

ICT Use in the EFL Classroom in Morocco: EFL Teachers' Personal and Technology-Related Variables

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the level of information and communication technology (ICT) use in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Morocco. It explores the effects of EFL teachers' personal and technology-related variables in ICT use in English high school classes. The study opts for a descriptive and an analytical method to account for this claim. Therefore, a mixed-methods approach is used. A survey questionnaire and interviews are conducted to obtain a corpus of data that is both representative and reliable. The sample of the study consists of 30 teachers of English in six high schools in the city of Meknes. The findings indicate that ICT integration in the EFL classes in Morocco is hampered due to different variables. Interior variables refer to the teacher's attitude and dilemma towards using ICT while exterior ones are strongly associated with the lack of ICT facilities and ICT-related equipment in the Moroccan high schools.

KEYWORDS

EFL Classroom, ICT, Teachers' Personal Variables, Technology-Related Variables

1. INTRODUCTION

Being aware of the multiple benefits of introducing ICT in the educational system, the Moroccan educational authorities have initiated the adoption of ICT use in schools through huge national education initiatives. Firstly, the National Charter for Education and Training has incited the use of modern technologies in order to improve the students' learning. Later, the Emergency Plan has come into effect since the year 2009 to accelerate and further reinforce the achievement of the national educational reform that is envisioned by the National Charter.

The adoption of ICT in the educational system has been emphasized in the first area of the Urgency Plan. In Project E1.P10, "Integrating ICT in the Learning Process" has emphasized improving the mechanics of implementing the GENIE Program through having a strategy of equipping schools with the necessary ICT equipment, which will ultimately enhance the pedagogic and learning conditions of the learners (GENIE Division and the General Inspectorate for Educational Affairs, 2013).

Within the same program, a need for having a national strategy for training on ICT is voiced. A large number of administrators and teachers have been trained throughout the 2009- 2013 years. The desired ultimate goal of all these efforts, as it is stated by the ministry, is to improve the students' learning through the teachers' use of ICTs with a view of integrating the learners in the digital society. However, language education in Morocco still relies heavily on passive forms of learning focused on direct instruction and memorisation, rather than interactive methods that promote the critical and individual thinking needed in today's interconnected world.

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Ennaji (1998) advocated the use of ICT in English language teaching, and detailed its benefits for both educators and learners. In a study conducted on Moroccan teachers, Biaz et al., (2009) concluded that most teachers use the computer to word-process their lessons or to download materials from the Internet. Another dominant characteristic which is highlighted in this study is that ICT use is teacher-centered in the Moroccan context (Ibid). That is to say, students are very rarely involved as active participants in the construction of knowledge using ICT. Similarly, Mastafi (2013) stated that the use of ICT in the Moroccan educational system is still limited. This study found that among those teachers who use ICT in their classes, 60% use PowerPoint to deliver lessons in a presentation format.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The status quo indicates that the integration of ICT in Moroccan high schools faces different problems at different levels. This situation has triggered the main research question of this study in order to investigate teachers' personal and technology-related variables that may inhibit teachers from using ICT in their own classes in spite of the availability of ICT facilities in the majority of schools.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Defining 'ICT Use'

The terms 'use' and 'integration' are used interchangeably to refer to a teacher's basic use of the ICTs to deliver a lesson or part of it. According to Llyod (2005), the term 'integration' is used "to reflect a change in pedagogical approach to make ICT less peripheral to schooling and more central to student learning" (p. 5). On that account, 'ICT integration' is used with pedagogical considerations that reflect an approach in which ICT is fully integrated into teaching; an approach which is learner-centered and both process and product-oriented. In this sense, ICT use should be done in a systematic and pedagogically planned manner, rather than just as a simple 'add-on' to the traditional tools that are already available for teachers like the blackboard and the chalk, such as projecting a reading-comprehension text for students to read.

According to Sandholtz, Ringstaff, and Dwyer (1997) teachers will predictably progress in using technology over time through five specific stages: entry, adoption, adaptation, appropriation, and invention. As teachers move through the process of ICT integration, their attitudes to technology change as well. Teachers at the early stages have some kind of discomfort using ICTs. But, as they develop towards the end of the continuum, they become more comfortable and self-confident using technology.

Mishra and Koehler (2006, 2008) introduced Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) as a framework for teacher knowledge for technology integration and argued that the development of TPACK is critical for effective technology integration. As the name suggests, the framework has three main components: content, pedagogy, and technology. However, TPACK goes beyond these three components. Emphasizing the importance of dynamic relationships among these components, Mishra and Koehler (2006, 2008) identified pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological content knowledge (TCK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) in addition to content knowledge (CP), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK). The TPACK framework shows that technology integration requires much more than technical skills.

As stated by Mishra and Koehler (2006, 2008), when teachers understand the framework of TPACK, they can integrate technology into the content and pedagogy of their classrooms. The integration will help students learn more effectively. Mishra and Koehler suggest that TPACK should guide curriculum development and teacher education.

As globalisation and rapid advancements in technology continue to transform civic space and the world of work, education models must adapt to equip second/foreign language learners with

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