A DUMMY CHARACTER IN THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The recent launching of Universiti Maya Tun Abdul Razak, the first virtual university in Malaysia marks the significant attention the Internet technology has received from many higher education institutions in Malaysia. Long before its launching, many educators in this country have been experimenting with this technology for their classes, particularly using e-mail to improve writing skills and using the Web to provide supplemental instructions.

This paper attempts to describe an experiment using a dummy character to stimulate on-line discussion for a campus-based course in English Morphology, Syntax and Semantics. Ninety second-year B.Ed. TESL (Teaching English as A Second Language) students were involved in this experiment. The findings reveal a number of complex attributes of the virtual classroom interactions, including psychological and linguistic barriers affecting participation in the Virtual environment. Some unanticipated problems pertaining to on-line tutorial, and the use of the Web to supplement the course are discussed. Some suggestions are also made to help those interested in using the Web to supplement their on-campus courses.

Introduction

The snowballing effects of the use of information technology (IT) in Education and the introduction of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) have some significant repercussion in Malaysia. First, tertiary institutions in this country are now adapting the technology for their distance education programmes. Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), for example, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CELCOM, a telecommunication service provider, in 1995 marking UPM's entry into Internet-based distance learning (Moeira, 1995). And recently, the newly introduced

Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) took a leap forward by embracing the technology and using it holistically in its programmes, which started in December, 1998 (Mingguan Malaysia, 18 Jul, 1999)

While some academicians in this country started experimenting with the technology in the middle to late eighties, many are now eager to incorporate the use of the technology into their courses. A survey on the needs for Computer Literacy Workshop for academic staff at the Faculty of Language Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia found that of 65 academic staff who wanted to enroll in IT related workshops, 40 were interested in joining the workshop for creating Web pages (SallehHuddin, 1998). Among the reasons given include creating Web pages for the courses they were running.

There are a number of explanations why these and other educators are eager to use the Internet technology:1) some are techno-frontiers; those who always want to try out new technologies, 2) many hope that it will solve some of their problems, such as having to handle large groups of students (Thomas et. al. 1998:149), and also to improve their teaching (Reinhardt, 1995; Skillicorn 1996; Thomas et.al., 1998:149), and 3) some educators "were told, in advance, that one of the conditions of employment was that they use technology in their teaching." (Cornell, 1999:60).

Thus far many studies on Internet and its usage in education have always centered around distance learning and language learning. Furthermore, literature on the application of the Internet technology to supplement campus-based courses is pretty much lacking. SallehHuddin (1999) conducted a study on the extent to which the Web pages delivering self-access materials were used by first-year university students to improve their achievement in English Phonetics and Phonology (VC1623). The researcher was also interested in finding out problems in the implementation of online learning to support campus-based courses, particularly those affecting learner motivation and persistence. The study was undertaken to gather data that could be used to help decide if it was worth having instructional Web pages as an alternative to the traditional self-access learning materials to supplement VC1623, a campus based course. Supplemental instructions were considered necessary to help many students majoring in English Language Studies (ELS) who performed unsatisfactorily in this course because of: 1) limited proficiency in English, 2) inability to deal with many

abstract concepts, and 3) insufficient training or exercises. Some alternatives for the delivery of the supplemental instructions included: extra tutorials, conventional self-access learning materials, and Web-Based Learning (WBL) materials. However, a number of constraints—including logistics and scheduling problem, acquisition of the necessary audio-visual materials, and the cost involved ruled out the first two alternatives, leaving WBL as the only option.

The study identified a number of problems in the implementation of WBL to support the course. One of the most prominent problems is the students' lack of interest in WBL. The study also identified computer literacy, and knowledge in using the Internet as the major contributory factors to the problem. However, the result would be different had the study been conducted on subjects who were computer literate and could use the Internet.

This paper attempts to describe an experiment to use the Internet technology to supplement an on-campus course in English Morphology, Syntax and Semantics (VB2613) at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The supplemental instructions took place in the VB2613 Virtual Classroom which comprised a Web-based discussion group and a home page to deliver WBL materials. Interactions in this virtual classroom were conducted via asynchronous text-based discussion, a medium that allows anonymity. Thus, the students were free to use pseudonyms to encourage participation. The focus of this paper is not only on the effects of anonymity on participation in the classroom, but also on a dummy character used to stimulate the right ambience for online discussion.

Online Learning

Advantages

A number of studies have documented the use of the Internet in educational fields (Newton, Marcella and Middleton, 1998:173; Turoff, 1995) , particularly in distance education (Kaye, 1989) and language teaching (Soh Bee Lay & Soon Yee Ping, 1991; Ortega, 1997). Among the highlights include the advantages of Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) using Bulletin Board System (BBS) and e-mails: 1) students improve their writing (Soh Bee Lay

& Soon Yee Ping, 1991), students become more active in class discussion (Mowrer, 1996) and learning process (Harasim, 1989), students become more creative in expressing their emotion by using shorthands and emoticons (Stivers, 1996), and students developed a higher level of critical thinking and problem solving (Kearsley, Lynch and Wizer, 1995), learning process is more learner centered and learning is independent of time and place (Harasim, 1989). These scenario have resulted in the introduction of online learning.

The technology is so promising that it has attracted many institutions to adapt it for distance education programs (Turoff, 1995; Hiltz, 1997). Some institutions, such as New Jersey Institute of Technology, are now offering degree programs which are conducted through CMC (Turoff, 1995). Kearsley, Lynch and Wizer (1995) reported that George Washington University was offering Masters degree programs using the same method, and was in the process of offering doctoral program. According to the researchers, "many students seem almost thrilled by the fact that they can ask the instructor a question and receive a personal response" (Kearsley, Lynch & Wizer, 39). The researchers also add that one advantage the Internet has over traditional classrooms is that it has the capability to allow virtual communication among students who are separated by time and space. This allows students from various parts of the world to enroll in the program, and the fact that the communication is asynchronous allows students "...who have limited (spoken) English mastery" to take time to reflect and compose their responses. Additionally, since "students and instructors do not know what each other looks (or sounds) like, many subtle (or not so subtle) discriminations which can arise in traditional classrooms are not present in online classes." (Kearsley, Lynch & Wizer, 39).

The Web, the latest addition to online learning, is another feature of the Internet. It is basically a collection of Web pages containing information on various topics. Although the primary function of a Web page is to deliver information, it can be used to deliver a courseware comprising the instruction, interactions and feedback to any student who has access to the Internet by combining various tools including HTML, Javascript, Java and Shockwave. A courseware delivered through this medium is referred to by various nomenclatures including Web-based Training, Web-Based Instruction, Internet-Based Training, and Web-Based Learning (Baron, 1998:356). This paper will make use of the term Web-Based Learning (WBL).

Web-based learning, in order to be effective, requires the interactions between three elements: the learner, the teacher and the materials (Oliver, Omari and Herrington, 1998:122). The interactions between these elements influence the outcome of the learning. Baron (1998) puts forth that a learner may "physically" interact with the Web-based materials, however without cognitive engagement, meaningful learning may not take place.

Many instructional Web pages are designed for independent learning (Oliver, Omari & Herrington, 1998;). This means an individual student gets to work on a computer alone. Independent learning is most suitable in situations where learners have different learning abilities. However, "independent learning can often leave a learner passive and inactive" (Oliver, Omari & Herrington, 1998: 123) Therefore, according to the researchers, the effectiveness of independent learning have always been subjected to criticism. Studies (Turoff, 1995; Hiltz,1995) show that collaborative learning is a better alternative to independent learning.

Collaborative learning can be defined as a learning process that stresses "group or cooperative efforts among faculty and students" (Hiltz, 1995). Some advantages of collaborative learning include: 1) it helps "individuals to make progress through their zones of proximal development by the activities in which they engage", and 2) "personal communication enables and encourages learners to confer, reflect and helps to develop meaningful learning" (Oliver, Omari & Herrington, 1998:123).

Oliver, Omari & Herrington (1998) explored various implementation strategies –collaborative activity versus individual work, working with printed guide versus working with no guide, and how the strategies affected learner behavior and engagement in a classroom-based WWW learning activity. For this study, the researchers chose "a module from the course Multimedia Networking and Communications" (Oliver, Omari & Herrington, 1998:126). Next, a lesson which required the use of the WWW along with a Web-based document entitled "Designing Home Pages" were prepared. Fifty six students who were taking the course were identified as the subjects; half of which were given a printed guide as a supplement to the Web-based document, leaving the other half to work solely on Web-based document. To add complexity, some of the subjects were to work independently, whereas some were to work in small groups. The

study concluded, among other things, that implementing classroom-based WWW learning activities as collaborative exercises supported by guiding printed guide notes has many advantages compared to individual and unguided work.

Disadvantages of online learning

The application of the technology in online education is not without any major problems (Thomas. et al. 1998, SallehHuddin, 1999). Among the problems are instructors' time constraint, problems with logistics, glitches in the network, fees, and accessibility (SallehHuddin, 1999); "problems with hardware and software, demand on time required for instructors to prepare and conduct courses, students need to spend time to learn to use the computer system, limited writing and communication skills of some students, and lack of timely response from instructors" (Kearsley, Lynch and Wizer, 1995). Another problem often reported by academicians involved in online learning is the lack of technical and technological support. Consequently, many educators have experienced "considerable difficulty and frustration, and some are giving up hope on the effort to integrate information technology into their teaching (Maddux, Cummings and Torres-Rivera, 1999:44). Sometimes the solutions to some of the problems are very simple, and yet they have often been overlooked, because the "technology is developing so rapidly that it can often be difficult or even overwhelming to harness, somewhat like trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant" (Warschauer, 1995b p.xv in Warschauer and Whittaker, 1997).

Research Aim And Questions

The aim of the research is to find out if the virtual environment and its many attributes are appealing enough to B.Ed TESL students to improve academic achievement through collaborative learning in the VB2613 Virtual Classroom that meets outside normal tutorial hours. The virtual classroom is actually an asynchronous online discussion utilizing a Web-based discussion group (vb2613@egroups.com). In addition to the group, a home page (www.geocities.com/ Athens/Parthenon/5002/vb2613) to disseminate certain information such as guidelines on how join the list was also set up. Participation in this virtual classroom was strongly encouraged, and would be used in the overall course assessment.

All of the instructors, but one, the researcher, used their real names. The researcher used a pseudonym, "The Moderator," instead of his real name, and students knew who he was. The researcher also introduced a dummy character, Lima Juliet (LJ) whose behavior and language were planned to resemble that of a college student. The introduction of LJ encouraged the use of pseudonyms among students who joined the discussion group. The researcher was hoping that anonymity would help to create a conducive environment for the students to express themselves freely, revealing the problems that they had in conventional tutorial classes. However, the researcher wondered if the subjects would take advantage of, and make use of pseudonyms to engage in collaborative learning without any fear of being ridiculed or being judged. The researcher also wondered if, given the facts that the virtual vb2613 is independent of time and space constraint, and that the participants can hide their true colors, there were barriers prohibiting the students from participating in the virtual discussion. Finally, the researcher also wondered if the presence of LJ, the dummy character, would have any effects on the virtual classroom ambience.

Research Methodologies

This paper examines data collected from 91 second year B.Ed TESL students who took English Morphology, Syntax and Semantics in Semester 1, 1999-2000. These students were classified into 2 different groups:

1. those who had access to the Internet from their dorm (HA)
2. those who had no access to the Internet from their dorm (NA)

For the purpose of this study a discussion group (vb2613@egroups.com), and a home page for the course (www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/5002/vb2613/) were set up. Documentation and support materials including two different guidelines to help students join the discussion group were also prepared. One of these guidelines was downloadable from the home page. Answer keys to on-line exercises were also converted to HTML and GIF or JPEG format, and were made available through the home page. Students who subscribe to the discussion group receive a copy of every e-mail messages sent to the group. Furthermore, the group's messages, calendar, and document vault were available at www.egroups.com/group/vb2613/, allowing the students to read previous postings, or to download certain document. Questionnaires were distributed at the end of the semester to collect data. Besides the questionnaires, transcripts of e-mail messages sent to the researcher, and the ones recorded by vb2613@egroups.com were also compiled. Responses to the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics—simple frequency counts and percentages. In addition to that, each e-mail transcript was analyzed.

Findings

Students involvement and perception of the Virtual VB2613.

The researcher had expected students who had Internet access problems would have the tendency not to join the Virtual VB2613, and vice-versa. However, as it turned out, this did not happen. Out of 91 students who registered for English Morphology, Syntax and Semantics, 59 (64.8%) students who claimed they attempted to join the virtual vb2613 were a mix of the NA and the HA groups. Moreover, those who did not join the discussion group were made up of a number of students from both the NA and HA groups. The distribution of the students according to the groups is shown in Figure 1 below.

Group	**Attempt to Subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com**		Total
	Positive	**Negative**	
HA	21 (67.74%)	10 (33%)	31
NA	38 (63.33%)	18 (30%) + 4*	60
* did not know how to use Netscape & e-mails			

FIGURE 1: Distribution of students according to group and attempt to subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com

Based on this finding, the students can be re-grouped as follows;

a. Those who had access to the Internet from their dorm, and attempted to subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com (PSHA)
b. Those who had no access to the Internet from their dorm, but attempted to subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com (PSNA)
c. Those who had access to the Internet from their dorm, but did not attempt to subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com (NSHA)
d. Those who had no access to the Internet from their dorm, and did not attempt to subscribe to vb2613@egroups.com (NSNA)

A number of interesting observations can also be made based on Figure 1. First, the majority of students from both the NA and HA groups made an attempt to subscribe to the discussion group. Next,

for each group, the percentage of students who did not attempt to join the group is about the same (HA=33%, NA=30%).

Moreover, the study also found that in general, the students were all computer literate, and all, but 4, were able to use Netscape to send and receive e-mails, to engage in Web-based chat, and to browse the Internet. The students were also proficient at using Microsoft Word since they had been using the software for about 2 years to do many of their course assignments. All 91 students also felt that the Virtual VB2613 was useful. This is shown in figure 2 below.

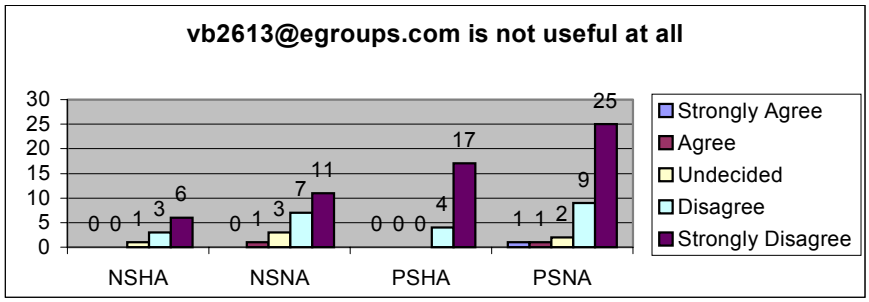

FIGURE 2: How students feel about the Virtual VB2613

Problems in joining eGroups.com

Out of 91 students, 59 attempted to join the discussion group. However only 54 managed to become a member of the group, whereas the other 5 failed. One of the causes was that the students had difficulties with the "validation number" that they needed in order to join eGroups.com. E-mails 1 through 5 in Appendix 1 are some of the examples illustrating their frustration

This study also identified some reasons why the students encountered the problem. One source of the problem was the guideline for joining eGroups.com. The first guideline, distributed to students during the second week of the semester, contained instructions that were slightly confusing. The corrected version was made available through VB2613 home page, but not many students used it. Next, some of the students were not using the guideline when they attempted to join the discussion group. Finally, all the students who complained were found to disregard the instructions provided by eGroups.com registration page.

These findings suggest that only a small number of students were not able to join the discussion groups due to technical problem. On the other hand, quite a number of students did not join the discussion group not because of technical reasons, but because of the anxiety and the frustration they had to overcome when the network was down, or when they could not do anything about "validation number." Thus, many quit trying.

Problems participating in the Virtual VB2613

Out of 54 students who managed to join the discussion group, 11 students (20.37%) used pseudonyms, whereas 33 students (61.11%) used real names. Furthermore, out of 52 students who joined the virtual vb2613, only 17 students, 9 using real names and 8 pseudonyms, contributed to the online discussion, and with a total of 32 postings for a period of 2.5 months, the average posting per student is 2 e-mails. The findings also indicate that the majority of the students (38 agree; 31 undecided; 22 disagree) felt safer when their real identities were not known to others. As a matter of fact, out of 91 students only 18 (19.7%) would like their real names to appear in every e-mail they sent to the Virtual VB2613, 46 students (50.5%) opposed the idea, and the rest were undecided. Perhaps, this explains why 34 students who were members of the discussion group were passive listeners.

The Effects of having a dummy character in the Virtual VB2613

The presence of a dummy character in the Virtual VB2613 has had some effects on the ambience of the virtual classroom.

4.1 The dummy character, LJ, helped to set the right atmosphere for virtual discussion. For example, when the Virtual VB2613 was operational, it was quiet for the first 10 days, even though the students had been told to post questions for discussion. During this period, only the researcher sent e-mails to the discussion group. Three of the e-mails were announcement, and no one responded to these e-mails. However, when the researcher used LJ's e-mail address to post a question (refer to Appendix 1; E-mail 6), immediately the students responded (E-mails 7 and 8).

LJ was also instrumental to keep the discussion going. For example, when the semester was nearing its end, the virtual classroom was pretty quiet. Announcements and posting from the lecturer had no response from the students. LJ was used to stimulate the discussion (Refer to Appendix 1, E-mails 9 and 10).

4.2 LJ also bridged the psychological gap between the lecturer and the students. In general, most students had the tendency to be playful when interacting with peers; serious when interacting with the lecturer. LJ was an avenue for the lecturer to mingle with the students, trying to understand their problem in understanding certain difficult topics without them resisting the researcher's intruding into their social and psychological territories. For example, one student sent an e-mail (Appendix 1, e-mail 11) wishing "all of you will do your best in the final exam...especially for this subject...." , LJ responded to that e-mail (e-mail 12), and found out that some students were somewhat nervous about the final exam. Moreover, none of the students was aware that LJ was in fact their lecturer wearing the student's hat. One student thought that LJ was a female student. Thus, she addressed LJ with "Dear Miss Lima". Refer to Appendix 1, e-mail 14.

4.3 Chat expressions such as "akum," "salamzzz" for "assalamualaikum" (a greeting), "cd" or "Cd" for "could", "u r" for "you are", were quite extensively used. Students seemed to be at ease using the expressions. From the data gathered it is obvious that most students would like the discussion in the virtual classroom to be less formal than the conventional tutorials. As a matter of fact 16 out 32 students' postings contained chat expressions. Coincidently, postings containing chat espressions also seem to use colloquail English. In some instances, some attributes of Malaysian English was also observed. For example, E-mail 7 in Appendix 1 contains the expression "... etclah," which is uniquely Malaysian.

4.4 Chat expressions were also found in 4 e-mails addressed to the lecturer. However, the chat expressions in these

e-mails were only limited to the greeting "akum" or "salamzzz." Furthermore, in these and other e-mails addressed to the lecturer, the students, with the exception of one who spelled "because" as "coz," tried to use formal English. This seems to show the existence of a psychological gap between the students and the lecturer in the virtual world. Although the students prefer to use a mixture of colloquial English and chat expressions in the virtual world, they resorted to formal English when writing to their lecturer.

Other Findings

1.1. Some students had problem using English effectively. One student made a mistake when she concluded "*the first sent is an adjective*s *and the second sentence is a verb*," when comparing the structures of two sentences (refer to e-mails 13 and 14), a typical mistakes that many second-year B.Ed TESL students tend to make in quizzes and examination. Another student made contradictory statement in his e-mail (refer to e-mail 15 in Appendix 1). The virtual classroom has helped the students to become aware of problems like these. The second student later on corrected his mistake in response to a question from a friend (E-mail 16, Appendix 1).

1.2. Analysis of the transcripts of the e-mails sent to the discussion group indicates the existence of a pattern for asking questions, as shown below:

a. Start with greeting, eg. Hi, hello, hi guys, etc. [optional]
b. Introduce the problem with " I have a question", or "Could anybody help …," " Does anyone know …", etc.
c. Comments or remarks. [also optional]

One student violated this norm. Instead of following the pattern, the student introduced her question with the word "Ambiguities ?" which does not indicate whether she was about to ask a question, or puzzled by earlier posting (refer to Appendix 1, e-mail 17). Thus, leaving her readers puzzled. Her "undefined" use of the word

"ambiguities" seemed to have flouted the normal pattern for asking questions in the virtual environment. As a result of her flouting the norm, nobody responded. Although, it can be argued that other participants could always seek clarification from her, it is more economical if she had followed the pattern, so that she would not have to wait longer to get responses from her peers.

1.3. Printing problem. Answers to exercises provided in the virtual classroom were made available using HTML document. When students printed out the answers, part of the answers were not printed because they exceeded the page size. Some suggestions to overcome this problem are : 1) The answers be made available in Powerpoint or MS Word document, which students can download and do page setup for printing with different printers, and 2) For answers made available using HTML document, the document should be set up so that the printout fit normal A4 papers.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to present the result of an experiment to use virtual classroom to supplement an on-campus course. This paper has shed some light on the complexities of the virtual classroom, its participants and its management. Among the findings include the use of pseudonym for the purpose of anonymity, an attractive attribute to encourage participation in the virtual classroom. Those who did not use pseudonyms were found to be somewhat apprehensive to participate, unlike those who were anonymous. This suggests that anonymity helps students to develop positive attitudes towards virtual classroom. Second, participation in the virtual classroom is dependent more on a student's psychological well-being than technical ones. Even though most students were computer literate and were able to use the Internet, but many of them did not participate simply because they fear about wasting money, and time, or they were put off because they still could not join the Virtual VB2613 after a couple of attempts. Third, the use of a dummy character helps to enhance an otherwise dull situation in the virtual world. In Cyberspace a person using a pseudonym may change his character. Thus a serious teacher may become a warm and approachable person in the virtual world. Fourth, some linguistic aspects of the virtual

classroom interactions, such as the students' tendency to use a different register in the virtual classroom, reveal how students behave in the virtual world. Moreover, students learn to be more effective communicator.

Recommendation for teachers

Having taught and guided the students in the virtual classroom has made the reseacher to realize the value of "playful learning" and how it contributes to community learning. The following are some recommendations for teachers who are interested in the virtual classroom.

1. Guidelines, support materials and help files need to be concise and clear.
2. Maintain consistent scheduled updates so that students could adapt to the virtual environment quickly and systematically.
3. Supplemental exercises and answer keys should be prepared well in advance to avoid unnecessary delays.
4. Teachers need to be very patience. The virtual classroom is new to most students, and therefore many of them need to overcome technological difficulties first before they can function well in the virtual world.

Recommendation for Future Research

These findings of this study are far from conclusive. Rather, the findings raise more questions, and thus highlight some potential research areas in the field of on-line learning, particularly on-line learning to supplement an on-campus course. The following are some possible research areas:

8.1 the role of the instructor in the virtual world,
8.2 linguistic aspects of virtual class interactions,
8.3 some strategies teachers may use to lead on-line discussions,
8.4 characteristics of effective support materials for usage in the virtual classroom,
8.5 effectiveness of supplemental on-line instructions to complement on-campus course, and
8.6 strategies students use to overcome technical problem they encounter in the virtual world.

Note:
This is the unedited version of my paper which appears in the Proceedings of the International Conference on Teaching and Learning. The complete reference should be:

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Email 1
I tried to subsribe but the message that i received was that there was an error in the verification whatchamacallit???..I'm sory for my crude words , please reply.

E-mail 2.
Sir,
I still cannot join the egroup. Please send me another invitation. Thank you.

E-mail 3
i have subscribed to the list but so far do not receive any messages. Cd somebody help.

E-mail 4
dear sir,

Both of us:Dayang Haffizah and Ozaililawati had tried so many times to open the online services. Every day we went to the cyber cafe but we failed to open it. So, if you are kind enough, please.....help us ASAP and SOS!!!!!

E-mail 5
sir,

i am sorry.
i have some problem to open the file for the assignment, that you asked me to. I have followed the instructions you gave to me and i have tried it for many times. but, still, i cannot go to the site i want to access. they say that i have problems with my password. so, i reregister myself to the egroups. then, they want my validation number. i do not know what my validation number is, so i just put any number that i think suit the form. they said that the number i gave to them is invalid. actually, i do not understand, what do they meant with the validation number.. therefore, now, i do not know what to do to solve this problem.
i hope you can help me.
thank you

E-mail 6:
This is great. I hope someone is here to answer my question. Anyone. Really. I'm a bit confused here. What is the difference between article and determiner. Aren't they the same thing ? Could anyone explain.

Thanks.
LJ

E-mail 7:
salamzzzzz,
actually article is restricted to "the, a. &an" but determiner is more global.....
his, her, they.....etclah
hopefully u understand.
wassalam

E-mail 8:
a'kum,

in my opinion, i think determiner is the general idea or the big topic and article comes under it or one of the subtopics. for example articles are a, an and the. but determiner is wider...for example, some, a few and inlcludes article a, an and the.

E-mail 9:
Hi,
How come the virtual vb2613 is very quiet .. Do you guys check your e-mail ?

bye.

E-mail 10:
wei! hallo! EXAM FEVER!! WHAT DO YOU EXPECT!
then how come i'm in? just got well from fever...
hardiharhar
BEST WISHES FOR THE EXAMS!!!
LONGLIVE TESL NINE!!!

E-mail 11:
hai guys....
i wish all of you will do your best in the final exam...especially for this subject, vb2613. Good luck.....

E-mail 12:
Hi Ina,
What you mean by "especially for this subject..."
This subject really difficult ahh ? Those who think so please reply.
Hi hi hi, i'm wondering how many will reply..

E-mail 13:
Could anyone help me ? Someone told me that the following sentences have different tree diagrams.

1. He is interesting
2. He is jogging

Is that true ?
Thanks in advance.

E-mail 14:
ello....
well..dear miss lima....i guess this is the answer....

the two sentences are different...
the first sentence is an adjectives and the second sentence is a verb..

hehehehe...hopefully my answer is right...
p/s if u r not satisfied...then ask MR Salleh...

E-mail 15:
>> >>I know that articles are restricted to "a", "an" and "the", but in
>> >what instances do they become determiners? Can someone please clarify
>> >that for me? I'm kind of in the dark as to the difference between
>> >article and determiner.. aren't they the same thing?
>> >
>> when 'a', 'an', 'the' are used to indicate a new information, they are
>>called article.but, they are called determiner when they determine (or
>>indicate) the item/s that they are bearing.
>>
>>for example, i) a, an, the: as article
>>a) Jessica bought a pencil yesterday. b) The pencil is red in color. c) The
>>pencil has an eraser on top of it.
>>
>>-in the sentence a), 'a' is an article because it indicates a new
>>information i.e pencil.
>>-in b), 'the' replaces the 'a' because now it (the) is determining
>>'pencil' as being red, not others.
>>-in c), the article 'an' is used to indicate new information i.e eraser.
>>the determiner 'the' in c) is still maintained as it determining 'pencil'
>>as having the eraser, not others.
>>
>>addition: 'a', 'an', 'the' are called determiner when they determine (or
>>indicate) the item/s that they are bearing. it is also important to note
>>that determiner 'the' is used to indicate old information as well as to
>>indicate (determine) the item/s that they are bearing.
>>

E-mail 16:

>to mr.hasrul,
>quite good an explanation
>but didn't you say that articles and determiners are the same?...
>just curious...
>have a nice day!!
>
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i didnt remember writing anything about whether or not article and determiner are the same. but, for sure, article is categorized under determiner.

Actually, determiners are words "which specify the range of reference of a noun in various ways, e.g by making it definite (the boy), indefinite (a boy) or by indicating quantity (many boys)" Leech & Svartvik.

Other words include my,his ,her (possessive pron); these, those,this, that (demonstrative pron), etc.

Notice the article a & the also function as determiners; articles are therefore a subclass of determiners; just like possessive pronouns and demonstrative pronouns.

hasrul,
b.p. the coordinator
egroup.com

E-mail 17:
...ambiguities?
like for example in the sentence:
"The girl hit the man with a knife."
how do you explain the two meanings and how do you put them in tree diagrams? where does the PP come in ?

a case of 'ingat-ingat lupa'...
thankee!!