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VIEWS OF DIGITAL NATIVES IN A LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: ARE TECHNOLOGICAL GADGETS AN ASSISTANCE OR OBSTRUCTION?

Abstract

Technology pervades every aspect of our life today from everyday practices to different learning contexts. Inclusion of technology and technological tools in language education is a well-accepted phenomenon by language practitioners nowadays (Bozdoğan & Özen, 2014; Berk, 2009; Koehler & Mishra, 2005; El Semary, 2002; Christensen, 2002). Technology is evolving the experience of learning and reshaping the language experience in the classroom both for learners and educators. Language practitioners accept that right technological tools used in appropriate contexts could engage learners through the stimuli of several senses and increase the learning output for learners. This paper draws on an empirical study carried out in the school of foreign languages in a University of Mediterranean Karpasia in Northern Cyprus in April of 2013. The study inquires the view of learners in a mixed proficiency level learning context about technology use in language classes. There have been several studies up-do-date which inquired the impact of technology on learning. The uniqueness of the present study is due to the learners' abroad experience in a multinational learning context. This qualitative study represents a unique educational study to value because of the common experience of increasing number of learners today from diverse language and cultural backgrounds traveling to different countries for their educational quest.

Keywords: Technology and Multiple Intelligences Theory, Technological Gadgets, Second Language Learning

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DİL EĞİTİM SINIFLARINDA DİJİTAL YERLİLERİN BAKIŞ AÇISI: TEKNOLOJİK AYGITLAR DESTEK Mİ ENGEL Mİ?

Özet

Teknolojik uygulamalar hem öğrenme ortamlarına hem de hayatımızın farklı alanlarına günlük uygulamalarla yayılmaktadır. Günümüzde dil eğitiminde teknolojinin kullanımı kabul görmüş bir fenomendir (Bozdoğan & Özen, 2014: Berk, 2009; Koehler & Mishra, 2005; El Semary, 2002; Christensen, 2002). Teknoloji, dil öğrenim deneyimini hem öğrenciler hem de eğitmenler için yeniden şekillendirmektedir. Dil eğitmenleri doğru teknolojik araçların kullanımıyla eğitim-öğretim ortamlarında daha fazla uyaranlar oluşturarak ve daha fazla duyuya hitap ederek öğrenme verimini artıracakları konusunda hemfikirdirler. Bu makale Nisan 2013 tarihinde Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde, Akdeniz Karpaz Üniversitesi, Lefkoşa kampüsünde Yabancı Dil Yüksek Okulunda ampirik bir çalışma olarak gerçekleştirilmiş olan bir araştırmanın analizi sunulmaktadır. Hazırlık Okulu orta-düzey (intermediate) dil yeterliliği sınıfında okuyan birbirinden farklı dil yeterliliğine sahip bir öğrenci grubu bu çalışmanın katılımcılarını oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, farklı ana dil ve kültürlerden gelen öğrencilerin görüşleri teknolojinin dil öğrenimi üzerine etkileri konusunda incelenmiştir. Bu alanda yapılmış benzeri çalışmalar olmakla birlikte bu çalışma çok uluslu bir dil öğrenme ortamını temsil etmesi (sekiz farklı dil ve kültürü temsil eden katılımcılardan oluşması) ve günümüzde eğitim için yurtdışına giden öğrenci sayısının artışı sebebiyle bu çalışma özgün bir nitel araştırma değeri taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Teknoloji ve Çoklu Zekâ Kuramı, Teknolojik Araçlar, İkinci Dil Öğrenme

1.INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand the significance of technology for language learners during their classroom experience. The research question that guide the study is : ‘‘Do technological gadgets enhance the language learning process during class instruction; or do they diminish the learning experience by taking learners' attention elsewhere ?’’. This question is key for language educators who aim to have a closer understanding of the experience of technology and technological gadgets for university level students. Today's context of learning is very different from that of earlier generations. Learners of today are different from the previous generation because their life is distinguished with prolonged use of technology on a daily basis. The digital generation of today grows up with technological gadgets, and almost every aspect of their life is shaped by the experience of digital devices (Reilly, 2012: El Semary, 2011: Berk, 2009). Today's generation is given many names such as Millenials, Net Generation, and Digital Natives because of their unique experience of technology (Pena Galaviz, 2014; Berk, 2009). Some of the digital modes today's learners engage in are Facebook, Flickr, iPods, iPhones and PDAs; these provide a rich experience of stimulation for learners. With this in mind, a traditional university classroom is an under-stimulated setting for today's learners and fails to meet their expectations. Language teachers/educators strive to keep up with the changing demand of language teaching by utilizing powerpoints, digital realia and different language software to keep the learner interest alive. And yet, despite their efforts, it is not uncommon to find more than half of the students bored during a university class/lecture.

In addition to several learning opportunities technology offers for young adults, there are also disadvantages of technology such as a decreased attention span for learners in the absence of technological stimuli. Learners of today have a much shorter attention-span than previous generation because they are used to having multiple digital stimuli (Pena Galaviz, 2014: El Semary, 2011; Koehler & Mishra, 2005). Learners of today need their daily dose of technology stimulation to tolerate a full class-hour. More and more students engage in instant messaging, surf on the internet or listen to music videos during classes. Language educators can be grouped into two groups: they either allow their students to play with these technological applications so long as they continue attending their classes. Some educators, on the other hand, are very strict about not allowing use of any technological devices during the class time arguing that classroom demands their full attention and technology should not interfere (Pena Galaviz, 2014: Christensen, 2002). If educators demand that learners' i-Phones are taken away, they have a series of other novel gadgets to gear their attention to. Also, removal of their so called *technological toys* may cause learners to relinquish the course topic completely. The technologically deprived learners on the request of the educator can turn into a group of bored and disinterested learners ready to give-up on learning because they feel restricted or controlled against their will. According to Pena Galaviz (2014) it is not an option to deny the use of technology as an educator. He argues that it is essential that teacher is ready to adapt to all types of learning styles and keep-up-to-date with any technological innovations. Whichever route the language educator takes in the decision of technology integration, it has its own consequences and challenges in the learning context. Each strategy means a new route of action which is a dilemma educators grapple with on a daily basis.

1.1.1. Teaching in the Digital Era

Teaching in the digital era is more demanding than before, because it is no longer adequate to know one's subject matter as an educator. Educators strive to keep up with the changing technologies in the educational context. The teaching context is evolving at a quicker speed, which calls for more learning and adaptation on the part of instructors. Learners continue to lead the game of technology as educators lead the game of teaching. Teacher's leadership of teaching and learners' leaderships of technology can get in the way of the other's operations in the teaching hour. Whether or not technology is welcomed, it does intrude into the private classroom of the teacher. Educators are divided on the benefits of technology. Despite the increasing number of educators who support technology use in the classroom, some researchers and practitioners argue that adding technology does not necessarily make a fundamental quality difference in the content area of a course. These teachers/educators argue that it is also possible to achieve a good instruction in the absence of technological tools. For them, if technology is included, it is only to please students rather than providing a better quality of language instruction (Reilly, 2012; Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyabu, 2005). Others argue that teaching without emerging technologies is like teaching without a book.Technology seems to add more quality when infact only planned and careful integration can bring about quality instruction. Thus, it is better not to use technology if it will not be integrated mindfully to not lower the quality standards in education. Different skills or combinations of skills are needed for each unique teaching context to achieve the learning objectives with or without technology (Barnes, Marateo & Ferrids, 2007; Prensky, 2001). Only a well thought-out plan and careful integration of technology will ensue positive learning results in language classrooms.

There is a clash of interest between the educator and learners. Educators aim to cover their topic whereas learners aim to make the subject-matter appealing or digestible with some seasoning of technology. The term 'Digital Native' is coined for the young generation of today and 'Digital Immigrant' is used to refer to educators (Galaviz, 2014 Reilly, 2012; Berk, 2009; Prensky, 2001; Pena Kent & McNergney, 1999). The image conjures up educators as immigrants in the learners' native land of technology. Language educators as digital immigrants try to gain citizenship into the technological context by including technology in their teaching praxis. Also, teaching time can be used more effectively if the course content is supported with technological tools intelligently. A more pressing concern is probably the challenge of sustaining attention of learners if technological tools are removed from the learning environment. Many educators acknowledge that learners of digital generation have shorter attention spans: an epidemic that comes with over-stimulation of technology and under-stimulation of teaching environments in classrooms. It is for the goal of counteracting this loss of attention that educators embrace the idea of integrating technological appliances in their teaching contexts. This means that educators need to keep up with the new technologies and also participate in the technological discourse of their learners to have a common language. Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) is utilized as a theoretical framework in this study in order to inquire the meaning of technology integration in the teaching context for students and reduce the technology gap between learners and educators.

2. Theoretical Considerations

Technology fits smoothly into the new conceptualization of Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT), because MIT initiates innovation and change in the teaching praxis (Reilly, 2012; Bas, 2008; Veenema, 2001). Today's teaching and learning requires that we make technology and information systems part of our classroom teaching practices (Barnes, Marateo & Ferris, 2007; Gen, 2000). MIT allows for applying different technological applications in different forms and styles in the teaching process. The key achievement of the Multiple Intelligences Theory up-to-date is the expansion of the concept of intelligence from a previously static IQ conceptualization and supported with technological innovations in order to increase a variety of student participation and student performance. MIT should be conceptualized as a 'dynamic construct' that is always changing and evolving to emphasize the possibility of development and improvement (Fonseca &Arnold, 2004, p.122; Gardner, 1999). Multiple Intelligences proposes a fluid conceptualization of intelligence emphasizing uniqueness of each individual, and potential each learner brings for succeeding (Gen, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2011). In a similar vein of thought, learners of today need different ways of teaching to integrate their different intelligences in learning. It is the instructor's duty to respond to different learning styles of each learner.

MIT acknowledges that one size does not fit all, and views differences in learners as possibilities. Diversity of learners and their unique needs call for implementation of MIT in the language classroom (Dastgoshadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011). Gardner disturbs the so-called measurement of intelligence with IQ tests and proposes a larger spectrum of abilities highlighting the pluralistic nature of cognitive abilities (Mirzazadeh, 2012). From Gardner's perspective each learner is unique with his/her interests, capabilities and possibilities. He proposed a multiplicity of learner abilities and learning styles (Gardner, 1983; Gardner, 1999). He questioned unitary conceptualization of intelligence in educational spheres arguing that this may ignore hidden talents of today's diverse learners (Akbari & Hosseini, 2008). These multiple

types of intelligences imply 'diverse abilities' and 'learning styles' and require the need for tailored instruction for nourishing these specific talents (Madkour, 2009). MIT requires that an educator brings to surface hidden talents in each student by creating individualized lesson plans for their unique needs. The actual praxis of MIT application brings extraneous demands on the part of the language educator by requiring extra hours of preparation to realize potential of each learner.

Technology can be a life-saver for the teacher who needs a much better management of his/her time. Initial loss of time due to ups-and-downs of technology integration pays off soon after initial integration of technology in the lesson. Also, technology integration can help us reach learners with shorter attention spans and students with less tolerance for long lectures (Pena Galaviz, 2014; Prensky, 2011). Technology continues to change our perception of learning and change the nature of learning experiences. MIT is closely related with the technological teaching approach, because MIT allows for implementing various technological approaches into the teaching context (Bas, 2008; Veenem, 2001; Gen, 2000). Since the new generation demands more technological applications in the classroom, MIT can offer multiple stimuli for different learning styles and smoothly situate these in the learning context of today. Before delving into methodological details of the teaching context, it is necessary to have a close look at the types of intelligences proposed by Gardner. The following table shows different intelligences and the key points introduced by Howard Gardner in 1980s. Each intelligence emphasizes unique skills learners bring into the learning environment. Each learner has different levels and aptitudes in a number of intelligences. Our teaching praxis should make use of multiple modalities of intelligences to support the learning styles of all learners. These seven intelligences later extended to be nine intelligences in total in order to provide different avenues and tools to be implemented in the classroom:

2.1. Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) Chart

1) Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
This intelligence refers to effective use of language and good knowledge of words. These learners love expressing themselves in written or oral language. They are verbose in their descriptions and keen on participating in the classroom and expressing themselves effectively in various forms of language.

2) Mathematical/Logical Intelligence
This intelligence refers to effective use of numbers; ability to draw conclusions, logical deductions and inference of cause-effect relationships. Learners in this category recognize patterns easily and can arrive at the principles of a system such as solving the meaning of a text. These learners appreciate grammar rules.

3) Musical Intelligence
This intelligence refers to sensitivity to melody and rhythm. Learners in this group appreciate rhythm, pitch and melody alterations. They can notice subtle variations in speech production. Songs and poetry could be a great asset for these learners in the language classroom.

4) Spatial/Visual Intelligence
This intelligence refers to sensitivity to graphic forms and depictions; sensitivity to color and design. Learners in this category are good at creating images and picturesque depictions, and support their learning through imagery. New vocabulary

is retrieved through mental image forms.

5) Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
This intelligence refers to effective physical and bodily coordination. Learners in this category use their hands dexterously and manipulate objects easily. These learners like to move around and be active in their learning environment. Role plays and active participation in the learning appeal to them.

6) Interpersonal Intelligence
This refers to ability to understand others, their intention and moods; ability to empathize with others, and work well in group activities. These learners enjoy working with a partner and enjoy communicating with others in discovering a new language point.

7) Intrapersonal Intelligence
This refers to knowledge of the self; these learners express preference for independent learning and engaging in individual assignments. These learners enjoy introspection and self-reflection, and are well aware of their abilities and limitations as language learners.

8) Naturalist Intelligence
This intelligence refers to knowledge and care for nature. These learners enjoy learning about plant life and animal world. They are sensitive about environment, pollution and show care for the ecosystem. Topics about environment, botany and animal life could be interesting subjects in the language classroom to dwell upon.

9) Existential Intelligence
This intelligence refers to inclinations for the existentialist philosophy. They ponder upon the meaning of life and existence. These learners will enjoy discussions about religion and spirituality as they relate to the purpose of men on earth. So, including these subjects in the language classroom will grasp their attention.

3. Methodological Considerations

Different aspects of MIT framework illustrated in the above chart relates to the praxis of language learning, and this diversity has been recognized by more language educators recently since its conceptualization first by Gardner in 1980s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Almeida, Prieto, Ferreira, Bermejo & Fernando, 2010; Mirzazadeh, 2012). More educators today are recognizing the link between MIT and emerging technological tools for digital generation of learners (Reilly, 2012; Veenema & Gardner, 1996). Technology is one of the less spoken about factors that pervade all learning experiences today. More than ever, it is possible to see multiple gadgets attached to learners' bodies (Prensky, 2001). More and more students express a need to be online during the teaching hour. Technology continues to intervene into language classes, whether teachers welcome it or not. It is essential to accept the changing face of learning, and make space for technological innovations in the teahing process. Technology offers a simple and effective way to bring different intelligences to life. For instance, a video excerpt illustrates audio and visual intelligences and captures learners' attention through two distinct mediums. From a theoretical standpoint MIT offers a multi-viewed window, turning a mono-concept into a multi-concept.

Technological tools can be used in any teaching context, especially in a language teaching context in order to utilize a number of intelligences students bring into classroom. Different types of intelligences require different approaches of teaching in a language classroom. The continuing interest of language educators for effective language teaching compels us to engage in the the dialogue of MIT and technological framework in foreign language teaching praxis. Language educators recognize that language learning entails various factors in the language learning process (Hammond, 2008). Some of these factors are more apparent than others, and it is the language educator's duty to provide learners with different opportunities of learning for the same language material (Reilly, 2012; Mirzazadeh, 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 2011). An English language educator needs to acquaint oneself with these less noticeable constituents influencing student learning in hopes to respond to their different learning needs. MIT proposes a model that aims to serve all learners with different learning styles in the language classroom. Each intelligence utilized in the classroom can be visualized as a hook through which learners can be linked to the learning process. Hence, the more intelligences practiced in a classroom, the more chances there will be for teachers to grab the attention of learners (Dastgoshadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011; Fonseca & Arnold, 2004; Gen, 2000). Technology used purposefully in the language context can be the way for effective learner participation in a language classroom.

A case study is carried out with students studying in the School of Foreign Languages students in a Northern Cyprus University. This empirical study aimed to include student voices about the place of technology utilization in language classrooms. The research question that guide the study are: ''Do technological gadgets enhance the language learning process during class instruction; or do they diminish the learning experience by taking learners' attention elsewhere''. Eight students participated in this case study. Participants came from different countries such as Kirgizystan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ozbekistan. Three of the participants were female and five of them were male. Their ages are between19-27. The classroom was a mixed group of intermediate language proficiency students, some of which were false intermediates. The survey tool is used in the study to collect data. The survey sought to gather student views on technology and the place of technology in language education. Student responses in the survey were analyzed to figure out if student interest and engagament are influenced by technology inclusion of students into the teaching practice. It was also a goal to better understand the impact of technological tools for learners as an 'aid' or 'inhibitor' to the learning process in the language classes. The survey included six open-ended questions, which is added to the appendix at the end of the paper. Students were told that they could give short or extended responses in writing to the survey questions as they deem necessary. Students chose different lengths and details in responding to the survey questions. The student responses to survey analyzed in attempts to understand if student interest and engagement is determined by technology inclusion into the teaching practice. The study also attempted to get a closer understanding of the experience of technology for learners in language classrooms.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The findings are reached through a descriptive analysis of the survey questions. The responses of participants are studied comparatively and similar responses grouped under the same list. Coding of the responses as categories enabled better understanding of the concepts. Overarching themes are grouped together and similar categories and subcategories are highlighted. Open-ended survey questions aimed to provide the option for a short-and-to-the-

point or long-and-detailed responses. Students may have different experiences and levels of responses. Open-ended questions aimed to adress the unique experiences of each learner in the context of technology and language learning. Careful analysis of the responses gave rise to specific themes as the encompassing motifs. The themes are included in the following section with the underlying argument that shapes the framework:

4.1.Technology as a necessary element of effective language instruction

When their opinion is sought about the use of technology in the language classroom all learners claimed that technology is needed in the classroom to improve the quality of language education. Interestingly learners expressed very little about the teacher-directed technology integration in the language classes. Majority of students perceived utilization of technology from the perspective of individual learners as opposed to educators using technology. They pr-perceıved the technology question as students use of gadgets. This is interesting, because it may indicate the level of narcissism prevalent in the technology experience of young learners. Survey questions purposefully constructed as open-ended questions in order to get a closer glimpse of learner conceptualizations of technology. Studying the data from participants revealed that majority viewed technology as an essential aspect of the language class. Learners differed in their value judgement of technology use in language classes. Language proficiency level appeared as an important factor in how technology is viewed: an absolute must or an interesting addition to the class.

Analysing the response to whether technology use is practiced in language classes in their current undergraduate institutions, revealed some use of technological elements in the language classes. Second part of the question asked about whether they found technology inclusion adequate in their classes: Half of the students expressed a demand for more technology integration in their language classes as a way of improving the quality of language education in the classroom. Students explained their need to use technology with a variety of reasons such as a need to translate to their native language, understanding vocabulary words when there are unknown vocabulary, immediacy of information about a topic they are unfamiliar with, and an assistance through technological tools as a way of comforting shy students who prefer to learn intrapersonally with less attention from the instructor. If a language educator skillfully integrates technology in their teaching and is able to represent diverse intelligences, s/he will be closer to achieving the teaching objectives for her/himself and his/her learners.

4.2. Technological needs of learners varying upon their language proficiency

Despite overall agreement about technology's positive effects and overwhelming necessity of technological gadgets in learning, some learners mentioned that sometimes students use technology for social networking rather than educational purposes. Unfortunately, this can have a negative effect on the learning objectives. Confessions of technology use for non-learning purposes pointed to the need for teacher monitoring of technology use in language classes, because free-use-of technology can be a free-pass for student manipulation of the learning objectives. One participant mentioned about necessity of technology as a means of facilitation between his/her native language and the target language. This false-intermediate student had difficulty in comprehending the meaning of some survey questions, and highlighted his need and dependecy on technology for translation and comprehension purposes of English, only partially responding some of the questions. This particular case highlights varying levels of

dependence on technology in a mixed proficiency level classroom. Use of technology is vitally important for students with limited English proficiency. This is because students with lower-proficiency level language abilities might be reluctant to express their need of language support in the presence of higher-performing students. Thus, the level of English proficiency appears as an important indicator of technological need to be demanded by learners with less proficiency.

4.3. Technology demand to be directed by learning as well as non-learning purposes

One question specifically asked if students find themselves playing with iPhone, iPad, or IM during their language classes and why they engage in these activities. Interestingly only one participant indicated that he does not engage in these activities during the class period because it distracts his/her attention from the teacher and class. Other students expressed that their engagement in technological devices is due to translation between their mother tongue and the target language, assisting their understanding when they do not understand something about the subject matter and to connect with friends and family and so on. Others stated that they use these devices for a variety of purposes from education to social interaction with family and friends. One student confessed that he finds himself losing focus and attention as s/he engages in these activities, whereas another one claimed that he is able to sustain his/her interest in the class as s/he engages in these technological social networking. One confessed that he knows it is bad to play with technological tools during the class intruction, but s/he still does it. The responses indicate that students use these technological mediums for different purposes. Some learners use it for comprehension purposes to better understand the class whereas others use it for non-educational purposes namely social networking. This makes it challenging for the educator to have a firm technology policy in the classroom, because in either case some learners will be unserved. Probiting the use of technology will affect those who are dependent on technology as a language aid. Not prohibiting the use of technology, on the other hand, will affect some learners negatively, especially those who find themselves carried away to other platforms instead of the course material. Teacher monitoring is key to solving this problem. Yet, it is easy to accomplish in small classes, but it is a more challenging task in more crowded classrooms.

4.4. Technology use as a narcissistic learner engagement

Student responses to the first and second questions of the survey about technology use in the language classroom were responded from an individualistic perspective. Participants answered the question based on their use of technology individually as opposed to group use of technology or teacher directed technology use in the classroom. This represents an individualistic perspective of technology integration in the language class. Also, this highlights narcissistic experience of technology use for learners. Despite the small number of participants in the study, this qualitative study represents of six different countries, and languages. Creation of a community of learning experience can be a challenging task if learners view technology use as an individual activity. Also, dependence of learners on technology is another phenomenon the educator needs to address in connection to today's generation.

The responses to the question how students felt when they were asked to stop using these technological devices by their educators revealed that a majority of the learners felt bad or embarrassed when the teacher asked them to stop using internet and pay attention to the class. One of the students expressed that he feels like he is missing a hand or leg when his/her telephone was taken away. This response specifically shows the addiction young adults have in

technology. They cannot think of their life without technological gadgets, to the extent that a particular student felt as if he was amputated if his technological device is taken away from him. One person expressed that he feels bad because an important call from home can come when his telephone is not with him. Since the students were not native to Northern Cyprus (K.K.T.C) and originated from different countries for their university education, their phone represented an important connection to their family living overseas. These factors can alert language educators to rethink about their policies of student-directed technology use in their classes to better serve learner needs. To break the cycle of individual technology use for a collaborated learning community may require some effective planning on the part of the instructor.

4.5. Technology as a student escape (i.e. boredom and loss-of-attention)

Student boredom in language classes appeared as a reason why students chose to engage in technology. Also, reaching any data in a matter of seconds are given as reasons for learners' technology use during classes. One student expressed that he does not feel bad for being caught by the teacher using their phone because he can do two things at the same time without losing interest in the lesson. One other student expressed that it is okay if the teacher stops him/ her from using his/her tehnological gadget, because students should know their status in relation to their teacher and act accordingly to respect their teacher's requests. The last student expressed that the instructor has the authority to ask the student to stop using these devices and there could also be a penalty for using these devices by the teacher.

It was also interesting that all learners assumed cellular phones as a technological tool when the question asked generally about the use of technological devices. There could be a list of technological devices to discuss about but the participants of the study chose to focus on cellular phones as the representation of technological devices. All these points highlight the importance of technology for today's learners, and negative feelings accompanied when their internet access/ technological gadgets are taken away from them. This indicates that instructors should develop careful strategies without ostracising students when responding to their use of internet to get away from the course content. As difficult as it seems an educator needs to present such lively and visually attractive classes that learners will be ready to leave their technological devices and buckle-up for their classroom learning experience.

4.6. Technology control as affirmation of the course-objective

The last question asked if a class can be effective without technological support. Majority of the participants thought that the class without technology couldn't be effective. A few of the participants thought that the class can still be effective without technology. It is evident that participants in the study supported having technological elements in language classes and thought it would make the language class more effective. They claimed that the teacher can still use the textbook effectively if the teacher can make learners understand the topic in which case technology will be the icing on the cake. Despite the positive effect of technology in language classes, the misuse of technology (i.e. social networking) still needs to be addressed. Thus, the educator needs to find a happy medium between technology and his/her instruction. S/he needs to provide technological support for those learners who assumes it essential for their learning, but should also watch out for learners who would try to sabotage his/her learning and that of other learners' learning. This in itself is a challenging task and highlights the difficulty of meeting diverse learning styles and needs. The decision will be determined by the make-up of a particular teaching context. If majority of learners use

technology for academic purposes, one can ignore a few who would utilize it for social purposes. Yet, if majority of learners utilize it for social networking purposes, then it is inevitable to limit technology use or control its use to be alignded against the learning goals. Educators can determine pros and cons of their decision and consider the context of the learning situation for the best action plan.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Teacher's task of teaching has become more challenging today, because we are living in an era where teaching is more demanding than before. Teachers need to put more hours of preparation making sure that their class is adequately palatable for the technologically-oriented learners and perform as an actress/actor in front of students to sustain their attention throughout the course hour. It is not enough to know one's subject matter anymore to achieve one's teaching objectives. It is also necessary to know how to present it in a way that makes sense to the changing clientele of young adults. If the presentation lacks what they consider vitality and technological palatability, the expert knowledge does not reach the intended audience of learners. Keeping-up with the emerging technologies are of equal importance as the content of teaching materials. Dual duty of the teacher becomes prevalent: to present a key content to the target audience and hold learner attention on the topic during the teaching process. Language classrooms appear as an under-stimulated environment for the technologically stimulated learner groups. This technological division between learners and instructors can only be resolved when instructors know more about learners' world and bring aspects of technology into classroom.

The task of teaching and learning goes hand-in-hand. No relationship is one-way nor is teaching or learning. Thus, it is not fair to expect all work to be done by the educator or the learner. There are responsibilities for both groups to embrace. Young adults of today need to face their problem of addiction when it comes to technology and address this learning risk constructively. As with any addiction there are some consequences to counterract. Learners of today appear to suffer from a specific kind of attention deficit disorder. This is a learned behavior due to prolonged use of technology. Digital natives of today find it challenging to listen to any lecture or speech and take notes if the lecture extends longer than fifteen minutes. Their attention gets lost and they seem to need colorful screen with bullet points and lively digital pictures and videos to be able to follow any intense course material. This is alarming because these learners are unable to store audial information in memory, filter important notes from unimportant ones and take notes of important points as we used to do in schools. Young learners of today seem to suffer from a short attention span and getting them to focus on any activity or task for an extended period is a challenging task.

The challenges of today's learners are partly due to their inadeate reading habits. They get their daily dose of news and information anywhere from the internet such as blog, twitter, and internet sources which could be reliable or unreliable and they all accumulate into a less-quality communication experience for them. New generation has no time or patience to read long documents because they love to get instant formulas or quick fixes. Sitting down to read a book seems an archaic experience for them because internet offers a quick condensed version of anything. So, why should they bother? Yet, the problem is; internet does not only reduce the length, they also reduce the quality of the text and the reading experience. The result is much less-criticality in reading. This of course makes teaching them a much more challenging task than it already is. Teachers are puzzled as how to create short summaries of chapters and diluted

powerpoints when they have an impatient on-the-go group of learners who demands least amount of work and most amount of gain in the short time-frame. Life is no place of shortcuts nor is the learning process. Learning comes with hardwork and patience. This generation is in danger of inadequate and inefficient learning experience. The digital Natives are caught in a limbo of technology. As for any thing there needs to be some precautions to be taken and for technology similar rules should apply. Learners of today have all the means and possibilities of learning uncomparable to previous generations and yet somehow they use the bare mimimum from among rich possibilities of learning.

This paper aimed to inquire the technology experience from the perspective of learners. The study revealed once again the prevalent gap between the digital natives (today's learners) and digital immigrants (today's teachers). The educational gap of today is not only teacher's/educator's problem; it is also students' problem. And it is not only a problem to be blamed on emerging technologies. It is not only to be blamed on textbooks or diverse learning styles of learners. All parties need to take responsibility in the teaching and learning process by questioning what they are doing, what they are not doing and what they need to be doing. Learners need to look for ways to recover from the epidemic of technology addiction by forcing themselves to turn off electronic devices and focus on listening to their educators. Learners owe it to themselves to read the full-text papers and long passages at home and during the classes for the full benefit of learning instead of frantically searching for the shortest or quickest summary available on the internet.

Today life is full of options and technology offers many pathways and possibilities. The goal should not be the quickest way to reach the destination, but diverse pathways to choose the most quality learning experience. In the question of technology, educators have a big responsibility for their learners and themselves. They have to update themselves in the technological advancements in order to better serve their learners. A teacher needs to be a good learner if s/he is to be a good teacher. Teaching cannot take place in the absence of learning and vice versa. Today, we live in an era where technology leads the way of learning. While we feel comfortable to do what we have always been doing in our teaching practices, the times call for innovation, change and renovation. It is imperative that we continue improving ourselves and make innovation part of our teaching practice. This means that we need to educate ourselves about new ways of teaching and novel aspects of technology in order integrate into our teaching practices. This will enable us to take risks and find common pathways with our learners to be the best educator we can be. It is only with the devotion of both educators and learners that we can achieve the learning and teaching goals to reach the highest potential.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

(1) What do you think about the use of technology inlanguage classrooms?

(2) Do you think your language classes use technology? If yes, do you think it is

adequate (sufficient) use of technology ?

(3) Is it necessary to use technology in language classes? Why?

(4) Do you find yourself playing with your cell phone, iPhone, iPad or IM ing during

lessons? If yes, why do you do that?

(5) Were you asked to stop using any technological devices in class by your teacher?

How did you feel?

(6) Can a language class be effective if no technology is incorporated into the lesson?

Why?