



Technology and Second Language Acquisition: How rapid technological growth is affecting formal language education



Audrey Murray, Major: Anthropology, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Mentor: Dr. Dorothy Wills, Department of Geography and Anthropology
Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project

ABSTRACT

The twenty-first century has seen an unprecedented amount of rapid technological growth. While many forms of technology exist and are being developed for language learners, most schools and teachers are not equipped to use these technologies in the classroom. In this project, I explored how technology is affecting second language acquisition among adult language learners. For this project I conducted one interview with an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor at Mt. San Antonio College, and one participant observation session in an ESL classroom. My results and research show that using technology in the classroom provides benefits such as more motivation to learn, individualized and independent learning, transferability of skills to other areas of life, and access to more authentic materials. Unfortunately, the cost of implementing technology and of properly training teachers to use it are the biggest deterrents of using technology in the classroom. However, using technology in the language classroom will overall improve the quality of education and will give students and teachers access to real language used by real people in real places.

METHODOLOGY

1. Interview with an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor at Mt. San Antonio College
 - a. Doug Evans, has taught ESL for 26 years
 - b. Six questions regarding his use of technology in the classroom, as well as any other thoughts he was willing to share about his use of technology throughout his teaching.
2. Participant observation session in an ESL classroom.
 - a. Speaking B/C adult ESL class at Mt. SAC.
 - b. Student age range: approximately 30-60 years
 - c. Rangel of English skills: intermediate to advanced English oral skills.
3. Academic Research

FINDINGS

Advantages

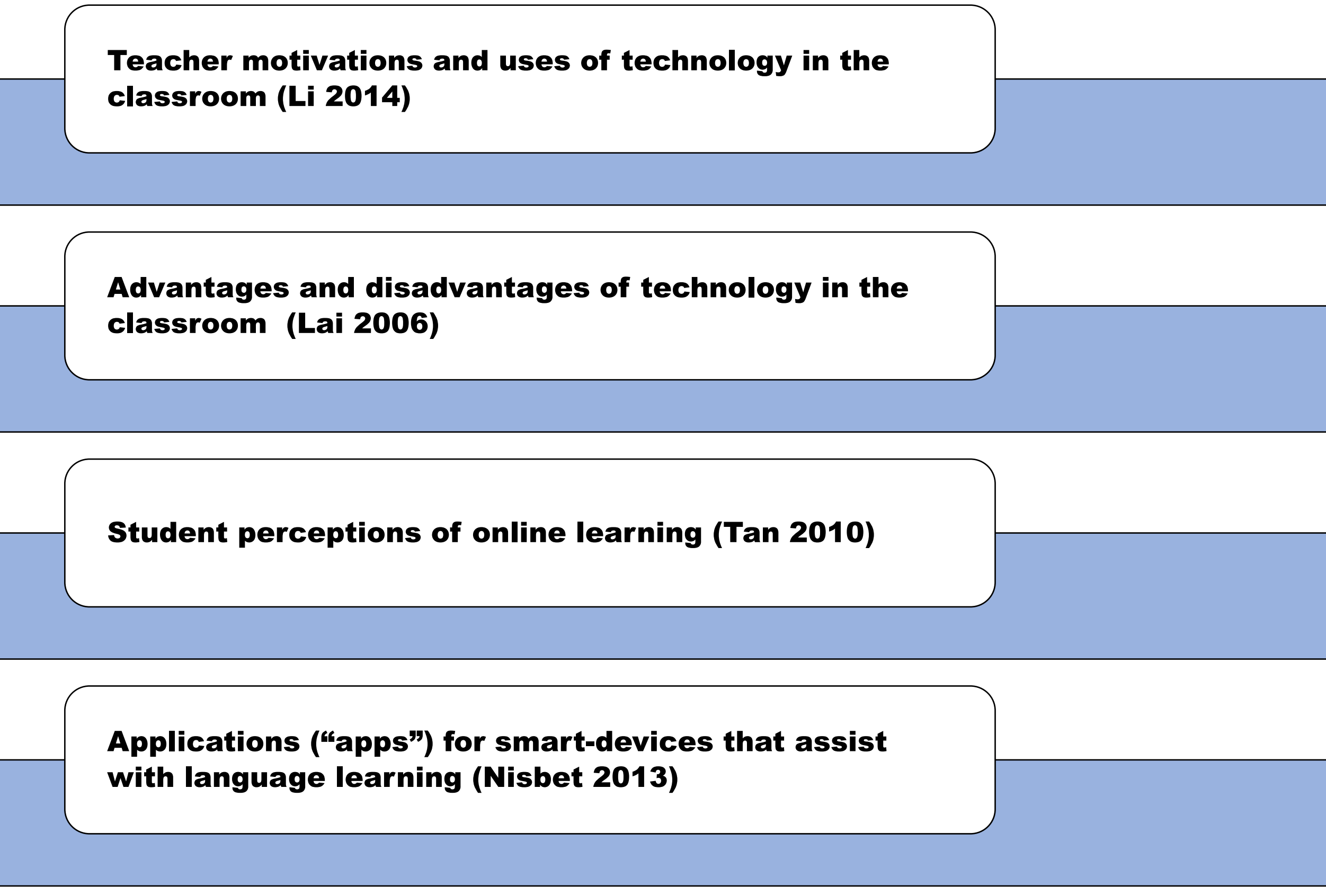
- Motivation and more engagement with material (Green 2005)
- Individualized and independent learning (Lai 2006)
- Authentic material is more easily accessible (Nisbet 2013)

Disadvantages

- The cost of implementing technology into the classroom creates a problem of equity between schools in more affluent areas and those not (Lai 2006)
- Lack of teacher training (Li 2014)

BACKGROUND

In the twenty-first century, technology has become the source around which our worlds revolve. The world of education has begun to implement technology into the classroom with varying levels of success. The language classroom is one of the most recent places where technology has taken root. Current and previous research on technology use for language learning have explored:



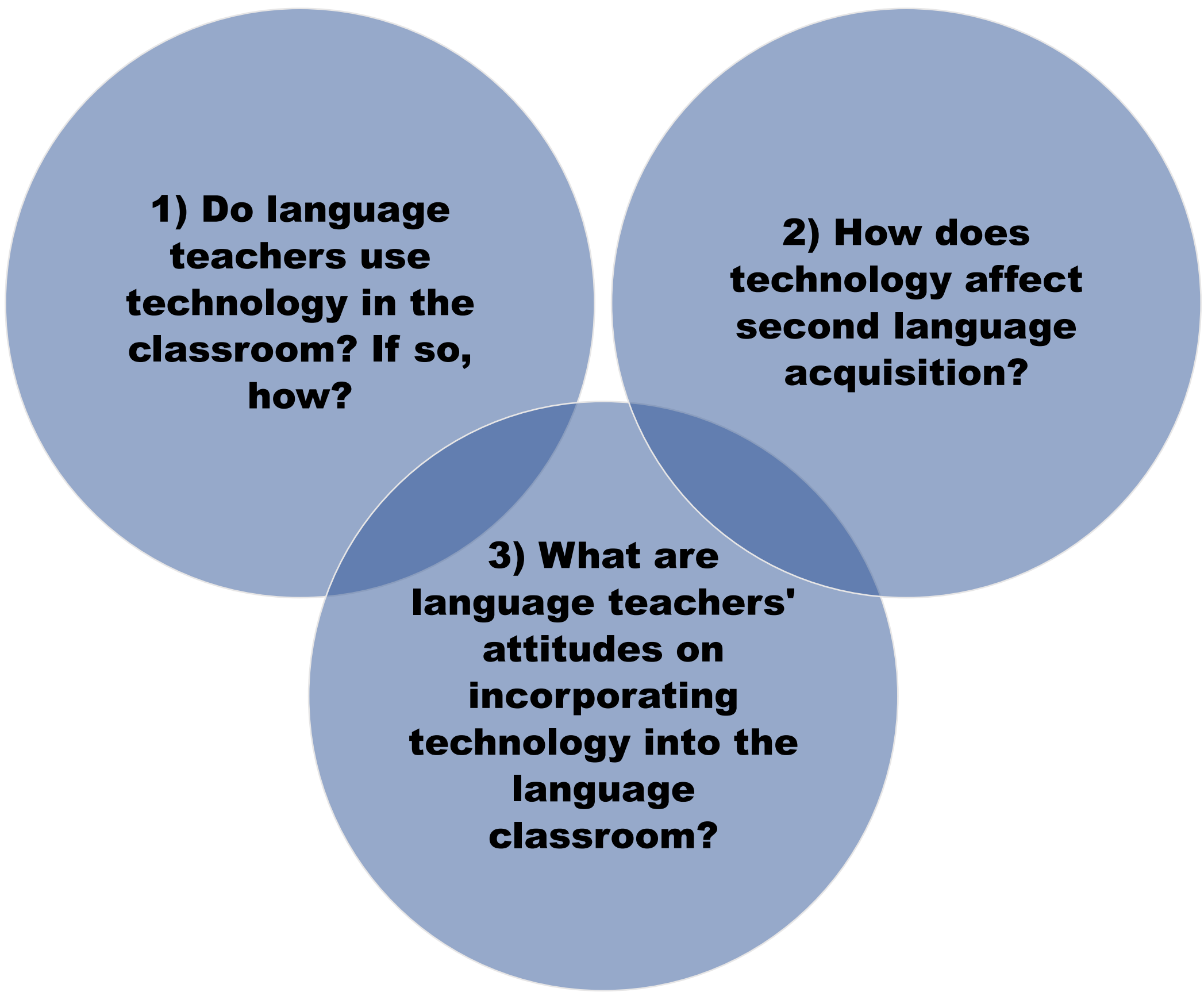
IMPLICATIONS

Pedagogy: This research will add to the body of knowledge on the uses, benefits, and difficulties of incorporating technology into language education in the hopes of shedding more light on how, if at all, technology is benefiting the student and the teacher. Adding technology to the classroom setting will give students and teachers access to real language used by real people in real places. Ball (2011) provides us with an excellent model for how to effectively introduce technology into the classroom:



Personal experience: I believe that using technology inside and outside the classroom has greatly enhanced my language learning experiences. I also plan to become an English language instructor, and therefore need to know what advantages and disadvantages technology might have on my career path.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



REFERENCES

Ball, Nancy. 2011. "Technology in Adult Education ESOL Classes." *Journal of Adult Education* 40 (1): 12-19.

Green, Timothy. 2005. "Using Technology to Help English Language Students Develop Language Skills: A Home and School Connection." *Multicultural Education*, 13(2), 56-59.

Lai, Cheng-Cheih, and William A. Kritsonis. 2006. "The advantages and disadvantages of computer technology in second language acquisition." *Online Submission*, 3(1).

Li, L. 2014. "Understanding language teachers' practice with educational technology: A case from China." *System*, 46, 105-119.

Nisbet, Deanna, and Dayna Austin. 2013. "Enhancing ESL Vocabulary Development Through the Use of Mobile Technology." *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education* 42 (1): 1-7.

Tan, Fujuan, Lee Nabb, Steven Aagard, and Kioh Kim. 2010. "International ESL Graduate Student Perceptions of Online Learning in the Context of Second Language Acquisition and Culturally Responsive Facilitation." *Adult Learning*, 21(1-2), 9-14.