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Algerian Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Information Communication Technologies in English for Academic Purposes Teaching

مواقف الأساتذة الجزائريين تجاه إستعمال تكنولوجيا المعلومات والإتصالات في تدريس اللغة الإنـجليزية لأغراض أكاديمية

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Abstract

In the light of globalization which has been accelerated by technological advancement that revolutionized most domains including education in general and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in particular. The current investigation seeks to determine the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) which are mostly preferred by the teachers of EAP in Algeria. Hence, the research endeavours to reveal the attitudes of EAP teachers towards the most efficacious ICT tools in teaching EAP. The researcher implements the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in order to demonstrate the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of ICTs among EAP teachers. The foundations of the study have been laid upon an exploratory case study which includes a sample of twelve teachers and ninety students from three departments: Industrial Engineering (IE), Computer science (CS) and Finance. The investigator used two research instruments: questionnaires with teachers and students and classroom observations. The findings demonstrated that most teachers have positive perceived usefulness of ICTs. Yet, they have a negative perceived ease of ICTs' usage without its basic conditions in the teaching context.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

تكنولوجيا المعلومات والإتصالات، مواقف الأساتذة،

الوسائل المفضلة،

الإنجليزية لأغراض أكاديمية،

نموذج قبول التكنولوجيا.

ملخص

يهدف البحث إلى تحديد وسائل التعليم المفضلة لدى أساتذة اللغـــة الإنجليزيـــة لأغراض أكاديمية المتعلقة بتكنولوجيا المعلومات والإتصالات. يعتمد الباحث على نموذج قبول التكنولوجيا) ن.ق.ت (في تصميم أدوات البحث لتبيان أنجع وسائل تكنولوجيا المعلومات والإتصالات لتدريس الإنجليزية في السياق الأكاديمي وترتيبها حسب فعاليتها وإنسجامها مع المحيط البيداغوجي. البحث عبارة عن دراسة حالة يتم خلالها طرح إستبيان عينة من إثني عشر أستاذا وتسعين طالبًا، مقسمون بالتساوي على ثلاث تخصصات في جامعة تلمسان: الهندسة الصناعية؛ علوم الحاسوب والعلوم المالية. كما قام الباحث بملاحظة الأقسام التعليمية عن كثب حتى يتحقق من المادة المستخلصة. أظهرت النتائج وعيًا كبيرًا لدى الأساتذة تجاه إمكانات وسائل تكنولوجيا المعلومات والإتصالات وقدرتها على تحسين العملية البيداغوجية من خلال تسهيل طرق التعليم والتعلم وهذا ما يدل على مواقف الأساتذة الإيجابية. لكن هذا لا يعني تحفزهم لإدماجها في التدريس لانهم أظهروا مواقفا سلبية تجاه جدوى وإمكانية استعمالها بفعالية في محيطهم التعليمي إذ يرون هذا مرهونا بتوفير الشروط الأساسية كالتكوين وتوفير المعدات الضرورية كما وكيفا. إذا إدماج تكنولوجيا التعليم يجب ان يخضع لتحليل دقيق لخصائص السياق التعليمي.

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1. Introduction

The massive technological advancement has accelerated the process of globalization in which it has rapidly joined the levels of global integration in most domains including education. Algeria has also been subject to the ramifications of worldwide interconnectedness in which it adopted new reforms suggested by the global educational institutions. It embraced the LMD system and the Competency based approach (CBA) with its learner-centred principles. It also started to give more significance to English language with particular emphasis on teaching it for specific purposes as it became a module in most tertiary domains.

Hence, the EAP teachers have been compelled to shift their pedagogical methods and sometimes impelled to change their preferences with reference to teaching tools. As Algerian universities implemented ICTs, teachers were asked to exploit them. Nevertheless, this adoption process did not go through a preparation process. Thus, many teachers are still reluctant to use it as they are used more to the traditional teaching materials. Therefore, the current research attempts to demonstrate the teaching preferences of EAP teachers and determine the factors that may impact their choices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Incorporating ICT Tools in EAP Instruction

The world has become more dependent than ever on technologies which have transformed many domains including education in general and language teaching in particular. The EAP field could not remain isolated from the incorporation of technologies which are innovated for educational purposes. In fact, English as a global language is tightly connected with technologies as both of them contribute to the expansion of the globalization process as they serve to connect the world through technological equipment and the linguistic means of communication. Accordingly, English *"...has become the established language of science and technology, and of late the primary language of business."* according to Fortanet-Gómez and Räisänen (11: 2008).

Moreover, as EAP is deemed to be embracing the learner-centred approach, ICTs seem to be of tremendous assistance. In this regard, Paulsen (2001: 10-14) points out that *"it is no longer a question of whether to take advantage of these electronic technologies in foreign language instruction, but of how to harness them and guide our students in their use."*. Hence, many teachers adopted ICTs according to their own preferences which might have been formed with reference to the teaching context and the target students. The technological innovations provided many types of educational ICTs. It can be hardware equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets, interactive white boards… etc. It can also be software applications such as Microsoft Office tools (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), Learning Websites, Online Platforms and Smarphone applications.

In this regard, Educational technology has been referred to as *"The use of technological developments, such as computers, audiovisual equipment, and mass media, as tools to enhance and optimize the teaching and learning environment"* according to The International Technology Education Association (2003: 11). Ergo, it is fundamental that the teachers undertake in-depth analysis about the effectiveness of ICTs tools with their characteristics. They should check whether it can adapt to the students' needs and the educational environment in the sense that makes it feasible and efficacious to use in order to achieve the EAP course objectives.

Therefore, ICT integration ought to follow systematic procedures based on accurate needs analysis and identification because *"By choosing the appropriate technology, teachers have opportunities to change and adapt curriculum in different ways or to improve the quality of classroom activities"* (Gulbahar, 2007:945). In this regard, the goal behind incorporating ICTs should not be conducted in order to follow the global trends. It should rather follow the requirements and the needs of the students and the context.

Accordingly, teachers should carefully select the most effective ICT tool based on the formal pedagogical principles because integrating technology in the educational field *"... is the use of technology by*

students and teachers to enhance teaching and learning and to support existing curricular goals and objectives" according to Sun (2000:55). ICT should be regarded as tool for improving the educational process as it can facilitate the teachers' tasks and help the students to learn in a more effective methodology.

2.2 The EAP Teachers' Role in ICTs' Integration

The EAP teachers appear to be the most paramount agents of the pedagogical process as they deliver the course, manage the classroom and deal with students on daily basis. Their teaching methodologies might determine either the success or the failure of the learning operation. Moreover, the adopted teaching tools might also impact the students' attitudes. Hence, teachers are supposed to adjust their methodologies with the integrated tools and the students' needs and preferences. In fact, opting for ICT integration does not mean excluding the paramount importance of the teachers' role as contended by Ertmer, Et al., (1999: 55) who asserts that *"teachers, not technology, hold the key to achieving integrated technology use"*.

Therefore, the incorporation of ICTs should not be imposed on teachers in which they should be consulted and involved in the decisions related to any pedagogical reform including the adoption of educational technologies. EAP teachers themselves, should not be confined to their zone of comfort as they need to adapt with the 21st century's developments. On that account, Zhao and Cziko (2001) assume that teachers should believe that technology can be effective and that it does not necessary disturb their teaching tasks. ICTs are said to go hand-in-hand with the criteria of learner-centredness. This means that teachers should no more spoon-feed their students. They should not let them rely entirely on the provided materials but rather search and explore further information and knowledge from multiple sources. However, they must equip their students with the skills to filter the information and choose what is reliable, valid and unbiased.

Accordingly, ICTs can play a crucial role in the research process in which it facilitates access to plethora of information on the web and enhances the operation of cross-checking and filtering resources. Such qualities render ICTs, compatible tools for the EAP context as maintained by LeLoup and Ponterio (n.d./ 1998) who point out that *"There are a number of aspects that are inherent to the ICT which make it particularly fit for teaching languages, especially ESP."*. Nonetheless, the teachers cannot be treated with a perception of one-size-fits-all. Each one of them has a particular experience and knowledge in addition to a specific teaching context with distinct characteristics. When it comes to the characteristics of teachers with reference to the use of web-based online technologies, Peled et al. (2011) classify four types:

1. The Initiator: He has a high motivation with a strong confidence in using the inventions of online technologies;

2. The Follower: He is also referred to as a conformist teacher. He follows the initiator after he uses the technology in which he considers his feedback to make up his decision about using this new technology;

3. The Avoider: He refrains from using the new technologies but uses them when it is imposed on him either by administrators or because only technology can deliver his wanted task;

4. The Antagonist: He is a teacher who has extreme negative perceptions and attitudes about technologies in which he refuses to integrate in the teaching process.

These characteristics may generate tremendous effects on the success of ICT integration in the EAP course. This is elaborated by Loveless (1995: 149) who asserts that *"The teachers' beliefs and values about the nature of education and schooling affect how life in the classroom is organised and managed, and the background experience of an attitude to new technology will also affect the role it plays in the classroom."*. Ergo, the attitudes of teachers should be given careful attention as they cannot remain unnoticed from the students who can in turn form their perceptions according to the behaviours and beliefs of their instructors.

2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

It is thought of as one of the most effective and used models for investigating the perceptions of

individuals towards technology. Lee, Y., et al (2003: 752) states that the TAM model *"...is considered as the most influential and commonly employed theory for describing individual user acceptance of information systems"*. It seeks to determine the factors that intervene in attitudes' formation concerning technologies and how it contributes to the decisions of an individual to accept the use of a given technological innovation. Its foundations were paved by the Theory of Reasoned Action model (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It has two main determinants, i.e. perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness which can determine the attitudes and the behavioural intention of an individual to use the new technology. This is what highlights the actual system usage as shown by postulate by Davis (1989):

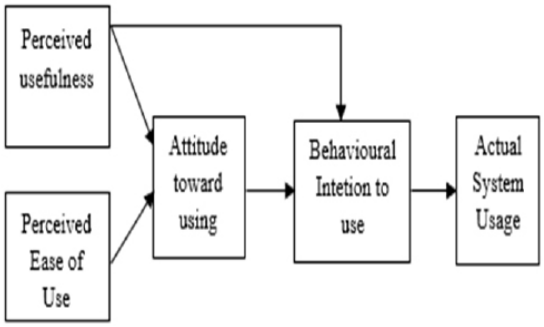

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present research is an exploratory case study which is *"...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."* (Yin, 2009:18). It uses a mixed method approach which is a *"step forward, utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research"* according to Creswell (2003: 188). The data collection and analysis procedures followed the principles of qualitative and quantitative methods with frequency counts and descriptive statistics by means of Microsoft Excel sheets.

In an attempt to meet the triangulation criteria, the researcher employed two main instruments for gathering the information namely; questionnaire with teachers and students in addition to classroom observation. The diversification of sources aims at cross-checking data and consolidating the validity and the reliability of results. The sample population included ninety Master one students and twelve teachers divided equally on three specialties: IE, Finance and CS. The research methodology uses aspects of the Technology Acceptance Model as it adapts with the objectives and the target context.

3.2 ESP Teachers' Profile

Twelve EAP teachers have been selected to be part of the research sample. Most them work as part-time teachers. Most of them are recent graduates with a master's degree in English Language Studies, ranging from its multiple branches of language sciences, didactics and literature and civilization with one teacher holding a doctorate in translation studies. Their age ranges from 23 to 45 years old but most of them are beyond 30. Most of them have a working experience of four years. Three among them are PhD students in which one of them pursues investigates in the scope of instructional technology for language pedagogy at the CS department.

3.3 Research Instruments

The students' questionnaire sought to demonstrate the opinions of learners with regard their teachers' pedagogical methodologies. It attempted to reveal which tools were mostly used and encouraged by the teachers. To achieve this, a questionnaire was delivered to ninety students split on the departments of IE, CS and Finance. It was written in English with Arabic translation. The researcher explained the goal of the study and the importance of the students' serious answers to be used for the advantage of improving the EAP teaching situation in Algeria. The classrooms had a number ranging between thirty and forty students.

Nonetheless, the researcher included only thirty in which he chose them randomly. However, the teachers' questionnaire aimed at revealing the

teachers' preferences with regard to the teaching tools. It attempted to reveal the attitudes of teachers towards ICTs for educational purposes and which tools among them could be more efficacious at the EAP course. It included twelve teachers from the same departments of students. The language of the questionnaire was English. The investigator explained the depths of each question and the main objectives of the research in which he gave flexible time for the teachers in order to give appropriate answers.

Moreover, the classroom observation was conducted via a grid which adhered to the structured approach. This has facilitated the investigator's task to report and organize the observed data. It followed the non-participant method as the researcher sat on the back of the classrooms without any intervention in order to maintain the originality of the context and avoid influencing the teachers' attitudes and behaviours. He was taking notes and contemplating the teachers' behaviours and affirmations.

4.Results

4.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire

Item One: It tries to find out the methods used by EAP teachers in order to collect information and preparing for the course.

Most EAP teachers at the three departments integrate the web-based sources when they conduct research and prepare for the EAP course. They make use of online platforms, websites, google scholar tools and e-books. Nevertheless, Half of them acknowledge that they combine web-based resources alongside print-materials such as books. This could be a consequence of their low confidence in web-based sources as they may consider print materials to be more valid and reliable. These findings entail that most teachers have a high awareness about the usefulness and the effectiveness of ICTs in providing a bulk of information faster and easier. Yet, it shows that they are still hesitant about using it solely without the support of print materials in such a way that creates a reasonable balance.

Item Two: It seeks to reveal the most used teaching materials in the EAP course.

Table 1. The Teaching Materials of the ESP Course

Teaching Materials	Computer Science	Industrial Engineering	Finance	Total
Blackboard	2	4	3	9
Handouts	2	2	3	7
Textbooks	2	1	3	6
Digital materials	3	1	1	5
Audio-visual content	3	1	1	4
Online materials	2	1	0	3

The table reveals that most of the teachers are still using the traditional materials as their main teaching tools such as the blackboard, handouts and textbooks especially at the IE and Finance departments. The ICT materials come at the second position; in which the most used amongst it, are digital materials followed by audio-visual content lastly by online materials. Nevertheless, each department has its own results depending on many factors. The findings demonstrate that the majority of EAP teachers in the CS department use digital materials like the PowerPoint presentations and Prezi.

At the same rate, they incorporate audio-visual content such as podcasts and tutorials. Some of them asserted that they organize group discussions after screening the audio-visual materials. At the same time, they teach the CS scientific terminology through these illustrative videos that can even improve their listening and speaking skills. The results also display that two teachers who are in parallel PhD students, integrate online tools.

The collected results denote that many teachers have a considerable perceived usefulness of ICTs in the EAP course. Despite that, half of teachers prefer using the traditional materials due to the lack of motivation and incentives to make extra efforts. Such results could be related to the major difficulties faced by teachers such as the lack of training and sufficient equipment.

Item Three: It studies the ICT preferences of

teachers and demonstrates their opinions about the most effective ICT materials in the context of EAP teaching.

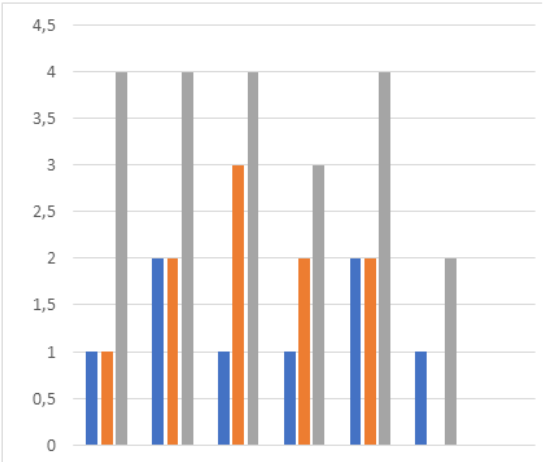

Figure 2. Teachers' Ranking of the Most Effective ICT Tools for the EAP Course

The graph demonstrates the positive perceptions of the majority of EAP teachers towards the ICT materials as being efficacious educational tools. However, they have ranked them according to their level of effectiveness. The responses of CS teachers highlight significant awareness about the potentials of ICT tools to add value in the EAP course; in which they mostly give it equal importance.

Such attitudes could be a consequence of their interest in instructional technologies as they work at the CS department which often integrates ICTs. It could be also related to their prior experience in ESP as most of them studied it at as part of the Masters' curriculum. Ergo, they seem to adapt their teaching tools to the needs and the preferences of the CS students.

At the IE department, most teachers seem to consider audio-visuals as the most effective tools as it can enhance the students' listening and speaking skills. It can also assist them to acquire the phonological patterns of the native speakers and help them to expand vocabulary. Yet, half of the teachers have a different opinion as they prefer language learning websites, illustrative pictures and Smartphone applications while one of the teachers picks out the digital materials.

The teachers of the finance department have a different opinion as most of them select language learning websites such as Rosetta Stone and the Smartphone applications such as Mesmrise and Babbel. These choices could be due to the tremendous options offered by such software which facilitate the learning process and make it faster and easier without being confined to a place or time as students can use their Smartphones to access these websites whenever they want. The teachers' choices might not be limited only to the quality of the ICT tool per se. It could also pertain to the conditions of the context and their abilities to perform using that type of ICT tools.

4.2 Classroom Observations

This research tool endeavoured to investigate the regularity of incorporating ICTs' at the EAP Course. The researcher observed that most EAP teachers at the CS department integrated the ICT tools regularly. Teachers and students used the Data Show device to screen digital presentations by means of advanced software like Prezi and PowerPoint.

It was also noticed that the teachers who worked with the software engineering group, exploited the audio-visual tools to deliver authentic materials with listening and speaking activities. These tools enhanced interaction in the class and ameliorated the participation of students. On the whole, it appears that most EAP teachers in the CS department favour the use of ICT tools over traditional materials which makes their methodologies coherent with their students' familiar learning approach and tools.

Nevertheless, the teachers of the IE department seem to establish an equilibrium between the use of ICTs and materials. Most of them use the criteria of the blended approach. For instance, a teacher used digital screening but elaborated through the blackboard where he explained the points included in each slide. He asked students to prepare presentations and encouraged them to innovate in it. He included it in the evaluation process as a TD mark in which he gave a grade even to the technical innovation along with the content and the presentation skills. In fact, most students seemed to have an average or good level of ICTs' use proficiency.

There was a teacher who used the communicative tools of the internet in which he was interacting

with students through emails to share e-books, research references and links to educational videos or documentaries about IE. Tools like the Data Show device were regularly integrated for his lessons in which he was also using audio-visuals. His students were also engaged in the process as they did quality presentations. Some of them could use animations and design their projects' prototypes using advanced software like Adobe After Effects to create motion graphics, composites and visual effects.

When it comes to the Finance department, ICTs' use was limited in comparison to the other departments in which only one teacher was using the Data Show and attempted to include more ICTs but the students did not react positively concerning his initiatives. The teachers who used ICTs were mostly employing Data Show devices along with computers and Speakers. Whereas, few teachers were exceptions. Such as a teacher at the CS department who used emails, social networks to share lessons and useful links, learning websites and Smartphone applications.

Those teachers seem to have a high awareness about the capacity of ICTs in which they have a positive perceived usefulness about these materials to facilitate their pedagogical tasks in the explanation of lessons. It also helps them to organize the language practice activities and enhance the interaction among students. For example, the audio-visuals can be significant in promoting their perceptual cognition. In fact, it was observed that students were receptive in which their contribution in the lectures increased.

Their interaction was boosted after the use of ICTs, especially at the IE and CS departments. Yet, the degree to which they interacted differed according to the method and the mastery of each teacher. Even though some teachers used ICTs, they failed to attract students to use them effectively. Ergo, ICT tools became a curse in disguise rather than a blessing as students were unfocused and disturbed.

4.3 The Students' Questionnaire

It attempts to demonstrate the ICT materials that are mostly incorporated in the EAP course and preferred by teachers.

Table 2. EAP Students' Views about the Integrated ICT Teaching Materials

Departments	Computer Science		Industrial Engineering		Finance	
Teaching Materials	AF	RF	AF	RF	AF	RF
Offline Digital Materials	20	67%	19	23%	11	36%
Audio-visual Materials	17	57%	14	47%	14	47%
Online Materials	4	13%	9	30%	10	33%

The table reveals that the most used ICT materials differ from one department to another depending on the preferences of each teacher. The CS students claim that the offline digital materials are mostly integrated in their EAP course followed by audio-visuals and at last online materials. In the IE department, students assert that their EAP teacher uses audio-visual materials as the primary ICT tool followed by online materials then offline materials with a small difference in terms of percentage. When it comes to the EAP teachers at the Finance department, the students' assumption is similar to IE students in which they affirm that audio-visuals are the most used ICT materials followed by the offline then the online materials at the last position.

The overall results show that the majority of teachers prefer the integration of audio-visuals at the first position. This might be related to its easier manipulation and use in the classroom. Sometimes it needs just the speakers for the audio content while the visual materials necessitate at least a computer and a Data Show device with an installed screening software. Moreover, through this tool, teachers can teach many language skills, mainly, speaking, reading and listening.

Yet, they can also use the dictation technique to improve their students' writing skills and increase their vocabulary. The offline digital materials such as Pdf and PPT files, seem to be the second preference of most EAP teachers according to the students' claims. They are favoured more than the online materials which are ranked at the last position. This might be related to the issues related to internet connection and its debit. Online tools required also the provision of

laptops and sometimes Smartphones and tablets with a considerable proficiency of ICTs' use. Whereas, offline digital materials can be used through one computer and screened by the Data Show device. They can also present multiple learning materials in which it can contract heavy and expensive books into a digital pdf file which can be downloaded even for free and shared among students.

5. Discussion

The questionnaire delivered to EAP teachers showed that the majority among them conduct research by means of web-based tools such as online platforms and websites. This denotes that they have a tendency to exploit the options of ICTs in order to facilitate their tasks. Whereas, many of them are fusing both web-based sources with print materials in such a way that blends the advantages of both tools. Furthermore, the teachers ranked the ICT tools in terms of its effectiveness for the EAP course. Most of them chose audio-visuals, language learning websites and Smartphone applications at the first in the hierarchy of ICT tools. They were followed by illustrative pictures and digital materials while educational platforms come at the last position.

However, the CS teachers seem to be the most aware about the potentials of ICT tools as they give most of them an equal significance. These findings demonstrate the extent to which EAP teachers are conscious about the importance of ICTs in enhancing the teaching process and improving the learning conditions. This shows a high degree of perceived usefulness towards the capacity of ICTs with regard to the TAM model principles. Teachers seem to believe in the ability of ICTs to generate output quality with faster results demonstrability.

Nevertheless, the context shows that most teachers are still integrating traditional tools such as handouts and the blackboard. However, ICT materials are used mostly as secondary supportive instruments especially the audio-visual tools and the digital materials. This was affirmed by students through the questionnaire which shows that online materials are mostly avoided by teachers. The classroom observations also denote that many teachers would like to integrate ICTs in which many of them attempted this; especially at the CS department. Those who teach at the IE department opted for a more balanced method as they included the blended approach.

However, it was observed that EAP teachers at the Finance avoid to use ICTs except for one teacher who did initiatives but did not fully reach his goals. This reveals a negative perceived of ease towards ICTs with reference to the actual context which seems to lack many fundamental prerequisites such as the adequate ICT materials and its needed conditions. Hence, the teachers' positive attitudes towards ICTs do not necessarily mean that they are using them.

6. Conclusion

EAP teachers seem to believe in the capacity of ICTs in bringing a positive impact on the EAP course. They believe that it is high time to exploit in the innovations of the digital transition. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to consider that adopting the new technologies in the educational arena needs the support of adaptation measures in order to lay down the fundamental foundations and pillars for ICT integration. Some of these conditions could be providing pre-service and in-service training for teachers about the pedagogical usage of ICTs for specific language teaching purposes.

It is also fundamental to provide the basic conditions for ICT integration such as sophisticated facilities and quality hardware and software; in addition to a high debit of internet connection with constant technical support. Applying these recommendations might increase the benefits from the advantages of ICT materials and decrease its shortcomings. Furthermore, EAP teachers appear to be confident in the potentials of ICTs to facilitate EAP instruction. They have a positive perceived usefulness about the output quality of ICTs. Their students would highly benefit from the synchronic communication which can be further and farther by which they can contact learners and native speakers for language practice.

Teachers can also access a bulk of internet content which provide authentic materials and language teaching programs cheaper and faster. The EAP course can become more intriguing for the students who are

mostly digital citizens. ICTs can indeed, transform the classroom atmosphere and render it more impelling with more interaction and enjoyment. ICTs might also enhance the students' learning autonomy and turn them into self-regulated lifelong learners which highly matches with the principles of the CBA and learner-centred approach to language teaching.

On the whole, despite the positive perceived of ICTs' usefulness for the EAP course, most teachers seem to share a negative perceived ease of ICTs' use. They do not doubt its efficacy and possible output quality, but they are aware that the context in which they work does not provide the favourable requirements and the pedagogical basis that may exploit the advantages of ICTs. Their motivation and positive attitude towards it, did not uncover the reality of the teaching terrain which shows their high degree of awareness and realistic thinking.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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