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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Abstract

Nowadays, it is easier for us as teachers to choose different methods and approaches in teaching and learning process. The aim of this study is to emphasize and analyzing the necessity of using information technology as a facilitator in English language learning. Also, we will discuss some of the advantages and difficulties, that we as teachers face while we use technology during language teaching.

Our hypothesis is that it is important for us as teachers using technology within the class especially in difficult aspects of learning such as grammar or new information explaining. In order to support our hypothesis a theoretical and comparative study is conducted in two different Albanian schools: 'Neim Babameto' and 'Albanian College' at the same level of learning. In addition forty-three students of fifth grade in both two schools complete a questionnaire of quantitative data collection.

The hypothesis that is important for us as teacher using technology in teaching is supported by the results of data collection. Also, the comparison between 'Neim Babameto School', where there is no technology using during English learning and Albanian College where it is widely used, shows that students of 'Albanian College' have better results and they can speak fluently English during a short period of time. This study supported our hypothesis that technology should normally be used during grammar and other difficult explanations in a foreign language classroom. In

conclusion the findings of this study show that students support us in using this important 'element' of teaching. Perhaps this study will help future teachers in improving their teaching abilities.

Key Words: Information technology, English teaching, learning process.

Introduction

In general we will focus in teaching English because of the present role and status of English. It is the language of social context, political, socio cultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education". With the spread and development of English around the world, English has been learned and used by more and more speakers. According to David Graddol 'it is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economies and management, and also it has promoted new literature entertainment genre…' (David Graddol, The future of English, Page 2).

The tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of technology. Technology provides so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvements. Technology is one of the most significant drivers or both social and linguistic change. Graddol: (1997:16) states that" technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture. The use of English language has increased rapidly after 1960. This is why we are completely focus in some of the most important elements of technology to provide our hypotheses that it is useful for us as teachers to use technology in our teaching.

Background

21st century is the age of globalization and is important to grasp on various foreign languages and English language comes first. English Language Teaching has been with us for many years and its significance continues to grow, fuelled, partially by the Internet. Graddol's study (2000) suggests that in the year 2000 there were about a billion English learners- but a decade later the numbers doubled. The forecast points to a surge in English learning, which has peaked in 2010. The same study indicates that over 80% of information stored on the internet is in English

With the spread and development of English around the world, English is used as a second language in different countries and for some people it is the 1st language. It enjoys a high prestige in the country. As the number of English learners is increasing different teaching methods have been implemented to test the effectiveness of the teaching process. Use of authentic materials in the form of films, radio, TV has been there for a long time. It is true that these technologies have proved successful in replacing the traditional teaching. Fullan (1982, p. 107),

1. Teaching experience

Though some research reported that teachers' experience in teaching did not influence their use of computer technology in teaching (Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001), most research showed that teaching experience influence the successful use of ICT in classrooms (Wong & Li, 2008; Giordano, 2007; Hernandez-Ramos, 2005). Gorder (2008) reported that teacher experience is significantly correlated with the actual use of technology.

In her study, she revealed that effective use of computer was related to technological comfort levels and the liberty to shape instruction to teacher-perceived student needs. Also, (Baek, Jong & Kim 2008) claimed that experienced teachers are less ready to integrate ICT into their teaching. Similarly, in United States, the (U.S National Centre for Education Statistics, 2000) reported that teachers with less experience in teaching were

more likely to integrate computers in their teaching than teachers with more experience in teaching. According to the report, teachers with up to three years teaching experience reported spending 48% of their time utilizing computers, teachers with teaching experience between 4 and 9 years, spend 45% of their time utilizing computers, teachers with experience between 10 and 19 years spend 47% of the time, and finally teachers with more than 20 years teaching experience utilize computers 33% of their time Further, Lau & Sim (2008), conducted a study on the extent of ICT adoption among 250secondary school teachers in Malaysia.

Their findings revealed that older teachers frequently use computer technology in the classrooms more than the younger teachers. The major reason could be that the older teachers having rich experience in teaching, classroom management and also competent in the use of computers can easily integrate ICT into their teaching. The result is disagreement with (Russell, Bebell, O'Dwyer, & O'Connor 2003) who found that new teachers who were highly skilled with technology more than older teachers did not incorporate ICT in their teaching. The researchers cited two reasons: new teachers focus could be on how to use technology instead of how to incorporate ICT in their teaching. Secondly, new teachers could experience some challenges in their first few years of teaching and spend most of their time in familiarizing themselves with school's curriculum and classroom management.

But in a survey of almost 3000 teachers, Russell, O'Dwyer, Bebell and Tao (2007) argued that the quality of ICT integration was related to the years of teacher service. However, Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston and Wideman (2002) conducted a qualitative survey on factors contributing to teachers' successful implementation of ICT in Canada. They interviewed 60
respondents from 12 schools. The findings found no relationship between teachers' teaching experience and experience in the use of ICT implying that teachers' ICT skills and successful implementation is complex and not a clear predictor of ICT integration.

2. Technology competence

Computer competence is defined as being able to handle a wide range of varying computer applications for various purposes (Van Braak et al., 2004). According to Berner (2003), Na (1993) and Summers (1990) as cited in Bordbar (2010), teachers' computer competence is a major predictor of integrating technology in teaching. Evidence suggests that majority of teachers who reported negative or neutral attitude towards the integration of technology into teaching and learning processes lacked knowledge and skills that would allow them to make "informed decision" (Al Oteawi, 2002, p.253, as cited in Bordbar, 2010).

In a qualitative multiple case-study research on primary school competence and confidence level regarding the use of ICT in teaching practice conducted in five European countries, (Peralta & Costa 2007) found that technical competence influenced Italian teacher's use of technology in teaching. However, the teachers cited pedagogical and didactic competences as significant factors if effective and efficient educational interventions are likely to be implemented. In Portugal, teachers reported different views regarding the most important competences for teaching with technology. The experienced and new teachers stressed the need for technical skills and attitude, the innovative teachers' emphasized curricula and didactic competences and the student-teachers cited technical competence and pedagogical efficiency as significant to integrate technology in teaching and learning processes. According to Peralta & Costa (2007), teachers with more experience with computers have greater confidence in their ability to use them effectively. To conclude, Jones (2004) reported that teachers competence relate directly to confidence. Teachers' confidence also relate to their perceptions of their ability to use computers in the classroom, particularly in relation to their children's perceived competence.

3. Computer self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as a belief in one's own abilities to perform an action or activity necessary to achieve a goal or task (Bandura, 1997). In real meaning, self-efficacy is the confidence that individual has in his/her ability to do the things that he/she strives to do. Thus teachers' confidence refers both to the teachers' perceived likelihood of success on using technology for educational purposes and on how far the teacher perceives success as being under his or her control (Peralta &Costa, 2007).

Teachers' computer self-efficacy is described as a judgment of their capability to use a computer (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). According to Liaw, Huang and Chen (2007), teachers' computer self-efficacy influences their use of technology in teaching and learning. Similarly, (Yuen & Ma, 2008) revealed that the Hong Kong teachers' implementation of technology was depended on simplicity of computer use and perceived teacher self-efficacy Christensen and Knezek (2006) described computer self-efficacy as computer confidence in competence. Knezek and Christensen (2002) revealed that teachers' competence with computer technology is a key factor of effective use of technology in teaching. Peralta and Costa (2007) conducted a study on 20 teachers' competences and confidence regarding the use of technology in classrooms.

4. Integrating technology into the classroom

There are many issues related to the successful use of technology in the classroom. Some of the more salient include securing necessary annual funding, the development of dynamic plans, and decisions concerning platforms, hardware, T1 lines, software, and so forth. (Sarason 1990, 1971). While attention to choosing the appropriate hardware and software for the classroom is prerequisite, it is the skill and attitude of the teacher that determines the effectiveness of technology integration into the curriculum. Fullan (1982, p. 107), a renowned expert in change theory, stated that

"educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it's as simple end.

Students today must learn to search and discover knowledge, actively communicate with others, and solve problems so that they can become productive life-long members of our society. For more information about change paradigms refer to publications by Fulan (1993, 1991, 1982), Reigeluth (1994), Goodlad (1975), Papert (1993, 1980), and Sarason (1990, 1971). Yet, it seems, teachers are often overlooked when technology is discussed. Before technology can effect changes in the classroom, those ultimately responsible for the classroom must be considered. Teachers must learn to use technology and must allow it to change their present teaching paradigm. (Fulan 1993, 1991) They must also be mindful of the considerations cited in this article to assist the teachers through the difficult change process necessary to use and integrate technology into the curriculum. (Reigeluth 1994).

5. Some of benefits using technology in English language learning

> **To improve learning and teaching process**

Technology continues to be increasingly adopted and used by educational institutions across the countries, but examples of cutting-edge technology being harnessed to transform teaching and learning remain the exception rather than the rule (Becta, 2009). Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) grant programs have supported teacher training and capacity building efforts to encourage technology integration (Koehler & Mishra, 2005). Such efforts promote and encourage student centered uses of technology as well as unstructured uses (Fletcher, 2006). Multimedia technology goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning, stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time meanwhile increases class information. (Reigeluth (1994

> ➢ **To Cultivate Students' Interest in Study**
> Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual, animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information. Besides, with such characteristics as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia technology offers a sense of reality and functions very well, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in study and their involvement in class activities.
>
> ➢ **To Promote Students' Communication Capacity**
> Traditional teaching has trivializes the students' capacity to comprehend certain a language and hampers their understanding to structure, meaning and function of the language, and makes the students passive recipients of knowledge Hall and Loucks 1979). So it is hard to achieve the target of communication. With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology class set in new-type internet classroom seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives. Fletcher (2006). And such in-class activities as group discussion, subject discussion, and debates can also offer more opportunities for communication among students and between teachers and students. Fulan (1993, 1991, 1982). So multimedia technology teaching has uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice.

6. Some key factors to promote technology in class
> ➢ **Fear, anxiety, and concern that teachers have about change must be addressed**. Adults do not change easily. Change of any kind brings about fear, anxiety, and concern. Helping teachers overcome their fears, concerns, and anxiety is crucial to the success of the program. For additional information about fears and concerns of adults please refer to the writings of Knowles

(1982, 1980), Knox (1977), Hall and Hord (1987), Hall and Loucks (1979), and Hord, Rutherford, and Hall (1987).

➢ **Training must provide teachers with knowledge of the very basics of computer use.**
Teachers need to have a rudimentary understanding of how to operate a computer. (Goodlad 1975, p.68), A working knowledge of standard input and output devices such as a mouse, disk drives, printers, speakers, and so forth, is important. It is equally important that they know how to perform basic system operations such as program installation, deletion, and backing up files (Hall and Loucks 1979, p32). They need to know such basic file commands as Save, Delete, and Rename as well as a basic understanding of directory structures. Personal productivity skills can be used as a means to foster the teacher's interest. Fulan (1993, 1991, 1982).

➢ **Programs that promote problem solving, provide information, stimulate discussions, and allow for drill and practice are also important to review.**
A few programs with these characteristics are Decisions, Decisions, the Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia, Jasper, and Math Blasters. Thus, an important skill for teachers to develop is that of evaluating software. This will provide them with a base from which to begin to choose which software will best suit their classroom needs. Hall and Hord (1987). Learning should be the impetus that drives the use of technology in the school. Its use can allow teachers and students to become partners in the learning process.

➢ **Technology integration necessarily alters the traditional paradigm of the teacher providing wisdom and the student absorbing knowledge...and for good reason.** The knowledge needed for tomorrow's jobs will change before many of today's students enter the job market. Students today must learn to search and discover knowledge, actively communicate with others, and

solve problems so that they can become productive life-long members of our society. For more information about change paradigms refer to publications by Fulan (1993, 1991, 1982), Reigeluth (1994), Goodlad (1975), Papert (1993, 1980), and Sarason (1990, 1971).

➢ **Support in technical and curriculum area.**

In the technical area, there needs to be an onsite support person available who can troubleshoot and remedy hardware and software problems as they occur. When a problem occurs in class, it is difficult, if even possible, to ignore 30 or more students and concentrate solely on restoring a technology resource breakdown. Teachers need telephones in their classrooms and a number to call at anytime to get answers to technical or "how to" hardware and software questions. There is a need for ongoing training in the use of new and different hardware and software Papert (1993, 1980).

7. Methodology

The methodology that we have chosen in to take the possible results from our study is an Empiric Methodology. It is based in such important elements like that: the sample of examination, the instruments that we have use to take the results of our study, the procedures of collecting the appropriate information and the statistic evaluation which help us to support our hypothesis and to take the appropriate results. Also our methodology is a Quantitative Methodology because it is based to a short questionnaire with open-ended questions. It is a Comparative Methodology because we are based into the comparison of two samples (schools) to take the results of our study.

8. Possible results

The aim of this study is to support the idea that it is important for us as teachers to use technology during teaching and learning process. Also, we will support the idea that we should to use technology in class and it is very

important to combine it with other methods, approaches and techniques. In this study there are a lot of elements that support us to protect our hypothesis that teachers should use technology in the class. It is not only an argument that we want to discuss but a real necessity in our real classes

9. Participants and Setting
The participants in the study were purposively identified, as they were fifty (50) students of the third grade, 25 males and 25 females, all the age of 9-10 from two schools in Durres 'Neim Babameto'(N.B) Primary School and Albanian College(A.C) Primary and Secondary School. So we delivered 50 copies of the questionnaire in their classrooms, in order to take the results of the study.

10. Questionnaire
In order to support our hypothesis we have done two surveys which include a questionnaire in ' Neim Babameto' primary School and Albanian College Primary and Secondary School: It is not always easy for us to have the possibility to do and completing the whole survey, but despite of this we have done it correctly and without no hesitation. All the students are delivered the questionnaire to complete and they did it successfully. Later, in our study we will have the possibility to have a look the results of our study and also to give a detailed information about it.

11. Results of data collection
Table 1: Presentation of Demographic Data

Sex	Frequency	Percent %
Male	25	50%
Female	25	50 %
Total	50	100%

No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree
1.	I enjoy using technology in learning English	(75%) (93%)	(25%) N.B (7%) A.C
2.	Teachers should know how to use technology in an English classroom	(80%) (83.5)	(20%) N.B (16.5%) A.C
3.	I should use technology in doing my assessments, projects…	(75.5%) (87%)	(25.5%) N.B (13%) A.C

Table 2   Student's Questionnaire

12. Results of the study

The hypotheses that is important for us as teacher using Information Technology(IT), was tested using table 2. 75% of students in N.B are agree for using IT in learning English and in A.C 93%. Also 80% of students in N.B are agree that teachers should use IT in their teaching and 83.5% in A.C. 75.5% of students in N.B are agree that should use IT in doing their assessments, etc and 87% of them in A.C too. So This study supported our hypothesis for using it especially in difficult aspects of teaching. The findings of this study show that students' support us into this important 'element' of teaching.

Furthermore, we chose two different schools in our city: 'Neim Babameto' Primary School in which the teachers sometimes use technology during their teaching and 'Albanian College' Primary and Secondary School where the most part of the teachers, not only English teachers use technology in their teaching. For that reason we choose the two third grade of these schools to make a comparison in using this important element of teaching. Also, in Albanian College, there are both native English teacher and an

assistant Albanian teacher and where the students are allowed to speak mostly English and Albanian if they have got any difficulty in understanding the new information. The students' of Albanian College(A.C) can speak English better than their peers of Neim Babameto(N.B) during a short period of time, so this fact strongly supports our hypotheses about the importance of using Information Technology(I.T) during English language learning. So the students agreeing that it is necessary for them to use IT during English learning classes.

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