

The Use of Technology in English Language Teaching: Teachers' attitudes in Turkey

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12783919>

Published Date: 19-July-2024

Abstract: The use of technology in classrooms is an effective tool to motivate and engage learners in the learning process. Educators around the world emphasize its importance in facilitating teaching and learning. This paper investigates the attitudes of English teachers in Turkey towards integrating technology in their classrooms. Another, issue this paper attempts to investigate is whether these targeted teachers use technology frequently or not. Moreover, another aim is to discover whether they have received training or not. A total of 30 participants engaged in this study by answering a questionnaire online. The data collection was done through Google Forms then SPSS was applied to interpret the results more accurately. The overall outcomes show that the teachers have a positive attitude on using technology. Also, they emphasized the necessity of using it in the English language classroom.

Keywords: Attitudes, Integrating technology, training.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's world is one ruled by technology in all areas of modern life. Almost every sector is impacted by technology. Economists, doctors, and educators. Moreover, in recent years, the educational sector has known a huge shift from traditional classrooms to digital e-learning and education. Thousands of educational services are hosted online, and when the Coronavirus hit in 2020, educators found themselves suddenly out of the classroom environment teaching their learners from the comfort of their homes. Ever since, the use of technology is more and more researched. There are many questions regarding the use of this relatively new method. Although some professionals in the field condemn its use, almost everyone agrees on its effectiveness. Furthermore, its importance is emphasized worldwide by educators in facilitating the teaching and learning process. In the English language classroom, many teachers use technology as a way to keep up with the modern world of education and to aid the learning process. Many teachers report that the use of technology in the classroom is very useful. Moreover, there are different factors which make teachers use this tool in their classroom setting. Some examples retrieved from research conducted in South Korea includes: limiting fatigue, a tool for effective classroom management, using it to facilitate learning, etc. (Baek et al., 2008) This shows that the factors which make a teacher use technology vary considerably from teacher to teacher depending on the circumstances affected by it. There are different uses of technology which can be applied at any stage of an English language lesson. These treatments range from activating background knowledge at the beginning of a lesson, all the way to checking understanding by using online games, for example, towards the end of a lesson. There are also different types of ways technology can be used to share information with learners. It could be in the form of online game or slides in the classroom, or in the form of distant learning where learners are outside of the classroom environment. here are many tools' teachers can use in the classroom to assist them in teaching English. These tools range from game browsing platforms to applications for conducting quizzes. Also, Technology can be either used in the classroom, outside of it, or both. It is also called flipped classroom where teachers deliver one part in class and leave the other part to online education. It can be in the form of Homeworks to practice what was studied in the classroom, or a new delivery of a new lesson online.

Teachers' attitudes towards technology can be seen as a relatively new researched topic. Since teachers are the ones guiding the learning process, it makes sense to explore their attitudes and perspectives. Knowing the attitudes of teachers, will help in exploring the reasons behind using it, and how does this use facilitate the teaching and learning for learners. In addition, what factors affect these attitudes should also be explored. Could it be the teachers' age, training, or other unknown factors. Knowing this would most definitely make us look at this issue from different perspectives and beliefs.

While discussing this topic, the idea of training in using this tool comes to light. The types of training a teacher can receive vary considerably ranging from: governmental programs for public school teachers to more self-directed training based on the use of books and online courses. Which form of training is best depends on the type of program and the personal willingness of teachers to learn to use technology in their classrooms. This training is reported to be a main element of teachers' confidence in using it. (Brown, 2014) The available research suggests that training increases confidence in using technology in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem & Purpose

The role of technology has been frequently discussed by educators. Nowadays, technology is a must in almost every setting. It is used to share, deliver, or give feedback on a piece of information. In the English language classroom setting, teachers integrate technology to motivate their learners and to make lessons more interesting. We cannot say this is the only purpose for using it, many other factors exist which will be discussed later in this paper.

Language teachers worldwide find that traditional classrooms are no longer encouraged by many educational institutions. English teachers are encouraged to integrate technology by administrators and experts. Consequently, it is important to discover the attitudes of teachers to determine how much learners benefit from this tool. So, we can say that this point is expected to be explored in the paper.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of English language teachers in Turkey towards the use of technology in the classroom?
2. Did the targeted teachers receive any training?
3. Does the training selected increase a teachers' confidence in using technology?
4. How often do these teachers use technology in a school week?
5. Do English teachers in Turkey think that training is important?

Significance of the Study

Taking into account the reasons mentioned above, it can be said that knowing teachers' attitudes is very important. A teachers' perspective towards something shapes the whole learning process of learners. A positive attitude towards the use of technology will lead to a more fruitful lesson. However, a negative outlook will lead to a confused teacher who is just forced to use technology by the administration or just for the sake of using it. Knowing the importance of training in integrating technology in the classroom can also be helpful to determine how teachers can improve themselves and what training they've already received in the past.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Use of Technology in the English Language Classroom

Technology is a tool which teachers use to facilitate the learning process. It can range from the use of tablets and platform games all the way to videos and audios. The use of technology can be a reason for learners' motivation (Stockwell, 2013). Moreover, the classroom environment becomes more dynamic which enhances learning. Also, learners get tired and bored of the usual delivery of classes which makes technology an important feature. It is known that associating meaning with visual representations can help in contextualizing language. A more contextualized lesson plan will lead to a good path for learners to acquire language. Visual features such as videos and other devices can help in this process of creating real life situations in the target language (Mickenzie, 1999). Real life situations help learners to observe language in its natural setting which promotes the use of authentic language.

Consequently, it is an important feature of acquiring language in a more natural way. Students nowadays are familiar with technology. They use it in all aspects of life outside of the classroom setting. So, it is not hard for teachers to guide learners in an online game, for example. Instructions are easily grasped by learners which takes less time and makes it more effective. The use of technology in the English language classroom is reported to reduce anxiety levels among learners. Furthermore, when independent study is combined with technology enhanced learning tools, students' interest and engagement increases with it (Weinstein, David, 2024). This shows the importance of this use in the classroom on both improving anxiety levels and boosting students' interest and engagement in the classroom. If these improvements continue in a smooth manner in the English teaching and learning processes, it can have a positive impact on performance and achievement as well.

Many scholars and researchers in our field of study attempt to draw a clear vision on how ICT enhanced teaching and learning affect students' achievement and overall performance. In a systematic review on the different research regarding our topic of study, it is illustrated that an ICT enhanced learning environment does in fact improve the overall performance of students raising by consequence academic achievement levels. Berrocoso et al. (2022) As we can see here, different variables comprise this complex entity as different factors influence and correlate with each other creating a complex dynamic worth researching across different contexts and environments. This complexity stems from the fact that teachers and learners alike are still figuring out new ways and trying different strategies to implement this tool to enhance learning in general and language learning specifically.

Teachers' Attitudes in Using Technology

It has been investigated that teachers' attitudes towards integrating technology affected their decision to use this tool in the classroom. (Seraji et al.,2017) There are many factors which may affect a teachers' use of technology. It can be an outside force such as the institutions' administration, or a lack of knowledge concerning using it. Sometimes a belief that technology will be a waste of time can lead a teacher to refrain from using it. However, most teachers have an overall positive outlook on it. This positive side, stems from the fact that technology helped many language teachers worldwide to achieve their lesson objectives and goals. Sometimes even a positive outlook can push the teacher to not use it. It can be due to financial restrictions where students do not have tablets, or the school is not well equipped. This problem is mostly noticed in poor countries where teachers' struggle to teach students with the latest technologies available. Technology should not be used for the sake of using it. It must serve a clear purpose Another important aspect of technology is that it promotes more autonomous learning. After class, students can use this tool to access more broad information, and be in control of their learning. A teachers' use of technology can differ based on the student's age, level, and time. (Vassallo & Warren, 2018)

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants

30 English teachers teaching in Turkey participated in this study. The selection process of these participants is through random sampling. Also, the questionnaire in Google Forms was sent to the participants through online means. Such as, Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups, and emails.

The following table provides a description about the participants:

Table 1: Demographic Description of the Participant

Variables	Number of Participants	Percentage
Age		
25-34	16	53.3
35-44	8	26.7
45-54	6	20
Teaching Experience		
Less than 1 year	11	36.7
2 Years or more	5	16.7
6 years or more	14	46.7

The age of the participants varies considerably. 53.3% of the participants are between 25-34; 26.7% are between 35-44 years old; 20% are between 45-54 years of age. The teaching experience of these participants also differs. The largest percentage 46.7% is for teachers with a teaching experience of 6 years or more. 36.7% of novice teachers who a teaching

experience less than 1 year. 16.7% of the participants with an experience of 2 years or more. Ninety percent of those who participated in the questionnaire reported that they have used technology in their classroom constituting a total of 27 participants.

Instruments

The instrument consists of a questionnaire. There are 12 items in total. The first part of it focuses on the general demographic information such as age and gender. The second part focuses on the details pertaining this research. Such as, questions related to the frequency of using technology and the possibility of training in integrating this tool.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was conducted using SPSS. The data about respondents was transferred from google forms to determine the overall frequency of answers to determine the attitudes of teachers towards the use of technology.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The First Research Question:

80% of the teachers think that the use of technology in the classroom is very important and necessary. Thus, this shows that the attitude of English language teachers in Turkey towards the use of technology in the classroom is positive.

Table 2: What do you think of the use of technology in the classroom?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Moderately important	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
Not important at all	1	3.3	3.3	20.0
Very important and necessary	24	80.0	80.0	100.0
	30	100.0	100.0	

The Second Research Question:

There was a total of 30 teachers who answered the questionnaire. From 30 teachers, 16 teachers meaning 53.3% of teachers have received training on the use of technology in the classroom. Also, 46.7% of teachers never received any form of training.

Table 3: Did you receive any form of training on the use of technology in the classroom?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
Yes	16	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The Third Research question:

From the results stated in the table, it can be noticed that 50% of the teachers did not receive any training, but they are still confident in using it. The other 50% of teachers who received the training reported that it boosted their confidence in integrating it.

Table 4: If yes, did it boost your confidence to use it?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I did not receive training, but I am confident in using it	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes, I have more confidence while using it because of the training	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The Fourth Research Question:

Based on the analysis of data we can conclude that 63.3% of teachers use the technology every day in a school week.

Table 5: How often do you use technology in the classroom?

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Two or more times	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
Everyday	19	63.3	63.3	86.7
Once a week	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

5. CONCLUSION

The data analysed in this questionnaire shows that almost all teachers have a positive outlook on integrating technology in the classroom. Also, They agree on the necessity of using this tool. What can also be noticed is that teachers seem to rely on self-training more than other forms of training. Furthermore, this way boosts their confidence in using it in their classrooms. Other teachers used other forms of training and emphasized its effectiveness in boosting their confidence. Also, according to the data, the majority of teachers use technology every day. The teachers also stressed how the administration encourages them to use it in their classrooms. The results of this study are aligned with the research available. That teachers agree on the importance of technology in teaching English in the classroom setting. This study focuses on one context. More research should include other contexts including rural areas as well as big cities. By now, it becomes clear that this use is important for different reasons including boosting students' self-confidence, reducing anxiety, and therefore enhancing academic achievement and performance. One cannot argue on the complexity of this fairly new phenomena, but getting to know it more, and creating new ways to benefit from all the benefits that it brings with it in improving learning and language proficiency in different settings and contexts. As well as, conducting more research to learn more about the different tools used to take on the challenge of learning languages in a more positive mindset. Language learning tools do not have to be limited to the English language classroom as we need to seek ways to improve second language learning for different purposes as well. Including fields such as business, science, and other.

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