



---

## Investigating University Level Efl Undergraduate Learners' Attitudes about Padlet: A Web-Based Digital Tool In Reading Classroom

*Usman Shah Toti & Majed Abahussain*

Department of English, College of Education, Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia

### Abstract

The purpose of this mixed-method research was to assess the attitudes and perceptions of a sample of 21 University level Saudi Undergraduate EFL students at Majma University, Community College towards using Padlet as a collaborative web-based online digital tool in reading classroom. Participants were enrolled in reading introductory course. The research applied by the researcher was basically descriptive in nature and survey method for which students' oriented set of questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire included 21 items related with respondents' different categories of variable constructs on 5points likert scale. The research tools used for data collection were semi-structured interviews, researcher's observation and a questionnaire. Data collected revealed that respondents indicated positive attitudes towards Padlet application in reading classroom. Maximum number of students enjoyed Padlet tool with great zeal. Furthermore, students valued the instructors' feedback and peer discussion using Padlet.

**Words:** Padlet, writing wall, dragging files, peer discussion

### 1.1 Introduction

In this age of technology, language learning strategies and teaching have crossed the boundaries of schools walls (Yunus & Salehi, 2012). Technology plays an important role in developing learners' knowledge through interactive and collaborative ways. The arrival of technology in the field of education has brought about a lot of changes in replacing teachercentered, dependent, stereo-typed and traditional methods of learning and teaching into modern self-autonomous independent learning. Several studies have proved that technology plays an important role in enhancing active learning and encouraging students to solve their learning problems (Grégoire, Bracewell & Laferrière, 1996). Technology is a tool that helps the learners of different, interests, learning styles, cultural, socio-economic background and multifaceted levels of abilities in second language learning environment. Technology is also a multidisciplinary tool both in literature and science. According to Sivin-Kachala & Bialo (2000), technology enhance learners' performance and self-concept.

Padlet is a web-digital tool that is very simple and easily be accessed to the learners. It is called wall wisher, a free online bulletin board. It provides information to the learners who use it on any topic. It has a lot of advantages such as students can record their voices for correct pronunciation,



they can use it for seminar and presentation, it can also be used for hyperlinks on any topics, they share information on Padlet using images, pictures, links and videos. Writing wall can be made public or private to the learners. There does exist editing option on Padlet due to which the learners can modify its background, color and high lighting the headlines for increasing the learners' interest. Learners share their posts and do comment on each other views and gather a lot of knowledge stuff through discussion. The learners once registered can organize, monitor and control the Padlet wall. In addition, the learners invite others and contribute to the wall. The teacher moderates the wall then all contributions are accepted. There are some reasons why the researcher has chosen this online web digital tool for collaborative reading class. First, the researcher has experienced using padlet as a web digital tool will provide the learners opportunities to share their ideas on any assignment or research work with each other in the classroom or at home in the form of a group. In addition, to have an access to each individual and share their feedbacks through emails. Secondly, the application of padlet tool is a medium of motivation to enhance the students' creativity knowing each other views, ideas and opinions displayed on the writing wall. Thirdly, padlet will enable the learners to compete with each other and boost up their motivation and will impress other classmates and teachers. Finally, the students have the option to use it even at home to upload their feedback, comments, posts and thoughts after finishing class work activities. It was a new experience for the learners as everyone can open account through Gmail to discuss issues with the teacher. The learners upload any topic on the wall then the partners can send their feedback in the form comments for discussion and it is very simple and easy to access to all learners. Also, traditional teaching teacher-centered in which the teacher has no access to each individual so the researcher felt it important

### **1.2 Significance of Study Research**

Several researchers (Bartsch & Murphy, 2011; Blood & Need, 2008; Cydis, 2011; Dunn, Richardson, Oprescu, & McDonald, 2012; Gauci, Dantas, Williams, & Kemm, 2009; Moratelli & DeJarnette, 2014; Shaffer & Collura, 2009; Stowell & Nelson, 2007 claim that SRSs t is an effective tool in enhancing learners' engagement and their academic achievement. Yet, there is meager research has been done to show undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions and behavior at Majmaah University towards Padlet. This research study will contribute to the literature by examining the perceptions of different individuals about the the effect of Padlet as an online web-based digital tool in reading classroom. The present research aims to enhance students' motivation, interest and engagement to affect their learning process through the use of Padlet in reading classroom.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

This research study aims to examine the EFL learners' attitudes towards using Padlet as a web-based digital tool and difficulties they face during reading classroom. Moreover, to determine this tool is effective for college level learners in learning domain.



## 1.4 Problem Statement

According to Omelles (2007) that at-risk students display low performance in their academic field because they have low level of engagement in the classroom activities. He further explains that the participants engagement in the classroom develop their mind set up and behavior of asking questions and reading loudly the content materials. According to Omilles (2007), learners' academic performance becomes inactive. Therefore, Omelles (2007), states that engagement can increase students' performance n the classroom. Teachers accept that technology is a potential power to support the students at risk, enhance their engagement in learning and academic achievement Marino and Beecher (2010). Padlet, in this situation, is an important tool to engage the learners and work together (Fuchs, 2014). According to Weller (2013), the learners are engaged by giving answers to the questions of the teacher or activities designed by the teachers. Fuchs (2014), states that Padlet is an important tool for learning and teaching pedagogy in the classroom. However, little research has been done to determine the students' perceptions about Padlet application in EFL reading classroom. The main purpose of this research study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of university level undergraduate EFL reading students about Padlet-online web-based digital tool and also to determine the learners' attitudes, perception, interests, motivation, difficulties, benefits and engagement in reading class through the application of Padlet as an online tool.

The study investigated the following research questions.

1. What are University level EFL undergraduate students' attitudes about the difficulty of Padlet based reading class?
2. What are University level EFL undergraduate students' General attitudes about the use of Padlet online web-based digital tool in reading class?

## 1.5 Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews different forms of technologies and its uses in classroom. Also, this chapter highlights the background of the Padlet tool and its importance in EFL classroom.

### 1.5.1 The Use of Technology in Present Time

The revolution in digital technology has brought about o a lot of changes in the daily human lives and advanced their communication to the peak (Delgado et al., 2015). In the past few years, technology has entered into every spare of our day to day lives even its effects can be seen at homes in the form television, smart phone, computers etc. Consequently, technology has changed every spare of business management system with new techniques, information and computers have been infiltrated in the field of employment (Delgado et al., 2015). The environment in educational America is rich with the use of technology for children (Rideeout et al., 2010). According to Strommen and Lincoln, many toys for children now a days are working on batteries, more interactive and can sing, dance, and talk since 1990 and children have got control over computers



and television through the use of control button and have an easy access to information and knowledge system (Strommen and Lincoln, 1992). In addition, media has a very dynamic and powerful role in the life circles of children from 8 to 18 (Rideout et al., 2010). A study conducted by Rideout et al, stated that children spend 7 ½ hours per week using various media forms (2010). So, the use of technology has been increased in all circles of life in the world.

### **1.5.2 The use of Technology in Classroom**

According to (Delgado et al., 2015), “digital revolution” means technological change in the life circles of the people in the discipline of education. For the past few years, technology in education discipline has been changed from movies and radios to computers and iPads ( Delgado et al., 2015). This provides the opportunities to the children to spend time with technology use. According to the Common Core Standards report 2009, technology played a very significant role infiltrating in the field of education to develop students’ critical thinking skills (Delgado et al., 2015). Thomas and Saade (2015) stated that online learning systems are more beneficial for students in developing their critical skills. Technology is useful in curriculums and keeps the students engaged in classroom activities which promote their thinking skills (Morin, & Thomas, &Saade, 2015)

### **1.5.3 Technology Develops Students’ Motivation, Performance**

Technology promotes students’ engagement which can affect their academic performances (Dotterer & Lowe, 2010). Dotterer and Lowe (2010) studied classroom instructional, social and emotional and climatic context that have affected students’ engagement and their achievements in a study of 4rth grade students without academic hurdles. The findings showed that students with academic problems were more engaged in class work activities because of high quality of teaching. Engagement means that they concentrated on their learning and understanding. In spite of good result, behavioral engagement did not mean academic achievement. However, psychological engagement means being motivated and had good academic achievement for poor students. Engagement predicts learners’ academic performances for poor students (Dotterer & Lowe, 2010).

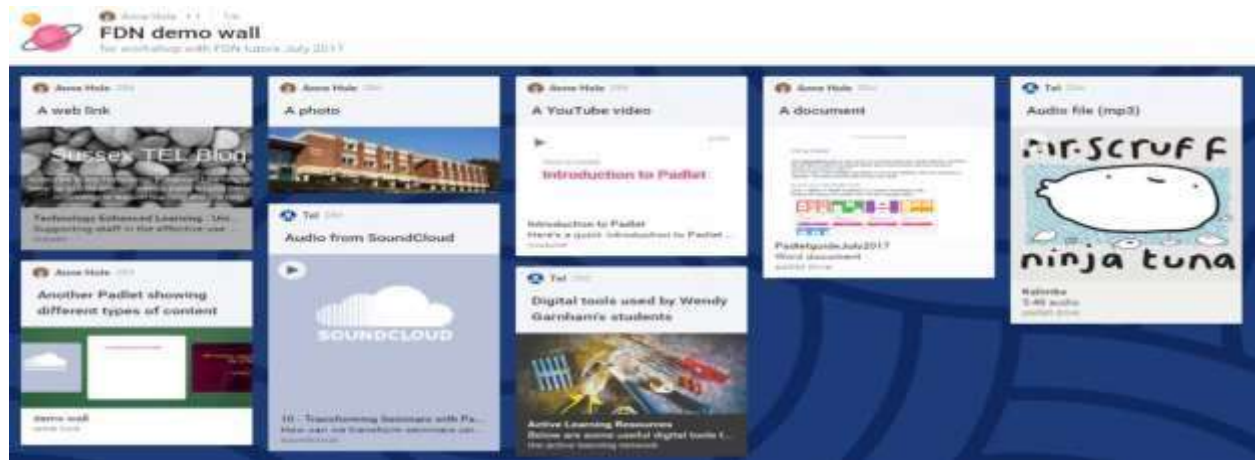
### **1.5.4 What is Padlet and why it is important?**

Padlet is used as an online digital tool that can support both teachers and students to make them express their thoughts on the wall page (Kaya, 2015). According to Byrne (2015), “Padlet” is a tool for a collaborative research that has no charge service, easy and simple and is used for taking notes, videos, discussion and documents. The use of padlet in the classroom can enhance students’ cooperation and collaboration with easy and quick access to the wall without any difficulty (Kaya, 2015). According to Fuchs (2014), padlet provides information, it can develop students’ class participation and it has a lot of advantages such as it has many devices, anyone can create account easily and it does not need highly sophisticated knowledge to use it. According to Shield (2014) the use of Padlet in the classroom, can encourage and motivate the students to learn from one another and teachers can create lesson plans, list of vocabulary, takenotes, brainstorming, projects, discussion, collaborative group work, feedback from the peers, assignments, links, PDF files and pictures etc. it is obvious that students should have knowledge about this technological tool and



should use it to facilitate their learning in the classroom so that they enhance their knowledge about it as a latest tool.

### Padlet as a Tool



#### ***1.4.5 The Use of Info graphics in EFL Classroom Context***

According to Fowler (2015), “infographics” is the representation of chart, poster, picture about a topic in visual form. According to the interpretation of Krauss (2012) that infographic is a method used in the classroom to engage the learners and to develop new knowledge and enhance their critical thinking by presenting visual picture in a more effective way. Infographics are new tools of learning in an educational context to promote students’ learning background. Matrix & Hodson (2014) investigated that infographics have more advantages in online classroom environment. The investigation showed that visual infographics presentation can encourage students learning competencies which are very important for second language learners. They further studied that infographics tasks for online courses can motivate learners’ learning experience due to which the learners play a very active role by using digital tools. They stated that infographics are best digital tools for interaction and keeping learners engaged in their work.

### **2.1 Methodology**

This portion reviews the population sampling and mixed-method application for this research study.

### **2.2 Participants**

Participants in this research study consisted of 15 male undergraduate second year Saudi EFL learners at Majma University. Their ages ranged between 20/25. They were homogeneous and already enrolled as an intake reading group. The researcher trained them and taught them reading task-based activities for a period of four weeks. Most of them were familiar with computer which they used both at homes and in the university.



### 2.3 Teaching Course via Padlet

The course in this study examined was Google task-based reading activities. These reading activities were selected from various Google based websites which were prepared and uploaded to the learners on the writing wall on Padlet. The researcher gave students instructions and guiding them about Padlet in certain ways. First, the students had one week orientation program for enrolment and introduction of how to use Padlet in the classroom. Second, the students were trained how to open an account in Google, how to use writing wall, upload their comments, pictures, assignments, send feedback, and share ideas with teachers and friends. Thirdly, they were instructed how to upload the materials on the writing wall for display.

### 2.4 Researcher’s Observation and Measurement Materials

The researcher developed an observational checklist to manage the learners’ classroom engagement for 6-10 minutes as an independent practice. The researcher checked their classroom participation after every minute to evaluate their task behavior. A copy of checklist can be seen in figure1. The study examined the issues related to the intervention were the learners’ participation, interests, difficulties, information, obstacles and challenges they faced during the application of Padlet in the class.

**Week of:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Week #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Day #:** \_\_\_\_\_

Students#	1 minute	2 minutes	3 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

*Table 1. Student Engagement Checklist*

### 2.5 Selection of Material and Observation Procedure

The research study had several sources for data collection. First, the students were enrolled for the academic session in reading program. The students had demographic information as developed by Oxford (1990) for the evaluation and assessment of their language skills, and the use of computer. Second, the researcher conducted the course that spanned over four weeks’ period of time of the academic year. The researcher personally observed the students involvement in their work. The learners chatted face-to-face online with the instructor for guidelines and other friends. The researcher examined their interaction and discussion with each other as a research observer. The



fourth source for data collection was semi-structure interviews conducted with the respondents. The interviews were taken as confidential and private reflecting their knowledge and skills on Padlet tool. These interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed for analysis.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

The current study employed both qualitative and quantitative procedures. The data collected through research tools such as questionnaire was coded and analyzed in SPSS in terms of percentage.

## 2.7 Quantitative Data Analysis

The second research question of the this study, “What are University EFL undergraduate level students’ attitudes and perceptions about the use of online web-based digital tool in reading class was analyzed by using likert five points scale. Students completed this survey using likert scale related to their attitudes and perceptions about the application of Padlet as a collaborative in reading classroom. The survey questionnaire consisted of 21 statements based on different constructs such as the usefulness, satisfaction, interests, knowledge, engagement and peer discussion in which the respondents selected their level of agreement as strongly agree, Agree, neutral, disagree as strongly disagree. The internal content reliability and validity of the questionnaire was determined by SPSS and professional experts who recommended some question modifications. The time duration was one month as training to know about the instrument and then how to apply for peer communication. At the end of the treatment, twenty one (21) respondents were given questionnaires with Arabic translation so that they should understand the questions clearly. Fifteen minutes were assigned to them to solve all the questions in a definite time. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed that indicated the following results.

1. 65% respondents indicated strongly agree responses on five points likert scale towards using Padlet in the reading classroom.
2. 15 % indicated agree responses
3. 15% Neutral responses
4. 5% responded disagree

Therefore, the overall result indicated that majority of the students showed positive attitudes towards the application of Padlet as tool in reading classroom. The result is shown in the following table.

*Table 2: Students’ Attitudes towards Padlet (Five points Likert Scale)*

No	5 points Likert Scale	%
1	Strongly Agree	65
2	Agree	15



---

3	<i>Neutral</i>	15
4	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	5
5	<i>Disagree</i>	0

---

## 2.8 Qualitative Result

Semi-Structure Interviews were conducted as a research tool for data collection. The first research question of the this study, “What difficulties the EFL University level EFL Undergraduates respondents face in using Padlet digital tool in reading classroom” was analyzed on semi-structure interviews. Data collected from the interviews was analyzed that provided information on different segments such as significant ideas, words structure, contexts, reactions, and feelings about the intervention. According to Anderson (1990), it is necessary to give importance to the main ideas, original words, contents that can easily reflect ideas and thoughts of the learners. The researcher focused on thematic codes while conducting interviews such as: a) planning interviews b) gradation and classification of language c) focusing on content words.

Seven out of fifteen students were taken for the interviews from the Community College in

Majmaah University who deeply expressed their views and responses regarding the application of Padlet digital tool in the reading classroom. After finishing their interviews, the researcher transcribed them and analyzed them just on the basis of contents such as perceptions, responses, about the difficulties taking place to the respondents in padlet reading class. There are certain reasons why the researcher had selected thematic code procedure. First, this technique helps the researcher in prediction and inferring the result (Smith and Ogilvie, 1996, p.6) also it shows valid results Krippendorf (1980). According to Tendall, (1994), thematic content analysis facilitates researcher’s interpretation as the contents are categorized, and identified. This technique is suitable for qualitative data collection because it can be easily managed, time saving and contributes in data interpretation and analysis. The researcher conducted Focus group interviews. According to (Denscombe, 2007, p. 115). Focused interview consists of six and nine group of people in number to understand their point of perception and views about the topic Therefore, the researcher transcribed the content words, phrases, ideas to match with the objective of the research work and research question of the study. Their opinions and views were interpreted and analyzed as followed.

1. First Student: The data results from the student through the research tool indicated that Padlet is an important tool for learning a second language. He argued that Padlet is a motivating instrument in reading class and found it very convenient, easy and comfortable. In the beginning he said it was difficult to operate in the class but with the researcher contribution, he found it more motivating. He found it very easy, useful in cutting and pasting pictures, images, editing contents, dragging files from the desktop computer,





uploading documents and writing comments on each other opinions etc. as whole the respondent could not feel hurdles in managing Padlet in reading class.

2. Second Student: He found Padlet a unique web-based digital tool and insisted it to be recommended for the students in the college. He found it more easy and simple and every one can use it online at homes, offices and schools and colleges.
3. Third Student: Third student found it very difficult and responded like this: *I cannot write on it because the tool is a new technology and the language is difficult for me to understand. When I copy contents on the writing wall, then it is difficult for me to share with my friends. I don't like to share my views because I don't like others to see my mistakes. I don't know the font size. I don't know how to past pictures and answer to the questions displayed by the teachers and friends.* He explained that without background knowledge, students would not be able to use it.
4. Fourth Student: He found it very interesting. He explained that during learning process Padlet was not very easy but later on it was very easy and convenient. He faced no difficulties in registering name, opening account in the Google, dragging files from different places. He explained that even he helped other friends in managing the tool, sharing feedback, replying their answers and coloring the consents.
5. Fifth Student: This student gave preference to various factors adding in difficulties such as teaching pedagogy, course syllabus, teachers' role, learners' role, and social, cultural, linguistic aspects. He said that traditional teaching classes had demotivated and mad the learners less dynamic in learning process. He presented his own personal perception about the Padlet digital tool that it is very fascinating and he emphasized its recommendation for future use in the university. He found easy and satisfactory.
6. Sixth student: this student was encouraged to use the Padlet tool in reading classroom. He had mixed feelings about the use of this digital tool. He said if this web based tool is used in regular bases then students can get a lot of benefits from it. He explained that he faced difficulties in organizing and managing the tool such as: how to open an account in Google, creating groups, coloring images, downloading files, changing the writing walls background, editing etc are
7. Seventh student: This student faced no difficulty in organizing the materials and sharing them with the students. He found it more easy, comfortable and convenient in the reading classroom. He explained that using Padlet increased his flow of speed and saved times to collect a lot of responses from the respondents and sharing with other students. The data results from the student through the research tool indicated that Padlet is an important tool for learning a second language. He found it very easy, useful in cutting and pasting pictures, images, editing contents, dragging files from the desktop computer, uploading documents and writing comments on each other opinions etc. as whole the respondent could not feel hurdles in managing Padlet in reading class.



Therefore, the overall results collected from the respondents indicated that most of the students found the web-based online digital tool very easy and convenient. Most of them had faced no hurdles in using in reading classroom. Therefore, data showed that Padlet is very important, easy and comfortable in learning.

### **2.9 Observation**

A check list was used for observing the learners behavior during the application of Padlet in reading classroom. The researcher examined the participants' responses and behavior very closely from the check list which are positive in nature. Students movements, gestures, writing on the wall, asking questions from the peer group, cutting and pasting images, contents, discussing difficult words, ideas, sharing views and uploading files indicated that the respondents were very active and interested in using Padlet. For example, the researcher sent them some brain storming questions related to a topic. They would write the answers and then peers would share each other responses about them. The participants' involvement encouraged the researcher contribution to the course throughout a month treatment. From the semi-structured interviews they participants expressed their responses openly and majority of them favored the application of Padlet because it save time and make reading speed fast. Most of them indicated their attitudes and perceptions positive. The data collected from the questionnaire also indicated that most of the participants were holding positive attitudes towards using Padlet in reading classroom. They showed high level of interest and thought it very beneficial for them, some students insisted on its application in future in the academic domain.

### **2.10 Discussion**

Fifteen students participated in the research study. The respondents had access to the Padlet technology in the classroom. These participants were engaged in their work and had to give their feedback to other students which had created a classroom more dynamic. The researcher found them actively involved in their work by cutting and pasting images, content materials, responses on the texts from other students, and uploading messages. This developed a strong feeling of unity and awareness among them. This qualitative feedback showed that students were motivated in reading collaborative classroom through interaction (Opp-Beckman & Kieffer, 2004, p. 240). The respondents understood their feelings, attitudes and were able how to interact with others (Opp-Beckman & Kieffer, 2004, p. 240). Subjects from this qualitative study thought that they inherited a lot of benefits from the researcher as an instructor and also increased their level of interests, motivation, engagement, satisfaction and knowledge about Padlet.

### **2.11 Implications**

The researcher received positive responses and results from the research tools and the research questions. The findings showed that the respondents' attitudes and perceptions about the application of Padlet were positive. Maximum number of respondent indicated that Padlet is useful and interesting tool. The feedback the researcher received from the close check up observation list indicated their interest, engagement which showed that Padlet was helpful and useful for the learners. The research question regarding difficulty had a mixed feelings and feedback. The



qualitative research findings revealed that some respondents faced hurdles while using Padlet and could not have any access to the writing wall to discuss and display images with peers. This study consisted of meager number of respondents' attitudes and beliefs about Padlet application so broad generalization cannot be claimed. Although this research confirms the previous research that claimed positive feedback on using Padlet in the classroom. The introduction of Padlet tool in EFL reading class was a new development and the respondents felt comfort and were motivating which indicate that the level of respondents' comfort, interest, and engagement should be enhanced.

### **2.12 Limitations**

Limitation of this research work depends on just one type of researcher's observations. There exist insufficient observations to be compared with to indicate accurate observations. The researcher observations lacked accuracy in scientific ways because of the time duration which spanned over a period of 4 weeks. The lack of randomization also indicated a great threat to generalizability because the respondents were enrolled in the course but the sample was selfselected for the semi-structured interviews that might not represent the learners' accurate attitudes and the findings might have been influenced by the instructor's biasness, the time duration, and the appliance.

### **2.13 Recommendations**

In order to extend the results of this research work, future researchers should focus on certain areas:

1. Future results could contribute to the finding of this research study if some other variables or constructs were included into the analysis.
2. The application of some other alternative designs could aid to the findings in future.
3. Researches in future could extend the findings of this current research study to other courses.
4. Multiple ways of observers, subjective ways of measuring respondents' attitudes about the tool would contribute to the findings of this current study.
5. The recommendations would be used for the purpose of education and the application of Padlet tool could be endorsed in the classrooms. The English teachers and students must benefit from this technology and should be a part of syllabus.
6. Future research will also enhance reading programs and knowledge how to include Padlet technology into them

### **2.14 Conclusion**

The current study employed mixed method approach to find out the EFL learners' attitudes towards Padlet as a tool in reading classroom. The research tools used were semi-structured interviews, observation and questionnaire modeled on 5 points likert scales. The results from both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated that majority of the respondents showed positive attitudes towards using Padlet in reading classroom.



## References

- Hockly Nicky, Teachers and technology, *Modern English Teacher*, 55-57, print.
- Salaberry M. Rafeal, The Use of Technology for Second Language Learning and Teaching: A Retrospective, *The Modern Language Journal* 85(2001), 39-56 print.
- Sharma Ramnath& S.S. Chandra, *Advanced Educational Technology*, Vol.II, Atlantic Publishers Tileston Donna Walker, What Every Teacher Should Know About Using Media and Technology: Corwin Press, California, 2004, print.
- <https://msdlt.instructure.com/courses/1092/pages/what-is-padlet>
- <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/how-to-use-padlet-fantastic-tool-teaching>
- PDF) *Edmodo and Padlet as a collaborative online tool in Enriching Writing Skills in Language Learning and Teaching*. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/302472966 Edmodo and Padlet as a collaborative online tool in Enriching Writing Skills in Language Learning and Teaching](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/302472966_Edmodo_and_Padlet_as_a_collaborative_online_tool_in_Enriching_Writing_Skills_in_Language_Learning_and_Teaching) [accessed Nov 01 2018].
- Li, R. C. (1995). English as a second language home page. In M. Warschauer (Ed.), *Virtual connections: Online Activities and projects for networking language learners* (pp. 202-204). Honolulu, HI: Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center.
- Foegen, A. (2008) Algebra progress monitoring and interventions for students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 31, pp. 65–78.
- Fuchs, B. (2014) The writing is on the wall: using padlet for whole-class engagement. *LOEX Quarterly*, 40(4), pp. 7–9.
- Gauci, S., Dantas, A., Williams, D., and Kemm, R. (2009) Promoting student-centered active learning in lectures with a personal response system. *AJP: Advances in Physiology Education*, 33(1), pp. 60–71. doi: 10.1152/advan.00109.2007.



@ 2017 by the author. Licensee University of Chitral, Journal of Linguistics & Literature, Pakistan. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).