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Master thesis: "The impact of technology use in developing students' critical thinking skills – a case study from the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice"

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Abstract

This research focused on the crucial role that technology has in the process of learning a second language. The main role of this study is to demonstrate the positive effect that technology has nowadays in learning and teaching a second language, or more concretely, on the development of students' critical thinking skills. It also stresses that teacher should be well-trained in order to use technology properly.

By using technology students become autonomous learners and they develop critical thinking skills. In this way they do not only receive information but they are able to know what they want and become creators themselves. The study also tells how technology increases students' motivation and as there are many engaging activities that seem to be fun for students they also become more independent and strengthen their skills (Zaphiris, 2005).

Taking into account that we live in a world where technology is becoming more and more widespread and people need it for their studies and jobs, an investigation like this is crucial. The aim of this study is therefore proving the great impact that technology is having in people's lives, specifically in schools. It is believed the use of technology in schools is fundamental when it comes to the success students achieve in language learning. This study focuses on the benefits that technology has in education.

 Three main instruments were used for carrying out the research: students' observation, students' questionnaires and students' proficiency tests. Fifty-one students from the high schools of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice will participate in the study. There were two classes observed (with and without technology usage). In this way the results of the classes will be compared, thus the results of the study will be found. The gathered results from the study proved the positive effect that technology is having in schools.

.Keywords: technology, skills, education

Abstrakti

Kjo tezë ka për qëllim rolin e pazavendësueshëm që teknologjia ka në procesin e të mesuarit një gjuhë të huaj. Roli i këtij studimi është që të demonstrojë ndikimin pozitiv që teknologjia ka sot në të mësuarit e një gjuhe të huaj, ose më saktësisht që të zhvillojë aftësitë e të menduarit kritik të nxënësve. Studimi gjithashtu tregon që mësimdhënsi duhet të jetë i trajnuar që të dijë te përdorë teknologjinë në mënyrën e duhur.

Duke e perdorur teknologjinë studentët bëhen te pavarur dhe e zhvillojnë të menduarit kritik. Në këtë mënyrë ata marrin informacione dhe janë të gatshëm të dinë se qfarë dëshirojnë, pra bëhen te pavarur. Ky studim po ashtu shpjegon se si teknologjia i motivon nxënësit dhe se aty ka aktivitete mjafte tërheqëse që e bëjn procesin mesimor më argëtues dhe përvetëson aftesitë e nxënësve.

Duke e marrë parasysh që ne jetojme në një kohë ku teknologjia është duke u perhapur gjithnjë e më shumë dhe njerezve j'u nevojitet në studime dhe në pune, një studim si ky është kyq. Kjo tezë ka gjithashtu për qëllim që të vërtetojë ndikimin që teknologjia është duke e pasur ne jetët e njerëzve, veqanarisht në shkolla.Besohet se përdorimi i teknologjisë në shkolla është rrënjësor kur vie te suksesi qe nxenesit arrijne në gjuhë. Ky studim fokusohet në përparesitë që teknologjia ka në edukim.

Tri instrumente janë përdorur për mbajtjen e këtij studimi: vëzhgimi, pyetësorët dhe testet e nxënësve. Pesëdhjetë e një nxënës nga gjimnazi 'Ismail Qemaili' ishin pjesë e këtij studimi. Dy klasa u vëzhguan (me dhe pa teknologji). Në këtë mënyrë arritjet e të dy klaseve u krahasuan, dhe rezultatet e ketij studimit u vërtetuan . Fatmirësisht rezultatet e mbledhura nga ky studim vërtetuan ndikimin pozitiv që teknologjia ka në shkolla.

Fjalët kyqe: teknologjia, aftesitë, edukimi

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Being aware of the positive effect that technology has been playing in our lives, we as English teachers who always try to find the best methods and techniques to make the learning process easier and to fit our students' needs, computers and internet are definitely the best option to be used (Muhtadi, 2013). Moreover by using technology students are in the center of the learning/teaching process whereas the teacher's role is not to instruct them but learn and help them when needed. It is interesting how the number of using technology is growing and how it has a great impact in L2 learners in all countries. Although students can still use their books, they can escape from the books for a while and discover other information from the internet. We are living in a world where the use of technology is becoming more and more widespread and where students need to be accessed to web. They have the chance to write e-mails and join groups to communicate with people they have never met. By doing so, they can practice communication in global level (Kuang-Wu-Lee, 2000).

Being able to communicate in a foreign country helps individuals to make connections with different people and it helps to better understand the language. There is also the chance for shy students to realize their potential by working individually. Furthermore some internet activities provide positive and negative feedback to correct online exercises thus help students learn from their mistakes (Kuang-Wu-Lee, 2000). Technology causes students to be more focused, thus gain more information. It also provides many engaging and fun experiences. Since technology is becoming globally used, students should become more confident to use computers and the internet.

Another reason why students should pay attention to the positive effect of technology is that it is becoming an integral part of our everyday life and everyone in their jobs has to know some

type of technology use.

Nowadays technology is becoming very important even in public school and many schools have started to use it. As it appeared in the news, these schools that are using technology find it very helpful, interesting and fun for the students. They also find it easier for the teacher since they can find materials from the internet and then practice with the students.

This research took take place in 'Ismail Qemaili' high school and two classes, eleventh grade students were observed. They both had to learn the same topic but one class used technology whereas the other class learned the topic only from the book. In this way the great impact that technology and computers have in students' improvement was clear.

In order to determine the positive impact that technology has on student's achievement several articles have been researched that emphasize its importance. This research focuses on all the four skills (reading, speaking, writing and listening) and how computers are used as means for learning and have a positive effect on students' improvement. After the year 2000 technology has grown very rapidly (Morales, 2014). Many studies show that technology plays an important role in facilitating the second language (L2) and foreign language. Using technology appropriately requires time and engagement.

It is believed that technology helps learners receive and learn information and experience. As it is known teaching sometimes can be difficult but it is easier for the teachers to understand students' needs through different activities that are available in the internet.

In addition, some studies show that technology is being overused by people and in this case it is having a negative impact in them. Students do not try to critically think when they have to analyze an essay, a story or write something, instead they search for it. So, some of the studies searched show that technology can be very helpful for students if it is used for a purpose, either way it can have a negative impact on students' achievement. Students have been used to search for any kind of question they might have in the internet as well as plagiarize. Even though it has many benefits, teachers should not always use it. A good teacher uses different

methods and different activities in his/her classes. A teacher should sometimes use the book and the board, just so students do not get bored from the same method of learning.

1.2 The influence of Technology on Education

Since I work in a private school, technology is usually being used to teach lessons in my classes. However, sometimes the use of traditional methods is better than using technology without having a purpose. In my opinion the teacher should have a purpose when teaching and should always think about what students want and how they want to learn it.
Moreover there are many benefits in using technology. Students become better learners and can search for information in the internet without their teacher's help, motivate students to learn and prepare them for the future. There are many available materials and activities in the internet that can be very helpful and engaging for the students. Students have the opportunity to collaborate and then share ideas. In my classes the use of projector and the internet is always helpful and students can practice reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. They really enjoy working together and learn from each-other.
'As technology continues to evolve, it brings with it new opportunities and challenges for educators and students. Social networking is a great example of technology that can help — or hinder — education, depending on how it is used and integrated into teaching plans (Newnam, 2012, p. n.).
 However, using social networking as part of the learning process can also have benefits. Students who are more introverted may open up and connect more with faculty and other students when they are communicating through social networking. It also affords students the opportunity to collaborate and work together in a whole new way' – says Newnam. (Newnam, 2012)

It's important to mention that expensive technology solutions do not always result in beneficial teaching and learning. When students learn to use technology in the classroom at a

young age, they develop the skills and knowledge that are crucial in today's world. Technology demonstrated to have many benefits; students can both learn the subject contents with the help of technology and learn the technology itself. Students can also receive feedback from the internet and improve the lacks they have. In this way they get motivated and have the chance to redo the assignment right after they get the positive or negative feedback. Students have many opportunities to practice online and giving more opportunities doing tasks encourages them to learn more.

1.3 The impact of technology on education in Kosova

   Many primary and high schools started using technology in Kosovo recently. Teachers of these schools declared that technology is being very helpful for both the students and the teachers. Some of the teachers said that it was difficult first to find appropriate materials and there can be problems with the internet but in general it helps students be more attentive and cooperative.

Therefore, the minister of education in Kosovo said- We have an obligation to build an Education System that provides quality, because we want Kosovo to be a society whose development is based on knowledge, and whose citizens possess the knowledge and skills that make them employable, both within the country and abroad. Through quality we develop our economy, create jobs, and become competitive, regionally and globally. We must therefore start implementing competency based curricula, equip schools with Information Technology and teaching aids, improve the quality of textbooks, and above all, improve the quality of teaching at all levels of the education system (Education, 2016, p. 2).

   Based on a research that was done in six high schools in Gjilan, the application of technology in schools is very important in the transformation of classical to modern schools. As the

research of the study Blerim said: 'Based on the research conducted, are identified negative sides, such as:

- domination of the classic way of teaching,
- computers are still locked in IT labs,
- schools are not provided with technology coordinators,
- lack of lap-tops and projectors in classrooms,
- lack of internet in classrooms and labs.

Some of the recommendations which simultaneously represent the standard of schools run by the communications and information technology are:

- each school should have access to the internet, also the quality and sustainability of the service need to be increase,
- at home should be parents who control the technology, while teachers should teach students how to use the technology, not to abuse.
- students need to use the computer as a technological tool integrated into learning, not only on the case of IT, but also in the other subjects,
- Teachers must participate in various conferences where the topic is application of technology and modern methods in schools' (Beqiri, 2015, p. 8).

1.4 Research Aims

This study is expected to provide us with useful information with the aim of proving if technology is having a positive impact in students' critical thinking skills. It also determines if the use of technology makes the process of learning more interesting and engaging for the students. This research will also show if students become autonomous learners and if there will be more collaboration between students when using technology.

This research is carried out in Kamenice, Kosovo. Fifty-one students from the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' are being part of the research. First, they will be observed. During observation

they will have to do different activities and tasks. This is expected to help us understand students' preferences, gather relevant information about whether they used technology before, how helpful, engaging and fun it is and if it contributes to the students' critical thinking skills.

Later on, questionnaires were distributed to the same students. By using questionnaires I will have an idea about students' progress. I will find out whether students like technology or if it contributes to critical skills development. Questionnaires will be distributed to students after the above mentioned period to see the improvements of both classes.

The last instrument that was used was a test. The test is also very useful in order to see if there are parts of the topics discussed during two weeks that one class improved more than the other. So, through tests I can identify if students are better learners by using technology or by using traditional methods.

1.5 The major objectives of this study

1. General Objective
To find out whether the use of technology in teaching English improves students' critical thinking skills at the students of the high school 'Ismail Qemaili'.

2. Specific Objectives

a) To find out whether technology is engaging, improves students' skills or increases team work by communicating online with people.

b) To find out if students become better communicators, critical thinkers and self confident by using technology.

1.6 Description of theses organization

Chapter I provides readers with the information of the positive impact that technology can have on students' critical thinking skills. It also tells how technology helps in students' achievement and how collaboration can be very effective and helpful for the students when practicing online.

Chapter one is made up of the introduction part, the research aims and the objectives of the study.

Chapter II discusses the literature review and previous researches and studies that were done on this field. This chapter also talks about the ideas of different authors who argued on this case as well as previous studies carried by them.

Chapter III presents the methodology, the purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and a detailed description of the instruments.

Chapter IV presents the results and discussion about data gathered from student's proficiency tests and student's questionnaires. These are better demonstrated with tables and charts that present the gathered data from the students' answers. The results are described briefly as well as compared with each other.

Chapter V provides readers with the conclusion and recommendation part of the thesis from the results and the data gathered from student's proficiency tests, student's questionnaires and the observation

Chapter 2

2.1 Literature Review

Today students are very exposed to technology. Many students use many forms of technology in their daily lives including texting, social networking and so forth. They see these forms useful and enjoyable to be used. With the help of technology the learning process will be more interactive. Technology can be very effective for English language learners and it can also enhance students' participation, especially the participation of those students that are not very engaged in the activities or are shy to express themselves.

To create environments that engage students to think critically, both teachers and students should ask questions, teachers should encourage students to express diverse opinions and thus listen to each-others' opinions. Furthermore the teachers should always use hands-on activities thus force students to be involved in their own learning. There are many online tools to teach critical thinking skills such are:

- o Reflective activities- help students to show how much they have learned throughout the semester.
- o Peer review activities – students giving helpful feedback to each-other and allow students to make questions while they are reading something.
- o Discussion Forums – allow students to participate in discussion, communicate with their peers, make questions and learn from each-other.
- o Small groups activities- student collaborate, hear different opinions, communicate and solve problems together.
- o Digital story-telling activities – students learn how to use multimedia to present information. (Mansbach, 2015)

Wagner (2015) was the one who created Seven Survival Skills of the 21 century claims that in order for a learner to be successful the following skills will be needed: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across networks and leading by influence, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurship, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination (Hiltner, 2015, para.10.)

A number of studies which are written below have shown the positive impact that technology has in classroom instruction. It can be used as a tool to engage students to be critical thinkers and solve problems on their own. It can produce an environment that promotes in developing high critical thinking skills. Furthermore, collaboration is a very effective tool in learning. So, by using technology students can collaborate with each other and create project or learn by reading and listening one another's work.

There are also some studies that indicate that the use of technology is not beneficial and there are not many advantages in using it. These studies show the important of using traditional method and how students have become so dependent of technology. According to these studies, students these days are overusing technology and this seems to have a negative impact in their learning.

One study that was conducted by Tanya in Warrensburg, Missouri to determine whether technology would have a positive impact on students' achievement showed positive results. This study shows the great impact that technology has in students' critical thinking skills, how technology raises collaboration, how students are able to analyze information and be prepared for the 21 century. This study also stresses that students do not only need to learn reading, writing, speaking listening or grammar rules but also skills that require students to be autonomous learners and make decisions about themselves. Furthermore, this study examines the positive and negative effect that technology has had in education as a whole, students' motivation, the achievement of students and also how students learn in the 21 century. (Appling, 2015, p. 6)

Carrilo, Onofa and Ponce (2010) tell that information and communication technology can increase student achievement in at least two ways. First, the availability of (ICT) affects

students' learning outcomes. Second, students being exposed to (ICT) probably increases their cognitive abilities and helps them think faster. This study has lasted for two years in many school and the results were that technology has a great impact in mathematics but not such a positive impact in language test scores. (Carrillo, Onofa, & Ponce, 2010, p. 2)

A study made by Aderonke (2014) in Rural Nigerian Schools led to a positive social impact of the usage of technology and awareness to use technology more often. As technology increases interactivity, students being motivated to work and being engaged in the process of learning improves achievement (Bello, 2014, p. 6). Moreover, this study showed how computers affect learning, communication and expression. Rural schools are used to face many problems with the access, but with the help of technology most schools are overcoming these difficulties. In this study two rural schools were being observed. The students using technology performed better than those not using technology. So, these findings demonstrated that the use of technology showed positive effect among students. (p. 16)

Although technology has proved to have many benefits over the years, it may decrease students' attention and slows down students brains. So, if you are not attentive in the classroom, it is almost impossible to think about what the teacher is saying. In other words the ability to focus and think critically plays a very important role in students' achievement. In the past students spent their free time reading for pleasure and this had a positive effect in their ability to imagine things and think critically. There was no distraction. Whereas, nowadays students spend most of their time playing games on the phone, have lack of attention on the technology classes. These allow little or no need for imagination. Even though the internet offers much information, knowledge and answers and people can have many benefits using it, but adults may use it for different purposes.

Stephanie (2015) says 'While technology has certainly proved its many benefits over the years, it has also become evident that as technology advances, it may be hindering the way the human brain develops, especially in terms of critical thinking and problem solving skills in young adults' (Mialki, 2015, para.4).

Susan and Robert (2014) have shown that technology can provide access to information, motivate students and enhance learning. By using technology students can have many experiences with other people and multimedia can be used to enhance learning. The study using multimedia to test 6th grade students for 2 years showed that students are improving skills such as: giving ideas, support opinions, express themselves better, better focus and be better listeners and speakers. Further, with the use of technology their writing was also more cohesive (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2014).

Zhao tells that technology can have many benefits in language acquisition such as the following:
'Enhancing access efficiency through digital multimedia. Multimedia presentations (video, images, sound, and text) can create stronger memory links than text alone. In addition, digital technologies allow instant playbacks, which provide the learner with quick and easy access to different sections of instructional materials than when they are using a textbook.

Enhancing authenticity using video and the Internet. The Internet provides learners with access to authentic materials, like news and literature, while video can offer context-rich linguistic and culturally relevant materials to learners.

Enhancing comprehensibility through learner control and multimedia annotations. Video materials online can be enhanced with full captions, key-word captions, and speech slowdown, allowing the reader to more easily digest the information. Digital reading materials can be hyperlinked to different media, which students can choose to help their comprehension of the material.

Providing meaningful and authentic communication opportunities. Students can engage in authentic types of communication through e-mail, chat rooms, and other digital means'. (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2014, p. 16)

Costley (2004) also stresses the importance of technology on learning and the advantages of using it. He tells that many jobs today require the use of technology, so students expect of having benefits in thinking critically, they also will need technology in their future jobs. In this

way they will be better prepared for the future. Moreover, due to the large use of technology in the world, it will become a priority in schools. With the help of technology students are given the chance to cooperate with peers resulting in learning from each-other. Not to mention the fact that technology benefits students' learning, it is also very enjoyable and students have fun using it. (Costley, 2014, p. 2). Kevin also shares 'Technology integration is shown to be effective in all age groups and is also shown to be helpful for students with special learning needs' (p. 9).

Since motivation creates the desire to achieve a goal, technology can play huge role in students' motivation. Teachers need to differentiate activities for almost every lesson, in order for the students to be encouraged and challenged. If teacher always uses the book or the board (traditional method), students will get bored and it will be difficult to make them focus on the lessons. However, using technology to present lessons has proved to be a beneficial motivator for every level. Sometimes it is difficult to find adequate activities that will fit all the students' need, but this study shows that students respond positively to technology and are encouraged to use it (Granito & Chernobilsky, 2012, p. 3).

Moreover, instead of memorizing students need to see meaning. So, today students are growing up using different technology, for this reason they will better gain information presenting in a digital way rather than just remembering the information. In this study, an experiment was made with 7th grade students. The students have just learnt a topic and they had three tests for that topic. The first test was done immediately after the topic was taught. The second test was the same as the first one and it was done later to see how much of the information students remembered. The third test was identical with the previous tests except for the order of the questions. The three groups of students were involved in two projects. Experiment group A completed these two projects in a computer lab. Experiment group B students had to choose whether to use technology while working on the project or not. Finally, the third group did all their work in the classroom without the use of technology. The results of this research were that those students who chose to complete projects using technology had better scores than students who were forced to use technology. This researcher believes that more seventh grade students would have chosen to work on the computer rather than use traditional methods (p. 8).

Mark and Ellina (2012) found that even though students might seem more encouraged and motivated to work with computers, this does not necessarily mean they learn best with computers. The participants in experiment group A had lower levels of learning and retention, but enjoyed learning with technology. Furthermore, technology can be very beneficial for those who have interest in it (p. 19).

Both the researchers conclude "For students with no interest in using technology, they will still benefit educationally from traditional methods. This research alludes to the fact that assigning a computer based project haphazardly to a group of students will not necessarily generate high test scores. There needs to be interest and motivation with using technology in the first place for students to succeed" (p. 20).

Elizabeth (2013) says that students can find many online applications to study and work outside and also communicate with foreigners. Different topics and activities that are available in the internet have proven to be very successful and help students' learning. Elizabeth says 'The use of computers, the Internet and interactive whiteboards has opened up a world of opportunity to students, who consequently have access to a great deal more information, which can help them learn and conduct research topics' (Nuttall, 2013, para.2).

Another benefit of using technology for both students and teachers is that it saves time. Teachers can find appropriate materials from the internet and practice with the students without having to prepare the materials themselves. Tools such as spelling, grammar checkers and feedback enable students to learn and practice even when the teacher is not there. However, there can also be technical problems while using technology and this can take time, thus it will be difficult for the teacher to manage the classroom. In this case teacher should always be possessed with other sources rather than technology, so the learning process will not be interrupted. Another problem that might negatively impact students' learning is distraction. Students might play games or watch videos instead of remaining focused in the topic. So, the teacher should always ensure that students are being focused and not distracted. Anyway, the overall effect of the technology on the students is positive (Nuttall, 2013, para.6).

Although access to the internet has allowed society to gain knowledge and increase productivity, it is hindering our ability to analyze topics, deliberate, and as a whole, critically think. As the internet continues to become further intertwined within our daily lifestyles, it is negatively shaping the way we are processing and interpreting information. Essentially, the way we are currently using the internet is reducing our desire to be inquisitive, think, comprehend, and ultimately retain information (Weyers, 2011, p. 2). He wanted to find out if the over use of internet might have a negative impact in our thinking.

Brent also adds that as a society, our critical thinking as a generation is declining in comparison to that of past generations. With the internet readily available to almost everyone, we can easily find solutions to questions online and take information that the internet supplies rather than analyzing topics and critically thinking on our own. We are becoming too apt to share what others think rather than personally developing and formulating our own unique ideas. This has negatively impacted our academic and educational institutions worldwide (p. 3).

According to Brent "If the internet is making us more intelligent, why are all of these negative insinuations developing as a result of its use? As noted earlier, we are becoming less original, inattentive, unable to comprehend and retain information, and essentially, more insular with our customary dependence on the internet" (p. 5).

Pamela stresses the advantages and disadvantages of involving technology in education. Pamela (2015) says we know the many benefits of incorporating technology while teaching, such as adding diversity to lessons, increasing student interaction, and to bringing new perspectives and knowledge to the class (DeLoatch, 2015, para.1).

But there can be a negative side resulting from inappropriate or overuse of technology, and that negative side can have serious and long-term consequences. To make the best out of tools of technology, teachers and parents must also recognize their downsides and how to avoid them (DeLoatch, 2015, para.2).

Since almost all the students today overuse the technology they might know how to find the information they need in the internet but they might fail in remembering it. In addition, those

students may not have enough chances to use their imagination or read because they have been used to always search for information in the internet. Even more those students who overuse technology also have difficulties in face to face communication but they perfectly socialize online. Students can be exposed to many inappropriate materials and share them with other students during classes which can cause many problems. Nowadays obesity is also on the rise, not just because of the food but also because of the overuse of technology. Instead of exercising, students play games or do other stuffs in the internet. However, technology should never be cut out. Here are some suggestions on how to use technology:

Both the teachers and the parents should know the way their kids or students are using technology and also check their search history. Students should be encouraged to use technology positively and be careful of some online situations that might lead them to post inappropriate materials. It is important for the teacher to use technology intentionally and give them the chance to use the language in person, not always communicating online (DeLoatch, 2015).

A study made by Brian Sutton in 2013 tells the importance of technology in education and how it has changed society. He says that technology used in schools is of a great importance to students' success. So, in order for the students to be successful and achieve their goal they first need to be familiar with the usage of technology because almost every job requires knowledge of technology. He also thinks that classroom looks has changed and traditional methods will never be used again (Sutton, 2013, p. 4). Moreover, the use of computers and the internet help in performing tasks more effectively and make teaching/learning process much easier.

By incorporating technology in the classroom it allows a student to feel comfortable to research his or her opinion before blurting out a response. Through the use of technology and appropriate wait time by the teacher, a student that is not confident in a specific subject can get positive reinforcement to eliminate the feelings of inadequacy. It is critical for teachers to implement technology in the classroom of the 21st century. Students feel at ease with the technology and it can provide a fun learning environment where students and teachers interact and challenge one another – declares Sutton (p. 56).

He also adds that technology can greatly improve these lines of communication. As students

are working on particular tasks they can e-mail or call their teacher for clarification and receive very immediate feedback. If a student is practicing the curriculum out of the classroom he or she can still use an intranet to look up the notes, examples, and even chat with fellow students about the assignment. Students no longer have to finish an assignment at night and wait until a couple days later for the teacher to look it over and critique. Generally, feedback produces positive results (p. 53). Computers have also had a huge impact on human interaction with other human. In particular, the use of e-mails has helped the process of learning a lot. Students do not have to go and talk in person with teacher but instead they can write e-mails. A major consequence of the transformation of technology is that people are not being patient anymore. "It seems that computer technology is to blame in large part for the 'speed up' of modern society - everything has to get done faster, be there sooner, and be available immediately. We try to finish everything faster; we no longer enjoy doing things slowly" (p. 12). Pleasant Valley high school in Western New York is well equipped with technology, teachers have their own computers, smart boards, projectors and speakers are found in each classroom. This school also owns wireless presenters and keyboards, digital cameras, digital movie cameras, airliners, grade cams, document cameras, and CD and DVD burners. All the students of this school have their own accounts and they can save their works there. The results were that most students positively react to technology and easily understand it. Many students in some cases understand the equipments better than the teachers (p. 37).

Students are equipped with technology everywhere they go and they know that there are many benefits that technology can have in their learning. As Meredith stated in her study that learners come into our classrooms armed with a technological devices for searching information, storing, exchanging and managing data, communicating with family, friends and work colleagues, accessing audio and video information, and participating in digital and online gaming communities (Godat, 2012, p. 1).
 Learning in the 21 century has changed a lot and students need to be exposed to different methods of learning not just traditional method. As John Dewey in his book entitled 'schools of tomorrow' predicted 'If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow' (West, 2011, para.2).

Why do some classrooms look the same now as they did 70 years ago? We must embrace students of today to reimagine tomorrow- says Kayla. (Delzer, 2015, para.2)

Kayla (2016) is a second grade teacher and she tells ways of stimulating learning and the classroom environment. She also explains how teachers were the main source of gaining knowledge before whereas today there are many available resources to be used. Using resources that are available in the internet gives teachers the ability to make the classroom more students centered rather than teacher centered. Kayla believes that students are the main focus in the learning process and we as teachers must adopt students in classes. So, the methods of teaching change over time and teachers should be creative and always use new methods and techniques which are appropriate and interesting for the students. (Delzer, 2016, para.1)

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Purpose of the Study

Witnessing the great influence that the usage of computers is having, this research shows the differences in improving the L2 with and without technology. The purpose of this study is to show the importance of technology and computers in the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice. Since I work in a private school and I teach many of the students that are in this high school I have been told that they rarely use technology but they find it very helpful and fun. There are many online applications for second language classes including encyclopedias, dictionaries, games, pronunciation tutors, grammar, different quizzes and materials for teachers, chat groupings, newspapers, and magazines (Morales, 2014).

By using these learners can be far more successful rather than learning only from the book. Moreover we use technology in our course and learners understand things much easier than just using traditional methods.

Since there are some teachers who still prefer traditional methods, the researcher wanted to make a distinction with those who prefer using technology and computers.

This study is held for the purpose of emphasizing the ways in which computers can help in the learning process. They help learners to explore ideas and communicate with others from the class, see pictures and analyze data and the most important one have the chance to learn the subject in a different way.

3.2 Research Questions

This study aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of applying technology in English classrooms?

2. How has learning/teaching and evaluation relating to the uses of technology and computers has changed?

3. How does the use of technology contribute to development of students' critical thinking skills compared to traditional method?

3.3 Research Hypotheses

H1. Technology is not only interesting to students, but it also improves their soft skills, such as team work, as they communicate with people they do not know.

H2. With the application of computers and internet, learners become more self-confident, critical-thinkers and better communicators.

H3. Technology use contributes to more successful language learning in general: increased vocabulary use as well as comprehension.

3.4 Research Design and Methodology

In order to find out the results, this study used instruments such as: observation, questionnaires and tests.

3.5 Participants

The participants of this study were fifty-one students from the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice. Two classes were observed for two weeks. One class contained twenty-four students whereas the other class had twenty-seven students. All of the students were Albanians. Both girls and boys were involved in the study. The students were about sixteen and seventeen years old, eleventh grade. Both classes had to learn the same topics but in different ways. While one class used traditional methods, the other class learned by using modern methods After the observation students had to complete questionnaires and a test. They did not have to write their names on the questionnaires or tests because in this way they freely express their thoughts.

One class had to learn the topic by using traditional methods whereas the other class used modern methods. The reason that two classes have been chosen is that the researcher wanted to see the difference on student's success and the possibility that technology helps students become better learners.

In the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice, eleventh grade students when traditional method was being used, the teacher was in the center, there was lack of collaboration and more emphasis on exams and the results rather than understanding. The tools that the teacher used are: textbook, the chalk and the blackboard.

On the other hand, in the classroom where technology was being used, the emphasis was on the understanding of concepts. Students had to submit homework via e-mail and do different activities, games and quizzes, collaborative learning and also practicing listening part by playing

videos. However the teacher was not in the position of the instructor but students were those who were in the center of teaching/learning process.

3.6 Instruments

The instrument being used in order to carry on this study are: Observation, questionnaires and a proficiency test.

Observation was used to gather information about students' use of technology, how familiar they are with technology and how do they feel about using technology in classroom. It also determines if technology helps in increasing students' critical thinking skills

Questionnaires were used to provide information, but this time from students' side. It also consisted of questions that examine students' attitudes towards the use of technology and their perceptions about its influence on development of the critical thinking skills.

Tests: There was a quiz (a test) through which an experiment was made. It was used in two classes after a two-week instruction. In one class, technology was used. In the other some more traditional methods and after that the results of two classes were compared.

3.7 Detailed Description of the Instruments

This research aims to investigate the impact of technology on students' critical thinking skills. In order to analyze this particular issue the research will be based on three main tools or instruments.

The first tool used was observation. It helped in determining whether technology contributes in learning, specifically in students' critical thinking skills. The observation lasted for two weeks and there were two classes observed. One class used technology whereas the other class did not. Topics that were discussed during these two weeks were about something in general such as: reading comprehension, vocabulary and practicing four basic skills. All the students were involved in tasks. Through this observation it is clear if students are better learners, better communicators and autonomous learners with or without technology. The advantages and disadvantages of the use of technology in the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' were proven through this observation.

The second tool used for this study was questionnaire. It consisted of eleven questions and two demographic questions. They were formulated with the aim to find detailed information about the environment they learn, and whether the learning process is more effective with or without the use of technology. The goal of the questionnaire was to find if students' level of English increases with the use of technology. In other words if students questionnaires matches with the results gathered from the proficiency tests.

Specifically, the questionnaire mainly tends to gather information about the frequency of using technology, how do they find technology, why do they use it, are they skilled in using computers and which are the benefits of using it. It was constructed with simple questions in order to motivate learners to complete it. Almost all the questions had three or more options where students had the choice to circle just one answer that matches them. Just one of the questions required from the students to write one-word answer.

The necessary time for completing the questionnaire was ten minutes. The questionnaire was given to fifty-one students. They were the same students who completed the proficiency tests. The instruction and the purpose of the study were explained briefly to the teachers who allowed me to carry on my research as well as to the students. All students willingly participated in this study. The necessary time for completing the questionnaire was 10 min. Questionnaires were anonymous in order for the students to feel more comfortable in

expressing their opinions. The questions in general were easily understood by the students, except for the 11th questions which was a little bit confusing for them.

The last instrument that was used is students' proficiency test. The test had five questions and students had to first read a passage and then answer the questions. The questions were open-ended; students had to supply their own answers.

This test was carried in the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice. Fifty-one students from two different classes participated in the research. At the first beginning students were given information about the purpose of this study as well as were instructed on how to complete the test which was anonymous. The necessary time for completing the test was twenty minutes which was good enough for the students to finish it.

In this chapter a detailed description on the research methodology including the purpose of the study, research question, research hypothesis, research design and methodology including the three instruments and participants is given. The following chapter will be based on the results and discussions gathered from the instruments.

Chapter 4

4.1 Results and Discussions

The data gathered in this research has provided me with information about the use of technology in classrooms. The three instruments that have been used in this study have been analyzed deeply in order to get specific results and comparing results have been the main issue of this research. The observation, the students' questionnaire and students' proficiency tests are presented separately below.

The first instrument used for this research is observation. In order to find out if students are better learners and if technology has a positive impact in students' critical thinking skills a two-week observation was done in two classes in the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice. One class was using technology while learning whereas the other class was using traditional method. In the 'modern' classroom there were twenty-four students, thirteen females and eleven males. Moreover, there were twenty-seven students in the traditional classroom, fourteen males and thirteen females. Fifty- one students took place in this study. First, students were introduced with the aim of the research and the language used for giving instructions was English. The observation part was successfully done and students were very collaborative and participated in all the activities done.

The second tool used is questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions with multiple choice answers and only one of them required to write the answer. The questions in general were easily understood by the students, except for the 11th question where students did not know if they have to circle or write the options in each sentence. The questions were in English and the test was anonymous, so that students answered more freely.

The last instrument used is students' proficiency test. The tests were used in order to find out if during these two-week observation students with or without technology usage are more successful. Two classrooms belonged to the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' in Kamenice. They

were given instructions in English before starting to complete the test. The test contained five questions and they had to read a short passage and then answer the questions. There were some unknown words in the passage but they were encouraged to guess the meaning of the passage according to the context of the sentences. In this case the class who was using technology for two weeks analyzed the sentences deeper and found many of the meanings. The passage was about 'extreme weather'. Before having the test, students had many similar tests in that two-week observation and were asked to analyze sentences, find the meaning of the sentences and answer the questions. While the 'modern' classroom was learning by using the projector and many other sources from the internet, the traditional classroom was only learning from the book and using the board and the chalk.

4.2 Observation report of the first classroom

The first classroom did not use technology at all. The observation lasted two weeks. This class had twenty-seven students, fourteen males, thirteen females.

The first lesson that was observed included reading and speaking. In addition this lesson involved an introduction of the unknown words of the whole unit. Students had to first read a story from the book and then individually summarize the story. It seemed that students did not enjoy the class, they were passive, they tried to memorize the story and say it aloud, but when questions were made they found it difficult to answer because they learned it by heart. Moreover, they did not analyze the story and couldn't make question after the book was closed. In this case the teacher helped them to make questions.

The second lesson was about speaking and writing. In this classroom students had to read a role play from the book and then write one on their own. They had to work in pairs. They enjoyed working in pairs but it was a little bit difficult for them to a find a topic and imagine situations. They had 10 min to write the story but this was not enough. As a result the teacher gave 10 more min. Therefore, students were asking about what kind of topic they should take. They

were not creative.

In the third lesson students were given a passage with questions from the book and they had to answer the questions. The passage was short and clear. This was an individual task. They were not allowed to make questions until they were done with the task because all the unknown words of the unit were explained in the first lesson. So, the teacher understands if students memorized or practiced words at home. Moreover, students did not remember some of the words at first but then the teacher helped them and they were able to answer the questions. Additionally, one thing that seemed interesting to me was the fact that students did not write answers with their own words but they used the same sentences from the passage, word by word.

In the last lesson the test was made. The test was about 'extreme weather'. There were some unknown words, but the passage was understandable in general. An observation sheet was used to describe the lesson and the comments and questions of the students were written.

4.3 Observation report of the second classroom

In this classroom students used technology for two weeks. There were twenty-four students, thirteen females and eleven males. The topics discussed were similar with those in the first classroom, expect for the fact that this classroom used technology in all the lessons discussed.

So, in the first lesson students had to practice reading and speaking skills. Students first read a story from the internet about 'global warming'. The teacher explained the meanings of the unknown words and showed them other meanings of the same words in different contexts from the internet. And then a discussion was made. Students were all being part of the discussion, they were active whereas the teacher was just listening. The atmosphere in the class was great. The students were enjoying the lesson and learning many new expressions from other friends.

The second lesson was about speaking and writing. Students had to write about a topic named 'Are we (humans) evolving at a faster rate'. They had to work in pairs, in this way they share

ideas with one another. They were allowed to search in the internet for this topic and then write with their own words. The topic seemed very interesting to them and they were all motivated to write. It was such a good feeling to see them collaborating and thinking about different ideas, even criticizing each other. They had 15 min to write about it and then share it with others. All the writings were interesting and the vocabulary used was kind of complex.

In the third lesson students were given a passage about 'abortion' with questions and they had to answer the questions. The passage was a little bit long but clear whereas the questions were a little bit confusing but as they had to work in groups of four, it was more challenging. They were allowed to collaborate and also ask other groups for the unknown words but not the teacher. Doing so, students had to understand the passage in general and then guess the meaning of the unknown words according to the context of the sentence. This activity was pretty successful since students had to critically think about the meanings of the unknown words and listen to others' opinions. They had different ideas and learned from each-other.

In the last lesson the test was made. The test was about 'extreme weather'. The test included 5 questions. There were some unknown words, but the passage was understandable in general.

4.4 Students' Questionnaires

As mentioned previously the second instrument used for this study is the questionnaire. Fifty-one students completed the test. The purpose of the questionnaire was told to students and they all willingly participated. The questionnaire had eleven questions. All the questions were intended to gather information about students' environment of learning as well as their opinions of the impact that technology can have in the learning process, specifically in students' critical thinking skills. Moreover it aims at collecting information if students like technology, how skillful they are and if there are many benefits in using it.

There were only two demographic questions about age and gender. The results of the two questions were as follows: twenty six females and twenty five males. Moreover, there were twenty-seven students aged sixteen and twenty-four aged seventeen.

Gender	Male	Female
	25	26
Age	16 years old	17 years old
	27 students	24 students

Table 1: Students' gender and age

The first question is about students' opinions about the usage of technology in classroom. This question aims to find out if technology is helpful or not in classroom for the purpose of learning. Five students from two classes answered that technology is not necessary in classroom, thirty-four of them answered that they enjoy using technology in classroom and twelve of them did not like using technology at all.

The figure below presents the results of the first question in percentages. It clearly shows that the majority of the students enjoy using technology in classroom.

How do you feel about using technology in classroom?

Technology is not necessary in classroom
10%

I don't like using it at all
23%

other
0%

I enjoy using technology in classroom
67%
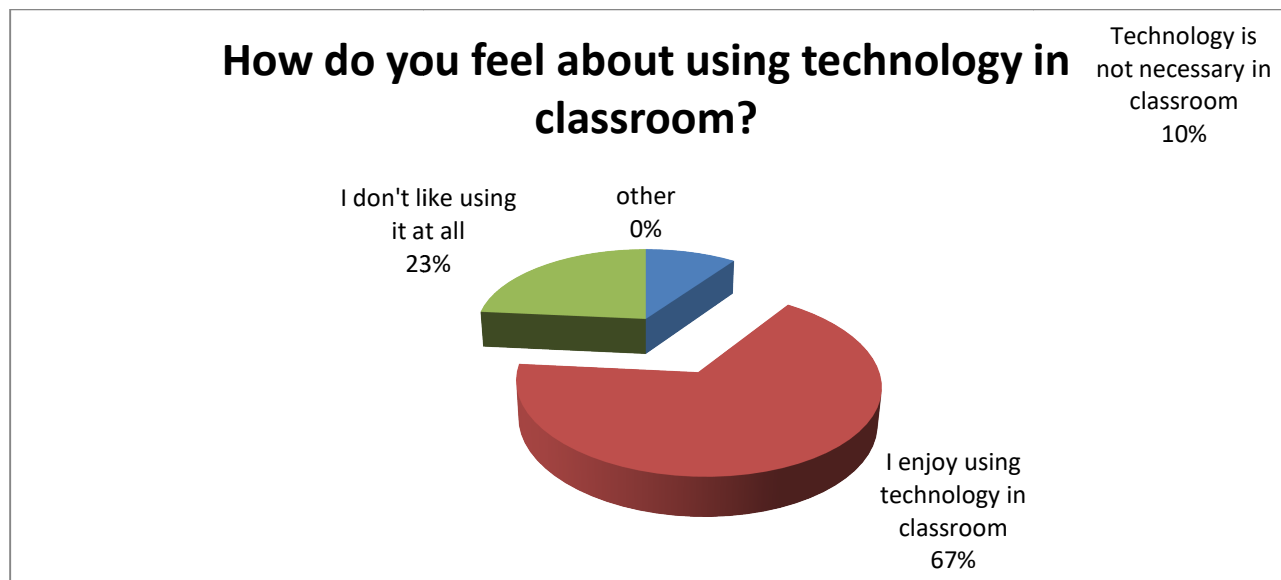
Figure 1: How do you feel about using technology in classroom?

The second question aimed at finding the reason of using internet at school. Students were allowed to choose more than one option. Thirty-one students (34%) answered that they use internet to read authentic materials and thirty-two students (35%) said that they use technology to practice listening parts. Moreover there were also a number of students who said that technology is also used to communicate with other people. There were only eight students who wrote other options such as: using technology to practice writing and get feedback, watch movies and learn new words.

Why do you use technology at school?

8%

23%

35%

34%

- To communicate with other people
- To read authentic materials
- To practice listening parts
- Other

Figure 2: Why do you use technology at school?

Concerning the third question whether students have laptops, computers, smart phones or any other electronic device in the classroom, there were a large number of students (45 students) who answered that they possess smart phones. Only five students answered that they have laptop computers whereas thirty-seven students answered that they have desktop computers. The English teacher was also asked about this question and he said that they have desktop computers but they rarely use them for the purpose of learning English. Only three students wrote that they also have a projector in classroom.
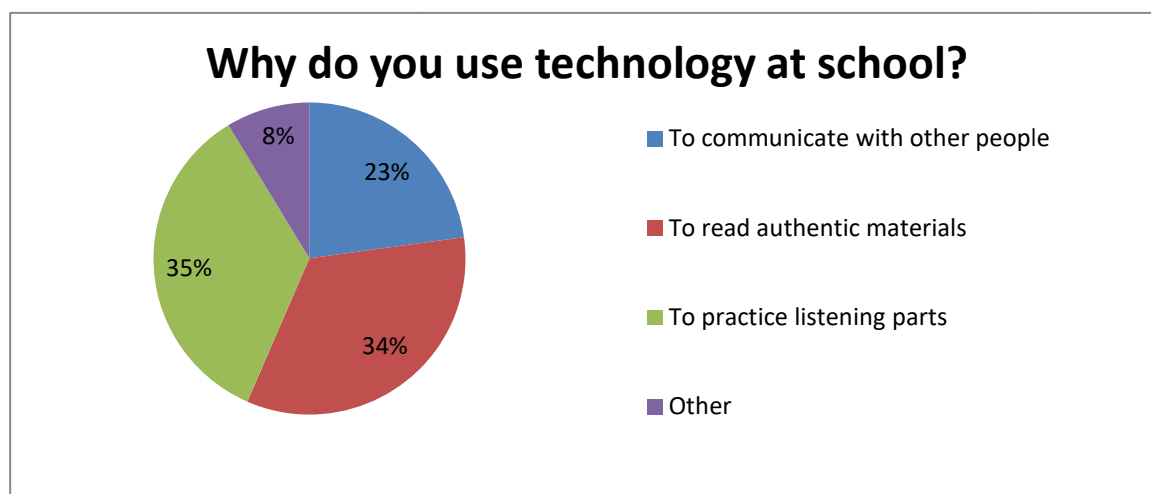
Which of the following electronic devices do you have in classroom?

Device	Count
Laptop Computer	5
Desktop Computer	35
Smart phone	45
other	3
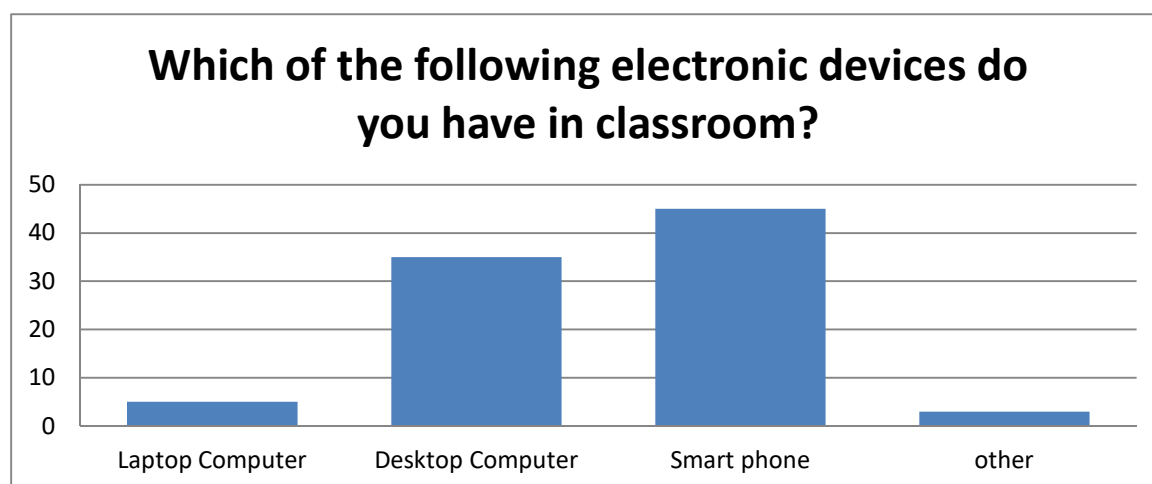
Figure 3: Which of the following electronic devices do you have in classroom?

The fourth question deals with the frequency of using the above electronic devices in classroom. This question has the purpose to find out if students in this high school use modern methods or they still use traditional methods. The results of this question were obvious. Students either use technology 1-2 hours or less than an hour a week which is not enough for the students to be prepared for the future. To be more precise, there were twenty-five students who said that they use an electronic device less than an hour a week, eighteen students said that they spend 1-2 hours using an electronic device per week in their school,

eight of them said that they spend 3-4 hours whereas none of them said that they do not use technology at all.

How many hours a week do you spend on using an electronic devices at your school?

25

18

8

0

Do not use at all   1-2 hours   3-5 hours   less than an hous
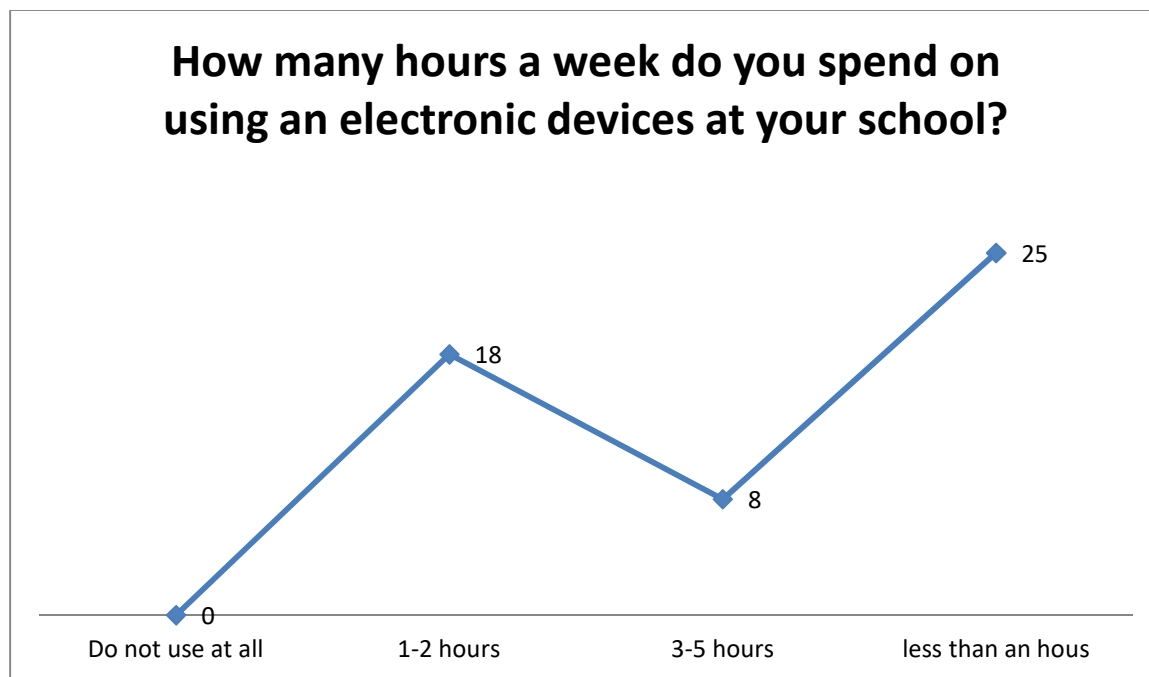
Figure 4: How many hours a week do you spend on using electronic devices at your school?

In this fifth question almost all of the students said that the reason they use technology is to make lessons more attractive and be independent learners. So, there were thirty-six students who answered that they use technology to make lesson more attractive and the answers of thirty-two students were to be independent learners. However, there were only five students who said that they use technology to play games. Five students added other reasons such are: learn visually, compete online with friends, interact with others and be better communicators.

Why do you use technology for?

Category	Value
other	5
To be independent learners	32
To play games	5
To make lessons more attractive and engaging	36
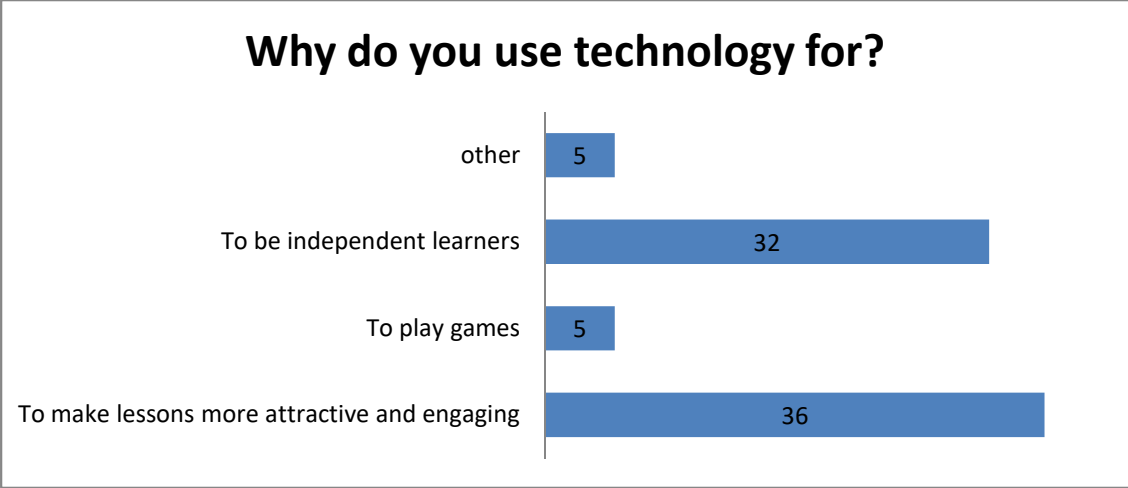
Figure 5: Why do you use technology for?

Considering that there are many online exercises to practice reading, listening, and writing and speaking, the sixth question has to do with the time students spend on practicing these four basic skills. In this question students had to choose only one option. Based on the results of this question students spent 1-2 hours a month practicing four basic skills.

How many hours a month do you spend on practicing four basic skills by using technology?

- Do not use at all — 11%
- 1-2 hours — 68%
- 3-5 hours — 18%
- less than an hour — 3%

Figure 6: How many hours a month do you spend on practicing four basic skills by using technology?

According to the results of the seventh question, twenty-nine students were skilled on using computer programs at school but there were also a large number of students (nineteen students) who said that they were not very skilled. Only a few of them (nine students) said that very skilled and two other students answered that they were not skilled at all.. So, due to this question it can be said that students do not use technology as they should and that's why they are not very skilled and this will cause problems in the university or to get hired somewhere. Nowadays all jobs require great skills in technology usage.

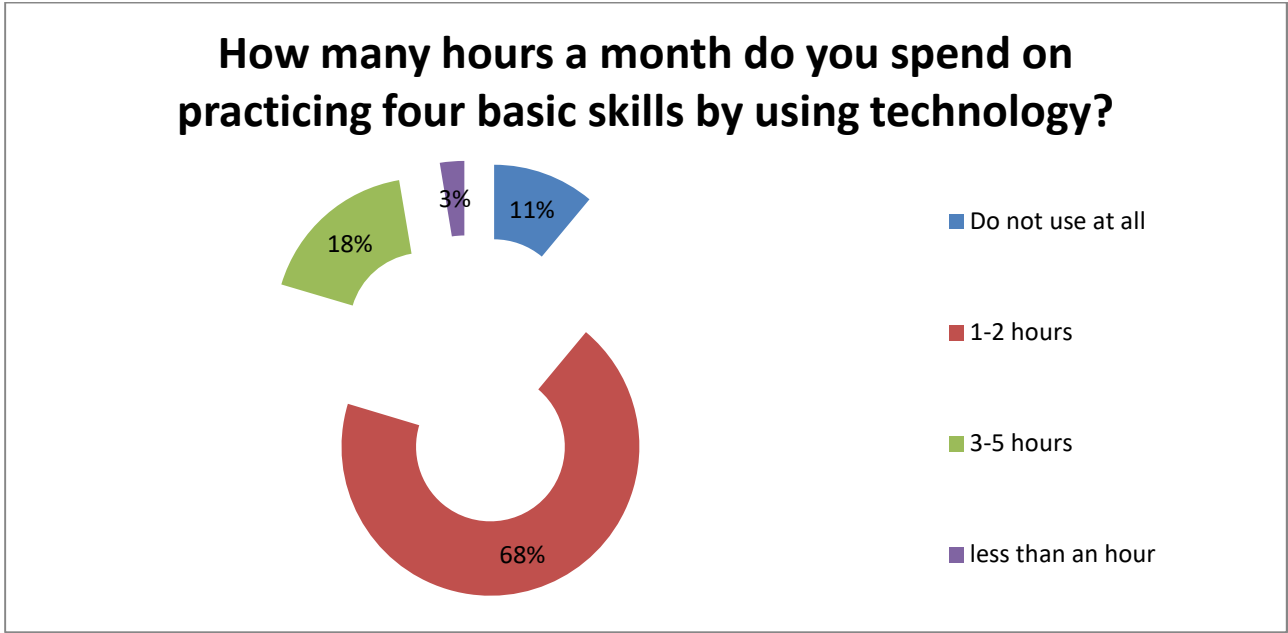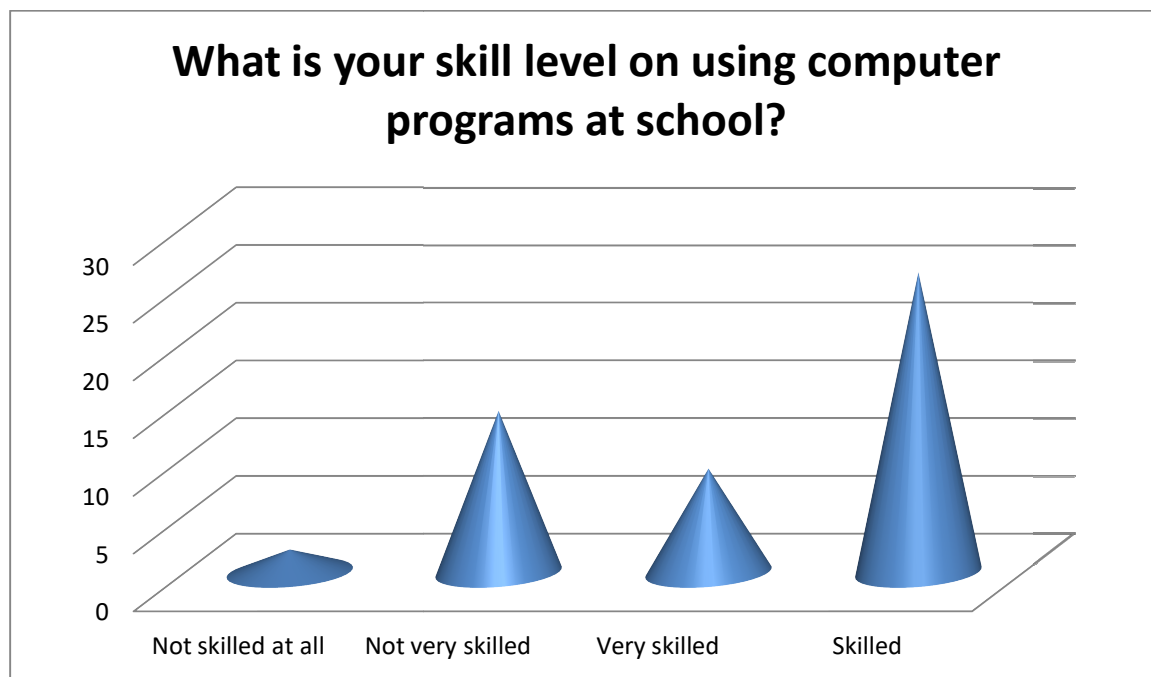**Figure 7: What is your skill level on using computer programs at school?**

The next question is somehow related with the fifth one. In this question the students are asked if technology has helped them in classes or not. The student had to choose among the given option (more than one answers were possible). Their answers were like expected. None of them said that technology has not helped them at all. Moreover, most of the students said that technology has helped them collaborate with others, more focus on real world tasks and have a greater control in their learning.

The use of technology doesn't help me at all
0%

How much does technology has helped you in classes?

The use of technology has helped me to be a better communicator
23%

The use of technology has helped me to more focus on real world tasks and to have a greater control in my learning
26%

The use of technology has helped me in providing feedback and has given me more opportunities for practice
25%

The use of technology has helped me to more interact and collaborate with others
26%

Figure 8: How much does technology has helped you in classes?

The ninth question shows the benefits that are of the most importance to students. According to the results of this question the use of technology in classroom have many benefits. Further on, the results were clearly obvious, it improves learning, increases collaboration and the most important one helps students be autonomous learners. Based on students' answers, one of the most important benefits of using technology is that they become critical-thinkers themselves, they do not need teacher's help, they can learn things by themselves.

Which of the following benefits in using technology in classroom is of the most importance to you?

- Helped me be an autonomous learner — 33
- Increases collaboration — 27
- Improved learning — 30
- No benefits — 3

Figure 9: Which of the following benefits in using technology in classroom is of the most importance to you?

On this question students have to write down if technology has a positive impact in improving language skills. Forty-nine students (82%) affirmed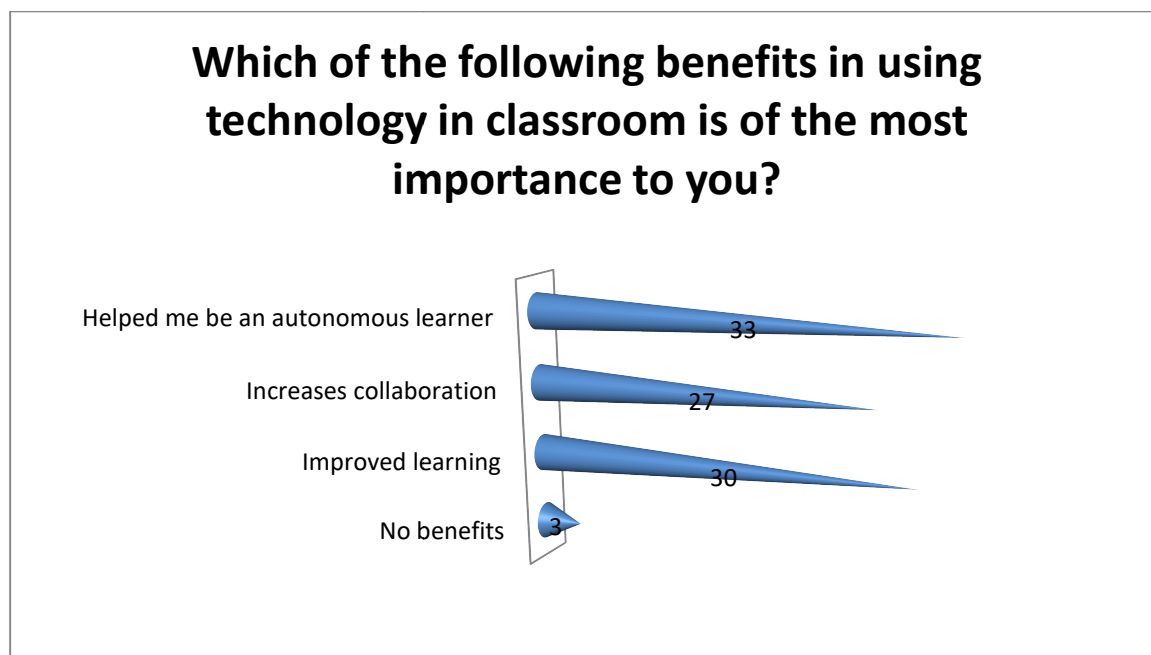 whereas nine students (18%) disaffirmed. Consequently this question also shows the great influence of technology in education. Students were asked to choose only one option (yes or no) and if yes, they had to explain. Still, there were many students who said 'yes' but did not give the reason. Therefore, some students gave different reasons such are: Technology has a positive effect in improving language skills because all of the technology devices are in English, so we can benefit from those. Some other students said that technology can show meanings of the words and not translate them. Moreover some students can watch different videos in YouTube and almost all of them are in English, so it is a good opportunity for them to learn many new words and expressions which were never learned from the book.

There were also some other students who added that technology increases communication and it improves pronunciation and speaking.

Another important benefit is that technology increases collaboration. They are willing to exchange different ideas and freely communicate in English.

Additionally technology improves writing as there are many online topics that can be written and get feedback.

It is also important to state that spelling can be best improved when students are given the chance to practice together online.

Another crucial advantage to be remembered is that it also helps in becoming an autonomous learner and it can be used for very good purposes: many available topics can be found and students can write them on their own and then compare it with someone else's writing from the computer.

According to students' answers they can speak and understand better, are able to freely communicate, are not shy to express their thoughts, and have become better communicators through the use of technology in classroom.

It seemed that the use of computers and internet helps students achieve their goals and be successful learners. Lastly, it is important not to forget to mention that listening skills are improved when students have the chance to hear different accents.

Does technology have a positive effect in improving your language skills?

18%

82%

■ Yes   ■ No
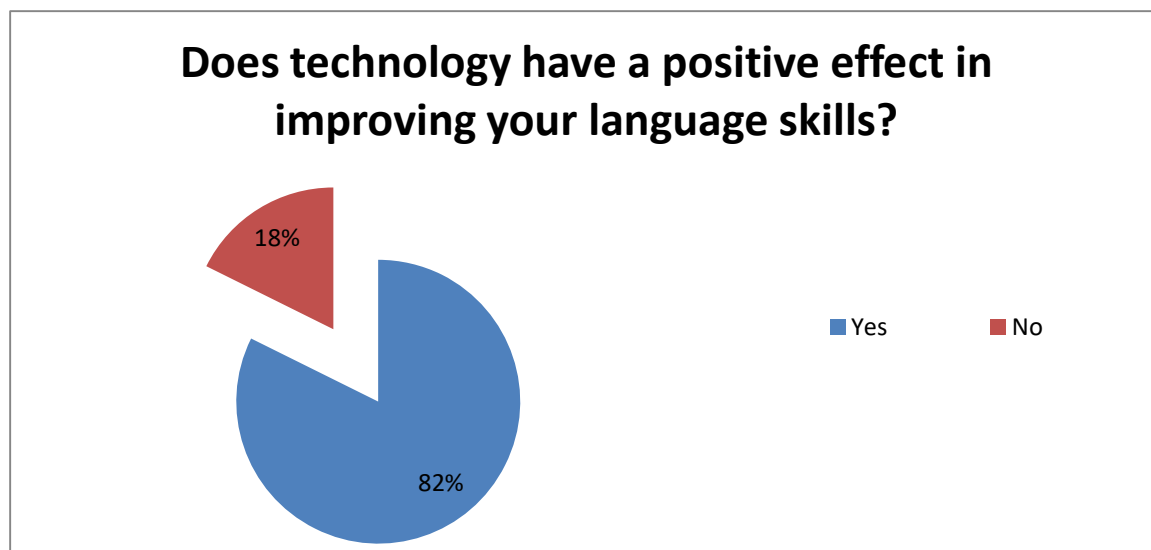
Figure 10: **Does technology have a positive effect in improving your language skills?**

Finally, the last question deals with the frequency of doing activities by using computer technologies. The results of this question are listed in the table below. According to the results, there are some activities that teachers and students do with the help of technology, however there are some other activities that has never been done.

	Never	Practically never	Once in a while	Often	Almost always
I don't think teachers use web quests in classes	43%	51%	6%		
I think students use e-mails to communicate with other students	8%		4%	55%	33%
I think students use e-mails to communicate	34%	4%	30%	32%	

with teachers					
I think students use e-mails to communicate with parents	29%	4%	47%	16%	24%
I think teachers use LCD projector in class	4%	14%	72%	10%	
I don't think students are evaluated online	82%	14%		4%	
I think students do tests/ quizzes and homework with the help of technology		12%	12%	76%	
I don't think students play games	22%		43%	4%	31%
I don't think students use computer time as a reward for	37%		28%	31%	4%

completing class work or good behaviors				
I think teachers scan pictures or images	2%			16%	82%
I think teachers use digital video and digital cameras	43%		53%		4%
I think teachers and students have discussions				25%	75%
I don't think students or teachers use PowerPoint presentations	14%	6%	41%	35%	4%
I think teachers test or asses learning	14%	31%	10%	45%	
I think teachers search the	4%		16%	6%	74%

Students grade	Number of students	Students nationality	Language used in the classroom			
internet for information for a lesson						

Table 2: The results of students' questionnaires

4.5 Classroom Proficiency Tests

4.5.1 First Classroom Proficiency Test

On the first class that the test took place twenty-five students were present, twelve males and thirteen females.

Students grade	Number of students	Students nationality	Language used in the classroom
Eleventh grade	25 students 12 girls 13 boys	Albanian	English

Table 3: Information about first classroom that completed the test

In the first class none of the students reached max points. However there were nine students who reached good points. Four students reached eight points out of ten, two students reached seven points, and three students got six points and so on. While checking their tests it is noticed that there were only two or three students who did the first question correctly even though it

was very clear. I guess that the majority of the students did not get the meaning of the passage because they did not understand many words and that's why it was difficult for them to reach the max. The passage seemed to be difficult for almost all of them and the reason might be that they have been used to only learn from the book and wait for the teacher to help them. They did not have the chance to think critically, thus guess the meaning of the words and also practice different reading comprehension from the internet. The list with the points of the students is presented in the table below.

First class	Students
0 point	2
1 point	1
2 points	4
3 points	3
4 points	4
5 points	2
6 points	3
7 points	2
8 points	4
9 points	0
10 points	0

Table 4: Students' results of the proficiency test

4.5.2 Second Classroom Proficiency Test

In the second classroom from twenty-four students, only one was missing that day. So, there were twenty-three students, thirteen males and ten females. The students' points were very good. There were eight students with ten points, three students who got eight points, one student who got seven points and so on. Moreover, there was only one student with zero point. So, it can be said that those students who used technology during lessons were able to understand the passage better and answer the questions. Additionally it can be said that those students did a very good job.

The table with the students' points is presented below:

Second classroom	Students
0 point	1
1 point	0
2 points	1
3 points	0
4 points	3
5 points	5
6 points	2
7 points	1
8 points	3
9 points	0
10 points	8

Table 5: Students results of the proficiency test

4.6 Analysis of the Results

Three instruments used for collecting data gave specific information whether technology has a positive or negative impact on students' learning, more specifically on students' critical thinking skills. Based on the results, I come to realize that students are better learners, more motivated and more focused in the process of learning when technology is being applied. The analyzed data from the comparison of proficiency test results and students' questionnaires confirm that students who learned lessons with technology were far more successful than those who didn't. What it is realized is that some students who had lower grades in the 'technology' classroom were better than those who had higher grades in the 'traditional' classroom. In addition, students with technology use except for learning better, they enjoyed lessons whereas the lessons in the other classroom were boring and students were not creative. Taking into consideration that students use technology everyday at home, they also find it attractive to use for the purpose of learning.

This study examines the impact of technology in language learning with eleventh grade students. Learners indicated positive effects of technology use on language achievement. In addition, several characteristics were identified as having positive effects.
The study also showed that cooperative learning is much more successful than individual learning. Moreover, students are encouraged to work together under individualistic goals. It is certain that motivated learners can learn very effectively through technology. However, without such motivation, technology might not be so successful. According to the results of this study technology in classroom makes learning fun, interesting, enjoyable and more interactive. The proficiency test results show that in the 'technology' classroom nineteen students completed the test successfully (79%) whereas there were only five students who failed (21%). Due to the fact that students were very active and very involved in the process of learning during two-week observation, the results were clear. However, in the 'traditional' classroom ten students were able to complete the test but none of them reached the max points. In

addition, there were fifteen students who failed. As a result it can be said that 60% of the class failed whereas 40% were successful in completing the test. As a result, creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving were all part of the 'technology' classroom.

In contrast, passivity, memorization, discouragement, lack emphasis on critical thinking, lack student focus on learning, lack interactivity were all involved in the 'traditional' classroom.

4.7 Findings

Previous studies have been done on technology and its effect in learning, student's achievement, student's critical thinking skills, and student's creativity. This study focuses on different factors and their positive and negative effect that technology has on learning a language. Moreover it aims to find out the impact of technology on students' critical thinking skills.

After analyzing the results obtained from the three instruments used for this study, enough information was gathered in order to answer the main questions of this study that were written on the previous parts. The information below will give specific answers based on the gathered data.

1. What are the benefits of applying technology in English classrooms?

Based on the results of the three instruments it was concluded that technology has many benefits in English classrooms. Almost all the students are familiar with searching things from the internet and immediate answers are given to students beyond what's in their textbooks. Moreover students prefer to use technology for the purpose of learning. In addition, the study also shows that students are more motivated and enjoy learning when technology is being used. It facilitates critical thinking, independent learning, increases collaboration and interactivity, keeps students focused longer, better prepares students for their future and

increases communication. Furthermore the most important advantage of using technology is that students are able to better analyze things, not just memorize by heart.

2. How has learning/teaching and evaluation relating to the uses of technology and computers has changed?

According to the results of this study students achieved productivity with technology usage but technology is rarely used in this school. Additionally students never get evaluated online. The fact that technology is rarely used is that there is just one classroom with computers and the projector, so it takes time to change the classroom. However technology is used when the teacher thinks that it can be very helpful for one lesson. So, based on the analyzed results in the class that technology was being used and interactivity and collaboration was present, students were better learners and better communicators.

3. How does the use of technology contribute to development of students' critical thinking skills compared to traditional method?

With the use of technology students seem to be better communicators which is part of thinking critically. Students are able to analyze things deeper and solve problems easily when technology is being used. Moreover, students are encouraged to express diverse opinions since they had the opportunity to read many authentic materials and then exchange ideas with other peers in the classroom. So, based on the results all of these factors help students become better thinkers, have their own ideas and not be afraid to express their thoughts. Thereafter, the great contribution of technology in students' critical thinking skills compared to traditional method is obvious. At the same time with the use of technology learners are able to perform all levels of critical thinking:
Remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. In contrast, the learning in the nontraditional classroom was not enjoyable and fun, there was no interactivity, and some of the students were not participating, no competition and no discussion at all.

4.7.1 Research Hypotheses

H1. Technology is not only interesting to students, but it also improves their soft skills, such as team work, as they communicate with people they do not know.

Based on the gathered data, this hypotheses turn out to be true. The students' questionnaires and tests confirm that technology improves skills and increases team work. Students are more motivated to learn when all the class is participating and hear different opinions. So, technology creates different activities to develop students' critical thinking skills such as: peer working, digital storytelling activities and review activities.

H2. With the application of computers and internet, learners become more self-confident, critical-thinkers and better communicators.

This hypothesis has also been proven to be true. With the application of computers and internet learners are more self-confident to express their ideas because through technology they are exposed to different materials and have a better understanding of things in general. Moreover, they are more thoughtful and purposeful about creating their own objectives and setting goals for their future. They are able to analyze things better and understand things. As communication is a crucial part of knowing a language, students need to be exposed to different accents. In other words technology increases communication and enables students to communicate more.

H3. Technology use contributes to more successful language learning in general: increased vocabulary use as well as comprehension.

It is also true that technology increases vocabulary as well as comprehension. Students memorize words easier when meanings of words are explained in different contexts. There are also many activities to practice and get feedback. Further, learners have the ability to better understand texts and be able to answer the questions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to determine if the usage of technology in classroom influence students' language learning. The study was based on three main instruments that were used to gather information on the factors that had impact on students' learning. Fifty-one students participated in the study. From the gathered data and the analyzed results it was confirmed that technology usage produces more increases in students' achievement rather than non-usage.

Moreover, the results show that students enjoy using technology in schools for the purpose of learning and it impacts students' motivation and learning. Teachers always want to find ways to get their students interest in learning, so technology can work best.

Further, according to the results of the study technology has a great impact on students' critical thinking skills. Students can easier find the main idea of a passage, identify cause and recognize details. They are not afraid to express their ideas even when they are not sure.

Collaboration is also another factor that is increased when technology is used in the classroom. Students love working in groups and sharing ideas, thus compete with other peers. They better learn things when they have the opportunity to practice it by using technology. They mostly use smart phones and desktops. It is proven that they rarely use technology at school even though they find it very helpful. It is important to note that the integration of technology in classroom prepares students for the future. According to their answers technology makes lessons more attractive and engaging and students can become autonomous learners. It is also proved that those students who used technology in learning show a higher level of comprehension and are able to use this information they learn later in their lives. With the help of technology students use a variety of material and videos to improve communication skills and express ideas more clearly. Those students who are exposed to different materials

from the internet have greater confidence in their abilities. Even though technology can be best applied to practice four basic skills, students of this school spend approximately 1-2 hours practicing these skills.

The results show that during this two-week observation technology has helped students to have a greater control on their learning, provide feedback and have opportunities for practice and be a better communicator.

In the proficiency test, students who used technology performed better in vocabulary and reading comprehension than those who didn't. They were able to better understand the passage and answer the questions. It is obvious that teachers should use different methods to fit students' needs, so there are many ways that integrating technology in the classroom can help students be comfortable and retain information.

The findings clearly indicate that even though students used technology only for two weeks, the results were obvious. They were able to perform better during observation and in test. They did very good during discussions and were very collaborating. In contrast, in the traditional classroom students were depended only in the book. They were trying to remember the passage and say it but did not have their own ideas. So, technology helped students in becoming autonomous learners and not be dependent from the book or from the teacher.

It has also been proven that technology has a great impact in practicing listening skills and helped students in providing feedback and has a greater control in their learning. Moreover, technology makes lessons more attractive and engaging. There are many available resources for students to be used. In this way they have the chance to practice lessons and interact with others. It is known that communication is a key to language learning and technology can work best to involve students to communicate with others online.

In conclusion this study has revealed that the use of technology has many benefits students' achievements in learning, especially in students' critical thinking skills and encourages students to be self-confident.

5.2 Recommendations

After analyzing and discussing the results there are a few suggestions and recommendations for future students as well as teachers. Knowing that we live in a diversity world where technology is being necessary, it should be often used in classroom for the purpose of learning. In other words technology is crucial in preparing students for the future.

When students were asked how they feel about using technology in classroom, according to their answers they enjoyed using it a lot in classroom. So, if better teaching methods want to be used in classroom, technology can help a lot. It is important not to forget to mention that teachers should have a purpose when they use technology. It is not always the best option to be used.

Moreover, when they were asked about the time they spend on using an electronic device, almost all of them said they learn less than an hour per week by using modern methods.

In addition, this is not enough for the students to practice their skills and be autonomous learners. This school should possess laptop computers for each student and spend more time on using them. Students need to be exposed to real-world tasks and be prepared for the future.

What is also important to be noted is that teachers should encourage students to work together and share their diverse ideas with each-other. Moreover, if technology is used more often in this school students would be more engaged in the process of learning, thus be independent learners and more self-confident. Since students have different learning styles, different activities should be given. By the use of technology teachers have the opportunity to use different activities and make the process of learning more interesting. By learning together and discussing they will be more open to learn and share.

Finally, what this study recommends is to encourage all teachers to use technology in classroom since it helps students to be better communicators, collaborate, interact, have opportunities to practice and has a great impact in their critical thinking skills. It is also crucial for the teacher to know how to use technology with their students. Each learner should have

the opportunity to learn through the use of technology and be involved in an environment when everyone shares ideas and is able to participate in different discussions.

5.3 Limitations

Even though observation, proficiency tests and students' questionnaires are proper instruments for the study, there are still some suggestions for future researchers. After investigating the results of the study, it is obvious that aims and objectives of the study are reached. Even though almost all of the hypotheses are proven to be true there are still some limitations.

What was found difficult for this study is the limited number of the material resources. Fewer studies were done on this field which made the writing of the theses even more difficult. There were some studies done for the impact of technology on students' achievement in general but only few of them analyzed the impact that technology has on students' critical thinking skills in details.

In this study fifty-one students participated by completing the proficiency tests and questionnaires which gives enough information regarding the influence that the use of technology has on students' level of English language. However even better students in the classroom who did not use technology had fewer points in tests than those weaker students in the 'technology' classroom which is an issue that turned out to be surprising.

In order to determine if technology has a positive impact on students' critical thinking skills two classrooms from the high school of 'Ismail Qemaili' were observed. Therefore the limited time of observation was not enough to determine if the usage of technology in classroom is always better than the usage of traditional methods. In addition, to come to more accurate results the observation should have lasted longer than two weeks.

Even though none of the students in the 'traditional' classroom reached maximum points still this is not sufficient to conclude that they failed in contrast with those 'technology' students. Even though almost all students agreed that technology had a huge impact on learning still if more students would have participated in the research more exact results will be achieved.

In my opinion future researchers need to take into account different new methods for collecting more information such as document analyses in order to achieve better and more precise results. They should also be aware to choose a study that is relevant for the future generation as well as helpful.

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Students' were given the questionnaires and the questions were explained to them. They were allowed to ask about everything that was unclear. The questions were understandable in general and the students were sincere in their answers.

What is your gender?

a) Male

b) female

What is your age?

a) 16

b) 17

1. How do you feel about using technology in classroom? **(Choose only one)**

a) Technology is not necessary in classroom

b) I enjoy using technology in classroom

c) I don't like using it at all

d) other

2. Why do you use internet at school?

a) To communicate with other people

b) to read authentic materials

c) to practice listening parts

d) other

3. Which of the following electronic devices do you have in classroom?

a) Laptop computer

b) desktop computer

c) smart phone

d) other

4. How many hours a week do you spend on using an electronic device at your school? **(Choose only one)**

a) do not use at all

b)1-2 hours

c)3-5 hours

d) less than an hour

5. Why do you use technology for?

a) To make lessons more attractive and engaging

b) to play games

c) to be independent learner

d) other

6. How many hours a month do you spend on practicing four basic skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) by using technology? **(Choose only one)**

a) do not use at all

b)1-2 hours

c)3-5 hours

d) less than an hour

7. What is your skill level on using computer programs at school? **(Choose only one)**

a) Not skilled at all

b) not very skilled

c) very skilled

d) skilled

8. How much does technology has helped you in classes? (**More answers are possible**)

a) The use of technology doesn't help me at all

b) The use of technology has helped me to be a better communicator

c) the use of technology has helped me to more interact and collaborate with others

d) the use of technology has helped me in providing feedback and has given me more opportunities for practice

e) the use of technology has helped me to more focus on real world tasks and to have a greater control in my learning

9. Which of the following benefits in using technology in classroom is of the most importance to you?

a) No benefits

b) improved learning

c) increased collaboration

d) helped me be an autonomous learner

10. Does technology have a positive effect in improving your language skills?

a) yes

b) no

If yes, please explain

_____

_____

11. For Items 1 to 15: Please indicate how frequently you use computer technologies for each of the activities listed below.

Never	Practically Never	Once in a while	Often	Almost Always
A	B	C	D	E

1. I don't think teachers use WebQuests in classes

2. I think students use e-mail to communicate with students.

3. I think students use e-mail to communicate with teachers.

4. I think students use e-mail to communicate with parents.

5. I think teachers use LCD projector (a projector connected to a computer) in class.

6. I don't think students or teachers use PowerPoint presentations in class.

7. I don't think students are evaluated online

8. I think students do tests/quizzes and homework

9. I don't think students play games

10. I don't think students use computer time as a reward for completing class work or good behavior.

11. I think teachers scan pictures or images.

12. I think teachers use digital video, digital cameras.

13. I think teachers and students have discussions

14. I think teachers test or assess learning.

15. I think teachers search the Internet for information for a lesson.

Appendix 2: Proficiency Test

The participants had to first listen to the instructions given by the teacher, continue reading the passage and then answer the questions individually. They were now allowed to make questions; instead they should understand the meaning according to the context of the sentence.

Severe storms happen in low-pressure weather systems. Warm, wet air begins rising into the air. The higher it rises, the cooler it becomes. Water vapor in the air forms drops. This process is called condensation. The drops join together to form clouds. Precipitation in the form of rain, sleet, snow or hail falls down to Earth's surface.

Conditions must be very specific for a thunderstorm to develop. Even so, thunderstorms remain the most common kind of extreme weather. Before a thunderstorm can develop, there have to be three conditions present. First, the air has to be full of moisture. Next, there must be either an approaching cold front or an intensely heated piece of Earth's surface sending warm air up quickly. Finally, the warm air that rises must be warm enough to stay warmer than the air it passes through. When these conditions are met, the moisture in the rising air condenses. Clouds form, and a storm begins.

A cold front happens when cold air is moving near the surface of Earth, and it pushes warm air up very quickly. This is often the beginning of a thunderstorm. Clouds form, and heavy rains begin falling. Opposite electrical charges inside storm clouds separate. This causes lightning to flash towards Earth. Lightning has enough energy to heat the air all around it.

This sudden burst of heat is what causes the noise we know as thunder.

Thunderstorms often bring disasters with them. This can be in the form of floods, fires caused by lightning, damage from hailstones or strong winds, and even tornadoes. A tornado is a spinning mass of air over land that can destroy virtually everything in its path.

A blizzard is a combination of strong winds and extremely low temperatures. Snowfall increases until it is so heavy it is difficult or impossible to see. People can become lost in the snow and freeze to death.

Homes can be covered over with snow, trapping people indoors.

A hurricane is the most powerful storm known on Earth. It forms over warm ocean waters off the coast of the tropics, becoming a gigantic swirling mixture of air and water. It can grow to between 100 and 900 miles wide.

Wind speeds can average 75 miles per hour or more. Hurricanes do the most damage to coastal cities because they quickly lose their strength as they move over land. Hurricanes are so large and powerful that their swirling clouds can be seen from space.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) What kind of weather system encourages a thunderstorm to develop?

_____

_____

2) Why does thunder usually occur during storms that have lightning?

_____

_____

3) What is one of the conditions necessary for a thunderstorm to develop?

_____

_____

4) Name one danger associated with blizzards.

_____

_____

5) Which kind of extreme weather do you think would be the most difficult to face? Why?

_____

_____

Observation Worksheet for the Study
First class Observation
Comments/Questions
1. Did Students understand the lesson? During this two-week observation the students were not able to understand the lessons properly. They failed in most of the activities done. 2. Were they attentive? It seemed that the lessons were boring for the students. So, even though they were quiet and it looked like they were listening and understanding what was being explained, they were actually not attentive. 3. Did they enjoy learning? The majority of the students did not enjoy learning. The only source they used was the book. 4. Were they creative? Students only memorized things from the book. They did not express their own opinions about a specific story or dialogue. 5. Did they like group working?

They enjoyed group working a lot because they had the opportunity to discuss with other students and express their ideas.

6. Was rehearsing helpful?

   When students had the chance for practice they performed much better.

7. Were they active?

   Most of the students were passive and they were afraid to share opinion with others.

8. Were they collaborative?

   They were not very collaborative. They did not cooperate with each other and listen to different ideas.

9. Were they able to make discussions in English?

   It was difficult for them to communicate fluently in English but they asked for unknown words when they were not sure.

10. Did they understand the instructions in English?

    Even though simple sentences were used to give instructions, the majority of the students were confused about the meaning.

Observation Worksheet for the Study
Second class Observation
Comments/Questions

1. Did Students understand the lesson?

   During this two-week observation the students were able to understand the lessons properly. They succeeded in most of the activities done.

2. Were they attentive?

   It seemed that the lessons were engaging for the students. They were attentive and very curious about everything.

3. Did they enjoy learning?

   They loved learning by using technology; they were having fun and learning at the same time.

4. Were they creative?

   When they were asked to write essays and then discuss with others, they were very creative and were not afraid to express their thoughts in front of others.

5. Did they like group working?

   They enjoyed group working a lot because they had the opportunity to discuss with other students and be able express their ideas.

6. Was rehearsing helpful?

   When students had the chance for practice they performed much better. Furthermore, practicing by using online materials and activities were very helpful for students.

7. Were they active?

   Most of the students were active and participated in all the

activities.

8. Were they collaborative?

   They were very collaborative. They cooperated with each other and listened to different ideas.

9. Were they able to make discussions in English?

   They were able to communicate fluently in English and discuss about different topic together.

10. Did they understand the instructions in English?

    It was not difficult for them to understand the instructions in English since the teachers used simple English.