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RESEARCH PAPER

Effects of Using Online Instructional Method of Teaching English to Undergraduate Students during COVID-19 Period

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT							
Received:	During Pandemic period, online learning wave observed among							
February 28, 2022	undergraduate EFL students. Both students and teachers experienced							
Accepted:	its usefulness in learning and teaching English. The current study is							
April 10, 2022	aimed to explore the role of Google-meet class available on computers							
Online:	to improve under undergraduate EFL students of English. Quantitative							
April 15 , 2022	and qualitative research methods were used in this study. Data were							
Keywords:	collected through questionnaire that had close-ended and open-ended							
Computer,	questions. Questionnaires were distributed among 300 undergraduate							
Education,	level EFL students studying at University of South Asia of Punjab,							
Google-Meet, Online Learning,	Pakistan. Data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social							
Technology	Sciences (version 28) to find out results in the form of Percentage, Mean							
*Corresponding								
Author	Score, SD (standard deviation) by conducting the Independent Sample							
nuuloi	t-test. The results of the study revealed the potential of computer and							
	mobile assisted language instructions as an anticipatory approaches to							
drmehmood.eng	improve English language. Results indicated that EFL students were							
@mckru.edu.pk	more intended to use computers to develop interest for language							
штскги.еаи.рк	proficiency. They responded positively about the role of mobile as well							
	as computers to improve English language skills. On the basis of							
	findings, it was concluded that mobile can play result oriented role in							
	improving EFL students' language proficiency. For future research the							
	study recommended that experimental research might be carried out to							
	analyze the effectiveness of using computers for learning English as							
	foreign language.							
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Introduction

Technology plays a crucial role in the field of education particularly to learn and teach English nowadays (Aziz & Hassan, 2018). The important roles of technology are to shape and transform the way people communicate, learn, teach, and socialize with others. Technology has made the world a small village. It not only helps people but also the learners to give and receive data all over the world without utilizing the traditional methods used in the past. Smartphone is one of the new technological tools that learners use in their learning present days. EFL students have been using in education as most EFL students use them in their daily life. The new trend of 21st century is to use computers in learning and exchanging ideas through the World Wide Web. In this way the learners are empowered to learn through innovative ways (Hassan & Aziz,2019; Hassan & Dzakiria, 2019). The learners especially young, energetic and passionate utilize latest computers in everyday which also help them

in their education. These computers of new technology help the young learners in using them for calls, to play games, to buy and sell things. The computers are also used to chat with others through social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snap chat. This mobile technology like many other technological tools has advantages which assists the learners to be in touch with up to date and hot topics of all over the world (Hassan & Qureshi, 2021; Hassan & Qureshi, 2021; Hassan, 2021). Similarly, the learners use computers to learn foreign languages that is one of the major benefits of technological tools in the field of education. Studies on using technology in education indicated that computers improve the process of teaching and learning English (Kessler, 2007; Machmud & Abdulah 2017). According to Alrefaai (2019), the language learning process becomes more attractive through computers which builds awareness of learners when they interact with other EFL students. The researchers have mentioned the benefits of computers i.e., flexibility, portability, and easy access to the learning materials in learning a language (Alrefaai, 2019; Kukulska-Hulme & Pettit, 2009; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). According to Papadakies (2018), the features of computers could help to construct the learning process more comfortable and expressive. As language learning is a continuous learning process, new instruments i.e., computers are required in the field of learning a language to make it easy and successful way to learn a language. These technological tools motivate EFL students and teachers to do their traditional jobs in different and attractive ways (Ta'amneh, 2017). The utilization of computers and their applications might assist EFL students and teachers in learning process for the improvement of educational procedures. Similarly, these computers are needed for learning and teaching to give helpful ideas that encourage EFL students to study and learn well (Cui & Wang, 2008; Kizito, 2012; Wang, 2017). The learners of English language may use computers for the improvement of all kills of English i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Further, without looking for traditional ways to check their learning, the EFL students could share information with their peers and others all over the world.

English language learners have received new opportunities and different learning techniques by using computers. These opportunities include the relationship between instructors, EFL students and learning items (Babiker, 2015). Smartphone technology has motivated learners in learning and it has also supported their own learning process (Algahtani and Mohammad, 2015; Tal and Gross, 2014). According to some researchers, technology has created new learning strategies. Similarly it has supported EFL students' achievements and has reduced EFL students' anxiety in learning (Babiker, 2015; Thinley, Reye and Geva, 2014; Luo, Lin, Chen & Fang, 2015; Ebrahim, Ezzadeen and A.K, 2015). The leaners can learn English language skills more effectively by (Ta'amneh, 2014). The technology of computers performs important roles to facilitate the learners in the process of learning and teaching English. Pulla (2020) believed that smartphone technology contextualized the learning activities and actions. The EFL teachers contain good behavior in learning English via the use of mobile devices. Besides, they also believe that learning through computers could help the learners to learn English effectively through a high percentage of scales. (Vo and Vo, 2020). Some educational problems or difficulties might be confronted by learners during the process of learning a foreign language. The important roles of the instructors are to help EFL students understand their materials and achieve their objectives successfully. The instructors also need get extra information and they should have more time to achieve the objectives of the course (Ta'amneh, 2020). There are opportunities

for teachers and EFL students to enhance learning and change the ways of learning by using computers in learning English (West, 2012). Smartphone technology is helpful and beneficial for EFL students in different ways (Wail and Omaid, 2020). The smartphone technology in learning has made learning efficient and well-organized (Gangaiamaran and Pasupathi, 2017; Klimova, 2019). According to Chen (2016) mobile learning is an important strategy for learning language skills. He further asserted that multiple channels and modalities for adult learners to practice language skills are provided through the use of computers (2016). The following studies investigated the role of computers in learning English language skills.

Computers have become popular in recent times and they cover almost every aspect of human life. The use of computers for entertainment is replaced by the communication games, Apps, websites and educational equipment. Mobiles have replaced computers due to all its features being available in the computers. There is a great deal of English language learning via computers. Numerous research studies are already investigating about this issue but, research in this field in Pakistan is very scarce. The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of EFL students about the role of computers in developing their English language proficiency. It is important to take their feedback as our actions are the production of our attitudes towards something.

Bashar (2012) also described this attitude as the tendency to appreciate or hate using something. The use of computers for learning depends on the attitude of teachers towards 'EFL students and EFL students'. Student-centered classrooms are now more in practice than teacher-centered. Many studies relate to teachers' practice of controlling classes by text messages to EFL students, as Stockwell (2007) studied it. Song and Fox (2008) analyzed about the way learners use the smartphone for language learning as educational tools.

In the 21st century, the roles of teachers and EFL students are changed due to their independence of learning via computers. The role of teachers and EFL students is changing over time. Teachers are now facilitators rather than being authoritative. Computers are learning tool that gives access to online learning materials, which is why this topic is worth exploring. For analyzing its effectiveness in learning English language we first need to explore learners' practice of using it for learning as well as EFL students' perspective about it.

Material and Methods

Creswell (2012) described research design as a process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting information quantitatively. The purpose of the current study is to discover whether computers help EFL students who are proficient in the English language. The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire based on participants' ideas about improving English language proficiency through a smartphone. The purpose of this study was to study the current use of computers for learning English and to guide them properly in this regard for better learning experience. Data were collected in approximately 9 months (March to November, 2017) for this study. The researcher developed research instruments; therefore, a pilot study was conducted to test the accuracy of these instruments.

Population of the study is all the final year BS level EFL students (males & females) in the field of English studying at private universities in Punjab, Pakistan. Data were

collected from 6 universities. The sample of this study included 300 EFL students, males and females, of BS English 5th semester students from Mir Chakar Khan Rind University Sibi, Balochistan (Pakistan).

Research Tool

Data were collected through a questionnaire about the role of mobile to improve EFL students' English proficiency: section one was about EFL students' age, gender and residence, section two consisted of 14 close-ended questions designed on 5 point likert type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and section three was consisted of 2 open-ended question to get the views of EFL students about how far Google-meet can be available on computer/Smartphone help them in improving their language proficiency and what about their experience of using them.

Questionnaire was prepared with slight modifications on the basis of reviewed literature and was adapted in accordance with the Pakistani context. Johnson (2014) justified this adaptation of the research tool by stating that the construction of quality questionnaires depends on already conducted research as it improves the quality of research tools and also helps to share research results in continuation.

Reliability of Instrument

Four university professors of English Department checked the questionnaire to see if it is completely suitable to get the study objectives. The questionnaire was prepared using a standard procedure. Experimental evaluation showed that the tool was reliable as the alpha value was .864 and its size ranged from .86 to .73. This value proved that the tool was reliable to be used.

Analysis of Data

Quantitative data were analyzed in form of frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation, and t-test. In the second phase, the qualitative data of the student questionnaire, open end questions were analyzed. Consideration was also given to comparing EFL students' opinions on gender, age and location.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher visited research sight after getting permission from the Chairperson and the concerned faculty to collect data as per the availability and convenience of the participants. She personally remained present to remove unexpected events or ambiguities faced by the participants during the data collection process. Total 300 questionnaires were distributed among participants and all questionnaires were found appropriately filled.

Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28 was used to analysis the data. Average score, frequency, standard deviation and independent sample t test were applied for data analysis. Percentage is used to describe the details of male and female respondents and demographic information is described using descriptive statistical analysis and numerical representation of the respondent.

Table 1

EFL students' opinion about using computers regarding language proficiency									
	Thomas	A+SA	N	DA+SDA	Mean				
Sr.	Items	f(%)	f(%)	<i>f</i> (%)	Score				
1	Improving English proficiency is very	233	44	7	3.01				
	effective through using computer/Smartphone	70.3	11.3	3.3					
2	Using computer/Smartphone for	199	59	23	3.77				
	English language proficiency is a source of motivation.	73.3	14.2	4.0					
3	Teacher encourages me to use	194	103	65	3.45				
	computer/Smartphone for improving English.	51.2	26.1	15.7					
4	Learning English using computers	166	73	32	267				
	provides stress-free environment.	66.2	16.7	8.7	3.67				
5	Face- to- face communication makes	151	72	47	3.53				
	me stressed in speaking.	60.5	20.1	13.1					
6	I am OK to speak in English via	169	64	29	3.53				
	mobile/computers more than in the face- to- face communication.	68.3	13.3	9.1					
7	Learning Apps are effective in	198	60	12	3.62				
	improving English language.	72.3	13.1	12.6					
8	Teachers recommend to use	166	102	20	3.58				
	Mobile/Computer Assisted Language instructions in the class.	63.3	23.4	4.6					
9	Computer/computers are useful in	167	73	36	3.50				
	developing English language.	66.0	15.4	8.3					
10	Using mobile/computers develops	149	89	19	3.47				
	English proficiency.	63.2	22.2	5.8					
11	Learning mobile/computers'	190	57	20	3.74				
	applications to improve English requires little amount of efforts.	76.1	13.4	4.8					
12	I like to reach out course contents via	198	51	16	3.70				
	mobile/computers to help me improving English.	76.5	10.5	3.8					
13	Using computer/Smartphone should	180	63	33	2.47				
	be allowed in the classrooms.	71.0	12.3	9.0	3.47				
14	YouTube English lectures help me to	169	69	31	261				
	improve English.	69.2	16.5	6.7	3.64				
15	I use mobile/computers to improve	213	17.5	6.8	3.00				
	English language according to my convenience.	78.0	13.1	4.0					
	Cumulative scores	79.3	19.5	09.0	4.57				
-									

In Table 1, overall 70.3 % EFL students agreed that using Smartphone for improving English language proficiency is very effective. 73.3% EFL students consented that they feel motivated when they use their Smartphone for improving English language proficiency.

51.2% EFL students consented that their teachers motivate them to use a Smartphone for improving English language proficiency. 66.2% EFL students established that learning English via Smartphone provides stress-free learning environment. 60.5% EFL students agreed that in a face- to- face communication they often feel stressed when they speaking foreign language. 68.3% EFL students agreed that they feel comfortable communicating in English via their Smartphone. 72.3% EFL students agreed that mobile Apps are helpful for developing English language proficiency. 63.3% EFL students agreed that teachers also recommend using Mobile Assisted Language Learning largely, 66.0% EFL students agreed that mobile phones can be used for developing English language proficiency inside classroom. 63.2% EFL students agreed that utilizing computers for developing English language proficiency should be incorporated in classes. 76.1% EFL students agreed that learning to use mobile applications for developing English language proficiency does not require lots of struggle. 76.5% EFL students agreed that they would like to access course content via smartphone that can help me improve English language proficiency. 71.0% EFL students agreed that using of Smartphone for learning in classroom should be permitted. 69.2% EFL students agreed that English language learning channels on YouTube help EFL students in developing their English language proficiency. 78.0% EFL students agreed that they use their smartphone for improving English language proficiency according to their convenience of time and place.

Table 2
Gender-based differences of opinions towards using computer/Smartphone to improve English language proficiency

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.	Mean difference
Male	170	4.39	1.489	0.012	005	0.200
Female	130	3.28	1.011	-0.913	.005	-0.299

The Table 2 shows the comparison of EFL students' opinion, on the basis of their gender, about the role of smartphone for improving English language proficiency. Results show the Mean of male student is: 4.39, SD = 1.489) and females' mean score is: 3.28, SD = 1.011. Male EFL students' mean score is greater than females. Therefore, opinions of male EFL students' attitudes towards using computer/Smartphone to improve English language is greater than that of female respondents and t-value is -0.913 and P value is 0.005 which shows that the difference is significant at 0.05 significance level. This shows that variable gender affects the opinions of the EFL students. The female EFL students' preferences and attitude towards using computer/Smartphone to improve English language is better than males.

Discussion

In the light of results it is validated that learning English through online Google-meet available on computers to improve English language proficiency is very effective and motivating. Teachers also encourage EFL students to use Smartphone for improving English language proficiency. Results show that learning English via Smartphone provides stress-free learning environment to EFL students which facilitates their learning in a positive way. EFL students in classroom feel less comfortable speaking foreign language in such situation

they agreed that the google-meet help them develop their language proficiency inside as well as outside classroom as autonomous learners. Utilizing computers for developing English language proficiency should be incorporated in classes due to its effectiveness. Using mobile applications for developing English language proficiency does not require lots of struggle on part of EFL students. EFL students like to access course content via smartphone that can help them improve their English language proficiency so the utilizing Smartphone in classroom for learning should be permitted. Smartphone helps EFL students improve their English language proficiency according to their convenience of use anytime and anywhere.

In the open ended questions EFL students responded that there are language dictionaries, audio, video, websites for learning language, YouTube channels that help to learn the correct pronunciation and various apps to promote language skills. They access authentic online learning content.

The results show that the smartphone is good for improving English language proficiency of EFL students at undergraduate level. The results of previous studies also confirm these findings as Kress and Pachler (2007) and Okabi and Ito (2006) stated that learning by smartphone requires privatization of one's learning activities Training would enable teachers to take advantages of ever changing and growing mobile technology to utilize it for language teaching purposes. This will answer the claim of Kress and Pachler (2007) that learners will need guidance to make use of mobile phone in learning.

Males and Females responded positively to the role of google-meet available on computers for improving their English language proficiency. The comparison of EFL students' opinion, on the basis of their gender, about the role of smartphone for improving English language proficiency showed that female EFL students' mean score was higher than that of males, therefore, the perception of female EFL students' attitudes towards using computers to improve their English language proficiency was found higher than that of the male respondents. It shows that the gender of the EFL students affects their opinion.

Tough (1973) also analyzed the adult learning plans that adults were uncertain about the performance of their education through technology enhances gargets that promote autonomous learning among them. The results of this study shown positive attitude of EFL students towards improving EFL students' English skills through computers because they know that computers have the ability to facilitate learning vocabulary and language skills. Using computers provides access to learning materials online on their computers English language learning channels on YouTube help EFL students in developing their English language proficiency.

Conclusion

The outcomes in this study pointed out that the technology increased in computers has an important part to improve the English language proficiency of the EFL students. Computers also help to learn English anywhere anytime according to EFL students' convenience. The study aimed to investigate the perspective of EFL students that how online Google-meet on computers benefits the learners to develop English language proficiency. The present uses of Google-meet on computers by learners for learning English have been explored in this study. The researcher guided the learners properly to make computers more effective in learning experience through this insight of Google-meet in the present study. Findings also indicated that computers help in learning English to provide the EFL students

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an instant access to online content available on internet of the computers. The learners use portable advanced technology computers for learning purposes because when computer or printed book is not available, they can get an easy access to online learning materials through their computers.

Rrecommendations

The present study recommends that trainings regarding the use of smartphone effectively to learn the foreign language should be conducted which would enable them to use it in better way. Similarly, for getting more advantage of this technology, proper trainings must be arranged along with sound pedagogical implications. The computers should also be allowed in the classroom so that the EFL students may have better learning experience. Since computers are helpful learning gadgets therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should be instructed to design, plan and develop courses. They should also develop rules for using the smartphone technology for teaching and learning activities. Moreover, to know the real effectiveness of learning through using these smart devices, other studies i.e., an experimental study may be conducted in future which should analyze EFL students' learning achievements through computers.

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