

EFL TEACHERS 'ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-LEARNING

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Abstract

This research surveyed English as foreign language secondary school teachers in order to identify their attitudes toward the integration of electronic learning into their teaching, and to define the different factors influencing them. The study used the questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to 30 teachers of English as foreign language at secondary schools of Khenchela. From the questionnaire both quantitative as well as qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The findings of this study revealed that teachers held positive attitude toward electronic learning's potential effectiveness in EFL instruction. Furthermore, the results prove that teachers who ignore computer use and e-learning application tend to reject e-learning incorporation astonishingly. Moreover, the study revealed that teachers' level of technology use is the most factors impacting teachers' use of IIT and their attitudes toward e-learning implementation, in addition to other factors including insufficient time, restricted access to IITs, and lack of teachers training.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language –Teachers- Attitudes- Implementation- E-learning- Algerian- Secondary schools

الملخص:

هذا البحث هو عبارة عن مسح لأراء معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية من أجل تحديد مواقفهم تجاه دمج التعلم الإلكتروني في المواد التي يدرسونها، وتحديد العوامل المختلفة المؤثرة فيها. وقد استخدمت الدراسة الاستبانة لجمع البيانات. تم توزيع الاستبيان عشوائيا على ثلاثين من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الثانوية لولاية خنشلة و بعد ذلك تم جمع البيانات من الاستبيان وتحليلها كما و نوعا. كشفت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن لدى المعلمين موقفا إيجابيا تجاه فعالية التعلم الإلكتروني المحتملة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وعلاوة على ذلك، فإن النتائج تثبت أن المعلمين الذين يتجاهلون استخدام الحاسوب وتطبيقات التعلم الإلكتروني يميلون إلى رفض دمج التعلم الإلكتروني بشكل مدهش. كما أن الدراسة كشفت أن مستوى استخدام التكنولوجيا لدى المعلمين هو أهم العوامل التي تؤثر على استخدام المعلمين للتقنيات و تتحكم في مواقفهم تجاه تطبيق التعلم الإلكتروني، بالإضافة إلى عوامل أخرى من بينها عدم كفاية الوقت، كونها ليست في متناول الجميع ، وعدم توفر تدريب للمعلمين .

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية - المعلمين - مواقف - إدماج - التعليم الإلكتروني - المدارس الثانوية - الجزائرية

Introduction

The new modern E-concepts have been launched for political and economical reasons, or even because of the human inability to keep pace with the fast developments that characterize today's information society. Currently, almost every field tries to align to the new widely used technologies. It is ever more frequently spoken of concepts such as e-commerce, e-learning, e-banking, e-business, e-government, etc. E-learning is may be the most interesting of these internet mediated concepts referring to the integration of computer and digital technologies in the process of teaching and learning. In its world education forum, convened in Dakar, Senegal, the UNISCO emphasized that teachers should essentially achieve the goals of "Education for all". It also stressed the important role that distance learning and information and communicative

technologies may play in teachers' development (UNISCO, 2002). E-learning can provide teachers with access to resources, courses, tools, training programs, online communities, and opportunities to collaborate with other educators around the world (Kante, 2002).

Many educational institutions all over the world, including Algeria, have realized that the rapid increase in the availability of electronic learning technologies highlights the value of educational technology within schools and universities. Recently, important investments are being made to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning through expanding the number of technology resources in educational institutions. They are looking at successful ways to integrate these tools into their curricula, syllabi, and classroom practice. However, not all secondary school teachers especially those at khenchela are willing to integrate e-learning into their instruction, and the present study is an endeavor to examine foreign language teachers (SST) attitudes toward e-learning implementation within the Algerian secondary school programs.

Achieving a meaningful use of computer in the field of education can be influenced by many factors. One of these factors is teachers' attitudes towards the use of technology in teaching and learning process. Research shows that the success of technology use in the educational settings largely depends on teachers attitudes toward technology use (Albirini, 2006, Baylor & Ritchie, 2002). Teachers' attitudes are considered as a major predictor of use of new technologies in the educational settings (Albirini, 2006). Thus their attitudes toward computer can play an important role in the acceptance and actual use of e-devices. The successful utilization of technologies in the classroom depends mainly on the teachers' attitudes toward these tools (Kluever, Lam, Hoffman, Green & Swearinges, 1994). A number of studies were carried out to determine teachers' attitudes toward technology devices use. Harrison & Rainer (1992) conducted their research using data compiled from a 1990 survey of 776 knowledge and information workers from a large university in the southern United States. They found that participants with negative computer attitude were less skilled in computer use and were therefore less likely to accept and adapt to technology than those with positive attitudes. Albirini (2004) conducted a study to investigate the attitudes of EFL teachers in Syrian high schools toward technology in education, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to collect data. He found that the results from quantitative and qualitative data indicated that teachers had positive attitudes toward technology use in education.

A study by Hoffman (1997) revealed that teacher's attitudes toward computers have distinctive affective and evaluative components. Sofranova (1993) who specifically studied teachers' attitudes towards computer technology, define attitudes as a somewhat subconscious state which would be revealed "without thinking too much" (1993:7). Newman (1987) writes the importance of uncovering assumptions when teaching, again implying the subconscious belief systems, Lowther and Sullivan (1994) acknowledge that numerous factors including teachers' needs, wants, beliefs, and practices, as well as educational settings are important in determining attitudes towards the use of technology in teaching. In a study examining teacher attitudes toward innovational teaching approach in Hong Kong schools, researchers found again that despite positive attitudes towards the innovation, contextual constraints, attributed partly to sociological and cultural biases, limited the integration of this innovation in the curriculum (Morris, 1998).

Some researchers (Abbot & Faris, 2000; Kumar, 2003) have suggested that teachers' attitudes toward technology could be improved by integrating technology into teacher education course work. Furthermore, teacher preparedness contributes to teacher attitudes, and the research suggests that teachers' attitude toward computers are very important to the integration of technology in the classroom (Russell, O'Dwyer, Bebell & O'Conner, 2003). However, the way teachers view using computers in their classes is an important issue as a positive approach can help them to be more effective while teaching in a computer lab. There might be teachers who

have negative attitudes toward using computers in their classes. According to Brikner (1995) one of the obstacles to integrating computers into schools is related to teachers' beliefs about teaching, beliefs about computers, their established classroom practices and unwillingness to change. MC Menimam (1998), Rado and Foster (1992) also stated that language teachers do not change their beliefs by decree but by practicing and when they are presented with the evidence that technology has positive effects on learning. Another possible reason for this kind of attitudes might be because they do not feel confident enough and feel a need to be trained about the use of computers in classes.

In a study conducted by Ertner, Addison, Lane, Ross, and Woods, D (1999) teachers reported that in a number of "cases technology was considered to be additional or supplementary to the existing curriculum" (p.8). Becker (1999) concurred that "computers have played a relatively limited role in schools-primarily, they have been used as a supplementary activity after more necessary work is done or in computer lab setting where students perform a uniform task" (p.362).

Another cluster of studies (Hannaford, 1988; Mitra, 1998; Moroz and Nash, 1997), suggest teachers see technology as important only if their teacher training institute has placed value on integrating technology. Yildirim (2000) points out that education majors who became teachers report that they hesitate to use technology and do not feel prepared to integrate technology into their instructions. Ropp (1999) further notes that even those preservice teachers who demonstrate proficiency integrating technology will not do so if they do not believe that technology has a use in their classroom (p.403).

In addition, teachers' attitudes have also been referenced as an obstacle for implementation of technology into the curriculum. If technology is something that teachers regard as important they will be more likely to follow through with it (Owens, 2002, p.65). However, Kathleen King (2002) makes an important point that even teachers who recognized the value of technology may still feel uncomfortable using it.

"Truly technology skills are highly valued in our global community, and this can be one source of the extra stress teachers experience as they approach the learning of technology" (King, 2002, p.21).

This study will be significant in so much as it will provide information about how teachers perceive the importance of computer technologies in foreign language teaching and hence identify what they think about the incorporation of electronic learning. The study also will offer invaluable information to the educational institution as well as to policy makers about the nature of the contribution of e-technologies to the teaching-learning process in the Algerian EFL classroom.

Through doing this research we try to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes among English teachers toward the use of E- learning?
- 2) Does EFL teachers' level of electronic devices use affect their attitudes toward E-learning?
- 3) What are the different barriers that prevent teachers from integrating E-learning?

Our aim in this research is to examine and identify the nature of English as foreign language teachers' attitudes toward the incorporation of e-learning into their teaching, and to define the different factors influencing them.

1. Overview of Methodology and Design

1.1. Choice of the Method:

The research methodology used in this study is the descriptive. Relying on the questionnaire as a research method, both quantitative and qualitative data are used.

1.2. General Description of the Questionnaire

The study uses the Questionnaire as its instrument for gathering both Quantitative and Qualitative data, since the questionnaire is considered one of the most common instruments used in second language research for gathering attitudinal data (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010). The questionnaire for this study was composed of four parts. The first part aims at gathering background information about the participants: their age, sex, teaching experience, and educational level. The second part (Section One) revolves around teachers' readiness and level of computer use and the use of IIT in their TEFL. The third part (Section Two) investigates teachers' likelihood of e-devices use and their broad attitude toward generalizing e-learning within secondary schools teaching programs. The fourth part (Section Three) tackles the main obstacles and barriers to e-learning implementation.

1.3. Population Sampling and Questionnaire Distribution

Fifty five questionnaires were distributed to EFL teachers from different secondary schools of Khenchela (Khenchela, Kais, Bouhmama, Chechar, Yabous, Elhamma, Fais, Babar, Msara, and Ain twila). 30 were returned from the original 57, this yield a total return of approximately (53%).

2. Results

The following section demonstrates and examines teachers' responses to the different items of the questionnaire

2.1. Participants' Characteristics

Part one/ Background Information

In this section participants were asked to respond to four questions related to their age, sex, level of education, and experience.

2.1.1 Teachers' Gender

As for teachers' gender and as it indicated in Table.1, the majority of informants are female 21(70%) and only 9(30%) are males.

2.1.2. Teachers Age:

Among the participants 8 teachers have their age between 40-49 years old, 12 teachers which represent the majority range their age between 30-39 years old, and 06 respondents are between 25-29 years old. Only 02 are under 25 years old and no one of the respondents is older than 60 years old.

2.1.3. Teachers' Educational Level:

The majority of teachers have Bachelor degree 19(63%) and, 09(30%) have Master degree, while only 2(7%) teachers have Magister degree.

2.1.4. Teachers' Experience:

The majority of participants' experience ranges between 6-10 years (09 teachers) and more than 20 years (07 teachers), then comes a category between 3-5 (06 teachers), and 03 teachers ranges between 1-2 years. Only 02 informants have less than one year and one teacher have an experience ranging between 11-15 years.

2.2. Teachers Experience and Level of Electronic Devices Use

The second part of the questionnaire (section one) deals with teachers level and experience with computer and interactive information technology. In this part, teachers were asked to provide exact information about their knowledge of computer use and its integration into

language teaching, the frequency of computer and IIT use, the availability of computer and internet access to teachers.

Q1/Do you have a computer at home?

Q2/Do you have internet access at home?

From 30 teachers 02 do not have computer at home, 22 have computer with internet access at home and 06 have computer at home and 06 have computers at home without internet access.

Q4/How often do you use computer applications?

The results indicate that (67%) of teachers use computers on a daily basis, (17%) use it weekly and (13%) use it occasionally.

Q6/Have you received training on how to integrate technology tools into your EFL teaching?

Few participants reported having received training in technology or computer mediated language learning and teaching. About half of the participants 12 representing (40%) indicated having received no training on how to integrate technology in EFL instruction. 10 (33%) of the participants indicated engaging in a kind of self taught or self training, and only eight (27%) of the total reported having received some training on technology integration in language learning.

Q7/If yes, what type of training have you received?

When asked about types of training have been received, a large majority of the 08 teachers reported receiving computer application like word processing and spreadsheets (87%), basic computer literacy (on/off operation) 75%, while (50%) of the informants reported receiving computer integration (how to use computer in classroom).

Q9/Have you ever used interactive information technology in your EFL teaching?

More than half of the participants 18 (60%) do not use IITs, whereas only twelve (40%) teachers use IIT in their teaching.

Q11/Do you think using IIT helped your students?

The whole sample of 12 teachers that represent 100% agree on the fact that interactive information technology (IIT) helps their students for many reasons and in different ways:

1) Integrating interactive information technology into the classroom is definitely a great way to reach diversity in learning styles.

2) It gives students the chance to interact with their classmates more by encouraging collaboration.

3) Technology helps the teachers prepare students for the real world environment. As our nation becomes increasingly more technology-dependent, it becomes even more necessary that to be successful citizens, students must learn to be tech-savvy

4) Integrating IIT in education everyday helps students stay engaged. Today's students love technology so they are sure to be interested in learning if they can use the tools they love.

5) It helped achieve affective objectives (such as increasing students' motivation).

6) The traditional passive learning mold is broken. With technology in the classroom the teacher becomes the encourager, adviser, and coach.

7) Students become more responsible and apt to learn

8) Student can have access to digital textbooks that are constantly updated and often more vivid, helpful, creative, and a lot cheaper than those old heavy books.

Q12/If you have not used IIT in your EFL teaching, why haven't you used them?

As far as the non-users of information interactive technology (IIT), that represents 60% of the total participants, the main explanation for not having used IIT was lack of time (66.66%). This was followed by a lack of knowledge of how to integrate IIT in EFL teaching, and (16.66%) not comfortable using IIT, while (3.33%) reported having agreed.

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2.3.What kind of attitudes does the use of computer and technology applications provide for you?

The majority of participants share feeling of confidence 27 (90%), enjoyment 19 (63.33%) and pleasure 15 (50%) when using interactive information technology applications, only two (6.67%) respondents feels embarrassed when using computer applications.

3. Discussion of the Results

3.1. Teachers Level and Attitude toward E-learning (Computer & IIT) Use

The difference in participant attitudes occurred among participants grouped by daily and weekly hours computer use. Results indicated a positive link between both daily and weekly computer use and e-learning attitudes among informants. Escalating computer use among teachers resulted in rising positive view of the educational efficiency that electronic learning integration can achieve in EFL. It is not unexpectedly that those teachers using computers regularly have more computer knowledge and thus show more positive attitudes toward their usefulness in foreign language teaching. Green et al. (2000) cited numerous studies indicating the relationship between positive attitudes and increased computer knowledge. Cited in Green et al (2000), a study by Gressard and Loyd (1985) found that in a personnel development, elementary school teachers were less anxious and more confident about computer implementation after training than before. Finnegan & Ivanoff (1991, as cited in Green et al., 2000) established highly positive attitudes towards computers for class social work graduate students following computer training. Also, McCain (1999) found increased knowledge using computers lead to positive attitudes toward computer in education. Research indicates that unfavorable perceptions of computers negatively affect computer literacy, (Chisholm, Irwin & Carey, 2000). The results also indicate that even those teachers who have negative attitudes are not against e-learning implementation but because of certain ignorance of what e-learning represents. As a result, the more one uses computers' technology the more one is likely to see and appreciate the potential of these tools in education. In other words, the lack of knowledge about e-learning technology and the lack of skills influence the successful integration of e-learning among teachers.

3.2 The Different Barriers that Prevent Teachers from Integrating E-learning

- Lack of Teachers Training and Technological Support

It represents the first reason (96.67%) why teachers do not integrate technology in their programs. The study shows that 07% of participants do not know how to use computer technologies. About 40% indicated having received no training on how to integrate technology in EFL teaching, and 27% having received some training on technology integration in language learning (on their own expenses). So the first reason is that teachers have not had appropriate training. Dupgan & Krendel in their study refers to the importance of training for teachers to achieve e-learning implementation.

- Lack of Time

It represents the second reason (73.33) why teachers do not integrate e- learning. 66% of participants do not use IIT because they have not enough time. So providing teachers with enough time in addition to good training would solve the problem and encourage them to integrate technology in their classroom (Hoffman, 1997).

- Unavailability of IIT Technologies

Sixty three percent (63%) of the participants reported that it is the lack of IIT access. The result of the study indicates that 60% of participants do not use IITs due to inexistent access to technology.

- Other barriers to implement e- learning are: lack of money to implement distance education programs (50%), organizational resistance to change (53%), and difficulty keeping up with technological changes (36%)

The barriers that were presented in this results support the previous research done by Berg & Muilenburg (1999) as cited in Simonson (2000:1). Below are the strongest obstacles to technology implementation:

- 1) Increased time commitment
- 2) Lack of money to implement distance education programs
- 3) Organizational resistance to change
- 4) Lack of shared vision for distance education in the organization
- 5) Lack of support staff to help course development
- 6) Lack of strategic planning for distance education
- 7) Slow pace of implementation
- 8) Faculty compensation
- 9) Difficulty keeping up with technological changes
- 10) Lack of technology enhanced classrooms, labs, or infrastructure.

Some other reasons stated by teachers for not using IIT are as follow: 11.11% do not think that IIT would be effective for students, 16.66% are not comfortable using IIT, and 11.11% would first want to see the results from other teachers using interactive information technology.

Conclusion

In this study we surveyed EFL teachers' attitude toward E-learning media and materials in secondary schools. Electronic media and materials are invading every aspect of our lives, including education. Additional, we investigate participants' acuity about the potential of IIT in teaching and learning and tried to prove that its use will create a flexible setting for students to learn and teachers to teach.

In line with Kukulska-Hulme (2013a) states that "while traditional skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking remain the foundation stones of language learning, the new century calls for greater learner autonomy, flexible use of new tools, and sophisticated use of social networks to keep up with the pace of change." Therefore "A smart learner in the 21st century is one who adapts a lifelong learning attitude, recognizes that effective global cross-cultural communication is a strong driving force for language learning and uses technology to enhance their language learning potential". Thus, both teachers and learners have to be familiar with technology.

However, significant e-learning media and materials, their use is still marginalized, if not barred. Consequently, this study aim to found EFL teachers attitude toward e-learning integration in classroom. Correspondently, this study uses as its sample EFL teachers at secondary schools-Khenchela. The instrument used for collecting data from participants is the

questionnaire. The findings of this study revealed that teachers had positive attitudes for future implementation of e-learning in secondary schools (80%), even those who had negative perception are not against its integration, but because of different obstacles. The most significant factors preventing foreign language teachers' use of this innovation is lack of computer facilities, and pedagogical training, etc. In order to eliminate or at least reduce the effect of these barriers on the improvement of our educational system and adaptation of new technologies, a wide access to computer facilities, adequate time, technical support, and pedagogical training must be provided. Only then e-learning will be implemented successfully among teachers.

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