

Students' attitudes and motivation towards technology in a Turkish language classroom

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to investigate adult learners' approaches towards Turkish Language (TL) and examine learners' outlooks towards the use of digital technologies for learning. It will also evaluate the impact of the Language Lab's model on learners' language achievement. Language Lab model is a system that is used for learning languages by using technology. It comprises a teacher and student console. The role of the teacher console is to offer the control purposes while the student console is given the facility to obtain the lessons that have been recorded. They are also required to listen to the pronunciations. An example of the Language Lab is the digital language lab (Saxena, 2012). The research questions of the study were based on whether attitudes towards digital technologies varied based on different backgrounds (i.e linguistic, educational, etc). There was also an analysis of whether the implementation of Language Lab's model motivated the Turkish as a Second or Foreign Language (TSL/FL) learners of Adult Education Programs (AEP) to continue their studies. During this assessment procedure, it was identified that students used varied technological tools (Kahoot and Facebook) that motivated them to learn foreign languages in an efficient way. In conclusion, it can be affirmed that with the adoption and the execution of the above stated technological tools, the approaches of the students changed by a considerable degree in learning TL within the classroom setting. It is thus worth mentioning that the findings of this study can encourage the TL teachers to use technology in their classes in order to turn them into more autonomous, student-centered teachers using an effective language method in TL acquisition.

Keywords: Turkish language, attitudes, motivation, technology.

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1. Introduction

The goal of this research was to investigate learners' attitudes and motivation for learning Turkish, the second official language of the Republic of Cyprus, with the help of computer technology. This is further supposed to contribute to the existing research in this particular area. In addition, an attempt has been made to evaluate the impact of Language Lab's model on learners' language achievement. The study addressed the following research questions:

- Did the implementation of Language Lab's model motivate the TSL/FL learners of AEP to continue their studies?
- What was the impact of the model on learners' TSL/FLs' skills?

2. Method

2.1. Participants and settings

TL courses offered by the Language Center (LC) with the cooperation of the Centre for Life Long Learning, Assessment and Development (KEPEAA) were designed for three different classes. These comprised Turkish B2 language level (intensive courses, Jan-May 2015), Turkish B1 language level (Sept-May 2015) and Turkish A2 language level (intensive summer courses, May-July 2015) and were delivered at the University of Cyprus (UCY) LC's labs. The study group included 26 adult learners enrolled in UCY LC AEP.

2.2. Data collection instrument

A mixed method with the inclusion of a questionnaire along with semi-structured interviews was used for collecting relevant data to be analysed and then come up with the results. The survey was contracted at the LC within the first two weeks of August 2015.

2.2.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained biographical information about the participants including age, gender, educational background, workplace, acquired languages and language skills.

In the second section, the participants were asked to respond to ten close-ended questions on their individual perceptions. The answers were made up of a five Likert-type scaling instrument, which comprised 62 statements.

The statements had two forms that were graded as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree and another form to be Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often and Very Often. These questions were asked in order to clarify participants' approaches towards the TL, their learning strategies and evaluation of the effectiveness of technology in the language class (Koh, 2015).

2.2.2. Interview

The research questions of the Interview included one close-ended question and four open-ended questions. The maximum time spent for the interview was 35 minutes. The questions were:

- Why did you decide to learn Turkish? What were/are your motivations to learn this language?
- What kind of language strategies/techniques did/do you use to practice your Turkish?
- Could you please indicate how much time per week you've spent to study your Turkish?
- Which technological tools used in our class did/do you like most and why? Which of the four skills were improved more via technology?
- Which skills were improved less? Could you please give me an order from one to four with an explanation?

Their responses were accordingly recorded with an MP3 IC Recorder. To bridge the procedure of interview scheduling, two polls were conducted with the selected participants.

Three online interviews were conducted in the second week of August (10th-14th). Notably, five out of 16 interviews were conducted via Facebook, three via Skype, one via Hangouts, one via WhatsApp, five via Viber and one by phone. The analysis of the responses along with the discussion of participants' responses will be discussed in the next section of this study.

3. Discussion

According to the results obtained, it was found that a majority of the participants (i.e. 81% of the total population) fall in the category of 19 to 25 years of age. This response eventually revealed that the generation students that are exposed to wide and new levels of technology have started learning foreign languages for finding a good job. They have also begun to understand the role played by culture when communicating with people of other ethnicities.

The factor concerning gender did not make any significant distinction in the results, as the figure of the male participants was low. The participants usually appeared from a diverse background of studies, however, there had been a significant concentration observed (42%) to Turkish Studies and (15%) to Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and Law Studies.















The interview results showed that students usually preferred the use of computer technology in the class because with the integration of such technology, they managed to acquire better knowledge about Turkish grammar and syntax. These lessons proved very useful for them. Interestingly, students were positive on whether they learned Turkish lessons in technology-enhanced classrooms and especially, with the use of the Labs-model ([Station-E Language Lab, 2011](#)). In accordance, this particular model has been taken into consideration for discussion, as this leads towards developing the language learning procedure by various ways that entails saving much amounts of time and amplifying the participation level of the teachers and the learners in any classroom setting ([Saxena, 2012](#)). The positive effects on teaching were accordingly increasing the pace of lesson, enriching teaching and increased productivity ([Grinager, 2006](#)). Positive effects on learning thus mentioned certainly increased students' interests, along with longer attention spans, participation, understanding, performance, communication and interaction with enjoyable lessons ([Shyamlee, 2012](#)). Only few believed that the implementation of technology in class has not much effect on teaching and learning quality overall.

Regarding the effectiveness of the technological tools used in TL classes, the students stated that most of the tools used in the class were teaching aids. For instance, with the online game Kahoot, Facebook and listening materials consisting of the digital tool Vocarro, the students remained active and involved in their learning. Moreover, the Pbworks platform had an effective role in language learning. The Pbworks platform worked as a tool to develop new learning-styles and innovative methods in learning Turkish language. Students hence changed their traditional

learning style and thus, integrated the Pbworks platform, which is deemed as an interactive approach with positive effects on learners, as per the results obtained.

On the other hand, the questionnaire results showed that the WiZiQ platform did not contribute a lot to TL learning. WiZiQ is regarded as a virtual classroom software that enables the learners to establish a wider connection with one another by making better use of chat options and microphones, among others (Figure 1). Some students, through their interviews, explained that within the setting of a virtual classroom, they were quite anxious and not comfortable to talk in front of the camera. Nevertheless, face-to-face classes were observed as more confident to speak and remain active throughout the language learning session.

Figure 1. Effectiveness of digital technologies

###		Average rating	Ranking between technology tools
Facebook - Group page; synchronous discussions with instructor and with peers		4.6	3
PBworks platform especially created for this class; asynchronous discussions with instructor and with peers		4.5	4
Padlet - for announcement and for sharing wishes, photos etc		4.1	6
Online diary [embedded in PBworks platform - individual page for each student]		4.0	7
Power Point Presentations		4.9	1
Kahoot - In class language game		4.8	2
Quia - online games- outside class [embedded in our PBworks platform]		4.0	7
Learning Apps. Org online games- outside class [embedded in our PBworks platform]		4.1	6
WiZiQ tests - in class self-assessment language test		3.8	8
Google form-test - in class self-assessment language [embedded in PBworks platform]		4.3	5
Viber - Our Group- synchronous discussions with instructor and with peers		4.3	5
WiZiQ - online synchronous discussion website		4.0	7
Doodle - for making a poll [embedded in our PBworks platform]		3.3	9
Makes belief Comix online task activity - in class [then embedded in our PBworks platform]		4.0	7

4. Conclusions

With the conduct of a mixed research approach by performing questionnaire surveys as well as interviews, a detailed viewpoint of the students regarding their TL experience, knowledge of technologies being used in the classrooms and their motivation level was ascertained in this study. The results of the survey and the interviews thus showcased the fact that the implementation of technology in class has enormous effects on teaching and learning the Turkish language. Such effects can be determined in distinct ways that entail learning TL grammar and

syntax more quickly and communicating with others belonging to diverse cultural backgrounds in an efficient way. Thus, in conclusion, it can be inferred that the use and the integration of digital technologies, within the learning procedure, possesses the capability to improvise the learning procedures of the students and at the same time, motivate them to embrace those in making wider advancements in their future career.

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