

A Qualitative Study of the Perceptions of Iranian EFL Learners' Attitudes towards CMC Tools Usefulness

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Abstract—This project examined the perceptions of Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards online computer-mediated communication tools usefulness. Few researches have been done to evaluate student perceptions of the helpfulness of CMC tools in online learning. In this regard, based on convenient sampling method, 60 English Language Teaching students (B.A) of Zanjan Azad University were selected. The students attended in two classes that were held by two different instructors. To homogenize the participants, PET was administered. Those participants whose scores was ± 1 above and below the standard deviation were selected as the statistical sample ($n= 60$). Then, the selected participants were randomly assigned to one experimental ($n= 30$) and one control group ($n= 30$). The Community of Inquiry (CoI) questionnaire was distributed among the participants in groups before the treatment. During the study, the experimental group was taught using e-mail and telegram chat. In the control group, the learners were taught through traditional way of teaching. At the end of the treatment, the CoI questionnaire was re-administered among the learners in the both groups. Responses before and after the treatment revealed that the perceptions' of the learners in the experimental group were significantly influenced as a result of instructing by e-mail and telegram.

Index Terms—attitudes, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), EFL learners, perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, technology has penetrated into all aspects of human life and thus, different ways of communication among people have appeared. For example, cellphones transmit text messages and photos; computers allow us to connect to the Internet from any location, webcams provide visual contact between the Internet interlocutors. In an age where the target language is immovable in our minds and where computers are necessarily means of communication, interactions among computer technology, language learning, and multimedia are considerable (Berger, 2005; Shahlou, & Izadpanah, 2016). Innovation of technological devices has resulted in changes in communication in classrooms. Use of technological devices like networked computers can be a replacement for discussion in small groups. Using CMC provides opportunity for learners from different geographical locations to interact, communicate, and learn through the Internet (Lo, 2009).

As the most commonly used CMC tool, we can refer to E-mail and Telegram. Through E-mail, messages can be delivered to people or groups and it may contain attached files (Repman, Zinskie, & Carlson, 2005). Among several interactive and supportive CMC tools, some may be more useful to improve and foster learning. The attitudes of students towards the CMC tools' effectiveness could offer insights into the usefulness of various CMC tools for online learning.

Nowadays, many factors such as time and motivation hinder the optimal learning in foreign language learning process. To broadly speaking, inadequate time makes difficulties for most EFL learners to deal with learning.

According to the Community of Inquiry theoretical framework, student perceptions of social, teaching, and cognitive presence is a good means to evaluate online learning effectiveness. All together, above mentioned components illustrate a Community of Inquiry which is developed among language learners and teachers using interchanges and communications (Salloum, 2011).

Although the effectiveness of CMC tools including e-mail, news forums, discussion forums, and web-conferencing into online learning has been revealed, few studies have attempted to evaluate students' perceptions of their helpfulness for learning. To fill such a gap, this research employed the Community of Inquiry as the theoretical framework to determine the positive effects of online computer-mediated communication tools on the learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence.

Thus, the present work is an attempt to explore the attitudes of EFL learners towards online computer-mediated communication tools usefulness as well as their effect on learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. By social existence, it means how much students regard themselves as genuine individuals when they communicate and interact

with people. Teaching existence is students' perception of teacher and instructor's assistance and planning of the learning background. Finally, cognitive existence is students' perception of an ability to construct meaning (Salloum, 2011).

For the purpose of the study, the researcher investigated the following research question:

What are the perceptions of Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards online computer-mediated communication tools usefulness before and after the treatment?

II. METHOD

Yin (2003) stated that a research design is the logic which establishes associations between the data to be gathered (and the result to be drawn) and the questions posed in the initial stages of the research. This work was a quasi-experimental study since randomization was not possible. In the study, dependent variables were social, teaching, and cognitive existences and the independent variables also included the students' perceptions of computer-mediated communication tools effectiveness.

The preset study was conducted at Zanjan Islamic Azad University of Iran. The statistical population was 70 English Language Teaching students (B.A). To homogenize the participants, the PET was administered. Those participants whose scores was ± 1 above the standard deviation and ± 1 below the standard deviation were selected as the statistical sample ($n= 60$). Then, the selected participants were randomly assigned to one experimental ($n= 30$) and one control group ($n= 30$).

The instruments that were employed in the study entailed The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) to homogenize the participants; the CMC tools (e-mail and telegram chat installed on computer desktop); the 34-item Community of Inquiry (CoI) evaluating learners' social, cognitive and teaching existences based on communication and interaction factors, and the 13-item Computer mediated communication (CMC) tool helpfulness scale.

Since randomization was not possible, the current study was a quasi-experimental study. Convenient sampling method was also employed to select the sample. After selection, the participants were assigned to an experimental ($n= 30$) and a control group ($n= 30$). On the onset of the study, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) questionnaire was distributed among the participants in both groups to poll the learners' opinions before the treatment. During the study, the experimental group was taught using e-mail and chat. The task of the course book was then sent to the learners via E-mail. Using e-mail could save time for handling all the class tasks and acting in telegram group could make a funny, exciting and motivating environment for the learners. After receiving the task through e-mail, the learners were asked to answer the questions and send the fulfilled assignments in the telegram group created for the classroom students. In the control group, the learners were taught through traditional way of teaching. Each session, the teacher taught a unit, ask some students (volunteer or selected) to discuss a topic, answer questions, write a summary of played audio tape, etc. At the end of the treatment, the CoI questionnaire was re-administered among the learners in the both groups.

In order to check the normality statistically, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov was conducted for the tests. Table 1 and Table 2, demonstrate the results of this test for the respondents' responses in the questionnaire before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment, respectively.

TABLE 1
ONE SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST (PRE-TEST)

| | | pre-test in Control Group | pre-test in Experimental Group |
|----------------------------------|------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| N | | 30 | 30 |
| Normal Parameters ^{a,b} | Mean | 78.5 | 77.5 |
| | SD | 1.213 | 1.233 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov | Z | .367 | .354 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2- led) | | .216 | .374 |

TABLE 2
ONE SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST (POST-TEST)

| | | post-test in Control Group | post-test in Experimental Group |
|----------------------------------|------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| N | | 30 | 30 |
| Normal Parameters ^{a,b} | Mean | 78 | 83 |
| | SD | 1.705 | 1.431 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov | Z | .411 | .456 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | | .123 | .423 |

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

According to the tables 1 and 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov indices of normality were all significant ($p<.05$); therefore, normality of the obtained data were assured. As a result, it is concluded that no assumption was violated and the parametric tests are allowed to be run.

To gather required data from the participants in the project, Community of Inquiry instrument was employed. The questionnaire items were taken from the instrument developed by Arbaugh, Cleveland-Innes, Diaz, Garrison, Ice, Richardson, and Swan (2008, as cited in Salloum, 2011); the CMC tool helpfulness questions were developed by

Salloum (2011). According to Salloum (2011), “CoI and CMC survey items utilized a five point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= undecided; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree)” (p.68). The questionnaire was administered before and after the treatment. To answer the research question, the frequency of the responses to CoI and CMC items before and after the treatment was specified to determine the most important items selected by the respondents.

TABLE 3.
FREQUENCIES OF THE RESPONSES OF COI AND CMC BEFORE THE TREATMENT

| Item | Experimental Group N=30 | | | | | | | | | | Control Group N=30 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|-----------------------|---|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| | SD | | D | | U | | SA | | A | | SD | | D | | U | | SA | | A | |
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q1 | | | | | 4 | | 4 | | 21 | | | | | | 5 | | 5 | | 20 | |
| Q2 | | | | | 7 | | 4 | | 19 | | | | | 22 | | 4 | | 4 | | |
| Q3 | | | | | 20 | | 2 | | 8 | | | | | 21 | | 4 | | 5 | | |
| Q4 | | | | | 23 | | | | 7 | | | | | 22 | | | | 8 | | |
| Q5 | | | | 24 | | | | | 6 | | | | 23 | | | | | 7 | | |
| Q6 | | | | 20 | | 5 | | | 5 | | | | 19 | | 6 | | | 5 | | |
| Q7 | | | | 22 | | 3 | | | 5 | | | | 23 | | 5 | | | 2 | | |
| Q8 | 3 | | | 16 | | 4 | | | 7 | | 4 | | 18 | | 4 | | | 4 | | |
| Q9 | 1 | | | 6 | | 18 | | | 5 | | 2 | | 4 | | 19 | | | 5 | | |
| Q10 | 2 | | | 18 | | 6 | | | 4 | | 3 | | 19 | | 6 | | | 2 | | |
| Q11 | 2 | | | 21 | | 2 | | | 5 | | 3 | | 22 | | 3 | | | 2 | | |
| Q12 | 6 | | | 15 | | | | | 8 | | 8 | | 15 | | 2 | | | 5 | | |
| Q13 | 8 | | | 19 | | 2 | | | 1 | | 10 | | 19 | | 1 | | | | | |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q14 | 2 | | | 6 | | 19 | | | 3 | | 3 | | 4 | | 20 | | | 3 | | |
| Q15 | 5 | | | 21 | | 2 | | | 1 | | 4 | | 23 | | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| Q16 | 2 | | | 7 | | 18 | | | 3 | | 1 | | 7 | | 19 | | | 3 | | |
| Q17 | 1 | | | 3 | | 19 | | | 7 | | 2 | | 2 | | 21 | | | 5 | | |
| Q18 | 4 | | | 18 | | 4 | | | 4 | | 4 | | 20 | | 3 | | | 3 | | |
| Q19 | 8 | | | 19 | | | | | 3 | | 10 | | 19 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Q20 | 18 | | | 9 | | | | | 3 | | 19 | | 9 | | | | | 2 | | |
| Q21 | 10 | | | 10 | | 8 | | | 2 | | 12 | | 11 | | 7 | | | | | |
| Q22 | 3 | | | 17 | | 5 | | | 5 | | 3 | | 19 | | 6 | | | 2 | | |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cognitive Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q23 | 6 | | | 19 | | | 4 | | 1 | | 6 | | 20 | | 4 | | | | | |
| Q24 | 3 | | | 17 | | 5 | | | 5 | | 4 | | 17 | | 5 | | | 4 | | |
| Q25 | 3 | | | 22 | | 2 | | | 3 | | 3 | | 25 | | | | | 2 | | |
| Q26 | 7 | | | 21 | | | | | 2 | | 7 | | 22 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Q27 | 7 | | | 18 | | 3 | | | 2 | | 5 | | 18 | | 5 | | | 2 | | |
| Q28 | 5 | | | 15 | | 5 | | | 5 | | 5 | | 18 | | 2 | | | 5 | | |
| Q29 | 2 | | | 11 | | 13 | | | 4 | | 3 | | 10 | | 15 | | | 2 | | |
| Q30 | 5 | | | 7 | | 12 | | | 6 | | 6 | | 8 | | 10 | | | 6 | | |
| Q31 | 2 | | | 6 | | 10 | | 1 | 11 | | 2 | | 8 | | 12 | | | 8 | | |
| Q32 | 5 | | | 12 | | 8 | | | 5 | | 6 | | 14 | | 7 | | | 3 | | |
| Q33 | 10 | | | 12 | | 5 | | | 3 | | 5 | | 13 | | 10 | | | 2 | | |
| Q34 | | | | 5 | | 21 | | | 4 | | 1 | | 4 | | 23 | | | 2 | | |
| CMC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q35 | | | | 4 | | 16 | | | 10 | | | | 5 | | 21 | | | 4 | | |
| Q36 | | | | 6 | | 19 | | | 5 | | 2 | | 5 | | 16 | | | 7 | | |
| Q37 | | | | 2 | | 21 | | | 7 | | 2 | | 5 | | 20 | | | 3 | | |
| Q38 | 1 | | | 5 | | 18 | | | 6 | | 2 | | 2 | | 19 | | | 7 | | |
| CMC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q39 | 3 | | | 5 | | 19 | | | 3 | | 2 | | 5 | | 18 | | | 5 | | |
| Q40 | 2 | | | 7 | | 15 | | | 7 | | 1 | | 8 | | 17 | | | 4 | | |
| Q41 | 5 | | | 5 | | 16 | | | 4 | | 3 | | 7 | | 15 | | | 5 | | |
| Demographic Items | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q42 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q43 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q44 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

TABLE 4.
FREQUENCIES OF THE RESPONSES OF COI AND CMC AFTER THE TREATMENT

| Item | Experimental Group N=30 | | | | | | | | | | Control Group N=30 | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|-----------------------|----|----|----|---|---|----|---|----|---|
| | SD | | D | | U | | SA | | A | | SD | | D | | U | | SA | | A | |
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q1 | | | | | | | 8 | | 23 | | | | | | 5 | | 5 | | 20 | |
| Q2 | | | | | | | 6 | | 27 | | | | | 20 | | 4 | | 4 | | |
| Q3 | | | | | 0 | | 12 | | 18 | | | | | 20 | | 4 | | 6 | | |
| Q4 | | | | | 0 | | | | 20 | | | | | 21 | | 1 | | 8 | | |
| Q5 | | | | | | | | | 23 | | | | 22 | | | | | 8 | | |
| Q6 | | | 7 | | 5 | | 5 | | 18 | | | 19 | | 6 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q7 | | | 2 | | | | 5 | | 23 | | | 23 | | 4 | | | | 3 | | |
| Q8 | | | | | 0 | | 8 | | 19 | | 4 | 18 | | 4 | | | | 4 | | |
| Q9 | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 5 | | 19 | | 3 | 5 | | 17 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q10 | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | 27 | | 2 | 20 | | 6 | | | | 2 | | |
| Q11 | | | 0 | | | | 6 | | 24 | | | 23 | | 4 | | | | 3 | | |
| Q12 | | | | | | | 3 | | 27 | | 5 | 18 | | 2 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q13 | | | 0 | | | | 4 | | 26 | | 8 | 21 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q14 | | | | | 1 | | 7 | | 22 | | 3 | 4 | | 20 | | | | 3 | | |
| Q15 | | | 2 | | | | 7 | | 18 | | 3 | 23 | | 3 | | | | 1 | | |
| Q16 | | | | | | | 4 | | 26 | | 1 | 7 | | 20 | | | | 2 | | |
| Q17 | | | | | | | 9 | | 21 | | | 4 | | 21 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q18 | | | 1 | | | | 13 | | 16 | | 4 | 20 | | 3 | | | | 3 | | |
| Q19 | | | 1 | | | | 14 | | 15 | | 11 | 18 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Q20 | | | | | | | 14 | | 16 | | 19 | 8 | | | | | | 3 | | |
| Q21 | | | | | 1 | | 12 | | 17 | | 11 | 11 | | 8 | | | | | | |
| Q22 | | | | | | | 14 | | 16 | | 3 | 20 | | 5 | | | | 1 | | |
| CoI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cognitive Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q23 | | | 1 | | | | 5 | | 24 | | 7 | 19 | | 3 | | | | 1 | | |
| Q24 | | | 2 | | | | 12 | | 16 | | 3 | 18 | | 5 | | | | 4 | | |
| Q25 | | | | | 1 | | 8 | | 21 | | 3 | 24 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Q26 | | | 2 | | 1 | | 7 | | 20 | | 6 | 24 | | | | | | | | |
| Q27 | | | | | 1 | | 12 | | 17 | | 3 | 20 | | 5 | | | | 2 | | |
| Q28 | | | | | 1 | | 10 | | 19 | | 5 | 18 | | 2 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q29 | | | | | | | 5 | | 25 | | 2 | 11 | | 15 | | | | 2 | | |
| Q30 | | | 1 | | | | 2 | | 27 | | 6 | 8 | | 10 | | | | 6 | | |
| Q31 | | | | | 1 | | 4 | | 25 | | 2 | 8 | | 11 | | | | 9 | | |
| Q32 | | | | | 2 | | 5 | | 23 | | 6 | 13 | | 7 | | | | 4 | | |
| Q33 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | | 26 | | 5 | 13 | | 10 | | | | 2 | | |
| Q34 | | | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 23 | | 1 | 7 | | 20 | | | | 2 | | |
| CMC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q35 | | | | | | | 9 | | 21 | | 1 | 5 | | 20 | | | | 4 | | |
| Q36 | | | | | | | 7 | | 23 | | 1 | 5 | | 16 | | | | 8 | | |
| Q37 | | | | | | | 4 | | 26 | | | 7 | | 20 | | | | 3 | | |
| Q38 | | | | | | | 9 | | 21 | | | 3 | | 20 | | | | 7 | | |
| CMC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Presence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q39 | | | | | | | 7 | | 23 | | 2 | 5 | | 18 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q40 | | | | | | | 19 | | 11 | | | 8 | | 17 | | | | 5 | | |
| Q41 | | | | | | | 9 | | 21 | | 1 | 7 | | 17 | | | | 5 | | |
| Demographic Items | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q42 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q43 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q44 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

III. RESULTS

Employing computers in CMC language instruction is considered as a tool for communicative interaction. Therefore, computer mediated communication (CMC) and communicative approaches to foreign language teaching are closely related. Based on a communicative approach, it is necessary to comprehend input - listening and reading - for the overall process of language acquisition. However, Swain (1993) declares that it is not sufficient to only comprehend input for language acquisition. Learner output - writing and speaking - is also regarded as an important aspect of language acquisition. Input and output necessary for second language learners' progress can be provided through using

computers in computer-mediated communication activities (Sotillo, 2000; Dehjalali, & Izadpanah, 2017). As concluded by Hampel and Hawk (2004), Internet-based activities allow students to interact and negotiate meaning with other learners, since they need to get and deliver information. Hampel and Hawk showed that learners have to understand messages and produce comprehensible output through speaking and writing.

Due to significant developments in the Internet and network technology, learning and teaching online has experienced emergence of a huge number of CMC devices (Aria, & Izadpanah, 2017; Bonk, 2009; Salloum, 2011). "Some of the web-based applications include discussion forums, video based blogs (Vlogs), voice over Internet protocols (VoIP), web-conferencing, podcasts, wikis, video streaming, virtual worlds, blogs, and social networks" (Salloum, 2011, p. 24).

As Parsad and Lewis (2008) state, distance learning is now practiced using computer-mediated communications (CMC) by the web or online learning. As academic institutes provide more Internet and web-based courses and classes in which learners can communicate and interact online, more studies in literature emerge (Salloum, 2011). However, the effect of computer-mediated communication (CMC) technology on teacher education has not been analyzed. There is a necessity to know relationships between CMC technology and student perceptions regarding learning.

"Repman, Zinskie, and Carlson (2005), categorize CMC tools into two types. Type one CMC tools are asynchronous tools that are independent of time. Examples include e-mail, discussion forums, and blogs. Type two CMC tools are synchronous, allowing participants to communicate at the same time. Examples include text chat and web-conferencing" (as cited in Salloum, 2011, p.24).

Various kinds of CMC tools provide various media through which communications and interactions can be promoted. Student perceptions of tool helpfulness for learning and student perceptions of social, teaching, and cognitive presence can be influenced by the usage, combination, and application of CMC tools. By social existence, it means how much students regard themselves as genuine individuals when they communicate and interact with people. Teaching existence is students' perception of teacher and instructor's assistance and planning of the learning background. Finally, cognitive existence is students' perception of an ability to construct meaning (Salloum, 2011).

Zsuzsana (2010) tended to analyze foreign language learners' interactions in CMC to show the usefulness level of CMC for foreign language learning. As she found, those L2 learners' strategies in CMC take advantage of distinct linguistic and interactional features of Internet Chat. According to this study results, CMC involves potential advantages for learning including facilitating comprehensible and contextualized interaction, learners' self-correction, and collaborative learning environment. Saleh Mahdi (2014); (Nazarian, & Izadpanah, 2017) attempted to find out how CMC environments have been implemented to foster language learning. As discussed, it is necessary for researchers and scholars to conduct more studies in order to find appropriate methods to integrate CMC tools in language classrooms and provide suitable courses and activities. In a study, Behjat, Yamini and Bagheri (2014) explored Iranian EFL learners' tendency and confidence toward using the Internet and Web 2.0 tools in English language classroom. As the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses indicated, more than half of learners showed interest in use of Web 2.0 tools in language learning process. In addition, it was seen that most of learners strongly tend to use web-based and the Internet technology for learning language. In another research study conducted by Sadeghi, Rahmany and Doosti (2014), EFL teachers' attitudes toward using Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools in English language classrooms were investigated. Researchers aimed to find why teachers agree or disagree by integration of CMC tools in English learning classrooms. According to the statistical analyses, teachers who could more skillfully use computers had positive perceptions of integrating such tools in language teaching process.

According to the provided literature, there have been studies attempted to explore computer-mediated communication tools usefulness as well as learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. In spite of the existing literature, there is a gap on the effect of to explore the attitudes of EFL learners towards online computer-mediated communication tools usefulness and their effect on learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. Due to the lack of investigating in this regard, the present study tends to fill this gap and enrich the literature on computer-mediated communication tools usefulness as well as learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence in order to help English teachers to deal with more fruitful methods to enhance EFL learners' performance in language learning.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that online experience language learners enjoyed the online activities to a great extent such that their perceptions were significantly changed after the treatment. It is suggested that the tasks were interesting for the learners and they were quite interested in those activities and wanted to use them in their classrooms. In the study, learners are allowed to communicate with their teachers using e-mail because they can e-mail in their convenient time and feel more private (Salloum, 2011). Text-chat in telegram also offers opportunities for instructor guidance and affirmation in the context of student interactions on course topics.

The research findings remind that the inclusion of online communicative tools creates greater perceptions of social, teaching and cognitive presence for learners. Therefore, it would be better to consider integration of technological and CMC tools in order to foster better results and superior contemplation. Through these tools, affective language and group cohesion should be also encouraged to promote social, teaching and cognitive presence. Since learning through technological tools is getting prevalent, it is necessary to investigate learners' understanding and attitudes toward online learning and its effect on their attitude (Salloum, 2011). Further researches can be performed on various aspects of the target language such as grammar (prepositions, subjunctives, modals, etc.), pragmatics (politeness, apologies, etc.), and

phonology/graphology. Designing such collaborative tasks can be beneficial for both language teachers and learners. Further studies can analyze using synchronous online communicative tools individually and in combination in larger samples. Other studies can compare teachers' perceptions and learners' perceptions about the helpfulness of different CMC tools. Teachers and learners' objectives for using different CMC tools can also be investigated.

IV. DISCUSSION

Comparing the responses, it was revealed that the perceptions of the participants in the control group had no significant difference before and after the treatment. However, the perceptions of the participants in the experimental group showed significant changes such that the responses were mostly changed into "agree" and "strongly agree". In other words, the participants' responses in the experimental group generally agreed with statements regarding teaching, social, and cognitive presence after experiencing synchronous online communication tools. In fact, e-mail offers privacy as well as convenience. Text-chat in telegram also offers opportunities for instructor guidance and affirmation in the context of student interactions on course topics. Accordingly, the learners' perceptions in the experimental group were significantly different regarding teaching, social, and cognitive presence. Consistently, Sadeghi, Rahmany and Doosti (2014) investigated EFL teachers' attitudes toward using Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools in English language classrooms and concluded that teachers who could more skillfully use computers had positive perceptions of integrating such tools in language teaching process. Additionally, Tahriiri, Hassaskhah and Mozafarian Pour (2015) reported the effect of Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) on EFL learners' motivation.

The practical significance of this research question was that teachers who were working with computers in their classes they showed positive attitudes towards applying technology in their teaching practice. Also it showed positive effect on EFL learners' motivation.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that online experience language learners enjoyed the online activities to a great extent such that their perceptions were significantly changed after the treatment. It is suggested that the tasks were interesting for the learners and they were quite interested in those activities and wanted to use them in their classrooms. In the study, learners are allowed to communicate with their teachers using e-mail because they can e-mail in their convenient time and feel more private. Text-chat in telegram also offers opportunities for instructor guidance and affirmation in the context of student interactions on course topics.

The research findings remind that the inclusion of online communicative tools creates greater perceptions of social, teaching and cognitive presence for learners. Therefore, it would be better to consider integration of technological and CMC tools in order to foster better results and superior contemplation. Through these tools, affective language and group cohesion should be also encouraged to promote social, teaching and cognitive presence. Since learning through technological tools is getting prevalent, it is necessary to investigate learners' understanding and attitudes toward online learning and its effect on their attitude. Further researches can be performed on various aspects of the target language such as grammar (prepositions, subjunctives, modals, etc.), pragmatics (politeness, apologies, etc.), and phonology/graphology. Designing such collaborative tasks can be beneficial for both language teachers and learners.. Further studies can analyze using synchronous online communicative tools individually and in combination in larger samples. Other studies can compare teachers' perceptions and learners' perceptions about the helpfulness of different CMC tools. Teachers and learners' objectives for using different CMC tools can also be investigated.

APPENDIX A

The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET)

<http://cambridgeesol.org/exams/general-english/pet.html>

APPENDIX B

The survey instrument consists of three parts: Community of Inquiry items, communication mode items, and demographics. The instrument employs a five point Likert scale as follows:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

Community of Inquiry Items

√ Teaching presence.

√ Design and organization.

1. The instructor clearly communicates important course topics.

2. The instructor clearly communicates important course goals.

3. The instructor provides clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities.

4. The instructor clearly communicates important due dates/time frames for learning activities.

√ Facilitation.

5. The instructor is helpful in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics that helped me to learn.
6. The instructor is helpful in guiding the class towards understanding course topics in a way that helped me clarify my thinking.
7. The instructor helps to keep course participants engaged and participating in productive dialogue.
8. The instructor helps keep the course participants on task in a way that helped me to learn.
9. The instructor encourages course participants to explore new concepts in this course.
10. Instructor actions reinforce the development of a sense of community among course participants.
√ Direct instruction.
11. The instructor helps to focus discussion on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn.
12. The instructor provides feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses.
13. The instructor provides feedback in a timely fashion.
√ Social presence.
- √ Affective expression.
14. Getting to know other course participants give me a sense of belonging in the course.
15. I is able to form distinct impressions of some course participants.
16. Online or web-based communication is an excellent medium for social interaction.
√ Open communication.
17. I feel comfortable conversing through the online medium.
18. I feel comfortable participating in the course discussions.
19. I feel comfortable interacting with other course participants.
√ Group cohesion.
20. I feel comfortable disagreeing with other course participants while still maintaining a sense of trust.
21. I feel that my point of view is acknowledged by other course participants.
22. Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.
√ Cognitive presence.
- √ Triggering event.
23. Problems pose increased my interest in course issues.
24. Course activities pique my curiosity.
25. I feel motivated to explore content related questions.
√ Exploration.
26. I utilize a variety of information sources to explore problems posed in this course.
27. Brainstorming and finding relevant information help me resolve content related questions.
28. Online discussions are valuable in helping me appreciate different perspectives.
√ Integration.
29. Combining new information help me answer questions raised in course activities.
30. Learning activities help me construct explanations/solutions.
31. Reflection on course content and discussions help me understand fundamental concepts in this class.
√ Resolution.
32. I can describe ways to test and apply the knowledge created in this course.
33. I have developed solutions to course problems that can be applied in practice.
34. I can apply the knowledge created in this course to my work or other non-class related activities.

CMC Tool Helpfulness Items

Participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements about the CMC tools they used in their online courses. The same five –point Likert scale is used with an additional option of .did not use. Because not all tools are utilized by all participants.

√ Helpfulness for teaching presence items.

35. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for receiving information from my instructor about course topics, goals and learning activities.

36. Using e-mail and text chat is for receiving directions or clarification from my instructor.

37. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for receiving personal feedback from my instructor.

38. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for communicating questions or concerns to my instructor.

√ Helpfulness for social presence items.

39. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for getting to know other course participants.

40. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for interacting and collaborating with other course participants.

√ Comfort level.

41. I am comfortable using e-mail and text chat.

Demographic Items

42. What is your gender?

. Male

. Female

43. Prior to the current semester, how many online courses have you taken?

. None

. One

. Two

. Three

. Four or more

44. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

Years of teaching experience

None

1 year or less

1 to 2 years

2 to 3 years

More than 3 years

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