

Technology Integration in English Language Learning: Examining Familiarity and Usage Patterns of Omani EFL Learners

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Abstract

The integration of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT) is a cornerstone of modern pedagogy and a key objective of Oman's Vision 2040. However, a disconnect often exists between familiarity and application, an area that remains under-researched within this specific cohort. This study examines the familiarity with and current use of technological tools among Omani foundation-level English students, as well as differences based on gender and academic level. A quantitative questionnaire was administered to 193 students in a General Foundation Program at an Omani university, and the data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics. The findings revealed high levels of both familiarity ($M = 3.95$) and current use ($M = 3.91$). While no gender-based difference were found in familiarity, female students reported significantly higher levels of current use ($p = .015$). Moreover, students at advanced academic levels (Levels 3 and 4) reported significantly higher usage than those in beginner levels (Levels 1 and 2), despite similar levels of familiarity across all levels. Overall, the findings indicate a successful diffusion of technological awareness but reveal notable usage gaps related to gender and academic progression. These results suggest a need for targeted pedagogical interventions to bridge the gap between awareness and effective application, thereby supporting Oman's national digital literacy goals and beyond.

Keywords: technology integration, English language learning, foundation program, digital Literacy, Omani EFL learners

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT), technology resources are no longer optional extras but an integral component of the way individuals acquire skills, communicate with materials, and participate in interactive, learner-centered environments (Al-Maashani & Mudhsh, 2023; Dahlstrom et al., 2013). Resource familiarity and active usage on the part of learners are two critical variables that mediate whether technology brings added value to learning outcomes. Familiarity reflects knowledge, prior experience, self-efficacy, and skill at applying technology tools; actual use reflects presence of use and frequency in learning activities. Both are worth examining, especially where there are bridging programs in English to take care of deficiencies in language skill, academic preparedness, and IT proficiency.

In different contexts of learning, research has observed that students generally possess positive attitudes towards technology, and in most cases, possess moderate to high degrees of experience with computer technology such as mobile applications, online reference tools, e-study materials, and social media for language learning (Stockwell & Wang, 2023; Pratama et al., 2022). This is not necessarily accompanied by effective and persistent use in formal instructional settings. These constraints are often attributed to lack of training, infrastructure constraints, digital literacy issues, and tool mismatch between tools students are familiar with and tools required in schools (Selwyn, 2016). In many studies, students report that while they heavily use technology for social, entertainment, or informal communication purposes, their usage in learning or formal language study environments is less frequent, inconsistent, or poorly directed.

Digital literacy is now an essential construct in this field, encompassing the dispositions, knowledge, and skills an

individual must have to access, assess, create, and communicate using digital tools. Pratama et al. (2023) study Indonesian EFL university students in their work and find that digital literacy is associated with both reported comfort and amount of current use of digital tools to acquire languages. More digitally literate students will be more inclined to adopt and use a greater variety of tools, and more deeply, for learning. Similarly, research conducted during and after the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that preparedness in both digital tools and skills predicting smoother transitions to online or blended learning formats (Wang et al., 2022, Reyes-Millán, 2023). With the above in mind, the present study aims at providing empirical evidence of the self-conception that Omani foundation English students have regarding their knowledge of technological tools and the extent to which they utilize such tools presently while studying English. The study specifically addresses the following research questions:

1. What is Omani foundation-level English students' level of familiarity with various technological tools and e-resources?
2. To what extent do these students employ technological tools currently in English study?
3. Do there exist statistically significant differences between levels of familiarity and usage currently by gender?
4. Do there exist statistically significant differences between levels of familiarity and usage currently by academic/foundation levels?

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both scholarship and practice in several ways. Firstly, by looking at students at the foundation level, it responds to a gap in the Omani ELT research literature, which has rarely separated such students from general university populations. Secondly, by measuring familiarity and immediate use together, it becomes easier to diagnose more precisely where gaps exist, thus making it easier for institutions to design targeted interventions—for example, to improve training, curriculum development, or resource planning. Third, the gender and level disaggregated analysis provides actionable information as to whether and/or to what degree different student subgroups require support or resources of differing types. Finally, this study has implications for policy makers in Oman, particularly within the context of Vision 2040 emphasis on digital literacy in higher education (Oman Vision 2040, 2020); outcomes can be used to inform institutional policy on digital literacy, curriculum development, support services, and the incorporation of technology into foundation programs.

1.2 Literature Review

Technology integration in English Language Teaching (ELT) is currently a core aspect of modern education that has revolutionized pedagogical practices and learner engagement (Al-Maashani & Mudhsh, 2023; Al-Yafaei et al., 2025). With further spread of digital devices, it is important to understand the students' familiarity with and continuous use of the technologies to design effective curricula and teaching methodologies. This literature review compares international, regional, and Oman-local research to support the understanding of positioning the research on Omani foundation students' interaction with ELT technological tools.

1.3 Global Perspectives on Technology in ELT

The global context of ELT has experienced a revolutionary transformation with the incorporation of information and communication technologies. Studies have referred to various technology tools, including Learning Management Systems (LMS), mobile applications, and online platforms, as playing a pivotal role in facilitating language acquisition. For instance, studies have demonstrated that the usage of mobile applications can facilitate vocabulary acquisition as well as pronunciation skills among English learners (Ducate & Lomicka, 2013). Similarly, online environments have been found to support collaborative learning and provide authentic language exposure, thereby boosting communicative competence (García Botero et al., 2019).

Digital literacy, encompassing skills to effectively and critically engage with digital environments, is at the core of reaping the advantages of these technological tools. Eshet (2004) identifies that digital literacy is not merely technical but also encompasses the ability to analyze and utilize digital resources within the learning framework. Existing literature confirms that digital literacy in students is an excellent and positive predictor of academic performance, mediated by self-regulation learning and learning adaptation—particularly where technology is integrated into teaching (Chen, 2025). However, the integration of technology in ELT is not without challenge. Research has identified barriers like limited access to online materials, a lack of adequate teacher training, and resistance to embracing changes in technology as major issues hindering successful integration (Bingimlas, 2009; Ertmer, 1999). These barriers underscore the need to incorporate holistic strategies addressing pedagogical and

infrastructural aspects of technology integration.

1.4 Oman-Specific Studies on Technology in ELT

Oman has recognized the need for technology integration in learning, as evidenced by government initiatives towards enhancing digital literacy and the technology capabilities of schools and universities. The Ministry of Education has launched initiatives to adopt Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in pedagogy with a focus on improving English language teaching (Ministry of Education Oman, 2025). Research in Omani ELT contexts has explored several dimensions of technology integration. For instance, studies conducted by Al-Habsi et al. (2022) investigated the integration of technology by public school English language teachers in Oman using a community of practice model. The findings indicated that, although the teachers recognized the potential value of technology, there were obstacles like inadequate access to resources and missing opportunities for professional development that impeded successful implementation.

At the classroom and system level, Al-Amrani (2025) explored the culture and technology's role in Omani ELT and how the integration of technology (specifically, code-switching assistance and web-based tools) can build dynamic, student-centric classroom spaces. The study concluded that reasonable use of electronic resources supported language learning and reduced learner anxiety but also noted the need for teachers to place new tools within Oman's linguistic and cultural environment.

University-level research in Oman has also specified recurring gaps in more detail. Al-Ruzaiqi and Hussain (2025) contrasted ELT issues and educational gaps in Omani higher learning, reporting that while technology and translation programs are increasingly accessible, learners and educators alike continue to face challenges through insufficient training, infrastructure differences, and lacking a specific policy regarding effective usage of electronic tools in language learning. This study applied a quantitative survey research design to investigate Omani foundation students' familiarity and current use of technological tools in learning English. Quantitative research is particularly suited to query measurable aspects of students' behaviors and beliefs so that statistical analysis can reveal patterns, differences, and relationships among a large population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey research was employed due to its efficiency in collecting data from a considerable number of students and at the same time maintaining standardization among participants. The approach can be used for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, providing an overall description of students' engagement with technological tools.

1.5 Regional and Omani Contexts

In the Middle East and the Gulf, technology integration in education has become an increasing priority. Oman, in particular, has launched several initiatives as part of its Vision 2040 plan to modernize education, improve digital literacy, and develop a knowledge-based economy. Official reports and studies reveal that Omani universities are progressing in the fields of digital literacy, policy environment, and infrastructure, though there are challenges in the fields of training, access equity, and pedagogical adoption (Al-Senaidi et al., 2022; Oman Vision 2040, 2020). For instance, Al-Senaidi et al.'s (2022) investigation of technology integration in higher education in Oman shows that, despite policy and attitudinal preparedness, academic implementation on the ground is uneven and faced with significant challenges.

Empirical research in Oman presents conflicting evidence regarding students' actual practices. The cross-sectional study of Pittas & Adeyemi (2019), carried out in Muscat with students (N=219) and teachers (N=44) in bilingual and international schools, revealed that most students utilize technology for research and projects. They also note that teachers and students perceive themselves as being capable of using available technologies and assess them positively in terms of effectiveness. Yet while attitudes and self-competence are very good, actual integration—especially frequent use of technology in teaching practice—lags behind.

Recent studies in Oman indicated that learners use artificial intelligence (AI) tools positively for tasks like checking grammar, translating, and generating ideas, but this use doesn't significantly relate to deeper learning or organized academic work (Al-Raimi et al., 2024, Mohammed et al., 2025). While previous studies have focused on targeted tools such as artificial intelligence for writing, the present study incorporates a broader perspective by examining general technological familiarity and actual use across foundation-level EFL learners.

Another study that is pertinent is that of Al-Naabi and Al-Badi (2022), which examined the implementation of flipped and blended learning models in the context of Omani higher education. From their study, there are positive outcomes in terms of learner engagement and autonomy where such approaches are used. The study also concludes diversity in terms of learner and teacher perceptions of preparedness and how often tools are being used. This divergence highlights the significance of distinguishing between familiarities and use: just because students are

aware of or familiar with particular technologies, it does not necessarily follow that they utilize them habitually or effectively in their study. Related research from the Omani EFL setting suggests that favorable assessments of instructional approaches do not always convert into widespread or consistent classroom application, underscoring the necessity of assessing both awareness and actual use (Al-Maashani et al., 2023).

Foundation education and school cultures in Oman also give evidence of organizational problems. ICT integration in Omani schools focused on problems such as the availability of facilities, training of teachers, and administrative support. Their conclusions showed that even though most educators are aware of ICT and its possible benefit, actual usage in classroom practice is highly inconsistent depending on the availability, training, and support systems of the school, suggesting a wide gap between practice and policy (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Moreover, the trend in digital literacy in the country has been in a positive direction. As per the World Bank (2020), Oman has invested significantly in its digital infrastructure, and this has contributed to improved digital access. Moreover, the government also prioritized digital literacy as one of the strategic pillars in achieving its Oman Vision 2040 (2020) targets under the national priority theme of "Education, Learning, Scientific Research, and National Capabilities." This strategic aim is translated into practice by intervening at educator and student levels, as can be observed through the national digital literacy framework introduced by Al-Zadjali (2022). Public reports and statements indicated that Oman is not only looking at digital literacy as a technical skill but also as a critical aspect of social and educational access, especially in preparatory or foundation courses where students can need additional support in order to further develop academic and professional level computer and language skills (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Despite this context, there are some gaps that motivate the present study:

- **Focus on Foundation Level Students:** Many studies in Oman focus on students at the school level (basic and secondary) (Ministry of Education Oman, 2022) or more general higher education cohorts (Al-Senaidi et al., 2022). Few focus on foundation-level English students whose language skills and digital competencies are still being shaped.
- **Dual Measure of Familiarity and Current Use:** Researchers in several studies (Wang et al., 2022; Reyes-Millán, 2023) measure attitudes, perceptions, or technological readiness but do not necessarily measure both what students know/are aware of (familiarity) and what they are actually doing (current use) in their learning activities. Both viewpoints are needed to observe where implementation or support gaps exist.
- **Disaggregated Analysis by Student Characteristics:** Some studies report moderate to high self-competence or use (Pittas & Adeyemi, 2019), but do not report statistical tests for gender differences, academic level (foundation year levels), or other demographic variables. Such differences have implications for the targeting of interventions, curriculum design, and resource allocation.
- **Alignment with Omani Vision and Institutional Policy:** Although policy documents and institutional initiatives emphasize digital literacy and technological integration (Oman Vision 2040, 2020), there is limited empirical research investigating if students in preparatory or foundation programs utilize or perceive technological tools in manners aligned with those aspirations.

Based on the reviewed literature, although technology is increasingly integrated into ELT and students generally report high familiarity with digital tools, inconsistencies remain in how effectively these tools are used for learning. Furthermore, prior studies provide mixed evidence regarding the influence of demographic variables such as gender and academic level. To address these gaps, the present study examines Omani foundation-level English students' familiarity with and current use of technological tools, as well as variations across gender and academic level.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative questionnaire research design to investigate Omani foundation students' familiarity and current use of technological tools in learning English. Quantitative research is particularly suited to query measurable aspects of students' behaviors and beliefs so that statistical analysis can reveal patterns, differences, and relationships among a large population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey research was employed due to its efficiency in collecting data from a considerable number of students and at the same time maintaining standardization among participants. The approach can be used for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, providing an overall description of students' engagement with technological tools.

The questionnaire was used to assess two broad dimensions: acquaintance with technological tools and use of the technological tools currently in learning the English language. These dimensions were assessed with a set of statements that utilized a 5-point Likert scale, for which students were able to indicate familiarity or frequency of use. The format ensures the gathered data to be calculable for measures of central tendency, variability, and inferential tests such as t-tests and ANOVA, which are able to show differences by gender and level.

The population of the study was the students of the General Foundation Program (GFP) at the Salalah campus of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Sultanate of Oman. The GFP specializes in delivering core academic competencies, including English language, study skills, and computer literacy. The foundation students were targeted due to their active exposure to learning the English language and familiarization with technology tools in classroom and independent learning environments.

2.1 Population and Sample

There were 197 foundation students who participated in the study. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure representation in terms of gender (male and female) and academic levels (Level 1 to Level 4) in the foundation program. Stratification offers an assurance that all subgroups of interest are represented proportionally, which increases the generalizability of the findings and allows for comparisons to be made meaningfully across groups (Etikan et al., 2016). The sample of 197 was deemed adequate after benchmarks for survey research in educational environments that suggest a minimum of 100–200 respondents are needed for achieving stable statistical estimates (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Demographic information was gathered at the beginning of the survey, including gender, age, academic level, and prior exposure to technology. This information was gathered to validate the stratification and to allow for subgroup comparisons in subsequent statistical tests.

2.2 Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection in this research was a close-ended questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The following are the main sections of the questionnaire:

Demographics: Information regarding gender, age, academic level, and prior technological exposure.

- **Technological Tool Familiarity:** Questions measuring students' awareness and perceived ability in some technological tools commonly used in ELT, including mobile dictionaries, online learning management systems, multimedia software, academic databases, and productivity software. Participants indicated familiarity on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (Not familiar) to (Very familiar).
- **Current Use of Technological Tools:** Questions assessing how frequently and to what extent students actually use the same set of tools in their English learning processes. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from (Never) to (Always) was used.

The questionnaire was developed by a trawl of the literature on technology acceptance, digital literacy, and ELT practice (Lewohl et al., 2023; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2022). Question items were phrased to report observable behaviours and perceptions with the aim of minimizing ambiguity and optimizing content validity.

2.3 Instrument Validation and Reliability

To validate the questionnaire for reliability and validity, the following multi-step process was undertaken:

- **Expert Review:** The questionnaire was examined by three experts in educational technology, ELT, and quantitative research methodology for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Their feedback was used in finalizing item wording, cultural appropriateness, and ensuring coverage of the constructs.
- **Pilot Testing:** Pilot testing of the questionnaire was carried out on a small group of 20 foundation students of the same program for testing their understanding, duration, and checking for any issues with response patterns. Minor adjustments were made after pilot feedback.
- **Reliability Analysis:** The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha (α) for both the familiarity and current use scales. A Cronbach's α of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978). The reliability analysis indicated that the two scales exhibited good internal consistency, confirming the sufficiency of the instrument for data collection.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected over two weeks during the academic semester. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via a secure online questionnaire to facilitate broad participation under conditions of anonymity. Students were informed about the study purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures prior to participation. Informed consent was gained from all participants before they accessed the questionnaire.

The electronic format allowed the potential for automatic data recording, minimizing entry errors and facilitating rapid data analysis. Mid-data collection period reminders enhanced response rates. 197 usable responses were obtained, yielding a 100% usable response rate, reflecting the effectiveness of the sampling and recruitment strategy.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS (Version 28). The analysis plan consisted of three stages:

- Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated to provide a broad picture of students' knowledge of and utilization of technological tools. Bar charts and tables were used to depict trends and the most and least known and most utilized tools.
- Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all the scales were computed to measure internal consistency.
- Inferential Statistics:

Independent-samples t-tests were used to examine potential differences in familiarity and current use between male and female students.

One-way ANOVA was used to explore differences by academic levels (Level 1 to Level 4).

Post-hoc analyses (Tukey HSD) were conducted when ANOVA results indicated significant differences, to determine which specific levels were different from each other.

The statistical analyses were conducted at the level of $p < 0.05$. This detailed analysis allowed the investigation of overall patterns and subgroup differences, with the result of an understanding of how gender and level of academic study influence familiarity with and use of technological tools.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Strict adherence to ethics was followed throughout the study. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from the university's IRB. An information sheet providing a description of the study aims, methods, risks, and benefits was distributed to the participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the respondents could leave the study at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured using non-collection of personally identifiable data, and all data were stored securely on password-protected devices inaccessible to anyone outside the research team.

3. Results

This section presents the results of the analysis conducted on the data obtained from foundation-level English Language Teaching (ELT) students. The results are organized under five headings: data preparation, reliability of the measurement instrument, descriptive statistics of the two constructs—current use and familiarity, gender comparisons, and academic level comparisons.

3.1 Data Preparation

Participants who had responded to fewer than 40 out of 50 items were dropped. Item responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale, for the familiarity variable, a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Not familiar” to “Very familiar” was used, while for current use, a five-point scale ranging from “Never” to “Always” was employed. Q1–Q25 measured familiarity with technological tools, and Q26–Q50 measured Current Use of technological tools.

3.2 Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Both constructs demonstrated excellent reliability (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability of Constructs (Cronbach's α)

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Familiarity	25	0.955	Excellent
Current Use	25	0.946	Excellent

These high coefficients confirm that the items consistently measure the intended constructs.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations were calculated for both constructs (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Familiarity	193	3.95	0.63	2.08	5.00
Current Use	193	3.91	0.67	2.00	5.00

Both constructs received high mean ratings, with familiarity ($M = 3.95$) and current Use ($M = 3.91$). These results indicate that students were not only knowledgeable about technological tools but also actively using them for their English language learning.

3.3.1 Gender Comparisons

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare male and female students. Results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. T-Test Results for Gender Differences

Construct	Male ($M \pm SD$)	Female ($M \pm SD$)	t	df	p	Effect size (d)
Familiarity	3.89 ± 0.64	4.00 ± 0.62	-1.25	≈ 191	.213	0.17
Current Use	3.78 ± 0.69	4.03 ± 0.65	-2.45	≈ 190	.015*	0.35

$p < .05$

While familiarity did not differ significantly between genders, females reported significantly higher levels of current use of technological tools than males ($p = .015$, $d = 0.35$). This suggests that female students are more engaged in applying digital tools for language learning.

3.3.2 Academic Level Comparisons

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences across four academic levels (L1–L4). Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Results by Academic Level

Construct	F (df)	p	η^2	Result
Familiarity	$F(3,189) = 1.12$	.341	.018	Not significant
Current Use	$F(3,189) = 4.28$	.006*	.064	Significant

$p < .05$

For Familiarity, no significant differences existed across levels. However, for Current Use, significant differences were observed ($p = .006$). Post-hoc analyses revealed that:

- Level 3 ($M \approx 4.01$) and Level 4 ($M \approx 4.08$) students reported significantly higher current use than
- Level 1 ($M \approx 3.71$) and Level 2 ($M \approx 3.82$) students.

This indicates that students in the more advanced levels are not only familiar with technology but also use it extensively and effectively in their learning practices.

4. Discussion

This study explored English Language Teaching (ELT) foundation students' familiarity and use of technological tools.

From the sample of 193 responses, the analysis elicited information on the measures' reliability, overall patterns, and variations by gender and academic levels. The findings support the fact that technology is deeply ingrained in the learning activities of students but further indicate wide variations in its use.

4.1 Familiarity and Utilization of Technological Tools

The results of this study, the most valuable is the finding that students reported high current familiarity ($M = 3.95$) and high current use ($M = 3.91$) with technology tools. This suggests that technology has moved into everyday usage as a component of the ELT learning environment, even at the foundation level. Students are not only aware of the tools available to them but are also actively using them in real-world applications to support their learning. This result is consistent with current findings that highlight the pervasive presence of technology in language learning. Existing literature confirmed that digital tools enhance learner autonomy, provide access to authentic materials, and provide room for out-of-class communication (Reinders & Benson, 2017; Stockwell, 2020; Mohammed et al., 2025). The present study's findings confirm the argument that familiarity will automatically result in implementation, as students demonstrating active initiative in embracing technology in their day-to-day learning processes.

4.2 Gender-Based Differences in Current Use

No significant gender differences were noted to be present in familiarity, although greater current use was reported significantly by female students than by male students ($p = .015$, $d = 0.35$). The outcome is consistent with past evidence that suggests female learners may be more engaged in adapting learning strategies and making use of resources at hand (Aydın, 2021). This research adds to this evidence by showing that female students not only know technology tools as well as male students, but are also more positively engaged with them.

One explanation is that female students perceive technology as an improved learning tool for language, perhaps due to their preference to use organized tools (e.g., vocabulary apps, grammar correctors, or group learning sites) in order to achieve academically. Men may rely more on traditional means or use technology in less academically inclined ways (Lai & Zheng, 2018).

These results support the necessity for bridging potential gender differences in technology use. Female students are already well engaged, but interventions can be implemented to promote more active technology use by male students. Education might involve activities that explicitly weave technology into classroom practice, making its use an indispensable rather than an optional part of teaching.

4.3 Academic Level Differences in Current Use

A second significant finding of this study is the clear difference in current use across levels of study. Level 3 ($M \approx 4.01$) and Level 4 ($M \approx 4.08$) students reported significantly higher use of technology tools than Level 1 ($M \approx 3.71$) and Level 2 ($M \approx 3.82$) students. Interestingly, no variations were found in terms of familiarity, showing that students of all levels are similarly familiar with technological tools but application increases with academic progress.

This trend is a result of increasing academic demands placed upon students as they progress through levels. Upper levels require higher-level independent study, research, and self-directed learning. Technology support such as online dictionaries, grammar websites, and research aids becomes more critical in Levels 3 and 4, whereas lower-level students can still anticipate more teacher-centered assistance.

These results are also consistent with constructivist theories, which posit that students incrementally internalize strategy and become increasingly autonomous while advancing through the stages of education (Vygotsky, 1978). Here, then, the greater reported use of technology by advanced-level learners can be seen as a manifestation of the increased autonomy and self-efficacy in using digital resources for language acquisition.

These results for teachers highlight the need for enabling lower-level learners to progress from being aware to actually using. Providing scaffolded technology usage instruction at the outset could fill the usage gap across levels (Liu et al, 2025; Al-Maashani & Mudhsh, 2023; Mudhsh et al., 2025).

4.4 Pedagogical Implications

There are several pedagogical implications for teaching and learning from this study.

4.4.1 Incorporation of Technology at Various Levels

Since present use is far more common at higher levels, teachers need to provide explicit guidance on incorporating technology into learning practices at lower levels. Facilitated activities that provoke the use of online resources, mobile applications, or language-learning software can support Level 1 and 2 learners in developing habits to increase long-term success (Kessler, 2018).

4.4.2 Bridging Gender Gaps

The rise in current usage among women suggests that instructors may need to develop interventions tailored to male students. Encouraging project-based learning with technology, gamification sites, or class digital exercises may be more exciting for male students and create more balanced participation (Wang & Vásquez, 2012).

4.4.3 Capitalizing on Familiarity

Since all the students reported high technology familiarity, the challenge is not awareness but use. The instructors can leverage this familiarity by providing assignments that require the students to employ technological tools within meaningful contexts, such as online discussions, digital narratives, or collaborative writing (Godwin-Jones, 2021).

4.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the findings are robust, there are several limitations that must be mentioned:

- **Sample Context:** The study took foundation-level ELT students from one institution as its sample, thus the generalizability of the findings to other educational institutions or disciplines may be limited.
- **Self-Report Data:** The use of self-report data through questionnaires may create bias because students may overreport or underreport their usage and familiarity.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The design captures a snapshot and does not lend itself to the basis for making inferences about how familiarity and use mold themselves longitudinally throughout the careers of students.

4.6 Directions for Future Research

Future research would have to strive to improve upon the results by:

- Conducting longitudinal research in order to explore how familiarity and use of technology evolve over time between academic levels.
- Using mixed methods (e.g., class observations, interviews) to complement self-report measures and provide richer data on students' technology use.
- Examining the specific types of technological tools most commonly used by specific groups of students, possibly guiding targeted interventions.
- Examining the intersection of technology use and language learning outcomes, e.g., gains in proficiency or gains in specific skills like writing or speaking.

5. Conclusions

This study intended to examine how Omani foundation-level English students engage with technological tools by examining both their level of familiarity and their actual patterns of use. It also considered how these aspects vary across gender and different academic levels. To achieve this, data were collected from 193 students enrolled in a General Foundation Program at an Omani university through a structured questionnaire, and the responses were analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistical insights. The results of the study confirmed that ELT foundation students are well positioned to utilize and benefit from technological tools in supporting their learning. However, differences were observed based on gender and academic level. Female students reported considerably more present usage than males, and advanced-level students (Levels 3 and 4) reported more use than beginners (Levels 1 and 2). These results emphasize the importance of supporting lower-performing students and male students to make fuller use of technology in learning. Leveraging the pervasive exposure to technology, teachers can design interventions that not only create parity of participation but also maximize the use of technology to enhance the quality of language learning outcomes.

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