Chapter V
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5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used for data collection for this study on the EFL learners’. This study was designed to elicit learners’ perceptions on the use of web-based activities. The study also attempted to specify the extent to which the learners’ use web-based activities in learning English.

In this chapter also as in the case of EFL teachers’, the population of this study has been presented with a clear picture of the sample used for the study. The classification of the sample have been highlighted mentioning the different characteristics of the sample based on various factors like their gender, age, language efficiency and computer efficiency since it is assumed that these factors may have an impact on the perceptions of the EFL learners’.

Besides this, the discussions on the characteristics used on the participants, the sample and the main instrument (primary data) used in the study which is in the form of a questionnaire has been explained. In addition, the discussion of the results of the pilot study, procedures of data collection and the statistical analysis of the data are presented.

Furthermore, in order to receive a supportive data for the quantitative study; telephonic interviews were also conducted as a qualitative technique which have been discussed briefly to understand the factors pertaining to the perceptions of the EFL learners’ on the use of web-based activities.

Apart from it, a lot of exploratory methodology (secondary data) was used by reading various research journals, papers, articles, dissertation and theses; various central and state governments’ publications, public records and statistics’, interaction with learners’ through blogs and internet based statistics provided on various websites. etc to analyze the perceptions of the young Arab EFL learners’.
5.1 Population

The population of this study also included all English Language learners’ in the same three Higher Education institutes of Oman as in the case of EFL teachers’ in Muscat - namely: Petroleum Development Oman- Human Resources Learning and Development Centre, College of Banking & Financial Studies and Arab Open University. These learners’ were studying at the foundation level courses.

In the academic year 2012-2013 there were a total of 1200 English Language learners’ in these three Higher Education institutes. A total of 480 English language learners’ were chosen for the purpose out of an overall of 540 participants of both EFL teachers’ and learners’ required for the whole study on perceptions on the use of web-based activities for EFL teachers’ and learners’.

5.2 Sample

A selective sample from these three higher education institutes of Oman was drawn for this study. Before deciding the actual participants of the study; a small test was administered to select the participants of the sample. Only those participants were given the test who happily agreed to take the test. This was done to determine the three levels of language desired for the study to make it convenient to arrive at conclusions from the concerned study.

The test contained a set of 50 questions; all being the multiple choice that contained different elements of grammar. A certain criteria were set to determine their language efficiency level. All those falling below 20 out of 50 were considered to be Beginners; 20-25 as Elementary; 25-30 as Pre-Intermediate; 30-35 as Intermediate; 35-40 as Upper- Intermediate and above 40 as Advanced or Professional.

After the evaluation of the test by the researcher herself, only those candidates who fell under the category of elementary, pre- intermediate and intermediate were considered
for the study. So, a total of 480 participants, which comprised of 40% of participants from each of the three institutions were selected.

Similar to the case of EFL teachers’, all these participants were requested to take a short and simple survey questionnaire to find out the characteristics of the sample. It was meant to get the information regarding their gender, age, nationality, language efficiency, computer efficiency and the contact numbers (optional).

5.2.1 Survey questionnaire sample characteristics

The data received from the demographic information has been presented subsequently. The age of the respondents was between 18-24 years with a mean age of 21. Gender wise, the sample included 206 male students and 274 female students who were considered for the study that constitute 43 % and 57% respectively. The learners’ used for the survey were 100% of Omani origin. The learners’ level in the sample ranged from elementary to intermediate.

Specifically, one hundred and fifteen learners’ had elementary level, two hundred and thirty had pre-intermediate level and last of all one hundred and thirty five had intermediate level. All of them were aged between 18-24 years of age with a mean age of 21. The respondents were both male and female. The number of male learners’ was 206 and the number of female learners’ was 274.

Considering all the learners’, 336 of them had sufficient knowledge of the use of computers and remaining 144 had the basic knowledge on the use of computers as computer is taught as a subject in all the schools of Oman. These results have been presented below in Figure 6.

Thus, we can see that the demographic information attained has been shown in the form of a bar graph which shows the characteristics of the sample according to their gender, language efficiency and computer efficiency.
As stated before, there were a total of 1200 English learners' in the three institutes in the year 2012-2013. To be more specific, there were 750 English learners' in College of Banking & Financial Studies, 330 in Arab Open University and 120 in Petroleum Development Oman - Human Resources Learning & Development Centre and only 40% i.e 480 were given the questionnaire.

**Figure 6**
Demographic information of survey questionnaire participants

As stated before, there were a total of 1200 English learners' in the three institutes in the year 2012-2013. To be more specific, there were 750 English learners' in College of Banking & Financial Studies, 330 in Arab Open University and 120 in Petroleum Development Oman - Human Resources Learning & Development Centre and only 40% i.e 480 were given the questionnaire.

**Figure 7** presented below illustrates the distribution of EFL learners’ in Oman in the three educational institutes of Oman that are considered for the study where \( N \) represents the number of EFL learners’ and \( R \) represents the total survey questionnaires returned out of all.
So, we can see in the figure that only 442 samples were returned out of the total 480 given to the participants, when the researcher went to collect the filled questionnaire after two weeks. The samples returned were: 41 from PDO, 278 from CBFS and 123 from AOU.

### 5.2.2 Telephonic interview sample characteristics

Similarly, the participants for the telephonic interviews were selected randomly from the same sample that was considered for the survey questionnaire. To be specific, only eighteen selected learners’ were contacted for the interview who had given their prior consent for the telephonic interviews at the time of filling their demographic information.

These results have been presented below in Figure 8. This bar graph shows the characteristics of the sample according to their gender, language efficiency and computer efficiency.
The age of the respondents was again between 18-24 years with a mean age of 21 as in the survey questionnaire. Gender wise; the sample included 8 male learners’ and 10 female learners’. All the learners’ were Omani were again of Omani origin as this survey was conducted in Oman. The learners’ level in the sample ranged from elementary to intermediate.

Specifically, five had elementary level, seven had pre-intermediate level and the remaining six had intermediate level. Considering all the learners’, 12 of them had sufficient knowledge of the use of computers and remaining 6 had the basic knowledge on the use of computers as computer is taught as a subject in all the schools of Oman.
5.3 Research Instrument

To identify the level of EFL learners’ perceptions and frequency of the use of web-based activities and the effects of gender, language efficiency, and computer efficiency, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study.

A paper survey questionnaire was developed and a telephonic interview semi-structure open-ended questionnaire was also developed to collect the relevant data required for the study.

Both these questionnaires were created by the researcher for the study based on the related literature to elicit the information needed for the study.

5.3.1 Survey questionnaire

The final version of the questionnaire (primary data) used in this study has four parts. (See Appendix C)

Similar to the one designed to elicit the perceptions of EFL teachers’; a questionnaire meant to elicit the perceptions of EFL learners’ was made. The first part of the questionnaire was just meant to elicit some personal information of the respondents like their age, nationality, gender, language efficiency, computer efficiency and the contact numbers (optional).

The second part of the questionnaire also; as in the case of EFL teachers’ incorporated a list of sixteen statements to find out the learners’ perceptions on the use of web-based activities in language teaching or learning.

The third part of the questionnaire contained a list of sixty six (66) web-based materials names that are normally used by the EFL learners’ in their English learning for different
kinds of activities. This was done to find out the extent of usage of different kinds of web based activities by the EFL learners’.

The last part of this questionnaire was designed to elicit the difficulties EFL learners’ encounter in using the web based activities in learning English and which may affect their learning in an adverse way.

**Part 1: Personal Information**

In the first part of the questionnaire some personal information of the respondents were elicited. The respondents were asked to tick mark the appropriate information about their gender, age, language efficiency and computer efficiency. They had either to tick mark the option or fill the box with the correct information. An additional footnote was added to provide their contact numbers & consent for the telephonic interview but it was optional.

**Part 2: Learners’ perceptions of using web-based activities**

Part 2 included a list of (16) statements about the learners’ perceptions of using web-based activities in language learning. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement to each statement by putting a tick in the box of the chosen level of the five point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree). The negatively worded statements (5, 6, 15) were recorded prior to the statistical analysis of the data.

**Part 3: Learners’ use of the internet to download web-based materials in order to use them in learning English**

Part 3 contains a list of sixty six (66) web-based materials names that are normally used by the EFL learners’ to be used in learning English for different kinds of activities. They
are further classified into eight skills in order to find which activities are used more commonly and how much by the EFL learners’.

The classification made for each activity type have been described here as: reading activities categorised into twelve types(12), writing activities categorised into ten types(10), speaking activities categorised into ten types(10), listening activities categorised into six types(6), grammar activities categorised into four types (4), pronunciation activities categorised into six types (6), vocabulary activities categorised into twelve types (12) and lesson planning activities categorised into six types (6).

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they download those activities from the internet by putting a tick in the cell of the chosen level from the three point scale (often=1, sometimes=2 and never=3) besides each activity name.

Part 4: The difficulties of using computers to utilize web-based activities in language learning

Part 4 contains a list of fourteen (14) impediments that make it difficult for some learners’ to utilize computers in their language learning. Various commonly cited options were given to the respondents in this part of the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to tick the difficulties they encounter and which affect their work in an adverse way again by putting a tick in the cell of the chosen level of the three point scale (often=1, sometimes=2 and never=3) besides each option.

5.3.2 Telephonic interview questionnaire

The final version of this questionnaire (See Appendix D) used in this study had a total of ten telephonic interview questions. It consisted of ten semi-structured open ended questions prepared by the researcher keeping in mind the alignment with the theme of the survey used in the paper survey questionnaire as it would allow the researcher to explore the learners’ responses for any further clarifications.
The first question of the questionnaire was just meant to elicit if the respondents enjoy the usage of web based activities used by the teachers’ in the English classes. The second question of the questionnaire was asked to enlighten the advantages of using the web based activities in learning English. Both these questions corresponded with the themes of part two of the survey questionnaire.

The third question was to find out if the perceptions of the learners’ could be biased due to certain factors and the fourth to check specifically if gender, language efficiency or computer efficiency may have an influence on their perceptions. This was in alignment with the theme of part one & two of the survey questionnaire.

The fifth question of the questionnaire enquired about the learners’ extent of using the web based activities in their English learning. The sixth question of the questionnaire enquired on the types of skill for which the learners’ like to use the web based activities in their English learning. The seventh question of the questionnaire enquired on the most common type of skill for which the learners’ like to use the web based activities in their English learning. All these questions corresponded with the themes of part three of the survey questionnaire.

The eighth question of the questionnaire enquired if the perceptions of the learners’ regarding different web based activities could differ because of gender, language efficiency or computer efficiency. This question was in alliance with part one & three of the survey questionnaire.

The ninth question of the questionnaire enquired about the barriers faced by the learners’ in their usage of web based activities for their English learning. The last question in the questionnaire enquired about the disadvantages of using web based activities in the learning of English. Both these questions corresponded with the themes of part four of the survey questionnaire.
5.4 Validity of the questionnaire

To establish the validity of the survey questionnaire, it was reviewed by a committee of experts in the field. All of them are senior educational experts. They were asked to go through the clarity of the items included in the questionnaire, their relevance to the categories, and the aim of the study and to suggest any modifications if deemed necessary.

Based on the recommendations and the feedback of these experts the researcher made the necessary modifications to those items in the questionnaire. Two items were deleted, four were modified and some other items were modified for simplicity and clarity.

The questions of the telephonic interview were reviewed and refereed by a number of faculty members in the same way as of the paper survey questionnaire. Some questions were modified or shortened and few were made little more elaborative. Some were cancelled as they were either redundant or did not integrate well with the theme of the questionnaire.

Finally, all the questions were reviewed and the necessary modifications were made in accordance to the suggestions made by the review team.

5.5 Reliability of the questionnaire

To establish the reliability of the questionnaire, it was piloted on a group of (30) learners’ who were randomly chosen from the population of the study and excluded from the sample. Sixteen of them were female students and fourteen of them were male. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the test retest method on these EFL learners’. A fourteen day interval was kept between the two time administrations of the questionnaire.
The internal consistency coefficient (Coronbach’s alpha) was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency coefficient (Coronbach’s alpha) of the items in the questionnaire was (0.94). Two items were deleted because they correlated negatively with the total. By deleting the two items the reliability coefficient became (0.95). This reliability coefficient was acceptable and suitable from a statistical point of view for the purpose of this study. Therefore the final version included (96) items.

Similarly, the internal consistency method was used to calculate the reliability of the telephonic questionnaire and it came out to be (0.94) after the necessary modifications.

**5.6 Procedures for data collection**

After establishing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, fifteen days later it was administered to the actual participants involved in the study. The participants were informed in advance so that they could keep their time free for some time.

The purpose of the study was briefed to the participants. It was explained to them that the purpose is only educational. They were asked not to write their names to maintain the anonymity. They were distributed the questionnaire in a separate room on different days in all the three institutions’. The researcher gave them a time of three weeks to fill and submit the data to the researcher herself in hand. The researcher went to collect the data herself within a month from all the three places.

Immediately, after the collection of the survey questionnaire from the participants of the survey, telephonic interviews were also conducted so that the data achieved could be compared properly at least in a broad for both the survey questionnaire and the telephonic interviews. This was done within a week after the collection of survey questionnaires.

**5.7 Data Analysis**

After receiving the questionnaires the data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to address the questions of this
study, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation were computed. In addition to
descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests and one way ANOVA and Scheffe test
for post-hoc comparisons were used to test the effects of gender, language efficiency
and computer efficiency on EFL learners’ use of various web-based activities for
learning.

Regarding the data for telephonic interviews, the transcripts were written immediately
after the interview by the researcher herself to compare both the views and extract the
significant information related to the research questions.

5.8 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter briefly described the methods adopted for the study. It started with
identifying the population and the sample investigated. After that the researcher
described the instrument used in the study for data collection. Following that, there was
a detailed description of the procedures followed to finalize the questionnaire and
prepare it for administration.

Finally, the statistical techniques used to analyze were described. In the following
chapter, the results of the study will be presented. In the following chapter, the results of
both quantitative and qualitative methods will be presented and compared in a broad
sense.