



Teachers' Perceptions towards Technology Use and Integration to Teach English

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Abstract

There have been made some regulations not in the higher education systems of many countries but also in the national education systems of those not to miss the requirements of the age we're living in which is highly technological. One of the most important reasons lying behind these alterations has been to prepare the pre-service or in-service teachers to their classroom practices, because the children, who are 'Digital Natives' (Prensky, 2001), are already familiar with all technological devices, and they feel quite comfortable with each changes and innovations in the technology. And, of course based on those regulations, teachers have been expected to use and integrate the technology in their classrooms. Following these expectations, like this research study, there are some research studies on technology integration (e.g., Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur, & Sendurur, 2012; Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007) [2, 3]. And, as the first phase of a research study, the motive behind this research study is to find out the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers towards technology use and integration. It also asks whether those teachers are aware of the distinction between use and integration of technology for English language teaching. This study tries to find out the factors influencing Turkish EFL teachers' classroom practices in terms of technology use and integration by asking them written interview questions. The data collected from 20 in-service Turkish EFL teachers, and the results of the study have indicated a positive perception towards technology use and integration. The results also revealed two types of teachers, reformist and loyalist teachers.

1. Introduction

Information Communications Technology (ICT) is found everywhere from formal to informal situations because of the requirements of this century which is highly digital. Schools which are one of the most important units of the society should be ornamented with various technological tools, because the generation of this century, which are 'Digital Natives' as Prensky (2001) called, learn better via technology [1].

And, the governments around the world make some regulations to prepare the schools and the teachers. Turkey also has made some regulations to improve the effectiveness of the technology use in the schools. Uluyol (2013) states that a great deal of money has been spent for ICT by the Ministry of Education (MoNE) since 1998 when the Basic Education Program started. And, the World Bank (WB) and European Union (EU) have supplied a large amount of those sources [4].

"Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology" (FATİH) is one of the large scale projects aims to turn all classes to "Smart Class" around Turkey. When the project has been finished, the quality of the education will increase [5].

Niederhauser and Stoddart (2001) say that teachers have key roles to provide and integrate the technology into the educational environment [6]. And, Karaca, Can and Yildirim (2013) state that teachers' attitudes, beliefs and related areas should be given more importance, because teachers have an important role for the innovation processes [7].

The drive behind this study is to investigate the EFL teachers' in Turkey perceptions towards technology use and integration. This is an on-going research study, and this paper explains the first phase of the study. The following research questions were asked for exploration.

1. Which factors lie under in-service EFL teachers' technological practices to teach English in Turkey?
2. How in-service EFL teachers understand technology use and technology integration?
3. Are the practices of in-service EFL teachers compatible with their perceptions?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study are 20 EFL teachers in Turkey. The participants were selected randomly and sent e-mails. The willing teachers participated in this study.



The mean age of the participants is 25.9. 19 teachers work in state schools, and one teacher works in a private school among the teachers participated in the study.

2.2. Data collection

Dörnyei (2007) says the most frequently used qualitative data collection instruments include observations and interviews to have thick and rich data, and to explore the situation [8]. The data collection instrument was the written interviews.

Before the data was collected from the participants, expert views were taken to check the validity of the instrument. Several items were changed based on the expert views.

2.3. Data analysis

The data were analyzed in terms of three categories. Teachers' perceptions towards technology integration and technology use were analyzed in terms of classroom practices, planning, and barriers towards technology use and integration.

The data were coded by the researcher by using constant comparison analysis of Glaser and Strauss (1967) [9]. This method has been made use of to categorize what the participants have said under themes.

3. Results and discussion

The results of the first phase of the study will be discussed in terms of technology use and technology integration. Two types of teachers will be discussed based on the analysis of the written interview questions.

3.1. Technology use

English language teachers in Turkey consider the technology use from the same perspective. They see the technology use as a facilitator and a must for language learning. The following extracts indicate some examples for the answers of the participants.

"Technology use is an indispensable factor for English classes. Learning English requires visual and auditory sources, and technology provides these."

"When technology is used in the English classes, the students will be kept motivated and willing to participate, and technology increases the fruitfulness of the instruction."

3.2. Technology integration

The participants in this study think the meaning of 'technology use' from the same perspective while they don't have the common view for the technology integration.

"Integrating the technology with what we are doing."

"Using some technological tools, such as computer, mobile phone, tabs in the course."

"Using the technology in a suitable way."

The answers of the participants are similar with what the two categories of Pierson (2001) revealed with her case studies [10].

However, only few participants' answers are similar with the results of the study of Becker (1994) [11]. They perceive the technology integration as a student centered approach, and they see it as an infusion rather than an application. On the other hand, the numbers of the participants giving those answers are so few.

3.3. Classroom practices

Teachers in this study were asked which technological tools they use for their English classes. The answers were projector, compact computers, smart phones, mp3 players, movies, smart boards provided by MoNE.

The participants were asked which skills can be improved via technology use and integration, and only three participants mentioned writing. However, other 17 teachers just mentioned listening and speaking. They associated technology only with listening activities or watching movies in the classroom. None of the teachers even the ones who mentioned writing and four skills have not talked about blogs, wikis or any other Web 2.0 tools. This finding may be explained with what Lei (2009) has said on the lack of use of Web 2.0 technologies by the pre-service teachers [12]. Today's teachers need to prepare to use Web 2.0 tools even though they are quite close with those technologies, especially the younger teachers.

Another aspect was related to social media, and only two participants reported that they benefited from social media. Majority of the teachers, number is 15, have been against making use of social



media despite their mean age. EFL teachers in Turkey have negative perceptions towards using social media in terms of teaching English. They don't consider social media will make the students study English. As Lin, Wang and Lin (2012) say "individual teachers construct unique perceptions of teaching, learning and technology that influence their integration decisions." [13]

3.4. Planning

In this study, the teachers have been asked who is responsible for the technology use for English classes. Eight teachers think that school management are responsible for the technology use while six of them perceive the teachers as the responsible people to use technology, and two of them consider that teacher and student are in charge of the technology use. Two teachers think that not only teachers but also school management are responsible for the planning part. Finally, one participant considers the student as a responsible person whereas one thinks that everybody including teachers, school management, parents and MoNE are the responsible parties for the technology use.

The participants also asked for the same question regarding technology integration. 12 teachers think that teachers are responsible for technology integration whereas four of them consider the MoNE and the rest of the participants see everybody in the education world

3.5. Barriers

There are barriers affecting technology use and integration for classroom practices. Ertmer (1999) categorized the barriers into two; first-order and second-order barriers. First-order barriers are caused by the unavailability of the access to the technological tools hardware and software, lack of training for the technology use while the second-order barriers result from the beliefs and perceptions of the teachers towards technology [14].

The following extracts show how EFL teachers in Turkey perceive the barriers of the technology use and technology integration.

"Unavailability of the resources, lack of competence of the teachers"

"Teachers' prejudice towards technology"

"Teachers' perception technological tools as burden"

"Poverty of the schools"

This first phase of the study has shown that first order barriers are perceived by Turkish EFL teachers as the dominant factors hindering technology use and integration for the classroom practices.

The strange point is that even the participants who see teachers are the responsible people to integrate the technology into English classes consider the first order barriers as the dominant factor.

3.6. Types of teachers

The analysis of this study revealed two types of teachers which are reformist teachers and loyalist teachers in terms of their perceptions to technology.

3.6.1. Reformist teachers

Reformist teachers have positive perceptions towards technology use. They don't put the blame on others, however; they always try to find practical ways to make their lessons enjoyable and attractive. They use their own mobile phones, own computers even if they don't have any technological applications provided by the school. They don't limit themselves just to the listening activities of the course book. They are productive and open to new technologies.

3.6.2. Loyalist teachers

These kinds of teachers are loyal to status quo, and they don't try to change anything. If MoNE or school management provides equipment, they make use of them. However, if they are not provided with technological tools, they behave submissively. They generally put the blame on other parties, such as the MoNE and school management.

They see extra preparation as a burden. Activities from the course book include the main practices of the teacher. However, if they don't have a technological tool even for the listening activities which are in the course books, they skip the activities. They are conservative people in terms of technology.

4. Conclusion

This study focused on the Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions towards technology use and integration because of the nature of the age and the large scale projects by MoNE for the technology. The results have shown that Turkish EFL teachers have a confusion with the technology use and technology



integration. They generally support technology although they have got some inadequacies and barriers caused by planning procedures and technological equipment.

And, results of the first phase have revealed two types of teachers which are reformist teachers and loyalist teachers. Reformist teachers have positive perceptions to use and integrate technology and always try to find ways to use technology whereas loyalist teachers don't try to find different and practical ways to use and integrate technology.

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