Student and Teacher Attitudes towards the Use of Language Learning Technology (LLT) in a Tertiary English Course in Oman

Sumaya Ambu-Saidi

The University of Queensland

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Harrington

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master of Applied Linguistics, (Undeclared), The University of Queensland

June, 2010
Statement of Authorship

I declare that the materials in this thesis have not been submitted either previously or concurrently in the whole or as part of requirements for a degree to The University of Queensland or any other educational institution. I confirm that this thesis is submitted as a partial fulfilment of the Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics at The University of Queensland, June, 2010.

I hereby certify that the work presented in this thesis is original to me, Sumaya Ambu-Saidi, except as acknowledged in the text. Any aid that I have received during the planning/preparation and completion of this thesis has been acknowledged. Additionally, I certify that all the information sources and literature used are mentioned in the thesis and indicated in the references.

Sumaya Ambusaidi

Date: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________
I hold endless thanks, above all, to Allah (God) for empowering me with both the physical and mental strength to pursue this dissertation. Without Him, I would not have been able to do it.

I extend my gratitude to my dear parents, Sulaiman and Shamsa, my husband Isaac and my siblings for their continuous support during my study journey here in Australia. Special thanks to my little sister, Jawaher “(Jewels)”, for being a huge motivation to me.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Dean of Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS) in Oman, Dr Abdullah, as well as to the students and teachers who volunteered to participate in my study and provided me with insightful data for this project. Special thanks go to Dr Ahmed, the Head of the English Department at NCAS, for his invaluable help and support and for allowing me an access to the participants.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor, Dr Michael Harrington, for his help, support, guidance and patience. His guidance and encouragement paved the road for me to do this study. I am indebted to him for the support he offered me in a number of ways. I also owe thanks to my teachers for their stimulating lectures during my Masters study here in Australia: Dr Noriko Iwashita, Prof. Roland Sussex and Dr Ki Chune Nah. My friends and colleagues in Australia: Jessica, Bita, Noora, Churan, Sujin and Orn, thanks a lot. Thanks especially for Jessica, Lara and David for reading my dissertation and providing me with constructive feedback.
Abstract

The current study explores student and teacher perceptions of and attitudes towards the use of language learning technology (LLT) in an academic English course in an Omani College of Applied Sciences. Previous research in the area has focused solely on teacher perceptions, and the current study will examine student perceptions along with those of their teachers. Quantitative and qualitative data concerning LLT use were collected in a one-semester course that met for 6 hours per week. A survey was given to students (n=61) while semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers (n=8). The survey consisted of 28 items that elicited judgements about LLT use across a range of categories, including its effect on macro and micro language skills, motivation, communication with teachers and peers, online submission and feedback, participation, and student computer skills. Student survey responses were compared with the views expressed in the teacher interviews to identify areas of convergence and divergence in the perceptions and attitudes of the respective groups.

The findings revealed that students felt that LLT helps them make progress in different language skills and provides them with access to a variety of learning materials. Teachers and students also reported that the use of these resources increases student motivation and provides a flexible mode for learning in terms of space and time. More generally, the findings indicate that students have embraced LLT as a constructive learning tool. On the other hand, technical problems that occur frequently appear to inhibit using LLT to its fullest potential. Lack of training on basic research skills also prevented students from using internet resources effectively. These findings offer valuable insights into the current status of LLT in Oman and will inform discussions by policy makers, administrators, syllabus designers and instructors about integrating LLT into English language syllabi.
# Table of Contents

Title page........................................................................................................................................i

Statement of Authorship ................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... iii

Abstract........................................................................................................................................ iv

Table of contents.............................................................................................................................. v

List of Tables .................................................................................................................................. viii

List of Figures ................................................................................................................................. ix

Chapter 1

Introduction.................................................................................................................................... 1

  1.1 A brief background about higher education institutions in Oman & Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS).............................................................................................................. 3

Chapter 2

Literature review ............................................................................................................................. 4

  2.1 Positive aspects of LLT.............................................................................................................. 4

  2.2 Negative aspects of LLT .......................................................................................................... 8

  2.3 A brief account of research on LLT in Oman ......................................................................... 12

  2.4 Motivation for the study ......................................................................................................... 12

Chapter 3

Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 16

  3.1 Research questions .................................................................................................................. 16

  3.2 Participants ............................................................................................................................ 16

  3.3 Procedures .............................................................................................................................. 17

  3.3.1 Questionnaire ...................................................................................................................... 17

  3.3.2 Interviews .......................................................................................................................... 20

  3.4 Piloting the questionnaire ....................................................................................................... 21
### Chapter 4

**Results**

- 4.1 Results for the defined-response questions .......................................................... 23
- 4.2 Results for the open-ended questions ..................................................................... 31
- 4.3 Testing Reliability .................................................................................................... 37

### Chapter 5

**Discussion**

- 5.1 Improvement in the English four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) .......................................................... 39
- 5.2 Improvement in micro language skills (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) ...... 40
- 5.3 LLT and motivation ................................................................................................ 40
- 5.4 LLT and communication between teachers and classmates .................................... 41
- 5.5 Online submission and feedback .......................................................................... 42
- 5.6 LLT and students’ participation ............................................................................. 43
- 5.7 LLT and students’ computer skills .......................................................................... 44
- 5.8 Student utilization of LLT at home ......................................................................... 45
- 5.9 Difficulties/obstacles faced by students and teachers when using LLT ................ 46
- 5.10 Facilities that students and teachers wish to have ................................................ 48
- 5.11 Comparison with previous research .................................................................... 48

### Chapter 6

**Conclusion**

- 6.1 Summary of the study ............................................................................................ 52
- 6.2 Implications for teaching and learning .................................................................... 53
- 6.3 Study limitations and recommendations for further research ............................... 54

**References** .................................................................................................................. 57
Appendices

Appendix A ................................................................. 61
Appendix B ................................................................. 63
Appendix C ................................................................. 66
Appendix D ................................................................. 67
Appendix E ................................................................. 68
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Categories for the defined-response questions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>LLT and improvement in English four macro skills</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>LLT and motivation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>LLT and communication between teachers and classmates</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>LLT and online submission and feedback</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>LLT and students’ participation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>LLT and students computer skills</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>LLT and various related issues</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Means and standard deviations for items 19 and 21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>A snapshot of Senselang software</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
Introduction

Language learning technology (LLT) refers to the use of computer and internet applications in language learning. It has been widely known as computer-associated language learning (CALL) as in Liou (2000) and Debski and Levy’s (1999) edited book, World CALL, global perspectives on computer-assisted language learning. The term LLT is more comprehensive than CALL in that it also considers internet applications and interactive online language exercises. LLT does not restrict its use solely to the classroom context. Rather, it takes into account the user’s utilization of LLT applications both at the teaching institution where they study and at home.

The integration of computers and the Internet in second language curricula has been investigated in many studies. LLT has been shown to have an impact on second language (L2) learning (e.g. Almekhlafi, 2006; Deckhinet, 2008; Kim, 2008; Murday, Ushida & Chenoweth, 2008). The pedagogical benefits of implementing LLT in language learning curricula have been reported extensively in previous studies and articles (e.g. Almekhlafi, 2006; Al-Musawi & Akinyemi, 2002; Gu, & Xu, 1999; Lai, 2006; Lee, 2005; Murday et al., 2008; Presby, 2001; Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). Positive and negative aspects of LLT have been identified in these studies and other studies. These aspects will be discussed in the literature review.

Despite the considerable body of literature on LLT across a variety of settings, few studies have focused on student and teacher perceptions of, and attitudes towards, LLT in Oman. Some of the few studies that do exist (Al-Musawi, 2007; Al-Musawi & Abdelraheem, 2004; Al-Senaidi, Lin & Poirot, 2008) were carried out at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) which is the only public university in Oman while others considered different higher education
institutions. Al-Senaidi et al. (2008) considered teachers’ perceptions of LLT at the Colleges of Applied Sciences. The current study will extend the research literature to a public Omani college context which is different in key respects from SQU in terms of students, resources and breadth of specialisations offered. Furthermore, previous research has focused on teacher attitudes towards LLT. The current study will widen the scope and examine perceptions and attitudes of students and teachers. The site of the study is Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS) and the main focus will be on the pedagogical benefits of LLT and how it is utilized at NCAS by students and teachers. More importantly, the study will inform discussion and debate by administrators, policy makers and syllabus designers by providing ‘input and feedback’ from students and teachers for the design, structure and integration of LLT in this particular context.

The study aims to answer two research questions:

- What are student and teacher attitudes towards LLT at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences?
- What are the implications of the findings for teaching and learning English in this context?

The thesis is organised as follows. First, it examines research findings regarding LLT. The motivation for the study will then be established. After that, the methodology for this study will be addressed. It includes a description of the participants, 61 upper-intermediate students and 8 teachers. The study uses triangulated methods in data collection, namely: a questionnaire that contains 28 items and semi-structured interviews, the content of which is based on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to students while the interviews were conducted with the teachers. The quantitative and qualitative approaches used in analysing the data will be depicted in the data analysis section. Corbin and Strauss
(2008) proposed some suggestions for analysing qualitative data which were used in this study. Next, the results and discussion will be dealt with separately. Finally, some implications and recommendations based on the study findings are given as well as suggestions for further study and research.

1.1 A brief background about higher education institutions in Oman & Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS)

The rapid integration of language learning technology (LLT) in higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman has taken place recently. There are twenty-five universities and colleges in the private sector and twenty-eight in the public sector (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010; Ministry of Manpower, 2010). In 2007, Royal Decree No. 62/2007, converted five Colleges of Education – in Sohar, Sur, Nizwa, Ibri and Salalah - into Colleges of Applied Sciences. In the same year, language computer laboratories were installed at each of the five Colleges of Applied Sciences, along with information technology (IT) centres (Ministry of Information, 2010). These colleges offer five-year programs in four different majors: design, communication, information technology and international business administration. The first year of study is a foundation year for studying English exclusively. It is followed by a four-year Bachelor degree course in one of the aforementioned majors. Besides their specialization courses, students still have one English course each semester in the first and second year of their study. These colleges started to utilize LLT to a greater extent when e-learning (online) was integrated through using Blackboard in 2007 which entails employing computer applications and internet resources in learning.
Chapter 2

Literature review

This study addresses the perceptions of students and teachers about the positive and negative aspects of LLT in an Omani tertiary institution. In the following literature review, the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing LLT will be presented. Then the motivation for doing the current study will be put forward.

2.1 Positive aspects of LLT

LLT has been linked to many benefits in language learning. This literature review will focus on various aspects of the use of LLT, which include CDs, DVDs, headphones and data projectors and the use of the internet. Typical uses are: performing computer-based exercises, surfing the internet for useful websites and using online dictionaries, translation dictionaries and thesauruses. Another area is participating in online discussions or communicating with native and non-native speakers of English via e-mails and chat rooms.

Previous studies have frequently revealed that various aspects of LLT increase students’ enthusiasm and motivation towards L2 learning (e.g. Gu, & Xu, 1999; Ilter, 2009; Kim, 2008; Lee, 2005; Murday et al., 2008). One of these aspects is the flexibility that LLT offers. That is, students can access the learning materials and tasks both at the teaching institution (school or university) or at home and at any time of the day (Almekhlafi, 2006; Al-Musawi & Akinyemi, 2002; Lai, 2006; Lee, 2005; Murday et al., 2008; Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). This helps both teachers and students “to become active members of a community that thrives far beyond the spatial and temporal limitations of the traditional classroom (Lee, 2005, p. 152)”.

Murday et al. (2008) and Zapata and Sagarra (2007) reported that students greatly appreciated
the ability to work at their own pace and to choose materials depending on their personal academic progress. Another aspect that fosters motivation is constructive feedback from teachers online. Feedback is defined, in Gu and Xu’s (1999, p. 179) study, as “a critical component of the optimal learning conditions”. In their study, students expressed satisfaction with the constructive feedback they received in different forms (written and oral, formal and informal group and individual) and from different resources (peers, teachers and e-mail partners). It encouraged students to do revision both before and after they submit their assignments (Lee, 2005). Students also expressed satisfaction with the immediate online feedback that they received after doing their assignments and/or homework (Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). Online feedback, whether explicit or implicit (e.g. recasts), is a good motivation for students to develop their language and learn from their mistakes. In Deckhinet (2008) students were grateful for being corrected because that eventually helped them to avoid making the same mistakes and to improve in various language skills.

LLT has been also shown to contribute to students’ improvement in English macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) which are considered by Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006, p. vii) as the “heart” of L2 classes. LLT offers students the chance to surf the internet for useful websites that help them develop their language skills. The ability to find abundant learning resources such as books, stories and exercises that help to develop their language is valued by students. For example, Ilter’s (2009) study stated that a large number of students were satisfied with the fact that LLT enabled them to access various authentic learning materials. Schwiernhorst (2008) also emphasized that LLT allowed learners to access authentic reading materials. Similarly, Chia and Ellis (2003) stated that students enjoyed using the internet to read news and to work on their language skills. With regard to listening, students appreciated the ability to listen to L2 input repeatedly (Murday et al., 2008). Lee’s (2005) study found that writing skill was also enhanced to a great extent by
LLT. Lee (2005) further showed that students practiced speaking and reading through online discussion via chat rooms. These findings are consistent with Deckhinet’s (2008) study which revealed that online learning improved students’ reading and writing skills. Similarly, Almekhlafi (2006) reported that LLT helped students improve reading. Heins et al. (2007) pointed out that LLT enhanced speaking and that students were motivated to use the target language while they were engaged in online spoken interactions. Zapata and Sagarra (2007) reported that students found LLT helpful for making progress in listening and reading. In addition, Gu and Xu (1999) pointed out that students were satisfied with the LLT experience and that they read and wrote three times more than their peers who were not engaged in that LLT project. Kim (2008) found that teachers agreed that LLT fostered three macro skills: listening, reading and writing.

Another area where LLT has been shown to have a positive impact is on the development of English micro skills. The macro skills include the four major skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing, (Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor, 2006) while the micro skills include some language elements such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The internet constitutes a rich source of exercises on grammar and vocabulary. For instance, online dictionaries enable students to identify the meaning of words, the grammatical category and word collocations. They are also useful to learn new synonyms and antonyms as well as allow students to check the pronunciation of these words by listening to the word pronunciation or by reading its phonemic transcription (e.g. Cambridge online dictionaries, 2010). Lee (2005) revealed that LLT was constructive in helping students improve their vocabulary and grammar. Students were encouraged by the researcher, Lee, to use an on-line dictionary and a grammar reference to help them improve their writing. Almekhlafi (2006) stated that LLT plays a big role in improving grammar. A considerable number of students in Zapata and Sagarra’s (2007) study
held a positive attitude towards LLT and its key role in helping them improve their pronunciation and vocabulary.

Additionally, LLT enables students’ continued use of the skills they have learnt and/or acquired in other learning contexts and other courses. Lee (2005) proposed that students had such a positive attitude towards using LLT that they intended to keep using it in the future. Additionally, Polisca (2007) stated that besides developing learners’ linguistic skills, they developed “precious” transferable skills. She explicated that students used the skills they learn in the computer-based context in other learning contexts. Almekhlafi (2006) also demonstrated that the perceived benefits of using computers in language learning contribute to students’ positive attitude towards LLT and their willingness to keep using it to practice the language in other contexts in the future.

Collaborative learning has been shown to be an area where LLT has made a particularly positive impact. For example, online discussion has been considered to be an effective learning tool that helps students improve their communication skills like discussion, debating, thinking skills and expressing opinions (Brown, 1997). The project that was designed and applied in Deckhinet (2008) enhanced collaborative learning between native and non-native English speakers who were required to share, discuss and debate different topics in a friendly environment. Students greatly appreciated this chance to communicate with native speakers of English. Likewise, Gu and Xu (1999) further stated that a tone of collaboration was set at the beginning of their project. Interestingly, students found that collaborative spirit was enhanced more with LLT than in a traditional classroom (Gu & Xu, 1999). Brown (1997) considered collaborative learning as an important part of online learning because it helped learners to discuss, criticize and share ideas as well as to construct knowledge with each other. These finding are consistent with Presby’s (2001) tips about effective online courses. Presby (2001) suggested that working in groups helps students to share their thoughts and
gets all the students to participate. This notion has also been supported by several studies which showed that the online delivery mode of learning encourages less extroverted learners to participate confidently in online discussions. Brown (1997) underscored that online courses were a bonus for shy students. Shy students might feel intimidated to participate in class not because they are incompetent in the language, but because of this shyness characteristic that makes participation in class an anxiety-provoking experience. Presby (2001) supported this by stating that shy students are more comfortable engaging in online discussions as these create a low-anxiety social environment for them.

Together, these studies indicate that LLT can play a major role in language learning. The positive aspects of LLT encompass motivation that is promoted through the flexibility which LLT offers, online feedback and the abundant authentic learning resources that students find online. Moreover, LLT contributes to improving macro and micro language skills as well as enhancing collaborative learning. LLT can also get all students engaged in learning by encouraging less extroverted students to participate.

2.2 Negative aspects of LLT

The previously mentioned benefits have also been questioned by research, and the evaluation of LLT has not always been uniformly positive. For instance, there is a need for textbooks to support online learning materials. In Murday et al. (2008), students complained about the fact that they had to log into the computer whenever they needed to have more practice or to revise previous lessons. So those students proposed having a textbook that contained more language exercises especially when computers were inaccessible. Presby (2001) suggested that a textbook could include learning materials to supplement the computer. Those students did not complain about logging in a computer because it is a laborious process. Complaint, in fact, stemmed from some difficulties concerning learning
through onscreen materials (Al-Musawi & Abdelraheem, 2004). Murday et al. (2008, p. 134) explained this by stating that “staring at a computer screen” causes eyestrain which is likely to occur if computers are used excessively for learning. Thus, a need for textbooks was desired.

Despite the fact that online discussion has been considered to be an effective learning tool that helps students improve their communication skills, many pitfalls have also been identified. For instance, students complained that communicating with others was difficult because they could not see their faces (Lee, 2005). It seems that students were unsatisfied with the absence of non-verbal language and some aspects of verbal language which are vital in spoken interaction such as facial expressions and pitch of the voice. Deckhinet’s (2008) study claimed that capital letters that replace non-verbal language would convey the feelings and intentions of the interlocutors. Whether they convey the meaning or not is questioned because capital letters, for example, can imply various feelings and purposes such as anger, excitement, happiness or emphasis. For this reason, the use of capital letters, use of italics, bold or underline cannot be assumed to convey interlocutors’ intentions successfully. However, those intentions can be easily conveyed in face-to-face interactions. Although online courses encourage less extroverted learners to be involved in online discussions, whether students will eventually be confident in engaging in face-to-face interaction is questioned, too.

Self discipline represents a major problem when it comes to using LLT. Self discipline can be defined as possessing goal setting skills, learning strategies that help to accomplish the goals, time management skills, taking the initiative and being proactive in terms of study (see Zimmerman’s (2002) overview on becoming a self-regulated learner). LLT offers students some freedom in terms of the choice of materials and activities and the time spent on learning. According to Lee (2005), students’ experience in using LLT made them learn that
technology was not used solely for entertainment. Students started to realize that LLT is an effective learning tool. Nevertheless, students might not focus on what they have to accomplish using LLT. Instead they keep checking their e-mails and chatting with their friends. In Murday et al. (2008), students expressed the need for more self discipline due to the freedom that LLT offered. They, in fact, believed that self discipline contributed largely to developing L2 depending on the effort they exerted to work and make progress in L2. Chia and Ellis’s (2003) study put forward two solutions to this problem. First, students should not be allowed to check their e-mails in class. Second, reading any materials in the native language (L1) should be blocked by teachers or technicians through changing computer settings.

Lack of technical support constitutes a major hindrance to teachers’ adopting technology in language teaching (Al-Senaidi et al., 2008). Lack of training in using technology and technical difficulties have also appeared frequently to be an obstacle for teachers and students which prevents making the most of the previously mentioned potential benefits (e.g. Al-Senaidi et al., 2008; Murday et al., 2008). Murday et al. (2008) further emphasized that continuous technical glitches could lead to frustration, disappointment and wasting study time that could be used for language learning and language development instead. Al-Musawi & Abdelraheem (2004) and Murday et al. (2008) also reported that students complained about the technical glitches that occurred frequently such as network interruptions and pages that did not load correctly. Chia & Ellis (2003) recounted student frustration with computer slowness, which resulted in a reduction of the popularity of LLT by students. Among the disadvantages that students articulated in Almekhlafi’s (2006) study regarding LLT were the technical problems that students faced while using computers. An ideal solution to these obstacles is training both teachers and students to help them make the most of the LLT learning experience and to effectively use LLT applications. As Murday et al. (2008, p. 137)
stated “Only with proper training and guidance for both students and instructors will online language learning succeed”.

One factor in the positive or negative outcomes of LLT implementation is the users’ prior familiarity with it. Zapata and Sagarra (2007) pointed out that previous familiarity and experience with LLT lead to comfortable and effective utilization of LLT applications. This study revealed that after one semester of using LLT in language learning, students’ achievement did not differ from their counterparts who did not use LLT. However, after the second semester, they out-performed those who did not use it. So, more exposure to and more experience with LLT appears to lead to better learning outcomes. This corroborates Almekhlafi’s (2006) findings which demonstrated the significant difference between novice and experienced computer users in terms of language development. He also stated in his results that students who had more experience in using LLT and allocated more time for using it outdid those with lower computer competency and less use of LLT.

From the preceding discussion, it can be seen that although LLT has great potential, there remains a number of questions concerning its effectiveness as a constructive learning tool. On the one hand, LLT enhances students’ motivation through flexibility, online feedback and the wide range of authentic learning materials that are found online. It also helps to improve the macro and micro English skills. Furthermore, collaborative learning is fostered and all students, including less extroverted ones, are encouraged to participate. On the other hand, lack of training and the continuous technical glitches inhibit both teachers and students from using LLT facilities effectively. Additionally, a need for textbooks to supplement learning through LLT has been expressed in many contexts. Speaking might not be enhanced in an authentic way, due to the absence of body language and nonverbal language aspects. Furthermore, self discipline needs to be increased to help students make the most of the LLT
learning experience. Finally, prior familiarity and practice with LLT has been shown to bring about better results as Almekhlafi (2006) and Zapata and Sagarra (2007) reported.

2.3 A brief account of research on LLT in Oman

There has been a big push recently to embrace LLT in higher education institutions in Oman. This has been accompanied by the emergence of research on how this technology has been received in the Omani context (Al-Musawi, 2007; Al-Musawi & Abdalraheem, 2004; Al-Musawi & Akinyemi, 2002; Al-Senaidi et al., 2008). The studies conducted in Oman regarding LLT have investigated different issues relating to LLT use by students and staff. For instance, Al-Musawai and Abdelraheem (2004) described LLT use at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the oldest university and the only state university in Oman. They described the extensive resources available at the university’s Centre of Educational Technology (CET). These include physical resources - all teaching rooms at SQU are equipped with access to the internet – as well as staff training. Key positive findings that emerged from the study were that students preferred online learning over face-to-face instruction, and that teachers and students agreed that LLT increased students’ self-confidence. Negative findings concerned student and teacher frustration with technical problems, including slow internet speed, as well as the belief by teachers (which might stem from their own experience) that LLT use is time-consuming. The authors concluded that with the rapid increase in computer and internet literacy in Oman, it seems that the future of employing LLT in higher education institutions is promising regardless of the technical, logistical and human factors that resulted in some difficulties in implementing LLT.

Al-Musawi’s (2007) study broadened the scope somewhat, exploring difficulties regarding LLT use encountered in different higher education institutions, private and state, in Oman. The study encompassed current uses of LLT, the extent of its effectiveness, difficulties in
using it and specific aspects that were required for future development of LLT in higher education institutions in Oman. Teachers, administrators and technical staff were involved in the study. A number of key findings were reported. There was a widely-shared view that there were not enough LLT facilities available, and that more training is needed for administrators and support staff. Also there was a low awareness of the importance of LLT in promoting language learning.

In a study of direct relevance to the current thesis, Al-Senaidi et al. (2008) investigated LLT use in Colleges of Applied Sciences (CASs). The study examined teachers’ perceptions towards LLT use, which were largely negative. Reported were five factors that were seen as barriers to LLT use in this setting. These were lack of equipment, lack of institutional support, lack of confidence, lack of time and disbelief of LLT benefits. The largely negative characterisation of LLT in Al-Senaidia et al. (2008) is in contrast to the positives identified in the research on LLT at Sultan Qaboos University reported in Al-Musawi & Abdelraheem (2004). It is unclear the extent to which the differences are due to institutional differences between SQU and the CASs (e.g., available resources) or are due to other factors. The current thesis examines LLT use in Nizwa College of Applied Sciences in an attempt to provide a better understanding of perceptions of LLT use in a College of Applied Sciences setting. The focus will be on both teachers and students, and the finding will be compared to the results from previous research reported above (see section 5.11).

2.4 Motivation for the study

The previous discussions about LLT are inconclusive. As a result of the mixed findings from previous studies regarding the effectiveness of LLT, the current dissertation will examine Omani students’ perceptions and evaluation of LLT at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS). Teachers’ views of the effectiveness of LLT will also be taken into
account. The study will particularly focus on two technologies: computers and internet resources. The following issues relating to LLT will be examined in this study: the effect of LLT on improving the four macro English skills, motivation, how LLT is utilized by students both at college and at home, students’ participation, shortcomings of LLT, difficulties and obstacles encountered while using LLT as well as what students and teachers like and dislike about using LLT in English classes. Teachers’ views about these issues will be identified, too. Lastly, the current study will also provide insights about the current status of LLT at NCAS from both students’ and teachers’ perceptions. By doing so, it can inform discussions and debate on this important issue for educators, policy makers, syllabus designers and teachers.

This dissertation will focus primarily on students’ perceptions and secondarily on teachers’ perceptions, as mentioned earlier. Students and teachers were both included in this study to see whether students’ perceptions match those of the teachers’, that is, to prove areas of convergence or divergence in their views. Another reason is that assessing the effectiveness of utilizing LLT calls for identifying how LLT is used in the instructional process and what impact it has on students’ learning of English. Additionally, knowing the perceptions of both will lead to a better interpretation of data. Thus, teachers, who are in charge of the teaching process, and students, who are responsible for making progress in learning, were involved in this study.

The significance of doing this study is twofold. First, it will reveal the actual implementation of LLT at NCAS and the extent of its effectiveness- that is, it will give insight into the current processes of implementing LLT at NCAS. Second, it will extend the research literature to an Omani public college where scarce research has been conducted and where students are enrolled in specializations different from those at SQU. An additional motivation for doing this dissertation is that I, the principal investigator, am going to teach at
NCAS. Thus, the study will give the principal investigator a deeper understanding of LLT practices at NCAS, what works best for students, what aspects of implementing LLT should be emphasized and what aspects need to be changed and/or improved.
Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter outlines the data collection methods and data analysis used for this study. It will give details about the participating students and teachers. Next, the triangulated instruments of data collection—namely questionnaires and semi-structured interviews—will be put forward. Results of the pilot test of the questionnaire will be then presented. The methods used to both quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the data will be given.

3.1 Research questions

This study aims to answer two research questions:

1. What are student and teacher attitudes towards LLT at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences?

2. What are the implications of the findings for teaching and learning English in this context?

3.2 Participants

A total of 61 students from Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS) in Oman participated in the study. They were aged approximately 20-22 years old and were all Omani citizens. Females usually outnumber males at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS). Hence, eighteen males and forty-three females constituted the male-female ratio of this study. Participants were in their second year of studies at NCAS at the time of data collection. All of them had completed an intensive foundation year in English and two English courses in their first year of the English program at NCAS. They were enrolled in different study fields: communication, design, information technology and international business administration.
They had one English course each semester besides their specialization courses. They had six hours of English instruction weekly, two of which were held in the college’s computer laboratories. Their English proficiency level was upper-intermediate. With regard to computer literacy, students had to use the Blackboard course management system (CMS) for the English courses. All of them were familiar with the use of computer and internet resources in their English classes. Hence, all the participants had some experience with the tasks they were required to perform using Blackboard.

The participants also included eight native and non-native English teachers who were teaching these second year students; four males and four females. They all had some experience in using LLT in English teaching. They were also familiar with the Blackboard applications. Furthermore, they were required to use LLT for the two-hour computer laboratory English session. The eight participating teachers come from eight different nationalities: Omani, Canadian, British, Malaysian, American, Hungarian, Uzbek and Indian.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Students’ perceptions were elicited through a questionnaire written in English. It contained both defined-response questions and open-ended questions (see the attached questionnaire in Appendix A). Participants were required to express their level of agreement with twenty-two defined-response items regarding the effectiveness and the use of LLT in English learning. Participants ranked their opinions on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The open-ended questions included six items which provided more insightful data about student attitudes towards LLT and perceptions and evaluation of LLT. Particularly, the questionnaire was administered to explore student perceptions of the use of LLT, the degree to which the available facilities are exploited as well as what
obstacles/difficulties they face when they use LLT. The defined-response questions were grouped into seven categories (see table 1 below). These were:

- The effect of LLT on improving the four macro English skills
- LLT and arousing student motivation
- LLT and communication with teachers and classmates
- Submission of assessment and receiving feedback online
- LLT and extent of student participation
- LLT and student computer skills
- LLT and other related issues

The open-ended questions shed light on other issues. Importantly, the impediments that students face when they use LLT at NCAS were explored. Another aspect that was investigated was student utilization of LLT in the English class and at home. Other items covered facilities that students would like to have and/or have improved, but which are not currently implemented or not used efficiently, as well as students’ likes and dislikes about the implementation of LLT for their English language learning.
Table 1: Categories for the defined-response questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>1 Language skills</th>
<th>2 Motivation</th>
<th>3 Communication with teachers and peers</th>
<th>4 Online submission and feedback</th>
<th>5 Participation</th>
<th>6 Student computer skills</th>
<th>7 Other related issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* x= yes, - = no.
Most of the questionnaire items were developed specifically for this study, but some were taken from previous studies and modified to meet the purpose of this dissertation. These studies include Chia and Ellis (2003), Deckhinet (2008), Gu and Xu (1999), Kim (2008) and Lee (2005).

The format of the questionnaire included a combination of defined-response statements and open-ended questions that will help students to both reflect on their LLT experiences and to choose an answer from the five options in the Likert-scale statements. While closed-response questions “provide more uniformity across questions in terms of the types and specificity of the data” that the researcher attempts to elicit, open-ended questions offer “flexibility” for the respondents to express different dimensions of an issue (Brown, 2000, pp. 36-37).

### 3.3.2 Interviews

Teachers’ views on the effectiveness and uses of LLT in English teaching and learning were elicited through semi-structured interviews. They lasted for 40 minutes each. Eight teachers who taught second year participating students were interviewed. The questionnaire items were used as a basis for the interview questions. Specifically, some items were altered to elicit teachers’ perceptions of LLT. For instance, item 21 asks whether students like to participate in online discussion. The researcher would then ask teachers to justify their answer and mention reasons as to why they think students enjoy or refrain from participation in online discussion. The semi-structured interviews were an attempt to discuss more fully issues covered in the questionnaire and raise topics not addressed in the questionnaire. Moreover, this provided an opportunity for teachers to raise more issues about LLT without the researcher’s prompting. The interviews took place on campus and they were not audio- or video-recorded. Instead, the researcher took notes of the points that she considered important for this study. So the interviews are basically similar to what Dornyei (2005, p. 6) refers to as “interview schedules”
where the researcher asks the respondents some fixed-questions and comes up with new ones based on the information that the respondents provide.

### 3.4 Piloting the questionnaire

A pilot study preceded the actual administration of the questionnaire. Eighteen volunteers participated in the piloting phase. All of them were second year students. The instructions of how to fill in the questionnaire were explained orally by the researcher. The piloting brought about many benefits regarding the way the questionnaire was administered and the items included in the final questionnaire. For instance, it gave the researcher a clue to the approximate time needed for completing the questionnaire and what needed to be clarified by the researcher before participants started completing the questionnaire. It also helped with the wording of some items. Moreover, the piloting showed what kind of information the researcher was likely to elicit. Consequently, some items were modified and one open-ended question was eliminated because it did not yield useful data for the purpose of this study.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

A mixed-method approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis was used for analysing the results. However, the primary focus was on qualitative analysis of students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of LLT in English learning. Because, as previously mentioned, females outnumbered males in this study (43 and 18 respectively), it seemed to be unreliable to make distinctions and/or comparisons in perceptions and attitudes in terms of gender. For this reason, the results were reported and discussed ignoring gender. Simple descriptive statistics, namely counting the percentage of frequencies, were used for the defined-response items to support the qualitative interpretation of data. Another statistical tool called Cronbach’s alpha (α) was used to test the reliability of students’ responses to the defined-response questions. The responses to the open-ended questions were categorized to
characterise the recurring patterns in both student and teacher perceptions. As for the interviews, teachers’ responses were also categorised. For each category, students’ and teachers’ responses were given respectively.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) served as a useful resource for analysing the data qualitatively. They suggested different techniques that are useful for understanding and interpreting the data, such as making comparisons between teachers’ and students’ responses. This was useful for the current study to see whether there was converging or diverging evidence between teachers’ and students’ responses concerning LLT. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 71) also proposed asking questions while analysing data to help “probe deeper into the data”. They recommended looking at the emotions expressed by participants and the situations that aroused them. In the current study, teachers’ and students’ concerns about implementing LLT were identified and analysed through the questionnaire and interview responses regarding how LLT was being implemented in this specific educational context.
Chapter 4

Results

The responses that students and teachers gave are detailed in this section. In particular, students’ responses to the questionnaire items and teachers’ responses to the interview questions will be presented in the following sections. The number of students who answered each question is given next to each statement. Finally, a description of the reliability test that was used to measure the internal consistency of the elicited data from the defined-response items in the questionnaire will be given, followed by possible reasons that affected reliability.

4.1 Results for the defined-response questions

The following table summarises the role that students assumed LLT plays in improving their four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Table 2: LLT and improvement in English four macro skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my reading skill.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my writing skill.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my listening skill.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my speaking skill.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N= number of students who answered the question

Students’ responses: The results of the study showed that the computer-based class was most beneficial in improving reading (85%; 38% strongly agreed and 47% agreed). It was also useful to enhance listening (74%; 23% strongly agreed and 51% agreed), and writing (72%; 26% strongly agreed and 46% agreed). However, this computer class was considered to be
the least effective one in helping students make progress in speaking (43%; 13% strongly agreed and 30% agreed). It seems that six to eighteen students did not have a strong opinion about the benefits of this computer session in improving their English skills (note the small number of students who gave the ‘uncertain’ response to the four statements in table 2).

Teachers’ responses: Some teachers believed that reading was promoted through online texts that have pictures and visuals. Other teachers were uncertain whether this computer class helped to improve the reading skill. Teachers said that writing is improved through online discussion and exercises that were graded according to students’ levels. These helped students to correct their spelling mistakes, monitor their progress and gave hints for editing. With regard to listening, all teachers agreed that students used headphones to concentrate more and students were able to replay the listening as many times as they needed. They added that CDs and DVDs with subtitles enhanced the listening skills. Teachers stated that speaking was not practiced online though. Students would rather have classroom face-to-face interaction through follow-up discussions that are based on the DVDs they watch and listen to.
Table 3 summarizes students’ responses regarding the impact of LLT on motivation

**Table 3: LLT and motivation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The use of multimedia <strong>motivates</strong> me (e.g. listening using headphones and watching videos).</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The computer materials allow me to choose activities that suit my <strong>learning strategies and needs</strong>.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I get to know about motivating activities and ways to study English on the internet.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>This class allows me to access different websites to improve my English.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students’ responses:** A considerable number of students (82%; 48% strongly agreed and 34% agreed) reported that this class was motivating. Interestingly, students gave a similar response to the third and fourth statements regarding surfing the internet to improve their English (82% and 83% respectively). They believed that surfing the internet helped them find motivating ways to study English. The majority of students (78%; 34% strongly agreed and 44% agreed) agreed that the online materials enabled them to choose activities and tasks that suited their learning strategies and academic needs.

**Teachers’ responses:** All teachers believed that the computer class motivated students because it offered them another environment to study English beside classroom instruction. Teachers felt that students could find a great deal of activities and exercises online. They also downloaded language-related exercises for the four skills, online dictionaries and articles for
their research projects. Although surfing the internet fosters learning independently, most teachers noted that students still needed teachers’ guidance and supervision. Learning independently was being achieved gradually as one of the teachers commented,

“We are not there yet, but we are doing it step by step.”

Despite the fact that students found this class motivating, still most of this computer class time was allotted for covering the syllabus. So students’ control over the learning materials and exercises was restricted.

The following table summarizes students’ responses regarding LLT and communication between teachers and classmates.

**Table 4: LLT and communication between teachers and classmates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I contact my teacher at anytime when I need help (e.g. by e-mail or chat).</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with my classmates in English.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with native speakers (teachers and friends).</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students’ responses:** The majority of the students (56%; 17% strongly agreed and 39% agreed) agreed that they use e-mails and/or chats to contact their teachers when they needed help while 29% disagreed. A similar response was given to the third statement with 53% (15% strongly agreed and 38% agreed) who communicated via LLT with native speakers and 28% who did not. A number of students (46%; 12% strongly agreed and 34% agreed) said that they contacted their classmates in English online.
Teachers’ responses: Most teachers said that the majority of students did not like to communicate by e-mail, but they sometimes contacted their teachers through Blackboard. Instead, teachers said that students preferred to drop by teachers’ offices and have face-to-face meetings. Teachers reported that students tended to use their L1, Arabic, unless they were told to use English. Teachers stated that students used English for language-related activities, but they switched to Arabic once they are finished with the assigned tasks.

Table 5 shows students’ responses to LLT & online submission and feedback.

Table 5: LLT and online submission and feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I submit my assignments on-line.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I get feedback on my work/assignments on-line.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ responses: The majority of students said that they submitted their assignments online (86%; 43% strongly agreed and 43% agreed) while 71% (28% strongly agreed and 43% agreed) stated that they received online feedback on these assignments. Six to eight students gave a neutral response to both statements.

Teachers’ responses: Some teachers indicated that they sometimes give online feedback to students if they submitted their assignments online; whereas other teachers do not give feedback online. Regardless, teachers preferred to make comments on the hard copies of students’ writing. In general, second year students were not required to submit their assignments online. So it was up to the teacher how she or he prefers to receive the assignments. If students submitted their work online, it would be sent to something called “Safe Assignments” in Blackboard to check originality of their work (e.g. plagiarism).
Table 6 presents student responses to LLT and participation

**Table 6: LLT and students’ participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I participate more when the class is in the computer laboratory.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I use discussion board in blackboard regularly.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I like to participate in blackboard discussion.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students’ responses:* Quite a large number of students (48%; 25% strongly agreed and 23% agreed) said that they participated more when the class was in a computer laboratory, while the other half was divided between those who gave a neutral response (25%) and those who disagreed with the statement (27%). Moreover, students did not show a strong opinion for participation in *Blackboard* online discussion.

*Teachers’ responses:* Teachers reported that students did not participate more in the computer class. They said, in fact, that students got distracted because they log in different websites, watch videos and check their e-mails. Other teachers believed that participation depended largely on students’ motivation and level and sense of responsibility. Only two teachers said that students participated more in the computer laboratory session. Regarding participation in online discussion, some teachers said that students were keen to participate in the online discussion; whereas others explained that students refrained from participation because no assessment was set for online discussion. Students would not do it unless they were told repeatedly. Unexpectedly, one teacher stated that she did not set up online discussion.
Table 7 shows student responses to LLT and their own computer skills.

Table 7: LLT and students computer skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I know how to use the search engine effectively.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I am not good at using computers.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Students’ responses:_ The majority of students (88%; 38% strongly agreed and 50% agreed) agreed that they were good at using the search engine effectively. Most students strongly disagreed with the statement that says that they are _not_ good at using computers.

_Teachers’ responses:_ Some teachers believed that students were not really good at using the search engine efficiently. They reported that students sometimes got lost and, thus, they needed some help and guidance. They also stated that students sometimes tended to search for relevant topics to their projects in Arabic and then translate the information they get into English. They also search in Google and Wikipedia only. Other teachers thought that students were computer-savvy. Nevertheless, they elucidated that students were good with basic skills, but not with research skills because of lack of training.
The following table outlines students responses regarding various issues related to LLT.

**Table 8: LLT and other related issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is <strong>easier</strong> for me to use the computer to write my assignment than using paper and pencil.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The skills of software used in this class are also useful for other classes.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The use of blackboard is a waste of time.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The internet connection is fast.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students’ responses:** A considerable number of students (43%) strongly agreed that writing their assignments using computers was easier than using paper and pencil. A substantial number of students (80%; 30% strongly agreed and 50% agreed) believed that the skills they learn in this class were helpful for other classes. Quite a big number of students (70%; 36% disagreed and 34% strongly disagreed) disagreed that the use of Blackboard is a waste of time. The internet connection was reported to be fast by most students (52%; 15% strongly agreed and 37% agreed).

**Teachers’ responses:** Teachers indicated that students preferred to use computers to write their assignments because computers helped them to edit their work and check grammar and spelling. However, one teacher explained that students had very poor typing and word processing skills and that training was required. All teachers agreed that students transfer the skills they acquire in this class to other classes such as essay organization and referencing. Teachers believed that the use of Blackboard was useful, but they acknowledged that it was
time-consuming. Teachers pointed out that students used *Blackboard* to communicate with students from other colleges of applied sciences, check their marks and attendance, get notices/announcements from teachers and perform exercises and web-based activities. They also had access to the course materials such as handouts, PowerPoint presentations and video files. The speed of the internet connection was reported to be better and faster than before, but it was still unstable.

### 4.2 Results for the open-ended questions

1. **The use of LLT for assignments**

   *Students’ responses:* Most students reported that they used LLT applications to look for information and to type their assignments. They also used these applications when they were required to give presentations, listen to pronunciation of new words, watch videos and practice grammar and listening. One student commented,

   “I spend my time on studying and searching for the information that I need. It is different from my use of internet at home.”

   *Teachers’ responses:* Teachers pointed out that students used LLT to search for information related to their essay topics, type their assignments, practice vocabulary through the CD-based exercises that come with the textbooks and to look up meanings of words in online dictionaries such as Longman and Cambridge.

2. **Student utilization of LLT at home**

   *Students’ responses:* A considerable number of students (20) stated that they used LLT at home to search for relevant topics to their assignments. Some students used it to improve their writing, listening and grammar. Seven students asserted that they used LLT for entertainment and socializing such as checking and exchanging e-mails, chatting, playing games, listening to music, watching movies, downloading pictures and checking fashion, beauty, health and cooking recipes. One student said that she participated in online discussion.
and another one stated that she checked her marks in *Blackboard* while a third one said that she communicated with her teachers. Other uses varied between translating tough words into Arabic, reading news, learning some computer software such as Excel and Photoshop and publishing poems online. Two students explained that they used computers, but not the internet because they did not have an internet connection at home.

*Teachers’ responses:* Teachers predicted that students employed LLT at home for searching for topics related to their assignments and for entertainment such as checking e-mails, chatting, Face-booking and watching videos on YouTube. Teachers anticipated that students also used the internet to read news and check online dictionaries.

### 3. LLT & difficulties that students and teachers face

*Students’ responses:* Fourteen students stated that they found it difficult and time-consuming to find information relevant to their assignments/research projects. One student commented,

> “I can’t find the information I want easily because I find a lot of similar articles that are related to my topic. I have to spend a long time to find the best ones.”

Other students expressed their inability to find useful websites that help them improve their language. Students also complained that they found it difficult to understand the online materials because there were too many new words that they were unfamiliar with. One student stated that he used an online dictionary to overcome this hurdle while another said that this was the reason why he resorted to English-Arabic translation dictionaries. Technical problems posed themselves as an obstacle for learners as well. These problems include: computers that did not work and got stuck which resulted in losing unsaved work; internet breaking down; unstable internet speed and a shortage of computers. Other language and logistical difficulties included comprehending listening passages, typing assignments,
teachers taking time to respond to students’ e-mails and having no internet connection at home.

*Teachers’ responses:* Teachers, on the other hand, listed many technical problems, such as lack of regular maintenance, shortage of computers, shortage of headphones, computers that did not work, projectors that did not work and remotes for the data projectors which were not always available. One teacher said that he was frustrated with using Windows 2007 compared to Windows 2003. Additionally, teachers noted that students could not discern between good and bad information and they did not know how to integrate the information they found into their assignments properly. One teacher said,

> “Students need guidance to find reliable information. They tend to use one website only; Wikipedia, because it is easy. They don’t access reliable academic journals and essays.”

Teachers also noted that the students struggled to understand the materials they found online because of the many tough words that they came across.

4. **Facilities that students and teachers would like to have or have improved**

*Students’ responses:* Two students expressed their desire to have audio-visual chats with friends and teachers. Four students explicitly said that they would like to have more speaking and listening practice/exercises and exercises based on videos that they watch. Students also wanted to have opportunities to chat with their classmates (in the computer laboratory; intranet), teachers, and native speakers from other colleges. Other students pointed out that there was a rare use of online discussion, and they asserted that online discussion should be exploited more.

> “It is a good idea to have more online discussion or improve using it.”

Students also found it difficult and time-consuming to type their assignments on the computer. One student suggested,
“I’d like the college to devote one session to teach us how to type quickly.”

Furthermore, students expressed their need to learn adept searching skills that would help them get reliable resources for their projects as one student noted,

“We need activities that familiarise us with how to search effectively.”

In the computer laboratories, either there are not physically enough computers for each student or not all computers are working. Because of this, students suggested having more working computers. They also would like to learn to use some computer software such as Photoshop and Moviemaker. However, they did not mention whether these software packages would be beneficial for learning or for entertainment only.

*Teachers’ responses:* Teachers, on the other hand, emphasized solving some technical glitches as to what they would like to be improved. They suggested providing enough computers, supplying printers with toner and regularly servicing the computers. One teacher placed great emphasis on having well-equipped computer laboratories with enough headphones, projectors and working and up-to-date computers. She added,

“They don’t have financial problems so why don’t they provide advanced and working facilities?”

5. **What students and teachers like about LLT**

*Students’ responses:* A considerable number of students believed that LLT allowed them to have a variety of learning resources as well as an easy and fast access to these learning resources. The use of LLT and *Blackboard* also represented a change in the way students learn and this, as students claimed, made them active and interested in the subject matter. Students added that the computer class helped them improve their language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and listening—especially those based on CDs. One student wrote,

“I like computer-based exercises.”
Students also liked submitting their assignments online, online discussions with classmates and teachers that helped them share knowledge and ideas, chatting with classmates, getting topics for presentations, using online translation dictionaries, finding videos and topics/articles that were relevant to the topics covered in class and watching and downloading English movies. Moreover, they liked fixing spelling and some grammar mistakes using word processors, developing typing skills and organizing the submitted written work. They were also satisfied with the free access to websites that helped them improve their English. Other students liked learning to use computer software such as Word, Excel, Photoshop and Dreamweaver. One of the students commented,

“I like to use the computer for this class because I acquire computer skills and I learn English at the same time.”

Teachers’ responses: Some teachers believed that students like having control over the activities and pace of learning. One of them suggested that this control leads to independent learning. Students enjoyed chatting and checking their marks individually not publicly. Furthermore, teachers assumed that students liked the exercises uploaded in Blackboard by the e-learning coordinator and the interactive activities like the CDs that come with the textbook, drag and drop exercises, puzzles and crosswords. Others thought that students enjoyed using technology since it allowed them to find information and resources for their assignments. LLT was also liked by students because, as one teacher commented,

“It is like a break. It is comfortable.”

6. What students and teachers do not like about LLT

Students’ responses: Some students stated that they did not like assignments that required them to do research because they found it hard to decide on the relevant information. One student added,
“Sometimes we are not sure whether the resources we get the information from are reliable or not.”

Some students said that they found it difficult to type their assignments. In addition, technical glitches created a dislike for LLT on the part of the students. These include: slow internet, slow computers and computers that get stuck and keep shutting down regularly. Further, five students reported that some of their peers were not attentive to the teacher. Rather, they keep checking their e-mails and other websites as one student commented,

“Some students use this session to perform things unrelated to the class”

Many students commented that the computer-based session was too short as one student complained,

“Two hours weekly are not enough. We would like to have more.”

Other students went on to say that sometimes this session involved no use of LLT- for example, the computer was rarely used or the class time would be spent on reading from the textbook. Some students considered this session to be boring and, thus, they expressed their hope to have more enjoyable and interactive activities.

*Teachers’ responses:* Teachers thought that students found typing assignments difficult. They also gave examples of the technical glitches that continued to occur every now and then. These include: equipment and projectors that do not work and shortage of computers. The following statements exemplify teachers’ concerns about LLT implementation.

“What about technicians? They must check on daily basis. I have to run after them. It is a waste of time…. They don’t have financial problems, so why don’t they provide advanced and working facilities?”
“Technology is acting as a barrier. We are complicating the instructional experience which could be easily done without technology.”

“I wish we had some course packages that tell us how to teach using LLT and that have resources and activities that teachers can use.”

“I wish LLT is set up properly so that I can use it.”

“E-learning is applied for the sake of e-learning not for the sake of learning…. technology has become an end in itself rather than a means to an end.”

4.3 Testing Reliability

Students’ responses to questionnaire items were tested for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient \(\alpha\) test that measures the internal consistency of students’ responses. It also measures the correlation of one particular scale with other scales that aim at measuring the same thing (Field, 2009; Garson, 2010). In this study, there were instances where participating students failed to give answers to some questions. That affected 14 responses out of 1342 which is the total number of the responses \(22 \times 61 = 1342\). By running Cronbach’s reliability test, the respondents who failed to give answers to some items were excluded. So there were 47 cases only \(61 - 14 = 47\). Excluding 14 participants is a lot compared to the total number of participants. When these participants were excluded, Cronbach’s coefficient was \(\alpha = 0.66\). Therefore, the 14 missing responses were replaced by the average mean of each item (see Appendix E for the means of each item which are listed according to the highest to the lowest mean). Cronbach’s standardised coefficient was then \(\alpha = 0.68\). This value is just on the border line of what is normally considered as a conventional cut-off criterion for a good scale- 0.7 or 0.8 (Garson, 2010). The following two reasons are likely to justify this inconsistency:

- Items 19 and 21 in the questionnaire explore students’ like or dislike for participating in Blackboard online discussion. The means and standard deviations for item 19 and item 21 are \(m = 3.07\), \(sd = 1.09\) and \(m = 3.29\), \(sd = 1.25\) respectively (see table 9 below)
and Appendix E for the means and standard deviations for all items that are sorted and ordered based on the highest to lowest values of the means). A probable reason for this inconsistency is that students were unable to understand the meaning of the questions in English. Hence, the questionnaire should have been bilingual—written in Arabic and English.

Table 9: Means and standard deviations for items 19 and 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I use discussion board in blackboard regularly.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I like to participate in blackboard discussion.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of students who answered the question

- The wording of the questions might be another reason behind the inconsistency. Students might have misread or misinterpreted some items (as Dornyei, 2005 pointed out in the disadvantages of carrying out questionnaires). Thus, those questions should have been checked through testing the questionnaire for content validity by expert researchers or scholars in the field of LLT.
Chapter 5
Discussion

A number of issues arise from the questionnaire and the interview findings. They will be discussed in this chapter. Where appropriate, suggestions are made for future use of LLT in institutional contexts like the one examined in this study.

5.1 Improvement in the English four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)

Both teachers and students reacted positively to the role of LLT in enhancing reading, writing and listening skills (as in Gu and Xu, 1999; Lee, 2005; Murday et al., 2008; Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). A small number stated that LLT fostered speaking (a finding also in Kim, 2008). Reading, which was regarded as the skill most improved by LLT, could be improved easily because students had abundant reading resources online. Reading was enhanced through articles related to research project topics, short stories, reading news, reading sports news, poems and checking tips for how to write excellent essays. Speaking was not performed as much online, however the computer-based CDs and DVDs created an engaging stimulus for follow-up debates and face-to-face discussions. Thus, speaking was only enhanced through face-to-face interaction. This suggests that speaking needs to be expanded to outside the computer laboratory setting through online conversations which will allow students to talk to more people, other than classmates and teachers, and probably allow them to interact with native speakers more easily.
5.2 Improvement in micro language skills (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation)

Vocabulary was enhanced through CDs that came with textbooks. Grammar was enhanced directly through grammar-based exercises and indirectly through writing. Additionally, pronunciation was fostered through DVDs that were used in class and the movies that students watched and downloaded on their own. It was also improved through checking the pronunciation of single words in online dictionaries such as the Cambridge online dictionary. These computer-based exercises were enjoyable and useful for students because they were interactive and they gave immediate feedback to their answers. Students could also choose exercises depending on their language level.

5.3 LLT and motivation

Both students and teachers believed that the computer laboratory class motivated students because it offered them another environment in which to study English, that is, students found LLT motivating because they did not have all their classes in a traditional classroom and because they employed both computers and internet in learning. Additionally, the use of LLT was useful and motivating for students because they learned English and acquired computer skills simultaneously. Further, students were motivated by surfing the internet for websites that helped them improve their English (e.g. Chia & Ellis, 2003). Having a variety of learning materials and interactive activities motivated the students to make progress in different language skills such as reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and listening.

Despite these benefits of LLT, both students and teachers asserted that students were unable to find good websites independently. Although the teacher was no longer the transmitter of knowledge and not the only source of information, the ‘independent learning’ stage has not been achieved yet. Students still needed teachers’ help and guidance. It seems
that they are still unable to be responsible for their own learning, but they are becoming self-dependent very slowly. This has raised the implication that teachers need to guide their students by designating some useful websites that students can use to develop their English which will save students’ time and eliminate aimless surfing.

Many students’ assignments required using some references. It was easy for students to find materials and articles. However, students pointed out continuously that they were unable to find reliable resources and relevant articles/information to support their arguments. They were not that skilful in distinguishing what was valid and reliable to support their topics and arguments and what was not. Students should have sufficient training on research skills and should also be taught how to avoid plagiarism. They should also be trained to use more reliable resources and should be provided with free access to these reliable resources, such as Eric or the appropriate academic database for their area of specialization. Students only use Google and Wikipedia as that is what is available, however by relying on these resources, they are essentially wasting their time writing assignments with inaccurate information. Even if they obtained information to support their arguments, the information they incorporated was not comprehensive enough to support the topic. This is another implication that students need guidance and training in searching for and integrating information to support their research projects and essays. Training poses itself as an essential solution to overcome numerous problems and to exploit the available facilities constructively. Such training saves teachers’ and students’ effort and time and will improve the quality of the work that students produce.

5.4 LLT and communication between teachers and classmates

The questionnaire results show that students use e-mails and or chats to communicate with teachers. Nevertheless, in actuality it seems that students prefer to see teachers in person to
inquire about various things and to ask for help and this is supported by statements from teachers. Students’ apparent preference to see and talk to their teachers in person is understandable because they see their teachers for six hours (three classes) weekly. Hence, they have the opportunity to ask the teacher face-to-face in class or at other times in the teacher’s office. Both teachers and students agreed that communication between classmates via LLT was achieved, but students used L1. This clearly indicates that the use of Arabic should be restricted maybe by blocking the Arabic characters as suggested by Chia and Ellis (2003).

5.5 Online submission and feedback

There is a mismatch between students’ and teachers’ claims in terms of submitting assignments and receiving online feedback. Students said that they submitted their assignments and received feedback online. As it is not a requirement in second year, most students do not submit assignments this way. Teachers supported this fact. Teachers also preferred to write comments/corrections on the hard copies of students’ writing. It seems that teachers are uncomfortable with online assessment. They should get into the habit of commenting on students’ writing online because students like it as it helps them to edit their writing on the computer. It seems that teachers are concerned that students will be editing their writing on the computer when they receive online feedback. Thus, students will not be able to identify teacher’s corrections or suggestions for what they should avoid in their upcoming assignments. Teachers believe that electronic documents are not as useful to the students as being able to refer back to written comments and corrections on a hard copy. However, students, in fact, can be trained to keep electronic documents with teacher’s comments and create new ones for the documents they modify. Regarding sending assignments to ‘Safe Assignments’, a plagiarism checker, it is extremely important because it
teaches students to take their assignments seriously and to be alert to plagiarism especially for research projects where they are required to use some references in their writing.

5.6 LLT and students’ participation

Both students and teachers concurred that there was no additional participation by students in the computer laboratory English session as compared with the two other sessions which took place in the classroom. This was due to the fact that students still had to engage in face-to-face interaction and had rigid timing for the English session that took place in a computer laboratory. Another reason behind this was that students were distracted by checking their e-mails or surfing websites for fun. Further, as no assessment was set for the online discussion and some teachers had not even activated it, students did not participate in it. There are two implications that come from these findings. First, students’ access to the internet should be monitored and restricted because they do not seem to realize the potential benefits of LLT nor do they appreciate the free-of-charge access to these facilities that could be used in more productive ways- that is, to use LLT as an interactive constructive learning tool and not solely as an entertainment tool. Thus, a need emerges for self discipline and restricted access to the internet while the computer-based class is taking place because students sometimes use the computer applications to do things unrelated to their learning. Students should be aware that progress in L2 is partly their responsibility (Murday et al., 2008). This could be effected by setting clear expectations for students from the beginning about their computer-based session and how it is different from the regular classroom session. Secondly, the facts that no assessment is set for online discussion and that teachers themselves do not upload any topics for discussion is one explanation as to why students are demotivated and do not engage in online discussion. Hence, assessment ought to include the online discussion- even if it weighs
only 5% of the overall course assessment. Students would, at least, have some motivation to participate then.

Both teachers and students agreed that using Blackboard was beneficial for promoting learning. Students found some applications in Blackboard useful such as checking their attendance, grades, viewing announcements posted by teachers and performing some language-related exercises that teachers upload. They could also participate in online discussion and view the course materials (e.g. handouts and PowerPoint presentations) for self-study on their own time. Thus, some flexibility in learning was involved in terms of both space and time (as in Almekhlafi, 2006; Lee, 2005; Murday et al., 2008; Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). The most important thing about Blackboard is to use it as a learning tool that helps students improve their English. Consequently, participation in the online discussion should be emphasized because it contributes to enriching vocabulary and developing internet searching, analytical and critical skills.

5.7 LLT and students’ computer skills

The fact that the majority of students strongly believed that they were good at using computers, or as teachers put it- computer-savvy, is very justifiable because they have learnt some basic computer skills and applications at school and at college.

The majority of students stated that they found typing their assignments using computers easier than using paper and pencil (60%). Thirty students emphasized this in their answers to the open-ended questions by stating that they use computers to type their assignments. However, three students complained that typing was difficult and time consuming. Teachers confirmed this by stating that students had poor typing skills. The implication that is drawn from this is that training students on word processing and typing is required, too. Their poor skills might hold them back from taking part in online discussion. One training session in
typing quickly would be sufficient. Teachers and/or administrators can use a very simple program called “Senselang” (see figure 1 below). Senselang is software that teaches typing quickly in a very user-friendly way. It also indicates the accuracy and speed of typing. It can be practiced online in the following website: http://www.sense-lang.org/typing/. This website allows students to practice typing fast. It offers tutorials which include clear instructions, typing tutorials, keypad tutorials, typing games and typing tests. Students are very likely to find this software enjoyable as well as useful for improving their typing skills in a relatively short time. A little training on these basic typing skills in the foundation year will save time and effort in the four upcoming years of specialization. Students will be able to type faster and better and their word processing skills will be enhanced.

![Senselang Software](image)

**Figure 1:** A snapshot of Senselang software

### 5.8 Student utilization of LLT at home

Teachers’ views of students’ likely uses of LLT at home substantiated those of the students. Students’ use of LLT at home consisted of looking for relevant information for their assignments and working on improving language skills such as writing, listening, vocabulary
and grammar. They also used the internet to check news and for translation from English into Arabic. Additionally, the internet was used for entertainment purposes such as checking e-mails, chatting, listening to music and playing games. This evidently shows that although students use LLT as an entertainment tool, they still also use it as a learning tool. However, they did not articulate whether they carry out the entertainment activities in English, Arabic or both English and Arabic. Only two students mentioned that they used *Blackboard* at home. Students should be motivated by teachers to participate more in *Blackboard* online discussion and to perform the activities that were uploaded there for them to practice on their own time, pace and space. Again, LLT can maintain the flexibility in terms of where and when students work on their language. E-learning through *Blackboard* was started in 2007, so it has been now three years since it was implemented. Thus, *Blackboard* applications should be exploited more effectively by encouraging students to take part in the online discussion, using the communication tools (e-mails) that are available there and downloading the English materials that are uploaded by teachers. It seems that the effort and time spent on designing and uploading *Blackboard* applications is, to some degree, wasted.

It is good that students are using online dictionaries at home. However, they should be encouraged to check words’ meaning in English so that they can enrich their English vocabulary and stop relying on English-Arabic dictionaries. Dictionaries of synonyms (thesauruses) and antonyms can be also recommended for students.

### 5.9 Difficulties/obstacles faced by students and teachers when using LLT

#### 5.9.1 Student difficulties with vocabulary and online translation dictionaries

When performing internet searches, students were confronted with an immense number of new words which inhibited understanding the materials/information that they found. Students should be given more exercises in vocabulary and more time should be devoted to reading to
alleviate their difficulty. It is also useful to give students some tips on how to be able to recall vocabulary easily. With these techniques, students will be able to better absorb the new vocabulary and have fewer difficulties when they encounter these ‘new’ words again.

Another problem students face is relying on online translation dictionaries. These are undependable as they give literal translations. Some students translate whole paragraphs, not only single words. They usually do this when they find it difficult to find relevant articles to support their essays and projects, so they look for articles in their L1, Arabic, and then translate them into English. Such translations using the online dictionaries are unreliable, literal and inaccurate.

5.9.2 Technical problems

Technical glitches slow up exploiting LLT to its fullest potential. Slow computers, unstable internet speed, shortage of computers, projectors that do not work and lack of regular maintenance were some technical problems reported by students and teachers. These lead to frustration in using LLT on the part of both students and teachers. A feasible solution to these problems is to run continuous maintenance checks to make sure that all computer laboratories have remotes for the data projectors, all computers are working, and that headphones are available and working. Otherwise, teachers will (and they indicated that this had happened) end up wasting that computer-based session on calling for a technician while the class is taking place or changing the lesson plan into something else. This also happened to the teachers in Gu and Xu (1999, p. 182) who emphasized in their study that without the “dedicated technician”, the LLT experience would have been a useless one. Teachers do not appear to have major problems in handling basic technology issues (this corroborates Al-Musawi and Abdelraheem, 2004), but they need technical support. They still need pre- and in-service training on using computers to help them use LLT effectively and to solve simple
technical problems. They also need training on basic computer software packages and effective ways to apply them in teaching (as suggested in Kim, 2008).

5.10 Facilities that students and teachers wish to have

Students and teachers gave some suggestions for facilities and applications that they wish to have. Students suggested having audio-visual chats. In fact, many user-friendly programs can be used such as Skype (as used in Jenks, 2009) and Ovoo (Skype 4.2.0.169, 2010; Ovoo 2.6.0.20, 2010). Both these programs are sophisticated ones and they are free of charge. Students’ preference for audio-visual chats justifies why they considered the computer-based class the least effective one in helping them improve their speaking skill. It also indicates that students wish to have more practice in speaking. Other students proposed allotting some sessions for training on both typing and internet searching. They also need training on integration skills to help them better incorporate data from online resources into their essays and research projects. Technical problems are obviously one of the paramount aspects which students and teachers alike insisted must be solved- for instance providing adequate, working and up-to-date computers and supplying them with necessary accessories such as printers, working projectors and headphones (this confirms teachers’ preconditions for implementing LLT in Kim, 2008). Teachers also think that administrators need to attend to these issues. As there are no concerns regarding finance, upgrading computer facilities should be a priority.

Teachers said they needed more clarification on how to utilize LLT as well as recommendations of activities that they could use in teaching using LLT. NCAS required that teachers use LLT applications. However, teachers were not provided with enough instruction on how to use it nor were they supplied with enough additional resources, activities and learning materials that can be used in the two-hour computer-based session. Training teachers and students seems to be an essential matter that should be taken seriously by the
administrators, policy makers and syllabus designers in order to implement LLT effectively in English learning at the college. So, training both students and teachers is just as important as supplying computer laboratories with well-equipped and working computers. To put it clearly, there is no point in having up-to-date technology where both students and teachers do not know how to use it effectively in the learning and teaching processes. Likewise, it is useless to have expert students and teachers in LLT if they are not supplied with working and advanced technology because “the success of technology-driven materials may depend as much on the human element as on the sophistication of the technology employed” (Murday et al., 2008, p. 137).

5.11 Comparison with previous research

This study’s findings will now be compared with previous research conducted in Oman regarding LLT use. The comparison reveals that there is an overlap in terms of findings with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), CASs and Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS). Al-Musawi and Abdelraheem (2004) reported that SQU students preferred online learning over face-to-face instruction. In the current study, students did not say explicitly that they preferred online instruction over face-to-face instruction, but they noted that they liked some aspects of LLT such as online communication with their teachers. Al-Musawi and Abdelraheem (2004) also reported that SQU teachers and students agreed that LLT increased students’ self-confidence. However, this issue was not addressed in this study. An issue that came up in both studies was student and teacher frustration with the technical problems, including slow internet speed. Consistent with the present study, Al-Musawi and Abdelraheem (2004) also reported that teachers believed that LLT use is time-consuming.

Al-Musawi (2007) reported that there was not enough LLT equipment and facilities in higher education institutions and this was reported by teachers, administrators and technical
staff from different private and public higher education institutions. Similarly, in the present study, teachers at NCAS also reported problems with LLT facilities such as lack of computers, headphones and remotes for data projectors. Administrators, in Al-Musawi (2007), reported that they faced some obstacles such as: little training, little financial support and low awareness of the importance of LLT in promoting language learning. Al-Musawi (2007) suggested that newly employed staff needed more training concerning LLT implementation. He further recommended supporting institutions with adequate technical and human resources. In the current study, teachers did not indicate whether they needed or did not need training, but they did want more sophisticated LLT facilities as well as for maintenance checks to be carried out regularly by technicians.

The major obstacles towards adopting LLT that were reported by teachers at Colleges of Applied Sciences (CASs) in Al-Senaidi et al. (2008) were the lack of technical support and lack of time. Lack of technical support is also an aspect that was emphasised by teachers at NCAS in the present study. Lack of time also came up in this study, but it did not appear to be a major obstacle. Unlike the current study, faculty members in Al-Senaidi et al. (2008) expressed satisfaction regarding CASs’ computing equipment. In this study though, teachers pointed out that the computing equipment was unsophisticated. In both studies, teachers did not lack computer skills and they were also aware of the benefits of using LLT. However, instructional packages that guide teachers for how to effectively integrate LLT were desired by teachers at NCAS.

This pattern of results indicates that LLT use at NCAS is both similar to, and different from that at SQU. Technical problems cause frustration for both students and teachers. LLT use is also regarded as a time-consuming process. On the other hand, having adequate technical support is emphasized at CASs and NCAS. The need for enough LLT facilities is expressed by teachers at NCAS and teachers from different higher education institutions,
private and public. It seems that LLT facilities at SQU are adequate and more extensive than those at CASs because this issue, to the researcher’s knowledge, is not reported to be a problem at SQU.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the study

Students’ and teachers’ perceptions and attitudes varied with regard to their experience of implementing LLT in language learning. LLT plays a big role in enhancing most language skills, but more activities should be designed for development of speaking skill. LLT also has a positive impact on enhancing motivation as it provides a wide variety of learning and teaching materials and a break from classroom sessions. However, students are still unable to function independently and teachers’ guidance is still necessary. Additionally, training on efficient typing and internet searching as well as integration of information skills is required.

It should be stressed to students that they need to develop self discipline in order to exploit LLT to its fullest potential instead of wasting the computer laboratory time checking e-mails and aimlessly surfing the internet. Apparently, it is sufficient for students to talk with their teachers face-to-face in the three weekly classes (two in a regular classroom and one in a computer laboratory) and so no further online communication takes place. Previously, students used LLT only for fun, but interestingly now they do use LLT for learning as well as for entertainment. Flexibility is maintained to some degree regarding when and where students learn/study. Despite the benefits of LLT, the technical malfunctions frustrate both teachers and students and make them sometimes unwilling to utilize LLT.

It seems that teachers are able to articulate what their students like and dislike about LLT as well as what they need. However, it is also quite apparent that they cannot change anything about it as the design and implementation of LLT is set by administrators, policy makers and
syllabus designers. Consequently, these administrators, syllabus designers and policy makers should seek feedback from teachers regarding LLT in order to better understand the reality of LLT. Teachers should also be involved in the design of these syllabuses, as students’ needs should be considered while selecting learning materials from the internet and teachers are best equipped to address these needs. This suggestion is consistent with Al-Senaidi et al. (2008, p. 587) who proposed that “a close collaboration between the technology experts and teaching personnel” should be established. Moreover, LLT lessons should be based on well-designed curricula and pedagogical considerations (as suggested in Itler, 2009).

LLT should not be implemented for the sake of technology. Instead, it should be used for the sake of learning and helping students to improve their language skills (Kim, 2008). Thus, this study and similar studies are important because they lead to a better understanding of how to enhance students’ learning via LLT in these contexts.

6.2 Implications for teaching and learning

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations and implications are put forward to maximize the benefits of integrating LLT (at NCAS):

1. Provide training on:
   - Internet research skills.
   - Integration skills because students need to integrate the information they find from reliable resources into their written work.
   - Typing (e.g. using senselang software).

2. Provide reliable access to information and encourage students to use websites other than Google and Wikipedia.

3. Designate useful websites for students to improve their English.

4. With regard to online discussion:
• Set assessment for online discussion.
• Activate online discussion through uploading topics by teachers.

5. Restrict internet use while class is taking place—such as blocking Arabic characters and monitoring students’ surfing by the teacher (the teacher can control and monitor all computers in class using the main computer control unit).

6. Encourage the use of English-English online dictionaries and cease use of English-Arabic dictionaries. The use of online translation dictionaries should be discouraged as they are very unreliable and they give literal and inaccurate translations.

7. Have more practice in vocabulary because unfamiliarity with vocabulary seems to hinder understanding the materials/information that students find.

8. Run maintenance checks on a regular basis.

9. Plan pre- and in-service training for teachers to keep them updated with new computer software packages and how they can be utilized in teaching English.

10. Develop audio-visual or audio chats to help students improve their speaking through listening to and/or watching various verbal and non-verbal language cues.

11. Set clear objectives and expectations for the computer-based sessions.

12. Involve teachers in the syllabi design process because they understand the reality of LLT better and know what works out well for students.

6.3 Study limitations and recommendations for further research

While this study might be limited in the depth and issues it raises, it has helped to explore some important aspects about the current status of LLT integration at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences (NCAS) in Oman. The results might not be applicable or generalized to other colleges, but they give some useful insights about how LLT is used in a College of Applied Sciences context.
Some limitations have been observed in this study. The questionnaire should have been examined by teachers with LLT teaching experience for content validity, so as to allow the researcher to know whether the questions are appropriate or not and whether any changes should have been made regarding the wording and/or order of the items. Particularly, it seems that the last question in the closed-response questions, I am not good at using computers, is badly worded because of the use of a negative question. Negation should be avoided in questionnaires because it leads to “misinterpretation and confusion” for the responding students (Brown, 2000, p. 47). Internal consistency concerning students’ responses to the defined-response questions was just on the border line of what is considered an adequate value by convention ($\alpha = .68$). This suggests that students might have had difficulty understanding the items. So it would have been better to use a bilingual questionnaire, written in both Arabic and English. Furthermore, in addition to macro skills, micro skills should also have been addressed more explicitly in the questionnaire and the interviews. Moreover, it would have been better to administer the questionnaire in the middle or at the end of the semester. It was administered on the first week of the semester. There is a big possibility that students might not have utilized LLT much in the break. Hence, administering the questionnaire some time later during the course would have yielded more accurate and representative data of students’ use of LLT.

With regard to the interviews, the interview questions should have also been revised for content validity. Audio- or video-recording of the interviews would have been better in that the researcher might have missed some points regarding LLT that the participating interviewees mentioned and considered important.

As the findings of this study might not be representative of the reality of LLT in the five Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman, this study could be replicated for further research and conducted in other Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman with the modifications suggested
earlier. The results could then be compared to identify whether they are consistent with or different from the ones found in this study. Further research could also compare males’ to females’ perceptions and attitudes towards LLT to investigate whether gender affects perceptions towards LLT. Moreover, further research could address redefining the roles of students and teachers in LLT-based teaching/learning.
References


Appendices

Appendix A
Student and Teacher Attitudes towards the Use of Language Learning Technology (LLT) in a Tertiary English Course in Oman

**Gender:**

**Investigator:** Sumaya Ambu-Saidi

**Code:** 2007699

**Teaching institution:** Nizwa College of Applied Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>reading</strong> skill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>writing</strong> skill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>listening</strong> skill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>speaking</strong> skill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The use of multimedia <strong>motivates</strong> me (e.g. listening using headphones and watching videos).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is <strong>easier</strong> for me to use the computer to write my assignment than using paper and pencil.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The skills of software used in this class are also useful for other classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I participate more when the class is in the computer laboratory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The computer materials allow me to choose activities that suit my <strong>learning strategies and needs</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The use of blackboard is a waste of time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The <strong>internet connection</strong> is fast.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I get to know about motivating activities and ways to study English on the internet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I contact my teacher at anytime when I need help (e.g. by e-mail or chat).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with my classmates in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with native speakers(teachers and friends).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I submit my assignments on-line.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I get feedback on my work/assignments on-line.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>This class allows me to access different websites to improve my English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I use discussion board in blackboard regularly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I know how to use the search engine effectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. What assignments require you to use computer or internet resources for this class?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. What do you use the computer or internet resources for at home?  

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. What difficulties do you face when you use computer and internet resources for language learning?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Is there anything you would like to learn and/or use in this computer-based language class that is not currently available?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. What do you like most about the use of computers and internet resources in this class?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Is there anything you do not like about the use of computers and internet resources in this class?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix B

School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies
HEAD OF SCHOOL
Professor Alfredo Martínez-Expósito

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Sumaya Ambu-Saidi. I’m undertaking a three-semester MA in Applied Linguistics in the University of Queensland in Australia. I will be doing a research next semester on “Omani student use and perceptions of language learning technology (LLT) in English language classes.

Research topic:

Student and Teacher Attitudes towards the Use of Language Learning Technology (LLT) in a Tertiary English Course in Oman

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how Omani students at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences perceive the use of LLT in English language classes. The data obtained from this project will examine student positive and negative attitudes towards LLT. It will also identify how the computers and internet resources are used. More specifically, the study will provide some teaching implications as to how effective language learning technology can be in the English language curriculum.

The expected duration of participation in this study

The estimated time to participate in the study is an hour; half an hour for filling out the questionnaire and half an hour for taking part in the interview.
Procedures for participants’ involvement

The purposes of the study will be explained orally by the principal investigator who will also hand out a participant information sheet and the consent letter. If you agree to volunteer to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent letter.

You will be required to fill in a questionnaire about your positive and negative perceptions, attitudes and evaluation of LLT in English language classes.

Finally teachers will take part in an interview. The interview will last for half an hour. It will cover the same theme of the questionnaire with an attempt to discuss fully the issues in the questionnaire and to raise more issues that are not addressed in the questionnaire. The interviews will take place on-campus.

Risks to Participants

There are no foreseeable physical or psychological risks involved in this project.

Benefits for participants

The outcomes of this research will be used to assess the effectiveness of language learning technology (LLT) based on students’ perceptions. The implications may eventually lead to the improvement in the use of LLT in English instruction at Nizwa College of Applied Sciences. Participant will contribute to advances in the implementation of LLT facilities.

Methods of maintaining confidentiality and secure storage of data once collected

The findings will be accessible and kept by the principle investigator. Participants’ identity will remain anonymous. The results will be kept on a password-protected computer hard drive.
Feedback to participants

A summary of the analysis of the data will be e-mailed to those who are interested in knowing the findings obtained from this project. If you would like to receive this summary, write your e-mail address in the participant consent letter.

Withdrawal

Participants can withdraw from the study at any time and no explanation will be required.

Contact details:

Should you have any inquiries or suggestions concerning the manner in which the research is conducted, please contact me through the following e-mail:

e-mail: sumaya.ambusaidi@uqconnect.edu.au

University of Queensland Ethical Clearance

The study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff contactable on sumaya.ambusaidi@uqconnect.edu.au. If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer of the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies on (07) 3365 6311 (within Australia), +61 7 3365 6311 (international), or email at ethics@slccs.uq.edu.au or via fax + 61 7 3365 6799.
Appendix C

Participant Consent Letter

Title: Student and Teacher Attitudes towards the Use of Language Learning Technology (LLT) in a Tertiary English Course in Oman

Participants,

This letter is to verify that you have understood the nature of the research in the project. You are free to decide whether to participate or not. The research will not involve any physical, emotional, and psychological discomfort.

Participant: I have read the information contained in the information sheet for participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research realizing that I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the data gathered for the study may be published in academic journals or might be used for further research, provided that my name is not disclosed.

I understand that I can obtain a summary of the results if I so wish.

Participant’s name: ………………………………………………………………………

Signature: …………………………………………………………………………………

Date (day/month/year): ………………………………………………………………..

If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the results, please write your e-mail address below or indicate how you would like to receive the summary.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Principal Investigator: Mrs. Sumaya Ambu-Saidi

e-mail: sumaya.ambusaidi@uqconnect.edu.au

Nizwa, Sultanate of Oman

University of Queensland; Australia (fax: + 61 7 3365 6799).
Appendix D

Gatekeeper consent letter

October 24, 2009

Mrs. Sumaya Ambu-Saidi
P.O.Box: 168
Nizwa, Postal code: 611
Saltanate of Oman

Dear Miss Ambu-Saidi,

Thank you for your letter of October 23rd 2009.

We are pleased to inform you that Nizwa College of Applied Sciences would be happy to co-operate with you in the proposed research you desire to undertake as outlined in your letter. In this respect we are willing to extend to you our college’s facilities for the successful expedition of your research.

Please accept our warmest regards and best wishes.

Dr. Abdullah bint Saif Al-Toubi
College Dean
# Appendix E

Means and standard deviations for the 22 defined-response items (ordered from highest mean to lowest mean)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>$m$</th>
<th>$sd$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I submit my assignments on-line.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.83615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>reading</strong> skill.</td>
<td>4.22951</td>
<td>0.69266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I know how to use the search engine effectively.</td>
<td>4.21667</td>
<td>0.80447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The use of multimedia <strong>motivates</strong> me (e.g. listening using headphones and watching videos).</td>
<td>4.21312</td>
<td>0.9507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>This class allows me to access different websites to improve my English.</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.77733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The computer materials allow me to choose activities that suit my <strong>learning strategies and needs</strong>.</td>
<td>4.11475</td>
<td>0.77671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The skills of software used in this class are also useful for other classes.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.70591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I get to know about motivating activities and ways to study English on the internet.</td>
<td>4.01639</td>
<td>0.71861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>listening</strong> skill.</td>
<td>3.90164</td>
<td>0.83076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I get feedback on my work/assignments on-line.</td>
<td>3.81035</td>
<td>1.0506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>writing</strong> skill.</td>
<td>3.7541</td>
<td>1.0902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is <strong>easier</strong> for me to use the computer to write my assignment than using paper and pencil.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.32288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I participate more when the class is in the computer lab.</td>
<td>3.46667</td>
<td>1.14191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I contact my teacher at anytime when I need help (e.g. by e-mail or chat).</td>
<td>3.38983</td>
<td>1.17469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The <strong>internet connection</strong> is fast.</td>
<td>3.38333</td>
<td>1.15115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I like to participate in blackboard discussion.</td>
<td>3.28814</td>
<td>1.24639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with native speakers(teachers and friends).</td>
<td>3.27869</td>
<td>1.24004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The computer-based class helps me to improve my <strong>speaking</strong> skill.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.09892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I communicate/chat with my classmates in English.</td>
<td>3.08197</td>
<td>1.21511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I use discussion board in blackboard regularly.</td>
<td>3.06557</td>
<td>1.09345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The use of blackboard is a waste of time.</td>
<td>2.09836</td>
<td>1.04411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I am not good at using computers.</td>
<td>1.63333</td>
<td>0.84305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>