

Technology Use in EFL Classroom: Teachers' Attitudes and Concerns

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Abstract

Today, throughout the world, there is an awareness of the fundamental role of the Internet in education; yet, many EFL teachers are reluctant to use it. This paper aims at investigating the EFL teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and concerns regarding the use of the internet in their teaching. In particular, the study attempts to provide answers to the following questions: To what extent are language teachers familiar with internet use in the classroom? Is the use of internet in class an important issue for them? Will the teachers be willing to use the Internet in their teaching? What concerns do the teachers raise over internet use in the classroom? A questionnaire was e-mailed to 50 teachers from the department of English. The findings revealed that all the respondents are not only quite familiar with the Internet

ملخص

يتزايد اليوم وفي كل مكان وعينا بالدور الكبير والاساسي الذي يحتله الانترنت في ميدان التعليم، حيث يزداد إصرار أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية على استغلال هذه التكنولوجيا، وذلك لأجل استثمار الإمكانيات التي تتيحها الشبكة في تعليم اللغات. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد المواقف والآراء التي تكشف مدى إلمام أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية وتمكنهم من استعمال الأمثل للانترنت، وبالأخص تدرّس اللغة الانجليزية لغير الناطقين. ولذلك تطرح هذه الدراسة جملة من الأسئلة لأجل الإجابة عنها، وهي: - مدى إلمام المعلمين ببرامج الانترنت؟ ما موقفهم من استخدام الانترنت في التدريس؟ ثم هل هناك استعداد للاستخدام الأمثل للانترنت؟ وما هي العوائق والمخاوف التي تعترضهم؟ الإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة تم إرسال

technology, but they express their strong willingness to integrate it in their teaching too. To a large extent, the results corroborate with previous—studies—on ICT in educational settings.

الاستبيان إلى 50 أستاذًا بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث بينت النتائج بعدد يلها الاستعداد الكبير لاستثمار هذه التكنولوجيا في العملية التعليمية، وهذا يعكس مدى استفادة الأساتذة من الدروس التي قدمت لهم في مقياس TIC.

Introduction:

For several years and in many parts of the world, the traditional-approach with its constrained pedagogical resources (the teacher, the chalkboard, and the textbook) has marked the teaching of English. Various studies (Grauss, 1999; Guefrachi and Troudi 1999) report that practically, most of the learners who were taught via this method could not communicate fluently in the target language. However, different developments in the educational field came about in the last twenty years, resulting in more emphasis on individualistic instruction, and authenticity in language learning. Undoubtedly, there is a greater focus on the learner, and on the development of communicative, as opposed to simply linguistic, competence (Kitao & Kitao, 1998). Moreover, the advent of technologies such as television, video, tape recorders, etc. has had a substantial impact on foreign language teaching. The latest profit to language teaching is the computer and the Internet technologies which significantly influenced the way languages are taught. Considerable studies (Warschauer 1997, 2000, Hanson-Smith, 1997; Kamhi-Stein 2002; Stepp- Greany, 2002; Brandl, 2002; Parks S et al, 2003) have been carried out and their findings have proved that the integration of the computer and the Internet technologies into EFL classrooms definitely improved the teaching and learning. It grants teachers and students the opportunity to attain authentic materials and connect with native and non-native speakers from all over the globe. Today, throughout the world, there is consciousness of the important role of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the field of education in general and in FL in particular. However, only a few studies attested the construction of a theoretical groundwork akin to the usage of computer and the Internet technologies in teaching (Warschauer, 1997; Chafe, 1999). This framework requires evidence from quantitative and

qualitative research methodology to explore the multifaceted nature of the teaching /learning process. This study aims at enlarging research in the area. Its purpose is to investigate the teachers' attitudes, beliefs, willingness and concerns about the use of the Internet technologies in the EFL classroom.

1- Internet Use in EFL Teaching

During the previous decades, the usage of Internet technologies as teaching and learning implements has been very fast extending into EFL instruction. According to Watson (2006),-the Internet technology serves as a mediating tool for technology-enhanced and student-centered educational environments This idea is further elaborated on by Chen (2008 a, p. 16) who stated that the Internet, "...has become possible and feasible for language teachers to make effective use of instructional materials, especially in teaching language and culture".

Hubbard (2004, p.45) points out that the quick spread-out of the Internet has occurred into language teaching due to the following reasons:

1. The Internet applications (i.e., asynchronous computer-mediated communication (ACMC) like electronic bulletin boards or e-mails) promote interactive language learning for both learners and teachers.
2. The resources on the World Wide Web make language learning and teaching easy and accessible. They afford valuable and varied learning resources for teachers and learners.

He explained that the learners not only enhance their language skills by interacting with different Internet applications, but they also perform well on the Internet to probe varied language learning materials, which suit their learning requirements, expectations, and objectives. For example, he showed that through an electronic mail interchange, EFL learners can easily communicate with each other which in turn will encourage them defeat issues like shyness, peer pressure inside the classroom. Learners manage to overcome an intimidating language learning environment, which may appear in face-to-face communication with peers or teachers (Chen, 2008; Yang, 2001).

Essentially, the Internet applications give the opportunity to language learners to be exposed to a real-life target language (English) and present them with enormous chances to learn that language away from the constraints imposed by the classroom environment.

2- Advantages of Using the Internet:

It is argued that Internet proffers genuine materials-enriched sources for EFL instruction (Watson, 2006). Such sources, as explained previously, are a means of increasing interactivity for EFL/ESL learners. In addition, when using these authentic materials-enriched sources, learners are stimulated and motivated. Former studies (Warschauer, 1999; Yang, 2001) have, for instance, inquired the usefulness of Internet use in EFL classrooms. Their findings indicate that learners were highly stimulated to read and listen to Internet-based audio instances for hours because they did appreciate doing such learning tasks. Doing so, they could manipulate their own learning goals and pace, develop their learning autonomy and create a more learner-centered instructional situation that gives them opportunity to make personal decisions about their own learning choices.

Using the Net in EFL classrooms offers language teachers many advantage. Further studies are called for to explore more benefits how this technology helps forward EFL teaching and learning process.

3- The Investigation:

Consequently, the aim of the present paper is to provide answers to the following questions.

- a) To what extent are language teachers familiar with internet use in the classroom?
- b) Is the use of internet in class an important issue for them?
- c) Will the teachers be willing to use the Internet in their teaching?
- d) What concerns do the teachers raise over the internet use in the classroom?

In order to answer this question, the following methodological procedure has been followed:

3-1 Setting and Participants:

This study took place in the department of English, at the teacher training school in Constantine. A questionnaire was administered to 50 male and female teachers (both part-time and full-time teachers). All of the participants were kindly asked to fill out a questionnaire.

3-2 The Questionnaire:

A questionnaire (Appendix 1) , as a research tool to gather necessary data, was used for the present study. It consists of three sections which seek to gather information on the following:

- (a) The participants' qualifications and teaching experiences
- (b) The participants' experience in using computer programs and educational software
- (c) The teachers' beliefs, attitudes, willingness, and concerns toward the notion of integrating the Internet in their teaching;

The questionnaire was piloted with a random sample of twenty teachers of the department of English at the ENS-Constantine (Ecole Normale Supérieure de Constantine). The constructive feedback from these teachers was taken into consideration in rewording and deleting the items that were irrelevant to the purpose of the study. Additionally, language mistakes were corrected, some instructions and directions were modified. For these aims, the pilot study proved very beneficial.

4- The Findings:

The results show:

4-1 Teachers' Qualifications and Work Experience:

As shown in table 1 and 2 below, the informants have different teaching experience and qualifications ranging from Magister to Doctorate. The least experienced respondents (10%) have three years, and the most experienced (2%) have thirty years teaching practice. The rest has between twenty eight and twenty four. As for their qualifications (table 2) ,the respondents were divided between those who hold a PhD (16%) and others (84%) who qualified for a magister degree.

Number of Informants	Number of Years	Percentages
01	30	2%
01	28	2%
02	08	4%
05	12	10%
05	03	10%
06	24	12%
09	26	18%
09	04	18%
12	06	24%
50		100%

Table 1: Teachers' work experience

Educational background	Number	percentage
Magister	42	84%
Doctorate	08	16%
Total	50	100 %

Table 2: Teachers' qualifications

4-2 The teachers experience in using computer programs and educational software

All the teachers have personal computers and Internet access at home. More than half (57%) use it continuously. Despite this fact, none of these uses this technology in his/her classroom. However, the participants noted that they used the Internet for different reasons which are:

- (1) Doing research,
- (2) reading online news,
- (3) watching videos for fun, and
- (4) Downloading supplementary materials for reading classes.

The teachers valued the search for information as for instructional purposes which include: (1) Classroom material design, (2) Supplementary classroom materials, (3) Outside classroom assignments.

4-3 Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, willingness, and concerns towards integrating the Internet in their teaching:

Teachers' beliefs

Although the majority of participants (76 %) agreed that they would be innovative teachers without necessarily using the Internet in the classroom,

(88%) believed that the use of this technology would meet their teaching goals. (72%) of the informants fully agreed that such a tool would facilitate their teaching- learning process, but (68%) of the participants thought that they would not feel comfortable with Internet in the classroom.

Question Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Number
a	02/4%	03/6%	38/76%	07/14%	50
b	44/88%	6/12%	00/00%	00/00%	50
c	00/00%	00/00%	14/28%	36/72%	50
d	1/2%	00/00%	15/30%	34/68%	50

Table 3: Teachers' Beliefs in the Use of the Internet in EFL classrooms

Teachers' attitudes

Table 4 below shows that almost all the participants share the same attitudes toward the integration of the Internet into the EFL classroom. All (100%) agreed that technology- oriented pedagogy offers more advantages than traditional classrooms. Nearly all (94%) thought it helps learners learn better. And most of them (76%) believed that it facilitates the teaching-learning process and makes the subject matter more enjoyable. For (94%), Internet serves as a facilitating tool for numerous language skills learning activities.

Question Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a	00/ 00%	00/00%	00/00%	50/100%
b	00/00%	00/00%	3/6%	47/94%
c	0/00%	00/00%	12/24%	38/76%
d	00	00	3/6%	47/94%

Table 4: Teachers' attitudes towards the Use of the Internet in EFL classrooms

Teachers' willingness

As regards, the participants' willingness to use the internet in their teaching, we can say that teachers in general, all agreed (100%) that they would integrate it in the classroom. However, their uses vary depending on their purposes. The internet would be useful in the following areas:

- To teach interactive listening and reading skills,
- To design teaching materials,
- To enhance interactive classroom interactions

- To help students improve their skills and develop their learning autonomy. Table 5 summarizes our findings

Question Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a	00/00%	00/00%	4/8%	46/92%
b	00/00%	00/00%	24/48%	26/52%
c	00/00%	00/00%	2/4%	48/96%
D	00/00%	00/00%	13/26%	37/74%

Table 5: Teachers’ Willingness in the Use of the Internet in EFL Classrooms

Teachers’ concerns

The participants’ concerns about the use of the Internet in the classroom could be summed up in the following:

- The unavailability of the Internet in the classroom.
- The lack or insufficient training on the use of the Internet for EFL learning and teaching sufficient.
- Culturally inappropriate web sites
- Insufficient time allotment and large size of classes

Nevertheless, if these difficulties are overcome, most of the teachers - if not all- would agree to integrate the internet in their teaching as shown in table 6.

Question Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	00/00%	00/00%	00/00%	50/100%
	00/00%	02/4%	30/60%	18/36%
	00/00%	00/0%	00/00%	50/100%
	00/00%	00/00%	01/2%	49/98%

Table 6: Teachers’ Concerns about the Use of the Internet in EFL Classrooms

Discussion:

The informants’ demographic information indicates that there is no correlation between the teachers’ qualifications and work experience and their use of the internet in class. Despite their relatively long training and professional maturity, teachers reported their limited use of the internet as a pedagogical aid in class. They were not keen to adopt this technology as part of their teaching not because they were reluctant to or unfamiliar with computer programs and educational software (they have continuous access from 12 to 35 hours a week at home), but because other reasons might have prevented them from doing so. Our findings on teachers’ concerns revealed that:

- a) The teachers' fear that students may use the internet irresponsibly: Students will ignore their learning, and focus on the fun aspect of the Internet. Yet These concerns, though "natural and global" (Chafe, 1999; Grauss1999), teachers can overcome them by planning, supervising, and setting clear goals behind any Internet activity
- b) The teachers also fear the lack of equipment maintenance: No one can deny that the institution has encouraged technology investment. The ENSC has provided computers, computers labs and made Internet access available everywhere at school (through wire, and wireless),but keeping computers in good condition by operating regular checking and repairing the damaged PC's is what makes teachers skeptical and reluctant to rely on this technology in class.
- c) Time allotment and size of classes: As long as teachers are not trained for group work teaching and collaborative learning, they are unwilling to venture into such an experience.

However, it worth noting that the use of the internet does not seem to be a threatening issue for the ENSC teachers. Unlike previous studies (Al-Mekhlafi, 2004) which report that teachers are -afraid of losing their roles as the main authority and source of knowledge in the classroom, the ENSC teachers' qualifications and certainly long experience allow them to say: '*I would be an innovative teacher without using the Internet*' (Questionnaire; item a; Q. 11). We believe that whatever situation teachers find themselves in, internet can never be a threat. Rather, as Chen (2008a: 34) argues "internet would complement their roles in facilitating the teaching-learning process".

On the other hand, what needs to be highlighted, in this study, is certainly the teachers' positive attitude and willingness towards the use of internet. Most of our respondents are aware that the Internet could improve their performance, allow their access to authentic materials and develop their research skills. In a word, their opinions about the internet benefits could be summed up in one of our participants' words: "*To me, education without technology is like some food without spices*". This positive attitude not only gives support to previous studies (Woodrow,1992; Kersaint, et al ,2003;Chen, 2008.) but it also opens up an optimistic prospect concerning the future use of this technology by the teachers. The teachers' readiness for integrating this modern tool as an instructional device can be illustrated by another excerpt from our data: "*We turn to the Internet as well as other resources to provide our students with more authentic and focused materials as a way to enhance their learning.*"

Conclusion and recommendations:

The study has attempted to investigate the use of the Internet by EFL teachers at the ENS of Constantine. Teachers' familiarity with the digital technologies, their views on their benefits, and the difficulties they are likely to hinder the process were discussed. Even though the Internet facilities are available in the school, and all teachers are familiar with the Internet applications, and are willing to integrate these in their teaching; none of them uses this technology as an instructional tool.

Several teachers, as illustrated in this survey, consider the Internet as a useful pedagogical resource. Yet, this technology should not be regarded as a wand that apparently could deal with all educational problems. Internet is first and foremost a motivational tool for students and an empowering device for teachers. Research has proved that it could lead to their professional progress by affording them possibilities to access the more recent suited research and also to exchange information with experts from all over the world. Therefore, the integration of the Internet in schools and in the EFL classroom is a requirement which calls upon a lot of efforts from software designers, developers, computer programmers, Web designers, researchers, and classroom teachers in order to realize curricular objectives.

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Appendix A:

Questionnaire:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine your opinions and attitudes toward the application of Internet technologies in EFL classes at the ENS. Please fill out this questionnaire as honestly as possible. Your answers will be kept absolutely confidential. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Section 1: Information Background

Education and Experience

1-How many years of teaching experience do you have? 24years.

2-What is your highest educational background? Please select the most appropriate item.

Magister ☐ Doctorat ☒

3 - What is your area of specialization in English? Please select the most appropriate item.

Literature ☐

Translation ☐

Linguistics ☒

TEFL ☐

Civilization ☐

Computer-Using Experience

4-Do you have a high-speed Internet connection and networked computer in your classroom?

Yes ☒ No ☐

5-If yes, proceed to the following questions:

a. How often do you use the Internet in the classroom a week on average?

Per week NEVER

b. What do you use the Internet for in the classroom?

c. How long have you been using the Internet in the classroom?

.....

6-Do you have a high-speed Internet connection and networked computer at home?

Yes ☒ NO ☐

7-If yes, proceed to the following questions:

a. How often do you use the Internet at home a week on average?

DAILY per week

b. What do you use the Internet for at home?

RESEARCH. DOWNLOADING BOKS.

8-Do you use the Internet for your students mainly for:(you can tick more than one box)

- a. Classroom materials design?

☒
- b. Supplementary classroom materials?

☒
- c. Outside classroom assignments?

☐
- d. Any other reason ? (please, specify).....

9- Whatever your answer to question 9 , please explain briefly why:

10- Whatever your answer to question 9 , please explain how such activities are implemented.....

Section 2: Teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, willingness and concerns toward the use of Internet in EFL classroom

11-Teacher Belief

- a- I would be an innovative teacher without using the Internet.
- b-The use of the Internet does not meet my teaching goals.
- c- The Internet makes me feel uncomfortable when I teach.
- d-The Internet-based instruction will change teacher roles as authorities and sources of knowledge.

Strongly disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Strongly agree (SA)
		X	
X			
X			
X			
Strongly disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Strongly agree (SA)
			X
X			
X			
X			

12-Teacher Attitude

- a- Using Internet in EFL classroom offers more advantages than traditional classrooms.
- b-Computer and Internet technology does help students learn English
- c-Using Internet technology in the classroom would make the subject matter more interesting and facilitate English learning.
- d- Internet serves as a facilitating tool for numerous language skills learning activities.

13-Teacher Willingness

- a- I will use the Internet for teaching listening and reading skills.
- b-I will use the Internet to design my teaching materials.
- c- If I had Internet access in the classroom, I would like to maximize the use of the Internet for classroom activities
- d- I will use the Internet to help my students improve their English skills and build/develop their learning autonomy.

Strongly disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Strongly agree (SA)
			X
		X	
		X	
		X	
Strongly disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Strongly agree (SA)
			X
		X	
	X		
	X		

14Teacher Concern

- a- I would use the Internet if I receive my institutional support (e.g., the availability of the Internet in the classroom).
- b-Teachers need sufficient training on the use of the Internet for EFL learning and teaching.
- c- I would use the Internet where sites are culturally appropriate.
- d-I would make use of the Internet if it suits my instructional time allotment, class sizes, and sufficient equipment.

Section 3: Teachers ‘Suggestions about the integration of the Internet on the Teaching-Learning Process.

15-Do you believe that the integration of the Internet into school curricula will facilitate the teaching-learning process?

Yes ☒ No ☐

16- If yes, please explain how : it will make teaching material more available.

17-What roles does the Internet play in EFL instruction in general?

Makes learning and teaching easier and quicker.