

EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Computer Assisted Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought major changes and developments which helped to improve and change the traditional classroom concepts. In fact, teachers' ways regarding the employment of ICT in their classroom play an important role in the EFL accomplishment. Following the recent trend of the implementation of CALL in EFL classrooms, this study aims to examine how EFL teachers perceive the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning at a foundation University. To answer the research questions, a descriptive research design will be used. 41 EFL teachers working at the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis participated in this study. Two data collection instruments which are developed by Christensen and Knezek (1998) are used. The first instrument is a Survey of Faculty Attitudes Toward Information Technology. The aim of this survey is to gather general information concerning teacher's knowledge and attitudes toward information technology. The second instrument is The Faculty Attitudes Toward Information Technology (FAIT). The results of the study at hand proved that most teachers have a positive attitude towards the implementation of computer assisted language learning in their teaching process. Teachers believe work with computers is stimulating, they don't feel anxious when it comes to implement computers in their classes. They believe that having training session helps them implement and use computers in a proper way. Furthermore, teachers believe computers help them organize their work and time and be well prepared as well as they help both teachers and students to communicate easily beyond the classroom and to create an interactive atmosphere.

Keywords:

Attitudes, Information and Communication technology (ICT), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

1. INTRODUCTION

Technology use for educational purposes and learning languages has been a remarkable interest for a long time. Several countries launched new projects to familiarize both students and teachers with educational technologies. Regarding the promotion of language learning, technology made learning environments more powerful. The idea of joining sounds, texts, animation, and sound graphics has made the educational technology system a great and vital source for activities in languages classroom.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a technique to implement technology in the process of language learning. In fact, much research was carried out to examine the effects of CALL on learning languages.

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It is observed that there is a positive effect of CALL on student learning. This technique demonstrates a very high language proficiency among students.

For a long time now, major investigations related to the use of CALL in various contexts and among different languages have been ongoing. Many researchers have discussed its use as well as its effectiveness for learning and teaching in the sphere of foreign languages (Charischak, 2000; Ayres, 2002; Nesselhauf & Tschichold, 2002; Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002; Robert, 2002; Cushion & Dominique, 2002; Schwienhorst, 2002; Jung, 2002; Bayraktar, 2002; Chika-matsu, 2003; Fenfang, 2003).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For decades, English has become a global means that facilitates communication (Crystal, 2003). Both teaching and learning English have also been exposed to the latest changes and have been affected in many ways. Despite this fact, the

main factor will always be technology and its integration into language teaching and learning processes.

Researchers such as Gorjian, Moosavinia, Ebrahimi Kavari, Asgari and Hydarei (2011) argue that computer technologies support learning in many different ways. In fact, due to the developments of technology, it is necessary for language teachers to be conscious of their own roles. Because computers play a major role in our lives, and as language instructors, we have to be aware of their roles in teaching and learning processes.

It is believed that computers are a mean for communication between teachers and learners. However, the most challenging aspect of using technology and creating an effective learning environment is when teachers do not try to understand how to use technology or computers in the classroom or have enough knowledge about computers as an educator (Hubbard, 2013). A new challenging era of teaching and learning languages has started due to the evolution of technology and learning styles.

As Heffernan and Wang (2008) pointed out in one of their studies that language teachers are obliged to decide what to use when and where to use their materials, and to check their appropriateness by integrating computers into their teaching. Since computers have the capacity to motivate learners, it also grants access to authentic language materials for the language teachers.

Many researchers emphasized the benefits of implementing technology in teachers' education (Volk, 2000; Gentile, Lon-berger, Parana, & West, 2000; Chester, 2001; Schnackenberg, Luik, Nisan, & Servant, 2001; & Berlin & White, 2002). For a long time, several educational researchers investigating the technological effectiveness in both spheres of learning and teaching were present in our lives to help both teachers and learners to develop their learning. This refers to the integration of technology especially multimedia wherever they are.

3. METHODOLOGY

Innovative methods in education and English Language teaching have changed proved to be essential for the growth and development of learners. These revolutionary innovations assist learners to acquire the 21st century skills. Teacher's attitudes toward these innovations and especially toward implementing computer assisted language learning play a significant role in EFL achievements. The following questions would be addressed throughout this study:

Research questions

1. What are the teachers' perceptions about enthusiasm?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions about anxiety?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions about productivity improvement?
4. What are the teachers' perceptions about avoidance?
5. What are the teachers' perceptions about E-mail use for classroom learning regarding the use of CALL?

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis. The English department has more than 55 teachers who supervise more than 800 students in the two licenses: fundamental and applied in English as well as in 4 different masters. The Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis was founded in 1999 at Cité El-Khadhra. It was in fact founded first in 1964 under the name of the Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages, which is situated in the north of Tunisia. It is a public university, which is part of the University of Carthage, which has provided university training in languages and translation since 1976 under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The English department comprises more than 55 teachers and all the courses are taught in English. The university is not a technology based one. In fact, both students and teachers are not exposed to technology as much as they have to. The participants of this study are selected through a voluntary-based sampling method.

Table 1: The demographic Distribution of the Participants in the Study

		F	%
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	21	51.2
	<i>Female</i>	20	48.8
<i>Age</i>	<i>21 – 24</i>	3	7.3
	<i>25 – 29</i>	10	24.4
	<i>30 – 34</i>	6	14.6
	<i>35 – 39</i>	5	12.2
	<i>40 – 44</i>	7	17.1
	<i>45 – 49</i>	4	9.8
	<i>50 – 54 – 55+</i>	6	14.6
<i>Education degree</i>	<i>Bachelor's degree</i>	4	9.8
		24	58.5
	<i>Master's degree</i>	12	29.3
		1	2.4
	<i>PhD Professional degree</i>		

4. PROCEDURES

First, the researcher received the approval from the developer of the questionnaire (Christensen and Kneezek) to use it in the study. Later on, the researcher received the acceptance from the Ethical committee of the Social Institute of Istanbul Aydin University that states the approval to use the survey. The researcher used google form to share the survey with the participants. In fact, all the participants were informed about the purpose of the study before proceeding to answer the questions, and they were assured about the confidentiality of their personal information.

The surveys were distributed via mailing list of the Higher Institute of Languages of Tunis as a Google Form link. The surveys were administered during the end of the Year 2020. The reasons for choosing web-surveys were to faster the process of collecting the data, lower costs, and multimedia interfaces.

The data collected from this study were qualitative and quantitative analysis methods because it includes two open-ended questions at the end of the survey through which the participants mentioned why they like or dislike using computers. In order to answer the research questions of this study, one instrument was used. This instrument is divided into two parts. The first part was the FAIT survey which consists of 68 items. In fact, for this part, SPSS was used to analyze the data in forms of percentages and frequencies for each likert-scale question. The second part consists of two open-ended questions and for this part, a content analysis was used.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that most teachers have positive attitudes towards the implementation of computers in their teaching process and consistent with the ones of Hardy (1998), Hong and Koh (2002), Arkin (2003), Albirini (2006), Teo (2008), Chen (2008), Özerol (2009), Tezci (2009) and Zereyalp (2009), Bordbar (2010), Dashtestani (2012), Aydin (2013), Safdar and Jumani (2013).

The responses to the first item related to Enthusiasm indicate that working with computers is enjoyable and stimulating for the teachers. According to the responses given, the participants enjoy working with computers as much as they want to learn about them and make use of them in their teaching process.

The responses to the second research question consist of finding out how teachers perceive anxiety when it comes to use CALL in their classes. In fact, it can be said that most of the participants do not feel anxious or stressed when they are around computers. It is to be said that they feel more confident when it comes to employ computers in their working and teaching. Computers do not discourage teachers or stress them, on the contrary, it makes them more confident and relaxed towards the implementation of CALL in their teaching.

The responses to the third research question which focused on the teachers' perceptions towards productivity improvement for the use of CALL, the findings indicate that most of the instructors share similar beliefs about computer use. Teachers believe that having training sessions on how to use computers is beneficial and it can help them in the integration of computers in their teaching process. They agree that computers play an important role in educational settings.

When computers are implemented and integrated into the teaching process, the students will get a chance to improve themselves and be more productive with the help of computers.

The responses to the fourth research question which focused on the teachers' perceptions towards avoidance for the use of CALL, teachers do not show negative feelings towards the use of computers. In fact, they believe that computers play an important role in our life and are means and tools to learn new things and most importantly helps them to organize their work and save their time. Most instructors believe that computers are beneficial, that they don't harm our lives on the contrary they are a good method to be well educated and well informed.

The responses to the fifth research question which focused on the teachers' perceptions towards E-mail use for classroom learning regarding the use of CALL, it can be concluded that teachers believe that computers are important and beneficial agents in the teaching process since they help both teachers and students communicate easily beyond the classroom by creating more interaction and motivation.

I like the use of computers because	Number of teachers.
1- Computers are a source of saving teachers' time and Energy	11
2- Computers are a source for the organization of teaching materials and easy access	9
3- Computers are sources for student teacher interaction, communication, motivation and participation	9
4- Computers as a source for multimedia materials	1
5- Computers are sources for teachers' creativity and productivity	4
I Don't like the use of computers because	Number of teachers.
1- Computers are discouraging elements due to technical problems	4
2- Computers are discouraging elements due to institutional barriers	2
3- Computers are discouraging elements due to Interaction	1
4- Computers are discouraging elements due to health issues.	2
5- Computers are discouraging elements due to the lack of information	2

The responses related to the first open-ended question are mostly positive. Teachers expressed their thoughts and ideas about the implementation of CALL in their classrooms

and how they see the progress of their teaching. They believed that computer saves their time, energy and gives them more access to wide resources and materials to be shared with their students. Computers help them interact with their students and be productive and motivated. On the other hand, some responses were negative towards the use of computers and the implementation of CALL in the classrooms. In fact, some instructors believe that because of the technical problems that they cannot cope with, they would rather not implement computers or use them on a daily basis. The reason for this statement is because they find difficulties in understanding how to use computers and this discourage them from using it as a very effective tool in the learning process. Some other instructors blame the institutional barriers and the lack of resources. Others claimed that computers are a source of health problems as it harms their eyes and back. Lastly, some instructors believe that computers are time-consuming objects. In fact, they claimed that looking for new resources or materials makes them waste their time and not be productive.

6. CONCLUSION

This study at hand attempted to examine the EFL teacher's attitudes towards Computer Assisted Language Learning. In accordance with the present results, it was proved that most of the participants in this study showed positive attitudes towards the implementation and the usage of computers in their language classes.

The findings of this study will help the teachers to be more aware of the importance of the implementation of CALL in their language classes. This will help them to be more productive and encourage their students to interact with them and be more autonomous. Similarly, the findings will benefit the institution as well to provide the materials needed for the teachers and students. Also, EFL teachers will be more aware of the benefits of CALL.

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