

The Role of Technology in ELL Classes in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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Abstract

In today's English language classrooms, technology keeps important to support language learning. However, the present research focuses only on the tools, i.e., Smart Boards, tablets/laptops, and Moodle (online learning management system). Modern English language teachers utilize English Preparatory School, BS, and Master in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Moreover, the present qualitative and observational research examines the role of technology utilized at the English Preparatory School in Cyprus International University to teach English to the learners who learn English as a Second Language. For the present research, data are collected through two interviews from the teachers who teach at Cyprus International University (CIU) and from an in-depth literature review. Through the findings, the researchers observe that: a) all the teachers in TRNC utilize technology, i.e., Smart Boards, tablets, and Moodle; b) technology helps the English Language Learners (ELLs) to enhance their language skills; c) teachers and students who utilize technology in language learning process face technical challenges due to lack of knowledge or less familiarity with the technology. Hence, the present research would explore the pros and cons of technology and intend to know a teacher interested in teaching language through technology.

Keywords: Language & Technology, English as a Second Language, English Language Learners, English Language Teaching, Technology and Gadgets

Introduction

In Turkish society, the students speak Turkish at the school level, yet, to meet the global or contemporary, the local or international students often speak Turkish (the official language) or English. As a part of Turkey, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) also follows the

same pattern, hence, more deliberately than mainland Turkey. In all higher education intuitions of TRNC, English as a Second Language (ESL) is taught in English Language Learning (EEL) Preparatory Schools. The researchers observe that the first language of all students who come to TRNC is often other than English to pass the English language test or learn English in English.

Preparatory Schools. Although TRNC is not an English native country, the English Language Learners (ELLs) are often found in universities or institutions because higher education is fully engaged in English as their medium of instruction is English. So, all the institutions also keep English Preparatory Schools and classrooms fully equipped with contemporary technology, i.e., Smart Boards. Furthermore, as a contemporary moderate society, the Turkish/TRNS local and international students are also fully attached to a media-saturated environment and modern technology (Çiçek, 2019). Hence, in language classes of learning English, the teachers adopt modern technologies in various learning processes (Ahmadi, 2018). Henceforth, in contemporary language classes in Turkey, technology plays a significant role in increasing language learning abilities through proper integration (Çiçek, 2019).

Purpose of the study

The present study identifies the classroom setting of language learning and the needs of ELLs. Moreover, the present study explores the methods and techniques ESL teachers utilize in ESL classrooms and technology. Henceforth, the study encourages ESL teachers to induce technology, to achieve academic success, to whom they do not utilize technology in both language learning and standard classroom. Hence, the present study is conducted on students from English Preparatory School to Master. It explores how technology and contemporary gadgets can improve the methods and techniques in ESL classrooms and how ELLs would get benefited from the technology and teachers.

Research questions

- 1) What type of technology, tools, methods, or techniques do teachers utilize in ESL classrooms in TRNC?
- 2) What are the challenges are there in technology-equipped ESL language teaching in TRNC?.

Literature review

The English language keeps an important role in the activities of the international communication system. The teachers and students employ different language skills, such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing to communicate and proficiency (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Moreover, according to Ahmadi (2017), for teaching and learning a language, the important thing is a method that the instructors use in classes of learning languages for facilitating the process of English language learning. Becker (2000) argues that technology is a vital and signifying instrument for instructions in language learning in classes. It helps both learner and teachers, yet teachers would be proficient at using the technology during the teaching language. Teachers use the technologies with the prospect of providing the quality of education. Bull & Ma (2001) states that technology usage provides many types of resources to English language learners, especially in the classrooms. According to Harmer (2007), the teachers must keep knowledge of language teaching according to the modern methods, such as the use of technology, which enables them to increase their proficiency in language communications. Gençlter (2015) comments that the

teachers could emphasize and encourage the language learners to use appropriate ways to become successful language communicators using computer technologies. Moreover, according to Clements & Sarama (2003), the use of technology could be helpful for the teachers and the learners in language learning classrooms. Harmer (2007) argues that using technology-based English language teaching activities to improve cooperative language learning enables them to use language in communication very proficiently. The technology-based activities provide language learners with an accurate and appropriate way of language learning in the language classroom. According to Gençter (2015), computer activities help language learners get rapid information and authentic material. While the continuity of internet usage motivates the learner to learn more and more. According to Freeman & Anderson (2011), technology makes it easy to teach and provides appropriate teaching resources to the teachers, which brings language learning experiences to the world of learners. The technology could provide authentic information to the learners (ibid). They could also be motivated while learning the English language in the classroom of language teaching. Hence, technology keeps an important role in teaching as well as a learning environment in the classroom. Technology has an essential part for the profession of teachers through that they could use it for facilitating the learners in the matters of English language learning as a second language. Whenever we think about technology-based teaching & learning, we usually use the term “integration.” Such as technology is part of our daily routine lives, we might rethink integrating the technology during the curriculum. The study aims to entrench technology in teaching for supporting the learners in the learning process. Further, according to Eady and Lockyer (2013), technology is used as an important and integral part of teaching and learning experiences; it keeps significant issues for the teachers, from beginning to end of teaching & learning processes. According to Solanki and Shyamlee (2012), the methods of teaching language has been changed due to the advancement of the technology and teacher must have appropriate knowledge of technology with the perspective of language teachings. Moreover, Pourhossein Gilakjani (2017) also supported that language teaching and learning methods are changed because of advancements in technology. However, the researcher continues those applications of the technology help the learners to learn on interest based. It helps the learner in both auditory & visual senses. Further, Lam & Lawrence (2002) argued that technology helps select teaching and learning according to the learners’ subject matter. Otherwise, technology has extensive data about the learning language. According to Pourhossein Gilakjani (2017), technology backs learners in adjusting their learning process, yet, they could have access to lots of the information, which the teachers cannot provide. Pourhossein Gilakjani et al. (2013) comments that the use of technology keeps great potential for changing the old and contemporary methods of language teaching in the classroom and out of the class. According to Pourhossein Gilakjani (2014), with technology, the language learner could control the learning language process to access various information, which the teachers control. According to Solanki & Shyamlee (2012), technology plays an important in promoting the activities of the language learners, which has significant effects upon the teachers’ method of teachings. If the teachers do not know technology usage, they will not continue teaching with the technology, especially teaching activities. Thus, computer technology has very important to the teachers, and they must know using it. According to Pourhossein Gilakjani (2017), the advancement of technology provides equal opportunities to the students without regarding their background knowledge. It helps them, especially in the teaching activities rose communication skills in the English language. Although the learners are born in a technological world, they might not use technology with skillful manners (Bennett et al., 2008). In addition, it is not adequate to just providing access to technology. Hence, we need the

meaningful developments of the knowledge of technology-based, which keeps a significant role for the learners and teachers to increase the learners' learning level (OECD, 2010). Hence, the paper depicts the review of some significant issues, which are pertinence by some scholars in their work about the technology's use in learning of English language as a second language. For instance, the issues of the following, firstly, the usage of the technology in language learning, especially in the classroom, the definition of technology, then previously studies about using technology for improving the language learning process, and the recommendations of the using of technologies. Moreover, technology Integration is defined by many researchers, which is discussed below. İşman (2012) describes the practical use of knowledge in the specific area of education and how to perform the task, especially technical methods or processes and knowledge. Moreover, the use of the technology includes machines and instruments and its structured relation with the humans, environment, and other machines (İşman, 2012). Hennessy et al. (2005) claim that technology provides an easy way of learning the language, especially the second language such as it connected the people of different areas very rapidly.

Research method

Procedures

The study adopts the qualitative methodology for tackling the data analysis, such as, the main objectives of the study were to pertain a deep understanding of the strategies and methods which was used to help the ELLs and explored technological tools, which were available to support the teachers, especially during the deliverance of their lectures. Moreover, Qualitative study uses the fundamental approach that seeks out the phenomena to understand the context-specific setting (Hoepfl, 1997). Furthermore, the qualitative method could realize the very phenomenon bitterly (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). The study involves reviewing literature about using technology in ELLs, especially in the classes. The researchers used different tools of technology, for instance, tablets, computers, and Smart Boards,) for improving the educational methods. The study collected the information from various sources, primarily from the research journals and articles on databases, e.g., ERIC, Summon, and CRCA. In addition, the study considers information from the newspapers and helps the researchers getting better insight into the present research.

After the literature review was completed, we followed this up by interviewing two practicing ESL teachers. The two interviews were conducted face to face in the English Preparatory School of CIU in December 2019. Moreover, the interviews help the researchers to understand the approaches of these teachers in the teaching of ELLs. The researchers can recognize these teachers using the technology during the teaching ELLs to help the students understand the accurate and quick knowledge concerning the subject matter. However, the researchers proceeded with in-depth analysis through the transcript of the interview.

Instruments of data collection

The study approaches *General Interviews for data collection* (Turner, 2010), which intends to certify that the data is collected from the interviewee's same information area. It focuses on conversations such as using pre-fixed questions, while it allows freedom when the researchers take interviews of persons by using unrehearsed follow-up questions. The ending phenomenon keeps essential, such as it gives flexibility to the researchers during the taking interviews.

The goal of the present research was to take interviews from the experienced teachers, who kept some experience to use the technology in a classroom, especially in the language learning classrooms and some teachers used technological elements. At the same time, the students pulled out from regular classes for one-on-one teachings. Hence, this phenomenon allowed the researchers to modify the questions of the study or add more questions to get a better result of understanding the experience of interviewees.

Participants

There were two Turkish Cypriots participants (assigned pseudonyms) in this study from CIU and GAU. Our first participant, Ebru (pseudonym) currently teaching ESL in CIU. Our second participant, Zeynep (pseudonym), is currently teaching ESL at GAU.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study is the sample size. The researchers interviewed only two teachers working with ELLs and ELLs from classes by one-on-one instruction, yet this phenomenon is the minimal sample size.

The time was another major factor of limitation, such as the study had completed the research within three months, which is a short time.

Analysis and findings

The Analyzing of data is the ongoing process, which begins suddenly after collecting it. After collecting data, each time, we should review it, such as what phenomenon effect it (Falk & Blumenreich, 2005). Moreover, the analysis of data is done qualitatively. The researchers, firstly, transcribed the data of each of the interviews in a faster way. After the reread of both interviews, the researchers wrote all the information of both interviews. While, the report, which is collected from the interviews, has been divided into three columns. The first columns followed the questions of the interviews, and in the next two, the researchers wrote answers of both participants of the present research. However, extensive reading is done to all the data which is collected through the medium of interviews. The study has highlighted the information, which provided the answers to the research questions too. Such as, the study marked the relevant comment on the transcript, we also took note of statements, which the participants make. Once the researchers completed it, then it is categorized with each statement.

The section of qualitative research begins with the explanation of both participants, their names, and their institution's name will be changed, if the would-be published, for ensuring the confidentiality of the participants. In the following chapter, the study analyzed the interviews of both participants, especially their use of technology in ELLs in the classes. The study has emerged five themes from the analysis of the data.

The study has selected two participants for collecting the data for this research. Hence both the participants are professionals, especially in English language teaching, and they have at least five years of technology use. The study selected the participants; researchers asked some associate professors, his colleagues, to have met with teachers who have at least five years of experience using the technology in ELLs classes.

Ebru (pseudonym) works as an ELLs teacher in Turkish Cyprus, where the Turkish language is used as a first language. She is an ESL teacher and has five years of teaching experience as well. She is Passionate about use technology in ELLs class; Ebru has said that she used technology during the teaching of Ells as a tool in the classroom which helped her students acquire all language communication skills.

The second participant, Zeynep (pseudonym), was recommended to me by one of our professors who has known her for many years. Zeynep is a current teacher at GAU. A teacher with seven years of experience, Zeynep has taught ESL to different grades ranging from Preparatory School Students to Master. In addition, she is currently the technology expert in the school and supports the technology learning of other staff members.

After analyzing participants' statements, the researchers find the four themes, which are the following.

- 1) The study explores the varieties of teaching methods that support English language teaching as first language acquisition and second language acquisition, primarily through technology, for example, computers, Smart Boards, or tablets.
- 2) Secondly, the use of technology during learning ELLs in the classroom increases learners' language skills and makes them independent in language learning.
- 3) Thirdly, the Students and teachers meet with some challenges during technology usage in language learning classes, such as they are not experts in using the technology in their educational systems.

Discussion

Both participants argued that a teacher must perform technology-based activities according to the needs of the students, yet the students often do not know about the activities performed through the utilization. For instance, the results of technology-based teaching often rely on the usage of the technology. For example, according to Gilakjani (2017), technology integration could be defined as how the teacher uses it to perform the activities effectively, yet, how that usage could be reshaped according to the needs of the learners. According to Dockstader (2008), we could define the term 'technology integration' as technology usage in the educational environment for improving it. Moreover, technology supports teaching by creating new opportunities for the teachers and learners to complete their assignments on laptops, computers, and tabs, rather than the regular use of pencil and paper. English Language Class could also benefit from technology, which is always an effective tool in learning for the learners. We must create awareness of the use of technology in the classroom and make it a significant part of learners' learning process. However, teachers could be a model to use the technology for supporting curriculum. The learner could increase usage of the technology in their learnings which improves their language communication skills (Costley, 2014). According to Murphy et al. (2003), the cooperation of the Learners could be increased with the use of technology. Hence, Cooperation among the students and teacher is an essential tool for the English language learning process. According to Keser et al. (2011), the Learners work in cooperation for creation and innovation.

Moreover, Bennett et al. (2000) state that technology usage becomes the reason for improving the teachers' teaching competency and learners' learning ability in the classroom. Further, Bransford et al. (2000) comment that applications of the technology enable the learners

to make their global and local societies connected to them with people that increases opportunities for learning the language more proficiently. However, the positive effects of computers do not come suddenly or automatically. Hence, it depends on the teachers that they use it during the learning language in the classes. Susikaran (2013) has commented that the changes come in the language class through the teaching methodology. For instance, the 'chalk and talk' teaching method concedes insufficient to teach the English language effectively. According to Raihan and Lock (2010), in the well-planned setting in the classes, learners learn how to learn it efficiently. Technology has enhanced the teaching environment in the classroom more effectively than lecture-based classes. While the teachers could not use the technology more effectively than the IT expert, they should find some practical methods of teaching language by applying the technology. However, they could not be learned technology like the computer experts. Patel (2013) argues that technology provides some alternatives for making teaching enjoyable and productive. In the traditional classes, the teacher stands in front of language learners for giving the lecture, instructions, and explanation by using a whiteboard. According to Arifa (2014), teaching methods are also changed in the modern world according to the changes or advancements in technology. The usage of technology makes learners familiar with the language's structure and vocabulary. For instance, in the past, people used the dictionary for searching the meanings of some words, but now they can easily search for it with a one-touch computer. While using technology, the teachers could teach effortlessly and make the teaching method interesting for the learners who build interest in learning the language. According to Dawson et al. (2008), language is the only medium for communication, and the English language has the status of international language as well. To get English language proficiency, we have to use modern technologies during the teaching of language. According to Pourhosein Gilakjani (2014), technology could create a learning environment centered on learners except for the teachers that makes a positive change in the language learning system. According to Drayton et al. (2010), using computer-based technology designates authentic learning experiences that augment the learners' responsibilities.

Conclusion

However, some researchers previously Studied Technology for Improving Language Learning Skills, while Some studies are done for the advantage of the technology using in the language learning process. According to Hennessy (2005), ICT is a catalyst to motivate the learners to work in a new way. Moreover, the researchers try to clear that learner become independent, and teachers think that the students could be supported by their acts and think independently. According to Lee (2001), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) applications increase the level of learning the learners' language and boost the self-confidence of the researchers. However, ICTs have benefits to learning and teaching too. First, the learner plays a vital role, which could help retain the information. According to Costley (2014), technology makes it easy to teach and learn the language. According to Tutkun (2011), technology changes the method of the teachers teaching the language. The modern world uses technology in every field of life. For competing in the modern world, we need to use technology to increase the level and speed of language learning during language teaching. According to Gillespie (2006), technology usage increases learners' proficiency in the language learning class. There are two views about integrating technology in the classroom; computer-based communications are helpful for language learning (Eaton, 2010) and authentic material could be gathered through technology from the internet, which helps the language learning students in which technology allows teachers teach

materials during fast access. Hence, the role of technology in teaching English as a second language is vital (Baytak et al., 2011).

Declaration of conflicting interest

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