Research Paper

EFL Students' Perceptions of Discussion-based Activities by Using Mobile Phone Technology

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Abstract

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, people helped each other to change conditions in their social lives to be alive. During these periods, the educational system followed some ways to change the pedagogical methods to present instructional assistance with the use of some mobile devices. Concerning this necessity, the priority of launching online education was high on the agenda in Iran and throughout the world. Regarding this condition, the most available device for every student to receive this type of instruction was a mobile phone set. Thus, the present study was to find the Iranian EFL university students' perceptions of the use of mobile phone technologies for online discussion-based activities. In this qualitative study, the researchers used convenience sampling, and out of 99 Law students from two Iranian universities, 10 students were selected as participants. To obtain the required data, semi-structured interviews were held with participants to find the objective of this study. Qualitative results for semi-structured interviews demonstrated that Islamic Azad University students reflected their interest in conducting comparative or discussion-based translation activities to develop reading comprehension skills of legal texts based on cooperative and collaborative reading strategies in online discussion classes. The findings of the study can be useful for administrative executives in the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology to revise their curriculum, university teachers to use the results of the study in their syllabuses and EFL university students in different fields of study, particularly Law students, to use the findings in their learning procedure based on online discussion-based instruction and use of mobile phone technologies

Keywords: EFL students' perceptions; Mobile phone technologies; Online discussion-based activities; Reading strategies; Translation activities

INTRODUCTION

Although students can help each other solve their problems through class discussions (Harizaj, 2015), sometimes during the discussion all the students of the group or class do not know about the solution to a problem in the

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online class. In such a condition, the present study intended to prove using mobile phone technologies can assist students to find a solution to the problem. This fact resembles the importance of using mobile phone technologies for the ability to investigate a subject (Dias & Victor, 2022). In this regard, the teacher can allow the students to use

mobile phone technologies to satisfy their curiosity (Boridani, 2019) for solving the problem. Therefore, the primary challenges for using MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) emerged from a lack of knowledge or a situation, which involves selecting the appropriate solution (Boridani, 2019).

Since this study was conducted in the context of Iran, it was very important to be informed about the studies conducted in different Iranian universities in this regard. Concerning this, some studies were conducted on mobile phone technologies or just mobile phone applications for General English instruction (Abbasi & Hashemi, 2013; Alemi et al., 2012; Bahri & Mahadi, 2016; Boridani, 2019; Hayati, 2009; Hayati et al., 2013; Jalilifar & Mashhadi, 2013; Khabiri & Khatibi, 2013; Rahmani, 2017; Samadi et al., 2011; Sarani, 2011). Likewise, some other studies were done in the domain of the discussion technique (Fatehi Rad & Sahragard, 2019; Polloway, Patton & Serna, 2001). Based on these findings, such studies did not investigate both two variables of online discussion and using mobile phone technologies in Iranian EFL settings.

Since this study dealt with students' learning, their perceptions of online discussion with the use of mobile phone technologies were considered. Based on the present study researchers' interests and their difficulties in the instruction of legal text translation, they selected university Law students in specialized legal English classes. To follow the purpose of this study, it was important to practice legal text reading comprehension through some class activities. According to Swartzwelder et al. (2019), collaboration in online instruction which is a multimodal type of methodology makes students more engage and interact since they can select their learning preferences during the learning process. Therefore, according to the practicality of video-based discussions and the potential features of this method, students were eager to use this modality (Swartzwelder et al., 2019). This modality demonstrated that this method is a mind-challenging strategy and engages better subject learning. The importance of discussion in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings depends on the discussion technique making interaction in a supportive situation (Harizaj, 2015). For this reason, discussion can help reinforce reading comprehension for understanding a legal text.

Regarding the discussion-based technique, collaborative and cooperative learning strategies were followed by the students during the time of class in this study. John Dewey in the early twentieth century as well as Johnson and Johnson (1999) brought the idea of cooperative learning for grouping. Likewise, collaborative learning contributed to the socio-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1962, as cited in Roselli, 2016). This learning strategy exchanges a common cognition among learners for participation (Roselli, 2016). Furthermore, this study considered Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model argued by Mishra and Koehler (2008, as cited in Bas and Senturk, 2018). Based on the TPACK model, collaborative and cooperative learning for this study was followed to find Iranian EFL university students' perceptions of online discussion classes using mobile phone technologies.

For this study, three questions were formulated to fill out the gap in the effect of using mobile phone technologies on discussion-based instruction of Law students for the comparative legal translation activities:

Q1. How can cooperative reading activities and mobile phone technologies affect the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students?

Q2. How can collaborative reading activities be developed by using mobile phone technologies among Iranian EFL students?

Q3. How can discussion-based instruction be developed to improve the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students?

Q4. What are Iranian EFL students' challenges in using recent mobile phone technologies in the Iranian EFL context?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Legal Discourse and Translation
Concerning the improvement of legal text translation, some studies examined the translation of legal texts (Cao, 2010; Gotti, 2016; Ramos,

2014; Way 2016). Furthermore, regarding the development of reading comprehension skills, some researchers (*Bekereci-Şahin, 2022;* Mulatu & Regassa, 2022; Salazar, 2022) applied (legal) text translation in their EFL (legal) classes. In this regard, the legal discourse is defined by (a) principles for the translation evaluation; (b) skilful translators' needs; and (c) merits of using real law texts on the Internet (Velykodska, 2018). Likewise, regarding the legal discourse, three general strategies are usually used in the translation process: *Pre-translation analysis* with local strategies, realizing concepts and stylistic features; *translation decisions* for finding an equivalent as well as creating its glossary and then a product of translation; and *Editing the translated text and getting translation experience* of local strategies for the text verification and correction, analyzing problems of translation and finding their way, and systematizing appropriate translation solutions (Sergeeva & Bazueva, 2016).

Tasks and reading comprehension

Rasulova (2022) indicated that in legal English classes, task-based teaching for EFL learners has an essential impact on academic progress. Appropriateness of tasks in classes plays a crucial role to get the students engaged in what they are doing and learning in classes followed by modern or traditional approaches (Rasulova, 2022). Concerning engagement, Amiruddin (2022) concluded that beyond the reading comprehension for university reading skills, readers engage in more cognitively demanding processes such as reading to learn from texts and reading to integrate information, write, and critique texts (Enright et al., 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2019, as cited in Ismayilli Karakoç et al., 2022). Students need to critically engage with readings, write their assignments based on the course readings, and reflect on readings in their written assignments (Ismayilli Karakoç et al., 2022).

Discussion-based Activities, Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Neff (n.d.) introduced instructions in the social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1962) based on students' activities on a task with each other,

students' progress with the curriculum, specific problem-solving tasks provided by instructors, and instructors' management of Socratic conversation (i.e. learning through discussion) for deeper learning. Concerning learning through discussion, Roselli (2016) defined cooperative and collaborative learning according to the comparison of cooperation and collaboration. Cooperation is to partition works into task distribution based on creating groups whereas collaboration is to engage all the groups in task performance (Roselli, 2016). According to Bruffee (1993, as cited in Roselli, 2016), collaborative learning is part of a social constructivist theory. Cooperative and collaborative learning compared in some studies in other EFL language skills such as writing skills. In this regard, writing was improved in both experimental and control groups. Based on the t-test, the pre-writing collaborative group acted better than the cooperative group. Furthermore, a pleasant learning atmosphere is created by using cooperative and collaborative tasks (Raissi et al., 2020).

Some studies investigated cooperative and collaborative learning distinctively. Concerning cooperative learning for improvement of motivation and achievement in an EFL classroom, Bećirović et al. (2022) examined the impact of gender and proficiency level among 211 EFL students to find whether cooperative learning can affect their motivation and achievement. The results showed that gender and proficiency level cannot affect cooperative learning and motivation. Furthermore, interpersonal skills and individual accountability played an important role in motivation, as well as interpersonal skills and promotive interaction for achievement in the EFL context. Likewise, this study mentioned that motivation-based activities and cooperative learning strategies are essential for the development of EFL students' achievements (Bećirović et al., 2022). Likewise, concerning the impact of cooperative learning on task achievement and cognitive engagement (CE), the study findings of 54 EFL students in the field of Education demonstrated that achievement

was approximately double in the experimental group compared to the control group (Sulaiman & Thakur, 2022).

Concerning collaborative learning, according to Li and Mak (2022), in the technological collaborative setting, the writing scores of college

students with lower language proficiency improved with reading-to-writing tasks in the experimental sub-group. Furthermore, these students can benefit from a well-structured cloud-based application for academic writing (Li & Mak, 2022).
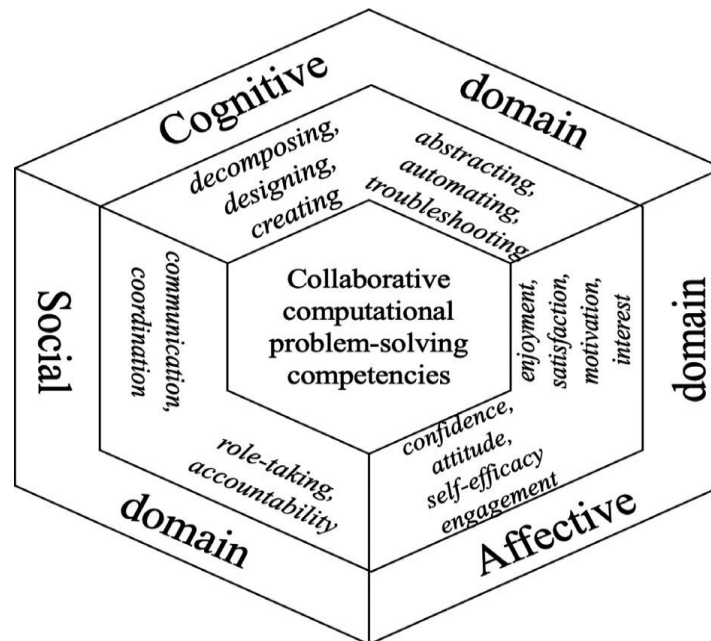

Figure 1
Collaborative computational problem-solving competency model (Lai & Wong, 2022, p. 158)

Regarding the effect of collaborative strategic reading (CSR) on students' comprehension and motivation (Bermillo & Metro, 2022), findings represented that the CSR group received higher scores than the non-CSR group for reading comprehension. Likewise, both student groups were motivated in reading at the average level whereas the CSR group received higher motivation compared to the non-CSR group. Furthermore, concerning reading comprehension, a significant difference was manifested between students of CSR and non-CSR groups. On the other hand, students' motivation for reading in CSR and non-CSR groups had a significant difference. Thus, CSR positively affected the students' reading comprehension and motivation.

Cooperative and collaborative learning makes interactions (Oxford, 1997/2011). Concerning patterns of learners' interaction in an asynchronous online discussion, networked interactions made students engage social and cognitive factors in collaboration since both social and cognitive factors can result in a more

powerful relationship between the learner's interaction and performance. Consequently, multiplex networks can follow "more interactive reactions than the monolayer networks". To this end, it is suggested that instructors apply an amalgamation of cognitive and social factors in learners' collaboration to formulate a conclusive interactive understanding (Liu et al., 2022, p. 36).

Mobile phones for Learning
Concerning mobile phone learning as a helping tool in higher education, Dakir et al. (2021) argued most of the students agreed that the mobile phone was a good type of learning mobile device since working with it is more flexible and easier, and it motivates students in learning. Regarding students and faculty members' attitudes toward using mobile phones, the average level of attitudes moved positively toward using mobile phones for pedagogy (Altameemy, 2017). More importantly, for the undergraduate students in the academic setting, findings indicated students' roles at the beginning of use, usage and understanding of

patterns to be similar in developing and developed countries, but there are different socio-economic aspects in such a setting (Ahmad, 2019).

Mobile phone technologies for learning

Use of the mobile phone or its installed technologies for learning with technology can be manifested in Mishra and Koehler's (2008) defined TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model. They indicated that the TPACK framework consists of some knowledge components: "content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, technological knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, technological pedagogical content knowledge, technological content knowledge, and technological pedagogical knowledge" (p.3).

Regarding technological learning, Chen et al. (2022) probed into the impact of web-based questioning learning on the instruction of information literacy with the collaborative digital reading annotation system. Findings illuminated that learning development and acceptance of technology for the experimental group with a web-based inquiry learning mode with collaborative digital reading annotation system support (WILM-CDRASS) were more effective than learners of the control group with WILM-GDBS (a web-based inquiry learning mode with general discussion board support) in the course of information literacy (Chen et al., 2022). Likewise, according to Oliaei et al. (2022), concerning the effect of the Personal Response System (PRS) on performance, communication and degree of comfort among Iranian EFL learners, results clarified PRS had a statistically profound effect on them in the English language classes. Regarding this, EFL teachers were advised to apply this tool for promoting general English language performance among EFL learners (Oliaei et al., 2022). These technologies, which can be used on mobile phone sets, are considered mobile phone technologies for the present study.

Findings of other relevant studies of mobile phone technologies are mentioned. For instance, concerning the quasi-experimental study of the impact of using mobile instant messaging (MIM) on student engagement for cognitive,

emotional and behavioral factors (Tang & Hew, 2022), results represented the MIM group was engaged in behavioral discussions, words productions, message writing, as well as participation, interaction, and task accomplishment. Emotionally, no statistical distinction effectively appeared in the affective result of satisfaction and interaction in the course between the two groups. Likewise, MIM helped with the learners' development in interpersonally intimate relationships. According to cognition, the AOD group was observed to be less involved than the MIM group. Specifically, MIM facilitated the exchange of interactive ideas and contributed to creative activities (Tang & Hew, 2022). Likewise, concerning the use of the Telegram Bot for teacher-based applications in online classes, Aisyah et al. (2021) found a useful implementation of the TPACK theory for such applications. The class observation included the Telegram Bot design, course content, interaction between learners and the teacher, activities, assessments, and an in-depth interview with the teacher. Such an interview with the teacher helped to get experiences of each meeting of the course regarding the learner responses, tasks, activities, tests and notes (Aisyah et al., 2021).

Furthermore, WhatsApp as an online learning platform helped students reinforce their pedagogical content knowledge competence of materials (Ratminingsih et al., 2022). For continuity of Education, Lyken-Segosebe et al. (2022) explained WhatsApp as an m-learning technological tool for pedagogical continuity in Botswana during and beyond the coronavirus pandemic. Findings of the study indicated that WhatsApp can be used by the high availability rate of mobile phones, the broadband network for mobile phone sets, reduction of national internet prices as well as using this tool in technology, instruction and academic environments, etc. in Botswana. Likewise, teachers need to train for competencies in technology and pedagogy (Lyken-Segosebe et al., 2022).

Concerning Kahoot as a gaming tool for learning the vocabulary of the English foreign language, Ahmed et al. (2022) concluded that

teachers should instruct with gaming tools which are possible to make more beneficial results than traditional instruction. Likewise, Ahmed et al.'s (2022) study can motivate students to use such tools for practicing and learning English everywhere. Furthermore, the other tool such as the proposed model for blogging concerned with the coronavirus pandemic in EFL writing courses constitutes (Al-Jarf, 2022): (a) Making a class blog: a blogging website or a free blog and (b) Considering writing topics for the Covid-19 pandemic.

Concerning technological use such as the Moodle platform, the study results determined that behavioral intention was affected by intrinsic motivation. Likewise, nine latent variables (AT=Autonomy, BI=Behavioral Intention, CT=Competence, EE=Effort Expectancy, HT=Habit, FC=Facilitating Conditions, RT=Relatedness, PE=Performance Expectancy, and SI=Social Influence) affected moderately the actual technological use (Raman et al., 2022).

Nowadays, each educational researcher or scholar indicated that the most modern learning technology is Robot-Assisted Language Learning (RALL). To find the RALL instructional design (Lin et al., 2022), the findings of the review demonstrated that this design applies communicative language teaching and storytelling methods that can often accompany total physical response and audio-lingual methods. Furthermore, with the impact of RALL on oral interactions in language classrooms, known language learning teaching methods were applied in tasks and the effects of interaction processes were represented to be helpful in language acquisition (Lin et al., 2022).

Among the aforementioned studies, regarding legal discourse and translation, translation was divided into three translation processes. Concerning tasks, engagement and reading comprehension skills, appropriate task-based teaching in the EFL context makes engagement, and in turn, engagement for reading a text develops reading comprehension skills. On the other hand, almost all studies had a positive attitude toward discussion-based activities, cooperative and collaborative learning,

and mobile phone or mobile phone technologies in the EFL reading context. It is worth mentioning to note that in comparison to cooperative and collaborative learning, collaborative learning had a more positive impact in comparison with the cooperative learning. Under investigation, it was approved that studies were conducted in the domain of legal text translation, discussion-based activities, cooperative and collaborative learning, and mobile phone technologies with reading or reading comprehension. Finding the gap among these studies, the purpose of the present study intended to examine the EFL university students' perspective toward online discussion-based activities or classes using mobile phone technologies.

METHOD
Research Design
The present study researchers used a qualitative approach. During the qualitative study, interviews were conducted among EFL students at the end of the academic semester. The research design of this study was considered participatory action research since students collaborate with researchers (Ary et al., 2010) to find their perceptions of using mobile phone technologies in discussion-based classes via the students' interviews. The students shared their experiences with the EFL teacher interviewer regarding the process of the present study research design, indicate their perceptions of the alterations they dealt with participating in discussion-based classes using mobile phone technologies and compute the probable alterations quantitatively.

Participants
Eight EFL classes were considered participants of the study. The students' interviews of these classes were conducted at the end of the fall semester of the academic year 2021-2022. These classes included 99 B.A. students in the fields of Law as well as Jurisprudence and Fundamentals of the Islamic Law respectively from the Islamic Azad University, Qods and Eslamshahr branches. Regarding sampling, researchers used convenience sampling to select a sub-sample of 10 students to

participate in semi-structured interviews. In other words, out of 99 students, 10 students as a sophomore, a junior or a senior participated in semi-structured interviews within the range of 19-33 years old, with 5 males and 5 females. Each interview continued for almost 45 minutes. The whole students were from four classes of Specialized Language 1 (11, 12, 12, 13 students) and four classes of Specialized Language 2 (10, 12, 14, 15 students) respectively from the above-mentioned branches.

Materials

Materials of the study for pamphlets of all classes were some lessons with main topics appropriate for comparative studies of Islamic laws and non-Islamic laws according to the university curriculum for this field. Pamphlets were delivered to the representative of each class to be shared on the WhatsApp channel of each course at the commencement of the semester. Therefore, students translated about 12 passages for each course related to subjects in the curriculum which were taught via online education once a week for 1 hour and 30 minutes during one semester.

Instruments

One instrument was used in this study. It is a student interview form. It should be noted to elicit participants' perceptions of using mobile phone technologies for online discussion-based activities and their tentative problems regarding online instruction of materials, semi-structured interviews were used in the current investigation.

Semi-structured Interview

In this interview form, several questions were used to collect EFL university students' opinions regarding the type of learning procedure in classes and the class environment using mobile phone technologies in discussion-based classes in the EFL academic context. Likewise, 10 students participated in the mobile phone interviews. Furthermore, formats of the qualitative interviews were open-ended (Ary et al., 2010). This interview form consists of 16 questions. Different sections of this form were as follows: I.

Content (3 open-ended questions, II. Mobile Phone Technologies (6 open-ended questions) and III. Pedagogy (7 open-ended questions). Besides these sections, this form was designed with some questions concerned with demographic information placed at the beginning of the form. This form was adapted by the researchers provided by Cabello (2018), Garcia (2018) and Martin (2019) (see Appendix A for the student's interview form). The content validity was investigated and accepted by six EFL university teachers in PhD. These teachers analyzed the relevancy of each three constructs with their designed questions, as well as the clarity of the language use was also checked, and if necessary, was corrected. According to these teachers' comments, a pilot study and modifications were made. For reliability, the second and third authors of the present study were considered the coders to check the data analysis and interpretation. They were selected as the inter-coders. The reliability of data was computed in terms of the Kappa coefficient value. The Kappa value is 0.745, which is placed between $0.6 \leq K < 0.8$. This value has a substantial inter-coder agreement and is acceptable (Landis & Koch, 1977) for the interview codes in this study.

Data Analysis

Results of the students' interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed by using thematic analysis. According to Ezzy's (2002) perspective, thematic analysis is usually used once the general issues of interest have been identified before, but the exact categories and themes that should be investigated are not prearranged. Likewise, this type of interview was considered for the analysis of the participatory action research design, and it illustrated the purpose of this study. At the end of the semester, semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit EFL participants' perceptions regarding tasks. To understand the data analysis of this study, refer to Appendix B for the interview codes retrieved from the students' interview responses specified by the researchers of the present study.

Procedure

Eight EFL classes of the two Departments of Law for the Faculty of Humanities and of Literature and Humanities were selected from the Islamic Azad University of Qods and Eslamshahr branches, respectively, in Iran. These EFL classes resembled a sample from the whole population of the concerned fields of study in other departments or faculties of the Islamic Azad University branches and other universities to be investigated and analyzed intensively. They were held in the DAAN database during one academic semester. 10 students who participated in the interviews were from these eight classes. Due to the student participants' confidentiality and anonymity of their affiliations, instead of their real names of these 10 participants and university titles, some pseudonyms (i.e. Ms. Alavi, Mr. Ghasemi, and Ms. Rezaei, from [A] university, Ms. Ghorbani, Ms. Hosseini, and Mr. Mohammadi from [B] university, as well as Mr. Bagheri, Ms. Esmaeili, and Mr. Golestani from [C] university) were registered for their completed interview forms. The interviews for each class or group were performed at the end of the academic semester to find the effects and clear discrepancies in using mobile phone technologies and discussion-based instruction after a duration of time. Before starting the interview with the participants, the first author of the present study – the main researcher – orally stated that she guaranteed their names and affiliations to be confidential, and if they agree, they can participate in the interview. She also orally received their agreements on recording their voices during the interview. The interviewer and interviewees' voices for stating the confidential options and receiving their consent were also recorded to be saved and filed if any default occurred in the future after conducting the study. During each mobile phone interview, the main researcher recorded the interviewees' voices for their responses. After finishing each interview session, the main researcher transcribed the English data. The other two researchers analyzed interviewees' responses separately by using thematic analysis. The themes of the study were classified into three components including content, mobile phone technologies and pedagogy (see Appendix B for more information). This classification made the interview data elaborate students' perceptions of the three mentioned components in the TPACK model for finding the important data of the student interviewees of EFL classes using mobile phone technologies for discussion-based activities.

In other words, in this procedure, the data were broken into small units of the text. Then, the second and third researchers rearranged the units by naming and categorizing them to have a clear data interpretation. In the initial coding process, the two researchers read and re-read the transcripts to improve the general meaning and sense of interpretation. Next, these two researchers or investigators labelled key phrases that revealed the perceptions of the participants. Once the data (i.e. the interviewee's responses) were broken into small components, they recognized the patterns easily (Ezzy, 2002). Then, they identified recurring key phrases and grouped them according to their semantic connotations. Regarding each group of phrases, they assigned a code that reflected a shared meaning among all of the phrases. The code was a word, a short phrase or a sentence that was extracted from participants' responses (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). "Codes do not appear from the data uninfluenced by pre-existing theory" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 93). Finally, based on this idea, the two researchers compared themes that appeared through data analysis with themes in the related literature. Furthermore, the main researcher checked the transcripts and revised any code as required to fit the original meaning of the key phrases. To precisely code the responses of the interviewees, the two researchers listed all the phrases that determine the code. The whole process is called thematic analysis. Thematic analysis identified themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and used these themes to address the research or indicate something about an issue. This analysis was much more than simply summarizing the data, which was interpreted and conceptualized (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

RESULTS

Firstly, the results were collected from the students' interview data. The interview form was designed for three TPACK components. Students who participated in this study were selected from the Law students in two fields of study, i.e., Law as well as Jurisprudence and Fundamentals of the Islamic Law. Data results indicated the importance of each TPACK component in this study. To demonstrate this importance, three main constructs (i.e. the content, pedagogy and mobile phone technologies) of the TPACK model were analyzed and reported in detail based on the qualitative data (see Appendix B for the interview codes.).

The Content Component

Concerning question one of the student's interview form "How can comparative activities help you promote your knowledge of English legal texts while translating? Why?, the student interviewees suggested a comparison of two texts with similar content in two different cultures with analytical skills. They compared the equivalents between the two languages to develop their knowledge of English legal texts through using mobile phone technologies in online discussion-based activities. Using these technologies made comparative strategies to conveniently follow needs analysis in the EFL classroom environment. For this study, needs analysis was done by specifying students' needs or problems in finding the best equivalents between two languages with a comparison of two languages while using mobile phone technologies. In this regard, translation as a comparative activity in EFL reading classes made a comparison of knowledge in discussion to find the required knowledge or the most appropriate equivalent from one to another language. For example, the B.A. student Ms. Ghorbani from [B] university argued that

> When I translate English legal texts into Persian, it causes me to learn English legal words in another language. Likewise, comparative translation activities provide me with the knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar within two languages instead of one language. This comparison makes me not only translate English legal

texts but also upgrade my knowledge of English legal texts.

Regarding question two of the student's interview form "How can you think translation as a teaching/learning tool helps you to promote your knowledge of English legal texts during the semester while using mobile phone technologies in different sessions? Why?", the students responding to the interview questions believed their knowledge increased in English legal texts to develop reading comprehension skills and proved that translation as a teaching/learning tool helped promote reading comprehension in the university environment. In other words, translation as a comparative translation activity made the students add their knowledge through the search for finding equivalents. This increase in Knowledge made having more EFL comprehension which, in turn, reading comprehension skills were developed. Thus, translation activities as a pedagogy tool acted between source and target languages for comparison of English and Persian knowledge of legal texts. As an example, the B.A. student Ms. Esmaeili from [C] university reflected that

> Using mobile phone technologies such as using Google Translate software helps me compare English sentences and Persian translations in my mind and check the words and structures according to the English sentence meanings. Likewise, this technology can help me compare the knowledge of English legal texts and grammatical structures between the source (i.e. English) and target (i.e. Persian) languages, and present the equivalents of English to Persian sentences as an assignment or something like this.

The Pedagogy Component

Concerning question two of the interview form "How did you communicate relevant information and ideas to the teacher and students or classmates using a variety of social media and formats?", the university student interviewees confirmed the idea of discussion, i.e. cooperation and collaboration, as the best strategy to be followed in discussion with different social

media. For example, the B.A. student Mr. Ghasemi from [A] university expressed that

> We sometimes suggested our opinions or heard the different opinions of other students in different age groups with different experiences in translating a specific text. Sometimes we shared our knowledge or translations on the DAAN platform. Then, we reviewed them, and the shared information and translations both increased our knowledge. Thus, we reached an agreement over the best translation or the smartest solution with examining different ideas.

Regarding question seven of the interview form "How did the students' reflection promote using discussion tools to reveal and clarify students' conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative process?", for promoting discussion tools with the students' reflection, the interviewees asserted the exchange of required Legal English knowledge was made among classmates or between the teacher and students. Such exchange of information for the discussion was transferred synchronously and asynchronously. As an example, the B.A. student Ms. Alavi from [A] university stated that

> During the time of class on the DAAN platform, we could speak or type our ideas and information, as well as our translations, and the teacher, let us tell our ideas, but after the class, the WhatsApp and Telegram groups were always available for all of the students and whenever a person had asked a question everyone helped and shared their knowledge in different ways.

According to Ms. Alavi's response, in asynchronous communication, the students asked questions from each other while delving into a problem to translate some parts of the class translation activity on the WhatsApp main group or some friendly small groups for the next session. This type of grouping made the strategy of cooperative learning. Likewise, this type of learning is problem solving since it made more knowledgeable students help the less knowledgeable ones for each student group. Furthermore, it

saved time in the class since cooperation was made for translation before the time of class. On the other hand, it made much more activities to translate during the time of class since the minor problems were resolved among the student groups before the class. It should be noted the teacher had sent the class translation activity to the class representative after the end of each session of class via WhatsApp. Then, the class representative had sent the class activity to the students' WhatsApp group in order to students prepare their translations for the next session. During synchronous communication, each student could send his/her translations in the platform of the DAAN system to resolve problems step by step among students and between students and the teacher. Finally, the revised translation form was sent to the platform of DAAN database system by the teacher of the class. In other words, for class collaborative learning, teachers allowed each student to send their translations in the DAAN system and confirmed the best acceptable version or revised it.

The result of this component approves the necessity of development in the technological environment with curiosity and involvement, and the university EFL students are active in such an environment to explore their curiosity to learn and progress based on their goals. In such an environment, online discussion with the use of mobile phone technologies is enhanced and developed by cooperation and collaboration in synchronous and asynchronous communication. Furthermore, the most frequently used mobile phone technologies can be dictionaries, websites, software, net search and other relevant technologies required for students' comparative translation activities. Likewise, for such an environment, mobile phone technologies as in-hand tools become significant in helping students to cooperate and collaborate more actively in classes and promote their knowledge conveniently and promptly. Concerning these concepts, Oliaei et al. (2022) demonstrated the impact of PRS (Personal Response System) as a technological tool for promoting and comforting communication

and performance in EFL learners in an academic environment.

The Mobile Phone Technologies Component

Regarding question four of the student's interview form "Do you think that downloading movies, video games, sharing or uploading videos, photos or audio can help you and your classmates or friends to be developed in doing your class activities? How?", the student interviewees responded that teachers followed to change learning strategies through enriching online learning environments with using different mobile phone technologies. For example, the B.A. student Mr. Mohammadi from [B] university mentioned that

> Yes, we used conversation-based games. We also watched movies with the relevant subjects of English legal texts for translation at different levels to improve our translation skills and language learning. Watching the film gets acquainted us with the cultures of different countries of the world, and also the attractiveness of the film makes us tired later and follows learning the language more enjoyable.

Concerning question six of the interview form "Which type(s) of mobile phone technologies help(s) you to promote students' reading comprehension skills through English legal text translation? Why?", the students responded some mobile phone technologies significantly contributed to the development of their reading comprehension skills while translating English legal texts such as searching on the net and going to websites, watching video files and listening to audio files to find the necessary information, using translation technology and software such as Google Translate for finding the meaning of the required words for translation, online and offline dictionaries to find the meaning of any word very promptly. For instance, Ms. Hosseini in her interview introduced some mobile phone technologies, and she indicated that

> I use the dictionary installed on my mobile phone since I do not have a printed dictionary. Sometimes, I search on the net to get new information. I also list the new vocabulary on the mobile phone notebook to be available for reviewing new words each time or every day. In this way, I change my pattern of study to have more facilities for getting the information I need when I translate English legal texts.

Since the mobile phone is almost always available if required, searching for finding new words will be more convenient, and it is possible to search promptly. Based on this idea, Ms. Hosseini's change of study pattern made her have a different attitude towards the discussion activities since mobile phone technologies can help to alter the mode of doing discussion activities.

According to the findings of the present study, codes were determined and mentioned in terms of three themes, which are the three main components of the TPACK model. Comparing the result of the mean for each three components, the degree of ranks from high to low were respectively dedicated to the content, pedagogy, and mobile phone technologies. That is to say, from students' attitudes, the content, pedagogy and mobile phone technologies were significant to be considered in this order in the online EFL educational setting. It is noted that this order does not mean that each of these components distinctively has high, average and low importance. However, it indicates that using these three components with each other should take priority in the EFL academic educational setting.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the study was to elicit students' perspectives toward using mobile phone technologies for the discussion-based translation activities of legal texts in the EFL reading context. In this regard, the data obtained from the EFL students' semi-structured interviews were analyzed in terms of thematic analysis. Since questions of each three sections in the interview form were designed in terms of the three main components of the TPACK model (Mishra & Koehler, 2008), the findings of each section were also in line with each three components. Thus, the findings of the present study for each component were discussed with the empirical studies, which have been conducted until now, in the following sections.

The Content Component

For question one of the interview regarding comparative activities and developing knowledge of English legal texts for translation, student interviewees argued that comparative translation activities increased their English legal knowledge through analytical skills in online discussion classes while using mobile phone technologies. When students analyzed their needs to find the appropriate equivalents for translating in such activities, this analysis challenges their minds for comparing the relevant contents of two languages from different views or discovering the connection between the two concepts of those two languages. The findings of this question are in line with Adjin-Tettey et al. (2022) mentioned ubiquitous technologies such as social media can be used for learning goals with focus group discussions to support academic needs via the appropriation process. Compared with Adjin-Tettey et al.'s (2022) study, the present study considered the students' academic needs for comparing the knowledge of two languages, and the appropriation process was regarded as finding the appropriate equivalents in the discussion groups with the use of mobile phone technologies.

Likewise, for question two of the interview form regarding translation as a teaching or learning tool for knowledge increase of English legal texts while using mobile phone technologies, interviewees argued the translation of legal texts with comparative translation activities to find the best equivalent. This comparison increases students' knowledge and then develops reading comprehension skills. This study is in line with Memon, Akhtar and Hussain (2022) who argued that the development of reading comprehension skills can be exhausting in the traditional method (i.e. reading the text and explaining it) performed by the teacher or using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Integration of different strategies is advised to be followed based on Memon et al.'s (2022) study such as the Communication Language Teaching Method (CLTM), participation and integration of other strategies for Public college students. According to

Memon et al.'s idea, researchers of the present study followed cooperation, collaboration, comparative studies, GTM (Grammar Translation Method) and online learning to foster reading comprehension skills. In this way, the discussion was also improved because of the acquired information via cooperation and collaboration for performing translation activities and using mobile phone technologies. Ultimately, students' knowledge was developed.

The Pedagogy Component

For question two of the student's interview form concerning the communication of information to the teacher and students or classmates using social media, the student interviewees mentioned through discussion they communicate information with classmates and other students through different forms of social media. This question is in line with Adjin-Tettey et al.'s (2022) study because of using social media for learning goals with focus group discussions to cover the requirements for an academic context. A negative result of a similar study mentioned by Waugh (2021) indicated a nonparametric and insignificant correlation between self-directed learning and student engagement, satisfaction importance as well as satisfaction level since the sample had selected the small convenience one and low statistics. That is to say, it refers to an inconclusive sample. Therefore, according to Waugh's study, community college students' relationships cannot play the role of self-directed learning through engagement and satisfaction.

Furthermore, for question seven of the interview form concerning students' reflection on the development of using discussion tools, the interviewees were reminded that synchronous and asynchronous cooperation and collaboration with mobile phone technologies can promote discussion tools. In line with this interview question, Lin et al. (2022) argued how instructional robots can facilitate interactions, for example, oral interactions in language classes, and how the learning tasks can be prepared to use the robotic facilities for activities or works to be presented by only human teachers. Lin et al.'s (2022) study also

mentioned that future research dealt with intelligibility along with meaning-based communication for oral interactions between language learners in the RALL context.

The Mobile Phone Technologies Component

For question four of the interview form concerning downloading movies, video games, sharing or uploading videos, photos or audio for promoting the learning of class activities, the student interviewees responded that they followed changing their learning style to promote their class activities when they used a variety of mobile phone technologies. In line with this question, Hongsuchon et al. (2022) studied the effect of online learning with some platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, MOOC, Moodle and Microsoft Team. They made changes in students' perspectives and patterns of study to develop their reading comprehension skills. Regarding the present study, DAAN platform was used by mobile phones, and it was investigated by patterns of discussion class activities. Hongsuchon et al. (2022) concluded that the effect of online learning can also be considered for the effect of mobile phone technologies. From this aspect, through the internet browser, the effectiveness of online learning can be concerned with different factors such as attitudes, student and teacher's self-efficacy, technological confidence as well as educational strategies.

For question six of the interview form concerning type(s) of mobile phone technologies and promoting students' reading comprehension skills through the translation of English legal texts, the interviewees indicated using some specific mobile phone technologies such as online and offline dictionaries, applications and software, surfing the net and visiting different websites played a significant role in empowering them to do their class activities in the academic context. In line with this question, for promoting learning, Hongsuchon et al. (2022) demonstrated the shift in learning frameworks in the form of an online learning model. According to his idea, the development of this framework or environment is made by appropriate learning strategies. For the present

study, learning strategies of cooperation and collaboration should be considered which lead to active participation, curiosity and progress in learning based on educational ends.

The results of the present study support conducting other studies on TPACK principles for the cooperative and collaborative learning of speaking and listening skills in different countries throughout the world in terms of their educational cultures. Likewise, these results can provide some implications for incorporating smart cooperative and collaborative English language learning in robot-assisted language learning (RALL) to facilitate language learning. This type of learning can be applied to different levels of learners or students in educational and academic environments. Ultimately, this study can be replicable not only in online or in-person EFL environments but also for different fields and courses of study. Furthermore, EFL training courses based on TPACK principles are advised to be held for materials developers, teachers, teacher educators, administrators, institute managers, teachers and students, etc. to apply discussion-based activities using mobile phone technologies.

For the qualitative study, the results of the students' interviews for research questions were determined as components of content, pedagogy and mobile phone technologies respectively. For the *content component* of the interview form, concerning question one, being aware students of the need for finding unfamiliar equivalents between two languages in a translation activity made them follow a comparison of two languages in discussion cooperatively and collaboratively. Such a comparison was made to increase knowledge of English legal texts for Law students. The result of this component clarified the students' needs analysis in the class environment for translation of English legal texts as a teaching/learning tool to promote their legal English knowledge and develop their reading comprehension skills. For the *pedagogy*, concerning question 3, students mentioned that they communicate the concerned legal English knowledge with their classmates and other students for discussion with different types of social media. Furthermore, the whole

students followed to cooperate and collaborate for discussion synchronously and asynchronously. Concerning *mobile phone technologies*, concerning questions two and four, students emphasized mobile phone technologies changed their perspectives, learning styles and types of discussion activities. This type of development in the learning environment increased students' creativity and activeness based on the instructional ends and the academic context.

Concerning three TPACK components of the interview form, for robot-assisted language learning in online learning, it is considered how instructional robots can facilitate interactions, for example, oral interactions in language classes, and how learning tasks can be prepared to use the robotic facilities for activities or works to be presented by only human teachers (Lin et al., 2022). Maghsoudi and Mirzaeian (2020) compared reading comprehension of English texts with university teachers' perceptions regarding the frequent use of scientific technologies such as Google Translate as a translation machine, and the research result indicated to observe a consistency between these two variables or perceptions. If teachers allow their students to find their response to the mobile phone technologies in their classes, it makes students find their curiosities and challenges in their minds (Boridani, 2019). The effectiveness of online learning can be related to different factors such as attitudes, students' and teachers' self-efficacy and technological confidence, educational strategies (i.e. for the present study, it can be concerned with patterns of discussion class activities), etc. (Hongsuchon et al., 2022). Likewise, social media can be used for learning goals with focus group discussions to support academic needs via the appropriation process (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2022). Results support the impact of mobile phone technologies on discussion-based instruction for the development of Law students' reading comprehension skills in General English courses. Furthermore, results can be applied to research in this field on a larger scale of participants in Iran and other countries.

The present research focused on university students, and for time limitations, learners or students in language institutions, and primary and secondary schools could not be considered. Therefore, this research results cannot be generalised to all Iranian students in institutes, and primary and secondary schools. Concerning interviews, researchers had to collect the necessary data from students in online and not in-person classes due to the coronavirus pandemic period. Furthermore, the lack of a standard and thoroughly related interview questions form for three TPACK fundamental principles in terms of three constructs, i.e., content, mobile phone technologies and pedagogy for the Iranian EFL students in this specific context was recognised to be one of the limitations in this study to be striven by the pilot study of prepared and adapted questionnaires with some professional university teachers while typing the necessary data for each question next to it.

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