Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of Technology in Teaching General English

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled "Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of Technology in Teaching General English" presents the results of a research dealing with the technology usage in teaching EFL within the curriculum of general English at the levels A0 Starter- A1Elementray -A2 Pre-intermediate in Zawia Language Centre at Zawia University during the academic year, Fall semester 2023-2024 .The research focuses on analyzing the language teachers' experience, practices and attitudes towards using technology- teaching general English . This study includes a comprehensive literature review, highlighting the benefits and challenges of incorporating technology in language education, specifically focusing on using technology in teaching general English. A detailed questionnaire was designed for teachers to gather insights into their experiences, preferences, and the perceived impact of technology on English language instruction within the context of technology- used in teaching general English. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative analyses to explore the attitudes of 20 English language teachers at Zawia Language Centre towards technology-assisted language teaching. The investigation focused on the implementation of the Face2Face curriculum at levels A0 Starter- A1Elementray -A2 Pre-intermediate during the Fall semester of 2023-2024 at Zawia University.

Keywords: Integration of technology, Professional development, Attitudes.

"اراء المعلمين اتجاه استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية العامة"

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ملخَّص البحث:

هذه الدراسة المعنونة "آراء المعلمين تجاه استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية العامة" تقدم نتائج بحث يتناول استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ضمن منهج اللغة الإنجليزية العامة على المستويات الثلاث (مبتدئ، مبتدئ متقدم، متوسط مبكر) في مركز اللغات بجامعة الزاوية في السنة الدراسية فصل الخريف 2023–2024. تركز البحث على تحليل تجربة وممارسات واتجاهات معلمي اللغة نحو استخدام تعليم اللغة المساعد بواسطة التكنولوجيا

تشمل هذه الدراسة استعراضًا شاملاً للمراجع الأدبية، حيث تسلط الضوء على فوائد وتحديات دمج التكنولوجيا في التعليم اللغوي، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية العامة. تم تصميم استبيان مفصل للمعلمين لجمع الأفكار حول تجاربهم وتفضيلاتهم والتأثير المحسوس للتكنولوجيا في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية داخل سياق استخدام التكنولوجيا في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية العامة. استخدمت هذه الدراسة نهجًا مختلطًا، مدمجًا بين التحليل الكيفي والكمي لاستكشاف آراء 20 معلمًا لغة إنجليزية في مركز اللغات بجامعة الزاوية تجاه تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بمساعدة التكنولوجيا. ركزت الدراسة على تنفيذ منهج Face2Face على مستويات A2–A1–A0 خلال فصل الخريف لعام 2023–2024 في جامعة الزاوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : المعلمين، التكنولوجيا، اللغة الانجليزية.

1. Introduction

The integration of technology in education has become increasingly common, transforming classrooms into dynamic spaces where traditional methods converge with cutting-edge tools. As Jim Scrivener noted, *"For many years teachers were told that the technological revolution was just around the corner and that we would all be using computers in class on a regular basis"* (Scrivener, 2000, p. 334).

In today's ever –changing educational landscape, the integration of technology has emerged as a transformative force reshaping traditional paradigms and revolutionizing classroom dynamics. The use of technology in teaching general

English provides various benefits. It allows for the integration of multimedia elements, such as videos, audio clips, and interactive exercises, which can capture students' interest and cater to different learning styles. Technology also enables access to authentic language materials, such as real-world texts, podcasts, and online communication platforms, which expose learners to authentic language use and culture contexts. As Arne Duncan mentioned *"Technology is transforming education, changing how, when, and where students learn and empowering them at every stage of their journey."* Duncan, (2011).

The high Ministry of education of Libya has taken a range of procedures to use technology to improve teaching and learning English in Libyan universities. In 2006 The high Ministry of education suggested the use of audiovisual materials in the language classes. Zawia University started developing supplementary classroom teaching and learning software for English language classes. The software was associated with the British Council Curriculum Face2Face Coursebooks which used in teaching general English till now.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The present study perceives the challenge of effective integration of using technology into the English language teaching process as a research problem. The following questions have been raised by the researchers:

1. What is the reality of using technology in teaching English language from teachers' point of view?

2. What is the respondents' general experience in the

use of technology in teaching general English ?

1.2 Aims of the Study

The major objective of the study is to raise the quality of teaching English through the improved efficiency in the use technology which highly depends on the language teachers' awareness. Accordingly, the present study

aims at providing valuable insights into the role of technology in language education , analyzing the English language teachers' attitudes towards the real level of technology usage , assessing the perceived benefits and challenges encountered by teachers using technology in language instruction and providing recommendations for optimizing the use of technology in teaching general English at Zawia Language Centre .

1.3 Significance of the Study

Understanding the effeteness of technology in teaching general English holds immense significance in shaping contemporary educational practices.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding educational technology, providing valuable perspectives for curriculum development and instructional improvement.

2. Literature Review

Undoubtedly, the style of language teaching has changed over the years. Technology has become familiar in usage; it cannot be excluded from teaching or learning. Resources and supplementary materials for both teachers and students are simply accessed. Classes which use technology transfer from teacher-centered to student-centered classes. Pitler et. al. refer to the advantages of using technology in classes; "*they state that it enhances learning and understanding, and it encourages students to take active part in the learning process. It also has a positive impact to shift education from being teacher-centered to student-centered.*" Pitler et. al. (2007, p. 3)

Information and references for both teachers and students are easily accessed. In fact, teachers who cannot cope with modern technology lose contact with their students. Thus, teachers have to invest technology as much as they can in order to improve themselves as well as the teaching and learning processes. Muir-Herzig (2004, p.113) states that teaching and learning via technology engage learners in active situations of critical thinking to solve problems, share ideas with others and reflect what they have known.

The use of information and communication technology cannot be underestimated in language teaching and learning process because emerging technologies make it relevant and practical to approach learning . It is essential for modern day teachers and learners to keep side by side of the modern trend at improving teaching and learning of English Language through the use of Information and Communication Technology. As Couros stated *"Technology will not replace great teachers, but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational.*" Couros (2015)

3. Previous Studies

The researchers present the following previous studies which are related to the aims of the present study in one way or another:

Stepp - Greany (2002, p.165) has used survey data from Spanish classes using different kinds of technology to determine the importance of the role of teachers, the relevance and availability of technology labs and individual components, and the effect of using technology on the learning process of a foreign language. Concerning the students' point of view, results have proved the importance of teachers' roles to facilitate learning, regularly scheduled labs and CD Rom. Stepp-Greany recommends a follow up study to determine the effect of using technology on the learning process of a foreign language.

Muir-Herzig (2004, p. 126) has carried a study to measure the effect of using technology in classrooms of a high school in Northwest Ohio. The study has shown that teachers' usage of technology was little. Muir-Herzig confirms the necessity of training teachers in order to include technology in the curriculum, so that to be effective.

Ermer, P. A. (2005, p. 25-39) explored the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their attitudes towards technology integration. The findings suggested that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning significantly influence their willingness and ability to effectively integrate technology into their instructional practices.

Shyamlee (2012, p . 155) has analyzed the necessity of using multimedia technology to language teaching. The analysis has shown that using multimedia technology has the feature of enhancing students' learning motivation and attention. This leads to involve students in the practical process of language learning through communication with each other. Shyamlee recommends using multimedia technology in classrooms due to its positive effect on the teaching process without overlooking the teacher's effective role.

Nomass (2013, p . 111) has done a case study to show the role of modern technology approaches in teaching English as a second language, and the drawbacks of the conventional approach of teaching. She has focused on using learning web sites, computers programs, presentation software, electronic dictionaries, chatting and emails, CDs and video clips.

Suebnusorn, W. (2013, p . 213-223) investigated English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' beliefs and practices regarding technology integration in Thailand. The findings revealed a range of beliefs among teachers, with some expressing positive attitudes towards technology and integration into their teaching practices , while others faced challenges such as limited access to technology and lack of training.

4. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses to investigate the attitudes of 20 English language teachers at Zawia Language Centre regarding the use of technology in teaching general English using the Face2Face curriculum at levels A0-A1-A2 during the Fall semester of 2023-2024 at Zawia University.

4.1 Data Collection

The data collection process involved two main methods:

1-Questionnaire Survey: A quantitative questionnaire survey was administered to the same group of teachers to gather structured data on their general experiences with technology in teaching general English. This stage was

fulfilled after the actual delivery of the general English courses fall semester 2023-2024.The survey focused on gathering quantitative data to complement and validate the qualitative insights obtained from the interviews.

2-Formal Interviews: Formal interviews were conducted with the English language teachers to gain qualitative insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of technology in language teaching. These interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of the teachers' attitudes, challenges faced, and effective strategies related to technology integration. In addition ,the method of a planned formal interview was applied for in detail discussion of the teachers' experience and opinion with regard using technology during the given courses.

4.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. What is the reality of using technology in teaching English language from teachers' point of view?

2. What is the respondents' general experience in the use of technology in teaching general English?

4.3 Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the formal interviews were analyzed thematically to identify key themes, patterns, and rich descriptions of the teachers' perspectives. Concurrently, the quantitative data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using statistical methods to generate numerical summaries and trends regarding the teachers' general experiences with technology in teaching English.

The supplementary data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview has been referred to by Burgess as a 'conversation with a purpose' (1984), the characteristics of which include:

• The interviewer and respondents engage in formal interview.

• The interviewer develops and uses an interview guide. This is a list of open-ended questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation usually in a practical order.

• The open-ended nature of the question defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. It often includes prompts to help the interviewee to answer.

The researcher interviewed 20 English language teachers with some questions concerning the research topic. See appendix (2).

4.4 Integration of Findings

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes and experiences of English language teachers regarding technology integration in language teaching. This mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation of data and enhanced the overall validity and reliability of the study's findings.

5. Discussion and Findings

The following detailed findings offer a comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes towards using technology in teaching general English, shedding light on both the perceived benefits and challenges associated with its implementation. The tables (1) and (2) below show the numbers of the teachers and theirs evaluations.

Table (1) Category 1: Perception and Benefits

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1-I believe that technology enhances student engagement in general English classes.	19	1	/	/	/
2-Integrating technology into my teaching practices improves students' language proficiency.	14	6	/	/	/
3-I feel confident in my ability to effectively use technology in teaching general English.	9	11	/	/	/
4-Technology offers valuable opportunities for personalized learning in general English instruction.	12	8	/	/	/
5-I believe that technology should be an integral part of teaching general English in today's classrooms.	17	3	/	/	/

Table (2) Category2: Challenges and Concerns

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
6- Integrating technology into general English lessons poses logistical challenges (e.g., technical issues…etc)	16	4	/	/	/
7-Concerns about the digital divide among students hinder my willingness to use technology in teaching general English.	5	15	/	/	/
8-Resistance from students towards using technology in English language instructions is a significant barrier.	9	8	2	1	/
9-I find it challenging to ensure that the use of technology aligns with my pedagogical goals in teaching general English.	7	4	3	6	/
10-Despite the challenges, I believe that technology has the potential to significantly enhance the learning experience in general English classes.	14	3	3	/	/

Based on the findings from the questionnaire, it is evident that teachers hold generally positive attitudes towards using technology in teaching general

English. The average rating for overall is 5, 4, indicating a strong positive attitude towards technology integrating among teachers, along with a recognition of its benefits and challenges.

The majority of respondents recognize the potential benefits of integrating technology into their instructional practice, including enhanced student engagement, personalized learning experiences and improved language proficiency. However, the findings also shed light on several challenges and concerns that teachers face when incorporating technology in general English instruction. Issues such as the digital divide among students, resistance from students towards technology , the need for comprehensive training programs, addressing technical challenges, and incorporating advanced features to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

Whereas the results of the formal interviews with the teachers add more details and clarity to the findings obtained through a questionnaire which presented above. The teachers are enthusiastic with regard to different forms of technology into language classes as for instance classes in the multimedia language teaching laboratory. The teachers to a large extent agree about the efficiency of using technology in teaching general English in terms of the resources contained there, such as video lectures, presentations, interactive exercises for self-check and others. In what follows, the teachers believe that technology provides opportunities for authentic language use and real-time communication which helps improve students' speaking and listening skills

The present research shows that the English language teachers demonstrate a generally positive attitude towards using technology in teaching general English.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, while technology offers numerous opportunities to enhance that teaching and learning experience in general English classes, its effective integration requires careful consideration of these challenges and the implementation of strategies to address them. Future research and professional development initiatives should focus on providing teachers with the necessary training, resources, and support to overcome these obstacles and maximize the benefits of technology in teaching general English. By doing so , educators can create more engaging , effective ,and inclusive learning environments that empower students to success in their language acquisition journey.

7. Recommendations

The researchers have identified several key recommendations that would be beneficial to adopt in the context of technology-enhanced language teaching. Firstly, it is crucial to develop and implement comprehensive training programs that encompass both technical skills and pedagogical strategies for integrating

technology into the classroom. These programs should also include mechanisms for ongoing support and professional development to ensure that educators remain proficient and up-to-date with the latest advancements.

Moreover, addressing the digital divide is essential by ensuring equitable access to technology and digital resources for all students, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. This effort will help to create a more inclusive and fair educational environment where every student has the opportunity to benefit from technological advancements.

In addition, fostering partnerships with technology providers, experts, and educational institutions is highly recommended. Such collaborations can facilitate access to advanced tools, resources, and best practices, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of technology-enhanced language teaching.

Lastly, establishing technical support teams or help desks to assist both teachers and students with any technical issues they encounter is paramount. Prompt and effective technical support can significantly reduce the frustration and downtime associated with technology-related problems, allowing educators to focus on teaching and students to focus on learning.

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Appendix (1)

Thank you for participating in this survey on Teachers' attitudes towards using technology in teaching general English. Your feedback is valuable in understanding perspectives and enhancing educational practices.

Demographic information:

Name (Optional):

Years of teaching experience:

Educational background:

Please rate the following statements. Use the following rating scale:

(5) Strongly agree   (4)Agree   (3) Neutral   (2)Disagree   (1)Strongly disagree

Category 1: Perception and Benefits

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
1-I believe that technology enhances student engagement in general English classes.					
2-Integrating technology into my teaching practices improves students' language proficiency.					
3-I feel confident in my ability to effectively use technology in teaching general English.					
4-Technology offers valuable opportunities for personalized learning in general English instruction.					
5-I believe that technology should be an integral part of teaching general English in today's classrooms.					

Category2: Challenges and Concerns

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
6- Integrating technology into general English lessons poses					

logistical challenges (e.g., technical issues…etc)				
7-Concerns about the digital divide among students hinder my willingness to use technology in teaching general English.				
8-Resistance from students towards using technology in English language instructions is a significant barrier.				
9-I find it challenging to ensure that the use of technology aligns with my pedagogical goals in teaching general English.				
10-despite the challenges, I believe that technology has the potential to significantly enhance the learning experience in general English classes.				

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

1- To what extent do you believe that incorporating technology enhances the overall effectiveness of your English language lessons? Which tools or platforms do you use and how often do you use them in your English language lessons?

2-In your experience, how does technology aid in fostering a collaborative learning environment in your English classroom?

3- How strongly do you feel that using technology allows you to tailor English lessons to meet individual student needs more effectively?

4- How strongly do you believe that students' language proficiency improves significantly when technology is integrated into the English curriculum?

5-How do you believe technology supports the development of different skills (listening, speaking, reading ,writing) in general English teaching?

6- To what extent do you think technology allows you to provide timely and constructive feedback on students' English language assignments?

7- How confident are you in troubleshooting and resolving technical issues that may raise during English lessons? And have you received any professional development or training on integrating technology into your English language teaching?