

## **Perceived affordances of Malaysian university students in Web 2.0-based English as second language informal learning: A mixed methods study**

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## **Perceived affordances of Malaysian university students in Web 2.0-based English as a second language informal learning: A mixed methods study**

Recent advances in Web 2.0 technology offer global authentic materials and a natural context to promote learner independence in informal ESL acquisition. This paper presents a report on research on the effect of Web 2.0 technologies on Malaysian university students' informal learning practices. The researcher applies a mixed-methods approach combining multiple data sources (i.e. on-line self-reported surveys and focus group interviews) and analytical methods. Questionnaires are used to generate quantitative data from the university student population (N=400) through the on-line self-reported survey. Five in-depth focus group interviews comprising 20 students are conducted. This stage aims to contribute further insights into these issues. Finally, the analysis integrates the results of the two methods during the interpretation stage. A majority of the Malaysian university students (ESL learners) surveyed found informal learning mediated by web 2.0 tools to be a useful and motivating practice. The research finds that context-sensitive, web 2.0 tools are valuable for motivating informal learning.

**Keywords:** English as a Second Language (ESL), Web 2.0 tools, informal learning, perceived affordances, social networking.

## Introduction

When people become connected to a virtual network, when they begin to value their interactions with others in the environment, when they begin to notice how their language acquisition affects others and their ability to communicate on an emotional level, they then begin to see the purpose of a ... language. They then connect to that language because it allows them to connect to others (Wilkerson, 2010, p. 129).

Technology-mediated sociocultural practices require the dynamic interplay of learner-users' roles, learning contexts and technology tools. The intentions of users interact with the perceived features of these tools in enabling up-to-date personal experiences of informal learning and social networking available online. This study aims to explore the current perceptions among Malaysian university students about their informal learning of English as Second Language (ESL) learning via Web 2.0.

There is emerging confirmation from scholars that web technologies have evolved historically through the development of powerful learning resources with unique functions. For example, scholars maintain that the technologies (1) increase opportunity for learners to communicate and practice (Boudreaux, 2010; Gardner, 2011; Lai & Gu, 2011; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Ullrich, Borau, Luo, Tan, Shen, & Shen, 2008; Wilkerson, 2010), (2) afford learning motivation and lifelong learning (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Mills, 2011; Ushioda, 2012) and (3) enable community building through collaborative construction of knowledge and global sharing (Jokisalo & Riu, 2009; McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Shihab, 2008). In the open virtual community, learner-users interact and collaborate with other learner-users from outside of the class, including native speakers of English (Egert, 2012). In turn, they become active, self-motivated and independent language learners. Over the last several years, Web 2.0 has been the subject of various studies but in different areas and with different cohorts.

These studies only focussed on the affordances and drawbacks of Web 2.0-based teaching-learning contexts in formal education (Anderson, 2007; Egert, 2012; Jokisalo & Riu, 2009; Starkey, 2010) and on its uses in formal language acquisition (Boudreaux, 2010; Mills, 2011; Shihab, 2008; Ullrich et al., 2008). This research study aims to bridge this gap and add to the body of knowledge on the current perceptions among Malaysian university students about their informal learning of ESL via Web 2.0. Researchers have argued that investigations into Web 2.0-based education regarding the use of language are still rare (Armstrong & Franklin, 2008; Starkey, 2010). At the same time, there are clear limitations in terms of quantity and quality of the research conducted to date on educational uses of Web 2.0 applications; indeed, the available studies were conducted on the general use of such technologies (Sefton-Green, 2004; Selwyn, 2008). For that reason, it is clear that more research is required in the area of Web 2.0-based informal learning in general, and of ESL among higher education students in Malaysia in particular.

## **Literature Review**

The notion of affordances has been increasingly applied to understanding the adoption of media technologies. Gibson (1979) noted that “affordances of the environment are what it offers animals, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill ... It implies the complementarities of the animal and the environment” (p. 127). Thus, affordances refer to the actionable properties (functions and usability) between the world and an actor. Moreover, affordances of technologies have been defined as the “capabilities and limitations” (Gaver, 1991, p. 79) they offer towards a dynamic perception and action (a direct relationship) that make technologies easy to learn and adapt. This notion of affordances is closely connected to the sociocultural view of learners as active agents and provides a conceptual framework for examining the relationship between the interactional environment and an active learner-user.

### ***Web technologies and learning affordances***

Many new technology resources, often called Web 2.0 tools, are available online to facilitate the learning affordances mentioned above. These tools, which include blogs, wikis, podcasts, social network sites, image/photo sharing sites, vary in function and can be implemented in a variety of subject areas and populations (Gardner, 2011). Recently, the demand for global, knowledge-creating capacities especially through web 2.0 tools has gained the attention of researchers interested in informal learning (Eberhardt, 2007; Freishtat, 2009) and teachers in higher education (Armstrong & Franklin, 2008). These media technologies are increasingly utilized to document people’s lifetimes and experiences, making technologically mediated spaces vital locations for discovering the “parallel realities and extensions of the social environment that allow students to interact virtually” (Eberhardt, 2007, p. 19). Through life-long experience with technology, young students are confident in accessing and adapting new technologies essential to their learning in daily life (Boudreaux, 2010; Gardner, 2011; Sefton-Green, 2004; Selwyn, 2008). The idea of Web 2.0-based social learning for the intellectual development of language and communication was identified by Ushioda (2012) as follows:

This is the highly interactive world of the current net generation that we need to connect with and tap into as a motivational resource for language learning and language use, since participation in this cyberworld has become such an integral part of their identity, motivation and daily activity in life... the opportunities that cyberspace presents for trying out new and alternative identities and modes of self-presentation... offer interesting possibilities for learning and communicating in the L2 in ways that are creative, individual and exploratory, yet without posing a threat to students’ real-world identities and private selves (Ushioda, 2012, p. 207).

Selwyn’s (2008) research on university students’ use of web 2.0 applications namely Facebook, in the UK recommends that the educational nature of students’ Facebook use is profoundly casual, such as the interactions that take place in corridors, cafeterias and beyond the classrooms.

Evidently, web 2.0 technologies are a set of new practices (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007, Wilkerson, 2010); therefore it is vital for educators to find out how and why youngsters learn through these technologies out-of-class in order to aid the design of new approaches for more effective education. To achieve a sound understanding of the learners' experiences and practices with Web 2.0 technologies, their daily learning culture as developed by the Web 2.0 media needs to be explored thoroughly. In describing informal learning via new technology, Sefton-Green (2004) writes, "whether voluntary, accidental, embedded [or] experiential" in learner-users' social and cultural lives, the technology encompasses "wonder, surprise, feelings, peer and personal responses, fun and pleasure" (p. 2). Informal learning can also take place in formal education settings, when motivation is focused on overcoming authentic problems with little instructional guidance (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Recently, in their research paper, Lai & Gu (2011) point out that "language learners were using technology to engage in out-of-class activities to regulate different aspects of their language learning experience, which is quite encouraging" (p. 330).

This is also the evidence from Antenos-Conforti's study (2009) that investigated the Twitter habits of L2 learners (22 university students) and explored how they evaluate this tool for learning language and culture. Antenos-Conforti (2009) found that Twitter can transform social networking into educational networking because of its three key features: namely its participatory nature, authenticity of use and interactivity. Twitter was considered by those users essential for authentic daily language practice because it promoted robust exchanges. Twitter facilitated positive affective choice because while learners tweeted, they felt more relaxed and motivated to converse in L2 (Italian). Some learners remarked that tweeting improved their writing in L2 in terms of grammar and vocabulary. They also acknowledged that their teacher's replies to their tweets benefited their learning and contributed to their knowledge of Italian culture. Overall, Antenos-Conforti (2009) commended the benefits of the interactive and dynamic nature of this Web 2.0 tool for language teaching and learning.

Jokisalo and Riu (2009) place emphasis on the current trend of web 2.0 tools and the collaboration they require. They see this as the growing communal fabric of globalization. In the daily life of web users, Web 2.0 technologies establish, through blogs and social network sites, individuals' own content and sharing through portals. In this regard, Jokisalo & Riu introduced three web-based learning areas namely: i) Individual development across web-based discovery involving learning-related hobbies generally at residence, ii) Learning communities referring to societies coordinated by people or clusters of people to meet, distribute and discover and iii) Communities generating learning as a side effect. Noticeably, the millennial generation has been inclined to learn informally through web 2.0 active engagements that support the wealth of information they can access easily, anywhere, and anytime (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Web 2.0 tools are also extremely useful and have great potential for English learning because young learners are naturally engaged when working with Web 2.0 tools (Shihab, 2008; Ullrich et al., 2008). All in all, most of these web 2.0 activities support learning in an informal way in both individual and collaborative contexts (Egert, 2012; Jokisalo & Riu, 2008) by connecting with the fundamental social values of individual learners (Freishtat, 2009).

In sum, Web 2.0 technologies offer a stimulating and valuable functionality at an extremely high level in which there is genuine engagement, connectivity and communication. Web 2.0 tools link minds, communities and ideas, while promoting personalization, collaboration and creativity leading to joint knowledge creation (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). In a sense, “the concept of affordances can provide a useful tool for user-centred analyses of technologies” (Gaver, 1991, p. 79). The usefulness of the concept is improved when affordances of web tools are seen as being resources of an engaging learning context. However, it is important to remember that even if technology can be inspiring, the main focus in Web 2.0-based informal learning should still lie on the sociocultural needs of the learner-users. Although the potential and opportunities of web tools to enable learning are great, the limitations of this web-based learning need to be disclosed too. Some of the false affordances are presented next.

### ***Web technologies and learning limitations***

This section presents limitations, obstacles or false attractions reported in the literature. As explained by Gibson (1979) and Gaver (1991), limitations or negative affordances are unpredictable results due to lack of information available or opposite consequences of perceived affordances (such as injuries and dangers). In this regard, it demonstrates inconsistencies or risks because the actual outcomes of the technology are different from the expected ones and resulted only in superficial learning opportunities. Review of this literature shows various difficulties and constraints relating to web-based learning.

This literature suggests several obstacles to the conditions of good use of web tools and learner-users’ ability to take up the affordances of the web tools. In fact, the Web 2.0-based learning environment expects a user to be an advanced learner and demands more responsibility and accountability. However, many young learners today are lacking in motivation to engage with technology-based education (Anderson, 2007; Lai & Gu, 2011). For some students, their preference is for face-to-face contact with their instructors and other students (Duke, 2010), consequently, they “have been slow to integrate technology into everyday learning” (Duke, 2010, p. 173). In relation to this, researchers have discovered Web-based learning is mostly social and peer-based (Boudreaux, 2010; Gardner, 2011; Lai & Gu, 2011; Mills, 2011), so, it can bring negative aspects to the learner-users. For example, it causes low self-efficacy, an unwillingness amongst some learners to self-publish (Anderson, 2007), and fears around plagiarism, privacy and data protection (Duke, 2010; Franklin & Van Harmelen, 2007; Ullrich et al., 2008).

Another challenge of Web 2.0 based learning is the resources available (Lai & Gu, 2011; Selwyn, 2008). The technological issues concerning Web 2.0-based learning system such as the required equipment, software and skills, the learning standards as well as financial factors should be considered. Even with today’s increased access to computers, some students still do not have a computer to work with at home, and for some students going to the library or using a computer at school is not the most convenient choice to consider. For this reason, assigning an online compulsory assignment might prove to be problematic for these students (Boudreaux, 2010; Franklin & Van Harmelen, 2007). The potentially supportive nature of educational technologies is also reduced by the restricted access of these Web 2.0 practices throughout broad populations

worldwide (Selwyn, 2008). Consequently these resources limitations will bring many difficulties, such as lack of student access and training, and shortage of support (Lai & Gu, 2011).

In sum, this review of literature provides a context and groundwork for the current investigation that attempts to discover the affordances and limitations in Web 2.0-based language learning beyond the walls of formal learning spaces. As presented, the web tools have many affordances for educational opportunities especially beyond the classroom. In contrast, web tools' limitations (obstacles or impediments to learning opportunities) are illustrated through the vulnerable values and behaviours of the learners and the challenges faced in access, cost and technical knowledge for web-based learning. Overall, with these outstanding and wide-ranging affordances in mind, it is important to investigate the potentials and the limitations of Web 2.0 tools and how they may contribute to learning in the future.

## Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework developed to explain the nature of the informal ESL learning experienced by the Malaysian university students based on the Web 2.0 technologies outside the classroom has provided fresh insights. This framework highlights important aspects of the dynamic and complex ways in which Web 2.0 functions to either enable authentic informal ESL learning or limit it, depending on the users' past experiences, preferences and abilities. This application of sociocultural theory, building on the work of Vygotsky (1986), Leontiev (1978) and Engeström (1987, 1999), demonstrates the links between learner motivation and virtual community-building in this context. The framework also draws on situated learning theory and affordance theory to guide research and to explore these links. From an activity theory and situated learning theory perspective, a learner-user, when engaged in Web 2.0-based informal ESL learning, is part of a complex activity system. The system is situated within everyday practice and includes a number of interdependent components, as presented in Figure 1 as follows:

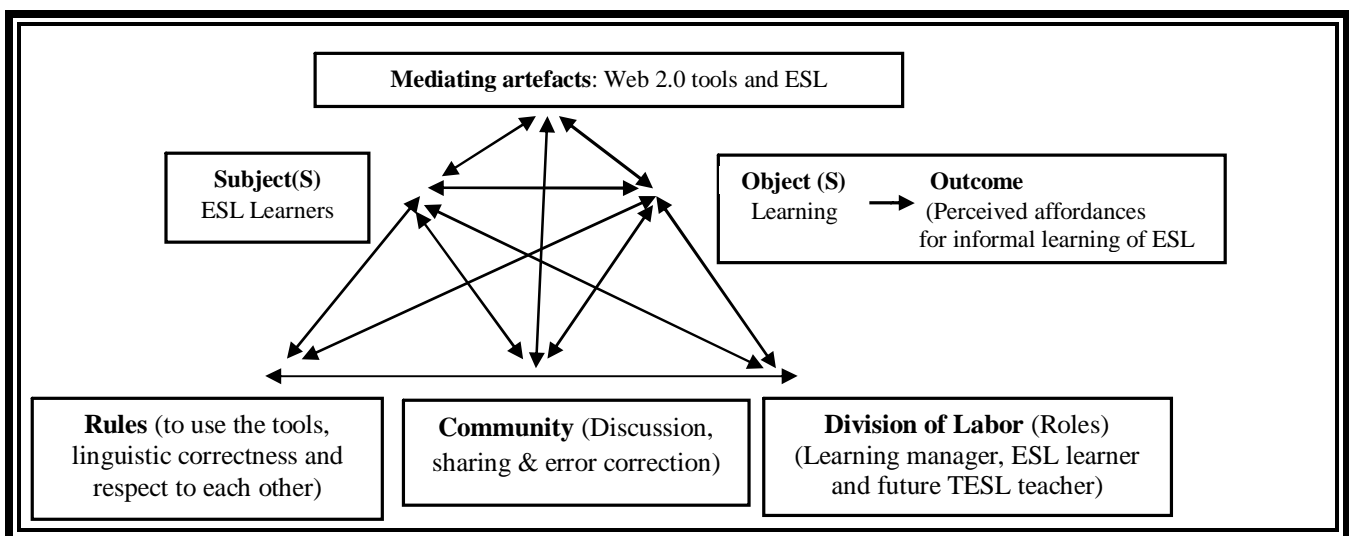


Figure 1: Triangle illustrating Web 2.0-based, informal ESL learning activity system

As shown above, the integrated approach employed in this study provides a fresh understanding by allowing the connection of complementary and interactive elements to capture the complexity of the ESL learners' activities and the learning contexts in which they are situated. When the individual learners participate in this virtual system, they choose artefacts (cognitive resources and tools) from the range to suit their goals that are mediated through the use of various rules and roles, and also influenced by other members of the virtual community. Both theories of activity and situated learning represent conceptions of group behaviours and participation by going beyond individual actions and mental processes. The holistic unit of analysis includes groups of single learner-users and the learners' larger practices in relation to sociocultural participation in virtual learning communities (social contexts). The notion of collective motives and intentions to participate, as defined by the framework employed in this study, is critically important to explain the differences in the ways learner-users engaged in Web 2.0 interactions. Powerful shared intentions and thoughts guide actions, shared practice and sociocultural mediation through tools and roles in this informal learning activity system.

The use of affordance theory provides a lens to understand how each individual learner via Web 2.0 tools utilizes the environment to mediate their goals. In this sense, as an activity system, perceived affordance emphasizes the mutual nature of actual interaction between an individual learner's intention and perceived value of Web 2.0 properties. The researcher attempts to demonstrate that a good fit exists for the development of new knowledge regarding the complexity of the system of learning, between the workability of behavioural intentions, and the perceived affordances of Web 2.0 resources that the learner-users access to become skilled in language use.

Thus, this combination of theories can be a lens for understanding why learner-users preferred Web 2.0 tools and how they make use of these tools to learn. In a sense, the learning goal has been conceptualised as a personal construct that is subjective, emergent, and shaped by numerous contextual factors and the motivation provided by the learning community. More specifically, the alternate ways learner-users relate to the learning goal support the development of shared goals and the ways in which participation expands identities. Thus, this multi-dimensional theoretical framework encapsulates those fine-grained and dynamic features of interaction and collaboration in an interactive Web 2.0-based informal ESL learning environment.

## **Methodology**

The research was implemented through a mixed methods design identified by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) as a "concurrent merged design". Theoretically, this type of design is selected when the researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study. This design generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weakness which lies within one method with the strengths of the other method. Each method of data collection is concurrent, occurring during one period of the study (2011).

In the quantitative method stage, self-report questionnaires were used to generate quantitative data from the university student population (N= 400). The questionnaires were adapted from

Antenos-Conforti's (2009) previously used survey questions which focused on how the Web 2.0 tools were utilized by university students for their informal learning of ESL. Likert scales were used to determine the extent to which selected individual and social factors predict Web 2.0 usage among university students. The numeric data from the survey included items that measured students' evaluation of the Web 2.0 in terms of its perceived affordances and usefulness for their ESL informal learning. In order to ensure anonymity in the interests of frank responses, participants did not identify themselves and were assured in the accompanying letter of total confidentiality. The statistical techniques altogether with the results of this quantitative descriptive and predictive stage are reported and discussed in the results section.

In the qualitative method stage, the focus group provided data for qualitative analysis. This stage aimed to contribute further insights into issues in question by shifting the attention from individual behaviors to shared social and cultural reasoning practices with regard to engagement in Web 2.0-based ESL informal learning. Five in-depth focus groups comprising 20 students were conducted. All responses were recorded by using tape and video recorder and were transcribed. The qualitative stage complemented the quantitative stage by revealing 'why' and 'how' the abstract numeric narratives obtained from the descriptive and predictive investigation are enacted in the experienced realities of these learners' daily social learning practices. The results and findings from this qualitative stage are reported and discussed in the next section.

The analysis of the data integrates the results of the two stages. This convergence aims to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study. The broad issues and theoretical underpinnings of the study were theorized in light of the empirical results. This sequence is followed through in this section. Corroboration of findings was achieved through the merging of all research stages (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

## **Results**

Overall, learner-participants expressed positive experiences and perceptions towards Web 2.0 affordances for their motivation towards informal ESL learning. For example, the quantitative results of this study has demonstrated the potential of Web 2.0 tools in ESL learning in various aspects, beyond the classroom, as summarized and depicted in Figure 2. This model brings together the perceived affordances of Web 2.0 explored in this stage under the relevant theoretical umbrella.



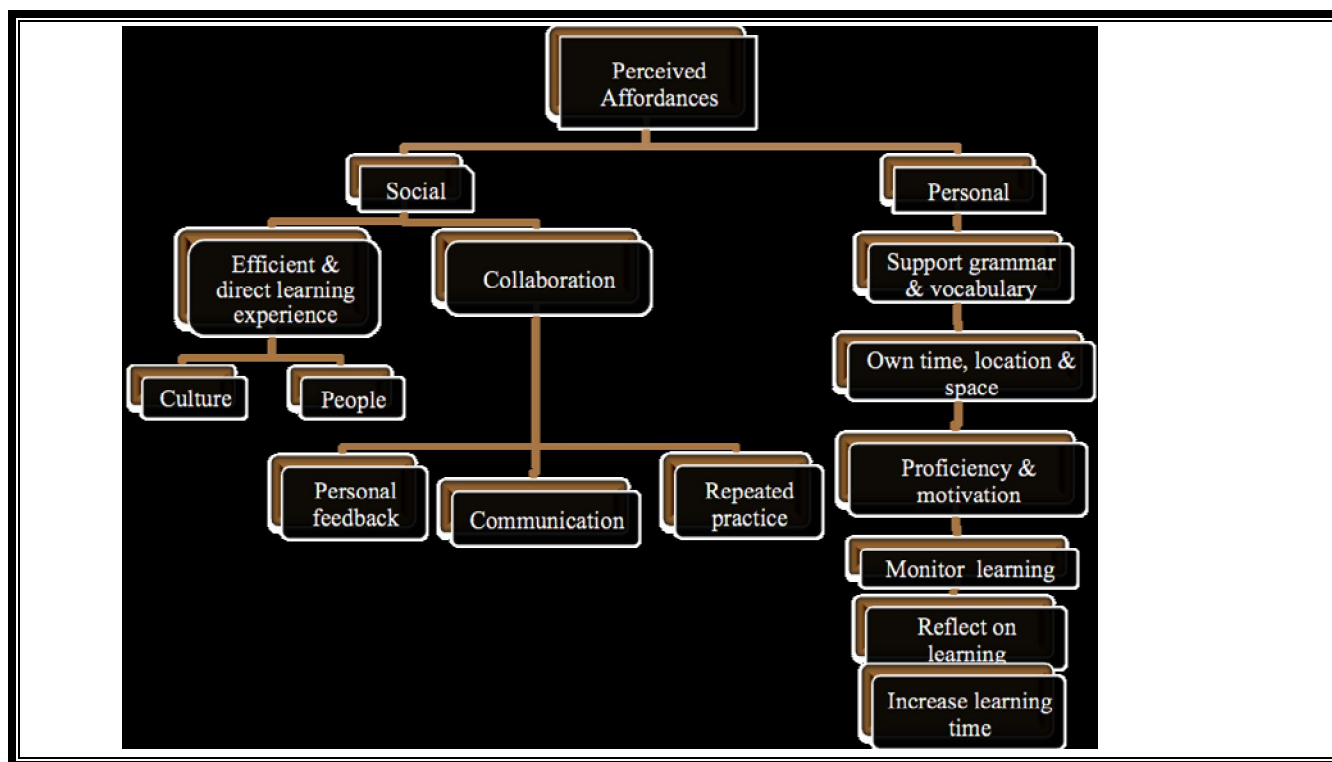


Figure 2: The summary of web 2.0 affordances for informal English learning

The study's quantitative findings corroborate the sociocultural view of informal learning, as strong endorsements of perceived Web 2.0 affordances for social and personal learning. For example, a substantial number of participants agree that Web 2.0 facilitates more interesting and efficient informal learning experiences, especially a more direct experience of English-speaking culture and people (90.1%), and in providing personal feedback on learning (84.8%). Moreover, 92.4% agree that the tools enable them to reflect on what it means to be a language learner, to interact and communicate online. Participants agree (89.5%) that Web 2.0 allows them constant practice and support of language skills. This indicates that Malaysian university students as ESL learners perceive themselves to be confident in the informal learning collaboration process mediated by Web 2.0 tools. Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 2, Web 2.0 tools could transform and extend social networking to personal learning networking. Participants agree (89.1%) that Web 2.0 supports their proficiency in ESL, particularly in terms of grammar and vocabulary. The data also reveal that approximately 92% of learners perceive these tools as allowing them to work in their own time and location and at their own pace. The learners also indicate (92.1%) that Web 2.0 provides them, as ESL learners, motivation for learning. Participants also agree that the tools allow them for a closer monitoring of learning progress and increased learning time (86.9%). As a result of such informal learning collaboration through Web 2.0 tools, these data indicate the ways in which learner-users become more independent learners.

The qualitative data of this study identify that the participants' accounts of a rich range of perceived affordances can be categorised into three interlocking themes, as summarised in Figure 3.

This analysis provides a richer understanding of participants' reasoning as to why and how they use these Web 2.0 tools for their ESL learning in unstructured environments.

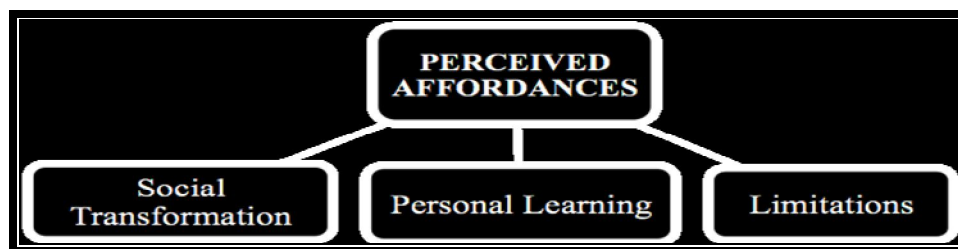


Figure 3: Themes of motivational affordances

### *Theme 1: Social Transformation*

Figure 3 provides an initial response to the research question. As illustrated in the figure above, Web 2.0 tools are perceived by participants to hold great potential for facilitating social transformation, and interactivity among learner-users within both technical and cultural dimensions. By this, they perceive that the psychological attraction of Web 2.0 is the most valuable and appealing aspect because it enables meaningful identity projection, social connection with one another and co-construction of knowledge across the Web 2.0 community. Most telling is the finding that the learner-participants intend to adopt Web 2.0 technologies as social networking tools for active participation and mutual collaboration in their daily ESL learning. Similar to the typical assumption of the theorists of situated learning and activity, learners in this study believe that they gain awareness of learning objectives through conversations and social interactions and consequently improve their personality developments in terms of perceptions, reflections and valuable learning activities. From an activity theory view, data from this study suggest that sociocultural learning mediated by Web 2.0 tools is a natural, social development process that may essentially differ from traditional ways of learning. For example, participants perform enhanced communicative experience outside the classroom through the use of various asynchronous and synchronous Web 2.0 tools.

This study contributes to the current body of relevant literature through its exploration of the idea that communication in the target language (English) is important for ESL learners in order to provide them with updated information, contacts and supports. Mainly, the interactive Web 2.0 tools allow a majority of participants to communicate and collaborate by enabling them to post questions in longer or simpler messages that facilitate their effective knowledge-sharing activities. In this regard, Web 2.0 tools as global networks link participants with other learners, learners with information, and information with other information, and allow them to express themselves confidently in a global language. Moreover, the reported features of Web 2.0 informal learning communities are shared learning goals experienced by members of learner-users' groups and their applicability to out-of-class learning contexts mediated by these tools, locally and globally. The evidence also shows that participants seek help from their peers, English native speakers and from independent research, adopting Web 2.0 tools to rehearse in order to enhance memory performance.

The evidence generated in this study demonstrates the merits of a sociocultural theoretical frame, through the presentation of an active virtual learning community that enables interaction among learner-users in developing collective understandings of individuals' creativity and critical thinking skills.

Another important finding of this study is that the users of Web 2.0 tools encounter authentic, informal learning through engagement in meaningful and legitimate peripheral participation. Influenced by the belief that, via these tools, participants may act as knowledge resources for each other, they understand peer feedback as critical to their purposes. As a peers-only space, social interaction mostly occurs amongst learners and significant others, establishing individual status, understanding and advanced group understanding. This study also finds that these tools allow learner-users to express multiple identities to their friends and parents and to reinvent themselves as their self-perceptions transform over time, for example, through the creation of their profiles on Facebook. Virtual community scaffolding supports the learner-users' new behaviours for meaning-making and reflection on new knowledge, and forms their identity projection in ways of understanding. This leads to the next theme that elaborates upon the participants' experiences with Web 2.0 tools for their personal learning.

### *Theme 2: Personal Learning*

In this study, the use of affordance theory provides a lens to interpret individual participants' use of Web 2.0 tools to motivate and support learning goals. A change in the kind of informal learning activity is reflected by a change in the affordances perceived and utilized by personal learner-users. Thus, the form of informal ESL learning may be influenced if certain affordances of Web 2.0 tools are perceived. This is true for many participants because the principles of power and control via these tools support their own learning. For example, participants express the view that Web 2.0 tools demonstrate less risk to their learning, less chance of making mistakes, and more self-selected participation. Interviews with participants also reflect the importance of safe practice for learning some aspects of language that learners need a moderate amount of practice to acquire. For instance, by accessing the audio of a language and viewing the language and culture at the same time, participants report efficient engagement with informal ESL learning.

Participants recognise that Web 2.0 technologies offer a window to experience new ways of learning which is intrinsically motivating and self-empowering. They believe that this learning is indirect, fun, effortless and helps them to satisfy their specific motivational needs. When these needs are satisfied they report experiencing enjoyment and a desire to engage further in informal and independent ESL learning. Participants' statements confirm that Web 2.0 tools provide them with useful first-hand experience with language learning and twenty-first century skills. They describe how focussing on learning new skills, avoiding errors and understanding new knowledge lead to positive judgments about their competence. This study also highlights another aspect of motivation for the participants, choosing to participate in certain activities over others. Cost of the computers and access time are a consideration. However, for some students, perceived affordances could also promote freedom to choose suitable platforms according to their interests and skills,

because Web 2.0 tools are easy to use and easy to access. Another learning affordance explained by learner-users is the flexibility of multi-tasking resources from various sources and formats including multimedia features for updating learning.

This study finds that the participants perceive that Web 2.0 tools impact strongly on their lives, providing a research head-start and a natural and supportive problem-solving backing for informal language learning development. Participants claim that they were meaningfully engaged and able to self-evaluate their learning and reflect on their own achievement towards independent lifelong learning. In contrast with such positive reports, the next section explores the participants' perceptions on the limitations of the Web 2.0 tools for learning.

### ***The limitations of the Web 2.0 tools for learning***

Although most of the participants are positive about Web 2.0 tools as providing opportunities to enhance their informal learning for ESL, there are concerns regarding their limitations attributed by the participants to some other learner-users.

As indicated by the qualitative data of this study, one of the limitations that pertain to Web 2.0-based informal ESL learning is that of technical issues. For instance, participants report on the incompatibility between different multimedia formats, the rapid changes of Web 2.0 technologies, and unreliable internet connections that delay free exchange and collaboration. However, this concern is not noted by participants of this study as a personal constraint because of their background as advanced student-teachers, adept Web 2.0 users, and motivated ESL learners. Participants state that novice users may have concerns using technologies the learning value of which might be considered in educational research as somewhat unsupported. There is concern about impacts on privacy and safety. Cost of computers and Internet access are also noted by participants as obstacles to the use of Web 2.0 tools.

In relation to motivational factors, most participants report that less experienced learners may have a further problem with lack of interest in technology. Some participants believe that learners hold differing levels of ability with Web 2.0 tools; while some learners find using Web 2.0 easy, some think it is quite time-consuming and others have real difficulty. For example, the continued addition of new and unreliable materials, containing informal language and linguistic mistakes, may mislead individuals, wasting their time and leading to poor modelling of language communication. Learners are also de-motivated if their learning material is inappropriate and boring. Some learner-users, as mentioned by participants, engage in copy and paste plagiarizing habits. However, the participants in this study are advanced student-teachers and ESL learners who have positive learning experiences, and therefore their perceptions are expected to differ from novices, arguably influencing the more positive findings of this research.

## **Conclusion**

With this study, the researcher identifies a series of important areas contributing to the literature. The framework provides fresh insights for current understandings which illuminate the potential of Web 2.0 tools for informal learning and the value in pursuing this medium for ESL learning beyond the classroom. It provides a model, refined in this current study, for future research. Mostly, the study develops an understanding of the learners' perceptions of the motivational affordances and limitations of Web 2.0 tools for daily learning of ESL. The research clearly identifies that the learners predominantly have intentions or at the very least, deliberate justifications around practicing at being good learners and fine-tuning their multiple roles and identities. They mutually negotiate and express themselves through repeated rehearsal, trial and error of informal learning affordances, in relation to the development of both social and personal learning of ESL. Thus, for most of the ESL learners, the benefits are important and far outweigh any obstacles experienced. These benefits involve authentic tasks and positive phenomena, and, as technology develops further, novelty will continue to drive motivation and the process of learning participation for many learners.

It is hoped that this research regarding Web 2.0 opens up a new trajectory, stimulating new research in this area through which policymakers and practitioners in general can recognize additional directions for education and investigation. By implication, the researcher believes that building on these findings can create new ways for future language education.

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