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THE WAYS TO IMPROVE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS OF EFL TEACHERS

Abstract. ICT plays an important role in the maintenance of Education. In the XXI century, ICT has become a central issue for educators to integrate into the curriculum, thus leading to high performance of learners in the classroom. This study focuses on EFL teachers in secondary schools with different years of experience. This paper analyzes challenges/problems teachers face while using ICT, the level of ICT usage among the secondary school English Language Teachers and teachers' perceptions towards integrating ICT in an English classroom.

The application of technology can progress interest and inspiration of learners. Innovation offers second language learners information, outcomes and feedback; it also offers teachers efficient way of coordinating course contents and to communicate with many learners. Nevertheless, the usage of technology is encouraged and instructors can alter their teaching practices and instructional approaches, so that, available tools are utilized in the most efficient manner. It is recommended that caution to be taken when using technology to support language education.

Keywords: ICT, the English classroom, English Teachers, English Language, challenges, perception, integration.
In this article, the acronym/abbreviation ICT, EFL will be used. ICT – Information and Communication Technology ; EFL – English as a Foreign Language

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Аннотация. ИКТ играют важную роль в поддержании образования. В XXI веке ИКТ стали центральным вопросом для включения преподавателей в учебную программу, что привело к высокой успеваемости учащихся в классе. Это исследование ориентировано на учителей английского языка как иностранного в средних школах с разным опытом работы. В этом документе анализируются вызовы / проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются учителя при использовании ИКТ, уровень использования ИКТ среди учителей английского языка в средней школе и отношение учителей к интеграции ИКТ в классе английского языка.

Применение технологий может способствовать развитию интереса и вдохновения учащихся. Инновации предлагают учащимся, изучающим второй язык, информацию, результаты и обратную связь; он также

предлагает учителям эффективный способ координации содержания курса и общения со многими учащимися. Тем не менее, использование технологий поощряется, и преподаватели могут изменять свои методы преподавания и учебные подходы, чтобы доступные инструменты использовались наиболее эффективным образом. Рекомендуется соблюдать осторожность при использовании технологий для поддержки языкового образования.

Ключевые слова: ИКТ, класс английского языка, учителя английского языка, английский язык, проблемы, восприятие, интеграция. В этой статье будет использоваться аббревиатура ICT, EFL. ИКТ - Информационные и коммуникационные технологии; EFL - английский как иностранный.

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Аңдатпа. АКТ білім беруде маңызды рөл атқарады. XXI ғасырда АКТ тәрбиешілердің оқу бағдарламасына енуінің басты мәселесіне айналды, осылайша оқушылардың сыныптағы жоғары көрсеткіштері пайда болды. Бұл зерттеу әр түрлі тәжірибесі бар орта мектептердегі EFL мұғалімдеріне бағытталған. Бұл мақалада мұғалімдердің АКТ-ны қолдану кезіндегі қиындықтары / проблемалары, орта мектептегі ағылшын тілі мұғалімдері арасында АКТ қолдану деңгейі және ағылшын тілі сабағында АКТ-ны интеграциялау туралы мұғалімдердің түсініктері талданған.

Технологияны қолдану оқушылардың қызығушылығы мен шабытын арттыра алады. Инновация екінші тілді үйренушілерге ақпарат, нәтижелер және кері байланыс ұсынады; ол сонымен қатар мұғалімдерге курстың мазмұнын үйлестірудің тиімді әдісін және көптеген оқушылармен байланыс орнатуды ұсынады. Осыған қарамастан, технологияны қолдану ынталандырылады және нұсқаушылар өздерінің оқу тәжірибелері мен әдістемелік тәсілдерін өзгерте алады, осылайша қол жетімді құралдар тиімді пайдаланылады. Тілдік білім беруді қолдау технологиясын қолданған кезде сақ болуға кеңес беріледі.

Түйін сөздер: АКТ, ағылшын сыныбы, ағылшын тілі мұғалімдері, ағылшын тілі, қиындықтар, қабылдау, интеграция.

Бұл мақалада АКТ, EFL аббревиатурасы / аббревиатурасы қолданылады. АКТ - ақпараттық-коммуникациялық технологиялар; EFL - ағылшын тілі шет тілі ретінде.

I.   Introduction

It is well known that technological tools in education have beneficial influence to education effectiveness. Information and Communication Technology is an acronym for ICT. Electronic devices and hardware including smartphones, computers, pads or tablets, and other technologies, such as audiovisual systems, smartboards and various types of technology for

educational, development, information, travel and business purposes, are included (NMC Horizon Project, 2013). The popular findings claim the fact that technology leads to powerful educating and studying atmosphere (Hermans, Tondeur, van Braak & Valcke, 2008) and can influence students' studying (Cancannon, Flynn & Campbell, 2005), desire (Mahdizadeh, Biemans & Mulder, 2008), critical view (Lim, Teo, Wong, Khine, Chai & Divaharan, 2003), and freedom (Claudia, Steil & Todesco, 2004).

Currently, usage of technology is increasingly important because teachers need to stay informed with the generation Z. The Generation Z - generation born between 1996 - 2010. This generation has been raised on technology and internet (*Business Insider,* Business Insider, www.businessinsider.com/).

Previous findings obtained different challenges faced and in–service teachers criticized the lack of technological equipment (Aydın, 2013; Çelik & Aytın, 2014; Dashtestani, 2014; Hismanoglu, 2012b; Kazemi & Narafshan, 2014).

The other finding showed that many teachers are involved in struggling with challenges such as lack of school materials and inadequate time to complete the course (Rahimi & Nabilou, 2009).

Some difficulties faced while using ICT are limited computer facilities, limited class hours, inappropriate class size and limited technical support. Teachers suggest in order to be competent users of the Internet they need training courses how to implement and adapt resources into a classroom (Shin & Son, 2007).

Despite the fact that teachers need more professional development about using technology, there is distributed limited budget for teacher training courses about using technology (Ansell & Park, 2003).

Learner ability skill must also be taken into account in technology-supported learning processes. For instance, it is important to test the learner's level of content that the best suits his or her skills (Türk & Erçetin, 2014). In another way, learning material can be either too hard or too basic to understand. Hsu (2015) suggested a filtering system for adaptive captions and enhanced listening ability effectively since students were able to pick various quantities of information at various levels of difficulty. Furthermore, in foreign language and first language, it is proposed that subtitles can be given in various dimensions during movies, lectures, academic lectures to fulfill the needs of linguistic learners at various levels (for example, more subtitles may be given for less-language learners). If students are using annotation equipment, it is advised low-profile students in the first language to take notes and use L2 definition ties for the word memory with the enhancement of their skills (Türk & Erçetin, 2014).

Based on foresaid, at the moment situations at schools are unacceptable to current challenges, consequently, it is needed to improve ICT skills of EFL teachers.

II.   Literature Review
2.1.Information and Communication Technology

Technology has already been incorporated into the cycle of language education. For instructional reason, audio tapes and television were traditional teaching aids. ICT — Information and Communication Technology widely used, leads to different changes in society at this instant. It affects spheres, such as business, trade, marketing, science, entertainment, markedly Education. Moreover, ICT and computers are an indispensable part of our lifespan one day (Mohamed, 2003). As Hubbard (2009) marked, it is obvious that information and technologies have become a member of our daily lives, and invaded in the field of study. There is no doubt that they should be used, but how to use them.

Information and Communication (ICT) incorporates computer, the Internet, broadcasting and electronic distribution devices, including, among other items, radios, television and projectors and is typically used within the modern-day area of education (Fu, 2013). As a consequence, ICT is regarded as a tool that can accelerate the process of education and learning.

In an analysis of developmental records review, Amiri (2000) found that ICT instruments are always considered to be a leader in use of creative teaching methods in language instructions since computers were brought into the world and language instructors were typically the leaders in the use of advanced coaching equipment in their training. The Computer – assisted language learning's (CALL) past comprises of 3 specific phases: behavioristic, cognitive, and interactive CALL, each with a successful laptop generation stage in conjunction with centralized servers, desktops, multimedia technology, and a particular form of linguistic learning and instructing alongside behavioralism, cognitivism, and constructivism (Warschauer, 1996). Coincidentally, EFL instructors have used ICT tools to train and research purposes with increased creativity and second language acquisition (SLA). It was no less effective than conventional teaching in classroom use of technology (Ghanizadeh et al., 2015 & Shadiev et al., 2019).

2.2. Advantages of ICT Tools

ICT is used in the area of education to help students be more successful in their studying. It helps teachers effectively perform administrative work. There are numerous benefits that may be received from the use of ICT tools inside the schooling area. ICT allows to improve coaching and learning quality. Cited from Lowther et al. in Fu (2013), there are three critical characteristics had to broaden great quality instructing and learning with ICT. Autonomy, ability and imagination are three attributes. The primary implies that students are controlled through gaining knowledge via using ICT, which means that they are able to work on their own or with others. Here, educators can be in charge of empowering learners in completing their works either with friends or groups. The second attribute notes that, if learners have confidence in learning systems, they are able to apply and transfer information simultaneously utilizing new

technologies. Also, ICT helps understudies in their innovation optimization. New multimedia gadgets can be determined and materials inside the patterns with no trouble available also can be created. Consequently, the usage of ICT can assist to broaden coaching, and gaining knowledge of high-quality through the assimilation of students' autonomy, skill and imagination.

The usage of ICT equipment helps to provide opportunities to increase higher order thinking abilities. Kelman mentioned in Ali (2012) highlighted that higher order thinking abilities can be upgraded by utilizing innovation. Ali (2012) points out that the development of critical and creative thinking and higher understanding has been crucial to future achievement as a consequence of the advent of the computerized and data age (Ali, 2012). This demonstrates that the progress in ICT advantages students as well as lecturers to increase the higher order thinking competencies. Moreover, Muir cited in Ali (2012), that innovation could be an encouraging device to involve learners in critical and imaginative thinking. Whilst the students are uncovered longer to the ICT surroundings, it implicitly leads to cultivate the potential of students to think more effectively. This allows learners to accomplish better degrees of cognition when they are capable of applying innovation.

2.3.Teachers and ICT

A number of studies have found that recent ICT innovations promote a variety of learning methods and multimedia resources that can be helpful for language learners, many language teachers have become involved in using the Internet (Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000). Moreover, instructors can not only use the Internet to find materials for their students, but can also provide other instructors with their own content, information and ideas through the Internet (Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000). For instance, they may build web pages for their classes and publish their material online (Meagher, 1995). Muehleisen (1997) suggests that English as a Second Language/ English as a Foreign Language (further ESL/EFL) teachers use the Internet in their classrooms to encourage learners to speak in English language and make it part of their everyday lives outside the classroom. Kern and Warschauer (2000) point out that language students with internet connection will be able to interact with English speakers worldwide. Either individually or in multiple ways, they can interact whenever they need in school, at home or at work. Subsequently, it is not surprising, that numerous ESL/EFL instructors have supported internet – assisted language teaching (IALT) and created new ways to use the Internet together with their students. Shetzer and Warschauer (2000) further indicated that teachers should learn from their teaching circumstances how to use Internet resources with guidance and motivation. This means teachers must learn and improve skills to efficiently apply the Internet so that online education can be maximized.

EFL teachers must be adequately qualified in order to effectively implement internet - based content in the classroom. As indicated by the

teachers' answers to the issues of their competencies in the use of online materials and their knowledge of internet resources incorporation into existing curricula, teachers, who are required to learn how to use Internet resources, to build or choose Internet-based activities should be provided web-assisted training courses for IALT. The training which enables educators to understand the aspects of IALT will enhance professional skills and thus ensure a high level of interest and a desire to use Internet-based materials and activities in the classroom. The challenges are evident from an enormous amount of information on the Internet and restricted time available to obtain useful information. The organizing and management of IALT classes are another challenge recorded for the teachers. Instructors must carefully choose internet resources while using it in their classroom. They should also tackle problems of controlling student access, handling class time and solving technical issues on websites that are connected with lessons. Teacher development and internet integration skills are required to reduce the difficulties through IALT teacher training. In order to learn and develop Internet skills, the usage of Internet tools could be enhanced more efficiently, collectively and reliably across the entire school system if every EFL instructor takes well-planned training courses. Schools should also be supplied with new, working computer equipment with technical assistance. While teachers report computers with Internet connectivity in their schools, they note that these connections are still not good for use in classrooms. Therefore, to encourage and facilitate IALT, that can enhance EFL education, teachers need sufficient computer equipment with secure Internet access as well as technical assistance.

2.4. Teachers' attitudes towards the Use of ICT Tools in English Classroom

The findings of the analysis indicate three main factors influencing internet use in the classroom: teachers' preferences and willingness in internet usage; teachers' capability to incorporate internet services into school activities; as well as computer and technological support in schools. Internet-assisted language teaching (IALT) preparation courses for in-service teachers are highly recommended to further improvement and incorporation of the IALT.

Van Braak, J., Tondeur, J., & Valcke, M. (2004) state that technological attitudes of teachers are among the most often studied technological variables for ICT literature, as positive computer attitudes are usually thought to promote computer application in the classroom. It has conclusively been shown that technology behaviors are formed in terms of the perceived practicality and accessibility (Davis, 1993) and is a significant feature that enables/disables teachers' use of technology (Albirini, 2006; Hermans, 2008). The prevailing conclusion of behavioral investigations indicate that the formation of optimistic attitudes towards innovative technology in pedagogy is essential for successful implementation.

Similarly, Watson (1998) found that the improvement of the positive attitudes of teachers to ICT will be a fundamental aspect in minimizing teachers' aversion to computer usage aligned with computer tension.

It has been demonstrated that insufficient mastery and competence (Al-Oteawi, 2002), computer possession, and computer handling amount (Baloglu & Cevik, 2008) has been demonstrated to be linked to computer anxiety. Baloglu & Cevik (2009) points out that computer anxiety can be seen as a barrier to basic computer literacy or computer skills and teachers with higher rates of computer anxiety may encounter computer difficulty and avoid this in their classes.

Teacher's technical skills and expertise in the classroom are also an element impacting computer usage (Pamuk & Peker, 2009). In Hew & Brush (2007), three forms of knowledge and skills are likely to establish significant obstacles for the instructor to use ICT: the lack of basic knowledge and abilities in technology (Snoeyink & Ertmer 2001), pedagogical competences enabled by technology (Hughes 2005) and technological knowledge and skills related to management (Lim et al., 2003). Poynton (2003) concludes that age, eagerness, approach, computer utilization and admission affect computer skills.

III.   Conclusion

In general, teachers agreed that using the Internet could be successful means of EFL teaching, since the Internet offers a rich learning atmosphere for students in which accurate learning tools can be found. Teachers regarded the internet as an important teaching tool for EFL and found out that numerous sites contain different types of material for learning. They also suggested that learners could develop online communication skills. They also shared the opinion that they need to learn how to use the Internet for their students who are well acquainted with the Internet. According to teachers in the study, the Internet can be an efficient platform for authentic tools, knowledge exchange, communication with target language speakers and the encouragement of students. They appear, however, to have trouble using the Internet.

According to teachers in the study, the Internet can be an efficient platform for authentic tools, knowledge exchange, communication with target language speakers and the encouragement of students. They appear, however, to have trouble using the Internet. Conceptual reasons not to use the internet include a small number of computing space, insufficient learning time and excessive class size. Unforeseen Internet breakups can also be a difficulty. The class cannot be organized unless the instructor in the course has backup lesson plans, in the case the Internet is disconnected without warning. During class time, learners can also visit inappropriate websites. This would be very hard for a teacher to avoid such situations without either a limited number of students or an assistant to instruct. This can also take a lot of time for teachers to find or build well-designed tools or materials on the Internet.

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