Chapter 6
The Place of Technology–Assisted Language Learning in EFL Listening:
A Review of Literature and Useful Applications

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ABSTRACT

As technology improves, such trends as technology-assisted language learning (TALL) have dominated the field of foreign language teaching in the new millennium. This chapter aims to review research studies incorporating different aspects of computer and mobile-assisted foreign language learning to enable English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to improve their listening skills. The literature review is based on studies of experimental research design in which the experimental group was exposed to computers or mobile devices to increase EFL learners' listening skills. Additionally, attitudinal studies dealing with EFL learners' perceptions about the integration of technology into EFL listening instruction were reviewed. From the literature review, it was realized that TALL helps EFL learners to improve their listening performance, and students hold favorable attitudes towards its use. At the end of the chapter, two useful mobile applications with the potential to enhance EFL learners' listening skills are introduced, and some recommendations are made.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid development of technology, there have been drastic changes in the field of education, and it is stated that a world with no computers or Internet access is not very meaningful for the new generation (Prensky, 2001). Teachers and researchers are working on more effective ways to teach different subject areas to students by means of innovative technologies because it is believed that in comparison with traditional methods, technology has more positive effects on students' learning processes, achievements, attitudes, and motivation in a variety of disciplines (Miller, 2011). The same is also true in the field of learning/teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The integration of the media, such as animation, sounds, photos, and text graphics is worth giving serious attention to as sources of new pedagogies in EFL classes (Brett & Lloret, 2009). The positive impact of technology on different skills, motivation and achievement in the process of learning EFL has been argued by many researchers (Warschauer, 2000; Hennessy, 2005; Gillespie, 2006; Eaton, 2010; Riasati, Allahyar, & Tan, 2012; Rodinadze & Zarbazoia, 2012; Zhao, 2013; Costley, 2014; Orakçı, Durnalı, & Efe, 2018).

It is maintained that the use of electronic learning tools, such as tablet PCs, smartphones, notebook PCs and desktop computers has dramatically increased, and a concept known as 'technology-assisted language learning' (TALL) has emerged (Ko, 2017). TALL is becoming more and more popular as it is believed that learning a foreign language by means of numerous technology-assisted platforms, such as a computer or a mobile device paves the way for effective language learning (Ko & Goranson, 2014). Within the scope of this chapter, the term TALL is used as a concept embodying both computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Therefore, a concise introduction to CALL and MALL should be provided to help better understand TALL.

There has been a need for more interactive technology-based learning environments because of the changing roles of the teachers from the bestower of knowledge to the facilitator, and the role shift of students from passive knowledge recipients to knowledge navigators and co-learners (Pelgrum, 2001). CALL refers to computer-assisted learning environments going back to the 1980s (Chapelle, 2001) as a means of foreign language learning process in which the learners use a computer to practice and improve their language skills (Beatty, 2003). Various basic language learning skills (i.e., listening, reading, writing, speaking) and sub-skills (e.g., pronunciation, spelling) were integrated to the computers to facilitate language learning (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). There are many advantages of CALL. For instance, according to Lee (2000), the use of computers in foreign language education provides learners with experiential learning opportunities, authentic materials, and better interaction opportunities as well as increases their motivation, achievement, and global understanding. Similarly, Warschauer and Healey (1998) assert that computers pave the way for multimodal practice, provide a fun language learning environment, enrich the variety of resources and address different learning styles.

Another term popularized in line with integrating technology into education is MALL. For the implementation of MALL, autonomous mobile devices that can be accessed any time can be used (Trifanova, Knapp, Ronchetti, & Gamper, 2004). According to Kukulska-Hulme and Shields (2008), MALL refers to any kind of learning mediated through mobile devices, such as MP4 players and mobile phones. Likewise, Jarvis and Achilleos (2013) draw attention to devices, such as eBook readers, tablet PCs and podcasting.

MALL has emerged as a reaction to the possible drawbacks of CALL, and it is argued that MALL is unlike CALL in terms of "…its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access across different contexts of use" (Kukulska-Hulme & Shields, 2008, p. 273). As Geddes (2004) states, you can use mobile devices anytime and anywhere. The

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