Advantages of Using the Internet and Media in Teaching English in the Age of Innovative Technologies

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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates the characteristics of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the education system of Uzbekistan as well as the implementation of Common European Framework
of References for languages (CEFR) in the whole system of foreign languages learning.

E-learning is when one uses electronic media information and communication technologies in education. Elearning can be seen in nearly all types of educational technology in either learning or teaching. E-learning is enriched with various types of media that delivers text, audio, image animation and streaming videos. Elearning also includes technology applications and process such as audio, video tape, and streaming video. E-learning can happen in or out of classroom or the learning context. It can be self-paced, with the help of instructor, synchronous or asynchronous. E-learning is well suited for distance learning and is flexible for different learning situations. E-learning can be in agreement with face to face teachings. The pioneers of E-learning supports that "e" in E-learning stands for exciting, energetic, enthusiastic, emotional, excellent, extended and educational in addition to electronics [9]. Other scholars suggested that "e" in E-learning should refer to everything, everyone, engaging and easy [12]. It was in 1960s that Illinois University planned to teach students based on technology and it connected the computers so that students can gain information on a course when they are listening to its lectures. Also, in 1960 two professors from the University of Stanford decided to teach math while reading to young children by means of computers. Years passed and the use and the shape of using computers in educational technology changed. It was around 1990s that the World Wide Web entered into human beings' life. World Wide Web technology made teachers to rely on a method that has multi-object oriented sites and are either text-based or online virtual reality systems. Online education is vastly expanding and is trying to get the place of traditional methods of teaching and learning. Based on a research study that was implanted in 2008 by the U.S. department of education, the use of online learning and online courses has increased up to 66% during the academic years of 2006 and 2007 either in state or private universities across the United States of America. E-learning in Iran which is still a new born technology has only a few online programs. In reviewing the literature regarding the history of E-learning in Iran, it is not more

than seven years that E-learning has come into vogue. The door to have E-learning technology in Iran is either through private or state organizations. There has been a rise in the foundation of E-based universities in Iran. Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, Shiraz virtual university, Some Islamic virtual colleagues like Hadieh and some branches of Payam e nor University in Iran have started using this technology in their class rooms.

The target population of this study constituted a sample of 100 participants of Esfahan University of Technology bachelor degree students doing their winter semester. There was no gender difference, male and female students both participated in the study. The students came from came from three different academic disciplines and colleges including information technology, computer software, statistics and mathematics. The selection of those students was completely random and based on accessibility. To gather data and to investigate the study questions, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to a sample of 100 students in different majors. The content and face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by two external researcher who were expert in the field of computer and technology assisted language learning. After investigating the measures of content and face validity, the questionnaire was analyzed for the purpose of reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was made possible through pilot testing. The questionnaires were distributed to a group of 50 B.A. students from Isfahan University of technology who had the same features of the main sample of the participants. 25 male and 25 female students who were from statistics, computer software and information technology filled out the questionnaire. The results of pilot testing confirmed that the questionnaire is a reliable questionnaire for the purpose of this research study. There was no revisions and change needed. The questionnaire was not selfadministered. The format of the survey was based on a mixed method of seeking statistical and verbal responses. It considered four main parts. Part one collected demographic information about the participants. Part two

asked questions about the use and practices. Part three asked questions about respondents' attitudes to the use of internet for English language learning. Finally, Part four gathered information about difficulties facing students in using internet in English language learning. Most of the questionnaires were close ended, with an additional section for open ended questions and respondents' opinions. The section of open-ended questionnaire was analyzed and marked by two external reviewers to reach to the goal of interrater reliability. Respondents had enough time to complete the task. There was no missed or disserted questionnaire. Respondents were informed that the information they provide is kept confidential, and is only for research purposes.

As shown in the results section of the study more than half of the participants mentioned that they use internet for the purpose of English language learning. This shows the growing interest over online language learning and this is in agreement with what Waits and Lewis concluded in 2003. The results of data analysis also showed that internet in the English language learning environment is regarded as a motivational tool for the language learner because it helps them to learn the language communication and daily life of English language learners. They also mentioned that the internet is a good tool to learn English language vocabulary and grammar indirectly and this makes the learning task (as Luskin [9] & Parks [12]) more engaging, enthusiastic, engaging, and extended. As was shown in the results, 93 % of the participants mentioned that the internet helps them to learn English language, but 93% of the participants mentioned that their teachers or professors have never encouraged them to use internet as a language learning tool, this is perhaps because of what Dilmaghani [6] concluded and said there is yet the need of growing the realistic comprehension concerning the process of learning. If E-learning is going to grow in the Iranian society it still needs through study and inclusion of equipment and necessary infrastructure.

Education is highly important for the development of any country as well as the

sustained growth of its nation. The Uzbek government lays great emphasis to the education of the youth and it is free for children attending for private schools. Although, the measures are being taken for a rapid development ofeducation in Uzbekistan, and its internationalization, there are still traces from the past of the educational systemthat bear the characteristics of Islamic education, Secular education introduced by Tsarist Russia, and a greatinfluence of Soviet education which existed in the country for seven decades[5].Uzbekistan has a long enough tradition of teaching foreign languages to young children. The evidence to support the idea dates back from the "Great Silk Road" period when the present day territory of Uzbekistan used to be a center for world trade, science and culture. Uzbek merchants were fluent speakers in distinctively different languages such as Persian, Arabic or Chinese because bilingualism ormonolingualism always had practical concern to study, to make business and for intercultural communication.

Uzbek government gradually reformed foreign language teaching, therefore foreign language curricula has been changed from grammar-translation methods to communicative language teaching in order to improve student"s awareness of linguistic knowledge and communication skills in foreign languages. A new textbook, Fly High English, has been publishedby the Ministry of Education of Uzbekistan with the help of the British Council Uzbekistan. The content of new course book was quite different from the English textbooks used during the Soviet times. However, because of different state standards for schools, academic lyceum and colleges, there was no inconsistency in foreign language teaching. The repetition of some topics and themes occurred many times in the course books of different stages of education. The next big step in language police of the Republic of Uzbekistan was the President Decree "On measures to further improve foreign language learning system" in 2012. According to the Decree, foreign languages, mainly English, gradually throughoutthe country is taught from the first

year of schooling in the form of lesson-games and speaking games, continuing to learning the alphabet, reading and spelling in the second grade. Starting from the 2013-2014 academic year, foreign language teaching has been introduced in general secondary schools from the 1st grade through Kid"s English book. The above-mentioned State Education Standard was developed on the basis of the European Union's CEFR document and was the first step in the introduction of international standards in foreign language learning, teaching and assessment.

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