

The Effects of Technology on Learning English as a Foreign Language Among Female EFL Students at Effatt College: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Technology offers modern educational tools for learning English as a foreign language. For the current study, the effects of technology on learning English as a foreign language among female EFL students at Effatt College were investigated. To achieve this aim, questionnaires with Likert scale questions were used in the study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part began with two general questions about age and educational level. The second part included four specific questions regarding technology tools that enhance learning the English language. Thirty-Six participants were included in this study. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain accurate results. The findings clearly indicate that computer software, social networking websites, online videos, audio tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, MP3 players), and smart phone and tablet apps have a positive impact on learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, technology tools can clearly be effective in improving the students' language and communication skills.

Key words: Technology; Language learning; English as a foreign language; EFL students; Language skills; Self-teaching

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INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

The English language is an integral part of people's lives, and they are motivated to learn it for different reasons. English is considered to be the second language in many parts of the world. Advancements in almost every discipline necessitate learning English. Because most research is published in the language, it is regarded to be an important and universal language. In addition, many schools and higher education systems use it as the medium of instruction (Morris & Maxey, 2014).

Learning the English language is not an easy task (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Teaching methods for the language have also undergone a myriad of changes, and each one has been geared toward facilitating student learning. The conventional teaching methods have been complemented by mediums such as radio, television, and eventually information technology. The role of technology has been recognized as vital in the education of the English language, and many areas of the world have noted the importance of information technology within the context of English education, which has facilitated and augmented English learning to a great extent. Indeed, Graddol (2012) stated that "technology lies at the heart of the globalization process, affecting work, education and culture" (p.18). This is especially true in current times due to the fact that technology is indeed reshaping the world through each and every facet of individuals' lives.

The important role that information technology currently plays in English education cannot be over-emphasized. The most obvious advantage of using the technological medium for language instruction is the ease and timeliness of access. It is helpful for both teachers and students. The use of digital libraries as well as dictionaries and thesauri have facilitated quicker learning

and have substantially improved learners' vocabularies. Furthermore, the use of such technologies within the educational mediums has also facilitated fast and more integrated interactive learning. The use of technology is necessary because technological advancements have led to breaking barriers, and new domains have been explored within this global and informational age.

B. Technological Advancements and Language Learning

Technology has captured the interest of children and adults alike, and this fascination is capitalized on by using it as a medium of instruction for most disciplines. Multimedia uses a wide variety of applications, such as audio, visual, and animation effects. Time constraints, such as those related to traditional classroom meeting times, are not applicable because information and lessons can be accessed quickly from anywhere and at any time. Group activities are also possible in a more interesting manner compared to conventional classroom learning.

Communication is facilitated through the use of integrated technologies. Conventional teaching methods employed by passive means, such as lectures, and the results were observed through written testing at a later stage. Multimedia technologies facilitate interactive real-time learning and also facilitate interactive testing procedures so both students and teachers are aware of where they stand in real time. Improvements can be made quickly and hence retained longer because mistakes are corrected regarding phonetics and grammar form. In addition, multimedia technologies seek to integrate and consolidate learning procedures, so students are taught more effectively. The media also offer platforms for interactive discussions in real time as well as virtual classrooms.

Various multimedia course-wares enable students to gain a wider understanding of the difficulties and intricacies of the formal language learning process through a study of English cultural backgrounds. Information is more readily available and can be found at a fraction of the time students would spend in conventional libraries. Digital learning enables vast improvements in phonetics, grammar, and comprehension as well as oral speech. The knowledge and confidence gained through learning a language online creates confidence in students, allowing active participation in the classroom.

Student and instructor involvement is not only facilitated, it is also improved upon. Classrooms are enlivened due to the engaging and interactive process. The whole concept of teaching English as a second language through technology is encapsulated by Zhang (2006), who explains:

Through Multimedia and network technology, we can offer students not only rich sources of authentic materials, but also an attractive and a friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant

sounds, which to a large extent overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English" (p.111).

C. Research Statement

Learning a language is an ongoing process that does not end at a certain benchmark; rather, it continues throughout one's life. Today's technology provides students with numerous options for learning the English language that can be convenient and fit the learning requirements of the student. The computer is a modern educational tool in language education; it is a technological advancement that helps make education fun and may also create a positive learning environment. Also, it provides students with new experiences and learning opportunities to help make different decisions and to think critically. The World Wide Web increases students' interest and also offers many software packages that are designed for students who want to learn a language. I am interested in multimedia technology and hope that it will have a positive effect on female students at Effatt College who are learning English as a foreign language.

D. Research Questions

The paper will address the following research questions:

- a) How frequently do students use technology in learning English?
- b) What technologies (e.g., Computer software, Online audio and video tools, Facebook, Twitter, Whats App) do students use in learning English?
- c) Do students enjoy using technology in learning English?
- d) Does the use of technology have a positive impact on their ability to learn English?

E. The Significance of the Study

Since, the present study seeks to ascertain the effects of technology on learning English as a foreign language for female EFL students at Effatt College, this study is significant in terms of focusing on digital technologies in learning English as a foreign language. Many students want to know whether or not new technology is the most effective in enhancing English language learning. Moreover, one important contribution of this study is motivating students who face difficulties in mastering English and are sometimes unmotivated to learn.

F. The Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to 36 students and analyzed the effect of technology on females only. Examining the effects on a larger number of learners and researching differences between males and females would certainly show much more important outcomes. Moreover, the study was limited to a questionnaire as the primary source for this research. Using another method, such as an interview, would yield larger data. Finally, conducting the

study over a longer period of time could possibly provide more accurate results.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents numerous studies that are related to the effects of technology on learning English as a foreign language. The chapter is divided into three sections: language learning in the digital age, self-learning, and the role of technology in learning English as a second language.

1.1 Language Learning in the Digital Age

Society is gradually becoming more connected due to advancements in technology. A worldwide presence and knowledge about the international market is acknowledged by businesses to be a crucial tool for their survival. Furthermore, people have become increasingly mobile (Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006). Currently, opportunities to study abroad are provided by many colleges and universities. Therefore, studying a second language can be a great advantage for students. Specifically, regions that do not use English as their first language often utilize this opportunity. Regarding business, teaching the English language in both English-speaking and non-speaking regions is a profitable business. For instance, Chinese students comprise the highest percentage of students attending universities in America, and 40,000 of them are learning English (Bartlett & Fisher, 2011). Different approaches can be utilized by students from foreign countries to enhance their adaptation to their current environments.

Numerous technology tools are often utilized by many learners. Computers, MP3 players, mobile phones, televisions, and personal digital assistants are some of the electronic technologies that are being utilized by learners. Language learning is gradually becoming easier for learners because they can now use their computers or phones to access the learning lessons from wherever they are outside of the classroom. Continuous advancements in technology enable students to learn the English language without taking a formal English class. This means that learners can learn the language without necessarily attending classes because they can teach themselves. There are numerous tools that learners can use in language learning. These tools are user-friendly because they are programmed in such a way that it is easy for any learner to use them.

1.2 Self-Learning

As Tough (1973) explained, *self-teaching*, which means informal learning, is familiar to many people. In other words, it is not a new experience for adults. According to Livingstone (2000), it is a learning method that does not necessarily require the engagement of an authorized tutor because interested learners can teach themselves. The

main task for learning is in the learners' hands because this type of learning is different from formal learning in a classroom (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). This is because this type of learning can be carried out at any place using any method. In fact, according to some studies, informal learning in the workplace has been achieved by the employment of unofficial learning and is estimated to be about 90% (Lohman, 2000; Lovin, 1992); however, there are few discussions about the significance of informal learning for learners (Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006).

Some people assume that 21st century generations will substantially benefit from the lifelong, unofficial learning process. One contributing factor is the overall change in the discussions of education professionals. As a result, an effective learner-centered technique has been established (John & Wheeler, 2008; Tough, 1977). Improvements in technology as well as the way it changes what is likely to be achieved contributes to part of this change. In addition, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have the potential to facilitate study at all life stages, which will lead to an increase in educated societies. A new phase of lifelong learning is being ushered in by the advancement in technology tools, which, while continuing to be cost-efficient for the provider of the education, can be centered on the individual learner (Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006). Furthermore, there are claims that lifelong learning also benefits society at large. These claims are from individuals, instructors, and political organizations. The importance of the connection concerning informal learning and independence will also increase as the informal learning role in education and across human life spans constantly increases.

A list comprised of the elements of self-directed learning, which learners want to be effective in an online ESL learning environment, are highlighted below (Kannan & MacKnish, 2000):

- a) Understanding when a need to ask for assistance arises.
- b) Searching for subordinate sources of assistance.
- c) Advancing the process of learning by discovery.
- d) Learning to move at one's pace and be able to effectively utilize time.
- e) Increasing the capacity to learn from accepted mistakes.

1.3 Role of Technology in Learning English as a Second Language

The influence of technology on both formal and informal learning aimed to advance capabilities in learning the English language will be discussed in this section. According to Chapelle (2003), technology is necessary to improve the language ability of students simultaneously inside and outside of the educational setting. Teachers who teach English as a second language recognize the students' need to use English away from the classroom in

order to improve communicative competence (Chapelle, 2003). He also mentioned that learners tend to be more motivated by using technology in the process of learning the English language.

A useful discussion regarding applying technology to support language learning is addressed by Gordon (2007). Firm affirmations of her work are shown by various reports stating that several other improvements in the entire practice, especially in the content and approaches to teaching and learning, are stimulated by technology. In addition, the understanding level and open-mindedness of young learners can greatly increase (Gordon, 2007). Thus, there are various advantages associated with technology tools that enhance the learning process.

The literature explains that technology influences reading and writing in many ways. For instance, it began with a simple computer program for word processing, and now the same technology has advanced and is being applied to reading and writing English for Internet uses. The word processing program is user-friendly, and, hence, it is the best tool to use for reading and writing. Al-Harbi (2008) stated that the application of the Internet for ESL students' reading and writing abilities using a word processor has been enhanced by technology.

In United States, Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) conducted normal type between each letter and communication skills for ESL students at Michigan University could be advanced through the application of technology tools. He concluded that these elements are useful to students in that they are using them to carry out their studies flexibly. In addition, he indicated that instructors and learners will experience improvement in their daily activities due to these elements. The significance of applying technology tools to improve reading and writing abilities, especially for English language students who need to catch up on their lessons or those who need to learn for the purpose of gaining some knowledge, is also discussed in his work.

The reading and writing processes for learners using word processing are also endorsed by his research. Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) stated that "word processors, including some that are bilingual, are an excellent way to further writing development and motivate students to write" (p.229). Perego and Boyle (2012) performed a study to affirm this view. Their study found that technology tools enhanced reading and writing abilities of many students because they are user-friendly, and students are able to learn at a faster and more effective manner. Furthermore, their research showed that students learn more efficiently when using technology elements instead of traditional instruction because the basic language of the Internet and ESL sites is English, enhancing a favorable learning environment for students. These tools have facilitated a new platform because students are able to gain convenient access to English learning lessons, regardless of whether he/she is inside

or outside of the classroom. In other words, the English learning process is improving because technology is also advancing and enabling students from all over the world to connect with each other when using these tools. This shows that students learning English can benefit most from the use of word processing applications, the Internet, and online fluent dictionaries. In accordance with Nomass (2013), rapidly advancing technology has enabled the creation of applications that can be used by learners using gadgets, such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops, as they only need to be downloaded and then installed. The new technology has also allowed learners to practice their handwriting skills and to gain more confidence in reading and writing through the use of touchscreen programs.

One effective tool used to teach writing to learners who are not native English speakers is a blog. Many opportunities are created by the use of blogs because they are easily printed and shared in a convenient way. In addition, they can be accessed by any user who has at least a minimal understanding of computer operation. As stated by Bloch (2007), many college students gain critical knowledge and receive guidance on how to write academically from blogs. There was a class blog used during his research in which students were advised to read and reply to the posts made by others. Then, they would utilize the knowledge gained from that exercise in their academic assignments. Abdullah, who was a Somali student, was Bloch's primary focus. Abdullah resided in East African refugee camps before his arrival to the United States as a teenager. Similar to the majority of "generation 1.5" immigrants, individuals who move from their countries and reside in another prior or throughout their early teenage years, he understands most of the words in English dialect but he needs to practice his academic writing.

Abdullah wrote about what he had experienced in his life using his vernacular English. In due course, he was able to express his argument concerning websites that are used to detect plagiarism because he was able to use the class blog. He later developed the ability to combine what he had read from online papers with his own ideas, and his academic writing skills improved.

Students who are in a developed English class can use Wikipedia as an opportunity to discuss what they have read from various books. This is because there are descriptions of what various books contain, and, therefore, it is a useful tool to be used because students are the contributors (Grandzol & Grandzol, 2010). This opinion was supported by Taranto, Dalbon, and Gaetano (2011) when they said that the driving force of each discussion is the student, while the tool acts as a mediator. As a result, students can interact outside of the school's website because they will have already gained confidence and knowledge from the discussion about the various ideas they acquired from the books they read.

The improvement in effective reading and writing that ESL students would experience is therefore supported by the examples provided because their physical abilities and understanding levels would increase. The literature indicates that technology, especially in the current era, has greatly influenced speaking and listening in a more efficient way. In addition, the process of learning for English students is easier due to the creation of applications that enhance the user's ability to produce, upload, download, and even play digital audio files, such as podcasts, because the process is user-friendly. One important tool used for second-language learning, known as ESLpod.com, was promoted by Hegelheimer and O'Bryan (2009) when they performed an assessment of podcast resources and technology tools for learners. English-learning students benefit most from this resource because it has more than 500 free audio files that are downloadable and structured by topic. Preparation for listening tests, the availability of grammar tips and English topics, and the development of academic skills for learners are enabled by other accessible pre-made podcasts. Also, independent learning can be expanded by podcasts because students can discuss various topics outside of the classroom, which benefits instructors when giving lectures (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007).

Potential technological approaches that could play an important role in teaching, especially in speaking and listening, are also provided by Nomass (2013). He discusses the various means by which English language learners can learn, including the use of websites directed at English language learning, computer assisted language learning programs, videos, audio resources, software for making innovative presentations, dictionaries, chat features, and email. The research was conducted in the case study tradition and focused on how a group of students used technology in the classroom in learning the English language. In the recommendations for future research, Nomass draws attention to the current problems with technology in the classroom and how these can be accounted for. The problems involve the division between theory and practice in the modern classroom. He called for the integration of technology into the practice of language learning in these classrooms and stated that educators should also account for these types of innovations.

Radio broadcasts can be utilized to enhance learning of a second language through transformation. In Kenya, Odera and Kisumu (2011) conducted a study in which the use of school radio broadcasts for improving English language learning was investigated. Kiswahili and Vernacular are the native languages in Kenya in addition to the English language and another language called "Sheng." To help learners to improve their English proficiency while not confusing it with other languages, learners listened to English radio broadcasts. The researchers used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The main findings of the

study indicated that using English radio lessons helped students improve their English language skills. Additional studies have shown that mastering a foreign language could be achieved more quickly by listening to radio broadcasts (Odera, 2008).

A study of the listening abilities for EFL learners through video chat was performed by Herron and Seay (1991). This study was carried out using middle-level learners who were divided into two categories: the controlled and the experimental category. The regular class was replaced by the experimental category in which they listened to the radio tapes. The regular class activities were used for the controlled category and did not use any radio tapes. The results showed that the experimental group accomplished much more than the controlled group. Learners are able to listen to English native speakers interrelating in daily conversational circumstances through videotapes, so they experience diverse linguistic settings. The visual dimension of the videotape is believed to decrease the presence of uncertainties more in listening to English native speakers than audio cassettes. Thus, students will be inspired to learn more. Furthermore, remarkable and inspiring evidence is provided by videos for the purposes of supplementing audio or written contributions, and, hence, the input or output of understanding and producing a foreign language is supported (Herron et al., 1995; Weyers, 1999).

The connections between listening and the application of technology tools in language learning have been studied by several scholars. As a result, positive interrelations were presented by several findings and outcomes (Jones, 2003; Wong, 2005; Beare, 2008). According to these scholars, the improved utilization of multimedia and the Internet as well as the various new websites that are consistently advancing are facilitated by digital technology. YouTube is one of the common websites that provide various videos. The advantage of enabling students to share videos has made it very useful (Badal, 2008; Cass, 2007).

The impacts of YouTube video clips on teaching for EFL Taiwanese learners regarding their listening skill performance were examined by Kuo (2009). This study examined the impacts of various YouTube video clips through three experimental categories, including a controlled category in which no videos clips were utilized. The three categories were labelled as two, four, and six. The quantity of optimized results was identified in each category. To determine the learners' attitude towards YouTube clips was the third purpose of the study. The study lasted fourteen weeks, and the participants were 195 EFL college freshmen from a school located in Taichung, Taiwan. Both the control (0-video clip) and experimental categories (2-video, 4-video, and 6-video clips) used pre- and post-tests and contextual surveys.

Three results were found. First, important impacts on the performance of learners' listening abilities for

YouTube viewing/listening were observed. Second, the category dissimilarities found in the assessments of the pre- and post-test listening ability scores were analyzed by clip quantity in each category. This means that the Taiwanese EFL learners' achievements were influenced differently by the four numbers of YouTube clips. Third, in terms of the different number of YouTube clips, a slight difference in attitudes was observed in the three experimental categories. Nevertheless, an effective positive impact was observed in English learning attitudes when a finding was added. The positive results show that a reliable native speaker setting, which can benefit EFL learners, is provided by the use of YouTube clips.

Other factors that facilitate learners in increasing their English language skills are the development of Smartphones and tablets and the rapid growth of ESL programs on the Internet. In other words, learners are able to expand their learning activities outside the classroom because they can access the available programs using those devices. This practice outside the classroom will enable them to learn for a longer period of time because there are no limitations involved. Hence, the traditional method is limited compared to the modern one. When students increase their urge to learn the English language, they will develop their skills and understanding.

The manner in which social websites influence EFL learning students, especially Facebook, has been evaluated by various scholars. This topic was studied by Shih (2011), and he divided learners into three categories according to their scores on English tests during the 2010 Taiwan National College Entrance Assessment. These categories included 90 points and above for a high mark, 70-89 points for a medium mark, and 70 points and below for a low mark. Learners were advised to post their assignments on Facebook through a Facebook-incorporated combined learning model created by Shih. He assessed their work, and he observed a great improvement in their English skills. This evaluation was done through the change of frequency of "likes" and the comments made on Facebook. He concluded that cooperative learning is enhanced by Facebook. Hence, EFL learning students can highly benefit from it as well.

Furthermore, WhatsApp is considered to be a popular application available. It is a free platform that can be installed on mobile phones to send messages, pictures, audio files, and videos using an Internet data connection. Alsaleem (2014) investigated how female Saudi undergraduate English students used WhatsApp applications in English dialogue journals to improve their writing, vocabulary, word choice, and speaking ability. The quantitative, quasi-experimental based research methodology of the study examined the analysis of a

sample drawn from students attending the Languages and Translation College at AlImam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. Kruskal-Wallis, Friedman, and the Wilcoxon tests were used to measure the results. According to this study, WhatsApp showed development in students' writing skills as well as speaking ability, vocabulary, and word choice.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of technology on EFL students learning English. To achieve this goal, quantitative data was collected and analyzed using a questionnaire. Quantitative research is a type of research that using a variety of numerical data examined through the use of statistics (Creswell, 1994). This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses data collection from the main data source used in this study to explore the effect of technology tools on learning English as a foreign language for Effatt students. The second section discusses the participants who answered the research questions. The final section discusses the instruments and measures used to evaluate each question.

2.1 Data Collection

In this study, electronic questionnaire was used, which was the primary source used in this research to explore the effect of technology tools on learning English as a foreign language for Effatt Students. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part collected demographic data about the participants including general questions about age and educational level. The second part included four specific questions regarding the use of technology tools. The Likert scale format was used for the second part.

2.2 Participants

To answer the research questions, this study was applied to 36 students for which English was a second language from three education levels: freshman, sophomores, and juniors. The survey targeted female learners who studied at Effatt College. The participants were between 18-26 years of age. The respondents included 8 freshman (22.2%), 23 sophomores (63.9%), and 5 juniors (13.9%) (Table 1).

Table 1
Participant Demographic Information

| Age | N | % | Level | N | % |
|----------|----|-------|-----------|----|-------|
| 18-20 | 23 | 63.9% | Freshman | 8 | 22.2% |
| 21-25 | 12 | 33.3% | Sophomore | 23 | 63.9% |
| 26-Above | 1 | 2.8% | Junior | 5 | 13.9% |
| | | | Senior | 0 | 0% |

2.3 Instruments / Measures

This quantitative study was completed using a questionnaire that contained two parts. The first part had two questions focused on demographic information (age and education level of the learners), while the second part had four main questions depend on a Likert scale. The first main question of part two consisted of 6 items regarding the use of technology tools that the students utilized to improve their English language learning. The choices were “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” In the second question, there were 5 items about how often they used certain technology tools for enhancing or improving knowledge and skills in learning the English language. The choices were “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The third question included 11 items about students’ attitudes toward using the technology tools for learning English. The choices were “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “undecided.” In the final question of the survey, 5 technology items were listed to determine their impact on learning the English language. The choices were “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree” and “undecided.”

3. RESULTS

This chapter presents the main findings of the study regarding the research questions. It is divided into five sub-sections: sample description of the study, research question 1, research question 2, research question 3 and research question 4. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to achieve a precise tabulation.

3.1 Sample Description of the Study

In the first part of the questionnaire, the students were asked about their age. Table 1 and Figure 1 present the age distribution of the female students who participated in this study. Most of the participants (63.9%) were aged between 18 and 20, while 12 students (33.3%) were aged between 21 and 25 and just one student was aged above 25. In addition, the students were asked about their level of education. Table 2 and Figure 2 present the educational level of the female students who participated in this study. Most of the participants (63.9%) were sophomores, while there were 8 freshman students (22.2%) and five junior students.

Table 1
Participant Age

| Age | Frequency | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|
| 18-20 | 23 | 63.9 |
| 21-25 | 12 | 33.3 |
| 26 and above | 1 | 2.8 |
| Total | 36 | 100 |

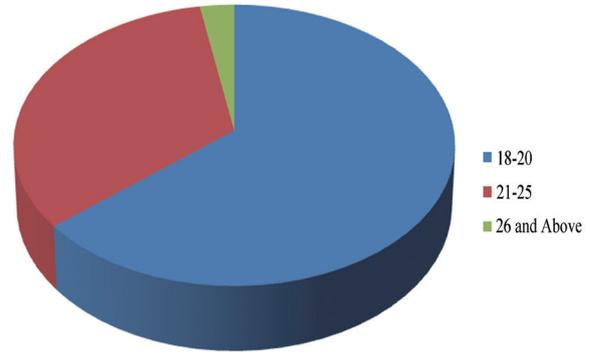


Figure 1
Participant Age

Table 2
Participant Level of Education

| Educational level | Frequency | % |
|-------------------|-----------|------|
| Freshman | 8 | 22.2 |
| Sophomore | 23 | 63.9 |
| Junior | 5 | 13.9 |
| Senior | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 36 | 100 |

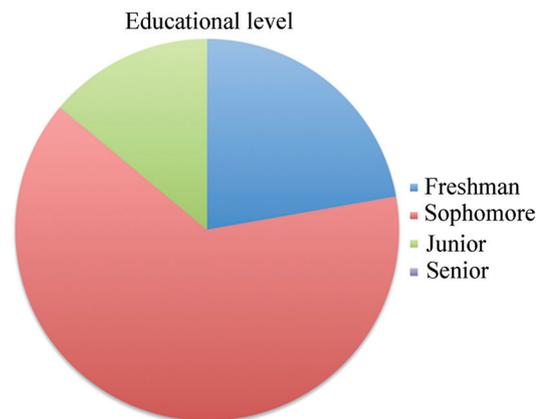


Figure 2
Participant Level of Education

3.2 Research Question 1

Regarding the first question (Tables 4-3 and Figures 4-3) in the second part of the questionnaire, there were 6 items analyzed to answer this question. The students were asked how they used the following to improve English language learning: watching TV/Videos/Films, listening to radio/broadcasts/lectures, communicating with relatives/friends, reading books/newspapers/stories, searching for information on websites, and writing assignments/emails.

The results show that 25 students (69.4%) believed that watching videos, TV shows, and movies will always have a positive impact on their English language learning, while 10 students (27.8%) believed that they could have a positive impact, just not all of the time. Although 8 students (22.2%) indicated that listening to the radio or audio lectures would not improve their English language learning in any way, 22 students (61.1%) indicated that it can sometimes actually improve their language learning.

Table 3
Usage Criteria in Improving English Language Learning

| Usage criteria in improving english language learning | Always | | Sometimes | | Never | |
|---|--------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1- Watching TV/Videos/Films | 25 | 69.4 | 10 | 27.8 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 2- Listening to radio/broadcasts/lectures | 6 | 16.7 | 22 | 61.1 | 8 | 22.2 |
| 3- Communicating with relatives/friends | 16 | 44.4 | 17 | 47.2 | 3 | 8.3 |
| 4- Reading books/newspapers/stories | 10 | 27.8 | 20 | 55.6 | 6 | 16.7 |
| 5- Searching for information on websites | 15 | 41.7 | 18 | 50.0 | 3 | 8.3 |
| 6- Writing assignments/emails | 16 | 44.4 | 15 | 41.7 | 5 | 13.9 |

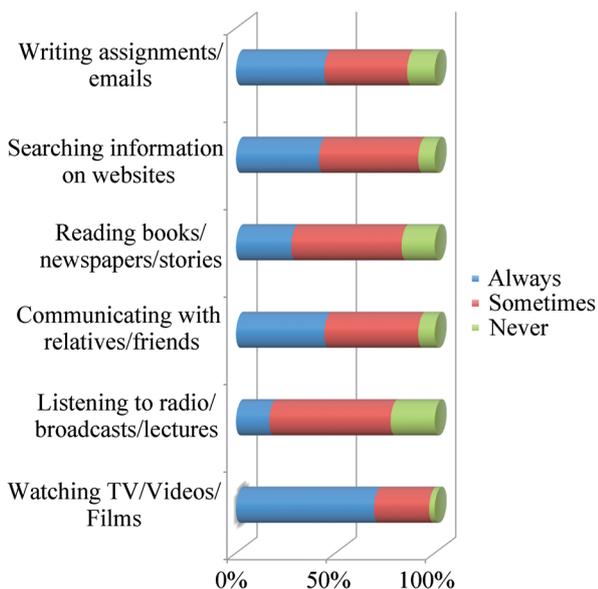


Figure 3
Usage Criteria in Improving English Language Learning

3.3 Research Question 2

In the second question (Table 4 and Figure 4), the students were asked how often they used the following

On the other hand, 33 students (91.7%) believed that communicating with relatives and friends through the use of modern-day technology could have a positive impact on their English language learning. Similarly, 30 students (83.3%) believed that reading books and newsfeeds could improve their English language learning.

Moreover, regarding the positive impact of technology on searching for information on websites as well as writing emails and assignments, both showed a 91.7% and 86.1% approval rate, respectively.

technologies: computer software for learning English (i.e., Duolingo: Learn Languages, Google Translate Desktop, and Longman Dictionary), social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Whats App, and blogs), online audio and video tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, MP3 player, and podcasts), smartphone or tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary.com, dictionaries, and thesauri), and word processing (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) for enhancing or improving their knowledge and skills in learning the English language.

The results show that learning English via computer software and utilizing social networking websites both had an approval rate of 94.4% in improving learning the English language. Regarding online audio and video tools, 32 students (88.9%) indicated that websites such as “Youtube” and apps such as “Skype” as well as podcasts and mp3 players all have a positive impact on their English language learning.

Finally, 35 students (97.2%) believed that smartphone and tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary.com, dictionaries, and thesauri) can improve their English language learning, while 29 students (80.5%) indicated that word processing software (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) can definitely have a positive impact on their English language learning.

Table 4
Technologies for Improving Skills in Learning the English Language

| Technology | Always | | Sometimes | | Never | |
|--|--------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Computer software for learning English (i.e., Duolingo: Learn languages, google translate desktop, and longman dictionary) | 18 | 50.0 | 16 | 44.4 | 2 | 5.6 |
| Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Blogs | 18 | 50.0 | 16 | 44.4 | 2 | 5.6 |
| Online audio and video tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, MP3 player, and podcasts) | 17 | 47.2 | 15 | 41.7 | 4 | 11.1 |
| Smartphone or tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary.com, dictionaries, and thesauri) | 19 | 52.8 | 16 | 44.4 | 1 | 2.8 |
| Word processing (i.e. Google Docs and Microsoft Word) | 10 | 27.8 | 19 | 52.8 | 7 | 19.4 |

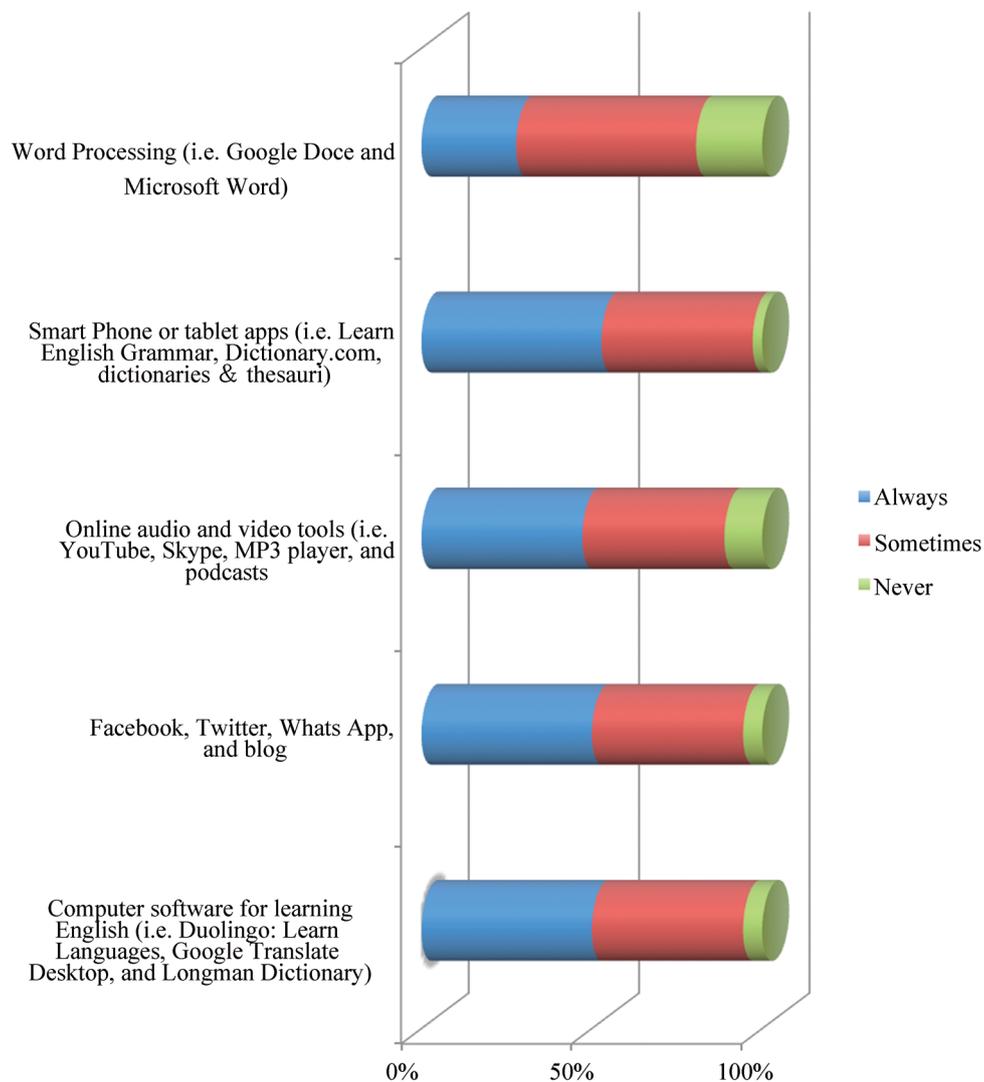


Figure 4
Technologies for Improving Skills in Learning the English Language

3.4 Research Question 3

Regarding the third question (Table 5 and Figure 5), which shows the attitude of the participating students toward using technology with respect to English language learning, there were 11 items analyzed to answer this question.

The results show that 34 students (94.4%) preferred the use of technology to enhance their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills, and 27 students (75%) liked to study the English language through online learning websites. Moreover, 29 students (80.5%) believed that

technology tools can definitely be more effective in improving their language skills, and 32 students (88.9%) believed that multimedia (i.e., computers and YouTube) can be an excellent method to learn the English language.

In addition, 35 students (97.2%) enjoyed using technology while learning the English language, 34 students (94.4%) acknowledged that technology can help them improve their language skills, and 31 students (86.1%) viewed language software and apps as crucial tools in developing their creativity.

Table 5
Attitudes Toward Technology

| Criteria | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|-----|----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1- I enjoy using technology while learning the English Language | 22 | 61.1 | 13 | 36.1 | - | - | 1 | 2.8 | - | - |
| 2- I know that technology can help me improve my English Language learning | 21 | 58.3 | 13 | 36.1 | - | - | 2 | 5.6 | - | - |
| 3- I improve my creativity by using English language software or apps | 11 | 30.6 | 20 | 55.6 | - | - | 5 | 13.9 | - | - |
| 4- I prefer using technology to enhance my speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills | 15 | 41.7 | 19 | 52.8 | 1 | 2.8 | 1 | 2.8 | - | - |
| 5- I think watching online videos in the English language motivates me to learn more vocabulary | 16 | 44.4 | 14 | 38.9 | - | - | 5 | 13.9 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 6- I really like learning the English language through online learning websites | 10 | 27.8 | 17 | 47.2 | 2 | 5.6 | 6 | 16.7 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 7- I believe that multimedia (i.e., computers and YouTube) is an excellent technique to learn English | 18 | 50.0 | 14 | 38.9 | - | - | 3 | 8.3 | 1 | 2.8 |
| 8- I think using technology in mastering the English language is not necessary | 4 | 11.1 | 17 | 47.2 | 1 | 2.8 | 10 | 27.8 | 4 | 11.1 |
| 9- I believe that technology tools are more effective in improving my language skills | 14 | 38.9 | 15 | 41.7 | 1 | 2.8 | 4 | 11.1 | 2 | 5.6 |
| 10- I use chatting on social networking sites to improve my writing skills | 15 | 41.7 | 17 | 47.2 | - | - | 4 | 11.1 | - | - |
| 11- I think voice recorders help me to improve my speaking skills | 10 | 27.8 | 16 | 44.4 | 2 | 5.6 | 7 | 19.4 | 1 | 2.8 |

3.5 Research Question 4

Concerning the fourth question (Table 6 and Figure 6), the students were asked about which technologies are helpful for enhancing or improving their knowledge and skills in learning the English language (i.e., computer software for learning English is very helpful to improve my language skills, social networking sites are very helpful to develop my communication, reading, and writing skills, online audio and video tools are very helpful in enhancing my speaking and listening skills, smartphone or tablet apps are very useful to develop my language skills, and word processing is very useful in developing my writing skills).

The results show that 28 students (70%) agree that word processing software (i.e., Google Docs and

Microsoft Word) can be very useful in developing their writing skills, while 34 students (94%) agree that smartphone and tablet apps can definitely develop their language skills.

Finally, 31 students (86.1%) agreed that online video and audio tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, and MP3 players) can in fact enhance their listening and speaking skills, and 34 students (94.4%) agreed that social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApps, and blogs) can easily develop their communication and reading skills. Furthermore, 32 students (88.9%) used for chatting on social networking websites as a way to improve their writing skills, and 26 students (72.2%) agreed that using voice recorders helps them improve their speaking skills.



Figure 5
Attitudes Toward Technology

Table 6
Helpful Technology for Enhancing Skills in Learning the English Language

| Criteria | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|--|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|-----|----------|------|-------------------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1- Computer software for learning English is very helpful to improve my language skills | 16 | 44.4 | 16 | 44.4 | 1 | 2.8 | 3 | 8.3 | - | - |
| 2- Social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs) are very helpful to develop my communication and reading skills | 13 | 36.1 | 21 | 58.3 | 1 | 2.8 | - | - | 1 | 2.8 |
| 3- Online audio and video tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, and MP3 players) are very helpful to enhance my speaking and listening skills | 17 | 47.2 | 14 | 38.9 | 1 | 2.8 | 4 | 11.1 | - | - |
| 4- Smartphone or tablet apps are very useful to develop my language skills | 18 | 50.0 | 16 | 44.4 | 1 | 2.8 | 1 | 2.8 | - | - |
| 5- Word processing (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) is very useful in developing my writing skills | 12 | 33.3 | 16 | 44.4 | 1 | 2.8 | 7 | 19.4 | - | - |

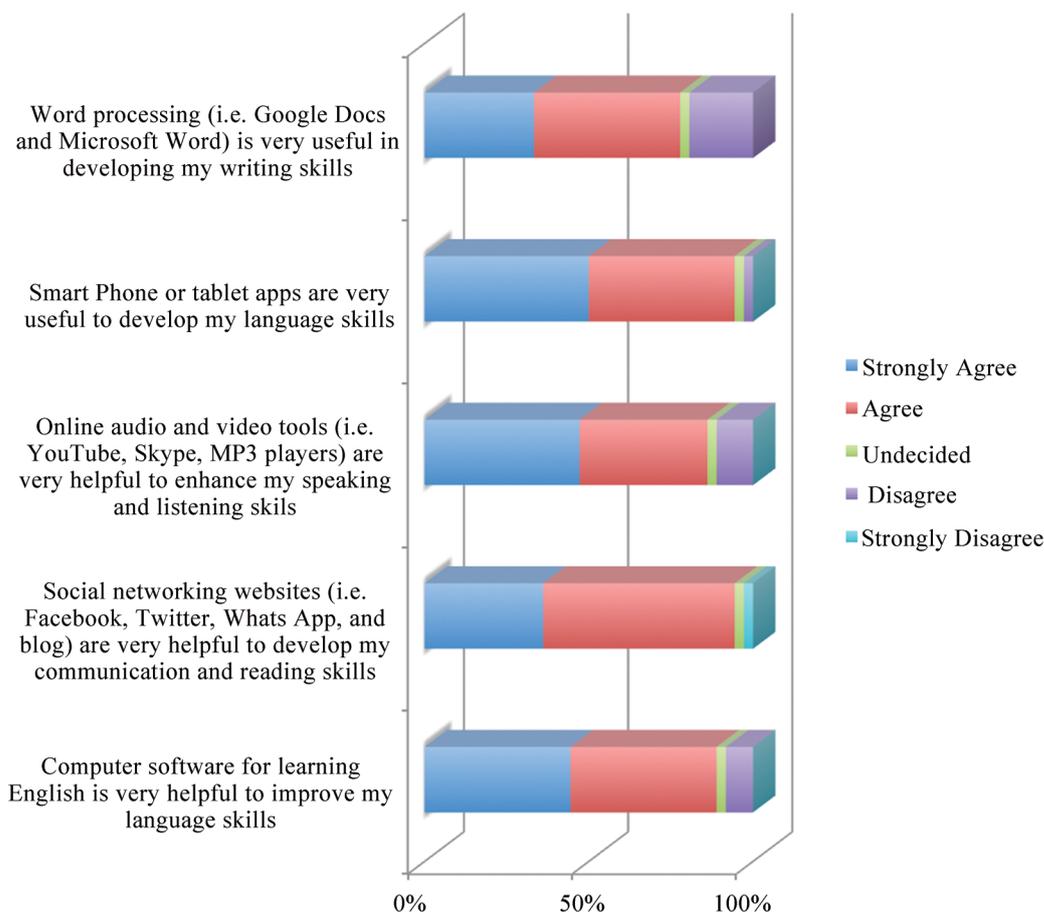


Figure 6
Helpful Technology for Enhancing Skills in Learning the English Language

DISCUSSION

This chapter combines the results of the analysis as well as examines the results from the framework of the literature review. As mentioned previously, the primary goal of the research focused entirely on the effect of digital technologies on enabling students to be more proficient in the English language. In addition, another aim of this study was to specify which technology was the most helpful in enhancing English language learning.

It was indicated by learners that technology tools can definitely be effective in improving their language skills. This supports the results of studies done by Peregoy and Boyle (2012). They found that the reading and writing abilities of many students were enhanced by technology tools because they were user-friendly and students were able to learn in a faster and more effective manner. Furthermore, their research emphasized that students learn more efficiently when using technology than they would in the traditional way because the basic language of the Internet and most ESL sites is English, which creates a favorable learning environment for students.

Similar to the findings of this study, Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) identified that “word processors, including some

that are bilingual, are an excellent way to further writing development and motivate students to write” (p.229). The responses of the students in this study support this claim. It was found that 80.5% of students agreed that word processing software (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) can definitely have a positive impact on their English language learning. In addition, 70% of students agreed that word processing software (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) can be very useful in developing their writing skills. Similar to Al-Harbi (2008) who stated that the application of the Internet for ESL students’ reading and writing abilities using a word processor was enhanced by technology.

With the increase in smartphone and tablet apps, learners can use these tools to exercise their handwriting and to gain more confidence in reading and writing through the use of touchscreen programs (Nomass, 2013). In this study, 97.2% of students agreed that smartphone and tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary.com, dictionaries, & thesauri) could improve their English language learning. Moreover, 94% agreed that smart phones and tablet apps could definitely help develop their language skills.

The literature states that radio is considered to be another effective technology tool in learning English. Odera and Kisumu (2011) conducted a study that investigated the use of school radio broadcasts to help learners improve their English proficiency while not confusing English with other languages. The main finding of their study indicated that using English radio lessons helped students improve their English language skills; however, this finding rejects the results that show that 22.2% of students believed that listening to the radio and audio lectures would not improve their English language learning in any way.

The findings demonstrate that 31 students (86.1%) agreed that online video and audio tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, and MP3 players) could in fact enhance their listening and speaking skills. Kuo (2009) showed that YouTube video clips positively impacted the listening skills of EFL Taiwanese learners. This positive result showed that a native speaker setting can benefit EFL learners and one way in which this is accessed is through the use of YouTube clips. Furthermore, there is remarkable and inspiring evidence regarding using videos for the purposes of supplementing audio or written contributions, which supports the input and output of understanding and speaking a foreign language (Herron et al., 1995; Weyers, 1999).

In addition to the positivity that was observed among the students toward YouTube video clips, the findings show that 34 students (94.4%) agreed that social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs) can easily develop their communication and reading skills. Furthermore, 32 students (88.9%) used for chatting on social networking websites as a way to improve their writing skills. Shih (2011) showed that cooperative learning was enhanced by Facebook. Hence, EFL learning students could highly benefit from that as well. As stated by Bloch (2007), many college students gain critical knowledge and develop academic writing skills by using blogs. In addition, Alsaleem (2014) investigated how female Saudi undergraduate English students used WhatsApp applications in English dialogue journals improved their writing, vocabulary, word choice, and speech. According to her study, WhatsApp improved development in students' writing skills as well as speech, vocabulary, and word choice.

Furthermore, 94.4% of students in this study preferred the use of technology to enhance their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. Moreover, 80.5% of students believed that technology tools could be more effective in improving their language skills. In addition, 97.2% of students enjoyed using technology while learning the English language. Regarding the literature, there is agreement that technology plays a positive role in learning the English language. According to Chapelle (2003), technology is necessary to improve the language ability of students simultaneously inside and outside of the educational setting. Firm affirmations, such as Gordon's

(2007) study, are provided by various reports stating that several other improvements in the entire practice, especially in the content and approaches to teaching and learning, are stimulated by technology. Furthermore, the understanding level and open-mindedness of young learners can greatly increase (Gordon, 2007). Thus, there are various advantages associated with technology tools that enhance the learning process.

Normal type between each letter teaching methodologies to embrace more interactive and modern technological methodologies. Technologies are able to cater to both individual as well as group learning, thereby eliminating the concept of 'lazy back-benchers' who would invariably get left behind due to lack of attention in conventional classrooms. Since time and ease of access are not an issue, multimedia technologies offer a wider scope for all manner of learning, especially in English language facilitation programs.

Analysis of the results revealed that 86.1% of students viewed language software and apps as crucial tools in developing their creativity. All the techniques and apparatus used by the instructors are for assisting the learners in language learning process, so they are able to express their viewpoints for any specific topic related to daily lives or for purpose of enhancing their reading skills related to language. Language learning requires different skills set as compared to studies carried out in schools. Therefore, techniques used by instructors are often based on different models of conceptualization and preparation techniques. The focus of these learning classes is not to educate them, but rather to enable them to deal effectively in community issues, societal problems, and personal or employment related issues. Beside this, the learning needs of adults require that teaching styles should focus more on problems, concerns, and issues which relate to the learner's immediate needs (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997). This practical exposure through language learning classes is not possible unless the apparatus used in the learning classes supports the digital technology that is useful in disseminating information to a wider context.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study presents data showing the positive effect of digital technologies in enabling students to be more proficient in English language learning. The focus of the study was to find approaches to motivate students who face difficulties in mastering English as a foreign language and are sometimes unmotivated to learn. The results indicate that learning English as a foreign language via utilizing computer software, social networking websites, online video and audio tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, and MP3 players), and smartphone and tablet apps show an approval rate from students in improving students' language learning. The study reveals that students prefer using technology to enhance their speaking, reading,

writing, and listening skills, which is mainly because they view technology as a crucial tool in developing their creativity. Furthermore, it provides learners with different and exciting options to study the English language. In short, the use of technology in learning English as a foreign language can definitely have a positive impact on the students' mastery levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In light of the results of the current study, there are many recommendations for further research. Additional studies are required for a more thorough understanding of this particular topic for both genders. To obtain more accurate results, the research can be duplicated by using a larger group of learners over a longer period of time. Finally, the data in the current research was analyzed quantitatively by a questionnaire. The next study may possibly use additional methods to analyze the data.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Technology tools in learning English as a foreign language

Part A: Please answer the following questions:

1-Your Age:

- 1) 18-20
- 2) 21-25
- 3) 26-Above

2- Your present year level:

- 1) Freshman
- 2) Sophomore
- 3) Junior
- 4) Senior

Part B:

Q1: From the following items that you use to improve your English language, please indicate with a (√) which word indicates your answer.

| Usage | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| 1- Watching TV/Videos/Films | | | |
| 2- Listening to radio/broadcasts/lectures | | | |
| 3- Communicating with relatives/friends | | | |
| 4- Reading books/newspapers/stories | | | |
| 5- Searching for information on websites | | | |
| 6- Writing assignments/emails | | | |

Q2: How often do you use the following technologies for enhancing or improving your knowledge and skills in learning the English language?

| Technology | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|--|--------|-----------|-------|
| 1-Computer software for learning English (i.e., Duolingo: Learn Languages, Google Translate Desktop, and Longman Dictionary) | | | |
| 2- Social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs) | | | |
| 3-Online audio and video tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, MP3 players, and podcasts) | | | |
| 4- Smartphone or tablet apps (i.e., Learn English Grammar, Dictionary.com, Dictionaries, and thesauri) | | | |
| 5- Word processing (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) | | | |

Q3: How do you feel about using the technology tools for learning English?

| Attitudes of technology | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Undecided |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1- I enjoy using technology while learning the English Language. | | | | | |
| 2- I know that technology can help me improve my English language learning. | | | | | |
| 3- I improve my creativity by using English language software or apps. | | | | | |
| 4- I prefer using technology to enhance my speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. | | | | | |
| 5- I think watching online videos in the English language motivates me to learn more vocabulary. | | | | | |
| 6- I really like studying the English language using online learning websites. | | | | | |
| 7- I believe that multimedia (i.e., computers and YouTube) is an excellent technique to learn English. | | | | | |
| 8- I think using technology in mastering the English language is not necessary. | | | | | |
| 9- I believe that technology tools are more effective in improving my language skills. | | | | | |
| 10- I use chatting on social networking sites to improve my writing skills. | | | | | |
| 11- I think voice recorders help me improve my speaking skills. | | | | | |

Q4: Which of the following technologies are helpful for enhancing or improving your knowledge and skills in learning the English language?

| Technology | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Undecided |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1-Computer software for learning English is very helpful to improve my language skills. | | | | | |
| 2- Social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs) are very helpful to develop my communication, reading, and writing skills. | | | | | |
| 3-Online audio and video tools (i.e., YouTube, Skype, and MP3 players) are very helpful to enhance my speaking and listening skills. | | | | | |
| 4- Smartphone or tablet apps are very useful to develop my language skills. | | | | | |
| 5- Word processing (i.e., Google Docs and Microsoft Word) is very useful in developing my writing skills. | | | | | |