some difficulty but were not too stressed. Meanwhile, 11.4% of students, accounting for 4 people, felt stressful, they find the supplementary exercises impose pressure on them, possibly in terms of time llimitation or difficulty. Not a small proportion of students (14.3%) considered that grammar exercises really caused great stress.

In general, the number of students who felt that doing grammar exercises was comfortable and easy was much larger than all the other groups, accounting for more than half of the total number of students. The number of students who said that doing this exercise was *Not stressful* or *A little bit stressful* was almost double the number of students who chose *Stressful* or *Very stressful*. Thus, the majority of students felt that grammar exercises were not a big problem, as more than 50% felt comfortable. This may be because they were familiar with the way grammar was learned or had a good foundation before. However, there was still a third of students (25.7%) who felt that the supplementary exercises *Stressful* or *Very stressful*, indicating that grammar exercises may be difficult for some students, this should become an indicator for the researcher to establish further study to get an understanding of the factors influence students' grammar learning.

4.2. Post-experiment interview results

After the experiment, to further understand students' views on the exercises designed on Google Classroom, we gave interview questions to six random students out of thirty four students in the experimental class. We focused on two issues: (1) the effectiveness of these exercises compared to exercises in textbooks; (2) the reasonableness of the content designed in grammar exercises. The opinions of the students were diverse, but the content focused on the following main points:

All students who were questioned thought that the content and volume of exercises were appropriate: "*I think that forty questions for homework and twenty questions for in-class exercises are suitable for my level and speed.*" (T. Nguyen, personal communication, February 24, 2024). "*The content and number of questions are not too many and not too short, so it is appropriate.*" (L. T. An, personal communication, February 25, 2024) "*The content of the exercises is not too difficult and not too easy, so it is suitable for my level.*" (N. T. Minh, personal communication, February 24, 2024) "*I think the number of exercises is reasonable.*" (L. V. Anh, personal communication, February 24, 2024) The remaining opinions also expressed similar ideas, so we do not quote them here. Thus, it can be seen that the content and volume of exercises designed in the program are suitable for the level and expectations of the learners.

Regarding the effectiveness of doing Grammar exercises on Google Classroom compared to exercises in the textbook, students acknowledged the effectiveness of this support exercise due to the support of technology. "*Of course, I find that this exercise is more effective because I can see my score and the wrong sentences right away, so it feels like someone is supervising me.*" (H. T. Thuy, personal communication, February 24, 2024) "*In general, thanks to the support of technology, I can do this exercise on my computer or phone very conveniently, so this type of exercise increases my interest in studying.*" (N. T. Minh, personal communication, February 24, 2024) There is also a complaint about the

rigidness of technology "*I like this exercise because most of it is multiple choice so it is quick and easy to remember. However, for some written exercises, sometimes Google catches mistakes that are not my mistakes but are still counted as mistakes.*" (L. V. Anh, personal communication, February 24, 2024) "*Of course, this exercise is more convenient than the exercise in the book because I can do it anytime, anywhere without having to carry the pen and the book, so the effectiveness of the exercise will be higher because I can take it out and look at it on my phone at any time.*" (T. B. Huong, personal communication, February 24, 2024) Some opinions said that this exercise puts pressure on students: "*Online exercises like this really put pressure on me because it has a set time to complete and a time limit, so I feel a bit stressful about time.*" (L. T. An, personal communication, February 25, 2024). It can be concluded that the students' opinions all show the reasonableness of the designed exercises and the level of effectiveness that doing these exercises brings. Although some opinions said that the exercise causes pressure, most of the remaining opinions recognized the effectiveness that this online exercise brings about.

4.3. Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into students' perceptions of using Google Classroom for grammar exercises. The study revealed that the majority of students found the grammar exercises on Google Classroom to be beneficial for their learning. With 65.7% of students rating the exercises as either "very useful" or "quite useful", it is evident that the online format provided meaningful practice opportunities. The ability to receive immediate feedback and track progress likely contributed to the perceived usefulness of these exercises. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of technology-based learning tools in enhancing student engagement and comprehension (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Although a small percentage of students found the exercises only "somewhat useful" or "not very useful", the overall positive response indicates that integrating online exercises into grammar courses is an effective instructional strategy. Besides, the data on difficulty levels suggest that the exercises were appropriately challenging for most students. While 45.8% of students reported some level of difficulty, only 8.6% found the exercises "very difficult". This distribution suggests that the exercises followed Krashen's (1994) i+1 principle, which advocates for slightly challenging material to promote language acquisition. It is also shown that in terms of the quantity of exercises students have to do, while nearly half (42.8%) felt that the workload was somewhat excessive, the majority (48.6%) considered the quantity to be appropriate. Only a small percentage (8.6%) thought the exercises were too few. These findings suggest that while the current exercise volume is mostly suitable, a slight reduction in workload might benefit students who feel overwhelmed. Besides, the study also explored students' emotional responses to completing grammar exercises. More than half (51.4%) felt comfortable, indicating that the exercises were manageable. However, 25.7% of students reported experiencing stress, with some feeling highly pressured. This could be attributed to time constraints or the nature of online assessments. While the majority of students had a positive experience, the presence of stress among a considerable portion of learners suggests the need for modifications, such as flexible deadlines or alternative assessment formats, to reduce anxiety.

The post-experiment interviews provided deeper insights into students' experiences with online exercises. Most students appreciated the convenience and immediate feedback provided by Google Classroom, considering it more effective than traditional textbook exercises. The ability to access exercises on multiple devices and receive instant corrections motivated students to engage more actively with the material. However, some students expressed concerns about the rigidity of automatic grading systems, which occasionally marked correct answers as incorrect. Additionally, time constraints in online exercises caused stress for some learners. Despite these challenges, the overall perception of online exercises was positive, suggesting that digital tools can enhance grammar learning when designed with flexibility and student-centered features.

5. Conclusion

The study indicates that Google Classroom is an effective platform for grammar exercises, offering usefulness, appropriate difficulty, and convenience. However, some challenges, such as workload concerns and stress due to time constraints, need to be addressed to optimize the learning experience. English majors at Hong Duc University benefit from the supplementary on the Google platform. The study has shown a positive evaluation from students on those exercises, it may act as an indicator that the supplementary exerices are a good support for students in learning the grammar course. The teachers of grammar course may consider slight modifications regarding their own students to apply and re-apply those exercises.

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