



Teachers' Perceptions Toward Technology Integration into the Language Teaching Practices

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Abstract

Students' experiences in language classes are no longer limited to the textbooks and other materials that are available in their immediate environment. Technology, as a tool, has broadened the scope of language teaching and learning. Therefore, technology integration in the classroom has become an important aspect of successful language teaching. This study investigates the perceptions of language teachers toward technology integration in language teaching and identifies the factors that are either promoting or demoting this process. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect the data. There were 171 participants from 51 different countries who completed the online questionnaire. 6 of these participants were selected for the semi-structured interviews. Results obtained from both qualitative and quantitative data revealed the teachers' perception toward technology integration, how it enhances the EFL teaching practices, and the kinds of contribution and benefit it offers to the students and teachers. Based on the research results, the teachers demonstrated a positive attitude toward technology integration in language teaching but highlighted certain factors such as lack of knowledge on how to use technology in language teaching, lack of resources and equipment in their workplace, insufficient support available, and lack of training as hindering their ability to utilise technology in language teaching.

Keywords: Technology, English language, EFL teachers, teaching

1. Introduction

"If we teach today as we thought yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow"

John Dewey

There has been remarkable development in information and communication technologies during the last few decades. The developed technologies have begun to serve a range of different purposes in our daily lives in which education is not an exception. The use of digital technology in education, especially language education, has continued to progress at a breathtaking speed and ad become widely available. The increased interactivity of the Web and the use of mobile technologies are some such examples. The premise is that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are expected to revolutionize the outdated educational

practices and prepare the students for the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, technology integration in the classroom has become an important aspect of successful teaching practices. It has encouraged many researchers to investigate the different aspects of such a process. One of the most significant aspects of the whole phenomenon is the language teachers. As the key stakeholder in the educational practices, their perceptions and attitudes play a significant role not only in the integration of digital technologies into language education, but also the ultimate success of such an innovation.

Technology-enhanced language education has been shaping and reshaping the field of language teaching for decades and could be regarded as the future of language education for both language teachers and language learners. However, the process so called, the computerisation of the education, is a complicated process in which there are a lot of variables that have either direct or indirect impact on it. As Lotherington and Jenson (2011) indicated, language teaching with digital technologies has not been transformed due to the fact that many teachers have been reluctant to acknowledge this extended understanding of literacy. Therefore, Albirini (2004) stated that one of the conditions for the educational innovations and technologies to be successfully implemented in language education, the attitudes of the educators who, in long term, determine how these technologies will be utilised in the classroom and will successfully transform the language teaching practices.

2. Significance of the Study

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of the language teachers pertaining to the integration of technology in language teaching in order to reveal the potential factors either promoting or demoting the technology integration. In other words, it is anticipated that this research study would reveal the factors that could either directly or indirectly impact the technology integration process into the language teaching practices. As Watson (as cited in Albirini, 2004) stated, teachers' attitudes are the most misread impeding force in the integration of computers in educational practices. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the following research questions;

1. How do teachers use digital technologies in their teaching?
2. What shapes the ways teachers use technologies in their teaching practices?
3. What is the perception of teachers' toward technology integration into language teaching?

The preliminary focus of the study is to delve into the issue of technology integration into language teaching from the perspective of the language teachers in order to identify the areas where the potential issues lay. This will enable us to have a better understanding of the overall phenomenon.

3. Literature Review

Even though there has been a remarkable increase in the use of technology to ameliorate the foreign language teaching and learning practices, most of the researches conducted have focused on the impact of technology on language learning; considerably less well-designed empirical studies do address the potential of technology in improving the foreign language

learning process and outcomes (Golonka et al., 2014). It is a fact that using technology in language teaching practices will not provide a good pedagogy on its own nor does lack of technological tools or applications hinder effective language teaching (Higgins, Beauchamp, & Miller, 2007). As observed by Warschauer and Meskill(2000), technology has made a remarkable impact on the style of language teaching. That is to say that regardless of the type of language teaching or the methodology applied, there has always been supporting technologies available. Therefore, Barr (2013) stresses that the use of digital technologies in language learning has made a breath-taking progress. As a result, there has been a paradigm shift with regards to the role of technology in language education. Warschauer (2004) clearly indicates that technology in English language teaching is now less about using computers as tools to teach English effectively and more about teaching English to help people use computers effectively to be self-efficient learners. In line with that, Chapelle (2001) emphasised a different aspect of it by stating that it has become a prerequisite for anyone who deals with foreign language teaching and learning to grasp the nature of technology driven tasks language learners can engage in to facilitate the language learning process. However, it is also a fact that not all language teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to make it happen. Indeed, technology in classroom could pose a serious threat to a teacher who has limited knowledge and experience on how to integrate technology in language teaching practices. On the contrary, a study conducted by Pierson (2015) to investigate the potential of using task-based language learning and computer-mediated instruction to improve language teaching and learning revealed that learning how to use computer technologies has increased the teachers' confidence as they were able to meet the needs of the learners.

3.1 Technological Advancements and the Role of Teachers

Although the field of technology has evolved rapidly in the last few decades, language teaching has not been able to transform itself to keep up with the technological advancements. Therefore, many language teachers display a strong reluctance to this 'extended' understanding of literacy (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011). As clearly indicated by Ware (2008), the confidence to utilise technologies in classrooms requires a significant amount of teacher's 'personal' interest and enthusiasm to integrate it into his/her teaching practices. From this perspective, it emerges as a requirement to gain a more comprehensive understanding of why technology use often remains traditional. Having said that, teachers' personal experiences with digital technologies are crucially important to explore as well. As highlighted by Tan and McWilliam (2009), teachers' educational backgrounds are an important factor in shaping how they feel about the educational technologies and how they approach them in their teaching practices. A research conducted by Graham (2008) that examined the role of teachers' digital histories in teaching revealed that teachers who learned about technologies demonstrated more confidence in utilising technologies in their teaching practices. In the meantime, there are a lot of nonconventional technologies that are widely available nowadays such as Skype, Facebook, Whatsapp, Wiki, to list but a few. Those teachers who actively engage in such technologies tend to be more confident in using them with their students. Graham (2008) points the same direction and adds that teachers who experimented and experienced the digital spaces also felt comfortable in providing their students the opportunity to engage in such literacies.

The role of language teachers within the language teaching/ learning process has remained almost the same for decades: facilitator, designer, advisor, cooperator and so on which has been promoted by certain language teaching methodologies and approaches. However, the integration of technology has altered the dynamics of a classroom in such a way that it has

become a necessity for teachers to develop computer literacy, manage a vast amount of resources, and create interactive activities based on his/her understanding of the characteristics of the modern 'magic' (Lin, 2003). It has become a way of ensuring the professional development for teachers to use technology as a tool in language teaching. Such technology-supported language teaching/learning tasks have the potential to foster the development of cognitive strategies, socioaffective strategies, and metacognitive strategies (Loyo & deMagnago as cited in Lin, 2013). Emphasising the key role of teachers in this process, we could clearly indicate that in the new trend of technology-based learning, only through the teacher's experimenting with using IT, like the Internet and computer-mediated communication, can both learners and teachers realise what they can and cannot do (Chen as cited in Lin, 2003). Newly emerged technologies such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp...etc. do provide great opportunities for the collaboration between instructor–student as well as student–student via either real-time and/or time-delayed collaboration (Beldarrain, 2006) which are yet to be discovered by language teachers.

3.2 Teachers' Perception of Technology in Language Education

The teachers' ability to utilise technology in language teaching is to some extent related to the potential positive impact of these technologies on the learning process and on the learners and how this positive impact could be attained. The study conducted by Darasawang and Reinders (2010) made it clear that a great majority of the learners spend more than ten hours a week using technology for non-educational purposes and only 33.5% of them spent more than ten hours using technology for English learning purposes. Part of the reason why the rate of the learners who use the internet for language learning purposes is low is due to the fact that the students do not have adequate knowledge about how to search for and use learning resources on the internet (Baldwin & Balatsoukas as cited in Nguyen & Tri, 2014). This could only be reversed if teachers are ware of the potential of technology in language teaching/ learning and actively use it in the classroom.

A large scale survey with 486 instructors from 11 different universities which focused on the type of resources they utilise on the internet , how they perceive and use internet-assisted language instruction, and how they evaluate themselves in terms of language learning technology revealed that even though they use the internet densely and with a positive perception in their teaching, they highlighted various areas that need to be improved by means of professional development programs (Celik, 2013). In order to ensure a successful integration of technology into the teaching-learning process, the teachers' negative or neutral perceptions of technology need to be altered. In other words, actions need to be taken to close the gap that is caused due to the teachers' lack of background and experience with utilising technology and thus their inability to perceive its capabilities (Blake, 2007). On the other hand, educators are increasingly under pressure to use technology to prepare students to live in a technologically interconnected, globalised world. Therefore, teachers must pay attention to technology not because it is either an asset or a threat, but because technology does have an impact on the way language is used (Chun, Smith, & Kern, 2016). Thus, as teachers learn to use technology, they develop expertise that incorporates their understanding of online technology into their pedagogical content knowledge(PCK) (Shulman, 1987). This integrated knowledge is know as technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The TPACK framework suggests that technology-supported teaching is not simply a matter of adding technology to an existing teaching context: rather, it involves teachers' awareness and understanding of a dynamic, transactional relationship between three component of knowledge: technology, pedagogy, and content (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The research study conducted by Archambault and Crippen (2009) with 569 K-12 online teachers to evaluate their knowledge

of technology, pedagogy, content, and the combination of these domains revealed that the teachers had a remarkable grasp of the relationship between pedagogy and content, but significantly low understanding of the relationship between technology and pedagogy, as well as technology and content. The study concluded that their knowledge of online technology was probably limited compared to their knowledge of pedagogy and content (Archambault and Crippen as cited in Tseng & Chen, 2016). Similarly, a study conducted by Gilakjani (2012) to examine the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their computer technology practices revealed that the technology use of the teachers is positively correlated with their personal beliefs about curriculum and instructional practices. If technology is presented as a tool for enacting student-centred curricula, teachers with teacher-centred beliefs are less likely to use the tool as advocated. Likewise, Zhao and Frank (2003) emphasised the role of teachers' beliefs in technology integration. Zhao and Frank (2003) further indicated that, teachers need to be assured that technology can help them achieve goals effectively and they have sufficient knowledge, ability, and resources to utilise it. As Hokanson and Hooper (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012) highlighted, the process requires teachers to change their well-established pedagogical beliefs and teaching approaches and to some extent step out of their comfort zone. This, unfortunately, may be too demanding to undertake for some teachers and thus might cause resistance. In the meantime, Egbert, Paulus, and Nakamichi (2002) asserted that having a positive attitude toward technology on its own does not guarantee that teachers will be able to utilise them in the classroom either.

3.3 Technology and Teacher Training

Despite the ever growing need to engage in technology in language teaching practices, language educators receive rather limited formal training on how to use technology in language teaching, either in their teacher training program or during their career as in-service teachers (Hubbard as cited in Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014). A number of different studies have indicated that the level of intrinsic motivation teachers have is remarkably high (Dilham & Scott, 2000), but the intrinsic motivation is constantly threatened by various factors including the stress of the job, lack of autonomy, lack of self-efficacy due to insufficient training...etc. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Integrating technology into language teaching which could be, to some extent, considered as an additional and significantly demanding task could undoubtedly affect the level of motivation. Therefore, it is crucially important that if language teachers are expected to integrate technology in language teaching, their perspective on technology integration into language teaching needs to be taken into account carefully. As clearly indicated by several researchers (Kim, 2002; Lamn, 2000; Redmond, Albion, & Maroulis as cited in Mollaei & Riasati, 2013; Atkins & Vasu, 2000), critical factors affecting successful integration of technology in the classroom are associated with teachers themselves, such as teachers' perceptions and attitudes. A number of studies indicate that factors such as teacher training and computer facilities, teachers' attitudes toward computers and prior teaching experiences with ICT are strongly related to the success or failure of computer-assisted language learning practices in the classroom (Mallaei & Riasati, 2013).

3.4 Technology and Language Teaching/ Learning

Technology has greatly affected the nature of language learning and the several learning theories (Beldarrain, 2006). This is partly because of the fact that it has altered the nature of the social interaction and thus revolutionise the learning process. For example, situated learning theory stresses the importance of collaboration among learners in the learning process and thus

highlights the importance of individuals to be part of a community of practice. The integration of emerging technologies such as blogs, wikis...etc to achieve such collaboration would first change the definition of the 'community of practice' and inevitably expand the scope of it. This would be made possible as technology facilitates not only collaboration, but also interaction. According to the Engagement Theory, technology has the potential to offer various kinds of engagement and interactions that traditional approach would fail to do so (Kearsly & Shneiderman as cited in Beldarrain, 2006). This was evident in using technological tools such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, Youtube in language teaching/learning which provide synchronous or asynchronous interaction among learners (Inayati. 2013). Besides offering new opportunities in language teaching and learning, technology integration impacts the responsibilities of language teachers and learners as well. The role of teachers, as mentioned earlier in details, is no longer the source of knowledge or the agent that manages the language learning resources, rather it is the 'partner in learning'. Such a change in the teacher's role in language teaching requires looking at the role of the learners from a different angle. Therefore learners need to be taken not as passive agents of knowledge gatherers, but as active builders of knowledge and contributors of knowledge. This was the foundation of the 'contribution-oriented pedagogy' used by Collis and Moonen (2005). This clearly demonstrates how technology affects the different variables in language education and how language teaching/ learning could be transformed by means of technology.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Mixed methods research approach was adopted for this particular research study which focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data with the purpose of providing a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed methods research is a way of compensating for weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. It compensates for the weaknesses of the quantitative research in a way that it allows the participants to voice their opinion on the research topic. On the other hand, it compensates for deficiencies of qualitative research in that it makes up for biases created by personal interpretations of qualitative research. Mixed methods research uses "all of the tools of data collection available rather than being restricted to the types of data collection typically associated with qualitative research or quantitative research" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.9). Finally, mixed methods research is practical, since it allows for both inductive and deductive thinking in addressing a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Research in sequential phases (sequential phases design) will be the model that the research study will follow. The model signifies that the researcher begins the study with a research approach (phase I) and uses findings to design the second phase (Phase II), but using another research approach. For example, the study begins with a quantitative phase and uses findings to design the qualitative phase. The fundamental aspect of sequential phase is to use a research approach to study the research topic/ problems deeply and then use the findings of the first phase to design the second phase (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2014).

4.2 Participants

In-service English language teachers were the potential target group regardless of their experience in language teaching. Therefore, teachers who were teaching different age groups in different contexts were invited to participate in this research study. In order to ensure that the data collected reflects the viewpoints of a number of different language practitioners from a range of different contexts, social media was employed to reach language practitioners from all over the world. Social media groups allocated to the English teachers were targeted and the group members were invited to participate in the research study. The overall number of the participants responded to the survey was 171 including the language teachers who responded the questionnaires locally. 72.6% of the participants were females and the remaining 27.4% of them were males. The age of the participants was ranging from 22 years old to 60 years old providing a good variety of participants. Meanwhile, such a variety also allowed us to get the perspectives of teachers with different levels of experience in the field. The following figure demonstrates the years of teaching experience the participants had.

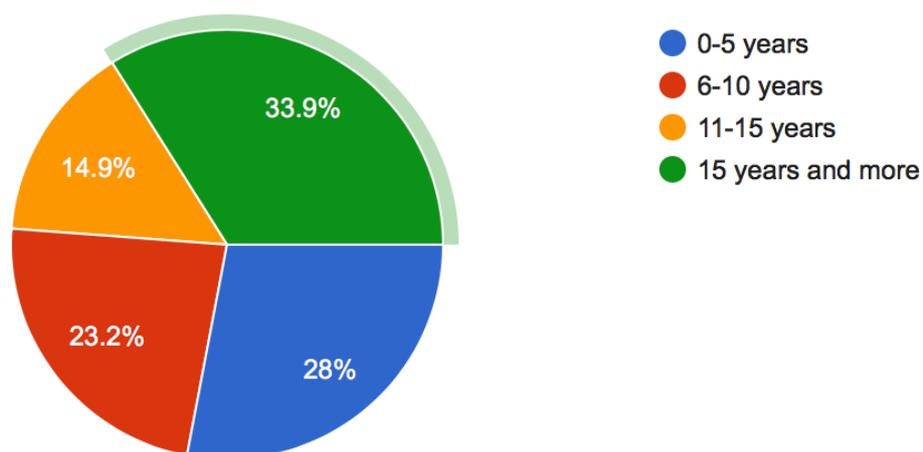


Figure 1. Years of Teaching Experience

Meanwhile, the background data collected throughout the process indicated that the participants were teaching in a range of different educational contexts; vocational schools, universities, secondary school, public schools, private schools, English preparatory schools, private English course, primary schools, adult educations...etc just to name a few. Because of the fact that the questionnaire was delivered to the participants via the internet, it allowed the researcher to access the language practitioners from 51 different countries all across the world.

Six of the research participants were selected for the semi-structured interviews. The interview participants were in-service teachers who had different level of experience in language teaching. The reason behind selecting such participants for the interview phase was to obtain the perspectives of the teachers who had different educational background (some of the participants had completed their teacher training long time ago and others had completed fairly recently) and level of experience in using technology.

4.3 Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire used in the study was adapted from Mollaei and Riasati (2013) and covered the following areas:

- teachers' perception toward technology integration
- teachers' view of using technology in enhancing EFL teaching/ learning
- computer-oriented technology contribution to language teaching/ learning

This questionnaire consists of thirty - three items, each one on a 5 - point scale ranging from " *strongly agree* " (Scale point 1) to " *Strongly disagree*" (Scale point 5), the middle point being " *Neutral- Neither Agree nor Disagree* " (Scale point 3) and two additional items (open-ended questions) to allow the participants to express their opinions. The purpose of the likert scale is to examine the overall tendencies pertaining to the overarching topics mentioned above. The preliminary data obtained through the questionnaire results was used to enhance the content and the quality of the interview process.

Interviews in a research study aims to uncover the interviewee's meanings and to avoid the researcher imposing their own structures and meanings through questionnaires. This is the most significant reasons why semi-structured interviews were appointed for this research study along with the questionnaires. There are also a number of other reasons why semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research study. First of all, semi-structured interviews are an effective way to enable a deeper exploration of the participants' experiences which allows to gather sophisticated data. In addition to that, the semi-structured interviews provide the freedom the interviewee needs while responding to the questions and they also provide the control the interviewer needs throughout the interview process.

There were twelve interview questions revolving around the perceptions of the teachers on the technology integration into the language teaching process, current practices, types of technologies used, problems and barriers encountered, training received...etc. It is anticipated that the semi-structured interviews will provide significant insights into the research topic and eventually enhance our understanding of the findings of the questionnaire results.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis means finding meanings from the data and a process by which the investigator can interpret the data. Similarly, as noted by Marshall and Rossman (1999), the data analysis is a way of extracting the meaning embedded in the data collected, putting the data in an order and a structure. The preliminary stage of the data analysis was conducted through reading all the information gathered from the completed questionnaires. The responses were classified under themes and the emerging themes were analysed carefully. The tendencies identified through the questionnaires were cross-compared with the interview questions and some additional sub-questions were formed to elicit more details pertaining to those emerging themes.

There were three major themes that the questionnaire items had been categorised under and the interview questions were aiming to delve more into those themes. The aforementioned themes were as following:

- Teachers' perception toward technology integration
- Teachers' view of using technology in Enhancing EFL teaching/learning
- Computer-oriented technology contribution to language teaching/learning

The results of the questionnaires and the interview data were categorised and presented under these themes in order to provide a comprehensive answer to the aforementioned research questions.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The research participants have been informed about the purpose and the scope of the research study in writing and orally. Participation in this research study was completely voluntary and the participants were made aware of this. As some of the participants took part in this study by answering the online questionnaire prepared by the researcher, they were asked to go through the consent form and confirm their voluntary participation before responding to the questionnaire.

Meanwhile, there was no gender and racial discrimination in this research study. Therefore, regardless of their gender and racial background, the participants were invited to take part in this study and share their perspectives.

5. Findings

The findings of the research study have been presented under the aforementioned sub-headings formed based on the themes under which the questionnaire items had been grouped. The questionnaire items and the interview data has been incorporated to interpret the tendencies in each theme and to identify the perceptions of the language teachers in the integration of technology in language teaching/learning process.

5.1 Teachers' Perception Toward Technology Integration

There were six questionnaire items listed under this category. The overall responses provided for these items represented a strong positive perception toward technology integration. For example, there was a strong agreement on the fact that technology has a positive impact on the language learning process and this could easily be observed when the responses given to the questionnaire item (#4) are carefully analysed. 62.1% of the respondents 'strongly agree' with

the idea that technology does assist in making language learning interesting and enjoyable (See

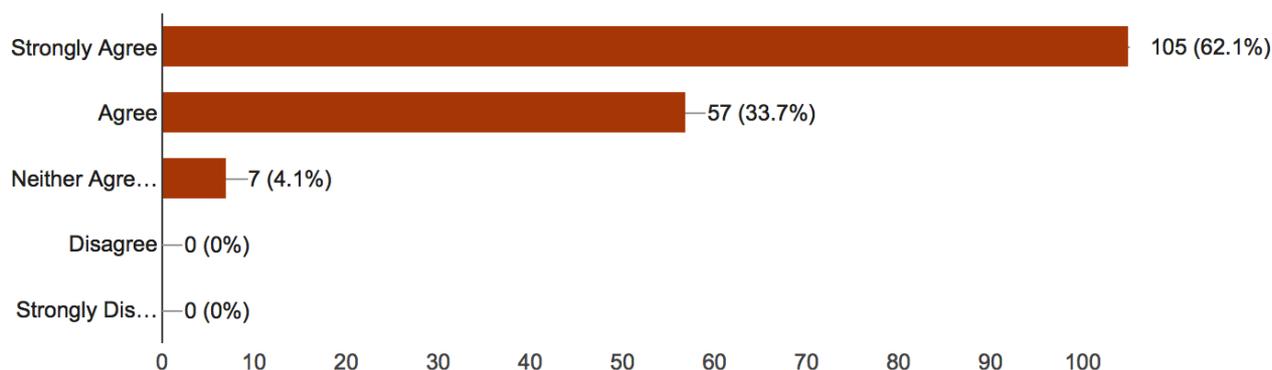


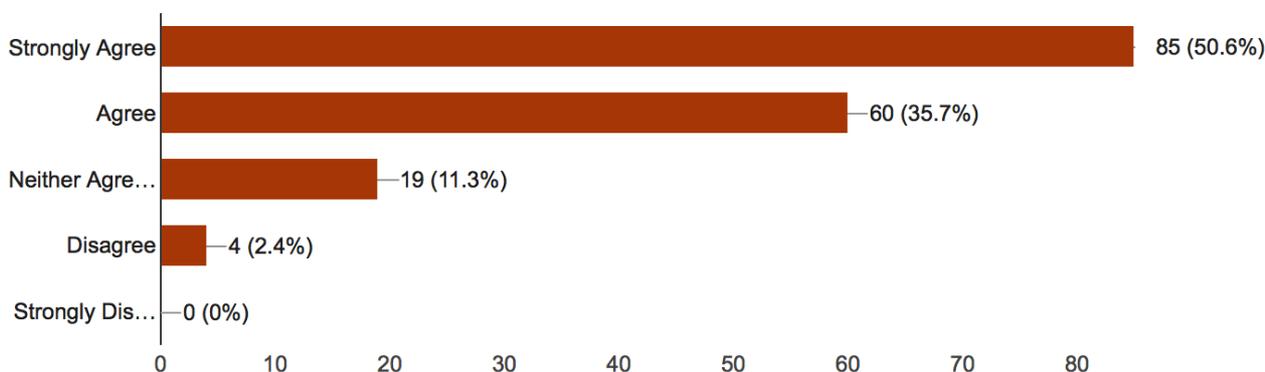
Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Technology assists in making language learning interesting and enjoyable.

It could also be observed in the interview results that the participants had similar viewpoints pertaining to the role of technology in language teaching/learning. The following excerpt from one of the interview participants clearly supports the questionnaire results.

“I believe it is quite useful and at the same time motivating our students because using for instance ...smart board..it really takes students’ attention.”

Even though there was a strong consensus on the positive impact of technology in language teaching/ learning, the result of the fifth questionnaire item was a bit contradictory. While a great number of the participants ‘strongly agreed’ that technology increases the students’ motivation, there was a small number of participants who neither ‘disagreed’ nor ‘neither



agreed nor disagreed’ (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Students’ motivation increases as a result of using technology in teaching

Even though the number was small, It was significant enough to raise some questions such as 'why is it that they would be neutral or they would disagree?'. The responses of the interview participants potentially answered these questions.

"...I always use technology at home and at school, but it is important to know what to do with it to teach English."

Participant 4

"...knowing technology is not enough, knowing how to use it to teach language is the main thing.."

Participant 5

"There are so many resources that can be used online that sometimes i don't know where to start and which to use.. workshops can be provided to help assist language teachers to better understand the different internet sites that can assist their teaching"

Participant X

It is evident that using technology for the sake of using it without having a clear purpose and goal in mind will not produce the results and generate the motivation language practitioners wish to achieve in the language classroom. Therefore, technology integration into language teaching process could ideally have positive effects, but there is no guarantee that it will boost the students' motivation. Another fairly strong indicator of this discrepancy between technology integration into teaching and positive outcome equation is evident in the responses provided to the questionnaire item seeking to investigate the correlation between technology integration and academic achievement and grades.

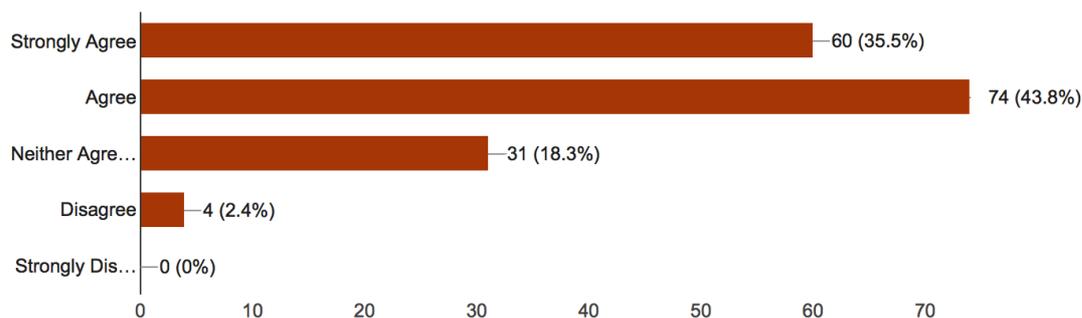


Figure 4. Technology assists students in improving academic achievement and grades

It clearly indicates that technology integration on its own may not be sufficient to produce the expected results at the motivational level as mentioned earlier or at the academic achievement level as presented in the figure above. Therefore, even though there is a positive perception about the integration of technology in language teaching/learning among the language practitioners, there are factors, mostly individual, which might affect the efficacy of technology in language teaching/learning process.

On the other hand, it has also been indicated by one of the interview participants that there is a potential danger in the dominance of technology in the classroom teaching practices, especially in language teaching.

“...students sometimes just feel everything is just about technology and let go off the aspect of communication so ignore... to make the balance between sometimes teachers need to just go to the class...use...teach without technology and sometimes technology to take place... so there can be a communicative aspect of language teaching.... is..... not let out.”

Participant 5

As clearly indicated by Pun (2013), it is commonly believed that technology has the magic touch in language teaching as it enriches the classroom environment, enhances the learner motivation, and allows easy access to a range of different materials. However, overuse of technology in language classroom can overshadow the benefits of the traditional teaching tools that are crucially important for the development of the students' communicative competence.

5.2 Teachers' View of Using Technology in Enhancing EFL Teaching/ Learning

One of the most significant aspect of technology in language education is its potential to promote learner autonomy. The relevant questionnaire item (#15) showed a strong agreement (38.1% strongly agree, 32.1% agree) on the fact that technology integration into language teaching/learning could promote learner autonomy (See Figure 5).

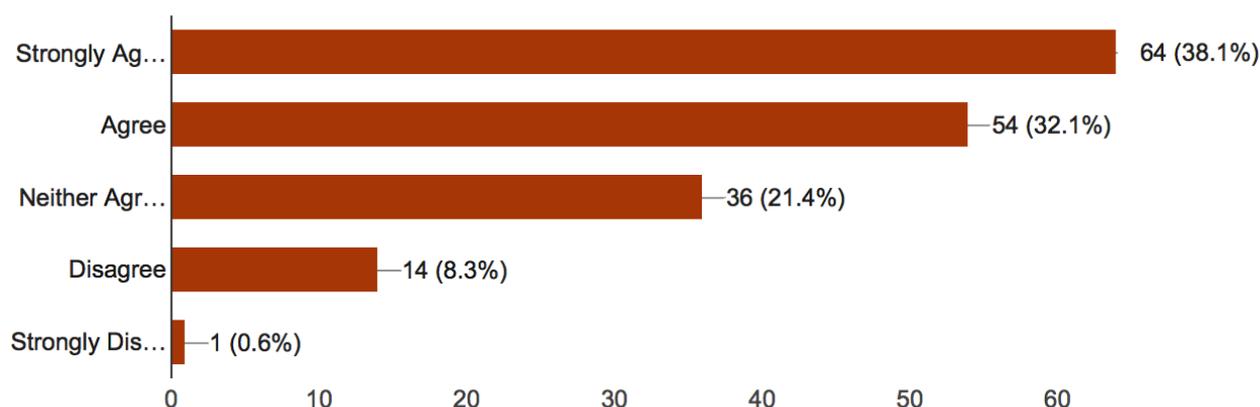


Figure 5. Students become more independent learners as a result of technology

The same results are apparent in the interview data collected. The participants clearly indicated the benefit of technology in language teaching/learning.

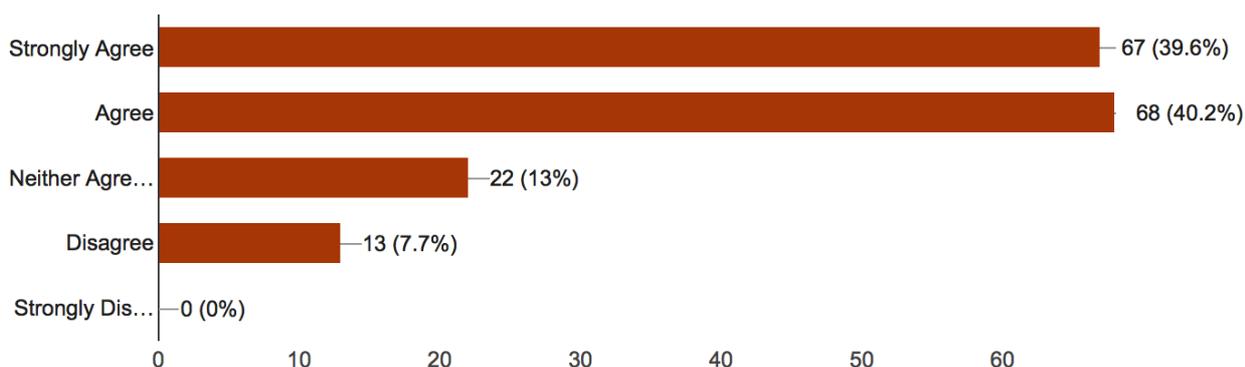
“One of the major benefit is that it allows the students to work for themselves. It gives a student autonomy....”

Participant 5

“I think there are a lot of benefits of using technology in EFL classes.like you can help the learners to be more autonomous..”

Participant 1

Considering the responses given to the other questionnaire and the interview items, it could be said that technology integration into language teaching/learning has the potential to promote learner autonomy. However, what is important is the fact that there has to be a peculiar goal behind such practices and technology integration into language teaching/learning process is not an exemption. This stresses the issue of teachers' role in language teaching/learning process. Due to the shift from Grammar Translation Method to the Communicative Language Teaching Method, the role of the teachers in the language classroom has also been changed. In an ideal language classroom, the teacher is a facilitator whose primary role is to monitor and facilitate the language learning process. This, to some extent, requires abandoning the traditional approaches in language teaching. Having said that, technology provides a remarkable opportunity for the language teachers to set up a classroom environment in which the learners are in charge of their own learning and the teachers function as facilitators. The responses provided by the participant to the relevant questionnaire item (#10) clearly indicate the mutual agreement among the participants that technology offers an alternative approach to the language



teaching/ learning practices.

Figure 6. Technology assists in abandoning the traditional approaches and developing more interactive ways in teaching and learning languages

However, the questionnaire results failed to take into account the potential reasons laying behind such a notion. That is to say that even though 79.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement, there was still 20.2% of the respondents who were either not sure about it or did disagree with it. The reason behind the disagreement is also important, but not evident in the questionnaire data. The interview data provided the missing information. Based on the

participant responses, it became clear that the reason why some respondents did not consider it as a way of moving away from traditional approaches was the fact that those respondents were not fully confident in using technology in the classroom or they did not have enough, if not any, training on how to integrate technology into language teaching/learning. The following excerpts clearly justify the points mentioned above.

“Researcher: Is there any particular reasons why you would prefer traditional methods over technology?”

Participant 1: Because we use to...like....you can consider my country as an undeveloped country so we used to use the blackboard and”

Participant 1

“I took a course about the techniques of teaching methods...we were training on using it just in the classroom, we didn't know how to use it anywhere because there aren't any technologies in the reality and for me...”

Participant

I “So...if we think about the period(when the participant completed the BA degree)...15 years ago...actually technology wasn't that popular..so I didn't get any training about this....it was just basicso...”

Participant 6

It is obvious that the level of formal education which is the building block of the teachers' knowledge about technology and its educational applications has a remarkable impact on whether the language practitioners utilise it to alter their teaching practices or not. That is to say that teachers may be reluctant to change their practices as they may not have sufficient knowledge about technology and how it could be integrated into the language teaching/learning practices. Moreover, even if the teacher had some kind of formal education on technology, it does not ensure a successful integration either. As raised by one of the interview participants, it is not enough to have the willingness and courage to use technology in language teaching.

“I try to use technology in the classroom as much as possible but sometimes I feel like I do not have enough ideas... I don't know what to do and how to use technology... I always use technology at home and at school, but it is important to know what to do with it to teach English.”

Participant 4

Another respondent highlighted a different aspect of the issue indicating the necessity of the support mechanisms in order to ensure an effective integration of technology in language teaching. Even if the teachers receive formal training and attend relevant workshops to develop their skills and knowledge, it is anticipated that they still need assistance either from their peers or the relevant bodies of the organisations (IT support department) where they work.

“I didn't get any related training in my background education, but during my professional development.... I attended a few workshops based on technology and received very little support following those workshops..”

Participant 2

On the other hand, the interview results also made it clear that the potential of technology in transforming the language teaching practices, to some extent, depends on the attitude and the aptitude of the teachers as well. That is to say that when teachers take the initiative and develop their skills and knowledge in the field, they can successfully integrate technology into language teaching and transform their teaching methodologies. The following excerpt demonstrates a good example of it.

“Actually, I have not received any formal ...ahh...training regarding technology.....So when I was going through my times of studying, I just learned different aspects of technology and making use of it to help in language learning. So that’s where I get my whole knowledge about language teaching using technology.”

Participant 5

The transformed teaching practices pose great benefits for not only the language learners, but also the language practitioners. The questionnaire (#16) results indicated a mutual agreement among the participants pertaining to the benefits of technology. It clearly show that the level of awareness among the participants is remarkably high.

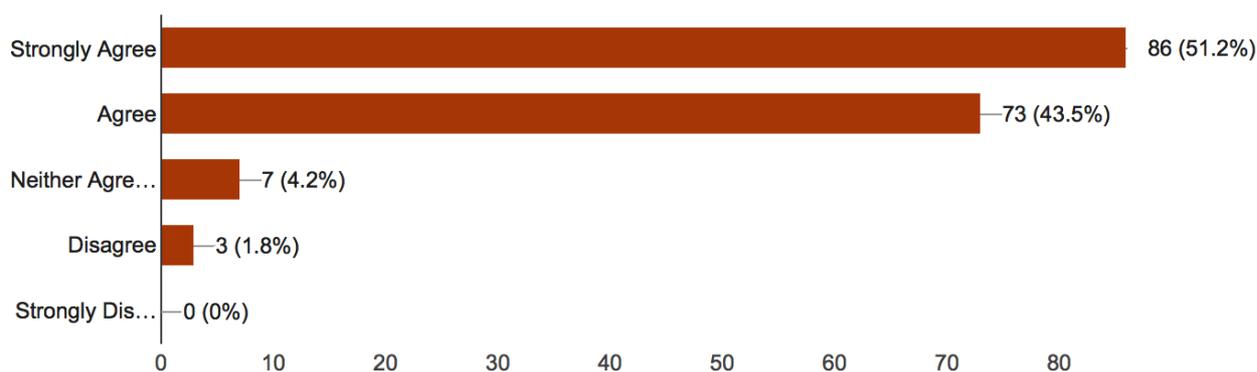
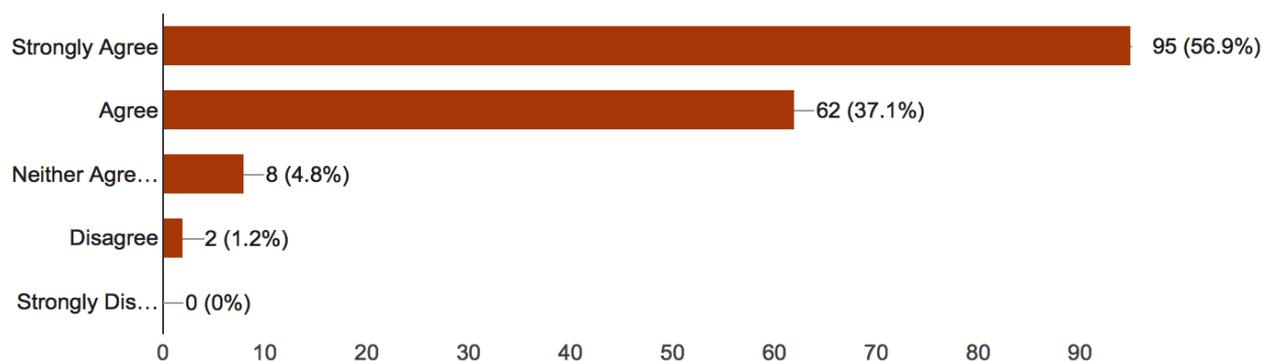


Figure 7. Using technology in the classroom has many benefits to teachers and students alike

Likewise, the interview participants reported that there are a range of benefits that technology offers to the learners and the teachers. Some of the participants referred to the fact that technology provides a vast amount of resources for language teachers offering easy access to authentic materials while others refer to the abstract benefits of technology pinpointing the fun factor that technology introduces to the language classroom. Meanwhile, some of the respondents indicated that the real benefit of technology in language teaching is its potential to promote learner autonomy and, in return, ameliorate the language learning experiences of the learners.

5.3 Computer-oriented Technology Contribution to Language Teaching/ Learning

The questionnaire results highlighted two areas where a great majority of the participants agreed upon: enriched learning environment and changed teacher role as a result of technology integration in language teaching/learning. 94% of the participants (the ones who agreed and strongly agreed combined) indicated a positive viewpoint toward the technology's power to enrich the learning environment and thus allowing the students to interact with the learning



resources as much as they want/need to.

Figure 8. Computer technologies provide non-native speakers of English rich learning environment. They can practice the activities as many times as they wish.

The fact that technology has the potential to bring the whole world into the space of a classroom with a single ‘click’, the potential is far greater than we anticipate. As indicated by one of the interview participants:

“...the potential of technology is endless in the classroom..”

Participant 4

“...you can access different things and....because language itself is global , it navigates through different areas instead of just giving them the stereotypes..”

Participant 5

This potential needs to be exploited in the language classrooms by language practitioners. However, this changes the classroom dynamics, especially the role of the teacher in the classroom. Integrating technology into language teaching practices inevitably affects the role of the teacher. Teachers as we know them are no longer the source of knowledge, but the guides that help the students access the knowledge. The awareness of such a shift is evident in the questionnaire (#18) data.

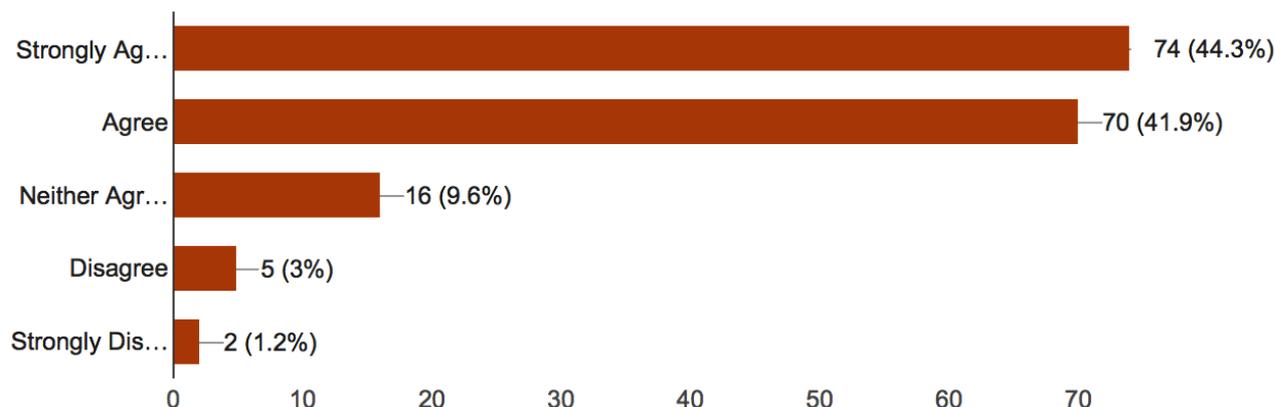


Figure 9. Teachers' role is quite different in a computer-oriented learning environment compared to traditional teacher-centred lesson.

Similarly, the interview participants also reported that technology integration does change the role of teacher in the language classroom and such a change could be considered as a positive or a negative one depending on the view point of the beholder.

"...It changes the role of the teacher to be ...ahh..not in the form of the teacher...probably I say the facilitator..."

Participant 5

However, it has also been confirmed that even if the majority of the participants expressed positive attitude towards the constructive effect of technology on the teacher's role in a classroom, the real life application of such a scenario is not problem free. Even though some of the participants indicated that technology integration does change the role of a teacher, they also indicated that they would not change or adjust their role in the classroom due to a number of different reasons. First of all, one of the participants indicated that such a change is technically not possible due to the contextual factors as well as the teacher related factors.

"But if it comes to me, I would not use any kind of technology. I prefer traditional.

Researcher: *Is there any particular reasons why you would prefer traditional methods over technology?*

Because we use to...like....you can consider my country as undeveloped country so we used to use the blackboard and

Researcher: *So you feel comfortable with the traditional methods.*

Yes....yes"

Participant 1

“actually..I am not good at using computers..I am just using it for the internet and Microsoft office word..so I cannot say that I am capable of doing things with computers...so definitely I need some ..ahh....you know support like...training...most probably...”

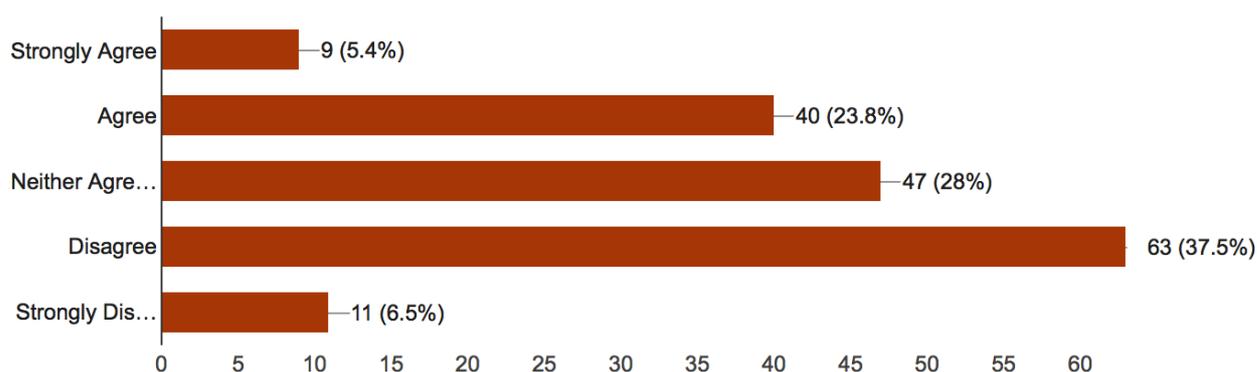
Participant 6

Another interview participant pointed a different aspect of the phenomenon and stressed the importance of the teacher’s role in language teaching/learning. That is to say that, even if technology integration guarantees a shift from teacher-centred language teaching practices more towards student-centred language teaching practices, there is a danger that it might eliminate the communicative aspect of language teaching.

“For example students sometimes just feel everything is just about technology and let go off the aspect of communication so ignore to make the balance between sometimes teachers need to just go to the class...use...teach without technology and sometimes technology to take place so there can be a communicative aspect of language teaching is not let out. “

Participant 5

The interactive nature of the technology-enhanced language teaching/learning practices makes it possible for teachers and students to interact with the content in various forms; telecollaboration, synchronous chats, and asynchronous social media applications such as Facebook, Youtube just to name a few. Therefore, unlike what many believes, the interaction between technology and the learners is not one-sided. This is clearly evident in the responses given to the relevant questionnaire item. A great majority of the participants (44% both ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ combined) disagreed with the fact that the interaction between the computer and the learners is one-sided. The analysis of the interview data along with the questionnaire results indicated clearly that the available technology for language education nowadays is more interactive than how it was before. This stresses the interactive



nature of the currently available technologies.

Figure 10. The interaction between students and the computer is one-sided, so the students just watch and listen to the sounds.

However, we shall also highlight the fact that, a significant amount of the participants did agree or strongly agree with the statement (29.2% combined). The interview data provided the reasons behind such a selection indicating that due to their formal educational background, limited

access to ongoing training, lack of equipment and facilities in their current workplace, insufficient amount of support they receive, some teachers have formed negative perceptions toward the integration of technology into language learning. That is to say that, a teacher who has completed his/her teacher training 15 years ago would be familiar with using CD players, VCRs, and TVs in language classes as technologies and would form their perceptions regarding their interactive nature based on such perceptions. Considering the fact that 33.9% of the questionnaire participants had over 15 years of teaching experience, the number of people either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement is not surprising. The remarks made by one of the interview participants would be sufficient enough to further clarify the points made above.

“So...if we think about the period...15 years ago...actually technology wasn't that popular..so I didn't get any training about this....it was just basic so...”

“Ok...first of all...ahh...I was working at a university and they didnt have that much opportunity to support us some didnt have chance to integrate into our classroom so we were just using ..ahhh....radio/tapes to play our CDs.”

Researcher: *What about the knowledge and the skills of the teacher....do you think that also influences?*

Of course it is really important...for instance the....I studies 15 years ago my BA and from that time until now everything has changed...education has changed.....I haven't done anything to develop my skills about this subject.”

Participant 6

Another interesting result that came out of the interview session was that none of the interview participants reported receiving formal training explicitly focusing on the integration of technology in language teaching practices or more generally, educational technologies. Some participants, therefore, preferred to use basic technologies in their teaching practices (e.g CD players) or stick to the traditional teaching methods whereas others preferred to develop their own skills by means of self-initiatives or by taking some formal steps to learn new skills and enhance their knowledge (e.g. professional development activities).

“I have rather tried to follow online courses and other international trainings, independently, as there is a constant lack of teachers' training on technology use.”

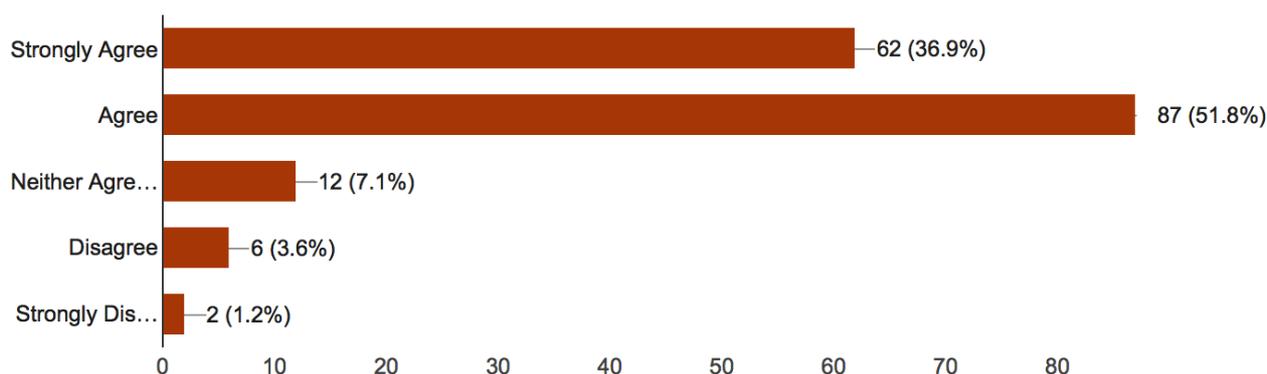
(A response given to the open ended questionnaire item)

“During my bachelors education I did not take any course on technology integration into language teaching since there was no such a course at the department and I still think many of the ELT departments do not provide these courses due to the fact that there are no qualified faculty members to teach at the universities. That's why I have acquired my current skill only by myself. I have experienced trial and error process most of the time.”

(A response given to the open ended questionnaire item)

Bearing in mind the fact that our experiences as learners and the experiences that we had in our formal teacher education programs form our identity as language teachers, it is not a surprise that teachers who are in the field longer than the ones who are considerably new seem to have different perceptions about the interactive nature of technology. This is due to the fact that the

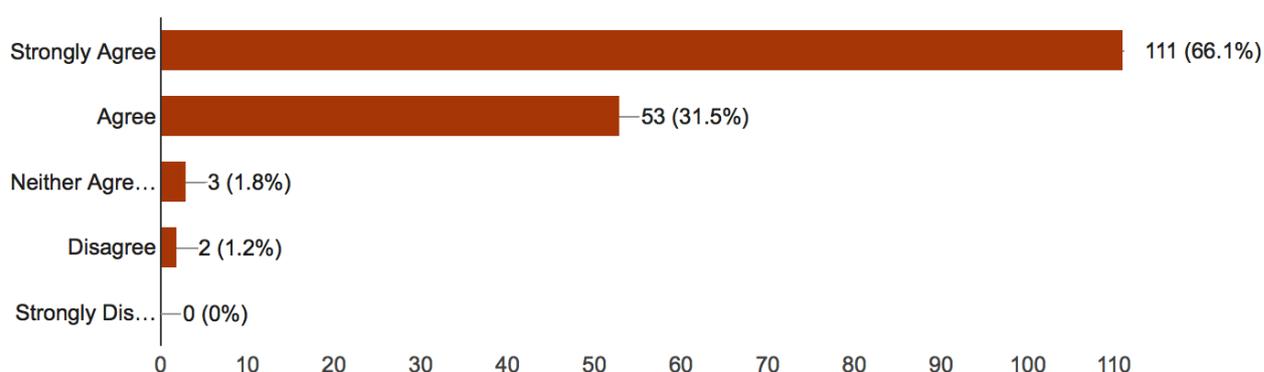
new generation has more confidence in utilising newer technologies and medias in language education whereas the older generations seem to be more conservative and resistant. Having said that, the questionnaire items (#24 and 25) that primarily focus on the computer facilities and their impact on the teachers make it clear that part of the reason why teachers are not so keen to utilise technology in the classroom is due to the fact that some considers the computer facilities as not sufficient. 54.7% of the participants reported that the computer facilities in their schools are either old or not in good condition. Likewise, 88.7% of the participants (agree & strongly agree combined) indicated that the reason why teachers are discouraged to use technology is because of the insufficient facilities in schools. Such a strong stance clearly indicates the driving force of the facilities which include, but not limited to, the equipments



available as well as the technical supports present at schools.

Figure 11. Insufficient facilities discourages teachers from using technology.

The last questionnaire item, in a way, summarised the overall perception of the participants. A great majority of the participants (97.6%) agreed on the fact that it is a necessity for the language teachers to learn how computers can be used in the EFL classroom effectively and how they



could be embedded in the current curriculum efficiently.

Figure 12. As a teacher, we need to learn how computers can be used appropriately in our specific EFL classrooms and how they can be integrated into the current curriculum effectively.

This clearly indicates the need for ongoing training for in-service teachers, and also more streamlined technology training for teacher candidates who are in their teacher education programmes. This would ensure that the teachers have the skills and knowledge to integrate technology in language education effectively. As a teacher, we need to learn how computers can be used appropriately in our specific EFL classrooms and how they can be integrated into the current curriculum effectively.

Discussion

The research reported in this paper set out to investigate the perceptions of language teachers toward the integration of technology in language teaching practices with the help of the following research questions:

1. How do teachers use digital technologies in their teaching?
2. What shapes the ways teachers use technologies in their teaching practices?
3. What is the perception of teachers' toward technology integration into language teaching?

This section discusses the data that emerged from the research study presented above in relation to the research questions and previous research in the field.

In relation to the question that aimed to explore the teachers use of digital technologies in language teaching and factors that shaped the ways teachers use technologies in their teaching practices, a number of different striking points affecting the use of technology in language teaching emerged. The research study found that those teachers who had completed their teacher education programmes when technologies used in language teaching were rather limited were not so keen to utilise up-to-date technologies in their classroom teaching practices. The interview results indicated that it was partly because of the lack of knowledge, skills, and confidence in using technology. As indicated by some of the interview participants, it was the traditional language teaching practices that they got themselves familiarised with and thus it was considered as the most appropriate practice to put in place. As indicated by Nisbett and Ross (1980), beliefs established early on in life are resistant to change. On the other hand, it was revealed that even some of the teachers who were new graduates and thus had considerably less teaching experience indicated that there was no sufficient emphasis on technology use in language teaching in their teacher education programmes. Therefore, the skills and knowledge required to put technology in use in language teaching was missing upon their graduation and commencement to their profession. Considering the fact that teacher education is considered as a way of changing the trainees' cognition (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000), lack of technology education or ill-emphasis on it in teacher education programmes would inevitably demote the willingness of the language teachers to integrate technology in language teaching process. This is due to the fact that there is a 'symbiotic relationship' between teacher cognition and classroom practices (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996). Teachers tend to put pedagogical applications

in practice that they feel comfortable with. In the meantime, the research study revealed that it is important to know about the technological tools that could be used in language teaching, but what is more important is to know what to do with those tools and how to utilise them for language teaching purposes. Not knowing what to do with technology could be considered as another reason why it would be neglected in language teaching based on the interview data collected. On the other hand, it was reported in the research study that technology integration into language teaching was considered as a significant way of moving away from the traditional language teaching methods. However, it was also reported that this was not always the case due to the fact that not all participants declared equal confidence in using technology in language teaching and thus preferred to stick to the traditional methods of delivery. In deed, 97% of the participants indicated that there is an emerging need for language teachers to learn how technology could be effectively embedded in the EFL classrooms as well as the existing language curriculum. As highlighted by Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot (1994), the important consideration is how the technology is utilised as it will determine the ultimate impact of it on students and the language curriculum. This clearly indicated more streamlined professional development activities for in-service teachers and more focused training for pre-service teachers in teacher education programmes.

Another significant point that emerged in the research study was the mutual agreement on the fact that technology integration in language education increases the level of student motivation and poses numerous benefits to the students and the teachers. The fact that technology allows teachers to access authentic teaching materials for language teaching purposes and involve the fun factor in the teaching/ learning process, the benefit technology offers is immense. One particular benefit of technology is what has been highlighted by Rogers and Medley (1988); technology allows the learners to experience the language as it is used by the native speakers of the target language. Meanwhile, technology promotes the concept of ‘learner autonomy’ which has gained a remarkable significance in the field recently. Teachers can utilise technology to teach learners how to access the language learning materials/ resources whenever and wherever they want to. In other words, students learn how to learn the language, which prepares them to continue learning beyond the period of formal instruction (Victori & Lockhart, 1995). Therefore, it has been reported by the research participants that there is a real benefit in the integration of technology in language teaching/learning practices even though there might be factors affecting the practical application of it as mentioned earlier.

Another key point that emerged in the research study pertaining to the third research question that was targeted in this study was the fact that some teachers were concerned about the dominance of technology in language teaching which could potentially demote the communicative aspect of the language teaching practices. The point made here is worth consideration due to the fact that technology integration alters the classroom dynamics and gives more autonomy to the learners which, in return, limit the control of the teacher over the activities carried out by the learners. However, the potential issue here is the way we perceive ‘learner autonomy’. Contrary to what the term might evoke in popular usage, learner autonomy does not involve secluding oneself (Godwin-Jones, 2011), but engaging in different forms of learning experiences based on the preferences of the learner. In this regards, this could also be considered as a positive aspect as teachers would have a chance to take a step back, let the students get in charge of their learning, and facilitate the whole learning process.

The final discussion regarding the research findings would be around the negative perceptions of the teachers on the integration of technology in language teaching. A range of different

factors were put forward in the study; formal teacher education, limited access to ongoing professional training, lack of equipment and facilities, and insufficient support available in the workplace. As highlighted in many research studies, the most striking reasons why technology integration and use fails to produce the expected outcome are correlated with factors such as the quality of the teacher training, the amount of quality knowledge transmitted to the teachers and the amount of practice teachers have done (Godwin-Jones, 2011). It is also highlighted by many researchers that in order to ensure an effective utilisation of technology in language education, the level of technology literacy of the language teachers need to be improved (Coghlan 2004; Lai & Kritsonis 2006; Schwab & Foa 2001). This would significantly impact the teachers' aptitude as well as attitude toward technology use in language teaching. On the other hand, having the knowledge, skills, aptitude, and attitude would not guarantee a successful integration of technology in language teaching if there is limited access to the resources or the access to the resources requires a lot of effort on the teachers' end as indicated by the literature available and the findings of this particular study. This could inevitably cause frustration in long term.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the research study have revealed significant pedagogical implications that should be carefully analysed by the policy makers and the language practitioners in order to ameliorate the current language teaching practices. First of all, the mutual agreement on the benefit of technology in language teaching and learning indicates that technology has a lot to offer in language teaching/ learning. It has been highlighted by the research participants that the integration of technology in language teaching enhances the quality of the language teaching practices which, in return, improves the level of student motivation and engagement. Meanwhile, due to its interactive nature, it is strongly believed that technology has the potential to provide more meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences for the learners. Therefore, language teachers should explore potential ways of embedding technology in language education to harvest the benefits it offers for language teaching and learning. However, as indicated in this research study, not all teachers feel confident in using technology in the classroom. Because of this reason, educational institutes should ensure that teachers have access to ongoing training to acquire the skills and knowledge needed and also update/ upgrade their existing knowledge based on the changing demands of the educational technologies. In addition to that, it is crucially important that language practitioners have easy access to technical supports as there could be a range of different problems they might face with when they utilise technology in the classroom. If teachers cannot get support in dealing with these problems, it might cause frustration which eventually leads to the exclusion of technology in teaching practices. Sandholtz and Reilly (2004) claimed that the success of ICT integration is closely related to the skills possessed by the language teachers, but on its own not adequate for the effective utilisation of it in the language classroom. That was to say that the training programs should not only equip the teachers with skills and knowledge about the educational technologies, but also put greater emphasis on how technologies could be employed in language teaching to maximise the effectiveness of the learning outcomes.

Considering the fact that the integration of technology in language teaching is a fairly current topic in the field of ELT, there is a field of knowledge that is yet to be built. The way to make this happen is through what is called the 'community of practice'. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to cooperate in the process of technology integration and share their experiences

with their colleagues. This would not only encourage them to reflect on their practices, but also learn new techniques and approaches from others.

Future Directions

What is considered as a new technology today will be outdated tomorrow and the popularity of it will decrease accordingly. This indicates the dynamic nature of the research topic and stresses the importance of further research in the field to analyse the potential ways of integrating the emerging technologies in language teaching practices. However, it should never be forgotten that the change agents which would make it happen is teachers and their perceptions are equally important in this process. Technology has always been considered peripheral; a complementary tool for the traditional teaching approaches. As indicated by Inayati (2013), such an approach would be nothing more than ‘doing things better’ with technology within the scope of traditional teaching approaches. However, the emphasis here should be more of ‘doing better things’ (Inayati, 2013) which stresses the active role of technology in language education and how it could potentially revolutionise the language teaching practices. In that regards, there are two distinct but closely related areas that need further research. First of all, future research studies should delve into the issue of integrating technology into the existing language curriculum and further investigate the potential issues and challenges in organising the content of such a curriculum with the available resources as well as the issues and challenges that could be faced in the execution of such a curriculum in language classes. Secondly, more research needs to be carried out to investigate the impact of technology integration in language teaching/ learning by means of exploring the practices of the language teachers. This is crucial due to the fact that the issues and challenges that the language practitioners face in utilising technology in language teaching need to be explored and investigated on an ongoing basis so that appropriate actions could be taken to overcome the potential barriers.

Conclusion

Less than three decades ago, critics were questioning the value of technology and its use in language classrooms, but nowadays our focus has shifted more towards the effective integration of technology into the language teaching and learning practices (Liu, Graham and Lee, 2014). The research studies been conducted including this particular study aimed to explore the perceptions of language teachers on the integration of technology in language teaching and identify the potential factors that might have either promoted or demoted the effective technology integration into the language teaching practices. This particular research study managed to involve teachers from diverse backgrounds with various years of work experience. This, in return, provided a rich data to analyse and respond to the research questions.

It was made clear by the research participants that technology as an educational tool has the real potential to alter the atmosphere of the learning environment and provide a more enjoyable learning experiences for the learners. Such a learning environment would inevitably increases the level of student motivation and thus the learners would be more engaged in the language learning practices. The most significant aspect of technology integration in language teaching highlighted in this study was the possibility of developing ‘learner autonomy’ in language classes. Technology integration in language teaching was considered as an ultimate way of achieving such a goal.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that technology in language teaching would have profound effects on the approaches in language teaching as it redesigns the role of teacher in the classroom and introduces more dynamic tools in the ecology of a classroom. However, it was also made clear in the research study that it would not be sufficient to know about the educational technologies, rather it is important to know how these technologies could be employed in a language classroom for educational purposes. Therefore, the research participants indicated the need for ongoing training to be able to acquire the required knowledge and upgrade their existing skills. On the other hand, it is also a fact that the existing educational resources such as text books and other materials are not completely aligned with the educational technologies. Therefore, it is even more difficult to harmonize technology with the resources in hand.

It could be inferred from this research study that the integration of technology expands the horizon of the language teaching practices and adds another layer to it. Even though it brings along numerous benefits, the challenges it poses are as great as the benefits it offers. Therefore, the teachers' perceptions pertaining to the integration of technology in language teaching reveals significant insights into the issue and highlight the actions that need to be taken in order to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to utilise such tools in language teaching practices effectively.

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