

USING COMPUTER AS A LEARNING TOOL AND ENGLISH
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

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Abstract:

The implementation and utilization of ICT in education has become an important for all countries in the globalization era. Technology applications have significantly contributed to improve and develop educational institutions. Therefore, the issue of using computer became an important and confronting large numbers of English language teachers in the worldwide. This study investigated and evaluated the attitudes of English language teachers in Iraqi secondary schools towards using computer tool in their classes. As well, the study explores the relationship between both teachers' competence and access to computer and teachers' attitude. The study findings are showed that the majority of English language teachers have positive attitude towards using computer in their teaching. Moreover, the analysis revealed that the males had more positive attitude than females. Furthermore, the study proved the low access and competence of English teachers have affected using the computer in the classroom.

Key words: English Techers, Attitude, Computer Use.

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1. Introduction:

English language is spread over the last 40 years globally. The number of users was increased for over one billion people by 2000 and by 2010 the number of native speakers transcended the number of English users as a second or foreign language. The use of English in the science, technology and communication contributed in its spread by using the computers and the internet as well as encouraging individuals to use it as an internet language (Hasman, 2004). In the Arab world, the interest of teaching English as a universal language is growing and English language became a compulsory subject in school curricula as well as some Arabic subjects are changed into English. Moreover, the focus of most Arab researchers is the widespread of using English as a second language, the subject of language teaching in general, and teaching English as a foreign or second language in particular in many fields. (Al-Khatib, 2000 as cited in (Tahaineh, 2010). So, language needs a great interest to revive and develop using the tools of new technology.

Technology nowadays is at a preliminary stage within all sectors in Iraq. Technology nowadays is at an average stage within all sectors in Iraq. the Iraqi government and educational organizations have been paying more attention to develop teachers' abilities and skills in ICT. (Unesco., 2007) (Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, L. L., , & Fook, F. S., 2010) asserted that many studies demonstrated that the use of information and communications technology (ICT) has had a significant impact on teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the role of information and communication technology (ICT) is very important in educational purposes in general and it is used as a tool to improve English Language in particular. English language became the global language and its improvement is a necessary matter by using new methods.

As a fact, there is a gap between those who have the ability to participate and manage the information age and knowledge systems in the developed countries and those who have not able to cooperate in this age. Organized systems are important to treat the problems, reduce the information gap and increase quality of education as well as to provide the improved education for all in order to create new generations are able to face these challenges, so it must help to build higher-level cognitive abilities, strengthen inquiry processes and prepare people to compete in global markets and become productive members ((Rusten, 2010). However, technology is not an end in itself, but a means of progress in this era. Technology characterized by permanent development of every innovation leads to create better results for an ambitious life and enable us to participate with people's knowledge around the world. The rapid revolution in the technology of computer and the wide expand of its uses in education generally and English language particularly lead to a change in the traditional ways of teaching and the use of computer as a tool deserves attention to facilitate and to develop instructional outcomes (Rezaee, bin Zainol Abidin, Issa, & Mustafa, 2012). The knowledge of computer helps learners to be able to complete all the tasks that may be impossible to complete manually, as well as the feeling of pleasure that is achieved by the use of this device.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to new technological and information time, educational processes such as teaching and learning might also adopt the new teaching styles and methods to be in line with technological progress in the world. The Iraqi students are in dire need of English language as a means of communication for the Internet, travel and scholarship (Taqi, 2008).

The importance of the computer lies with the impact of the modernization of teaching methods and training because of its sophisticated means in the storing and retrieval of information in a short time and effort for the learners (Lai & Kritsonis, W. , 2006).

Teachers in the technological age have to prepare and train themselves in using computers as effective tools in their teaching style and deepen their knowledge about information technology. Iraqi teachers are still hesitating about using computers as tools in their teaching methods despite the presence of computers in some schools. Furthermore, teachers are not convinced that the computer is one of the main tools in developing education and in improving students' learning and achievements (Naba'h, Hussain, J., , Al-Omari, A., , & Shdeifat, S., 2009).

The research problem was derived from the reality of the situation in Arab countries. This was shown in some studies looking at the same problem such as (Al-Mansour & Al-

Shorman, R., 2011). They tried to compare the effect of using computers in teaching English with the traditional method that was using to Saudi university students and in Jordanian schools, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a powerful approach and offers a significant advantage to the field of English by providing new methods rather than the traditional one to encourage students to real communication. (Al Masri, 2011)

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- 1- To investigate teachers' attitudes towards using computers in teaching English language.
- 2- To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between gender and teachers' attitudes
- 3- To explore whether there is any statically significant relationship between EFL teachers' level of competence and their attitudes towards computer use.
- 4- To investigate whether there is any statically significant relationship between EFL teachers' access and their attitudes towards computer use.

1.4 Research Questions:

- 1- What are teachers' attitudes towards using computer in teaching English Language?
- 2- Is there any statically significant difference between gender and teachers' attitudes?
- 3- Is there any statically significant relationship between EFL teachers' level of competence and their attitudes towards computer use?
- 4- Is there any statically significant relationship between EFL teachers' access and their attitudes towards computer use?

1.5 Significance of the Study:

The study shows the importance of English teachers' attitudes towards using computer in the teaching process. Thus, a study on teachers' attitudes enhances the ability of learners and their achievement in English as a foreign language in Iraq. Besides, it enables teachers to be aware of the new technology and encourage them to enhance their proficiency level when using computer. According to the importance of teachers' attitude, the study aims to investigate teachers' attitudes towards using computer in teaching English Language in Al-Anbar governorate in Iraq and then to explore the relationships between teachers' attitude and some factors that may influence them in this study including gender, level of competency and access to computer.

2. Literature Review:

Teaching and learning English as a global language and teachers' attitude should be given higher importance. There are many researchers who have tackled with the "attitude" as an essential part in teaching and learning language. Arab researchers as (Albirini, 2006); (Bakr, 2011); (Naba'h, Hussain, J., , Al-Omari, A., , & Shdeifat, S., 2009); (Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, L. L., , & Fook, F. S., 2010)) asserted the importance of attitude in Arabic countries as well as the factors that affect the type of attitude whether positive or negative toward ICTs such as computer, internet, and software uses in the classrooms. The researchers in their studies explained the issues related to the increase of the level of learners' achievements and their motivation to learn. Furthermore, the findings asserted the positive attitudes for teachers among their samples. The teachers' positive attitudes toward computer use help students in explaining all the concepts and diagnosing the weakness of some elements and treat them directly through the facilities of the computer. stated that when teachers have positive attitudes, they tend to increase the motivation for learning, whereas, learning becomes more difficult when teachers have negative attitudes and decrease in motivation.

Since the 1980's, computer technology has been used in language teaching. However, computer no longer represent a tool for processing the information and display, but it becomes a tool for processing the information and communication through accessing the internet, joining groups and using multimedia, email, electronic journals, databases, World Wide Web, chat, audio and video conferencing etc. which use English Language as the main language (Vu Tuong, 2005). Either, (Wang & Chen, N-S, 2009) emphasized that the use of computers in education through the internet supports the environment classroom learning.

Computer represents a tool that focuses on teaching and learning from teacher to student in schools. Teachers can spend more time teaching students the skills to use the internet, and provide adequate drills and to provide introductory courses for them to participate in online forums.

Based on communication technology, computer enhances language learners' skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) in addition to grammar knowledge by providing much software which assist language learning (Vu Tuong, 2005). Additionally, in the classrooms or around the world, students are using computer to support the communicative skills through exchanging messages among them (Oxford, 1990 as cited in (Vu Tuong, 2005)). There are many reasons and justifications that lead to learn more about what can computer applications do in our lives. There are many benefits derived from this learning tool. (Lee, 2000) listed many reasons behind applying computer technology in second language instruction, including: "(a) provide practices for students through the experiential learning, (b) offer students more learning motivation, (c) enhance students achievement, (d) increase authentic materials for study, (e) encourage greater interaction between teachers and students and students and peers, (f) emphasize the individual needs, (g) independence from a single source of information, and (h) enlarge global understanding".

Teaching English language using computer depends on the teacher and to what extent the teacher is qualified in technology as a means to increase the teaching quality and students' motivation (Albirini, 2006). (Naba'h, Hussain, J., , Al-Omari, A., , & Shdeifat, S., 2009) asserts that using Computer Assisted language learning CALL in the classroom enables students for better understanding as well as motivating them to learn more efficiently and effectively.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study is non experimental research, where the main aim behind applying nonexperimental is to evaluate the knowledge of Iraqi teacher's attitudes towards the use of computers in teaching for more understanding and integrating between English teachers and ICT use in the classroom.

3.2 Participants

The target population in this study is Iraqi English teachers in Al-Anbar governorate. The researcher chooses a random sample from different regions in the entire governorate. Random sample is "the best way to obtain a representative sample" (Gay, Mills, G.E. , & Airasian, P., 2009) (p. 125). By random sample, the individuals in the population can get an equal and independent opportunity to be a part of the sample, as well as the sample will locate under the influence of the same problem. The number of the sample for this study is limited in size which is 320 teachers.

3.3 Instruments

This study used a survey questionnaire for data collection. This questionnaire was designed to gather information from English teachers' attitudes towards using computer. Three sections (A, C, and D) of the questionnaire were adopted from research conducted in Syria by (Albirini, 2006). In addition, one of the sections (B) was adopted from (Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, L. L., , & Fook, F. S., 2010); (Salleh & Albion, P. , 2004); and (Teo T. , 2008) as the researcher modified it to be suitable with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was divided into four sections; section (A) indicates the teacher's demographic characteristics, section (B) indicates the attitudes of English teachers towards computer, section (C) about perceived computer competence, and section (D) about perceived computer access.

The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert Scale. "Likert-scale items are useful and effective means of determining opinions and attitudes" (Turner, 1993 as cited in (Arkin, 2003). The questions were designed based on the research objectives and based on the needs of this study.

3.4 Data collection and Data Analysis Procedures

The thirty (30) subjects of English teachers were conducted by using pilot study where the subjects were from the target population. "Cranach's Alpha estimates internal-consistency reliability by determining how all items on a test relate to all other test items

and to the total test" (Gay, Mills, G.E. , & Airasian, P., 2009): p. 161). The study used (SPSS) version (18) to analysis the pilot study data and to find out Cranach's alpha value. Cranach's alpha reliability = (0.858). Reliability of measure instrument is the degree to which test consistently measure whatever it is measuring (Gay, Mills, G.E. , & Airasian, P., 2009). The questionnaire was distributed to 320 English teachers. Nineteen out of 320 were not practical for data analysis because they were not completed. Only 301 were analyzed. The study used (SPSS) version (18). The essential features of the data are explained by using Descriptive statistics and Multiple regressions test is used to determine the highest effective independent predictors (gender, age, years of experience, and school location) to the dependent outcomes (general attitude, competence, and access to use computer), depending on odd ratio value (OR). The predictor with highest OR is the highest effecting variable, and correlation is used also to determine the strength of relationships among variables.

4. Results of the Study

4.1. First question: teachers' attitudes toward using computer in teaching English Language.

The participants were participated to do the questionnaire's items and show their attitude toward using computer in their classrooms. The table 1 showed the overall attitude of teachers toward computer use and the result appeared that the majority of Iraqi teachers had got positive attitude toward using computer in teaching English language (61.5%, no = 185), and negative (38.5%, n=116).

Table 1: Teachers' Attitudes towards Computer Use

Outcomes		Number	Percentage
Attitude	Positive	185	61.5%
	Negative	116	38.5%

The total score for teachers' attitude was calculated to determine the level of attitude. First, the total score of attitudes were divided by the expected maximum score of the answers to calculate the teacher's score per answer. Second, the median was used to get the cut point of attitude, and to categorize it into negative and positive, (Rabinowitz, Harvey Ph. D, Marielle, E., & Michael, D., 2006). Depending on using 5- likert scale, table 2 shows teachers' attitudes toward computer use, where 1 (Strongly Disagree) represents the minimum score and 5 (Strongly Agree) represents the maximum score of the scale. more positive attitudes are indicated by higher scores and fewer positive attitudes is indicated by lower scores. This means that English teachers in Iraq secondary schools have positive attitude toward using computer as a tool in their teaching. The participants of this study responded to 10 items related to their attitude towards computer use and their intention to use computer as a tool in their teaching.

4.2 Second Question: Teachers' Attitudes and Gender

The table 2 explains the mean score level of the two gender groups. The outcome showed that the mean score of teachers' attitudes towards computer use in English classrooms for males was 3.3362, and standard deviation was.39715, while the score of female teachers was 3.2184 and standard deviation was.49775. This reflects that the mean score of male teachers is slightly higher than the mean score of female teachers, there is statically difference between the mean scores of males and female teachers regarding their attitude towards computer use.

Table 2: Mean Scores by Teachers' Gender

Group Statistics	
Gender	N Mean Std. Deviation
Male	127 3.3362.39715
Attitude means	
Female	174 3.2184.49775

In term of gender variable, the probability of the differences was examined by using multiple logistic regressions: likelihood ratio analysis as shown in table 3. Where, there was no statistically significant difference between gender and attitude toward using computer in teaching English due the p- value (0.715) is greater than alpha level (0.05).

Table 3: Attitude and Gender

Positive attitude		OR	95% CI		p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Gender ^a	Male	1.12	0.630	1.962	0.715
	Female

The reference category is negative attitude

Multiple logistic regression: likelihood ratio; (chi-square = 103.319, df = 7, p <0.001).

a, d = no significant

4.3 Third Question: Teachers' Attitudes and Competence

The participants were asked to respond 17 of likert scale items to fine their competence in using computer. Depending on median the incidence of teachers who had got positive and negative competence were 41.5% (no= 125) and 58.5% (no = 176), respectively as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Total Percentage of Positive and Negative of Teachers' Competence

Outcomes		Number	Percentage
Competence	Negative	176	58.5%
	Positive	125	41.5%

The correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationship between teachers' attitude and competence. The table 5 showed the correlation results between teachers' attitude and competence. A positive correlation was found between teachers' attitude and competence. Result showed that, there was significant relationship ($r = 0.336$; $p < 0.05$) between Iraqi teachers' attitude and their competence in their computer use

Table 5: Correlations between Attitude and Competence

Attitude domains	Spearman correlation (p value)	
	Attitude	Competence
Attitude		0.336** (< 0.001)
Competence	0.336** (< 0.001)	

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2-tailed)

4.4 Fourth Question: Teachers' Attitudes and Access

The participants were asked to respond 4 of likert scale items to fine their access in using computer. Also depending on the table 6 showed that the incidence of teachers who had positive and negative access to use the computer was 36.6% (no = 110) and 63.4% (no = 191), respectively.

Table 6: Correlations between Attitude and Access

Outcomes	Number	Percentage
Access Negative	191	63.4%
Positive	110	36.6%

The correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationship between teachers' attitude and access. The table 7 shows the correlation results between teachers' attitude and access. A negative correlation was found between teachers' attitude and access ($r = -0.141$). The result showed that there was a significant relationship ($p=0.014$; $p \leq 0.01$) between Iraqi teachers' attitude and their access in their computer use.

Table 7: Correlations between Attitude and Access

Attitude domains	Spearman correlation (p value)	
	Attitude	Access
Attitude		-0.141* (0.014) no=301
Access	-0.141* (0.014) no=301	

* Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)

5. Discussion

In one of the Iraqi governorates, the attitudes of school EFL teachers toward computer as an educational tool were examined as well as the relationship of teachers' attitudes to effected variables such as competence and access to computers. The integration of ICT in teaching and learning processes depends on the positive attitude which are very importance for successful (Albirini, 2006); (Al-Zaidiyen, Mei, L. L., , & Fook, F. S., 2010); (Tezci, 2009))

The findings of this study suggested that Iraqi participants had positive attitudes toward ICT use in educational purposes. Teachers' purposes for using technology were to "enhance students' motivation and interest, provide variety of instruction and commitment to continuous innovation, provide updated and multimedia instructional materials, and develop students' autonomous and lifelong learning (Chen, 2008). According to (Teo T. , 2006) the success of learner who uses computer technology depends on teacher's attitude and their readiness to accept the technology in the classroom as well as the positive result that is affected by teachers' attitude. Either, (Sang, Valcke, M., , Van Braak, J., & Tondeur, J., 2013) asserted that the thinking processes of classroom are clearly related to teacher beliefs, motivation, and teacher' attitudes towards ICT and lead to the integration of ICT successfully.

The findings also examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes and gender. The result showed that the male teachers had positive attitude slightly higher ($x=3.336$) than the females ($x=3.218$) and there was no significant statistical difference between gender and attitude towards using computer in teaching English.

The results of (Bakr, 2011) aimed to investigate Egyptian teachers' attitudes toward computers use in terms of gender which is consistent with the results of the current study. The Findings proved that the Egyptian public-school teachers' attitudes were positive toward computers use. Also, there were no significant differences in terms of gender and their attitudes. (Jenson & Brushwood Rose, C., 2003)

Asserted that computer and gender are affected by the social and cultural context in which they are produced and used. Difference between genders might gradually disappear when teachers become more and more acquainted with the educational potential of computers. Therefore, the study discovered the nature of the Iraqi nation with some of obstacles that affect women's freedom in the working environment such as social, traditional and culture features of Iraqi society.

The relationship between teachers' attitudes and their level of competence was a strong as it was clear positive correlation between teachers' attitudes toward computer as an educational tool and their computer competence, as well as to what extent the level of competence effects on their attitudes in this study. Based on the total evaluation of negative and positive answers of competence, the (176 respondents) 58.5% had low level in competence to use computer, and (125 respondents) 41.5% had high level in competence to use computer in their teaching. Similarly, to the finding of (Jegede, Dibu-Ojerinde, O. O., & Ilori, M. O., 2007) where conducted his study in Nigeria. His study's result revealed that there is a significant relationship between ICT competence and teachers' attitude. In addition, the relationship between computer attitudes and competence suggested the positive attitudes of teachers may be as a result of their higher computer competence within the classroom leads to their highly use of computers (Albirini, 2006).

Also, the study found negative relationship between teachers' attitude and their access towards using computer in teaching English, the result showed that the teachers who had not access to the computer higher than teachers who had access. That means teachers' attitude affected by high and low access to the computer. Similarly, (Kutluca, 2011) found in his study that the low level of computer use (access) may be attributed to the lack of computer usage backgrounds that can be used by teachers during their pre-service in their faculties. As well as Sexton et al. (1999) as cited in (Kutluca, 2011) found that prospective early childhood students who had access to computers at home were more positive toward computers. (Albirini, 2006) resulted that there was a low, positive relationship between teachers' attitudes toward ICT and their computer access level. The findings of (Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, L. L., , & Fook, F. S., 2010) revealed that teachers' level of ICT use was low although their attitude towards the ICT use was positive for educational purpose.

6. Conclusion

The rapid developments witnessed by the world in many different fields of life, which came in the form of technology has affected, in one way or another, most aspects of human life; one of these field is education (Tezci, 2009). The integration of the technology in educational teaching and learning processes needs new ways and methods represented by providing the learner with some knowledge and necessary skills developing the quality of education (Cavas, Cavas, P. , Karaoglan, B., & Kisla, T., 2009) The delay in technological progress in Iraq in the field of education led to the need to detect its causes for and to detect the attitude of teachers toward computer use.

The study examined the EFL teachers' attitudes. The analysis of the quantitative data that was obtained from questionnaire revealed a number of significant results about teachers' attitude. The findings of this study showed that teachers had positive attitudes towards using computer as an educational tool in education of secondary schools in Iraq, that means teachers tend to use computers in their teaching but there are some limitations and barriers preventing them such as: lack of training, lack of competence and lack of access to computer. The study's results indicated that there is a weakness in planning and organizational issues on the part of officials regarding the use of technology in education in Iraq to cope with the level of education in the developed world. Therefore; it is important to support teachers' attitude toward ICT in order to get better education in future and provide all the services and facilities for teachers to compensate the losses.

Obviously, due to the lack of training, computer resources, and time, the teachers' limited computer competence and computer access are reasonable results. teachers' computer competence was marked low in almost major computer applications and functions. the majority of Iraqi English teachers who was participated in this study had little or no computer training, but they had positive attitudes towards using the computer as one of ICT tools in schools. Moreover, respondents had very low levels of access to use computers where, usually teachers could access computers once a month or never.

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