



EFL Teachers' Perception of Internet Assisted Language Teaching

L. Meriem Ouahidi¹

Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Morocco¹

Abstract

To meet the requirements of the world rapid high-tech growth, it has become imperative to use technology in EFL classrooms to enhance language learning and to equip students with the necessary skills and competences. Although many researchers [1,2,3] recommended the use of computer-assisted language learning, little attention has been paid to how teachers perceive internet assisted language teaching (IALT) in EFL classrooms. In fact, without technologically qualified teachers able to integrate IALT in the classroom, the outcome will not improve students' learning skills. The current research aims to investigate Moroccan teachers' perception of and self-efficacy on IALT. A quantitative analysis was conducted, and a questionnaire was designed for the English department teachers at different Moroccan universities. The major finding indicates that most EFL teachers view IALT positively and believe in its role to promote English language learning; however, about one-third of the respondents are unsure about their ability to use it adequately in the classroom.

Keywords: *English as a Foreign Language (EFL), internet Assisted language Teaching (IALT), Teachers' English perception, self-efficacy.*

1. Introduction

The interest in using the internet in the classroom has been growing in recent years because it offers language teachers and students a plethora of authentic resources (audio, video, and texts) that can be exploited inside and outside the classroom. Teachers can use these resources to implement pedagogical approaches, techniques, and learning strategies that are likely to create a motivating learning and teaching environment [4]. It also allows them to share their teaching material, ideas, and experiences with other teachers all over the world. The internet enhances student-centered learning since it gives students the opportunity to take their learning in charge and boosts their motivation [5].

Therefore, teachers' implementation of internet assisted language teaching (IALT) depends significantly on their views about its utility, for they will probably translate these views and attitudes into teaching practices. So far only a few researchers have investigated the teachers' perceptions, perspectives, and self-efficacy on IALT [6,7,8,9]; the current study will guide further research in this area in the Moroccan Higher education context. The objective of the present paper is therefore two-fold, first, to assess teachers' perception of internet assisted language teaching and to explore their self-efficacy in using it effectively in their classrooms. This research, therefore, is an attempt to address the following research questions:

- 1- What are the teacher's perceptions and attitudes towards the integration of IALT in EFL classrooms?
- 2- What are the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards the implementation of IALT?

2. Review of the Lit

It is a general belief among many researchers [10,11,12] that teachers with positive teaching experience in using computers are more willing to implement technology in the classroom environment. This idea is in line with the argument which asserts that teachers' perceptions of the benefits of IALT and their confidence play a critical role in their decision about its use in the classroom [13]. Besides, teachers' views regarding the use of technology can be a facilitating or a debilitating factor, encouraging them to gain more confidence and motivation or creating a hindrance to its use [14].

Nevertheless, a positive attitude towards Web technology is not enough to guarantee teachers the ability to integrate it successfully in the classroom [15]. Based on empirical data analysis, it seems that teachers' use of technology is limited, usually avoided or delayed due to teachers' lack of sufficient knowledge and experience, computer anxiety, insufficient time, and lack of confidence [16]. More importantly, "teachers who have basic computer competencies are more confident in using computers and are more likely to integrate computers into their teaching than those who have not." [17] p.19, and by implication, the integration of IALT in the classroom context.



3. Methodology

This study was carried in the Moroccan EFL context and with teachers of English at different Moroccan English departments. It aims at providing an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions about IALT.

3.1 Participants

The sample population under study consists of 42 higher education teachers. All the teachers are Arabic or Tamazight native speakers who teach English as a foreign language in different Moroccan universities. The data collection took place at the end of the spring session of 2019. The participants were contacted using convenience sampling and were asked to fill a Google-based questionnaire. The table below presents the background information of the respondents:

Table 1: Demographic profile of the participants.

Number of respondents	Gender	Teaching Experience
42	Males: 73.8% Females: 26.2%	Less than 10: 26.2% 10-20: 28.6% More than 20: 45.2%

It is worth mentioning that the variables in the table above are beyond the scope of the current study.

3.2 Instrument

Because the current study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, the quantitative approach has been used to carry out this research. For this purpose, the questionnaire was developed by Shin 2007 [18], but it was adjusted to meet the purpose of the study and was later administered to the participants online. It is composed of 15 items, consisting of three sections: In addition to the demographic background information of the participants, the questionnaire included two more sections to elicit the teachers' perceptions and beliefs of IALT (items 1-10) and their self-efficacy in integrating it in their classrooms (items 11-15).

Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, and it was 0.78. The questionnaire was on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The items receiving mean scores higher than two would represent negative attitudes and perceptions. The data obtained from the questionnaire were subject to excel analysis where all the descriptive statistics were scored. The survey data were analyzed using percentages, means, and standard deviations (SD).

4. Results and discussion

It is generally assumed that teachers' perceptions play a major role in how they teach, write lesson plans, organize the teaching material and tasks, and make pedagogical decisions. The data below display the teachers' perceptions about the use of the internet to teach a foreign language.

Table 2: Percentages of teachers' perception towards the integration of IALT

	SA	A	D	SDE	M	SD
1-The internet can provide learners with a rich learning Environment	57.1%	35.7%	7.1%	0%	1.47	0.63
2- Internet tools can be used for different teaching purposes	66.7%	33.3%	0%	0%	1.33	0.47
3- Students can be motivated by the use of the internet in the classroom.	52.4%	38.1%	---	----	1.59	0.73
4-Students can improve their English skills through the use of the internet.	52.4%	42.9%	4.6%	0%	1.52	0.59
5- Students will be more attentive in IALT classes.	38.1%	47.6%	14.3%	0%	1.76	0.69
6- IALT can enhance students' learning autonomy and self-directed learning	33.3%	59.5%	7.1%	0%	1.71	0.59



7- IALT can promote teachers' satisfaction and confidence.	26.2%	57.1%	16.7%	0%	1.90	0.65
8- IALT can make teachers knowledge facilitators	31%	59.5%	9.5%	0%	1.78	0.60
9- I Would like to use the internet in my classroom	38.1%	45.2%	14.3%	2.3%	1.80	0.77

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; DA=Disagree; SDE= Strongly Disagree; M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation.

Taking into consideration table 2, more than 92% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the internet could create a rich learning environment since it can be used for different teaching purposes as all the teachers admitted (66.7% + 33.3%). The vast majority of teachers confirm that the use of the internet can improve learners' skills (52.4%+42.9%), make them more motivated (52.4+38.1) attentive (38.1% + 47.6%), and autonomous (33.3+59.5%). It seems that the use of the internet is also beneficial for teachers since it can boost their confidence as about 83% (26.2%+ 57.1%) of the participants corroborated. More than 90% of the respondents affirmed that the implementation of the internet in the classroom could make teachers knowledge facilitators instead of information providers. The last item elicits what seems already obvious from the data that the majority of teachers would like to utilize the internet to teach EFL classes.

However, unexpectedly, 14.3+2.3% of the participants still doubt the usefulness of this tool to teach English. This number is insignificant, yet it indicates that there are still some teachers who are reluctant to use the internet to teach in an EFL context. This reluctance may be due to their lack of confidence, institutional barriers, and/or lack of self-efficacy.

Results in table 2 and 3 indicated that the mean scores are lower than 2, which reflects the teachers' positive perception towards the implementation of the internet in their teaching strategies. This means that the absolute majority of teachers are willing to integrate the internet in their classes. The lowest mean score (1.33) was ascribed to item 2 related to the use of the internet for different teaching purposes. This score was obtained because all the participants opted for 'agree' or 'strongly agree.' The highest mean score (1.90) was attributed to the association between IALT and Teachers' confidence. In fact, about 17% of teachers believe that the application of the internet does not boost their confidence.

Table 3: Teachers' perception of IALT

	Number	M	SD
Teachers' perception	42	1.76	0.74

The statistics of this study provided a response regarding the first research question "What are the teacher's perceptions and attitudes towards the integration of IALT in EFL classrooms?"

The general mean score (1.76) of this variable indicates the positive attitude of the sample population towards the implementation of the internet in teaching English. This means that the participants believe in the unparalleled opportunities the internet offers for teachers and students to explore and use inside and outside the classroom. They also consider IALT to be an unavoidable approach in the teaching-learning process. According to the survey, the respondents perceive IALT as interesting and motivational; they believe that IALT can create a student-centered environment that promotes attention, autonomy, and communication and eventually leads to improving students' level and teachers' confidence. Our results are consistent with previous research [1,16,6]. In fact, the traditional approach on its own is no longer enough to motivate students and make them autonomous learners. However, a small number of teachers are not confident enough to use IALT inside the classroom. This may reveal that there is a gap between their beliefs and their teaching practices. This is in agreement with the claim that a positive attitude towards the application of IALT does not necessarily guarantee its integration in the classroom. Such reluctant teachers should be continuously exposed to a rich Internet learning environment in order to observe the benefits of IALT in action [15].



Table 4: percentages of teachers' self-efficacy on IALT.

	SA	A	D	SDE	M	SD
11- I am competent to use internet-based material in the classroom	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	0%	2	0.76
12- I know how to integrate Internet resources into curricula	23.8%	61.9%	14.3%	0%	1.90	0.61
13- I need the training to improve my internet literacy skills	28.6%	40.5%	21.4%	9.5%	2.11	0.94
14- I successfully use IALA with my students	9.5%	52.4%	38.1%	0%	2.28	0.36
15- It's easy for me to find EFL materials	31%	54.8%	9.5%	0%	1.88	0.77

Although more than two thirds (28.6%+42.9%) of the participants believe that they are competent in using the internet and they (85%= 23.8% +61.9%) can integrate its resources in the curricula, about 70% of the sample population confirmed their need of training to improve their internet teaching skills. It is also worth mentioning that about 40% of teachers felt that they are ill-prepared to integrate the internet; whereas, most teachers (31%+54%) thought that they could use it successfully inside the classroom with their students and outside it to find and evaluate the adequate internet resources. Table 5 shows that items 11, 13, and 14 received the highest mean scores that exceed 2. These findings reveal that the Moroccan EFL teachers included in the study tend to perceive themselves as less efficacious as required. The lowest mean score can be attributed to item 15, which is related to the selection of authentic materials and resources that can be used in the teaching process. The statistics in tables 4 and 5 indicate that most teachers of the sample population are eager to know more about the use of IALT in their EFL classes in order to enhance their internet literacy skills. As the general mean score (2.03) in the table below displays, teachers have a moderately low sense of self-efficacy. In fact, they are not efficacious enough regarding their sense of mastery of internet-related skills that teachers usually need to find, evaluate and integrate useful resources in EFL classes.

Table 5: Teachers' self-efficacy on IALT

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teachers self-efficacy	42	2.03	0.63

As an answer to the second research question "What are teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in the implementation of IALT?" it seems that this group of teachers possess positive perceptions towards the internet, yet they face some limitations they would like to overcome via training. "language teachers need to be aware of technology integration and the possibilities it holds for ESL classes" [6] p70. This highlights the teachers' need to broaden their horizons of understanding and using IALT since about 39% of the participants cannot use it successfully with their students. This shows the modest integration of the internet in the classroom teaching. This highlights the necessity of providing teachers with regular training to sharpen their skills and enable them to choose the most efficient materials that would fit the curricula, the level of students and the cultural context.

5. Implications and limitations

On the basis of the study findings, It is highly recommended that teachers should actively and autonomously engage in their professional improvement by looking for productive ways to learn and boost their internet literacy skills and abilities from the internet itself. Additionally, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are vital constructs to take into account in trying to understand the technical problems some teachers face. Accordingly, it is essential and indispensable that universities and policymakers attend to the teachers' needs and provide them with regular training so that they can be equipped with the necessary competencies to integrate IALT successfully in their classrooms.

It is plausible to admit that our research may have two main limitations: first, the sample of the study is too small to make any generalizations about the teachers' perceptions and self-efficacy about the use of the internet in teaching. Given that the data of the analysis was only quantitative, it is not inconceivable that dissimilar findings would have arisen if the focus had been on qualitative analysis as well.



6. Conclusion

As this paper has stressed, higher education teachers perceive IALT in a positive way and believe in its advantages, yet its application in the classroom is still a challenging issue that teachers and policymakers should address. It is high time to get along the facilitating and debilitating features of the internet to enhance the internet enhanced environment. The current study, therefore, endorses a call for change by suggesting the necessity for teachers to adapt and adopt the Internet material and resources to use them “within the classroom, at the institutional level, and at the broader level of inter-institutional collaboration” [6] p71.

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