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Impact of ICT on Learners' Motivation in Language Learning: A Review

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Abstract

With the outstanding growth in the domain of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the field of education is also highly affected by this advance and it has undergone a remarkable change alike. Related literature indicates that integrating ICTs in educational courses can be beneficial in raising learners' motivation which is believed to be one of the key factors in learning any skill and learning languages is not an exception. This paper was an attempt to summarize some of the available studies addressing the impact of using technology on English learners' motivation. This comprehensive review revealed that the motivation of English learners was positively affected using ICT tools during the learning process.

Key words: Information and communication technology (ICT), Motivation, Language learner

1. Introduction

1.1. ICT

'ICT' stands for *information and communication technology* and is about using computers in teaching contexts (National encyclopedia, 2013). It might include any communication device such as computer, mobile phone, radio, television, satellite system etc. (Jayanthi& Kumar, 2016). Gay & Blades (2005), define ICT as using programs and tools to store, access, convert, present, retrieve and organize information and data (Sadeghi, Kalantari & Ramezanzadeh, 2012). The definition of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003) of ICT is much broader: "ICTs are

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basically information handling tools- a varied set of goods, applications and services that are used to produce, store, process, distribute and exchange information. They suggested the 'old' ICTs of radio, television and telephone, and the "new" ICTs of computers, satellite and wireless technology and the internet. These different tools are now able to work together, and combined to form a 'networked world' a massive infrastructure of interconnected telephone services, standardized computing hardware, the internet, radio and television, which reaches into every corner of the globe". The world today is highly influenced by technology and using information and communication tools are interesting for the students (Kreutz& Rhodin, 2016). Ghafourian, Haji Hussein Nejad and Hosseini (2012) also believed that human life has been affected by technology in all its aspects (Sadeghi, Kalantari& Ramezanzadeh, 2012).

Rapid improvements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have made remarkable contributions to English language education. In fact, the use of ICTs can provide English learners with opportunities to practice English in an authentic environment (Kramsch & Thorne, 2002). Although the use of technology such as computers and the internet in language classrooms has been disputed a lot, many agreed that it has a positive impact on English learning process (Houcine, 2011). According to Wernet, Oligens and Delicatch (2018), embedding technology in education seems to play an important role in higher and professional education. By using technology learners have the opportunity of controlling their own learning process and having access to an unlimited amount of information which is out of the control of the teachers (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). Moreover, using ICTs makes it possible to adapt teaching materials compatible with learners' needs and circumstances. It also can provide quick feedback and even allow to combine or use a skill interchangeably (audio, video, text, images, etc.) (Houcine, 2011).

1.2. Motivation

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"Motivation undoubtedly is the key in any learning" (Frydrochov & Poulouva, 2014). It can help us to know how and why people learn something (Akobirov, 2017). since motivation to learn indicates learners' desire for taking part and learning from an activity, it can be inferred that raising motivation to learn is one of the effective principles of education (Rajae Harandi, 2015). Different scholars proposed different definitions for motivation. Gardner (as cited in Verma, 2005) defines motivation as "referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity".

Many factors involved in success of English learning and motivation is one which determines the extent of learners' willingness to do a task (Kreutz & Rhodin, 2016). In their study, Masgoret & Gardner (2003) showed the high relationship between motivation and L2 achievement which can encourage successful learning of foreign language. According to (Klimova and Poulouva, 2014) motivation is a key variable in learning foreign languages and all English teachers attempt all the time to find motivating ways in their teaching. Kalanzadeh, Soleimani & Bakhtiarvand (2014) also believed that motivation is a socio- psychological variable known as an account for success in leaning languages and various studies have shown that motivated learners can learn another language faster and more efficiently. In general, it seems that motivation is a strong predictor of success in language learning (Klimova & Poulouva, 2014). It should also be mentioned that it is both very important and difficult to motivate learners to practice English out of the teaching time and outside of the classroom (McMinn, 2008).

1.3. Relationship between motivation and ICT use

As Jayanti and Kumar (2016) stated traditional methods of imparting higher education have become less motivating. Here, technology can play an important role in creating innovation and motivation for learners. In the same vein, Drent and Meelisen (2008) believed that new methods of teaching techniques like ICT can provide more interaction in the classroom and make learning

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more effective for students. Fortunately, ICT today is a natural part of children's lives because technology has surrounded them everywhere, home, community, the school, etc. Blagojevic et.al, (2010) on the other hand, pointed out that learning a foreign language requires a challenging process, learner's always need to be motivated and encouraged during this process and technology could be an effective factor to motivate the students in a positive way in the teaching language process (Ilter, 2009). Thus, as both English language and ICT tools are probably used by everyone, It is important to incorporate English learning with technology to raise students' motivation in school (Kreutz & Rhodin, 2016) and English teachers should try to exploit ICT for their teaching so that they can make their teaching materials more effective and motivating (Klimova & Poulouva, 2014). There are many empirical studies that have approved the positive effect of using ICTs on language learners' motivation and the current study attempts to review some related literature in this domain.

2. Review of Related Studies

2.1. Review of Studies in International Contexts

An experimental study has been conducted by Salim (2008) to determine the impact of ICT in schools regarding the learners', teachers', and entire learning setting on the learners' learning and achievements. Employing a sample randomizing technique, 50 participants have been chosen out of a 500 target population (30 students, 5 teachers, 5 management staff, 3 officials from the ministry and 7 technicians). To collect effective data, the researcher administered questionnaires, interviews and observation scenarios as his research tools. The findings indicated that although ICT did not make any increase in learning more than traditional methods, the recorded videos of the classroom using ICT reflected the motivation and activeness of the learners in the classroom. In the same way, McMinn (2008) claimed that embedding podcasting into English learning curriculum provides learner with a stimulated and authentic environment and offers new ways to motivate them to practice their language skills.

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Ilter (2009) carried out a study on the effect of technology on motivation in EFL classrooms. A group of students at Akdeniz university preparatory classes were selected to fill out the questionnaires during the 2007/2008 academic year. The results showed that one of the challenging and dynamic factors in motivating students in EFL classrooms might be using technology.

Liu and Chu (2009) also tried to study the impact of using ubiquitous games on learning and motivation in an English listening and speaking course. In their experimental study, they chose two groups of students to participate in their game -based learning classroom. Participants were teachers and juniors of a high school. Survey, tests and interviews were applied to collect data from participants. The findings of this study suggested that incorporation of ubiquitous games into language learning process will bring about better learning achievements and motivation in comparison with non gaming methods. A positive relationship between motivation and learning outcomes were also detected.

Another study was conducted by Garcia and Astrac (2012) in a Spain to investigate the influence of using media and collaborative technologies on English students' motivation. In this regard they designed an English teaching curriculum according to blended learning principles. 14 university students and 4 English native speakers participated in the study. Both groups had the experience of using internet and virtual learning. Analysis of the data gathered through a survey and a follow-up interview which aimed to assess participants' preferred learning style, reported that they had enjoyed the experience and felt motivated and want to repeat it.

In line with the aforementioned studies is the work of Amine, Chellali and Butkhil (2012). The work was a case study of English Master's of students at a university in Algeria. The results of the study which were collected by employing a questionnaire, indicated that using multimedia can be

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a highly motivating factor in language classroom and might lead the achievement of learning objectives.

In their investigation, Klimova and Poulova (2014), outlined the motivational role of ICT tools in the learning of foreign languages and explain a specific example of utilizing ICT tools in EFL classrooms to raise motivation in EFL students. As the results explained employing ICT tools can be appealing and stimulating for students and can have a positive effect on their motivation and learning. Al –Mohammadi's (2014) article about the effects of embedding ICT within EFL on learner's motivation and interest confirmed the results of the aforementioned study and claimed that integrating ICT in English classrooms heavily affect learners' academic performance and motivation and EFL teachers should consider this variable.

The findings of a study on ICT use in English language learning among EFL university students revealed that participants tend to employ ICTs for general purposes more than for learning English. However, they had positive attitude towards using technology in English learning classrooms. In this study a sample of 149 English major students were asked to answer the questionnaire, survey and most of them believe that teachers should use ICTs more frequently in their teaching (Tri, 2014).

Kreutz and Rhodin (2016) studied on the motivational influence of ICT on English language learners. 45 third graders from Swedish elementary school filled out survey questionnaires. Data analysis showed that ICT had a positive effect on increasing most of the students' motivation because using ICT in lessons made them more fun and students enjoyed incorporating ICT in their EFL classroom.

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Akobirov (2017) conducted a study to determine the impact of technology on language learning and EFL students' motivation in two different contexts. One of the aim of his study was to explore the language learning motivation level of the upper level EFL college students at Bukhara a state university (BSU) in Uzbekistan and that of upper level ESL students of Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC). Examining the motivational level of the two groups of students, he divided the motivation into 2 levels of instrumental and integrative. To find out the motivational level of the 129 students at BSU and 38 students at KCKCC, the researcher implemented the attitude /motivation test battery of Gardner and the Binnur's motivation and technology questionnaire in his quantitative study. The data were analyzed and the findings indicated that in learning English the ESL students of KCKCC were more motivated than BSU students, both instrumentally and integratively.

Boualem (2018) examined the effects of using ICT tools like Microsoft PowerPoint on English learners' motivation. Forty-two master students of didactics of EFL from Djillali Liabes University, Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria participated in this study, filling out a questionnaire. Analysis of the collected data showed a high motivation of students towards Microsoft PowerPoint. There for, It can be concluded that utilizing ICT tools can be beneficial in increasing motivation in English learners, however it cannot solve all foreign language learning problems.

2.2. Review of Studies in Iranian Context

The impact of ICTs on education in EFL Iranian contexts has been investigated by a number of researchers and the findings of these studies are in line with those that have been conducted in foreign contexts. The aim of Rajaei Harandi's (2015) research was to examine the role of E-Learning in instruction of students in higher education. To find the relationship between e-learning and students' motivation among the students of Tehran Alzahra University a questionnaire was

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used to collect data. The results of this study approved the helpful role of e-learning on students' motivation which is an important element in every kind of learning.

Samiei Lari (2014), Aimed to investigate the impact of using PowerPoint presentations on students' learning and motivation in secondary schools. For this purpose, the 56 female students of secondary school were split into two groups of experimental group and control group. In one of the groups technological tools such as video projector and PowerPoint were used in teaching process while in the other group traditional method like textbooks were conducted. The results of the Independent sample t-test indicated the significant difference between the means of the two groups which means that teaching with the help of technology had a positive influence on learners' performance. As data analysis reflected, the scores of the experimental group was better than those of the control group.

According to Kalanzadeh, Soleimani, and Bakhtiarvand (2014), the relationship between using technology and Iranian EFL students' motivation has been explored. The researchers distributed a questionnaire which was developed by Binnur (2011) among 60 Iranian students who were studying EFL in university using computer, PowerPoint and mobile in their English classroom. Statistical analysis of the gathered data proved the positive attitude of Iranian EFL University students towards the utilization of technology in English classrooms. Thus a great relationship between motivational factors for language learning and technology employment can be hypothesized.

Jafari, Dabaghi, and Vahid Dastjerdi (2017) explored the effects of integrating ICT resources into reading comprehension in an Iranian high school. To do this, they administered different types of interviews and questionnaires. Moreover, two groups of subjects comprising of 60 students in each, were compared according their performance in immediate and delayed post tests (one group

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were subject to integrated ICT resources in the classroom and the other group whose the teacher took the traditional procedure for teaching). The outcomes of the statistical and inferential descriptions of the gathered data revealed that the performance of the first group was better than that of the latter one. So it can be inferred that using ICTs might be beneficial in EFL students' learning outcomes.

3. Conclusion

In the age of technology, utilizing ICTs in EFL classrooms can have a crucial role and enormous advantages in improving learner's achievements especially by enhancing their motivation in an effective way. Considering the results of the studies reviewed in this article, the findings demonstrate that bringing ICT tools in language classroom can be helpful to boost motivation which is believed to be a key factor in EFL learner's success. Although ICT is not responsive of all language learning problems, it might have positive effects on developing motivation in language learners.

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