THE INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Dr. Mustafa ALTUN
Ishik University
Erbil- IRAQ

ABSTRACT

Technology-based foreign language teaching has provided many effective strategies in the learning process. The use of technology in teaching leads to a good command of the target language with ease. Learners stand a better chance of improving their foreign language skills if learning is strengthened with technology; therefore, technology-aided learning environment is a key factor that motivates the learners to accomplish better. This study puts forward how technology-based instruction helps learners achieve success in foreign language learning process.

Key Words: Technology, Foreign language learning, Achievement, Integration.

INTRODUCTION

As information technologies evolve and advance over time, use of technology in classrooms has increased in the classroom. There is a wide spread belief that technology-based instruction can contribute greatly to the quality of teaching and learning experience. Technology is a facilitating tool of education which teachers and students get a great deal of benefit from. Today's language teachers need to learn how to take advantage of the technology and how to integrate it into their teaching skills. Computers, smart phones, tablets etc. provide powerful opportunities to learn foreign language. As the use of smart phone, computer etc. is increasingly common among students; teachers need to equip themselves with today's technology. Smart boards can be instrumental in engaging and motivating student in the class. For instance pronunciation though the teacher is not a native speaker can be taught to learners with ease using smart phone/board. Teachers who introduce technology to their students may get a great deal of satisfaction when they, accomplish better.

Technology doesn't constitute methodology, but teachers utilize technology to complement it. How can teachers begin to integrate technology in language teaching? I think first, teachers need to contemplate their aims pertaining teaching styles. Different technological materials offer different advantages therefore teachers should be aware of utilities technology. Teachers may apply technology to their teaching skills. As a matter of fact, when teachers use technology in class they should know students' current language skills and needs. In a nutshell, the role of technology in teaching foreign language is very significant in foreign language teaching process.

Technology In Foreign Language Teaching And Learning

Using technology in foreign language learning and teaching is useful for both teachers and students. There is a great tendency among teachers to use technological tools in language learning classrooms. Uluc (2012) argued that the influence of "has permeated into all facets of our lives, including educational settings". In today's schools, information technologies (IT) are more powerful tools to teach, to motivate, and to make the subjects more interesting. Also internet is getting more common for people to communicate each other. In the last 10 years technology (internet, smartphones, computers etc.) has been used in all parts of lives. We use it with media, shopping, education, communication tools. Similarly it has made great contribution to language learning process. Cetto (2010, p.121) puts forward,

"In my experience, technology has broadened the spectrum of interaction while empowering the students' learning process by providing better opportunities for language usage".

22

Undoubtedly, using technology has positive effects on teaching and learning the English language. How can technology be applied to enhance teaching/learning the English language? When, computer, internet, smart boards, cell phones, video games, music players etc. are used in the target language learning process, students' motivation and language awareness is raised. The new generation (teachers/students) is good at using technology. They are all engaged with technological tools and somehow are involved in the target language through technology. Teaching by using traditional methods is no longer motivating and enjoyable for learners. Learners are more interactive, and learning outcomes bring about efficient results. Moreover the positive outcomes will lead to satisfaction for both teachers and learners.

Experienced teachers present different opportunities to students working at different rates and levels. The most widely used device is smart phone. Teachers and learners use it for developing the skills such as listening, and reading; furthermore watching target language elements on technological tools enable students to improve their second language proficiency. Todays' technology is breaking down all borders and bounds faster than physical terms. Houcine (2011: 1) suggests that "the effective use of the Internet and the Hypermedia brings valuable resources to both teachers and learners."

Activities That Can Be Used With Technological Tools
Young generation grows with the technological devices. Which has become a part of our culture at home, at school, at work, and at our social life?

Technology tools for communication, collaboration, social networking... In particular, these tools have transformed how parents and families manage their daily lives and seek out entertainment, how teachers use materials in the classroom with young children and communicate with parents and families, and how we deliver teacher education and professional development.(Odera & Ogott, 2014:4).

Effective teachers provide a natural learning environment for learners. Most teachers before lessons consider what they are going to teach and what kind of activities they will apply in their lessons. Upon deciding on this, they get ready through making lesson plan and finding the right resources or elements they will use. First of all technological devices are more interesting for the students to make some useful activities. For example; making online activities with smart board is very enjoyable for the learners. Integrating technology into language teaching and learning will bring about undivided motivation that will lead to achievement. Sykes suggests, 'integration can include, for example, the use of game content as pre-writing content for a writing task or as an impetus for a classroom debate' (2013: 34). Digital games offer learners a lot of benefits, but too many games especially violence games can be problematic. Characters, game narratives, context of play are very beneficial for the second language learners.

Sarah Catherine and K. Moore state that 'Perhaps the most widespread application of technology in onsite settings to date is the use of software programs designed for language learning.'(2009, p.1) Today many schools have computer labs and computers in every classroom. Almost all schools are connected to the Internet; a lot of teachers have Internet access in their classrooms. Technology can assist the teachers 'what to teach', 'how to teach', 'when to teach' or how to integrate all these to the curriculum framework.

Research questions:
1. Do traditional methods help learners develop their language skills?
2. Do technology-based instructions help learners develop their language skills?

Aim
The goal of this study is to investigate the contribution of technology-based instruction to development of language skills.
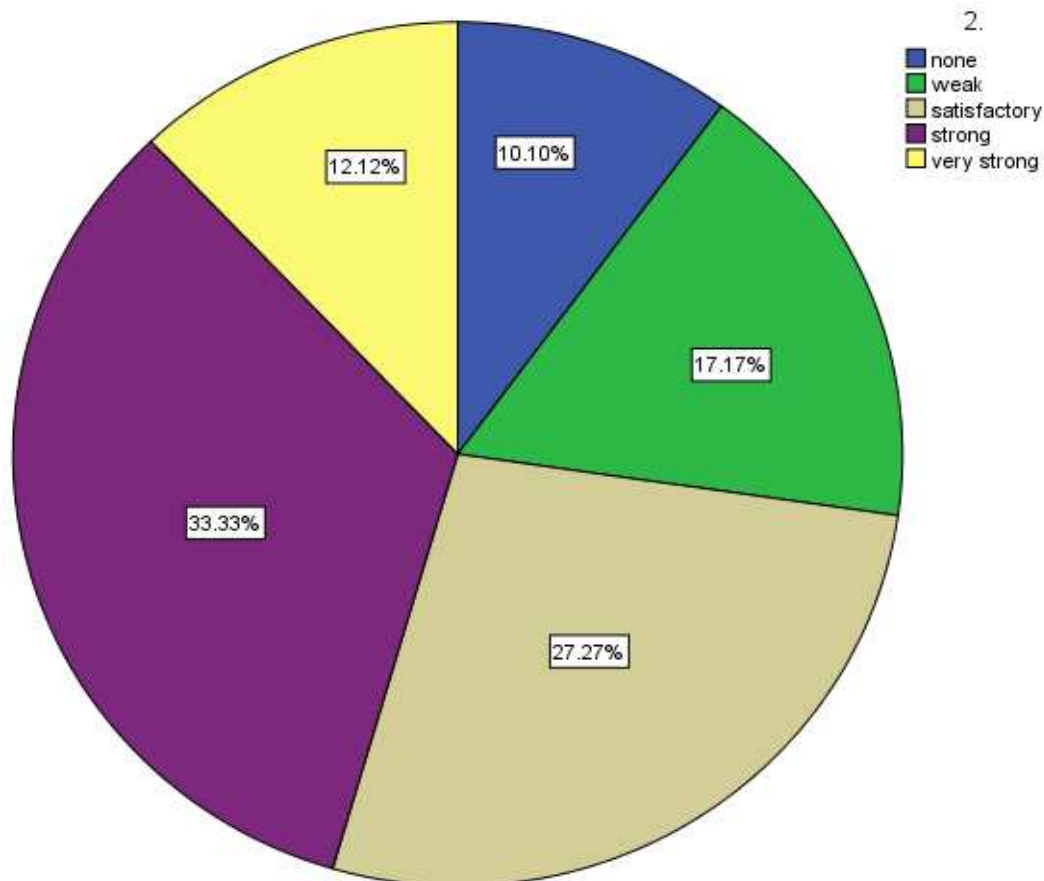
METHOD

Participants

99 students at English language teaching department at Ishik university participated in this study. The students are third year old fourth year old students who are well aware of traditional methods in the learning process, however technology-based instruction is implemented widely in their classes.

Data collection

In this study descriptive method is applied. Survey data collection technique has been used. The data in this research has been analyzed through qualitative research data analysis

FINDINGS

% 12.12 of the students have very strong opinions about positive contributions of traditional methods to the development language skills. The total percentage of the students who believe that traditional methods help them with their improvement of language skills is % 72,72.
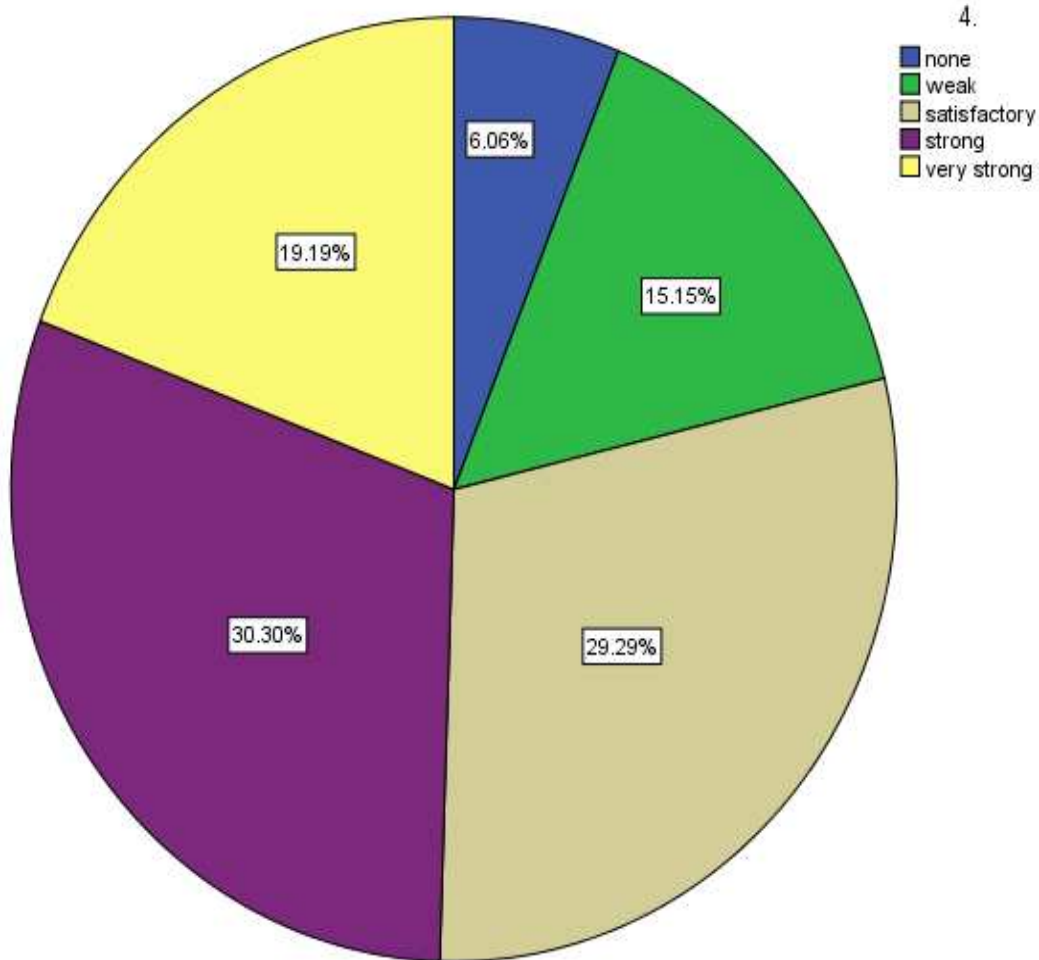
% 19.19 of the students have very strong opinions about positive contributions of technology based instructions to the development of language skills. The total percentage of students who believes that technology-based instruction help them with their improvement of language skills is % 78,78.

26.26of the students strongly believe that technology-based instruction should be implemented in language learning process. The percentage of the students who think that technology-based instruction is necessary is 88,88.

Though there is not great difference between students who advocate traditional methods and there who advocate technology-based instruction, the percentage of students have a device towards learning through technology-based instruction.
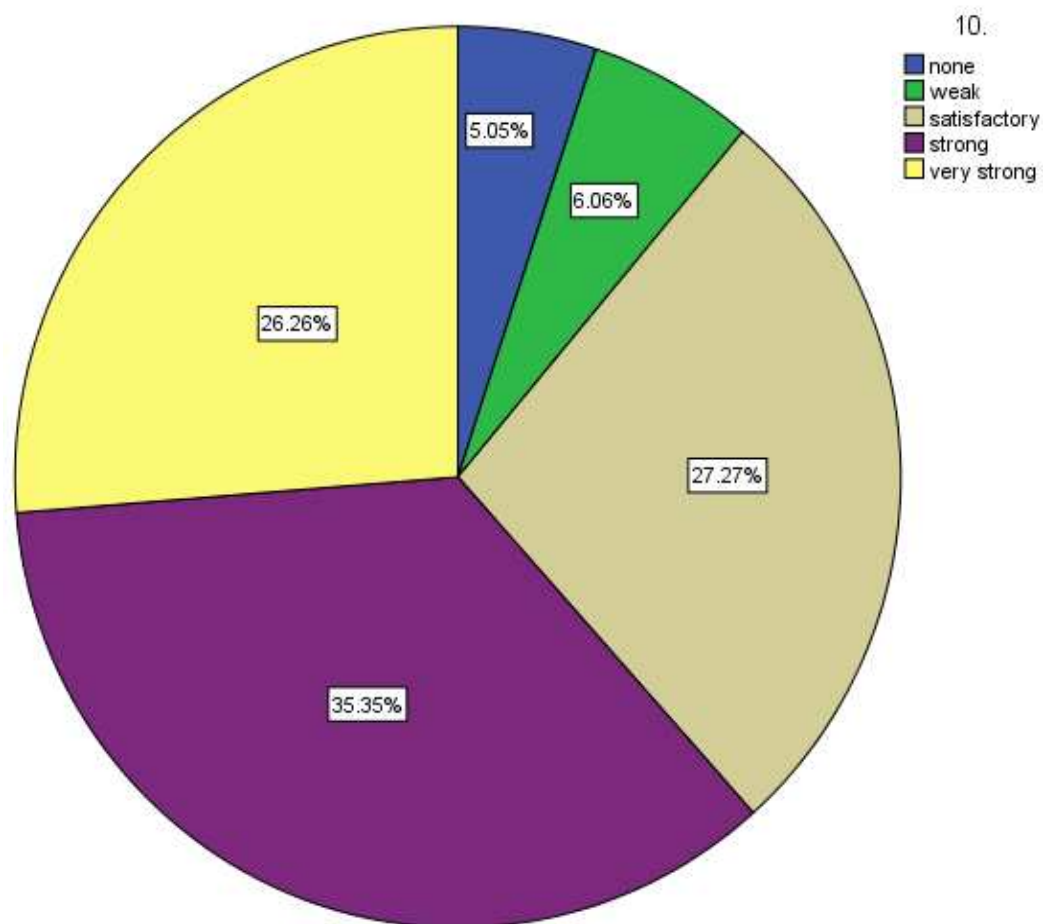
CONCLUSION

Traditional methods are considered useful for language learners however technology-based instructions highly contribute to teaching and learning process. Technology-based instruction effectively leads to accomplishment. It has been argued that motivation that occurs through integration of technology into language teaching and learning process encourages learners to achieve better.

IJONTE's Note: This article was presented at World Conference on Educational and Instructional Studies - WCEIS, 06- 08 November, 2014, Antalya-Turkey and was selected for publication for Volume 6 Number 1 of IJONTE 2015 by IJONTE Scientific Committee.

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF THE AUTHOR

Mustafa ALTUN was born on August 7, 1974 in Manisa ,Turkey. He graduated from Tajikistan State Languages University in 1998 and undertook his master degree in English language at the same university.

He completed his PhD at the Russian Educational Academy in 2013 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Currently, he is working as a lecturer at Ishik University in Iraq. His research interests are approaches to language learning and teaching English through drama and songs. His interests also lie in the preparation of English language teaching

materials (especially video materials), using technology in language teaching (particularly computer based ones) and translation studies.

Dr. Mustafa ALTUN
ELT lecturer Ishik University
Holy Zart Street No: 199
Erbil- IRAQ
E. Mail: Mustafa.altun@ishik.edu.iq

REFERENCES

Uluc, K. (2012). The Positive Effects of Integrating ICT in Foreign Language Teaching. International conference "ICT for language learning" 5th edition. Retrieved from conference.pixel-online.net/ICT4LL2012/.../235-IBT107-FP-Isisag-ICT2.

Cetto. M. (2010). Technology and second language teaching. Brujula, (8), 119-121.

Houcine.S. (2011). The effects of ICT on learning/teaching in a foreign language. ICT for Language Learning, 4th Edition. International Conference. Retrieved from conference.pixel-online.net/ICT4LL2011/

Odera, F. & Ogott, G. (2014). Use of Technological Resources in the Acquisition of Language skills in Early Childhood Development and Education programmes in Gem Sub-County, Kenya. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development. 3(4), 1-13.

Sykes. M. (2013). "Just" Playing Games? A Look at the Use of Digital Games for Language Learning. Special Focus on Technology. Retrieved from www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLE_pdf/TLE_Oct13_Article.pdf

Sarah Catherine and K. Moore. (2009). Uses of technology in the instruction of adult English language learners. Retrieved from www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/usesoftechnology.html