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Perception of Libyan English Language Teachers towards Integrating ICT into English Language Classes at the Libyan School in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study is set out to investigate the perception of Libyan English teachers towards using ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) by identifying the extent of their use of ICT and identifying which kind of ICT they use. In addition, the study also aims to investigate the challenges that Libyan teachers encounter in integrating ICT into their classes. The research adopts a case study design and employs the interview as the instrument for collecting data from the participants. The data of the study are collected through semi-structured interviews with four Libyan teachers who teach English language to the primary school students at the Libyan School in Malaysia. The study reveals that some of the Libyan teachers have a positive attitude towards integrating ICT, however, their use of ICT is very limited due to the challenges they encounter like poor technological infrastructure, poor support and funding.

المخلص

تم إعداد هذه الدراسة للتحقيق في تصور معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الليبيين تجاه استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات من خلال تحديد مدى استخدامهم للتكنولوجيا وتحديد نوع تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات التي يستخدمونها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تهدف الدراسة أيضاً إلى التحقيق في التحديات التي يواجهها المعلمون الليبيون في دمج تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في فصولهم. يعتمد البحث على دراسة الحالة واستخدام المقابلات الشخصية كأداة لجمع البيانات من المشاركين. تم جمع بيانات الدراسة من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع أربعة معلمين ليبيين يقومون بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب المدارس الابتدائية في المدرسة الليبية في ماليزيا. تظهر الدراسة أن بعض المعلمين الليبيين لديهم موقف إيجابي تجاه دمج تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات ولكن استخدامهم لتكنولوجيا المعلومات

والاتصالات محدود للغاية بسبب التحديات التي يواجهونها مثل ضعف البنية التحتية التكنولوجية وضعف الدعم والتمويل.

KEYWORDS ; ICT , teaching English , Libyan teachers

Introduction

English language is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and it is the most widely studied. In present, learning English language has become an inevitable necessity. Many people around the world are learning English in order to cope with the revolution of the world where English comes on the top of all languages. In this context, Braine (1999) states that " English language has been widely used and considered as the universal language". Due to this fact, an enormous number of teaching styles, strategies, books and materials have been designed to teach this language. And to make the teaching process of the language easier and more effective, information and communication technologies (ICT) have been introduced to improve the quality of education and facilitate the teaching and learning process in general and teaching English language in particular. ICT have greatly influenced the traditional methods of teaching and replaced them by new technology methods that assist both teachers and students to access to the information in more flexible and easy ways. In almost every field of study, technology is of great importance and benefit. Currently, every educational setting integrates some sorts of technological tools in the classroom whether they are primary tools like computers, CDs or new developed software's like different platforms, applications, power point, or social media apps etc.

Technology can be considered as a real guide for teachers. The ability to change the form of information from the traditional written form (textbooks) to a new (visual/audio) form and the possibility of presenting it in more practical ways has enabled the teacher to deliver the information in simple and interesting ways.

Literature review

Definition

Asabere and Enguah (2012) define ICT as “the tools, facilities, processes, and equipments that provide the required environment with the physical infrastructure and the services for the generation, transmission, processing, storing and disseminating of information in all forms including voice, text, data, graphics and video” . Some examples of ICTs; computers, computer assisted language learning (CALL) software, office applications (word, PowerPoint, drawing tools etc.), the Internet – websites and downloadable software, commercial course book CD-ROMs, DVD players, mobile phones, electronic dictionaries, digital cameras and videos, DAT recorders, document cameras, data projectors.

ICT is “the combination of informatics technology with other, related technologies, specifically communication technology” (UNESCO, 2002).

ICT use in Education and in English Language Teaching

Technology is changing the world at a very rapid pace. We use technology in every single day and for many purposes; for communication, entertainment, work or study. This dominance of technology has impacted our lifestyles and absolutely has impacted the way we get information or learn something. Technology has also impacted the education system in all over the world. Currently, in the developed countries, it is almost impossible to find a school that is not equipped with the new technological devises such as computers, projectors, etc. Today, instead of only listening to the teacher, students are exposed to power point, engaging videos, collaborating with peers, using internet and various ICT applications (Jayanthi & Kumar, 2016) .

ICT applications are categorized by Collis and Moonen (2001) into three categories;

- a) Learning resources; including educational softwares, online recourses and video resources.
- b) Instructional organization of learning; this refers to softwares and all technological tools supporting lectures, course management

systems like *Moodle* and computer-based testing systems like *Hotpotatoes*

- c) Communication; consists of email systems, and websites offering communication options.

The use of ICT in education is not confined in one particular subject, yet it has become an integral part in every educational setting. In English language teaching, according to Sharma and Barret (2007), there are several reasons for using technology in language teaching. In addition to the fact that technology can be motivating, it offers the language learners to work and collaborate together to fulfil certain tasks. Another advantage of using technology in the classroom is that it provides instant feedback on students' performance and it is considered very essential today as it provides time for both teachers and students alike. Finally, technology provides new sources and methods that increase the students' motivation and desire to learn.

Teachers' Perceptions of Technology Use

In schools, teachers are considered the most effective factors that affect the change or the implementation of any new idea, their beliefs may support or impede the success of any educational reform such as the utilization of an innovative technology program (Woodrow, 1991; Levin & Wadmany, 2016). According to Mundy et.al (2012), information and communication technology (ICT) changes the way in which teachers approach teaching as it affords opportunities for real-time learning through simulations, through online collaboration beyond the classroom, and through access to a plethora of primary source information and experts in various fields. A number of researches have been conducted to investigate the teachers' perceptions of integrating ICT in language teaching in different contexts. Sudiran (2016) conducted a study in the Indonesian context to identify the Indonesian teachers' perceptions of using ICT as a medium of teaching English language at schools as well as examining the use of internet in teaching- learning process. The researcher used a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative). He collected data for his study through questionnaires, interviews and

observations. His study revealed that the teachers who participated in the study have a positive perception towards integrating ICT in their classes ,yet ,regarding using the internet as a tool in teaching English, the researcher found that the teachers face some difficulties like technical problems, inability to access the internet ,i.e. internet connection and electric current outage. Another study was conducted by Emhamed and Krishnan (2011) in Libya particularly at one of the secondary schools in Sabha city. The researchers aimed to investigate the teacher's attitude towards utilizing ICT in teaching English as well as determining whether teachers are prepared to utilize ICT and identifying the main difficulties faced in integrating ICT. The researcher collected data through questionnaires and semi structured interviews with a group of 8 teachers. This study also revealed that teachers have a positive attitude towards using ICT in the class ,however, they face some challenges like lack of training , access to equipment, and lack of administrative support. In addition, this study revealed that the most common type of ICT used by teachers at Sabha School is the CD as it is available in the school and easy to use, other equipments are not available in the school and not all teachers can use those equipments perfectly. Sangra and Sanmamed (2014) also conducted a study to analyze the role of ICT integration in primary and secondary schools in Spain as well as to examine the teachers' perceptions of technology use. Multiple case studies were applied and data were collected from four schools of different levels in terms of ICT integration and the extent of equipping the schools with the technological tools and connecting to the internet as well as including ICT in the development plans. Data were collected through interview with the school's Executive Board and other information resources like schools' reports, teaching plans, and strategic plans. Finally, a questionnaire was administered to the teachers from the four participated schools. The study revealed that the teachers have a positive estimation of the use and the impact of ICT on learning, the participated teachers pointed out that ICT benefit students in terms of grabbing their attention and perception skills. The researchers found that teachers from level 4 school are more appreciative of the role of technology in education because this type of school is very well equipped to introduce technology into teaching plans and classrooms.

Purpose of the study

The importance of integrating technology into the class and using it to facilitate the teaching process in the classroom has become an integral part of the teaching process in the new education system in many parts of the world. However, the question arises here is; is this the case in the Libyan context?! Can all teachers use technology with their students? The purpose of this research is centered on providing a better and clear picture of the Libyan teachers' perceptions towards integrating ICT into their classes. It aims also to investigate the level of their use of ICT with their students and the challenges they face in utilizing ICT.

Significance of the study

By answering the questions raised in this research, the results of this study are expected to give us the extent of using ICT in Libyan classes and provide some information about the types that are most commonly used among the teachers at the Libyan School/Malaysia. This research is also expected to provide some information about the challenges encountered by Libyan teachers in applying and integrating ICT into English language classes. Furthermore, the study will also provide some recommendations about the possible ways that the decision makers in Libyan education can follow in order to increase the use of ICT in English classes.

Problem statement

The use of technology in the classroom has become an urgent necessity to facilitate the educational process and to facilitate the access of information to students. Many studies have confirmed that the integration of technology into the educational process helps in creating an enjoyable and beneficial learning environment and boosts the level of motivation among the students. "Technology can also improve communication of learning goals and facilitate higher-order thinking skills" (Elshaikhi, 2015). This requires the teachers to be very aware of the use of technology in their classes and to be qualified to use them effectively. In

spite of the large number of studies conducted to investigate the perceptions of teachers towards integrating ICT into their classes, particularly English language classes, (Sudiran, 2016; Young, 2003; Zerine & Sunjida, 2013; Yasir, 2015), only few studies have been conducted to investigate the English Libyan teachers' perceptions at a Libyan School. (i.e., Libyan context). Thus, this study was set out to address this gap by investigating the Libyan English teachers' perceptions towards ICT integration and to examine to what extent they are aware of using technology as well as to identify the types of technology they use with their students in addition to the challenges they face regarding the use of technology.

Research Objectives

1. Determine the extent of using ICT by Libyan teachers.
2. Determine the kinds of ICT integrated by Libyan teachers into English classes.
3. Identify the challenges that teachers encounter into integrating ICT in their classes.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Libyan teachers use ICT in their classes?
2. What are the kinds of ICT do teachers integrate into English language classes?
3. What are the main challenges that teachers encounter in integrating ICT into their classes?

Background of the School

The Libyan School is one of the Libyan schools located in Malaysia particularly in Kuala Lumpur. More than one thousand students are enrolled in the school. The Libyan school in Malaysia teaches the students from grade 1 to grade 12. It follows the Libyan national education system which consists of 6 years of primary education, followed by 3 years of middle school (preparatory school) and 3 years of secondary school. The age of students ranges between 7 to 18 years old. The school adopts the Libyan curriculum in teaching students in all subjects including English language. The majority of the enrolled

students are Libyans ,however, there are some other nationalities from other Arabic countries. English is a compulsory course in the school from grade 5 until the third secondary class, this means that English language is being taught to students for 8 years.

Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative research method particularly a case study for some reasons. First, the study aims to explore the Libyan teachers' perceptions of integrating ICT in English Language teaching, this is consistent with the reason behind conducting qualitative research which is to "explore, explain, or describe the phenomenon of interest" (Marshall & Rossman ,1999, p.33). In addition, as stated by Zaidah (2007) the role of a case study in research becomes more prominent when issues with regard to education, sociology and community-based problems. Moreover, the findings of this study will not be generalized and this makes the qualitative case study a suitable approach to follow according to Nunan (1992). For these reasons, the case study is designed to provide insights as well as result in a "rich and holistic account of a phenomenon" in real-life situations proves to be appropriate (Merriam ,1998) cited in (Luong & Nguyen ,2008).

The researcher employed the interview as the instrument for collecting data from the participants. Interviews can provide the information needed about the problem being studied. The data of the study were collected 4

.through semi-structured interviews with four Libyan teachers who currently teach English language to the primary school students at the Libyan School in Malaysia. The data procedure started with interviewing the participants to answer the questions of the research. The interviews with the subjects were recorded and analyzed for analysis purposes.

Ethical considerations

In terms of ethical considerations, the participants of the study were not forced to participate in the research they participated at their convenience. In addition, they were given the choice to withdraw from participating at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Furthermore, for confidentiality reasons, the real names or any information that might reveal the identity of the participants, were not mentioned in the research paper.

Pilot Study

The researcher started this research by conducting a pilot study as a first step of the practical part of the study. The pilot study is a mini-study conducted by the researcher to study the feasibility of the research and to assess the research tools such as questionnaires or interviews (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Thus, it is conducted after preparing a clear vision of the topic and the procedures of the study (topic, questions, method, and instrument) that will be applied later in the practical part of the research, It is “reassessment without tears” (Blaxter et al., 1996, p. 121)

The reason of conducting a pilot study

- In this study, the researcher conducted a pilot study before the actual study to test the interview’s protocol “since the method that is being followed in this study is semi structured interviews” and to test how the interviews will be in reality.
- To test the efficacy of the research instrument (the interviews)
- pilot study was also conducted to answer some questions like;
 - Are the interview questions adequate and clear to the interviewees?
 - Are there any misleading or confusing questions?
 - Are there any other questions that should be posed to the interviewees?

The researcher interviewed one teacher who has a five years’ experience of teaching English. She teaches English language to students in the primary stage. The teacher is from Libya as the study is conducted on the Libyan teachers. The interview was conducted at the Libyan School. The setting of the interview was quite formal as it was at one of the school

offices. The interview conducted by the researcher herself and it lasted for approximately 10 minutes and it was tape recorded.

After conducting the pilot study no big modifications were done to the questions of the interview as the researcher found that the questions were clear to the participant. However, the interviews were planned to be conducted in English but while conducting the pilot study both the researcher and the participant spoke in Arabic as the teacher preferred to speak in Arabic. Thus, the interviews in the actual study were decided to be in Arabic rather than in English for the participants' convenience. Secondly, some biographical questions were decided to be added like where the teacher is from? As the sample of the study must be only the Libyan teachers. In addition to asking a question about the teachers' year of experience, besides some other introductory (warm up) questions were also added to get the interviewees to speak. In general, the questions were clear to the teacher and the interview went very smoothly.

Data collection procedures

The data of the study were collected through semi-structured interviews with four English language teachers from the Libyan School in Malaysia. The participants were 3 female teachers and 1 male teacher. The participants ranged in number of year experience in teaching English from 1 year to 6 years of teaching. The teachers participated in this study were willing to participate and share their experiences. The interviews with each teacher lasted for around 10 minutes and were conducted at the Libyan School. The interviews with the participants were recorded except for one interview due to the participant's rejection to record her voice.

Data analysis

(Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p.150) describe data analysis as "the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected

data. It is described as messy, ambiguous and time-consuming, but also as a creative and fascinating process”.

After conducting the interviews with the participants and recording them, the next step of the research process was to analyze, interpret and present data in an intelligible way and in accordance with the research questions of the study. Antonius (2003,) succinctly states that the word data refers to information that is collected in an organized manner and that is arranged to enable the reader to understand the information correctly and accurately. Therefore, the data are not gathered randomly but very systematically and according to the questions that the researcher needs to answer. As such, the data of this research are presented according to the research questions set in the study.

Findings

Q1, 2: To what extent do Libyan teachers use ICT in their classes? What are the types of ICT used in their classes?

As evidenced by interviews with English teachers of the Libyan School participating in this study that they are somewhat aware of the importance of the use of ICT in teaching in general and in teaching English language in particular. Some examples of their attempts to integrate ICT are;

- a) Using audio CDs in the classroom to improve the students listening and speaking. In this context, one of the participants says *“I use CDs with my students because of its availability and ease of use, I use them to improve the speaking and listening skill, specially listening to native speakers of English”*.
- b) Social network site (particularly WhatsApp) . Another teacher says *“I have created a WhatsApp group as a kind of blended learning for my students. I share with them links, videos from different sites including YouTube, and also give assignments to my students like searching about something in Google and then they can write it down in Microsoft word and submit them*

through WhatsApp, my feedback is also shared via WhatsApp”.

- c) PowerPoint, videos, and flash cards are also used by the participants with their students.

Regarding the participant teachers' awareness of Utilizing ICT in teaching English Language, one of the participants says *“it is a monumental fact that ICT has become an important part in the teaching Process, students today are fed up of the traditional learning, they want something new and become more excited when they learn through ICT even when the assignments get to be tiring to accomplish yet they still excited.*

Other teacher also says: *“I think ICT is the best because when the students learn the information via laptop or I-Pad the information stick in their minds..., they are the generation of Technology”.*

On the other hand, two of the participant teachers do not really agree with necessity of using ICT with their students as they claim that the curriculums they teach are simple curricula that do not require to integrate any kind of technology to explain or simplify the information to their students. In addition, they believe that utilizing ICT in their classes would not be practical due to the large number of students in classes.

Q3: What are the main challenges that teachers encounter in integrating ICT into their classes?

Integrating ICT into the classroom is not an easy process, teachers may face some problems and encounter some obstacles in order to be able to utilize ICT, these obstacles and problems are known as “challenges” (Schoepp, 2005) and defined as “any condition that makes it difficult to make progress or to achieve an objective” (WordNet, 1997). The following are some of the main challenges that English Libyan teachers (in the Libyan School in Malaysia) encounter in integrating ICT into teaching English language to the primary school students.

i. Limited access to technology

Almost all the teachers who participated in this study complained from their lack of access to resources. A lack of computers, projectors, educational softwares. Teachers explained that they suffer from limited access to a large number of computer labs where each student or a pair of students can work together on their own computer. In this context, a teacher says *“unfortunately, all we have in technology-equipment is one projector, the school classrooms are not equipped with technological means”*. In addition, teachers also claimed that school principals and administrators do not encourage and motivate them to integrate ICT into the classes and do not care about providing any kind of technology to keep abreast of the development of ICT and changing the teaching style inside the school.

ii. Problems of accessing to the Internet

Teachers also complained about their lack to the internet access and the lack of internet coverage in the classrooms. In this context, one of the interviewees says; *“I have some softwares that can be used with my students and I tried to use them but the internet is not available in all classrooms, some of the classrooms are out of the range of internet, thus I was forced to bring my own laptop and my own internet”*. Other teachers said that they use their own smart phones connected to internet from time to time to illustrate some information or to show some pictures to their students. Conversely, other teachers see that they are not forced to bring their own devices in order to use ICT as they believe that this is the school’s responsibility to fund the teaching process.

iii. Lack of time

Time is also one of the obstacles that hindered teachers’ use of ICT. Participants expressed that one of the reasons behind their inability to integrate ICT into the class is the class time which is only 45 minutes per class. They claim that it is not sufficient to use ICT. Additionally, the participants argue that they need more time both before and during the class to plan and execute ICT-based activities successfully as well as

needing extra time to attend training courses to learn how to use technology whether in workshops or via internet.

iv. Lack of training

The participants addressed the problem of their lack of an effective training. They assert the importance of using ICT, however, they express their dissatisfaction with the absence of encouraging and providing training workshops. They claim that attending special workshops can help them to cope with the pace of change in the education system, particularly in the process of teaching English language.

Implications

Firstly, it should be noted that this study was conducted specifically on the English Libyan School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and therefore the results may not be generalised to all Libyan schools. The interviews conducted with the participants in this study reveal that some teachers hold a positive attitude towards utilizing ICT, and are highly aware of its critical role in teaching and learning, especially in teaching English. However, they face challenges that hinder the integration of ICT into their classes.

This finding has significant implications for decision-makers within the Libyan Ministry of Education. It is crucial to educate Libyan teachers on the importance of incorporating (ICT) into their teaching methods. In today's world, technology is rapidly advancing, and it is vital to ensure that Libyan students are not left behind. By integrating ICT into education, students would be able to acquire the necessary skills needed to thrive in the modern workforce.

To achieve this, it is necessary to conduct training courses and workshops for teachers to enable them to learn about different programs and software that would enhance their teaching experience. The courses would help prepare them to utilize the latest technology in the classroom, making learning more effective and engaging for their students. The use of ICT not only makes learning more interactive and exciting, but it also

makes it easier for teachers to evaluate student performance and provide feedback, therefore improving the quality of education.

Moreover, all Libyan schools should be equipped with the latest technological tools such as computers, projectors, and high-speed internet to enable students to interact and engage with technology from a young age. This would prepare them for the future workforce, where technology is essential in almost every field. It is also necessary that classrooms have the technological infrastructure necessary to integrate ICT into the teaching process, making it more accessible and efficient for both teachers and students.

Ultimately, creating a conscious and educated generation requires cooperation between all stakeholders in Libya, starting from the government, Ministry of Education, principals, teachers, parents, and students themselves. It is essential that all stakeholders work together to ensure that Libyan schools provide an environment that supports the use of technology in education, which would have a positive impact on the education system in Libya as a whole. The use of ICT would not only make learning more engaging and interactive, but it would also help to bridge the gap between Libyan education and the rest of the world, leading to a brighter future for the country.

Suggestions for future research

The researcher suggests the following for future research;

1. A similar study is recommended to be conducted at Libyan schools inside Libya (as this study was conducted at a Libyan school in Malaysia) to identify the current status or the current level of using ICT in the Libyan classrooms and to identify more closely the challenges that Libyan teachers encounter in integrating ICT.
2. A study can be conducted at a number of schools in one of the Libyan cities to investigate the challenges of integrating ICT at a wider scale.
3. A study is recommended to compare between the different schools and to find the similarities and the common problems or challenges being encountered.

4. More studies can be conducted to find out more factors (not only teachers' challenges) that might hindered the use of ICT in Libyan schools.
5. It is recommended to conduct a study on the perspectives of the decision makers in the ministry of education in Libya towards integrating ICT into the classrooms in schools or more broadly at Libyan universities
6. It is recommended to conduct a study to investigate the teachers' needs in terms of technology literacy so that the needs can be indicated. This can assist the current professional development centers by providing information about the teachers' needs so that they can train them and improve their skills to be able to utilize ICT into the classroom.

Conclusion

This study discussed the perspectives of English Libyan teachers towards integrating ICT into English language teaching. The findings of this study revealed that the most used technological tools by teachers were; audio compact disk CDs, social network site (particularly WhatsApp) , power point, videos and flash cards. Some of the participants showed a positive attitude towards integrating ICT however their use of ICT was very limited due to some obstacles and challenges they encountered like poor technological infrastructure, poor support from the school principal and administrators, in addition to the poor funding.

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