

Students' Perceptions Towards the Drawbacks of Technology in English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Technology has brought much improvement in English teaching and learning since its inception years ago. Undoubtedly, technology has changed the traditional English teaching and learning method, in-class, and out-of-class, with the teachers making the most of the multipurpose-functions that technology offers, especially, in this new norm era. However, as many as advantages the technology brings in English language classrooms, its drawbacks need to be addressed as well. Thus, this study aims to determine the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning as perceived by university students in Malaysia. This study employed a quantitative research method using a survey design. The instrument used for this study was a set of questionnaires that was randomly distributed to students from different universities via google forms. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items which covered four sections: demographic profiles, cost of technology, language teaching using technology and language learning using technology. 85 students responded to the questionnaire and became the participants of the study. The findings revealed that university students in Malaysia perceived using technology in English language learning as the major drawback. The second drawback was the cost of technology, and finally, English language teaching using technology. The findings also revealed the students' gender and fields of study had no influence on the drawbacks of technology in all three aspects. It can be concluded that the paradigm shift of using technology in the English language teaching and learning has also had its downside, especially in the students' learning process.

Keywords: technology, drawbacks, English language

1. Introduction

Technology has been implemented in multiple ways possible to aid both teachers and students in many aspects of language teaching and learning such as developing course materials, delivering and sharing content, students-teachers' interactions, creation and delivery of presentation and lectures as well as academic research. The inventions of Internet and mobile devices have also encouraged most of teachers and students to opt for these new man-made creations in helping them with teaching and learning. Undeniably, technology assists teachers and students greatly by which they do not have to be in a physical classroom to learn and the teaching and learning can be accessible online using the Internet and information can be gained at their fingertips. It has also eased the teachers' work by making it easier to find rapid and appropriate materials for their classroom activity. Technology has also been found to be helpful in students' visual and verbal learning, higher thinking skills, problem solving, feedback, hands-on learning and collaborative learning (Hani, 2014). These are some of the ways how technology is implemented in today's teaching and learning context.

Technology is widely embraced in the teaching and learning context. However, Riasati et al. (2012) lamented that it would be naive to expect the implementation of technology in any educational context to be successful without encountering some barriers such as lack of access, training, time, as well as teachers' and students' acceptance and attitudes. Technology cannot ensure meaningful teaching and learning to take place. The teachers must be well equipped with the technological knowledge by undergoing training for integrating technology in their teaching. Meanwhile, technological problems will make learning frustrating for the students, especially when the teaching and learning are conducted online, and they have internet connectivity issues (Goshal, 2020). According to Altavilla (2020), the drawbacks of integrating technology in English language classrooms include inequalities in accessing and using technology among students, the software programs and digital applications are not one-fit-all teaching and learning tools to cater students from different language backgrounds and learning abilities, and finally, technology does not cater learners' needs for genuine social interaction.

There are several studies documented on the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning. For instance, a study done by Tamilarasan et al. (2019) on teachers showed that English teachers may not be leading the teaching as they rely too much on the multimedia devices. Teachers play an important role in conveying knowledge for English learning activities and with technology taking over the lessons, it reduces the teachers' role and at the same time lessens the teacher-student interaction. Solano et al. (2017) also found in their study that English teachers did not incorporate technology in the classrooms because they did not have enough facilities and were not equipped with technological knowledge that would make English classes more interesting. They also avoided applying technological tools because they considered the tools difficult to use. Khodabandelou et al. (2016) stated that teaching using technology might not be suitable for some students because different students have different learning preferences. Highly technological teaching approaches may benefit some students, but not for others. Generally, syllabus which includes technological teaching

methods may not be optimum for students as they do not offer flexibility in students' activities. Evaluation using technology also has its own challenges for teachers.

Meanwhile, looking at the students' perspectives on technology in language learning, Rahmawati (2016) discovered that students perceived the drawbacks of online learning in English language learning as decreasing social interaction, having technical problems, not allowing direct teacher feedback, increasing the act of plagiarism, cheating and expensive. The findings indicated that plagiarism and cheating were notions emerged during the research where students were able to access resources freely and transfer materials without paraphrasing or citing the original work. Zboun and Farrah (2021) found several major drawbacks in implementing online language learning such as less teacher-student interaction, decreased students' motivation, increased students' boredom and poor internet connectivity. They concluded that students were not satisfied with online classes, and they preferred face-to-face classrooms as they could actively participate and interact with their teachers and peers which made them feel motivated. To cope with the advancement of new technologies, students need to train themselves to be self-directed in their own learning and explore how these new technologies could potentially assist them to the fullest. Technology usually focuses on a specific language aspect, for instance, vocabulary strategies, writing activities or collaborative activities in a technology-based environment. The other skills and competences that relate to self-regulated techniques and strategies need to be improved in this language learning environment (Parmaxi & Zaphiris, 2015).

Similar studies were also done in the Malaysian context, for example, Krisnan et al. (2020) studied the challenges of learning English via online versus traditional method. Although they found the respondents had positive attitudes on using online in learning English, some respondents mentioned some drawbacks too such as poor internet connectivity, occurrence of plagiarism and lack of teacher feedback. While Che Haron et al. (2021) examined the drawbacks of the technology faced by the teachers and discovered that there were two types of drawbacks: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic drawbacks include lack of technical knowledge, skills, training and resources and teachers' preparedness in using technology both in teaching and assessing. While extrinsic drawbacks were mostly students' related issues, for example, they had no control over students' attendance, participation and technology accessibility such as gadgets and tools and internet access. These drawbacks were not only prevalent during the pandemic, but also even before the pandemic as reported in earlier studies.

In conducting this study, the researchers referred to the Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Rogers (2003, cited in Sahin, 2006). Rogers stated that users' perceptions towards the attributes of innovations could affect the rate of innovation adoption. These attributes are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. Users will not have positive perceptions towards technology if they do not see the advantages of using it; if they feel that technology is not compatible to their needs; if they have difficulties in using technology; if they have limitations in trying out technology; and if the results of technology are not visible to them and others. These negative perceptions will impede the innovation-diffusion process which eventually demotivates the students to learn. Therefore, this theory is appropriate for the present study as the study examines the students' perceptions

and the drawbacks of technology.

Since the research on the drawbacks of technology in language teaching and learning in Malaysia from the students' perspectives is still relatively scarce, there is a need to investigate the drawbacks of technology in language teaching and learning, particularly, among university students in Malaysia in order to add to the existing literature. Therefore, there are three (3) research questions for this study:

- 1) What are the Malaysian university students' perceptions towards the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning?
- 2) Does gender have any influence on the Malaysian university students' perceptions towards the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning?
- 3) Do fields of study have any influence on the Malaysian university students' perceptions towards the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning?

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative research method using a survey design. Since quantitative research deals with statistical data which can be quantified, the interpretation of the results reduces the researchers' time and effort in explaining the outcome of their study. Furthermore, using a quantitative research method makes generalization possible to a certain extent. It can be replicated to validate the results of the study (Abuhamda, 2021). A survey using a questionnaire is also quite common and it has been used to obtain information describing the characteristics of a large sample of individuals for decades (Ponto, 2015). A 30-item questionnaire using both a multiple-choice response structure for the demographic profiles and a numerical Likert scale response structure that ranges from number 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was developed to answer the research questions for the present study. Section A had 4 questions that included age, gender, fields of study and place of study. Section B covered 8 items on the cost of technology. Section C had 8 items on language teaching using technology and Section D had 10 items on language learning using technology. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to Malaysian university students in both private and public universities using a google form via social media platforms. The simple random sampling technique would give each student in Malaysian universities an equal chance of becoming a survey participant. The researchers had to close the link to the survey after getting 85 students' responses due to the time constraint in conducting the study. The data gathered in google sheet were transferred to SPSS and the findings were reported in both descriptive and inferential statistics. The significance level was set at 0.05 for inferential statistics.

3. Results and Discussion

After the demographic profile section, the results and discussion will be presented based on the research questions of the study.

3.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows frequency distribution of the respondents' demographic profile that includes age, gender, fields of study and place of study. The demographic profile indicated that the majority of the respondents were in the age range of 23–26 and in public universities. The number of male and female respondents was almost the same and the number of respondents from Science & Technology was slightly higher than those from Business & Administration and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Percentages (N=85)
Age	
22 and below	28.2% (24)
23-26	64.7% (55)
27 and above	7.1% (6)
Gender	
Male	50.6% (43)
Female	49.4% (42)
Fields of Study	
Science & Technology	37.7% (32)
Business & Administration	34.1% (29)
Soc. Sciences & Humanities	28.2% (24)
Place of Study	
Public University	67.1% (57)
Private University	32.9% (28)

3.2 Research Question 1: What Are the Malaysian University Students' Perceptions Towards the Drawbacks of Technology in English Language Teaching and Learning?

Table 2. Cost of technology

Item No	Cost of technology	Mean
B8	Technology changes from time to time and often gets more expensive (more costs)	3.94
B7	It costs a lot to repair the computers or laptops if they are broken	3.88
B5	For some language learners, technology is not affordable	3.72
B6	Buying anti-virus software is costly	3.72
B3	Learning English using technology costs a lot of money in providing accessibility (Internet)	3.64
B4	Technology costs a lot of the language learners' time and effort in troubleshooting	3.40
B1	Learning English using technology costs a lot of money to purchase equipment (laptops, projectors etc.)	3.35
B2	Learning English using technology costs a lot of money for maintenance	3.10

Table 2 above shows the means for the perceptions of university students in Malaysia towards the cost of technology as one of the drawbacks of technology in language teaching and learning. Above, as can be seen, the highest mean found was for item B8, “*Technology changes from time to time and often gets more expensive (more costs)*” at 3.94 and it was followed by item B7, “*It costs a lot to repair computers or laptops if they are broken*” at 3.88. Then, item B5, “*For some language learners, technology is not affordable*” and item B6, “*Buying anti-virus software is costly*” had the same mean which was at 3.72. Item B3, “*Learning English using technology costs a lot of money in providing accessibility (internet)*” came next at a mean of 3.64 and item B4 “*Technology costs a lot of the language learners’ time and effort in troubleshooting*” was next at a mean of 3.40. Moreover, item B1 “*Learning English using technology costs a lot of money to purchase equipment (laptops, projectors etc.)*” had a mean of 3.35 and the lowest mean was item B2, “*Learning English using technology costs a lot of money for maintenance*” which was at a mean of 3.10.

The findings showed that students perceived technology changed over time and often, it became more expensive along with the improvements of technology as the drawbacks. Rahmawati (2016), supported this issue with her findings that stated learning using technology was costly. The study also revealed that a participant remarked that she had to spend more money to experience e-learning. Rahmawati (2016) further mentioned that students had to provide themselves with Internet connection to engage in the lesson, but aside the fact that having an Internet connection was already costly, they needed to spend more should they wish for stronger and faster Internet connection. Sandiev and Yang (2020) also stated that some of the technological tools were relatively expensive for language teachers and students to use technologies for language teaching and learning especially the more advanced hardware support and devices and newly developed software. The findings had also shown that students considered cost as a drawback in learning language via technology as some of them had financial difficulties and could not afford technology in their learning.

The next drawback that this study investigated is in terms of language teaching using technology. Table 3 below illustrates the mean for each item under investigation.

Table 3. English language teaching using technology

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Language teaching using technology</i>	<i>Mean</i>
C8	Technology reduces lecturer-student interaction in English language teaching	3.58
C6	Feedback cannot be provided immediately by the English lecturers when technology is used	3.52
C2	Technology will replace the traditional way of English language teaching	3.34
C7	Technology has limited English language teaching methods	3.28
C5	Lecturers cannot immediately identify English language learners’ problems when teaching language through technology	3.09
C4	English Language lecturers have difficulties and challenges teaching through technology	3.08
C3	Technology can replace English lecturers in the classroom settings	2.90
C1	Teaching language through technology can diminish an English lecturer’s role	2.75

From the table, the highest mean seen was for item C8, “*Technology reduces lecturer-student interaction in English language teaching*” at 3.58 and it was closely followed by item C6, “*Feedback cannot be provided immediately by the English lecturers when technology is used*” at 3.52. The third highest mean was for item C2, “*Technology will replace the traditional way of English language teaching*” at 3.34 and item C7, “*Technology has limited English language teaching methods*” was next with a mean of 3.28. Next, item C5, “*Lecturers cannot immediately identify English language learners’ problems when teaching language through technology*” was at a mean of 3.09 and item C4 “*English language lecturers have difficulties and challenges teaching through technology*” was at a mean of 3.08. In addition, item C3, “*Technology can replace English lecturers in the classroom settings*” had a mean of 2.90 and item C1, “*Teaching language through technology can diminish an English lecturer’s role*” had the lowest mean at 2.75.

The finding indicated that university students in Malaysia perceived that technology reduced teacher-student interaction in language teaching as the major drawback. When technology was applied, the active role of the teacher in the classroom became lesser and lesser. This finding concurred with a study by Tamilarasan et al. (2019, p. 975) who discovered that, “The teacher-student interaction lessens, as there is no eye contact between them with students’ attention focused completely on the screen.” The same study also mentioned that communication between teachers and students was reduced when technology replaced the teacher’s role by providing sounds and visual images. When verbal communication was reduced, the class could be passive as students turned into viewers instead of becoming participants for the lesson. Zboun and Farrah (2021) also supported the finding on lack of teacher-student interaction as the majority of their respondents stated that their interaction with their teachers decreased in language online classes as compared to learning in traditional classrooms. Meanwhile, the findings on lack of immediate feedback from the teachers and teachers’ challenges in dealing with technology are in line with Rahmawati’s (2016) and Che Haron et al.’s (2021) respectively. Rahmawati (2016) found that students were not comfortable with virtual feedback as it was delayed, and it caused misunderstanding as they could not clarify with their teachers immediately. Che Haron et al. (2021) stated that the biggest challenge of teachers using technology was readiness and acceptance. It is also important to note that the respondents did not see the changing role of the teachers as the major drawback. It might be probably because they still feel that guidance from the teachers is still needed in their language learning.

There were 10 items which measured the drawback of technology in language learning as presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Language learning using technology

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Language learning using technology</i>	<i>Mean</i>
D10	Technology can easily lead to plagiarism or cheating in language learning	4.14
D7	Learning English language using technology is restricted when Internet is not accessible	4.09
D5	Learners who are from low-income families find it hard to utilize technology in language learning	4.02
D9	Information gained through technology is not always accurate or reliable and language learners can be misguided	3.77
D4	Language learners with advanced technology skills will benefit better than those who do not	3.69
D3	The use of technology can distract English learners from the learning (games, social media)	3.62
D2	Language learners become inefficient and incapable of solving problems on their own (technology-dependant)	3.51
D1	Technology can make language learners disconnected from the real world	3.20
D8	Activities for English language learning are difficult to carry out through online courses	3.20
D6	Technology can make language learners be less interested in learning	2.83

From the table, the highest mean identified was for item D10, “*Technology can easily lead to plagiarism or cheating in language learning*” at 4.14 and was followed by item D7, “*Learning English language using technology is restricted when Internet is not accessible*” at 4.09. Item D5, “*Learners who are from low-income families find it hard to utilize technology in language learning*” had a mean of 4.02 and the fourth highest mean was for item D9, “*Information gained through technology is not always accurate or reliable and language learners can be misguided*” at 3.77. Meanwhile, item D4, “*Language learners with advanced technology skills learn better than those who do not*” was next with a mean of 3.69 and followed by item D3, “*The use of technology can distract English learners from the learning (games, social media)*” was at 3.62 and item D2, “*Language learners become inefficient and incapable of solving problems on their own (technology-dependant)*” was next with a mean of 3.51. Items D1 and D8, which stood for “*Technology can make language learners disconnected from the real worlds*” and “*Activities for English language learning are difficult to carry out through online courses*” respectively, had the same mean of 3.20 and the lowest mean found was at 2.83 for item D6, “*Technology can make language learners be less interested in learning*”.

University students in Malaysia perceived that technology could easily lead to plagiarism or cheating in language learning as the major drawback. Rahmawati (2016) and Krisnan et al. (2020) also found this issue as the drawbacks for students’ language learning. With Internet-enabled devices, looking up answers to questions, using dictionaries and finding other sources of information online would be easy (Chartrand, 2016). Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) also stated that technology would encourage plagiarism as students did not have adequate writing skills, which, led to “copy and paste” solution. Poor internet connectivity

was the second drawback found in this study. The same finding is also commonly reported in many previous studies (e.g., Rahmawati, 2016; Krisnan et al., 2020; Che Haron et al., 2021; Zboun & Farrah, 2021). This is probably because internet accessibility might not be available to students especially those who live in rural areas that cannot be reached by communication service providers. It is quite interesting to find that university students in Malaysia have considered plagiarism and cheating as the major drawback as compared to poor internet connectivity. This may be due to their temptations to commit the act of plagiarism as there is minimal monitoring on their work via technology.

Table 5 below shows the overall mean of each drawback investigated in the present study. From the table, the highest mean for the drawback was the language learning using technology at a mean of 3.61. Cost of technology had a mean of 3.59 and the drawback of language teaching using technology had the lowest mean at 3.19. Thus, university students in Malaysia perceived that the major drawback of technology in language teaching and learning was the language learning using technology. This is probably because students need to adjust their role from passive to active learners in a technological environment. Students need to improve their self-regulated learning skills as they will experience a more independent and meaningful learning process facilitated by technologies (Yot-Dominguez & Marcelo, 2017). In addition, Efriana (2021) also stated that some of the drawbacks in learning using technology include the students are less enthusiastic to learn online, they have lack of internet accessibility, and they cannot afford to buy devices.

Table 5. Overall mean of each drawback

<i>The drawbacks of technology in language teaching and learning</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Language learning using technology	3.61
Cost of technology	3.59
Language teaching using technology	3.19

3.3 Research Question 2: Does Gender Have Any Influence on the Malaysian University Students' Perceptions Towards the Drawbacks of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning?

This research question was to determine the differences in the perceptions towards the drawbacks of technology based on gender. Since gender, the independent variable, was a categorical variable with two unrelated categories; male and female, and the perceptions on cost, language teaching and language learning were normally distributed continuous dependent variables, an Independent T-Test was an appropriate test to run for the analysis (Mishra et al., 2019). Table 6 below shows the results of the T-Test analysis.

Table 6. T-Test based on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		F	Sig.			
Cost	Equal variances assumed	.439	.510	.423	83	.673
	Equal variances not assumed			.419	49.497	.677
Language Teaching	Equal variances assumed	.425	.516	.735	83	.464
	Equal variances not assumed			.767	56.576	.446
Language Learning	Equal variances assumed	.026	.873	-.131	83	.896
	Equal variances not assumed			-.130	49.847	.897

3.3.1 Cost of Technology

There was no significant mean difference in the drawback of cost of technology between male ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.80$) and female ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.77$), $t(83) = 0.423$, $p > 0.05$. Hence, both genders perceived equally on the drawback of technology for the cost as the drawback of technology.

3.3.2 Language Teaching Using Technology

There was no significant mean difference in drawback of language teaching using technology between male ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.67$) and female ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.76$), $t(83) = 0.735$, $p > 0.05$. Thus, both genders perceived equally on the drawback of technology for language teaching using technology.

3.3.3 Language Learning Using Technology

There was no significant mean difference in the drawback of language learning using technology between male ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.52$) and female ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.50$), $t(83) = -0.131$, $p > 0.05$. Therefore, both genders perceived equally on the drawback of technology for the language learning using technology.

Hence, it can be concluded that gender does not have any influence on the perceptions of Malaysian university students towards the drawbacks of technology in cost, language teaching and language learning. This finding is in line with Bećirović et al. (2021) who also found that insignificant differences between male and female in the use of technology in terms of language learning. However, it contradicts the review done by Goswami and Dutta (2016) who posited that females usually had more negative perceptions towards technology than males in the learning process. The females felt less confident and more anxious in learning via technology due to their lack of computer skills.

3.4 Research Question 3: Do Fields of Study Have Any Influence on the Malaysian University Students' Perceptions Towards the Drawbacks of Technology in English Language Teaching and Learning?

Since fields of study were considered as a categorical independent variable with three

categories; Science & Technology, Business & Administration and Social Sciences & Humanities, an extension of an Independent T-Test, known as a one-way ANOVA test was employed (Mishra et al., 2019). This test was to examine if fields of study had any influence on the Malaysian university students' perceptions towards the drawbacks of technology in English language teaching and learning. Table 7 shows the results of the test.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA test based on fields of study

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cost	Between Groups	3.145	3	1.048	1.784	.157
	Within Groups	47.594	81	.588		
	Total	50.739	84			
Language Teaching	Between Groups	2.715	3	.905	1.751	.163
	Within Groups	41.860	81	.517		
	Total	44.574	84			
Language Learning	Between Groups	1.062	3	.354	1.410	.246
	Within Groups	20.338	81	.251		
	Total	21.400	84			

3.4.1 Cost of Technology

The one-way ANOVA revealed that $F(3, 81) = 1.784, p > 0.05$. This showed that there were no significant mean differences in the students' perceptions on the cost as the drawback of technology based on fields of study. Therefore, students from these three fields of study perceived equally on the drawback of technology for the cost of technology

3.4.2 Language Teaching using Technology

The one-way ANOVA revealed that $F(3, 81) = 1.751, p > 0.05$. This showed that there were no significant mean differences in the students' perceptions on the language teaching using technology as the drawbacks based on fields of study. Hence, students from these three fields of study perceived equally on the drawback of technology for language teaching using technology.

3.4.3 Language Learning Using Technology

The one-way ANOVA revealed that $F(3, 81) = 1.410, p > 0.05$. This showed that there were no significant mean differences in the students' perceptions on the language learning using technology as the drawback based on fields of study. Thus, students from these three fields of study perceived equally on the drawback of technology for the cost of language learning using technology

It can be concluded that fields of study do not have any influence on the perceptions of university students in Malaysia towards the drawbacks of technology in cost, language

teaching and language learning. The finding is supported by Ruslan (2021) who also did not find any significant differences in the use of technology when learning language among the three fields of study. Nevertheless, this finding is not in line with Adam et al.'s (2018) finding which revealed that social science students did not see technology as the drawback in their learning as much as the medical students. This might be due to the nature of medical course that needs more hands-on learning experience and face-to-face approach.

4. Conclusion

Although technology has played a pivotal role in English language teaching and learning, its downside needs to be taken into consideration to ensure effective language teaching and learning take place. Without any proper guidance and implementation on the usage of technology, teachers and students might not fully benefit from technology integration within or beyond the four walls. According to Altun and Kurshid (2021), integrating technology in their teaching approaches not only supports the learning process, but also expands their abilities to experiment with various forms of technology in their classrooms. Therefore, teachers must use technology to its best functions to assist students in their language learning. Besides, teachers also need to be regularly trained in using the technology as some technologies employed as the pedagogical tools in English language teaching are rapidly evolving. It is essential for the teachers to undergo teacher professional programs that focus on implementing technology that will help enrich students' learning experience. Teachers must have technological skills in teaching English language so that effective teaching and learning can take place (Liang, 2021; Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Meanwhile, students can maximize their language exposure and increase their knowledge in various authentic settings by using technology in learning English language (Altun & Kurshid, 2021). Students must also optimize the use of technology and learn the potential of new technologies in improving their English language proficiency.

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