

Experienced and Novice Teachers' Awareness and Attitudes towards ICT in Language Classroom: A study conducted in a Thai context

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the English as foreign language (EFL) as teachers' attitudes towards the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in Thai setting. The participants of this study were six English teachers from an international university in Thailand which were further classified into two groups of "novice" and "experienced" teachers. Data were collected via interview methods with 6 teachers at an international university in Thailand. Findings show novice teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT in their language classroom as compared to their experienced peers. The novice teacher makes use of more ICT-related materials and activities when compared to their more experienced counterpart. Nevertheless, many language instructors mentioned certain challenges in using ICT. Besides, teachers' acceptance or rejection of ICTs has pedagogical implications. It is agreed upon that ICTs make the learning process more enjoyable since students becomes more involved to learn through wide range of topics, materials and tools.

Keywords: ICT, Teachers' Awareness, ELT

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Introduction

Education institutions are intended to prepare students for their professional lives. The influence of information and communication technology (ICT) is developing ways on how to better deliver instruction has been regarded as beneficial in educational settings. Moreover, in language classroom, this use of ICT can as well be an impactful experience. As observed by Tinio (2002), globalization has made both teaching and learning intricate and the transformation in part has been driven by technological innovation. In the view of Warschauer (cited in Jung, 2006) with the dual impact of globalization and the spread of English language, both English and ICT have become vital requirement for growing numbers of non-native speakers of English to ensure full participation in this era (Jung, 2006).

E-readiness, or the readiness to use technology to achieve certain goals or work (Parasuraman, 2000) displays that teachers as human resources are technologically competent (Lawson & Comber, 1999). Teachers with e-readiness are able to use and adopt technology into their classroom when they think that technology is a tool that can be used by both teachers and students to obtain more knowledge and share meaning (Vrasidas & McIsaac, 2001). However, literature also notes that there are some factors that impact teachers' use of technology in the learning process, which includes positive perceptions and negative perceptions.

In terms of positive perceptions, if teachers perceive training in ICT is worthwhile, they are inclined to use it in their teaching (Galanouli, Murphy & Gardner, 2004). Moreover, their openness toward the possible changes with technology is derived from their perception that technology can bring about innovation such as impact on higher thinking skill and on content acquisition for language learning (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002). Besides, Cope and Ward (2002) found that teachers' perceptions toward to technology include 'how' and 'what' effects technology can bring to students, for instance, whether students can manipulate language with specific software and interact directly with computers. Likewise, teachers can also identify the potential of technology to motivate students. On the contrary, negative perceptions from teachers reveal barriers which limit the use of ICT. Teachers may have knowledge of using ICT for their teaching, but insufficient numbers of computers may prevent them from using it. Moreover, lack of facilities may also mean lack of access. The limited number of computers may always be booked and cause frustration to users to gain access to them (Samuel & Bakar, 2005).

Literature review

The rise of internet and computer-mediated communication have reshaped the use of computers for language classrooms. Lee (2000) states, network-based technology can contribute significantly to experiential learning, learner motivation, enhanced achievement, and individualization. In order to prepare students for the real life in this era, the teachers must first have a positive attitude towards the use of technology in their classrooms. Ofsted (2004) points out that English language is one of the most difficult subjects and teachers must create an interactive classroom atmosphere to maintain the students' interest in the subject. Therefore, using ICT in a language classroom can be very beneficial.

Tanveer (2011) studied the students' and teachers' perception regarding e-learning tools in the language classroom by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods from eight English

language instructors and 46 learners and found out that both learners and instructors perceived that e-learning helps introvert students to interact better and allow for a more student-centered learning environment. Another study by Isisag (2012) examined the necessity of ICT and highlight its positive effects on foreign languages found that integrating ICT in foreign language teaching has positive effects on both the teachers and students to help them aware of the modernized world and meet the current demands of the new era.

In Khalid (2007)'s study investigates the use of ICT among thirteen teachers in English language classroom in Malaysia found that only 33% were integrating computer in their teaching. As such, lack of training and time factors are the main reasons for not integrating computer technology in classroom environment.

Several studies and research have been carried out on ICT integration in the classroom in general. A paper by Motshegwe (2005) explains "If the teacher has the skills to organize and stimulate the ICT-based activity, then both whole-class and individual work can be equally effective."(p.10). Regarding this point of view, it is clear that teachers should make use of ICT in their language classroom as well in order to enhance students' language learning. As Abdelhak (2015) puts, if used in a knowledgeable way, ICT can help promote civilisation to its significant place in today's curriculum. Moreover, the adoption of new teaching and learning approaches will certainly foster EFL students' talents, and produce future workers with adequate scientific knowledge, with sound professional skills, creativity, and discipline.

Ofsted (2004) says English Language is one of the most difficult subjects. Therefore, language teachers must create an interactive classroom teaching and learning atmosphere by implementing ICT in their language classrooms. According to Giordano (2007) learners needs to be equipped with ICT literacy and be lifelong learners ICT must be successfully integrated into both the English Language curriculum and academic practice in general.

Methodology

To gather the data on perception and attitudes of two groups of language teachers on the used of ICT in their classroom, two research instruments were used which included the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questions were validated by two experts in the field. The questionnaire consists of 13 items. The IOC was also carried out to validate the tool.

After both groups have completed the questionnaire survey for about 20 minutes, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview session with all the participants separately for about 35-45 minutes each. After the completion of data collection, the researcher analyzed and compared the responses of the novice group with the experienced group.

Participants of the study

The participants of this study were six English teachers from an international university in Thailand which were further classified into two groups of "novice" and "experienced" teachers.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Novice teachers' Detail*

	Gender	Years of teaching	Age	Computer usage in daily life	Percentage of ICT usage in the classroom
Novice teacher 1	Female	1	22	Daily	94% of all lessons
Novice teacher 2	Female	2	24	Daily	92% of all lessons
Novice teacher 3	Male	3	28	Daily	85% of all lessons

Table 2. *Experienced teachers' Detail*

	Gender	Years of teaching	Age	Computer usage in daily life	Percentage of ICT usage in the classroom
Experienced teacher 1	Male	8	35	Almost weekly	50% of all lessons
Experienced teacher 2	Female	12	42	Almost weekly	25% of all lessons
Experienced teacher 3	Female	16	50	Almost monthly	5% of all lesson

Table 1 and table 2 present the personal background information of the subjects that were deemed relevant to the study. The questionnaire responses suggested that both novice and experienced teachers were aware that ICT can be used in language classroom. However, the Novice teachers believed that ICT will bring positive impacts on the teaching and learning process unlike their experienced counterpart. According to novice teachers, ICT makes it easier as some students are better to learn via visual or audio. The experienced teacher only used ICT in lesson and material preparation like PowerPoint slides as they reported that they do not understand some of the software or other programs.

Table 3. *Likert scale rating, 1 =strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree*

	Novice teacher 1	Novice teacher 2	Novice teacher 3	Mean rating novice teacher	Experienced teacher 1	Experienced teacher 2	Experienced teacher 3	Mean rating experienced teacher
ICT is important in language teaching	5	5	5	5	3	3	2	2.6

ICT increases students' motivation	5	5	5	5	4	2	2	2.6
ICT makes learning more fun	4	4	5	4.3	3	2	2	2.3
ICT makes learning more interesting	5	5	5	5	3	2	2	2.3
ICT makes learning more effective	5	5	4	4.6	3	2	1	2
ICT makes learning more diverse	5	4	4	4.3	3	2	2	2.3
ICT enhances my teaching performance	4	4	4	4	2	2	1	1.6

This was also supported by the semi-structured interview. In terms of effectiveness the experienced teachers are not very sure about it. As describe by one of the experienced teacher, "I am not sure if using ICT will make things easier for me and the students" Novice teachers in contrast had a better perception towards the effectiveness of ICT as described "in some occasion students can learn more autonomously or the learning procedure can truly be student-centered". One of the novice teacher said that ICT with internet facility facilitated teachers in many ways. In terms of perceived ease of use, there were several factors which prevented the experienced teachers from using ICT, such as knowledge of certain software. They said if they had received training on additional software other than basic Microsoft office, they might consider using ICT in their classrooms in the future. Therefore, besides the ability to use which became of their setback in using ICT, their perceived usefulness in which they think that using certain software is not useful for language teaching was also a barrier. As confirmed by both groups that the university provide a stable wi-fi throughout the campus so the network accessing was not an obstacle that prevent teachers from using ICT in their classrooms.

Generally, the successful use of technology in education is very much determined by the teachers' personal beliefs and concerns (Angers & Machtmes, 2005) that pursue their probability to use technology (Russell et al., 2003). Moreover, the way that teachers view their role will influence the way they teach with technology (Angers & Machtmes, 2005). Teachers'

beliefs toward a particular practice will help them set their goals for technology use. Angers and Machtmes (1999) assert that those teachers who believe technology tools can be used to enhance lessons, motivate, and bring changes to their teaching and strategies will tend to adopt technology with confidence. In contrast, those who do not will tend to block the implementation of technology. Such external barriers as the belief on teaching, computers, established classroom practice, and unwillingness to change confront them with the current practice (Angers & Machtmes, 2005).

In line with many researchers lack of ICT knowledge also prevents teachers from adopting technology. When there is no skill to use it, the equipment just becomes useless and availability does not bring benefits. Technical problems and effective operation of educational software are also among the concerns of teachers (Demetriadis et al., 2003). They can lead to lack of confidence because teachers see themselves as incapable of running technological applications. The incompetence to use technology caused teachers to be recognized as one of the limitations of information technology use in the classroom (Lawson & Comber, 1999).

Conclusion

Teachers' acceptance or rejection of ICTs has pedagogical implications. It is agreed upon that ICTs make the learning process more enjoyable since students becomes more involved to learn through wide range of topics, materials and tools. It also offers benefit to the teachers to enhance his/her performances. From the study by Cox, Preston and Cox (1999), it revealed that ICT based teaching improved presentation of materials, are enjoyable to be used in the classroom, made the lesson more interesting for students and lessen the teachers' difficulty in controlling the class. This study, however, is limited to small samples and cannot be generalized to other teachers in various universities. Therefore, a further in-depth approach such as the interview on teachers' perceptions, needs and challenges are needed from more respondents to obtain broader knowledge about ICT implementation, especially in developing countries.

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