

Iranian EFL Learners' Attitudes toward Learning English through Computer and Technology in EFL Classes

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Abstract

The students learning English as a foreign language sometimes enjoy computer systems in their classes to do some class activities and tasks. The learners' attitudes toward enjoying computer systems can help the teachers to be aware that computers in EFL classrooms are necessary. The aim of the present study is to investigate the EFL learners' attitude toward learning English through computer systems in EFL classes. A hundred learners who learn English in Iranian EFL classes participated in this study. A questionnaire was adopted from a study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010). The data gathered in this study were analyzed through the related statistics and software and it is presented in percentage. The results showed that most of the learners who participated in this study had a positive attitude toward computer systems in EFL classes to learn English. It can also be said that using computer in EFL classes have beneficial and useful effects in learning by EFL learners and their learning can be improved via computers.

Keywords: *computer systems, EFL learner, attitude*

Introduction

The information abilities of the modern tools and media such as computer can be a reasonable and reliable source to learn English in EFL classes. The new and up to date devices can be enjoyed to learn English in all matters and subjects of this language in Iranian EFL classes. The notes and points can be included from the fundamental and

basic levels until the advanced levels from kindergarten to PhD level. Usage of computer systems in classes is getting more popular in recent years as the world sees a huge evolution in technology (Alkaraki & Awad, 2013).

It is believed that the human being live in an area of expanding the technology and also information and the possible influences and different effects the positive and negative of that on learning and teaching are commonly unavoidable (Nguyen, 2008). It is also said that usage of information technology and its related tools such as computer systems gets more essential in current times because the instructors have to be keep up with information of their learners (Merç, 2015); therefore, technology relating to education has added to learning-teaching (Liton, 2015).

Further, it is claimed that in various colleges in different parts of the world, technology related to the computers has effects on the success rate for learners (Meziane & Sari-Mitchel, 2014). It is repeatedly stated by the experts that technology like computer can be a reliable source to gather the knowledge toward English learning as a foreign language. Knowing the functions and roles of technology like computer in improving the learning among Iranian EFL learners can be an important and positive side of learning. The mentioned technology can be also used in all skills, both main and sub skills, to improve the related knowledge toward learning English as a foreign language. It is claimed that using information and computer technologies in EFL contexts can be beneficial to learners (Alsied & Pathan, 2013).

Different students and learners who enjoy English as a foreign language may use computer systems to learn English points and also to do different activities related to their subject and content and also know the nature of different skills. The learners' attitudes toward the computer systems may be helpful for different teachers and instructors to know the learners' ideas on the usefulness of the computer systems. It is believed that technology can be enjoyed in different universities in the world to enhance the results of success among the learners (Meziane & Sari-Mitchel, 2014). It is claimed that projects related to the efficiency of technology and computer in teaching English have increased (Baniabdelrahman & Bataineh, 2006), and research related to technologies in education has been focused on the problems which deals with their efficiency in language and language learning (Meihami, Meihami & Varmaghani, 2013).

The present study investigates the EFL learners' attitudes toward enjoying computer systems in EFL classes. Learners' attitudes toward enjoying computer systems also can help the managers of the institutes to use computer systems in EFL classes because teaching and learning English through computer systems is a new way of delivering points and most of the institutes try to have a computer systems in their classes and have more learners causing learners and students interest in learning English.

Literature Review

Role of Computer Systems in EFL classes

In most cases, whenever somebody states the role of technology in EFL classes, the first thought refers to the role of computer in EFL classes, where the listeners and the readers' ideas and minds are engaged with computer functions. Actually, computer technology is the most famous device and instrument in information technology and learning.

It is held that enjoying computer systems in schools have developed recently in different parts of the world and it can be enjoyed easily without any difficulty. The computer system can have different applications in its own domain such as linking to net to search information and data related to learning, different kinds of training software to improve the learning points in English, transferring the comments and ideas with the peers through email and a lot of other equipment related to computer systems. It is also stipulated that some tools like videoconferencing can be employed to teach EFL points (Marek, Yen & Wu, 2011). It is also mentioned that students can enjoy different systems of the computer in their classes at different time and it can be feasible for different generations like the young to understand the points and also related notes in English classes (Ebrahimi, Marzban & Mohsenzadeh, 2014).

It is claimed that fast growing development of technology related to the computer along with enjoying computer systems by teaching scholars and linguists and developing importance of learning through computer and related topics has affected both learning and teaching recently (Fang, 2010). Moreover, it is said that we require computer technology in each class and also each learner and instructors' situation because it is a kind of device that it is considered around the world to help the learning and teaching

English. (Campos and Lynch, 2014). It is believed that information and computer technology has a vast point in both sources such as a medium to form the disseminating output improving the way of speaking, providing chances to have others' feedback and also comprehensible input materials and points (Al – Maini, 2011).

It is also claimed that with modern technology, the tendency toward enjoying computer systems in education has also increased and it has affected the way of learning EFL points in EFL classes. It is believed that the computer and also information technology was introduced in language laboratories to improve the learners' skills like listening for the first time. It is also claimed that PC i.e. personal computer, appeared as a vital source of language learning and teaching in 1990s (Khoii & Aghabeig, 2009). It is claimed that the use of technology related to computer in EFL context all the time have been the main subject of debate and discussion for a long time (Alsied & Pathan, 2013).

The world surrounding us sees technology and information happening daily in the field of communication and information (Al-Maini, 2011); therefore, the considered information can be enjoyed in classes like EFL may have a positive side to learn the points and notes by the learners. It is stated that fast growing development in technology related to the information have influenced teaching (Ghoreyshi & Khany, 2013). Computer systems can enhance the learning and teaching. It is claimed that teachers who teach English as a foreign language enjoy different kinds of the technical tools instead of old tools like black boards, chalks and so on in the past twenty years or so (Khoii & Aqhabeig, 2009).

Through studying different studies related to the role of computer and technology system such as computer software and the improvement of the elementary EFL students' listening comprehension done by Khoii and Aghabeig titled *The Impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning on Iranian EFL Learners' Task-Based Listening Skill and Motivation* done by Ahangari & Ghalami Nobar (2012), it was found that the modern world of the teaching requires these systems to enhance the learning and also teaching in EFL classes in developing countries like Iran. Learning without technology, Internet and different media related to digital factors is meaningless (Ahangari & Ghalami Nobar, 2012).

Research Questions

1. What are Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward enjoying technologies and computer systems in EFL classes?
2. Are the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward enjoying technology and computer systems the same or different?

Methodology

Participants

A hundred learners learning English as a foreign language were selected at different English schools and institutes in Sari in the north of Iran with the age range of 15 to 40 years. They registered their names in communication classes to improve their abilities in communicating the foreign language i.e. English. Their native language was Persian. They were university and school students.

Instrumentation

To collect research data, the researchers adopted a questionnaire from a study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010). The questionnaire had 19 items and statements related to the computer and technology systems in EFL classes and the responses were arranged based on the Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Before doing the research, the questionnaire was distributed among some learners to consider the reliability of the questionnaire and it was determined to be .74.

Procedure

Before stating the attitudes toward the topic of the research by the EFL learners, a pilot study was done to consider the validity of the research instrument. The learners who participated in the study were asked to read the items of the questionnaire carefully and expressed their attitudes frankly.

Data Analysis

To obtain the aim of the study, related statistics was done to calculate the percentage of the attitudes of the learners for each item. The percentage obtained by the researcher showed the frequency of the participants' attitudes toward the items of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Distribution of the Percentage of Each Item toward the Questionnaire

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	60	28	10	22	0
2	64	12	16	6	2
3	40	30	16	8	6
4	30	40	20	8	2
5	26	44	14	12	4
6	56	36	6	2	0
7	40	30	20	8	2
8	30	40	18	6	6
9	20	30	20	16	14
10	30	48	12	6	4
11	40	44	10	6	0
12	30	34	20	10	6
13	0	4	20	40	36
14	10	10	5	50	25
15	10	8	10	30	42
16	36	36	6	8	20
17	45	30	4	5	16
18	30	20	30	12	8
19	20	15	10	20	35

Results and Discussion

In order to answer the two research questions of the present study, the students learning English as a foreign language stated their attitudes toward enjoying computer systems in EFL classes. By analyzing the gathered data, it was found that the learners' attitudes toward enjoying computer systems in EFL classes are not the same although the learners had the same opinions and views toward the topic of the study. The gathered data is based on the attitudes of the learners who participated in the study and their attitudes were showed in the above table. The ages of the learners participated in the study are not clear because the learners didn't mention their age to the researchers and it was only possible to calculate the percentage of the learners who strongly agreed, agreed, not sure, disagreed and strongly disagreed. Studying the results showed that some learners agree with some points while others disagree. The gathered data based on the questionnaire are as follows:

More than half of the learners who enjoy English as a foreign language like to enjoy computer systems and tools in their classes. In their opinions computer systems can

be enjoyed in EFL classes to improve their learning. The interesting point regarding item one to mention is that no one disagree with enjoying computer systems in their class and it shows the importance of the computer systems and tools in classes and it is better to consider its importance in the classes; however, in the study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010), 43.3 percent of the learners strongly agreed and 56.7 percent of the learners agreed with the first item and no one disagreed or strongly disagreed and had no idea.

Item two in the questionnaire deals with the usefulness of the computer systems in EFL classes because sometimes enjoying computer systems in EFL classes can be useful to assist both learners and teachers to meet the teachers and also learners need toward English as a foreign language. More than half of the participants participated in the study i.e. 64% of the learners believe in usefulness of the computer systems in EFL classes and selected and this high percentage show the usefulness of the computer system and tools in EFL classes. Twelve percent of the learners agreed with the item. Less than ten percent of the learners participated in the study strongly disagreed or disagreed with the item whereas in the study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010), 13.3 percent of the learners strongly agreed with the item and others agreed with the second item. Like the first item no one disagreed or strongly disagreed or had no idea. Usefulness of the computer systems in EFL classes can be seen and understood by considering the data of the second item. The learners' ideas and attitudes clarify the importance of the computer systems in EFL classes and show that the prominent place of computer systems in EFL classes to help the teachers and learners to teach and learn.

Interesting in doing different activities may help different genders to do their work better and also motivate them to enjoy them to meet their needs. Interesting in working with computer and computer systems also help the learners to use it well and provide more opportunities to enjoy EFL points. Item three deals with interesting in doing work with computer systems; again more than half of the learners interested in enjoying computer systems in their classes and it shows that interest among the learners to enjoy computer systems in EFL classes is a lot and most of the learners would like to enjoy computer systems in their EFL classes. Sixteen percent of the learners who

participated in the study were not sure of their idea, eight percent of the learners disagreed with the item and do not believe in their interest to do their activities and did not consider it as an important factor or reason to do their job and 6 percent of the learners did not strongly disagree with the item and they claimed that interest is not an essential fact to enjoy desirable act or task while in a study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) hundred percent of the learners agreed or strongly agreed with the third item.

Each activity to do should have enjoyment to do better, because each person should enjoy doing the activity in the first step and if he does not enjoy it, he may not be able to finish the activity as he like. Working with computer systems should be with enjoyment and if the learners do not enjoy doing it, they may not succeed. In response to item four most of the learners stated that they enjoy using computer systems and seventy percent of the learners stated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the item. Twenty percent of the learners did not have any comment toward the item and they did not know exactly whether if they enjoy computer systems and other learners disagreed or strongly disagree with item four meaning that they do not enjoy working with computer systems while sixty percent of the learners took part in Abdul Razak and Eswaran's (2010) study strongly agreed and forty percent agreed with the item.

If doing activities is exciting, the person will be eager to continue the work. If working with computers is exciting for the server, the server would like to carry on working with it. EFL learning may be exciting by enjoying computer systems and the points are accepted easily. Forty four percent of the learners agreed with working with computer systems because they think that working with computer is exciting. The highest percentage regarding to the fifth item traces in choice two means agree and most of the learners agreed with computer systems in EFL classes because of its exciting side of the computer systems in the classes. Twenty percent of the learners who participated in the paper strongly agreed with the fifth item showing that these numbers of the learners would like to utilize computer systems in their classes because they believe that working with computer systems are exciting and it creates enjoyable time to them and they may feel enjoyed through enjoying computer systems. Sometimes enjoying computer systems do not have a positive side for the learners and they are not satisfied with the computer

systems. Studying the results of the paper show that fourteen percent of the learners had no idea and they were not sure of the excitement of the computer systems regarding knowing and understanding the English points. Sixteen percent of the learners do not feel excited through enjoying computer systems in their studying whereas in a study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) all the learners agreed or strongly agreed with the fifth item.

To be effective is one of the most important factors to consider doing an activity because the activity should have some possible effect on the person and convince him of continuing the activity. The highest percentage of the questionnaire toward item six shows that computer systems can be effective in learning and teaching the EFL points and most of the learners who took part in the present study, 92% strongly agreed or agreed with item six. High percentage shows that the learners had a positive look toward item six and they believed in effective aspect of the computer systems in EFL classes. Six percent of the learners had no idea and they were not sure regarding the sixth item and only two percent of the learners disagreed or strongly disagreed with the sixth item. Low percentage of the sixth item toward disagreement or strongly disagreement shows that computer systems are really effective and these systems can influence on learners' learning and inputs while in a study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) a hundred percent of the learners strongly agreed or agreed with the item.

When a learner wants to answer the questions in the classroom, the questions should be related to the subject of the text book or topic of the class; because being familiar with the questions helps the learners to find the best answer and solution regarding the questions asked by the teacher. Sometimes some tools can be enjoyed to respond the questions and also do the exercises in the classes. One of these tools which can be enjoyed is computer system. Again more than half of the learners, seventy percent, expressing their attitudes in the present study stated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the computer systems to assist and help them to answer the questions in the classes and they can find the best response through using computer systems in EFL classes. Twenty percent of the learners were not certain regarding the item seven and they might not know the possible functions of the computer systems in the classes to improve the

way of learning. Eight percent and two percent of the students did not agree and strongly disagree with the seventh item respectively while in a paper by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) fifty percent agreed and 50% strongly agreed with the present item and no body disagreed or strongly disagreed. Most of the learners who stated their attitudes toward the seventh item had a look that computer systems can be enjoyed to comprehend the asked questions and answer them.

Thirty percent of the learners strongly agreed with enjoying computer systems in EFL classes because these instruments can be used to provide different kinds of the exercises and drills in the classroom to transfer the points better. Forty percent of the learners agreed with the item and they also believe in enjoying computer systems to create variety of the exercises to enhance the points. Eighty percent of the learners were not sure of enjoying computer systems to have more exercises and others did not agree or strongly agree with the function of the computer systems in creating the variety and various kinds of exercises in EFL classes while in a research study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) 76.7 percent of the students strongly agreed and others disagreed with the item.

The ninth item of the questionnaire is similar to the eighth item in one aspect in creating different kinds of exercises through enjoying computer systems in EFL classes. Results show that half of the learners strongly agreed or agreed with the ninth item and stated that the computer systems can be used as a good tool to create a lot of exercises in the classes and help the learners to learn EFL points. Among the learners participated in the present paper twenty percent of them were not sure of the role of the computer to create a huge number of the exercises in the EFL classes and thirty percent of the students did not agree or strongly agreed with the item and they do not consider computer systems to create exercises related to the EFL points; however, 3.3 percent strongly agreed, 76.7 agreed and 20 percent of the students disagreed with item ten.

It is necessary to have a feedback in response to each sentence and idea from the learners to encourage them to participate in class discussions. Sometimes feedback helps the learners to know their place in the class and believe in class environment. The tenth item of the questionnaire related to the role of the computer systems to provide the feedback to do the exercises or answer the questions. Feedback can have a positive side

in EFL classes and help the learners to know their rank and also their situations. The high percentage, 78%, of the present item shows that most of the learners agree with the item and they believe in feedback in EFL classes and creating feedback through the computer systems. The other percentages on 'not sure', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' are 12, 6 and 4 % respectively; although in a paper done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) the percentage of strongly agreed and agreed are 80% and 20% respectively.

Providing and mixing the colors in different subject matter manuals and aids is always a motivating factor to persuade the learners to enjoy the points. Computer systems can be as a source to motivate the learners to enjoy learning and studying. The gathered attitudes show that no one strongly disagreed with the item whereas the highest number of the learners strongly agreed or agreed with the item. Ten percent of the learners had no idea on the use of computer systems because of its color, graphic and animation and also possible aids to learn the points and notes. Only six percent of the participants disagreed with the item and they do not believe in computer colors and animation in learning the points related to EFL points whereas in a research study carried out by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) 16.7 percent strongly agreed and other learners agreed with the item.

Most of the learners who participate in EFL classes would like to gain the possible knowledge on the EFL points and be familiar with the notes; therefore, they may enjoy different tools to know the points in English. Computer system can be defined as one of the newest tool to gain the knowledge regarding the subject matter taught in EFL classes. Computer system is enjoyed in EFL classes now more than in the past decades. 64 percent of the learners, more than half of the learners, strongly agreed or agreed with the twelfth item of the questionnaire. All students were not certain that they can gain knowledge through the computer systems in the classes; therefore, 20 percent of the learners who studied the items of the questionnaire had no idea on the use of computer systems in EFL classes to gain the knowledge. The percentages of the learners who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the function of the computer systems to have knowledge are ten and six percent respectively while in the study done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) all the learners strongly disagreed with the item.

If somebody hates doing some activities, he may have possible problems to continue his task to finish the task. The man should be enjoyed with his task in the first step in order to succeed in the other steps. Working with computer system needs eagerness and also knowledge. If a person is not interested in working with computer system, he may have a problem or a lot of difficulties may be brought in while working with the system. The thirteenth item of the questionnaire deals with the degree of loving to work with computer systems. Only four percent of the learners strongly agreed or agreed with the item showing that most of the learners love to enjoy computer systems to enhance learning of points in EFL classes. Seventy six percent of the learners did not disagree or strongly disagree with the item and this high percentage justify the above claims that most of the learners are satisfied with enjoying computer systems in EFL classes; but in the paper done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) 100% learners strongly disagreed with the item.

Knowing computer system functions helps to enjoy different tasks in learning English as a foreign language. If the way of learning is known, the time to enjoy it will not be wasted and the time will be managed. Time is very important to all men who live in the world because everything can be achieved and gained again except time. Just twenty percent of the learners believed that working with computer system is wasting time. Seventy five percent of the learners presented in the paper did not agree or strongly disagree with the item and believed that working with computer system is not wasting time and it can be enjoyed to have knowledge toward EFL points while in the research conducted by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) all the participants strongly disagreed.

To know the points of the subject matters need to comprehend and understand them first. Enjoying different related tools can be a good factor to enjoy the points better. One of these tools can be computer system to improve the understanding of EFL points. Seventy two percent of the learners disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item fifteen and others had other ideas.

To be agreed or strongly agree with the sixteenth item has the same percentage meaning that thirty six percent of the learners agreed or strongly agreed with the item. Six percent of the learners had no idea of enjoying computer system to help them to learn the EFL points in the best way. Twenty eight percent of the learners disagreed or strongly

disagreed with the sixteenth item and they do not believe in computer system as a tool to understand the content of the subject matter in the best way. They may enjoy other tools to enhance the way of learning while in a paper done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) all the students agreed or strongly agreed with the item.

Enjoying old tools and aids to learn EFL points sometimes is time consuming and interesting for the present world learners. Enjoying black boards, chalk etc. in EFL classes may mislead the learners in understanding the points or may cause to learn points very slowly. Enjoying modern and new tools can be as one of the most important necessities in EFL classes to persuade the learners to gain more knowledge and points toward EFL points. Item seventeen of the questionnaire deals with enjoying computer system instead of old tools and aids such as whiteboards and marker etc. and seventy five percent of the learners agreed or strongly agreed regarding the item and claimed that they prefer to learn English through computer systems and believed that computer systems can be considered as one of the modern tools in EFL classes. Only four percent of the participants did not have any idea about the item. Twenty one percent of other learners prefer to enjoy other aids instead of computer system in EFL classes to learn English as a foreign language whereas in the research done by Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) 100% strongly agreed with the item.

Item eighteen of the questionnaire deals with the degree of the quality of the computer systems to improve learning English by EFL learners in Iran. The results show that half of the learners certainly agreed or strongly agreed with the computer systems because they believe that computer systems definitely improve their English learning and they can enjoy the systems to learn English. Thirty percent of the learners were not definitely sure of the function or the role of computer systems in improving their learning in EFL classes. Twenty percent of the learners believed that computer systems cannot be enjoyed alone to improve the learning and other aids should also be used in EFL classes, but in Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010), 3.3 percent of the learners strongly agreed and 96.7 percent of the students who took part in the study agreed.

The last item of the questionnaire deals with the fact that computer systems cannot be considered the only aid and tool to learn English well; therefore, twenty

percent of the learners strongly agreed with the item, fifteen percent of the participants agreed with the item, ten percent of the students had no especial ideas about the last item and more than half of other learners, fifty five, percent of the pupils disagreed or strongly disagreed with item nineteen while in the paper of Abdul Razak and Eswaran (2010) all the students strongly disagreed with the item.

Conclusion & Pedagogical Implications

Studying and analyzing the results of the present study show that most of the learners who participated in this study had positive attitude toward computer systems and this new tool can be enjoyed in most of the EFL classes to enhance the method of learning. It is also manifested that computer systems are going to be enjoyed instead of the old tools and aids such as white boards, markers and lots of other aids because the learners believe in computer systems as a new tool to clarify, comprehend, and also increase the amount of the input; therefore, computer systems can be used to encourage the learners to enjoy the subject matters and content of their courses in the best way.

Learners are considered as one of the most important and necessary member of each EFL classes and teaching is meaningless without them. Knowing the learners' ideas and attitudes toward enjoying aids and tools help most of the researchers and experts and also the instructors to determine the suitable method and also design to manage and handle the classes. Enjoying the suitable and modern tools such as computer systems can be as one of the safe devices to learn English as a foreign language and especially vocabulary learning.

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