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An Exploratory Study on the Use of Computers for English Language Learning Purposes among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students in Al-Albyet University in Jordan

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Abstract

Computer Assisted Language Learning and Internet have been proven as useful tools when being used in the classroom for English language learning purposes. This study aimed at exploring the use of computer (skills and internet) for English language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students. The data collection in the study was based on a questionnaire given to 171 EFL students in the department of Instruction and Curriculum and English in Al-AlBeyet University in Jordan. The results of this study revealed a high usage of word processor, power point and presentations software among Jordanian EFL students in their lessons. The study has also shown a high usage of net to search information, online entertainments and news accounts from foreign sources. Finally, the current study found that there were some factors influencing students' use of computer for English learning purposes such as the lack of appropriate software and the lack of time. Accordingly, a few recommendations were given for further research.

Keywords: ICT, Internet, applications software, EFL

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1. Introduction

In the second half of the 20th century, education technology was regarded as one of the most developed fields all over the world. Computers which have been used at schools in 1950s are continuously being developed in the world's advanced countries. Nowadays, computers have become more powerful, easier to use, faster, cheaper and they can store and process more data as well. Due to the rapid development of computers, some programs such as hard disks, CD-ROMs, laser disks and printers have developed and become effective in the learning process by displaying pictures and playing sound along with characters (Gunduz, 2005: 2). The use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) plays an important role in language learning process and this is due to the potentials which CALL offers such as motivating students and encouraging them to achieve positive outcomes, greater interaction and global understanding of various issues (Kuang,2000). As a result of computer development, many types of software have been developed to enable students to learn better and faster. This software definitely facilitates teaching and learning because language teachers can incorporate the materials in their teaching (Abdul samat & Zakaria, 2003: 253).

Warschauer & Healey (1998) stated that in the past thirty years, using computers has developed from computer-fed drills to research based on long-distance communication and collaboration. They divided Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) into three phases: behaviorist computer assisted language learning such as drill-practice method where computers work as tireless tutors, communicative computer assisted language learning which emphasizes that language learning is a creative development and the integrative computer assisted language learning which encourages the use of language in the meaningful context.

Thus, computer is a mechanical device which can be beneficial to educators in the fields of English as a foreign language. However, Computer becomes futile if there are no careful choice, preparation of materials, planning of lessons, classroom management and training of learners and teachers. Therefore, teachers' role in implementing the computer in lesson planning cannot be ignored. Higgins (1995) pointed out that computer assisted language learning allows the users to explore the language. Computer use is compatible to the approaches, methods and techniques of teaching and learning.

2. Statement of the Problem

Computers in teaching and learning are widely used in most countries and their use became an effective device in the classroom. Although Jordanian schools and universities have been equipped with computer labs, there is a shortage in their use for learning purposes. Batainah (2006: 6) pointed out that Jordanian students are not proficient in computer skills because they have not been given the opportunities to have enough exposure to computer use. In addition, the number of computers in the schools is

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not sufficient and there are problems in the hardware. Khomaith (2003) stated that Jordanian students rarely use Internet for learning purposes and they also hardly use it for the other applications. The study found out that there were differences in using Internet as a source of learning due to the differences in majors and specializations. Al-Omari (2005: 203) stated that although the internet is commonly used in all educational institutions in Jordan, Jordanian students do not make real use of this technology in the field of education and this is due to the lack of computer skills and computer access.

3. The Objectives of the Study

The present study attempts to achieve the following purposes:

1. To determine the patterns of computer programs usage for English language learning purposes among EFL students in Jordan. This item includes:
 - Word processing
 - Power Point
2. To determine the patterns of Internet activities usage for English language learning purposes among EFL students in Jordan. The items that need to be determined include:
 - E-mail
 - Online news
 - Online entertainments
 - MSN/Messenger/IRC
 - Online websites for English language learning.
3. To determine the possible factors which influence the students' computer usage patterns for English language learning purposes. This items that need to be determined include:
 - Lack of computer skills
 - Lack of computer access
 - Lack of typing skills
 - Lack of appropriate software
 - Lack of time

4. Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the most common computer skills which are used for English language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students in Al-Albyet University?
- 2) What are the most commonly internet activities which are used for English language learning purposes among EFL students?

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- 3) What are the factors that influence students' use of the computer for English language learning among EFL students?

5. Significance of the Study

All the institutions in the educational process in Jordan will benefit from the findings of the current study such as the students and the teachers and the decision makers in the Ministry of Education in Jordan. The significance of the study will be explained as below:

The findings will be inputs to the teachers enable them to measure the frequencies of students' Internet usage for English language learning without any external help. Comprehending the students' Internet usage habits will help the teachers to integrate the students' interests in the classroom. Beside that, this study will give obvious perception for the teachers about the extent of students' acceptance of the Internet in their daily lives because we can not presume that multicultural students in EFL classroom accept all the Internet usage patterns. The findings will give general perception of computer usage in the classroom which composes of students using computer programs beside the Internet. It also saves as a maker and checklist as to how frequent teachers in universities encourage the students to use the computer in English language learning. On one hand, this study will be important for the teachers that is enabling the teachers to determine if the teacher's help and his supervision will encourage the students to use computer programs on English language learning.

On the other hand, this study will help the teachers and the education web designers in developing the computer programs on English language learning. The findings of the study will also highlight how the teachers and the decision makers specify the factors that face students in the computer use and thus putting the appropriate mechanism to overcome these obstructions to improve the students' computer usage skills in English language learning. The present study will provide useful information about computer use in Jordan and the weakness points of Jordanian EFL students in the use of computer programs. This will enable the decision makers in Jordan to find right mechanism to bridge the gaps in the literature to the computer usage in the third world countries. The current study is a basis for a further research which can be conducted in the area.

6. Literature Review

Many research studies have been carried out during the last few years (2000-2006) on different instructional topics, learners and teachers and computer assisted language learning. The roles of technology and computer in teaching and learning have been widely explained and explored. There was a study conducted at Inter collage, Nicosia on the critical relation between lecturer, student and technology in the process of

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learning English in tertiary education in Cyprus. The title of this study is “Integrating Technology in EFL”, it was conducted by Ktoridou, Zarpatea and Yiangou in 2002. One of the aims of this study is to determine the patterns of computer usage (skills and internet activities) for English language learning.

The current study will be conducted because there was a similar study conducted in the University of Cyprus and secondary schools. Cypriot English teachers did not use technology in their classrooms although they were informed about the success of technology in EFL. Students at Cyprus University were given 150 questionnaires, these students took different English courses (inter mediate, upper intermediate and advanced). Only 120 students answered these questionnaires. As a result of the question if there is an encouragement from the lecturers to their students to use technology in their English classes, 62 out of 120 denied that their lecturers encourage them to use technology for English learning purposes. 58 out of 120 agreed that their lecturers encourage them to use technology in their English classes where the study has shown higher usage of chat, e-mail, net to search for information and news accounts from foreign sources. The findings also revealed that a few students use internet to study other cultures. The Cyprus study revealed that students rarely use power point and video clips for English learning purposes. Moreover, Cyprus study revealed that there were some factors that influence students’ use of computer in the classroom such as the lack of time, the lack of appropriate software and the lack of basic skills.

Al-Kahtani (2001) conducted a study to explore the role of CALL in EFL departments of four universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A mixed method design including a questionnaire and an interview was used to collect the data. He found that students in Saudi Universities showed positive attitudes towards using Call in EFL instruction. The study has also shown a high usage of internet, e-mail and word processor among Saudi students. It has also shown some barriers which influence students’ use of computer for English learning purposes such as the lack of internet connectivity, the lack of adequate software and the lack of computer access.

Another study was done on Jordanian EFL students’ perceptions of their computer literacy in Yarmouk University (Ruba Fahmi Bataineh & Abdallah Ahmad Baniabdelrahman, 2006). The researchers conducted this study on a big sample of 210 students representing all EFL students in the departments of curriculum, instruction and English at Yarmouk University to determine Jordanian EFL students’ perceptions of their computer literacy as a means to specify the kind of training that Jordanian pre-service teachers need to cope with the changes in information technology. In order to identify this aim, a questionnaire was given to 210 EFL students in the departments of curriculum and Instruction and English at Yarmouk University, the questionnaire consisted of two demographic questions and 25 items which are related to students’ perceptions of their computer literacy (19 items) and the factors that decrease students’ use of computer (6 items including one open-ended question). In answering the question that addressed the

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level of the students' computer literacy, the study showed that a high percentage of the students were not proficient in using images from a camcorder or digital camera in computer applications, opening and using more than one file, using a database system for looking for information, access to information on a CD-ROM, printing new information from database, repairing the malfunctioning printer, using database and word processing software to make tables and figures, making a lecture by presentation software, making pictures by using graphics software, making newsletter with desktop publishing, making database and using power point in their classroom.

The previous study revealed that the students were weak in higher order computer skills because the basic computer usages purposes were limited to the electronic email and word processing and may be their weakness in higher order skills due to that these skills are foreign to the study students. The study has shown that there were some factors which limit the students' computer usage such as computer usage purposes are limited to electronic email and word processing, the number of computers is inadequate, and there are problems in hardware such as a malfunctioning in mouse, microphone, keyboard and disk drive. The computers are slow, students lack the experience in computer usage and the time is limited to perform the tasks satisfactorily. Moreover, the study does not find out any significant influence of gender on the students' perceptions of computer literacy.

Although there are negative results on studies conducted on computer usage and English language learning, there are also positive results on using CALL in English language learning. A study was carried out on using Internet by Saudi postgraduate students in United States of America (Zakari, 2000). The aim of the study was to identify the benefits of Internet for Higher Education, the researcher has used an interview and a questionnaire as instruments for the study and the sample of the study consisted of 571 students. The findings of the study has shown that the students have a motive to use the internet where they confirmed that internet presents many academic benefits such as the speed of obtaining the information and the easiness of obtaining the information to finish their researches.

Another study was conducted on the internet usage in the American Universities (Fleck and Mcqueen, 2002), the instrument of the study was a questionnaire consisting of 22 items. The questionnaire was distributed to 6000 students in 13 American colleges and universities. The finding of the study has shown that the universities and colleges students use internet in the areas that are related to their study more than any other areas.

A study was conducted on building language learning environments to help technological university students develop English independent learning (Shih-Yin, 2005). This study aimed at encouraging students to use technology based environment out of the classroom to develop the language skills of the students. The instruments that were used to obtain the data were interview, reflective diaries and questionnaire. The findings of the study have shown that although the students encountered many problems and difficulties,

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they have shown a positive attitude towards using technology in learning process, and they confirmed that they would continue using the web for practicing language skills.

A study on the effects of computer assisted instructions was conducted on Jordanian college students' achievements in an introductory computer science course. This study was conducted on EFL students by (Mohammed Ali Ahmad Akour, 2005) to answer the question if there are significant differences in achieving the results between students who obtain traditional instruction (TI) beside the computer assisted instruction (CAI) and those who obtain only the traditional instruction (TI) in an introductory computer science course. The researcher used the computer science-1 achievement test (CS1AT) to assess the results. The sample of the study consists of college students who have enrolled in computer science-1 course in Al-Albait University. The findings of the study have shown that students who obtain (TI) with (CAI) achieve positive results in improving their learning rather than the students who receive only (TI). The study has also shown that students who receive (CAI) perform positive outcomes in various educational levels.

Looking at the pervious studies, some of them confirmed that computers play crucial roles in the educational process where students can use them including (word processing and power point) to improve their English language skills (Al-Kahtani, 2001 & Akour, 2005). Some studies asserted that students showed positive attitudes towards using internet to improve their English skills (Ktoridou, Zarpatea & Yiangou, 2002; Zakari, 2000; Fleck & Mcqueen, 2002 & Shin-Yin, 2005). On the other hand, only one study pointed out that students are weak in higher order computer skills but it corresponded to the other studies in regard to the factors that influence students to use computer for English learning purposes such as the lack of time, the lack of basic skills and the slowness of computers which led to the lack of computer access. The present study will explore further computer skills and activities which play a part in improving the Basic English skills for the students as well as the main factors that influence their use of computer for learning English.

7. Data Collection

7.1 An Overview of the Population

The population in this study is all EFL students in the department of Curriculum and Instruction and English at AL-Albait University in Jordan in the first semester of the academic year 2006/2007. The sample of this study contains 171 students (50 male and 121 female) EFL students. They are 22 years old and now in the fourth year in Al-Albait University in AlMafrq province in Jordan. The researcher chose the fourth academic year students because they finished studying most courses that require using English language labs.

Al-Albait University has its own computer labs and students need to sit one hour in the lab, learning English by using software programs or by visiting online English

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language learning websites. However, the time is not enough to enable students make use of the labs or even to fulfill what they are asked to do such as doing exercises or other learning activities. The teachers would determine a particular area such as pronunciation area or grammatical area that has been taught and explained in the classrooms. Then they provide the sites with exercises relevant to what they have learned in the classrooms and ask them to complete these exercises. In addition, visiting computer labs enable students to listen properly and practice pronunciation. The teachers would also specify the kind of software and website for the students according to their levels.

7.2 Sample Size

The department of Curriculum and Instruction and English in Al-Albyet University was chosen for the current study. This department has an average of 171 Jordanian EFL students in the first semester of the academic year 2006/2007.

7.3 Sampling Method

A random sampling method was used to choose the university where the researcher has conducted the study. Jordan consists of eight government universities and twelve private universities spreading in all provinces. All English departments in these universities teach English as a foreign language and use computers in the learning and teaching process.

The current study was carried out in Al-albait University in Al-Marfaq province and the researcher has selected this university because ICT infrastructure has been installed in this university recently compared to the other universities in Jordan. Also, this university was more convenient in location to the distributors of the questionnaires in terms of access and delivery of the survey. The department of curriculum and instruction and English in this university includes 171 students in the first semester of the academic year 2006/2007. The officials in the department of Curriculum and Instruction and English in this university had already provided the distributors of the questionnaire with a list of the EFL students in the fourth level of the academic year 2006/2007.

7.4 Data Collection Method/Instrument

In order to collect the data, the researcher used a questionnaire which includes three parts. This will be discussed as follows:

7.4.1 Instrument – Questionnaire

In light of the discussions above, the researcher used a five–likert scale questionnaire to measure the three aims:

- 1) The use of computer skills for English language learning purposes

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- 1) The use of internet-mediated activities for English language learning purposes.
- 2) The factors that influence students' use of computers for English language learning purposes.

The questionnaires were adopted from a similar study conducted in Cyprus by Ktoridou, Zarpetea and Yiangou in 2002 (<http://www.uncw.edu/cte/et/articles/ktoridou3/>). In the light of this, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire was established because a similar questionnaire has been used in a similar study in Cyprus, its title is "Integrating Technology in EFL". The questionnaire used in Cyprus included the use of internet, computer software and video where the current study focuses only on internet and computer software. The item 'using videoconferencing technology' in the first question in the questionnaire used in Cyprus was not involved in the questionnaire for the current study. Instead, only some of the items were selected. In the second question of the questionnaire that was used in Cyprus, there are two items such as 'the use of electronic encyclopedias' and 'the use of interactive software in the class' were not included in the questionnaire of the current study. Instead, only some of the items were chosen and others were from the one conducted on Jordanian EFL students' perceptions of their computer literacy by Batainah and Baniabdelrahman, 2006.

The researcher has taken some precautionary steps to administer the questionnaire. These steps are necessary to ensure that the respondents' answers on the use of computer are accurate. So, the researcher sent the questionnaire to two English master students in Al-Albyet University by email. The English master students live in the same place where the researcher used to live. When they received the questionnaire, they photo copied 171 questionnaires according to the sample of the study. Then, they met the officials of the department of Curriculum and Instruction and English in Al-Albyet University to ask for permission to distribute the questionnaires during 30 minutes, 5 minutes for distributing them, 20 minutes for answering them and 5 minutes for collecting them. The management of the department allowed the English master students to distribute and collect the questionnaires during 30 minutes.

Before distributing the questionnaires to the students, the researcher provided the English master students with the following instructions:

1. To provide the students with the purpose of the study.
2. To encourage the students verbally to be accurate in their responses to the items of the questionnaire.
3. To guide the students until they answer all the items by explaining ambiguous items. This will enable students to comprehend the items of the questionnaire accurately.

Then, the questionnaires were distributed to 171 students during 5 minutes and the distributors helped students to comprehend all the items of the questionnaires by answering their inquires and explaining ambiguous items. After the students answered

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all the items, the English master students collected the questionnaires during 5 minutes and they sent the answers to the researcher by email. When the researcher received the responses, they were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

The questionnaire includes four parts as follows:

Part A: Demographic information

Part B: The use of computer software for English language learning purposes.

Part C: The use of internet-mediated activities For English language learning purposes.

Part D: The factors limiting students' use of computer for English language learning.

Part A in the questionnaire generally addresses demographic information of the respondents which deal with information on the year of study and gender of the respondents.

Part B is about the use of computer skills for English language learning purposes. The areas that can be used on computer skills include word processor and power point. *For example, how often do you use word processor to write and print an assignment? (Please tick)... always, often, sometimes, seldom and never.*

Part C deals with the use of internet-mediated activities for English language learning purposes. The respondents were asked to answer five types of internet-mediated activities which include exchanging e-mails with native speakers or chatting, searching for cultural information in order to have an idea about different countries, customs and cultures, visiting online news to obtain the news from international newspapers, visiting online entertainment and visiting English online websites to learn grammar, pronunciation and reading. *For example: How often do you exchange e-mails with native speakers for English language learning purposes? (Please tick)...always, often, sometimes, seldom and never.*

Part D deals with the factors that influence students' use of computer for English language learning. This part of the questionnaire attempts to provide valuable information and insights to justify the pattern used by the respondents in the regulated and unregulated environments. *For example: How frequently does the time influences your computer use for English language learning purposes? (Please tick)... always, often, sometimes, seldom and never.*

7.4.2 Data Analysis

A total of 171 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the students to be answered under supervision of English master students. Each student was given a sufficient time to answer the questionnaire. The English master students were responsible for simplifying the questionnaire's items to the students in order to obtain accurate answers.

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The data obtained after collecting the questionnaire will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel which can count the frequency and then data will be offered in Pie-Charts to show the percentage of using computer among students. This will provide the researcher with an overview of the findings that will be obtained.

7.4.2.1 Flow Chart/ Schedule

The proposed schedule (Table 1) serves as a work plan to conduct the research within a time frame of about one month.

Table 1: Proposed Schedule/ work plan for the study to be carried out.

Week	Details	Actions to be taken	Results to be obtained
1-2	Survey	Questionnaire to be handed out and collected	Based on the feedback obtained
3-4	Data Analysis	Quantitative research methods	Based on the feedback obtained

8. The Results of the Study

8.1 What are the most common computer skills which are used for English Language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students in Al-Albyet University?

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, total and percentages of the students' responses to the items of computer skills:

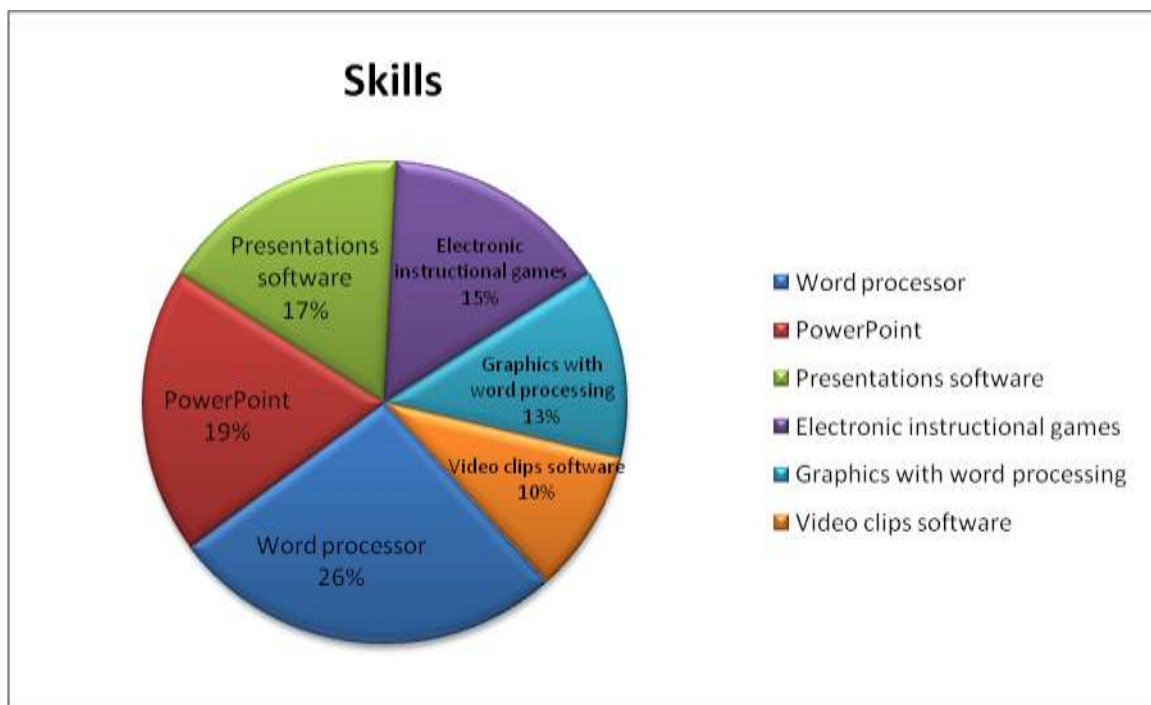
Item	Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total	%
1	Word processor	171	3.62	1.041	619	26
4	PowerPoint	171	3.12	1.045	533	19
5	Presentations software	171	2.98	1.181	510	17
3	Electronic instructional games	171	2.76	1.166	472	15
2	Graphics with word processing	171	2.30	1.030	394	13

6	Video clips software	171	2.14	1.053	366	10
	Averages		2.82	1.09	482.3	

Table 1 shows that skill 1 (*word processor to write and print assignments for English lessons purposes*) constitutes the highest percentage among Jordanian EFL students which is 26%. Also it can be noticed that the previous skill was followed by the skill (*power point to give presentation to the class for English learning purposes*) which constitutes 19% of respondents. Likewise, it could be seen that the third highest percentage of the most common computer skills used for English learning purposes is 17% which represents the skill (*presentation software to create a lesson or a lecture for English learning purposes*). These three skills are higher than the overall average of mean which is 2.82%. This means that students use the three computer skills more than the others for English learning purposes. On the other hand, it could be seen that the fourth highest percentage among the respondents is (*electronic games for English learning purposes*) constituting 15%. 13% of respondents use graphics with word processor in the class for English learning purposes and it is a low percentage as compared to the other skills. Finally, the computer skill (*video clips that software has to offer in the class for English language learning purposes*) has the lowest percentage among the respondents which is 10%. The last three skills are lower than the overall average of mean and this means that the students rarely use these three skills in their classroom.

Upon examining the previous table, one must have noticed that the most common computer skill used for English language learning purposes seems to involve word processor to write and print assignments and power point to give presentations. Moreover, Uses of word processor and power point constitute the highest percentages among respondents' answers. That is, 26% for word processor and 19% for power point. Thus, this demonstrates that Jordanian EFL students actually use word processor and power point for English language learning purposes more than the other computer skills.

Figure 1 : Students' percentages to the use of computer skills for English language learning purposes:



As can be seen from the figure, of the six skills, the skill (*word processor to write and print assignments for English language purposes*) is used more than the other skills for English lessons purposes, followed by the skill (*power point to give presentations in the class for English learning purposes*). Therefore, these two skills are the most common among Jordanian EFL students for English language purposes. One possible explanation for why Jordanian EFL students use these two skills more than the others is that word processor for English learning purposes and power point for the same purposes play an effective role in improving Jordanian EFL students in the fourth English skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.

8.2 What are the most commonly internet activities which are used for English language learning purposes among EFL students?

In order to identify the most common internet activities among Jordanian EFL students, the researcher divides table 2 according to each activity. The analysis is done according to each activity. The findings are presented in terms of percentages.

Table 2: displays means, standard deviations, total and percentages of students' responses to the internet activities items.

Item	Internet activities	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total	%
3	Net to search	171	3.91	0.863	668	25
4	Online entertainments	171	3.53	0.941	603	20
5	News accounts	171	3.45	1.086	590	17
6	English websites	171	2.90	0.986	496	15
1	E-mail	171	2.54	0.971	435	13
2	Chat	171	2.22	0.944	380	11
	Averages		3.09	0.97	528.7	

As can be seen from the table, the highest percentage of the most common internet activities used for English language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students is 25 % which is (*Net to search on background information about different countries and cultures*). This is followed by (*Online entertainments including music and online games*) which is the second highest percentage of internet activities usage among Jordanian EFL students (20%). The third highest percentage of internet activities for English language learning purposes is (*News accounts from different sources*) which constitutes 17% of respondents. As can be noticed, the percentages of these three skills are higher than the overall average of mean which is 3.09% proving that students use these three activities continuously for their classroom purposes. The activity that has the fourth highest percentage of internet usage for English language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students is (*English websites to improve English skills*), this activity reaches to 15% of respondents. Other internet activities were not used for English language learning purposes like the previous activities. Only 13% of respondents stated that they use (*E-mail with native speakers*) for English language learning but this is a low percentage as compared to the other activities. Finally, the lowest percentage of internet activities usage for English language learning purposes is (*Chat by using IRC/ICQ/MSN Messenger*). 10% of respondents stated that they use (*Chat*) for English language learning purposes. It is clear that the last three skills are lower than the overall average of mean which indicates that students rarely use these activities for classroom purposes.

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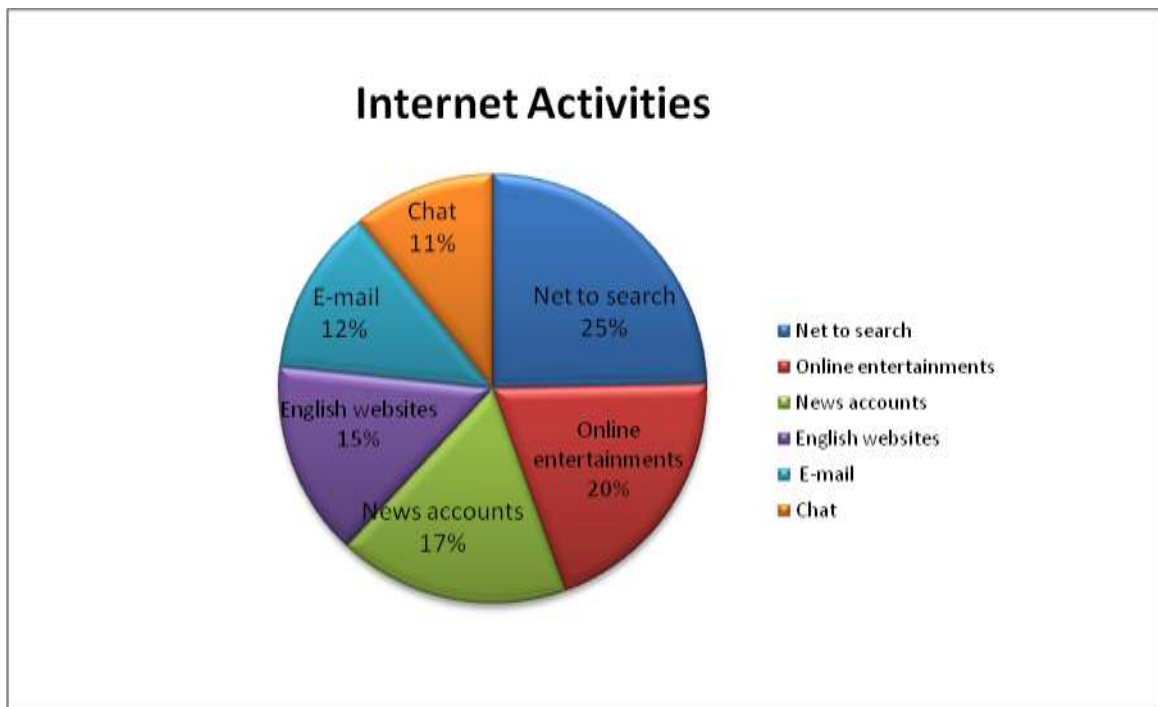
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From the findings of the study, the most common internet activities used for English language learning seem to be *Net to search on background information about countries and cultures*. The use of this activity constitutes the highest percentage of respondents. The second highest percentage of internet activities usage involves *online entertainments* and third *news accounts from different sources*.

This demonstrates that Jordanian EFL students use net to search on background information about different countries and cultures, online entertainments and news accounts from different sources for English language learning purposes more than the other activities. The three internet activities mentioned above are the most common activities used for English language learning purposes among Jordanian EFL students.

Figure 2: Students' percentages to the use of internet activities for English language learning purposes:



In figure 2, it seems that students do not show very favorable responses on chat usage for English language learning purposes. Only 11% of respondents use chat for English learning purposes. It could also be seen that the percentage of the respondents who use E-mail for English learning purposes is low. That is 12%. It could be noticed that the percentage of the respondents who use English websites for learning English is not high. Only 15% use English websites to learn English. This could be due to the lack of motivation for English learning. Although internet activities such as chat, e-mail and

English websites can be helpful for students to improve their skills, the current study has shown that not many students use these activities for English language learning purposes.

8.3 What are the factors that influence students' use of the computer for English language learning among EFL students?

Table 3 : displays means, standard deviation, total and percentages of the students' responses to the factors that influence students' use of computer:

Item	Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total	%
4	Lack of appropriate software	171	3.63	1.152	621	27
5	Lack of time	171	3.44	1.143	589	23
1	Lack of basic skills	171	3.13	1.350	536	18
2	Lack of computer access	171	2.98	1.276	510	17
3	Lack of educational software	171	2.75	1.231	471	15
Averages			3.19	1.23	545.4	

Table 3 shows that the lack of appropriate software appears to be prominent factor that impedes students' use of computer for English learning purposes in which it constitutes 27 % of respondents. This factor is regarded as the highest percentage among the respondents. Certain required software may not be available in the university and college labs and some software do not have the new version. This may cause frustration among the students and impede them from using computer for English learning purposes. The second highest percentage of factors that influence students' use of computer is the lack of time.

A total of 23 % of the students responded this as a factor that influence computer's use among Jordanian EFL students. Lack of time may be associated with the lack of computer skills, typing skills and access which act as an obstacle for the students to do their assignments. These two factors are the most common among Jordanian students because their mean percentages (3.63/3.44) are higher than the overall average of all items which is (3.19). The other three factors do not influence the students' use of computer as the pervious factors because their percentages are less than the overall mean averages for all items which is 3.19. Lack of basics computer skills which constitutes

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18% of respondents is less than the overall mean average and this means that this factor does not influence students' use of computer for English learning purposes. Lack of computer skills refers to the lack of knowledge to manage and handle computer applications using basics applications such as Word Processor, Power Point and Excel. Lack of computer skills also refers to the lack of skills in surfing the internet. Then lack of computer access does not have a prominent influence on students' use of computer for English learning purposes, the percentage of this factor is 17% and it is close to the pervious factor (lack of basic skills). This factor could account for the lack of responses in using the computer to chat or exchange e-mails with native speakers because these activities would need a longer access which is usually being limited by computer labs in the university. The lack of educational software is considered as the lowest percentage among the factors in which it constitutes 15% of respondents and this low percentage indicates that this factor is not regarded as an effective one that hinders students to use computer for English learning purposes.

The following figure will show a clear picture for the percentage of each factor that influence students' use of computer for English learning purposes.

Figure 3: Displays the percentages of each factor that influence students' use of computer for English learning purposes:

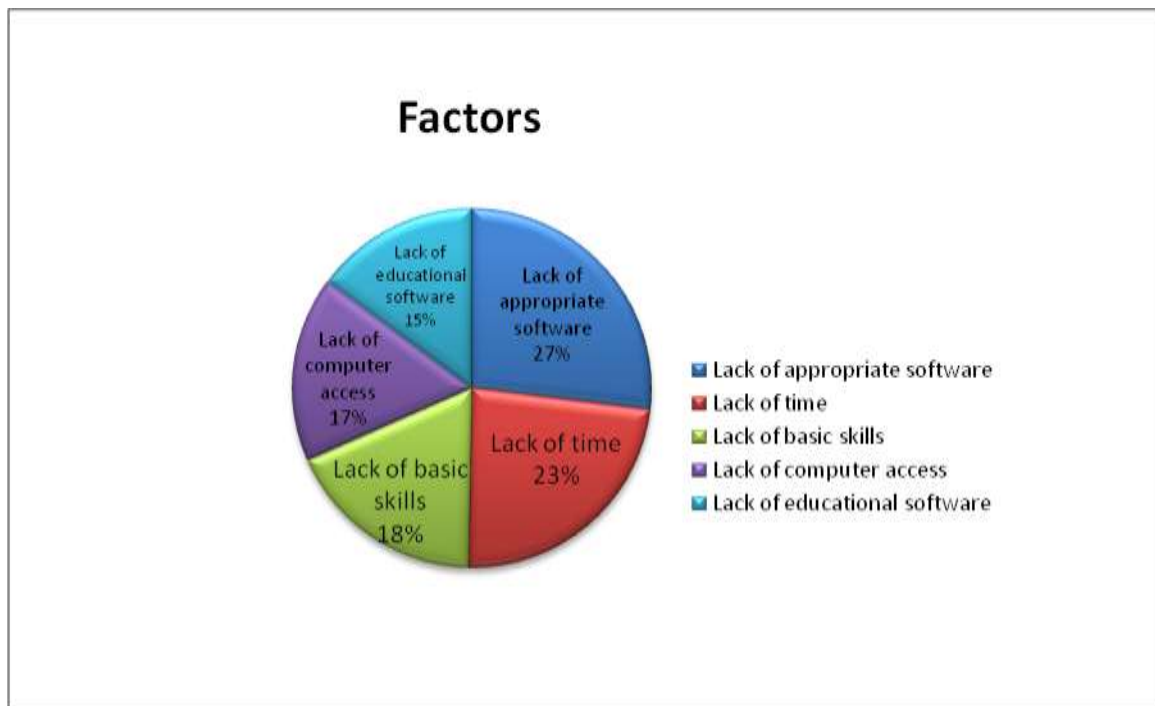


Figure 3 shows that the two major factors influencing the students' use of computer for English learning purposes are the lack of appropriate software (27%) such as the infrequency of certain software in the university. Perhaps, the software does not

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have new version. The second one is the lack of time constituting (23%) such as the lack of computer skills, typing skills and access which may impede the students to do their assignments. Smaller percentages of respondents perceived the lack of basic skills (18%), the lack of computer access (17%) and the lack of educational software (15%) to pose serious factors that influence students' use of computer for English learning purposes.

9. Conclusion

This study aims at exploring the most common computer skills which can be used by the students to improve their abilities in the English skills. The study has proven that word processor and power point are the most common among students in university work. These findings were supported by (Ruba Fahmi Bataineh & Abdallah Ahmad Baniabdelrahman, 2006) whereby they confirmed that these two skills are useful for students to learn the English skills. The study also aims at determining the internet activities used for English learning purposes. The findings of the study have proven that using net to search information to complete assignments or to search information about cultures and countries, using net to obtain news accounts from foreign sources and online entertainments are beneficial to improve students' competences. These findings were confirmed by (Ktoridou, Zarpatea and Yiangou, 2002) in Cyprus where they have proven in their study that net to search information, online entertainment and net to obtain news accounts are used for English learning purposes more than the other activities. The study has shown some factors that influence students' use of computer for English language learning purposes such as the lack of appropriate software and the lack of time. These factors were proven in other studies like the study done in Cyprus by (Ktoridou, Zarpatea and Yiangou, 2002) where the respondents pointed out that the lack of time and the lack of suitable software as well as the lack of basic skills are the main reasons that impede students' use of computer for English learning purposes.

10. Suggestions for Further Research

This study is limited to EFL students in Al-Albyet University in Jordan and might not necessarily apply to all universities in Jordan because universities from different areas in Jordan may not have computer based learning. Further studies can be done explore the similar pattern on Jordanian students in other universities. In other words, the findings of this study may not be taken as standard tools to fully understand the situations in other universities. Further studies can be done to explore another use of internet and computer skills such as online dictionary, search engine, Microsoft Excel and adobe. This study does not look at the usage patterns between male and female students, a similar study can be done on this aspect. Finally, the same study can be done to determine the use of computers among EFL teachers in Jordan and comparison can be made between students' usage patterns of computer and teachers' usage patterns of computer.

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APPENDIX

The Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Year of study : First year Second year Third year Fourth year

Gender : Male Female

Please place a (tick) in the column that corresponds to your level of proficiency for each of the following skills.

How often do you use the following computer skills for English language learning purposes?

No.	Skills	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1.	A word processor to type and print your assignment					
2.	Graphics with word processing to help students to learn better					
3.	Electronic					

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	instructional games in the class					
4.	PowerPoint to give presentations to the class					
5.	presentations software to create a lesson or a lecture					
6.	Video clips that software have to offer in the class					

7. Others: Please Specify

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Part 2: Using internet in English classroom

How often do you use the following internet activities for English language learning purposes?

No.	Internet purposes	Always	Often	Sometimes	seldom	Never
1.	E-mail with native speakers					
2.	Chatting by using IRC/ICQ/MSN Messenger					
3.	Net to search on background information about different countries and cultures					

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4.	Online entertainments (music, online games)					
5.	News accounts from foreign sources					
6.	English websites to improve your English					

Any comments on the use of computer for English language learning purposes:

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Part 3: Factors influence Students’ use of the computer

How frequently do the following factors influence your computer use for English language learning purposes?

No	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1.	Lack of basic skills					
2.	Lack of computer access					
3.	Lack of educational software					
4.	Lack of appropriate software					
5.	Lack of time to use					

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Thank you for your co-operation

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