

Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes toward the Use of Web-based Language Learning (WBLL)

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Abstract

The dynamic incorporation of computers and language learning has empowered language learners to process different sources and to internalize data more effectively through individual engagement. Thus, for decades, computer-assisted language learning and web-based language learning have received considerable amount of attention among researchers and language teachers by serving interactive, multi-sensory, and autonomous learning opportunities. The present study is concerned with exploring how EFL students and teachers perceive the use of computer technologies and their integration into foreign language teaching and learning. The data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire distributed to thirty EFL upper-intermediate students and thirty EFL teachers who were selected randomly through convenience sampling respectively. The findings indicated that both teachers and learners had positive attitudes toward computer technology use both in their daily lives and in language instruction. In addition, it was found that there was a significant difference between the teachers' and the learners' attitudes toward web 2.0 applications, indicating that the use of these web 2.0 applications were more prevalent among EFL learners.

Keywords: web-based language learning, computer-assisted language learning, teachers, learners

INTRODUCTION

As technology developed, new programs came into use to create a more interactive and interesting environment for language learners and teachers than what was previously available in the traditional language classrooms. Many researchers, in search of the best way to acquire a foreign/second language, now use CALL and WBLL in language classrooms to find out its effects on language learning. The enrichment of language teaching and learning process through WBLL can be achieved through empirical research including learners' and teachers' attitudes and opinions (levy, 1997; Mayer, 2005; Murray & McPherson, 2004; Son, 2002).

WBLL gives an effective learning environment, so learners can rehearse in a cooperative way utilizing multi-media content, either with the supervision of instructors or on their own pace in self-learning. In the new millennium, multi-media, the internet, particularly the World Wide Web, and different types of distance learning are broad instruments to strengthen language learning and help language instruction (Son, 2008; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). As indicated by Mayer (2005), the theoretical justification behind the interactive media principle is that when both words and pictures are displayed, students have the capacity to establish verbal and pictorial mental models and make meaningful associations between the two.

The rapid growth and the expansion of the web in language learning research which is computer-assisted and practice is an important issue. With discussions about the role of the web in English teaching and learning as a second language (Liou, 2000; Robb, 1995; Son, 1998; Warschauer, 1995; Zhao, 1996), some of the researchers and practitioners (Allodi, Dokter, & Kuipers, 1998; Bell, 1998; Felix, 2001; Li & Hart, 1996; Murray & McPherson, 2004; Son, 2008) claimed that web suggests authentic materials and can promote learning of language and teaching. It is necessary to develop ways to use the web efficiently and effectively.

A number of researchers have reported the benefits of the general use of technology in classrooms for learners such as improvement in self-concept and mastery of basic skills, increased motivation, and more active processing, more learner-centered learning and engagement in the learning process, resulting in higher-order thinking abilities and better recall (Brownlee-Conyers, 1996; Dwyer, 1996; McGrath, 1998; Weiss, 1994). CALL and web-based environments are appropriate to the alternative methodologies of modern foreign language instruction. Also, CALL helps students improve their language skills rapidly, makes them study at their own pace, and gets immediate feedback, corrections and even error analysis (Hanson-Smith, 1997).

Web 2.0 applications have turned into a pervasive segment of our daily lives (Murray & McPherson, 2004). As Warschauer and Grimes (2007) state, a large number of individuals now utilize Web 2.0 applications to communicate, interact, and excite through websites, wikis, social networking tools, and multiplayer games; most of these people delight in the thrill of instant self-publishing and feel stimulated by their dynamic cooperation on the web. In the previous decade, the movement from web 1.0 to web 2.0 has been notable. Individuals don't only read and recover data, but also make and offer data (Lomicka & Lord, 2007). Undoubtedly, Web 2.0 applications exploit the participatory capability of the Web. As an outcome of this, Web 2.0 communications have turned into a crucial segment of numerous learners' academic lives (Murray & McPherson, 2004).

As a learner-centered approach, web-based learning places a variety of demands on learners that exceed those typically experienced in traditional teacher-centered classrooms. In a constructivist web-based learning environment, learners are encouraged to construct knowledge for themselves and to have the control of their own learning. Through meaningful experience, they can search for patterns, raise their own

questions, and construct their own models, concepts, and strategies. For students, web-based learning is a suitable environment to take charge of their own learning since they can control their own learning process. Generally speaking, the use of technology inside or outside the classroom tends to make the class more interesting (Murray & McPherson, 2004).

This study is useful since there are few studies about the use of web-based programs as assisted materials for English teaching classes that address both the students and teachers. It will attempt to identify the attitudes of students and teachers toward the use of web-based language learning by drawing comparisons between the perceptions of teachers as well as students and find out the factors which can be identified as contributing to their attitudes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Web-based Language Learning is gaining recognition and credit in the teaching and learning of a second language. Educational systems have started to expend great attempts in trying to use computer facilities for classroom usage in order to improve language learning. Thus, there has been a lot of research that investigates the role of computers and web tools in the learning and teaching procedure and its effect in the classroom (Chapelle, 2001; Dhaif, 1989; Galavis, 1998; Hubbard, 1996; Kenning & Kenning, 1983; Levy, 1997; Muir-Herzig, 2003; Pennington, 1996; Schofield, 1995).

Moreover, web-based language learning incorporates the using of networks and adventure web materials, assets, applications or devices. An electronic learning is a suitable learning environment for learners in which they can control their learning and learning methodology. In any case, giving chances to coordinate information in an online direction is insufficient. Learners need aptitudes to control their learning.

Previous studies have revealed that attitude to another technology assume an imperative part in its acknowledgement and use (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Liaw, 2002). Over the previous decade, scientists have investigated the learners' attitude toward computers, the Internet and electronic learning (Colley & Comber, 2003; Tsai & Lin, 2004). On the other hand, relatively fewer studies have been directed to investigate the instructors' attitudes toward online proficient advancement.

In light of the requirement for more studies on WBLL, a few specialists have directed studies about how learners percept in exercises which are Internet-situated so as to make it simple to utilize Internet assets as a part of language learning. For instance Stepp-Greany (2002) has contemplated the impression of the learners about the utilization of the media segments for the direction of the language in Spanish classes. They utilized poll and asked learners a few inquiries, for example, how they know and comprehend the essentialness of the teachers in technology-enhanced language learning, the value of lab, online assets and the impact of technology-enhanced language learning on learning languages. She found that the vicinity of the teacher is critical for the learners and they accepted that the guideline has been ended up less demanding by

the vicinity of the educator in the earth. It's the place in which social information, communication, and certainty could be improved. Besides, Osuna and Meskill (1998) considered web sources' as factors that interfaces learners with real culture.

As CALL and WBLL programs become as tools, which develop autonomy in learning, the behavior of learners toward CALL and WBLL instructions in the classes play a vital role in successfulness of learning process. Students desire to learn the language and be responsible for their own learning, if the students have positive feelings about the use of computers in language instruction. Studies of Kulik and Kulik (1986) point out that when students feel that learning word processing is helpful and they can improve their vocabulary, they feel more positive attitudes toward vocabulary study and literature. However, despite what we anticipate, the series of earlier studies handled by Kulik and Kulik (1986) mention that though most of the partners declared they like using computers, they are not motivated by computers or they have lack of encouragement to be responsible for their own learning.

Educators additionally have worries about incorporating computers into guideline due to their unwillingness to change their traditional routines (Dupagne & Krendl, 1992). Dupagne and Krendl (1992) recommend that this may be based upon an absence of information and seeing about computers. Marcinkiewicz (1994) expresses that simply concentrating on outside components may not be successful in pushing educators' utilization of computers for guideline. The inner clashes that emerge from instructors' absence of computer fitness ought to likewise be mulled over since inside and outer clashes are interconnected. A study done by Ertmer et. al. (1999) backings the thought that the outer components that influence instructors' utilization of computers may be the reasons for inner variables. The results propose that the inward convictions of educators connect with outer variables to encourage or point of confinement their discernment in utilizing this technology.

Marcinkiewicz (1994) contends that having the essential environment for embracing CALL and WBLL may not be sufficient to influence educators to utilize it. Beginning starting here, Marcinkiewicz directed a study that investigates the utilization of computers for guideline by various instructors and what causes others not to utilize them. The aftereffects of the study demonstrated that the inclination in utilizing this technology emerge from educators' fearlessness and their readiness to change. Baylor and Ritchie (2002) investigated the part of readiness to change of instructors. They explored the readiness to attempt new instructional technologies, the convictions of educators in going out on a limb while incorporating computers into their guideline and their convictions about the criticalness of CALL and WBLL in direction for learners' substance procurement. They reasoned that the compelling utilization of this technology relies on instructors' openness to change and readiness to go out on a limb, and on their experience and practice in utilizing it.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the current study were thirty EFL upper intermediate learners and thirty EFL teachers who were selected randomly from different language institutes throughout Tehran. The participants were all Iranians and L1 speakers of Persian.

Instrumentation

For eliciting information about the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward CALL and WBLL use, a three-section questionnaire was employed. In developing the questionnaire, the researcher drew heavily on the existing literature that looked at the students' and teachers' attitudes toward computer use (Arkin, 2003; Onsoy, 2004; Tuzcuoğlu, 2000). For the purpose of this study, a revised version of the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward CALL questionnaire used by Onsoy (2004), was employed considering necessary adaptations according to the context in which the questionnaire would be used. The construct validity and the reliability of the instrument were ensured by piloting it. The Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.88, indicated that there was a high internal consistency between the items.

Procedures

After piloting the questionnaires and examining the reliability and internal consistency of the items of the questionnaires, the questionnaire was given to thirty teachers and thirty learners who were selected for the purpose of this study. Permission for data collection for the study was requested. Confidentiality and anonymity was assured. The collected data were examined quantitatively, through descriptive statistics. Therefore, Frequencies, percentages and the means were calculated for each item. Furthermore, an independent samples t-test was applied to find whether there were similarities or differences between the attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of WBLL.

RESULTS

The results gathered from the analysis of the questionnaire are analyzed by considering the two sections in the attitude questionnaire. These sections are: learners' general attitudes toward the effectiveness of using CALL and WBLL in language classrooms, and learners' general attitudes toward using different computer and web tools in the language instruction. These sections have been evaluated separately.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers' and Learners' General Attitudes toward the Effectiveness of Using CALL and WBLL in Language Classrooms

Position	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Skewness
Teacher	30	60.00	82.00	74.53	20.87	4.56	.83	-1.17
Learner	30	65.00	78.00	71.33	12.78	3.57	.65	.096
Total	60	60.00	82.00	72.93	19.14	4.37	.56	-.372

As Table 1 displays, there was a significant difference in the scores for teachers ($SD=4.56$, $M=74.53$) and learners ($SD=3.57$, $M=71.33$). The table also indicates the Skewness value for all the items within the acceptable range of -1.96 to 1.926 at $p \leq 0.05$ (Field, 2005) which proves the normal distribution of the scores.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' and Learners' General Attitudes toward Using Different Computer and Web Tools in the Language Instruction

			using web tools			Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	
Position	Teacher	Count	3	27	0	30
		% within position	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Learner	Count	0	5	25	30
		% within position	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	3	32	25	60
		% within position	5.0%	53.3%	41.7%	100.0%

The results of the second section which are presented in Table 2 indicated that there was a significant difference between the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward web 2.0 applications. It can be seen that the use of these web 2.0 applications are more prevalent among learners.

Moreover, the researcher conducted an independent samples t-test (Table 3) to investigate the differences between the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward CALL and WBLL.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test, Differences between the Teachers' and Learners' Attitude

	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
E. V. assumed	.27	.605	3.02	58	.004	3.20	1.05	1.07	5.32
E. V. not assumed			3.02	54.82	.004	3.20	1.05	1.07	5.32

The results of this test, as presented in Table 3, indicated that there was a significant difference in scores observed between the learners and teachers, $t_{(58)} = 3.02$, $p = .004$. Also Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was employed and confirmed that the variances in the scores for teachers and learners were statistically equivalent ($F = .60$, $p = .004$).

DISCUSSION

In educational settings like classrooms, the teachers' and learners' attitudes play a significant role in the attainment of educational goals. Lam's study (2000) indicated that

the personal beliefs of teachers and learners about the benefits of using technology in language teaching influence their decision in technology utilization. Therefore, enough time should be given to learners and teachers in order to become more familiar with the new presented technologies. Incorporating pedagogical programs will also be helpful in motivating them to use technology in their classes. Yildirim (2000) and Oh and French (2007) specified that, in their study of teacher training programs, teachers obtained more abilities and more confidence with technologies which promoted their attitudes toward technology positively.

The findings indicate that students and teachers generally have positive attitudes toward computer technology use both in their daily lives and in language instruction. This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that students and teachers have positive attitudes toward CALL and that they need to be trained in how to effectively use this computer technology in language learning and teaching (Hoffman, 1997).

The teachers' and learners' having positive attitude toward CALL was common in most of the studies which were reviewed in the literature. Although there are some differences in terms of tools used by these studies, all of them show that most of them have positive opinions and feelings toward CALL and WBLL. Yuksel and Kavanoz (2011) led their study on 200 pre-service teachers and found that 66.5% had highly positive and 30.5% had slightly positive attitudes. Simsek and Sagin (2008) carried out a study investigating the students' attitudes toward CALL and WBLL. The participants of the study were 30 college level students. The tool used was a questionnaire. The results indicate that the participants have positive attitudes toward CALL. By administering a 5 point Likert scale questionnaire to 30 in-service teachers, Hismanoğlu (2010) found that the teachers had positive attitudes. The study carried out by Kulekci (2009) indicates that about 90% of the teachers have positive attitudes. Having 87 in-service teachers, Karakaya (2010) found that the majority of the teachers have positive attitudes toward CALL. Aykac (2005) administered a questionnaire on the attitudes toward voice chat with 20 students and found that 85% of the participants have positive attitudes; also he investigated the attitudes of 60 EFL teachers. The positive attitude of the teachers was indicated by the mean scores ranging between 3.96 and 4.50. Finally, by making use of a questionnaire on WordBird software, Dokur (2008) found that 78% of 100 students have positive attitudes toward the software, and he interviewed 6 in-service teachers and found that they had positive attitudes toward the specific software used in the study.

In support of the significance of teachers' attitude toward technology utilization, Zhao, Tan and Mishra (2001) provided evidence to suggest that the attitudes of teachers are directly identified with computer use in the classroom. For instance, teachers mostly view the computer as a tool to accomplish housekeeping tasks more effectively, manage their students more efficiently, and to communicate with parents more easily. The success of student learning with computer technology will depend largely on the attitudes of teachers, and their willingness to embrace the technology (Teo, 2006). Gaining an appreciation of the teachers' attitudes toward computer use may provide

useful insights into technology integration and acceptance and usage of technology in teaching and learning.

The results of the current study concur with some empirical research studies such as Darus and Luin (2008) that examined the attitudes of Malaysian teachers toward teaching English using computer technology. In their study which was conducted through questionnaires, Malaysian teachers showed that they utilize computer technology infrequently for instructing English. In another study by Mcalister, Dunn, and Quinn (2005), teachers showed positive attitudes toward using technology, despite the fact that they didn't have enough experience about technology utilization.

Furthermore, the present study investigated the differences among the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward CALL and WBLL. To this end, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare their attitudes. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference among teachers' and learners' attitudes toward web 2.0 applications. It was represented that the use of these web 2.0 applications are more prevalent among learners.

The results indicated that computer use for general purposes among students and teachers is very frequent. Most students use computers for chat, social networks, e-mail, surfing the Internet, and playing games. Most teachers use them for e-mail, typing and maintaining lesson plans, podcasts, students' records, and assigning and checking assignments via e-mail. Most participants also reported that they like using computers for general purposes, that using computers makes them more efficient in their lives and that they have positive attitudes toward using computers in language instruction. Such responses are to be expected since computer technology is fast gaining recognition in almost every field including learning and teaching a foreign language (Gruich, 2002; Pennington, 1996).

On the other hand, the great majority of students and teachers stated that they never use online shopping, and web page design. The researcher thinks that the reason why 80% of the students and 90% of the teachers do not use online shopping and web page design may rise from their lack of trust for online shopping and their lack of knowledge for designing a web page. The participants also may not have any training in using computers for these purposes. Possible factors contributing to these findings may be identified with instructional programs not being utilized proficiently within classrooms. Besides, these findings may reflect a mismatch between classroom practice and practice in computer sessions. Also, these findings may also emerge from learners' lack of training in how to learn and teachers' need for training to teach with computers since most students and teachers reported that they need training in order to use computers effectively. These findings are in line with Huang and Liaw's (2005) study in which they claimed that teachers' and learners' attitudes toward technology utilization are different.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study specifically investigated the students' and teachers' attitudes toward CALL and WBLL along with exploring their attitudes toward different web applications, and their integration into foreign language education. The results gathered were interpreted to mean that most learners and teachers seem to strongly believe in the usefulness of technology resources in improving language instruction. The findings also indicated that students and teachers generally have positive attitudes toward computer technology use both in their daily lives and in language instruction. Moreover, it was presented that there is a significant difference between the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward web 2.0 applications; it was revealed that there was a significant difference between the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward integrating different web tools into English classrooms.

However, the current study encountered a few limitations which are expected to be removed in the future studies. The researcher based his selection of the participants on available sampling. The replication of the study is recommended in case procedures that allow a higher degree of randomization and ultimately more generalizability are employed. In addition, participants of different language proficiency (e.g., advanced or intermediate) were not taken into account. Furthermore, no observations could be carried out by the researcher just to ensure whether the teachers use the tools they have declared or to have a deeper understanding of how they make use of WBLL and how WBLL could be used effectively.

Overall, the findings provide a number of implications for language teaching pedagogy, and language testing. Research of this kind has implications for language teaching pedagogy and emerging computer-based learning technologies, in terms of helping us to understand how teachers capitalize upon the technology available in supporting students to construct links between their language competence and performance. Besides, the use of computer technology, in its present highly advanced form, in the field of language assessment and testing can be of immense help in overcoming many of the administrative and logistical burdens; computers and web tools can be used not just to score objective type of test tasks but also to assess and rate much more complex task types like essays and spoken English. Therefore, the results indicate the usefulness of the integration of WBLL and foreign language learning; henceforth, proposing the requirement for ongoing training and support in helping instructors to better utilize technology resources in educational practices.

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