

A Study of Students' Attitudes toward Using Technology in Second Language Learning

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Abstract

Students' high use of technology outside the classroom has led teachers and researchers to believe that technology could be highly effective for language learners when used appropriately. The present study was designed to identify students' perceptions towards the role of technologies such as computer and internet in English language classes. Furthermore, it aimed to find out motivating and preventing factors that led these students to use or not to use technology in their classes. This study employed a qualitative approach. Five ESL students and three teachers were selected randomly to take part in the study. Interviews were conducted to gather and analyze data collected. The finding showed the students' positive orientation toward technology. They are enjoyed and satisfied with it for foreign language learning in classes because of its convenience, and practicality which facilitate their acquisition of learning skills. Students valued the feedback from teachers and thought technology made easier and faster, but some factors such as insufficient computer skills, lack of internet access, and lack of time as obstacles students utilized it rarely in their classes. Yet little is known about how students actually react to technology-based tools for language learning purposes. It was discovered that age was the most significant predictor of student attitudes about technology. Meanwhile, it was explored that general attitudes toward technology do affect the ways in which students will react to a technology-based curriculum.

Keywords: technology, internet, online learning, students' attitudes, English language classrooms

INTRODUCTION

Technology can be used as a means of encouraging student interaction in the target language. Yamaguchi (2005) expresses: "A computer is a good device for handling various types of information such as visual, sound, and textual information. Teacher is a vital criteria in determining students' success and/or failure in learning a foreign language. They must find methods of giving their students a rich and authentic language

experience. One of the ways in which they have done this in recent years is through the use of technology. It has changed the way that people live so that many would have to do without it. The internet plays a great role in second/foreign language teaching and learning. Tools such as Email and Telegram have become staples in how people communicate. Teachers believe internet technology as a useful tool in teaching and learning process, but they used it rarely in their classes. As technology has evolved, it seems inevitable that it would also have made its way into classrooms of all types. What is more important now is to differentiate between effective and ineffective uses of technology in the classroom (Kern, 2006; Quinn, 2005).

Because of the widespread use of computers and internet in educational settings, language teachers are motivated to implement this technology in their classes in order to facilitate language teaching and learning process. In fact, having positive attitudes toward internet use can stimulate teachers to learn the required skills which are essential for applying technology-based exercises and activities in classes. Although it is apparent that technology is a large part of students' life as well as language teaching, we must avoid using technology for technology's sake by focusing on the pedagogical implications of its implementation (Chapelle, 2010; Hamilton, 2009; Kern, 2006).

According to Yang and Chen (2007), scholars have access to many English language resources if they use computers and internet in language classes. They can improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through real-world situation. Lots of various activities in the internet can produce more fun and excitement for the learners. If technology is to become a truly normal part of the classroom, we need to understand both the impact that its use will have on the classroom and the ways in which it can be used most effectively (Hamilton, 2009). It is important then to know which types of technology are best suited for which skills (Stockwell, 2007). Computers and internet technology are the most effective tools among various existing technological aids in teaching and learning language. Integrating and applying computers and the internet in a learning environment can strengthen the way that students acquire a foreign language effectively. Eldred and Toner (2003) believed that computer technology as it relates to education is an instructional tool and important feature of 21st-century culture. Australia has adopted e-learning technology on a broad scale to bridge the distances separating its population centers. In North America, virtually every institution of higher education conducts some form of e-learning.

Poor performance in English in the Iranian schools which have been reported in different occasions is the factor that teachers must find some methods of giving their students a rich and authentic language experience. So, the use of any modern technology is one of the ways of reaching this goal in recent years. While it is fairly common to use online resources, such as video, still images and audio, social networking sites are just beginning to make their way into the language classroom (McBride, 2009). The study reports on the ESL students' perceptions of the problems and difficulties they experienced when learning English language in a technology-based language learning environment. Also, there has been little research done exploring why

some language students are comfortable with technology when others are not (Aydin, 2011). Students today are different from students of previous generations; they quickly process and receive information, participate in various activities at one time, and they are very convenient with technology. Often referred to as “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001) or the iGeneration (Mills, 2011), people born within the past twenty to thirty years have also grown up learning technology. They have always had access to computers in their homes, classrooms. The resulting high level of exposure has helped them become experts at navigating the Internet, naturally picking up new technologies, and integrating technology into their daily lives (McBride, 2009). However, even though students are so called “digital natives,” they may not know how best to use technology for learning purposes (Dieu & Stevens, 2007).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to make the most effective use of technology, it is important to fully understand the technology itself, its various functions, uses, and limitations, as well as why certain technologies succeed while others fail (Luke & Britten, 2007; Markee, 2005). Educators are the real representatives of utilizing technologies in language learning (Albirini, 2004). Lam (2000) stated that the personal beliefs of teachers about the benefits of technology utilization in teaching of language affect their decision in using technology.

Computers today have an almost endless range of functionalities, many of which have the potential to be highly beneficial to language learners (Antenos-Conforti, 2009; Gruba & Hinkelman, 2012; Kurisak & Luke, 2009; Levy & Stockwell, 2006; Motteram, 2010). This seems like an obvious development when we consider that computers can be a window to an entire world through the diverse tools available for depicting life and narrative in new and interesting ways (Ang & Zaphiris, 2006; Sabia, 2011).

One common thread among these studies, however, was that computers can perform a wide variety of functions in the learning process (Glennan & Melmed, 1996; Kulik & Kulik, 1987; McArthur & Lewis, 1998; Ruschoff, 1988). With the accessibility to tools made possible by the Internet becoming widely available and used in the mid-nineties, the rate at which new tools began to emerge increased rapidly. Not only do computers demonstrate the ability to present authentic texts in innovative ways, they also allow students to share their own stories and learn from one another, all of which leads to enhanced motivation and the establishment of an identity in the target language (Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbot, 2011).

The Internet is a dynamic environment that holds the largest repository of centrally located, instantly accessible information that has ever existed and it has the potential to be the single most valuable tool for language learners (Conole, 2008; Legutke, 2005; Lomicka & Lord, 2009; Mitchell, 2009). Mitchell (2009) suggests that teachers turn to the Internet for current, authentic language input.

The phrase “digital native” was first introduced in 1996 by Barlow (1996), although the idea for it was later made popular by Prensky (2001). They are also known as the

"iGeneration" (Mills, 2011) or the "net generation" (Thomas, 2011). The prevailing theory behind the label of digital natives is that people born after 1980 are more adept at using technology than people born before 1980. That is to say, in much the same way that children who learn a language from a young age can usually achieve a greater level of linguistic proficiency than those who start studying in adulthood, people who have been raised with technology are better at using it than those who learn later in life. This generation is defined by their innate ability to navigate the Internet, and they are highly capable when it comes to assimilating new technologies into their daily lives (Conole, 2008; McBride, 2009; Stockwell & Tanaka-Ellis, 2012). As we utilize technology for language learning, we must focus on how the students use it and on their attitudes that result from the experience they have using the technology (Blake, 2008). It is safe to state that young adults as a group is more comfortable with technology than older generations in general, but it is important to not make assumptions when it comes to individual student experience and associations with technology (Thomas, 2011). Finally, in order for technology to be used most effectively, all parties involved in the new curriculum must be fully invested in the integration of the technology. That is to say that administrators, or other group if the administration is not in a position to do so, need to provide adequate training and support for the program, teachers need to feel comfortable and understand the technology, and students need to feel like the technology is offering them something that they cannot get elsewhere (Kurisak & Luke, 2009; Stevenson & Liu, 2010).

The progress of English language education in Iran in the last decade is probably due largely to the strong and enhance students' proficiency, English competence and computer skills for the younger generations in the twenty first century. Fluency in the English Language, in short, is the key to success in life. According to Jaber (1997), utilizing computers and internet in student centered classes enable students to collaborate, use critical thinking, and work together to find solutions to the problems that they face. In this kind of technology-enhanced classrooms, learners are capable of assembling information themselves, making decision, and become more independent (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). Teachers who have access to enough computers and the required instructional technology at schools possess more positive attitudes toward integrating technology in their classes (Becker & Riel, 1999). A considerable amount of research has been conducted that reveals the value of ESL and EFL Web sites in educational settings (Chen, 1988; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Warden, 1995; Warschauer, 2000). The Web can be used to provide linguistic exercises (Li, 1995), to access authentic language materials (Lixl-Purcell, 1995), to stimulate communicative exercises (Rosen, 1995), and enable students to publish their work (Bowers, 1995).

For the use of technology in the educational environment, the change encompasses both the learning of new proposed technology skills and pedagogies (Woodrow, 1987; Saye, 1998). Moreover, there are many studies such as Johns and Torrez (2001) that mentioned how technology increases the motivation of ESL students to learn. But according to Lam (2000), a few numbers of studies had been conducted to investigate the teachers' point of view toward integrating internet technology in language

instruction. There is plenty of research that alludes to the benefits and potential of computers in education. The study reports on the ESL students' perceptions of the obstacles and difficulties they experienced when learning the use of technology in ESL instruction. Although there have been several studies analyzing the attitudes of teachers towards technology, (Bancheri, 2006; Davison, 2005; Love, 2005; McFarlane, Hoffman, & Green, 1997), research on the students' attitudes has been fairly scarce (Aydin, 2011; Conole, 2008). Given the rapid release of technology today, it is important to uncover and evaluate student and teacher attitudes toward technology and how they implement it most effectively for language teaching (Hamilton, 2009).

THIS STUDY

This study seeks to understand the student perspective on technology for learning purposes, how students who consider themselves technologically challenged adapt to such classes, what kinds of technology might enhance the involvement and performance of a curriculum, how they use it in the classroom, and what they think of CALL as a tool for improving ESL learning. By understanding our students better, we can better target their wants and needs, and thereby become more effective teachers.

Because of technology's ability to deliver immediate and varied samples of language to a wide audience, many teachers are looking to the Internet for content to use in the language classroom (Conole, 2008; Mitchell, 2009). An investigation into students' attitudes is an effective method by which language teachers, education planners, syllabus designers and researchers can obtain greater understanding into the language learning /teaching process. Students have different needs, preferences, beliefs, learning styles, and educational backgrounds, and that imposition of change upon these factors can lead to negative reactions.

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of internet and computer technology in learning SLA?
2. What factors encourage and leads you to use internet technology in the teaching process in your classes?
3. What are teachers' attitudes toward social technology as an increase in language acquisition and comprehension?
4. Did you encounter with problems during the use of technology in the class or what is the disadvantages of applying technology in the classroom?

METHOD

Research design

In order to obtain the goals of this study, a qualitative research design was used. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), a qualitative research can provide a very thorough insight about the feelings and thoughts of participants. The present study was conducted on the role of Technology in the learning SLA. The participants were the students at one of the universities of Tabriz in the academic year 2010/2011.

Given the level of the subjects in English language, the interview was employed as an instrument. It was piloted with a group of participants in order to test its clarity and to see if it would produce the required responses.

Participants

Five Iranian ESL students and three teachers with different levels of experience were selected randomly to take part in the interview. The participants were the student of bachelor's degree and teachers in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 35 years old. This study was conducted at a public university in Tabriz.

Instruments

This research was based on interviews with six open-ended questions. The interview questions were developed by the researchers based on the objectives of the study. It concerned the learners' background knowledge of English learning, perception of technology, attitudes toward online learning, teachers' perspectives to use of internet in classes, and online learning materials. Participants needed to answer a series of prearranged questions. Each interview lasted about 15 to 20 minutes.

Two kinds of interview were formed. In one form, the interview questions were sent to the emails of the five students at a pre-arranged times. Before sending the interview questions, the interviewees had been informed about the goal of this research. After receiving the responses, the researchers sent other questions to the participants in order to clarify or get additional information. And in the second form, the researcher attending personally and face to face interview with three teachers. Through applying an interview, the researcher allows the interviewees to express their opinions and experiences freely. In this study, the interviews had been conducted in order to obtain in-depth information on what they were researching about the attitudes of students towards using technology and the attitudes of Iranian ESL teachers toward integrating the internet technology in their teaching classes. The participants were informed about the recording of their responses.

The interviews were completed in the participants' native language and with the permission of them, all of the eight interviews translated into English and then transcribed by the researchers. The major questions of the interview are as follows:

1. Do you use the internet technology in your language classes?
2. How often do you use computers to study English?
3. How often do you use the internet to assist in your university work?
4. What factors do you think encourages you to use internet technology in your learning / teaching process?
5. What is your opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing internet technology in English language classes?
6. Do you believe that using internet technology in English language classes improve language learning of students?

Data Analysis

Qualitative data of the study were collected from students and teachers through interviews (interviewees' responses) with the participants were coded and classified for the purpose of categorizing the responses of the participants.

The goal of the interview was to understand the participants' perspectives and attitudes toward using technology in English classes. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, all of the eight interviews were analyzed carefully. The analysis of data gathered from interviews produced major responses related to the objectives of the study. The researcher himself collected the data. Students were assured that the purpose of the study was to improve language teaching and learning in classes by use of technology. They were encouraged to answer all interview questions as honestly and accurately as possible and explain any items that students had doubts about. The study examined relevant issues such as what obstacles and benefits they believe they have experienced, and what personal or cultural constraints may exist that affect their ability to benefit from technology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Knowing the importance of technology and the importance of attitude to English language learning, this study was conducted to explore students' attitudes towards the role of technology and to investigate its effect on second language learning. In this study which was conducted through interviews, some of the teachers showed that they use computer technology rarely for teaching English. Based on the definition of attitude towards English in general as mentioned earlier, the results indicated that students generally have positive thoughts and emotions towards learning English language and the EFL teachers. Qualitative feedback indicated that these utilizing technology motivated most learners "by providing personal interaction and creating a cultural connection to the target language culture" (Opp-Beckman & Kieffer, 2004, p. 240).

Question 1: What is the role of internet and computer technology in learning SLA? In order to make the most effective use of technology, it is important to fully understand the technology itself, its various functions, uses, and limitations, as well as why certain technologies succeed while others fail (Luke & Britten, 2007; Markee, 2005).

Kern (2006) point out that different types of technology may have varying effects on learning outcomes, though he states that we do not yet know what these differences require. One thing we do know is that it is important for the implementation of technology to be both engaging and effective, and in order to achieve this, we need to focus on what technology is being used for what purpose (Kern, 2006; Quinn, 2005). Concerning perspectives of the role of internet and computer technology in learning SLA, the majority of the participants took positive attitudes to it. All of the five students mentioned that they utilized internet technology in their classes. One interviewee (teacher) said that compared to "pen and paper", computers were more convenient and more efficient. According to the interviews, teachers indicated that they felt more work

could be accomplished much faster with the help of technology. They stated that internet, computer, and any other modern technology (e.g. Television, radio, the PC) was a good self-learning tool for several reasons. First of all, they felt the content of these tools was useful, practical, and related to their daily life. In addition, they said that the plentiful conversation, news, statements, and events are actually useful for them to increase the knowledge. Meanwhile, the use of this technology has offered the same pedagogical benefits as traditional second language instruction. It provides an environment leads to lowering anxiety towards using the language. Very frequently, a fear of making a mistake in front of others or simply a low tolerance for ambiguity can prevent a student from speaking the target language as much as is necessary for adequate language practice. Most of the participants confirmed that the use of modern technology was helpful in their English learning. Furthermore, they expressed that they were really interested in self-learning with internet and computer because it is helpful, has many learning materials and has a powerful relationship to everyday life. All of the three teachers believed that, earning language through computer is exciting and made learning process interesting and enjoyable for students. It is exciting because it is complex, dynamic and quickly changing. Using internet technology promotes independent, lifelong learning. Teachers participating in interview claimed that students will not get bored easily. They can gain interesting materials, audio and visual stimulants, obtain extra information, which makes learning enjoyable for them. So, the purpose of the technology is not to provide mere classroom efficiency, but it must also be effective in its implementation (Wang, 2006). The researcher observed that having access to the Internet helped students and teachers seek more information about the topics of discussions in their classes. Teachers need to feel comfortable and understand the technology, and students need to feel like the technology is offering them something that they cannot get elsewhere (Kurisak & Luke, 2009; Stevenson & Liu, 2010). It is clear that technology is not only a common and important part of the lives of students, it is one that can play an important role in how they learn a second language (Conole, 2008; Kern, 2006; Stockwell, 2007; Wang, 2005). Because technology is such a large part of student life, Kinginger (2007) suggests that technology is the key to student motivation in relation to language learning. Kurisak and Luke (2009) summarize very well the ideas presented here:

As a powerful tool, technology has the potential to lead to the development of dynamic learning environments, support cross-cultural communication, foster critical thinking, and engage and motivate learners, but in and of itself, however, it does not guarantee successful learning. Like all tools, the utility of technology ultimately depends on how, when, and why it is implemented on both how it is presented to learners and how they respond to it. (2009, p. 173)

Question 2: What factors encourage and leads you to use internet technology in the teaching process in your classes?

All of the students revealed that it improves their language learning since they can learn English through audio and visual medium provided in the internet. So, they agreed

modern technology could be seen as a beneficial tool for developing language learning. It indeed facilitated and enhanced personal English learning outcomes. Almost all of the participants expressed technologies such as internet and computer encourage them to improve their English reading in comprehension, could enhance their listening and writing ability, and also speaking skills.

The majority of the students will be in favor of continuing to learn English with internet in the future. All interviewees were willing to keep using computers and the internet to learn/teach English, search information they need, or review the topics they had previously learned. In that way, participants kept regular self-learning habits to make better progress and increase the learning outcomes. Furthermore, they can search for several of information which will instruct them to think critically and wisely. One of the teachers mentioned that through using the internet, students can access to authentic English materials and the course taught them how to use additional software, such as computerized dictionaries. He also pointed out, "I show my instruction materials via power point to the students. This performance increase students' motivation to learn better. Learning with technology is more interesting and easy than just depending on text books lessons. Another teacher commented that with the use of the technology in class "grows the sense of responsibility for learning and discovering one's own mistakes and best ways for learning."

In terms of the ease of communication, students reported that the use of technology facilitated communication. Teachers and students could communicate with each other by use of the internet. It is the most frequently mentioned strengths of the course that provides an opportunity to learn from what others know, to share knowledge of different cultures and different styles, accessibility, face-to-face human interaction, as well as the convenience and depth of web communications and feedback. Meanwhile, those authentic materials help understand the English-speaking countries' culture and native language usage. According to one participant (student) view, through using the internet, students become interested in trying something new. They wanted to describe technology as a useful source for communicating with other people around the world in the target language. All of the students benefit from sharing ideas and working collaboratively with the other students and made it easier to avoid mechanical errors such as spelling mistakes and sentence fragments. It would clearly be impossible to have a native speaker monitor every conversation a student has in the target language. In fact, no person has the time or mental capacity to do that. If that conversation takes place through the use of technology, in this case, the computer can automatically act as both monitor and moderator. This not only makes observation easier, but it can assist in both the grading process and in gathering data about the students' current linguistic knowledge and abilities (Blake, 2006). So, communication through the Internet can provide a less frightening environment for conversation because a face-to-face experience is not always involved. In such a situation, students can take the necessary time to plan communications (Kurisak & Luke, 2009), which is not possible when communication occur in person. That fact alone can remove a great deal of the anxiety that many language learners might experience in their classroom.

Two of the students in the study elaborated that the internet technology facilities are available almost at every corner in the world and they could be able to connect to the internet wherever they are and can also access to the resources the teachers have provided on the internet anytime and anywhere. So, teachers will be able to give out assignments and return them back anywhere students are.

According to Jaber (1997), utilizing computers and internet in student-centered classes enable students to work together, develop a dynamic learning environments, use critical thinking, and collaborate to solve problems that they face. Therefore, it is hoped that language teachers use valuable resources in their teaching process to help effective learning.

Question 3: What are teachers' attitudes toward social technology as an increase in language acquisition and comprehension?

Based on the findings of this research, these ESL teachers showed positive attitudes toward internet in classrooms. Almost all of the teachers believed that integrating internet in English language classes will increase the motivation of students and make learning process more interesting for them. Because teachers are such an important agent in the success or failure of a language program, it is necessary that teachers receive proper training in how to fulfill any new language - learning tools, especially when they engage the use of technology (Bancheri, 2006; Chenoweth, Jones, & Tucker, 2006). This training must include both adequate technical and pedagogical support, as lack of training will lead to improper use of tools, which causes the curriculum to be ineffective (Gruba & Hinkelman, 2012, Hirata, 2006; Love, 2005). Only by understanding the program will teachers have the chance to be motivated by what the technology can add to the language-learning process (Bancheri, 2006; Stockwell, 2007). If teachers feel that the technology has been pressure upon them without their consent and without feeling a part of the development process, the implementation of the technology is very likely to fail (Davison, 2005; Warschauer, 2002). Therefore, we need to approach training in a positive way that provides teachers the time, resources, and support they will need to feel comfortable with the changes made to their regular teaching practices (Davison, 2005; Hirata, 2006).

The use of technology be founded on pedagogical principles, arguably the most important factor affecting the implementation of a technology-based linguistic activity is the teacher who uses it (Bancheri, 2006; Gruba & Hinkelman, 2012; Hirata, 2006). No matter how well thought out a computer application may be, if the teacher or student does not use it correctly, it is likely to fail. In order to integrate technology in classrooms and develop the quality of the classes, teachers should be aware of different approaches and methods which are necessary to know for applying technology in educational environments.

Question 4: Did you encounter with problems during the use of technology in the class or what is the disadvantages of applying technology in the classroom?

All teachers dissatisfied about some negative aspects of technology. One of them who participated in interview claimed that the weak internet connection can be problematic in their classes. They believed that, although using technology is charming and fantastic for students, but some of them complained that when they use the internet in their classes, making control of students becomes difficult. According to Shin and Son (2007), the source of this problem could be associated with insufficient pedagogical training of teachers in conducting technology in classes. So, teachers should have had more control through training when the students use the internet for other purposes during class. Teachers complained that “all students did not focus only on the lessons when they have an internet connection. They must be careful towards every student when he or she wants to use technology facilities in the classroom. One of the teachers referred to another negative aspect of utilizing internet technology in ESL classes that every day new information enters to the internet. They claimed that it would be difficult for teachers that check the internet all the times for informed of new things. Two of the teachers pointed out that “Lack of devices such as videos, laptop, only one or two class equipped with computer, LCD, and also no internet connection discourage teachers to use internet in their classes.”

Furthermore, the other factor is the feeling of teachers’ anxieties in relation to technologies (Dawes & Selwyn, 1999). They are afraid of having less knowledge about technologies than their students. Other factors that teachers and students encounter with problems during the use of technology in the class, such as; teachers’ anxieties in relation to technologies, lack of confidence, fixed curriculum, financial problems, insufficient internet access and Knowledge, fear of having no more control on the activity of their students through utilizing technologies in classes, lack of materials and time, and online learning requires more than simply presenting the same curriculum in the same way. One student mentioned that it was difficult to pay attention to the teacher while working on a computer connected to the Internet. Other teachers elaborated on the disadvantage of technology, stating that they have to update with the latest information every day and cannot control the continuous changes in the applications related to internet.

CONCLUSION

This investigation demonstrated students’ perspectives toward the effectiveness of utilizing technology in SLA classes. It involved the reported attitudes and beliefs of participants in the study. Through analyzing, data gathered from interviewing with eight students and teachers. Findings from the interviews indicated that the students hold positive significant attitudes toward technology in learning English language and that the kind and the degree of attitude are affected by the type of technology, teaching methods and the learning atmosphere that the teacher creates for his/her students. Because attitudes can be modified through experience, and understanding effective language learning strategies via computer and internet technology can encourage students. The results affirm that modern technology arouses students’ English interests and learning motivation. Findings from the first research question - the role of

computer and internet technology in SLA- was positive. There are some reasons for the role of computer and internet technology in classes: a) Technology helps teachers to make the instruction, individual through permitting students to learn in an environment which they feel more secure; b) It helps students to have access to different learning sources not only at the university, but also outside of it (Peck and Domcott, 1994, cited in, Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, Fook, 2010). It can make the learning process more student-centered. Online learning is a natural extension of earlier forms of distance education.

With regard to the second research question- factors which encourage to use technology in classes- computers have proven to be an effective tool for facilitating learning and practicing language skills. Other benefits of using computers is that it can keep a record of any and all communication that is taking place (Blake, 2006). Meanwhile, the findings of this research reinforced proven evidence of the usefulness of computer-based English learning for developing the basic skills including listening (Gruba, 2004), reading (Lee, 1998), and writing (Wang, 2008). Due to its convenience, appropriate difficulty level, and practicality, participants were generally satisfied with the content and learning materials of technology. These findings support the idea of Lam (2000) who stated that teachers take into consideration technology as a supporting tool in teaching and learning process. The involvement of the students in such authentic communication allowed them to reach communicative goals. According to Brown (2000),

“Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning in previously unrehearsed contexts in the real world” (p. 69).

The results of the transcripts from the interviewees in question three - teachers' attitudes toward social technology- showed that the role of teacher in utilizing technology in this regard is great and can influence the students' ability to learn a second language by creating a positive attitude towards the target language, English. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), then, should recognize that all students possess positive and negative attitudes in different degrees, and that the negative ones can be changed by thoughtful instructional methods.

Findings from the fourth research question - disadvantages of applying technology - based on results of this study, in order to integrate information technology in the education system of Iranian's universities, decision-makers of Ministry of Education in Iran should support and equip all universities with enough language resource rooms including sufficient computers and easy access to the internet. They should also equip teachers with on-going training programs to develop the practical skills of teachers replace books and other traditional information delivery methods; they need to add something above and beyond what books alone can do (Ang & Zaphiris, 2006; Gallardo Del Puerto & Gamboa, 2008; Kurisak & Luke, 2009; Stockwell, 2007). Especially in areas where there is resistance to the use of technology, educators and administrators must be sure that the technology is truly added to the language-learning experience,

otherwise its use may prevent the language-learning process (Chenoweth, Jones, & Tucker, 2006; Gruba & Hinkelman, 2012).

This study reveals that the practicality, dynamic, and plenty of learning materials are major factors in increasing students learning motivation. It provides an interesting self-learning method outside the classroom for English learners at the university level. Future efforts should focus on improving the existing features in the design of the technology to bring about additional learning outcomes. Overall, students had positive perceptions of using technology for second language learning, the level of comfort that students had with using technologies such as computers and internet was of central importance in the current study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Creswell (2003), limitations of the study are the potential deficiency of it which are not controllable by the researcher, but may affect the results of the study. A limitation of this study stems from the lack of a control group. Although this study could measure the attitudes of the student's attitude toward technology, it could not compare these with the attitudes of students taking traditional English language learning. Another limitation arises from the number of participants. The research population was relatively small and with a small sample size. It considered the attitudes of students and teachers who participated in this investigation and it will not be generalized to the students and teachers who are majoring in other fields of studies. For this reason, further work needs to be done with more participants to get more reliable results.

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