



English acquisition through unstructured internet use in Yemen

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Abstract

This study investigated the value of unstructured, casual, and free use of the Internet in Yemen from the perspectives of the natural and communicative approaches to L2 acquisition. The sample of the study consisted of 150 Internet users in the City of Taiz, Yemen. Data were collected by means of structured interviews. The findings of the study showed that the exposure to English language via unstructured Internet use is insufficient to acquire English naturally; yet it provides a learning platform that supports English instruction in Yemen. The study concluded that using the Internet as a learning tool should be directed towards guided tension-free English learning.

Key words: *language acquisition, unstructured Internet use, Internet café, Yemen*

Introduction

English is the second important language in Yemen. It is taught in schools and universities where the prevailing trends of grammatical drills and functional forms fail to enable students to master the language. Sahu (2008) argued that "about 60% – 70% of students leave secondary schools (after studying English for six years) without achieving even an optimal level of proficiency at the first year of learning English" (p.55). Even at the university level, English is taught in an environment where students have limited exposure to English language and English culture. That is, English learners find no opportunities to practice the language in real or native-like situations outside their classrooms. At the time this study was carried out, language researchers in Yemen, as elsewhere in the World, had been trying hard to find effective ways for improving English acquisition, including the use of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), primarily the Internet.

Rationale

Evidence from prior research acknowledged the potentials of the Internet which serves as an electronic learning platform of learning and/or improving English instruction. For instance, learners may resort to the World Wide Web (WWW) to listen to and watch models of how the native speakers use the language. In addition, the Internet tools allow for active participation, creating a learning environment of unconscious/ subconscious language acquisition (Crystal, 2006; Dawley, 2007; McDougald, 2009; White, 2008; Tudini, 2010). The diffusion of the Internet in the ESL/EFL teaching/learning came on board as a result of the need to cope up with the current global benefits of modernization and to adapt to the new dimensions of communication in the 21st century. This brought about recent trends in ELT, shifting a focus from using English to deal with computer to using computer to learn English. In fact, English and the Internet, with all its applications, are mutually functioning as a means to "read the world."

Today, there are online tools such as search engines, directories, libraries, and encyclopedias, an environment which can be harnessed for free English learning. In other words, using the Internet not only exposes learners to unprecedented large amount of language intake of great variety but also provides a lot of flexibility and convenience in the access, manipulation and organization of the information (Zhao, 2005). As English is the accepted international language of science and technology, it is used as a medium of Internet applications. Since the Internet users necessarily need English to profitably use the Internet, it is assumed that they, in return, subconsciously or



unconsciously pick up English in a natural way. They unavoidably use functional words, give commands, and react to the computer. This makes it possible for numerous Internet consumers whose L1 is not English to naturally acquire English while exploring the Net.

As the Internet in Yemen is accessible at a large scale, it seems to be a good option for Yemenis to learn English in tension-free atmosphere, accessed at home, office, school, university, and/or at Internet cafés. In addition, smart cell phones have made it possible to log into the Internet wherever and whenever the users are. Driven by the fascination of the Internet, a good number of people seem to be interested in spending more than three hours a day surfing the Internet in Yemen. Devoting this much of time and energy to online activities evoked the attention of the researcher to take a closer look at the content of this interest. This study, therefore, attempts to find out whether the casual (unstructured) use of the Internet provides sufficient exposure to L2 input in the local context. It also investigates whether the Internet cafés in Yemen play a significant role as training and learning venues, and exploring the contributions the Internet café staff offer to the café goers.

Research questions

This research study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How efficient as a tool of English learning is surfing the Internet in Yemen?
2. To what extent the Yemeni Internet users are adherent to English use in Internet surfing?
3. What aspects of English do they acquire through their unstructured Internet use?
4. What are the contributions of the Internet cafés, if any, to the EFL instruction in Yemen?

Literature review

English learning on the Internet

It is widely acknowledged that the emergence of the Internet has contributed to L2 acquisition in several ways. Sperling (1998) metaphorically reported, "The Internet is like a library which is five minutes old" (p.4). Such an amazing collection of resources can be developed and updated, providing a mine of information that helps the Internet users to drive the language in certain directions, offering L2 learners distinctive chances that their counterparts never had. For instance, ESL/EFL learners today can communicate inexpensively and quickly with other learners all over the world. They can also have access to an unprecedented amount of authentic L2 materials, and possibilities to publish and distribute their own multimedia information for an international audience. Making use of such advances facilitates language instruction and brings about progress in linguistic competence and communication skills. Blyth (1999) argued that students coming from a traditional textbook experience that emphasized grammar with drill exercises would have difficulty in adapting multimedia materials.

Advantages of Internet on L2

White (2008) observed that the World Wide Web (WWW) has moved towards becoming a read/write platform where users could engage with others, contribute, and publish information in several formats including texts, graphics, animations, audios, and videos. That is, the Internet has become a learning environment where interactive communication is possible, providing opportunities for L2 learners to be exposed to genuine learning materials. For instance, oral practice in the target language is not only more widely available on the Internet; it may also be more authentic. Being involved in English conversations with native speakers of the target language regardless of their location is overly estimated over repeatedly engaging in oral language drills and writing exercises. Such interaction with native speakers via the Internet is particularly beneficial for L2 learners to actively practice the target language without fear or panic of making mistakes.

One more benefit of the Internet for L2 learners is that the computer applications provide pronunciations and definitions over and over without becoming frustrated or making negative judgments about the learner's skill (Young, Wang, & Jang, 2010), or as Soska (1994) pointed out that the educational technology and its tools such as CD-ROM discs, Interactive audio, interactive videodisc, local area networks, hypermedia and telecommunications, databases, and spreadsheets



could furnish direct experience in organizing and retrieving information and developing problem-solving skills. Similarly, spoken English has presence on the Internet through the use of chat, Skype, messenger, etc. Crystal (2006) argued that “spoken language currently has only a limited presence on the Internet through the use of sound clips, songs, films, and video; but the use of speech will undoubtedly grow as technology develops, and it will not be long before we see the routine use of interactive voice (and video) dialogues, speech synthesis to provide a spoken representation of what is on a screen or to give vocal support to a graphic presentation, and automatic speech recognition to enable users to interact verbally with sites” (p. 6).

Along with oral language development, reading and writing skills are also enhanced through the use of the Internet. Exchanging emails, instant messages, blogs and wikis are good examples of online reading and writing. It has been argued that interaction with native speakers where language learners successfully engage in authentic exchanges not only builds literacy competence but also increases confidence and motivation to continue attempting to communicate (Wu, Yen, & Marek, 2011). Website tools like Facebook, Google, etc. allow language learners to be repeatedly engaged with multiple native speakers in different contexts where they must make themselves understood in order to take part in collaborative projects and discussions.

Disadvantages of Internet on L2

Although the Internet seems to be a terrific resource of a wide range of information — full text newspapers, magazines, journals, reference works and books, there is the problem of where to begin, which might be devastating for novice users for there is an infinite amount of information and resources. Put differently, despite the fact that the Internet is an attractive and rich source of information, it is also chaotic, disorganized, and overwhelming. These negative features make the Internet navigation, especially for inexperienced Internet users, a frustrating and fruitless exercise that wastes their time (Chafe, 1999; Graus, 1999). Novice Internet users find it hard to search the Internet for materials that effectively serve L2 input; they merely scratch the surface of it. Hence, training in Internet applications is very crucial in order to guarantee satisfaction and avoid or, at least, reduce frustration.

Another drawback of learning through the Internet, according to Chafe (1999) and Kern (1995) is that the Internet could improve fluency at the expense of accuracy. The Internet users might be exposed to a specific Internet language register, which is full of inaccuracies and different from the standard variety. The authors argue that the Internet users read many of their peers’ outputs with many mistakes in grammar, spelling, and pronunciation, which is one of the teachers’ major concerns. In a word, being exposed to a lot of inaccurate input might negatively affect L2 input (ibid).

Gündüz, (2005) added some other logistic disadvantages as connecting to the Internet might take long time and might break down in the middle of communication. In addition, there are some pitfalls of Internet connectivity like the start up expenses, copyright issues, and objectionable materials, etc.

Natural approach to L2 acquisition

One of the prominent approaches to L2 acquisition is Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) Natural Approach (NA). Such an approach postulates that using the language without conscious attention of it helps learners to acquire the language quickly and easily, given that the learners get sufficient exposure of the language input. When L2 learners do activities that interest them and engage their minds in using the target language, they, according to the NA, get in touch with the target language without their knowing that they are using it ; they do not feel pressurized by the rigid grammar rules or/and functional forms that they should keep in mind. As such, learning a new language turns into an amazing experience, which determines the success of learning. Relevantly, while using the Internet, learners of English have opportunities to learn with less stress and anxiety, which is good for learning, the Natural Approach posits. It has been argued that the language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence that they can understand most of it but still is challenged to make progress (Brown 2002, p.278). Krashen and Terrell (1983) stated that it is easier for a learner to acquire a language when he/she is not tense, angry, anxious, or bored, and using the Internet freely seems to be a good option to match this requirement.

The current approaches to second language acquisition, ranging from the universal grammar position to the input-interaction perspective, embrace “input” as a necessary component although they differ in



their emphasis on the type and amount of input that is considered crucial to triggering learning (Gass, 1997, in Al-Mekhlafi, 2004). Put simply, a person, regardless of his/her age, cannot successfully learn a second or any language without sufficient exposure to authentic, diverse, comprehensible, and demanding linguistic and cultural materials of the target language (Al-Mekhlafi, 2004; Brown, 2002; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). As surfing the Internet has become a daily routine for many people worldwide, there is a wide consensus that this gives learners a natural exposure to English language. The Internet surfers spend days, months, and years doing several online activities where English is the medium of navigation. This is a natural way of using English beyond the structured classroom teaching, where learners might be shy and forced to listen and respond verbally or non-verbally, as many teachers, Krashen contends, mistakenly push these students to speak English before they are ready. Using the Internet exposes the ESL/EFL learners to English vocabulary, phrases, and gradually using complete sentences.

Arguably, the continuous use of the Internet maximizes the Internet users' exposure to English and their proficiency increases exponentially. Their vocabulary grows and they use phrases and sentences step by step. According to Krashen (1983), learners should never be required to produce speech unless they are ready to do so because speaking fluently cannot be taught, but emerges naturally in time through experiences with enough comprehensible input. This is sometimes referred to as the "Silent Period" during which the Internet users get opportunities to acquire language naturally rather than in a forced classroom instruction, starting with acquiring vocabulary (Asher, 2000). Krashen and Terrell (1983) claimed that a student with a large enough vocabulary could comprehend and speak a good deal of L2 even if his/her knowledge of grammatical structure is nonexistent.

Communicative language learning

Another important approach to L2 acquisition is the Communicative Approach (CA). It is a learner-centered and experience-based approach, emerged and flourished simultaneously with the emergence of the Internet in the last few decades of the 20th century. Lately, critics have given prominence to the communicative approach over Krashen and Terrell's (1983) natural approach. Richards and Rodgers (1986) argued that the communicative approach is similar to the more general learning perspective usually referred to as 'learning by doing' or 'the experience approach' (p. 68). It has been debated that the Internet provides a communicative environment that enables English learners to: a) correspond in English by e-mail with other learners in other parts of the world; b) share opinions and ideas across cultures on sports, music, food, hobbies, etc.; c) make e-friends (pals) to write to (out of class time); d) conduct international surveys for class work; e) communicate in real-time chat rooms; and f) read and listen to up-to-date news (Chafe, 1999; Graus, 1999; Njamanze, 2010; Wu, Yen, & Marek, 2011). Such online activities, if harnessed properly, would maximize the exposure to L2 through authentic materials and cultural aspects of the target language in communicative situations.

Internet in the Arab World

Available documents show that Internet penetration in the Arab World is growing at a fast rate. In Yemen, for instance, the Internet became available in 1995. At that time, Internet diffusion was slowed by a) state concerns about losing an information monopoly, b) low public awareness and demand for the technology, c) the high cost of access, d) limited computing skills among the population, and e) sparseness of Arabic-language Web content (Wheeler, 2004). According to the World Bank (2008), Yemen has accelerated the Internet growth rate since 2000, yet it is still categorized among the bottom tier of Arab countries for Internet penetration rates. Currently, it comes in line with Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Algeria as having lower Internet penetration rates for the Arab world. Only 6.9% of the Yemenis have Internet access, which ranks 12th in the region countries (ibid).

As a relatively poor country and most of its population living in the rural areas, Yemen has not made Internet accessible for all citizens. A low percentage of people can afford the service at home in major cities, some others get access to the Internet at work and/or go to internet cafés, which are available in the major cities and towns. The city dwellers, thus, seem to have more opportunities to access the Internet more than those who live in the rural areas. Lately, it has been observed that the availability of smart cell phones has made the Internet accessible on mobiles, and even then, limitations of cost and applications remain an obstacle for many citizens.



Internet cafés

The Internet cafés, in third-world countries like Yemen, offer opportunities for ordinary people to access information and opportunities to communicate online. This could be made use of for the development of English instruction. For a good number of users, the Internet cafés are perceived as suitable and economically acceptable source of information and knowledge exchange (Furuholt & Kristiansen, 2006). In other words, such cafés are used, to a large extent, as arenas for human resource development and information seeking and sharing. It is to be noted that the Internet cafés have attracted ordinary and less educated people in poor countries, including Yemen (the context of the study at hand). Furuholt and Kristiansen (2006) believe that it is important to raise the competence and awareness of the Internet café staff. Only then will they be able to help and guide the users in a more effective way. Such training courses, combined with practical use, could be a valuable source for additional income for the Internet café business and a useful way to extend the customer base and the market (ibid).

Methodology

Participants

150 Internet users (50% male, 50% female) voluntarily took part in this study, in a convenience sampling of the Internet users in the city of Taiz, Yemen. 50% of the participants were recruited from 10 Internet cafés and 50% were accessed at their workplaces, namely, the Post Office, Education Bureau, Taiz Cultural Club, Shehab Agency, and Yemen International Bank. The participants, aged between 15 and 50, had different occupations (27% students, 17% teachers, 25% clerks, 11% physicians) while 20% were jobless. The sample varied also in education, primary education (2%), secondary school (16%), BA degree (73%), MA (6%), and PhD (3%). The researcher approached these informants in person, recorded their responses on a predetermined format of structured interview as in the Appendix.

Instrument

Data were collected by means of a structured interview with the Internet users, a survey customized to fit the Yemeni context; to elicit in-depth data about personal and contextualized beliefs and practices of free and casual Internet surfing. The survey consisted of 16 questions of different types, including demographic queries (Q1-5), experience of dealing with the Internet (Q6-10), English use on the Internet (Q12-14), limitations of Internet use (Q15) and a final open-ended question for suggestions and comments(See Appendix A).

Results and Discussions

The Internet accessibility

Venues of accessibility

The majority of the participants stated that they used the Internet at home, in Internet cafés, and on mobiles (Mean values = 3.3931, 2.4621, 2.2759) respectively. A few stated that they used it at work.

Table 1. *Venues of Internet Accessibility*

	No.	Mean	SD
In an internet café	150	2.4621	1.60304
At work	150	1.9586	1.42340
At home	150	3.3931	1.70088
Via cell phone(mobile)	150	2.2759	1.40180
Others	150	1.0345	.29846

Scale: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always

This result seems to be reasonable since the Internet service at home is quite easy to get and fairly inexpensive. The Internet cafés are also other alternatives for those people who cannot afford the at-home-service. Similarly, mobiles made it even easier to access the Internet. That is, accessing the Internet is possible via different mediums and in different locations.

Time devoted to Internet surfing

The majority of the respondents stated that they used the Internet for more than three hours a day particularly those whose houses were wired to the Internet. For them, accessing the Internet seemed handy and cheaper than going to Internet cafés or surfing the Net on mobiles. Even those who were not heavy Internet users used the Internet for less than 3 hours a day which could be considered. The respondents' utility of the Internet, in both cases, depends on their Internet literacy and how best they make use of the Internet in learning English. Since accessing the Internet in an internet café or via mobiles is fairly costly, and a considerable number of the Internet users get access to the net via mobiles and at internet cafés, it seems possible that if they could get their homes wired to the Internet they could have used it for more hours a day, and thus maximizing the exposure to English.

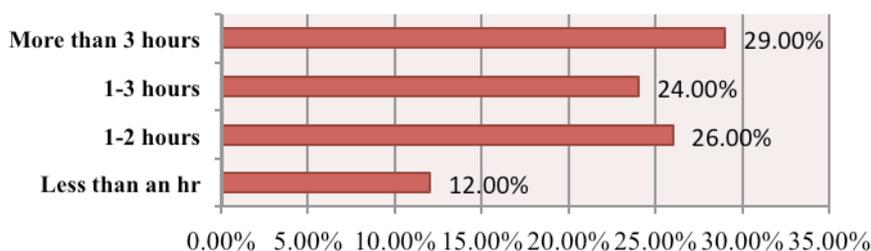


Figure 1. Time Spent on Surfing the Internet

Frequently-visited websites

The majority of the respondents stated that they mainly opted for Google and Yahoo (Mean values = 4.2345, 4.1172), followed by YouTube and Facebook (Mean values= 2.9724, 2.6828) respectively. A minority stated that they visited some other websites relevant to their field of work such as banking (mean= 1.2966). It sounds reasonable that both Google and Yahoo are beneficial in terms of search for texts, photos and chatting, and YouTube in terms of video clips.

Table 2. Websites frequently visited

	No.	Mean	SD
YouTube	150	2.9724	1.56323
Google	150	4.2345	1.26937
Yahoo	150	4.1172	1.40190
Facebook	150	2.6828	1.56659
Other	150	1.2966	.97983

Scale: 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Usually, 5= Always

Tables 1 and 2, along with Figure 1 above, clearly show that the Internet in Yemen is quite accessible for a considerable amount of time, and different websites are explored. This provides an opportunity for Internet users to pick up English during their free Internet sessions. This reinforces an earlier proclaim that the Internet is a fascinating tool for English learning.

Exposure to English

Needs for English

Expectedly, the majority of the Internet users in focus admitted that they needed English in their Internet surfing to large and moderate extents as most of online items of information, websites are available in English. The respondents who stated they needed English in their surfing were the

holders of higher education degrees. This could stem from their awareness of the importance of English and/or the necessity of English in their fields of study/work. This indicates that there is a need for English in online activities, and the Internet users are exponentially exposed to English while surfing and browsing the Net.

Only a few respondents stated that they needed English at a low rate or never needed it, perhaps those who accessed the Internet for entertainment, listening to songs, watching movies, and playing games, most of which were available in non-English multimedia. Those who did not use English in Internet surfing were those jobless young users who had no basics of English and they searched for entertainment.

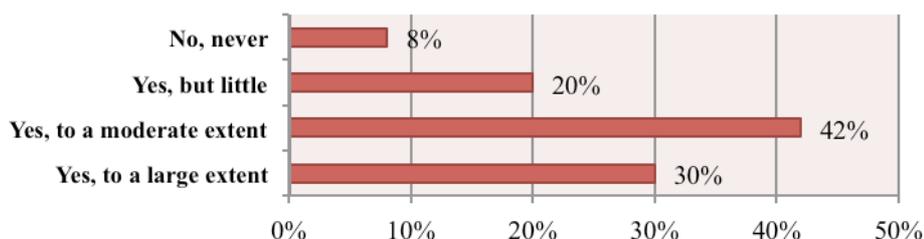


Figure 2. Necessities of English in Internet Browsing

Purposes of English use

As Table 3 shows, the respondents used English in their Internet surfing to achieve difficult purposes. The most striking ones are - looking for information, e-books, articles, downloading reading stuff, files, programs, and using dictionaries, wikis (Mean values= 3.2138, 3.2276, 3.0345) respectively. This sounds acceptable since most of the respondents were educated, holding BA, MA, and PhD. It could be interpreted that such educated informants needed English as part of their career, related to their work domains, as mentioned above. Less importantly, as Table 3 shows, the other activities were practiced with little exposure to English. Nonetheless, the difference in the mean scores is considerably not high. This result is consistent with the results in Figure 2, that English is used purposefully with a moderate level of exposure to it.

Table3. English Use in Online Activities

	No.	Mean	SD
Look for information, books, articles, etc.	150	3.2138	1.43462
Download books, files, programs, etc.	150	3.2276	1.36801
Dictionaries, wikis, etc.	150	3.0345	1.41624
Reading news, sports, etc.	150	2.4414	1.36359
Contact with friends, pals, etc.	150	2.4276	1.36801
Read about websites	150	2.5931	1.58770
Introduce yourself and country for others.	150	2.3793	1.38979
Electronic games.	150	2.1241	1.40378
Looking for jobs.	150	2.3310	1.44364
Chatting.	150	2.2552	1.26809
Send and receive emails.	150	2.6345	1.46161
Listening to news, clips, etc.	150	2.4276	1.44695
Others.	150	1.0207	.18518

Scale: 1= very little, 2= little, 3= neutral, 4= much, 5= very much

Noticeably, the results in Figure 2 and Table 3 indicate that the respondents in question used English in their Internet navigation to such an extent that could be invested to acquire English freely and naturally. The time and energy devoted to Internet exploring via English is quite beneficial to acquire

English freely and communicatively. But it is unknown what type of English is acquired, probably “internetese” wherein no attention to formal rules of grammar and pronunciation is paid.

Language aspects acquired

As Table 4 shows, the aspects of English acquired through surfing the Internet were general vocabulary, jargons, reading and comprehensions with mean values 3.3448, 3.2000, 3.2414 respectively. This result, the researcher believes, is due to the fact that most of the respondents were educated, and occupying different professions, Through surfing the Internet they picked up general vocabulary in dealing with the computer itself, and jargons while searching for information related to their fields of work/study. In addition, in the whole process they read and comprehended what they searched for.

Table 4. *English Aspects Acquired*

	No.	Mean	SD
General vocabulary	150	3.3448	1.27682
Technical words, jargons relevant to your job	150	3.2000	1.29422
Grammatical structures	150	2.6345	1.26279
Communication skills	150	2.7310	1.23747
Writing and organizing ideas	150	2.8345	1.32819
Reading and comprehension	150	3.2414	3.65011
Listening and comprehension	150	2.8759	1.31171
Other	150	1.0138	.16609

Scale: 1= very little, 2= little, 3= neutral, 4= much, 5= very much

The mean scores of the other aspects of the language, as illustrated in Table 4, seem to be not dispersed from the scores of the above-mentioned aspects, i.e. acquired with somehow less degree. This indicates that surfing the Internet helped the respondents in question to acquire some aspects of English, beneficial for their work, career, and general communication.

Internet Literacy

Level of literacy

Unsurprisingly, as most of the respondents were learned, they stated that their level of Internet literacy was “above average”. They might have reached this level by constantly using the Internet and/ or they learnt it as a required course during their study. In addition, some respondents worked for companies and private sectors where they got training in dealing with softwares and Internet applications. In general, the level of computer literacy of the sample was satisfactory. However, it is assumed that if they were trained in the nuances of Internet applications, they would have been more proficient Internet users, and subsequently more English input is gained.

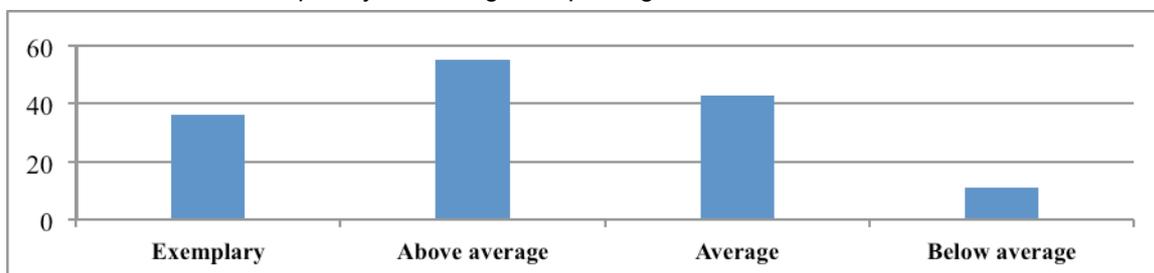


Figure 3. Level of Internet Literacy

Source of logistic Assistance

Surprisingly, most of the respondents stated that they fixed the technical problems they had in using the Internet by themselves. Only a few stated that they got assistance from their friends and/or asked for help from the café managers, probably those who went to the Internet cafés. The sense of “self-

repair” reflects a good tendency of “self-qualifying” in Internet /computer applications. This by itself indicates a tendency of self-directed learning, and this way boosts learners’ autonomy and, as a result, acquiring English becomes a second nature.

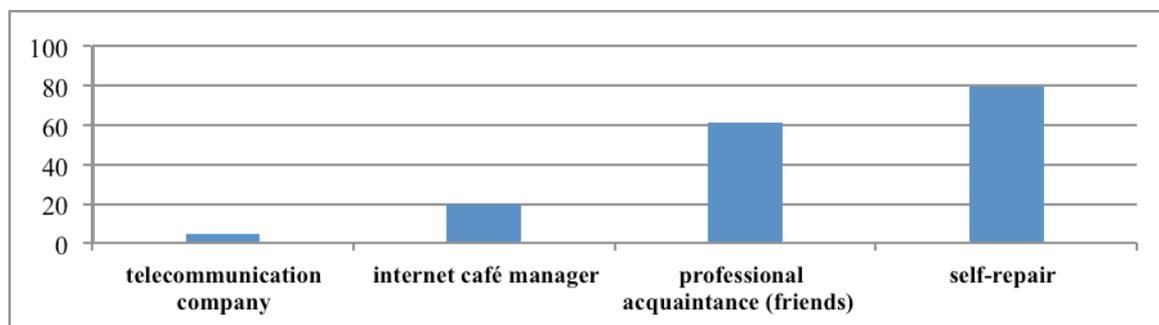


Figure 4. Source of Internet Training /Guidance

Limitations of Internet use

The most striking problems faced in using the Internet (as expositied in Fig. 5) were found to be the slow package (80%), and frequent power-cut (51%), a shared problem in most of the third-world countries. Besides, the absence of a supportive guide was also reported as a pitfall for some of the respondents. Had these limitations been not there, accessing the Internet might have been higher than what is illustrated in Figure1.

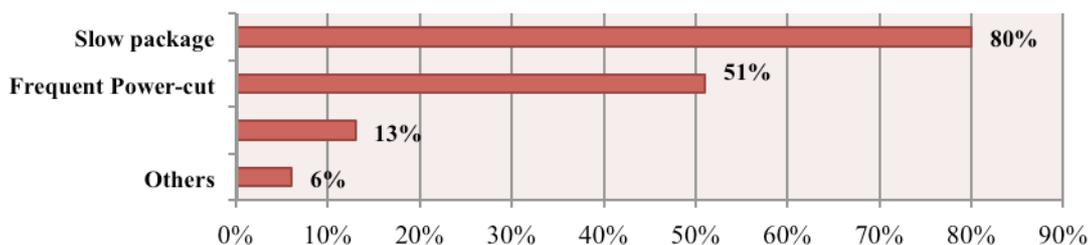


Figure 5. Limitations of Internet Use

It is to be noted that the level of Internet literacy (as displayed in Fig. 3), the source of technical support (Fig 4), and limitations of Internet use (Fig.5) are all joint factors that limited the Internet use by the participants. If such shortcomings are removed/reduced, the researcher expects more Internet utility and, consequently, more English intake.

As far as the internet cafés are concerned, the results displayed in Table 1 and Figure 4 above show that the Internet cafés are alternative venues to access the Internet where the stakeholders can get together with peers, computer technicians, and some other people. In such togetherness, some kind of English is used informally. In informal discussions with the Internet café managers, owners, and Internet goers, there was a wide agreement that the current role of the Internet cafés is limited to providing on-spot logistic assistance and downloading games, dictionaries and the like. The researcher believes that the situation might be better if the Internet managers/owners were qualified and trained to direct the internet-surfing time towards language learning purposes.

Conclusions, recommendations, and limitations

The results obtained show that surfing the Internet is not of much value to capitalize on as a source of acquiring English freely and naturally in the Yemeni context. That is, the Yemeni Internet users seem not to get a high language intake through surfing the Internet for they tend to use their mother tongue (Arabic) in browsing websites, googling, playing games, etc.. However, the time they spend using the Internet could be invested and directed towards tension-free English learning, provided that there is a supportive guide in a conducive learning environment. It has been reported that through their Internet surfing, the users acquire different aspects of English to such an extent not to be reckoned on as a solo source of acquiring English. Rather, the Internet could be thought of as a tool to enhance learning English communicatively. This is consonant with some previous studies, such as AL-Mekhlafi



(2004), Graus (1999), and McDougald, (2009). To best harness such a tool for tension-free learning, the owners and managers of Internet cafés should be coached and encouraged to provide the Internet café goers with adequate guide to useful websites, games, programs in which English is used. This concurs with Furuholt and Kristiansen (2006) in that the Internet cafés are suitable venues for human development and English enhancement.

Since the study was conducted within a relatively short period of time with a small number of informants, the results are limited to the perceptions of the subjects of the study who might have over-reported on the effectiveness of the Internet on acquiring English. Further research studies are recommended to investigate the informal Internet use as a language-learning tool using other methods such as case studies, observations to get more in-depth investigation. Another study is also recommended to look into the quality of English acquired through unstructured Internet use. This could yield concrete evidence to confirm or reject an earlier claim (Chafe, 1999; Kern, 1995) that the Internet users acquire a certain register of English (internetese) which is full of inaccuracies.

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Appendix A

Structured Interview with Internet Users

Part I: Background information

1. **Name** (optional)..... Email (if found).....
2. **Sex:** Male Female
3. **Age:**
4. **Occupation:**
5. **Education:**
 - Primary school Secondary school
 - Bachelor (please specify) MA
 - PhD

Part II: Your experience with the Internet

6. **How much time a day do you spend using the Internet? zz**
 Less than an hr 1-2 hrs 1-3 hrs More than 3 hrs

7. **Where do you get access to the Internet?**

Item	alway s	usuall y	often	rarely	never
a. in an internet café					
b. at work					
c. at home					
d. Via cell phone(mobile)					
e. Others (please specify)					

8. **What websites do you navigate?**

Item	alway s	usuall y	often	rarely	never
a. YouTube					
b. Google					
c. Yahoo					
d. Facebook					
e. Others (please specify)					

9. **Please rate yourself as a computer/Internet user.**

- Exemplary Above average
- Average Below average

10. **Most of the technical assistance you receive comes from:**

- An internet café manager A professional acquaintance
- (friend)
- A telecommunication company (please specify) self repair

11. **How much do you spend on Internet use every day?**Rials.

Part III: EFL learning via the Internet

12. Do you need English in your Internet surfing?

- Yes, to a large extent Yes, to a moderate extent
 Yes, but little No, never

13. To what extent do you use English in doing these online activities?

Item	very little	little	neutral	much	very much
a. look for information, books, articles, etc.					
b. download books, files, programs, etc.					
c. Dictionaries, wikis, etc.					
d. Reading news, sports, etc.					
e. contact with friends, pals, etc.					
f. read about websites					
g. Introduce yourself and country for others.					
h. electronic games					
i. looking for jobs					
j. chatting					
k. send and receive emails					
l. listening to news, clips, etc.					
m. Others (please specify)					

14. While using the Internet, to what extent do you acquire these aspects?

Item	very little	little	neutral	much	very much
a. General vocabulary					
b. Technical words, jargons relevant to your job.					
c. Grammatical structures					
d. Communication skills					
e. Writing and organizing ideas.					
f. Reading and comprehension					
g. Listening and comprehension					
h. Others (please specify)					

Part IV: Limitations

15. What limitations do you have when using the Internet? Check all that apply

- frequent Power-cut slow package
 absence of technical guidance other (please specify).....

Part V: Comments/suggestions

16. Any further comments or suggestions that you think will be useful for this study?

.....

