

***The Inclusion of Digitalization into the Universe of
Teaching EFL Linking Education with Future Prospects.***

SEKKAL BABOU Meryem.

- Dr. Moulay Tahar University; Saida (Algeria).

- Email: meryembabou@gmail.com

Received:06/05/2023; Accepted:25/11/2023; Published:18/12/2023.

Abstract:

Nowadays people all over the world are almost the time connected and strive to gain new friends or to get bargains through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT'S). The language that they generally employ is English. The latter has recently gained a significant place in the world. This reason has led many people to learn or to think about learning English so as to be ready for the current working world's demands. At this level, the teacher should consider his way of teaching i.e. teaching methods and techniques, as he should try to be more innovative in order to achieve his teaching goals and to motivate his students for both learning and then preparing themselves for their future careers. Thus, it has become apparent that teachers try to integrate new technologies namely the use of advanced and well-designed computers, data show and online platforms to reinforce their pedagogy and to update their classrooms. Two research tools have been employed with teachers and students of the university. The results demonstrate that ICT'S devices have brought efficient results within the learning process as they facilitate the teacher's role and enhance students' motivation and autonomy.

Keywords: digitalization; EFL classrooms; motivation; teaching; objectives.

المخلص:

أصبح الناس حالياً في جميع أنحاء العالم على اتصال، ويسعون لاكتساب أصدقاء جدد أو الحصول على صفقات من خلال استخدام أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات. اللغة التي يستخدمونها بشكل عام هي الإنجليزية. اكتسبت هذه الأخيرة مؤخراً مكانة مهمة في العالم. هذا السبب دفع الكثير من الناس إلى تعلم، أو التفكير في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية حتى يكونوا مستعدين لمتطلبات عالم الشغل الحالية، لهذا يجب على الأستاذ أن يفكر في طريقة تدريسه، بالإضافة إلى تقنيات وأساليب التدريس، حيث يجب عليه محاولة أن يكون أكثر إبداعاً من أجل تحقيق أهدافه التعليمية وتحفيز طلابه على التعلم ثم إعداد أنفسهم لمهنهم المستقبلية. وبالتالي فقد أصبح من الواضح على الأساتذة أن يسعوا لدمج التقنيات الجديدة في تعزيز أصول التدريس الخاصة بهم وتحديث فصولهم الدراسية. وتم استخدام أداتين بحثيتين مع أساتذة وطلاب الجامعة. تظهر النتائج أن أجهزة تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات قد جلبت نتائج فعالة في عملية التعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرقمنة؛ قسم اللغة الأجنبية؛ تحفيز؛ تعليم؛ أهداف.

Introduction:

In recent years, the teaching process has taken new discernible shapes in order to keep abreast of the latest developments and learning skills. This fact has prompted to the revision of the syllabuses and methods of teaching which cannot face actual student's needs. Students' diversity and their future prospects in addition to technological development are also sound reasons that have conducted many teachers to re-

think about their teaching methods and ways of implementing contemporary technological devices. Therefore, it is noticed that teachers are almost the time accompanied with one of these ICT's devices; namely computers, slaps, headsets and data show. These tools are regarded as helpful means in teaching as they give teachers the opportunity to devote more time for explanations and clarifications rather than focusing on old methods such as dictating or giving handouts. However, the implementation of ICT's tools should not only meet the necessary objectives of learning but should be linked to the professional world as well. This method can facilitate the teacher's role and motivate students at the same time because new technologies may help students to link their learning (theories) with the outside world's context. Thus, according to what has been mentioned above the following research questions need further examination:

Do integrating information and communication technologies tools serve the teaching goals and syllabuses in all circumstances?

What are the main outcomes of ICT's instruments? In other words, are educational prospects achieved through the integration of ICT or not?

Accordingly, we have hypothesized that the inclusion of ICT'S is of a paramount importance, as it can be fruitful to confront numerous and sometimes not expected occurrences. Second, ICT's are supposed to ameliorate the teaching process and help learners to overcome a series of learning problems such as lack of autonomy and motivation.

A survey has been held at the level of Saida University with master two students for the sake of answering the above research questions. A questionnaire was given to the students and an unstructured interview was held with teachers who use ICT's instruments. The answers turn around the axe of positive aspects and expectations of using ICT.

1- Use of Digital Devices in Teaching:

Through time, teaching has always gained a paramount place all over the world, particularly in the developed countries

that have strived to improve it in a way or another. The integration of communication technologies in the developing world however, has been also one of the remarkable means incorporated in educational systems in order to accommodate teaching with current trends. Nowadays, ICT's devices can be found practically in all working sectors since they have facilitated the transmission of information in particular and knowledge in general. As far as teaching is concerned, the staggering availability of ICT'S devices provokes a kind of dilemma to the teachers i.e. employing them or carrying on teaching with traditional material. Yet, ICT's requires an outstanding mastering so as to keep the balance between the teaching process and the means that are employed during the lectures. De Wan Ng (2015, p.4) asserts that: "For the educator, the enormous diversity of digital technologies provides literally hundreds of tools to support teaching and learning. However, this overwhelming availability poses challenges for the educator with respect to the choice of tools and learning how to make use of them in his/her teaching". Teaching in itself is a responsibility and requires strenuous efforts as the teacher tries to prepare the lessons, follow the syllabus, look for student's lacunas and more importantly to put over the lectures. Therefore, nowadays teachers are supposed to combine the aforementioned duties with ICT's tools to replenish their lectures.

However, their integration should not be misused since not all teachers master them and not all academic settings own sufficient material. Thus, to ensure an effective teaching/learning process, both teachers and policymakers should consider some matters such as teachers' formation to master new hardware and assuring the availability of ICT's material in addition to look for the suitable methods of transmitting the information successfully.

2- Importance of ICT's Tools:

Current EFL classrooms requires awfully the integration of ICT's tools as a means of ameliorating and enhancing student's learning. Lately, this new technology has proved its

efficacy in sustaining the teaching-learning process as it leads according to many previous researches to energize student's fervor and determination. Integrating ICT's tools in EFL classes generates diversified atmospheres of learning such as moving from passive to active learner. In this vein, Kathleen (2015:23) asserts that:

As students access information digitally and complete instructional activities through technology, they become active participants in the learning process... students in the digital age can read informational text online, add notes or ideas as they read, summarize information using a text-based software program and submit and receive feedback from their teachers electronically.

ICT's tools also leads to creativity especially when teachers put more emphasis on varying the content of lectures and make them more interesting so as to attract their student's attention, participation and involvement. Shetzer and Warschauver (2000, p.176) cited in Meri (2020,p.xvi) contend that autonomous learners are the ones who "are able to take charge of their own learning by working on individual and collaborative projects that result in communication opportunities in the form of presentations, web sites, and traditional publications accessible to local and global audiences". Besides, a practical and potent intrusion of advanced technological tools helps teachers to change their habitual way of teaching and looking for efficient methods and strategies to improve both the teaching process and themselves. Shetzer and Warschauver (2000, p.176) add that "teachers who have access to an internet computer classroom are in a position to teach students valuable lifelong learning skills and strategies for becoming autonomous learners. Yet, the online teaching requires a strong deal with ICT's instruments and hardware such as Moodle (case of university of Saida Algeria) and thus they need a formation which enables them to master these tools and improve their literacy skills at the same time.

ICT's integration has numerous virtues such as facilitating the teaching task and arousing student's interests in

learning. Accordingly, Namso et al (2012:540) cited in Kathleen (2015:24) argues that “ technology and games have yielded consistently positive results with regard to motivation, persistence, curiosity, attention, and attitude towards learning”. In other terms, students cherish new ways of teaching since they increase their catalyst and awaken their awareness as they incite their areas of interests. In this vein, (Mbulaheni et al, 2021: 69) push for the advantages of using ICT’s which are as follows:

- Safety and ease of access: seeing that most of the instruments are in the form of paper, they can be destroyed, misplaced, or when the storage is locked some teachers might unable to access them.
- Quick and reliable feedback: after inputting data into the ICT tool that is loaded with the instrument you are likely to get instant feedback which is accurate unlike when you have to sit and analyze the data in order to write report.
- Cost effectiveness: not lot of printing or photocopying of instruments is needed when using ICTS, and the instrument can be used over and over without extra costs.

Nonetheless, ICT’S tools can also be damaged and all the saved data will be lost and difficult to retrieve. At this case, teachers and learners should have a hard copy in order to avoid such inconveniences. Thus, one should know that these new methods of teaching using ICT’s instruments need a careful and rigorous planning form the part of the institution and the teacher.

Janssen argues that “A sensible and healthy use of ICT requires particular knowledge and attitudes regarding legal and ethical aspects, privacy and security, as well as ... balanced attitude towards technology...”(Janssen et al., 2013, p.480). Accordingly, the misuse of ICT’s can lead to negative consequences if the users will not take into account some ethical issues.

3- Design of New Teaching Strategies:

Teachers find themselves facing a dilemma of integrating new technological rules and mastering their usages in addition to how to employ them to achieve a satisfactory feedback. Lázaro-Cantabrana et al. (2019) pedagogical digital competence is “a set of skills, abilities and attitudes that the teacher must develop to incorporate digital technologies into their practice and professional development”. Yet, they need a tight design for the online courses in order to reach the same results of teaching in class. Reiser and Dempsey (2007: 293) assert that: “Rich online environments require a wealth of interaction. Human interaction, skillfully designed into almost any learning environment, provides for the richest learning experiences that go beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge”. (Kenedy, 2020) cited in (Keengwe and Jared, 2022,p.92) contends that developing high level of student engagement in online learning depends on interaction. Henceforth, interaction is one of the primordial criterion that boost the online learning, since it enables the teachers to approach student’s needs and then design and coordinate the curriculum accordingly. It also aids to assess the student’s capabilities and consider their lacunas through an excessive practice of activities. In fact, the beginning is always a difficult step for both learners and teachers, however as the proverb says ‘practice makes perfect’ and contributes in forming trained and competent teachers who are required to give birth to a new qualified generation. (Rahman and Hakikur, 2016, p. 32) withstand that:

ICT requires that users have some skills and no one should assume that by providing the facilities, everyone in the community will immediately embrace the technology...ICT can be made easier to use through improved training and documentation that is based on information seeking behaviour, with the caveat that good training is not a substitute for good system design.

In point of fact, all the existing fields in a given society including health sector, banks, international business and even small enterprises have become to a certain extent digitalized.

The latter is considered as an important reason which makes people especially teachers and students breaking into the world of modern technology in order to link theory with practice. So, teachers should constantly refresh their lectures to meet the current demands of their students who themselves have set future objectives.

4- Research Methodology:

Research methodology represents the basic part of any research paper since it embodies the tools and the ways the researcher has selected to carry out his investigation. Kothari (2004, p.8) points out that “Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them”. Indeed, the part of methodology in any research paper is considered as the focal portion which embodies the research paper’s structure.

Data Collection Tools:

This study primarily uses two sources of data, namely, an unstructured interview designed to teachers, and a questionnaire administered to students. Firstly, the interview was employed to know how do teachers accommodate their ancient teaching methods with the current ones? It also emphasizes the difficulties they face during their teaching and how they manage to overcome them. Secondly, the purpose of using the questionnaire was to investigate, students’ view points about the integration of ICT’ tools and their outcomes.

Unstructured Interview:

The present paper’s interview does not contain organized or pre-prepared questions .i.e. it is an unstructured one as it was analyzed qualitatively. Some of the reasons that encourages us to qualitative analysis is to retrieve more genuine data about the matter investigated. Klenke (2016:130) emphasizes the aforementioned idea as he argues that: “The advantages of unstructured interviews are that more complex issues can be probed, answers can be clarified, and a more

relaxed research atmosphere may contribute to the elicitation of more in-depth as well as sensitive information”.

Interview's Results:

Actually, 11 teachers were interviewed separately in different days. The majority announced that using ICT instruments comprises numerous directing facets of teaching/ learning process. As they argued that the involvement of ICT's tools is a two edges sword, i.e. it can be advantageous and disadvantageous. Among the positive points that they mentioned are:

- ICT's tools facilitate the task of teaching in terms of reducing lectures allotment and devote more time for explanations rather than writing or dictating the activities or even distributing handouts.

- They pave the way also to new practices which cannot be done through classical ways such as the use of videos of other scholars to reinforce and clarify the teacher's interpretations.

- Among the answers of the teachers we have also found some reflective ideas to the notion of student's gaining autonomy, improving the way they speak and communicate, and improving their social relationships through ICT tools. They added also that ICT tools have solved numerous problems (as means of learning/ teaching and assessing students) especially during the hard pandemic era.

- Concerning the accommodation of their ancient teaching methods with the current ones, teachers argued that it is not an easy task to move from a method used for many years to a new one which is imposed and has become obligatory to be applied within a brief period. Yet, not all the teachers are qualified and formed and almost all of them need a training.

- They added that the university has prepared a sort of training which is not sufficient. Consequently, they manage to adapt the ancient ways with the new ones. In other terms, they have kept the syllabus and have tried to use it via ICT's instruments and put it on line (Moodle).

Other teachers welcomed the intrusion of ICT's claiming that students give much importance to learning the English language when the teacher involves projects based learning and provides new modes of communication to network locally and globally.

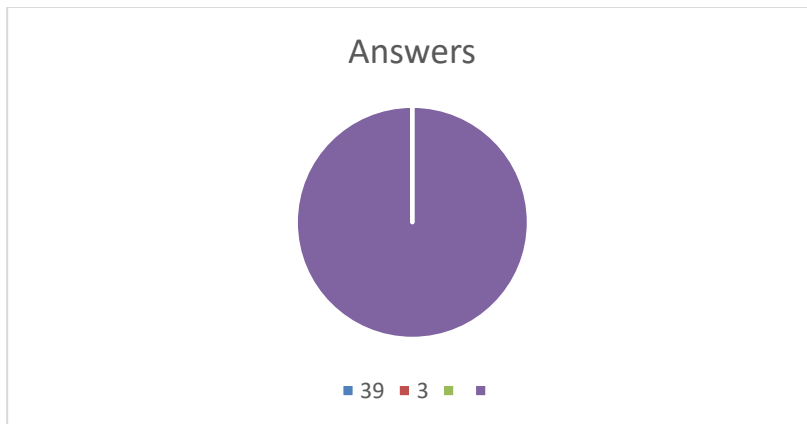
Some of the suggestions they provided us with are:

To train teachers professionally for the sake of helping their students and show them how to have access to data based, websites and discussions to help them achieving their future expectations.

Questionnaire's Findings:

The questionnaire of this research contains four questions and it was distributed randomly to 42 students from different levels at the department of English of Moulay Tahar university.

Question1: Do you prefer learning via the usages of ICT's tools or traditional way?
Justify!



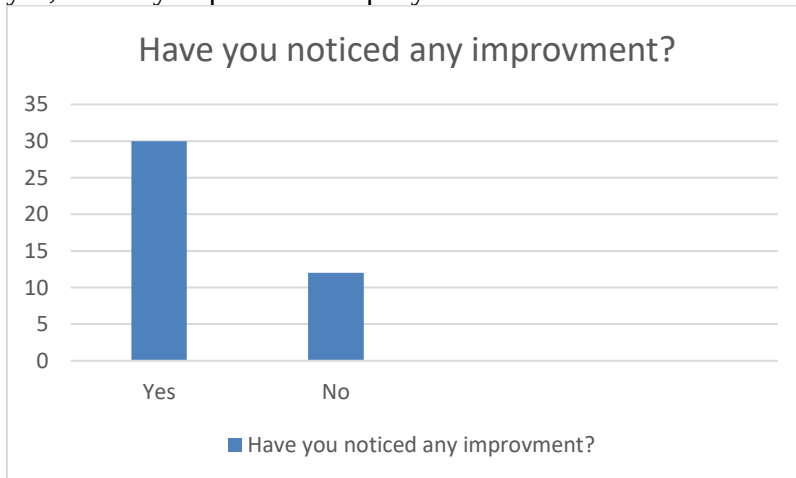
Graph 1: Students Preferences

The answers of students reflect their great appreciation to the newly used methods as the greater part answers with 'yes'.

They add that the use of technology has boost their motivations especially when the lectures or the tools employed touch their areas of interests such as a native conversation about

how to hire new employee or how to start a new business. Moreover, some of them say that ICT's tools have changed the atmosphere of learning, as they have aroused their preferences to teachers who use ICT instruments rather than those who still use the traditional methods. Others justify their 'yes' with the fact that technology is developing expeditiously and is immensely affecting the economical sector to the extent to which all the newly generation should be acquainted with this new system i.e. linking technology with learning/ teaching and working.

Question 2: Have you noticed any improvements? If yes, would you please exemplify?

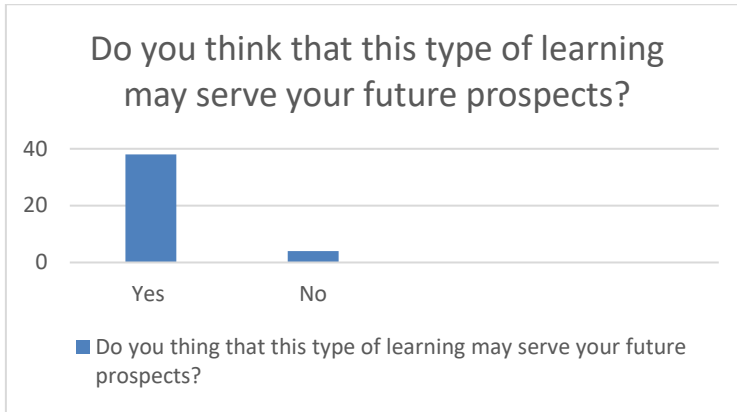


Graph Two: Student's Viewpoints about ICT's Usages

30 students say that learning through the use of ICT has led them to ameliorate their autonomy, and impetus and has encouraged them to interact with others for the sake of improving their businesses especially that they are English language learners, so they will not find complications concerning the language. They add that it advocates their learning cooperation and promotes their communication competence. The rest i.e. students who have answered negatively and said that there are some classmates who are not keen on learning with ICT's tools and cannot pursue their

learning at home simply because they do not own computers, tablets and so on.

Question 3: Do you think that this type of learning may serve your future prospects? Justify your answer!



Graph Three: ICT's Role in Shaping Learner's Future Prospects

As the above graph demonstrates almost all of them opted for the option of 'yes' arguing that ICT has provided fruitful results with ambitious students who find it as a starting point for their future. They contended that it enables them to gain new skills which promote their social development and communications deals (mutual understanding). Others argued that digital or network literacy permits students to ameliorate subject learning and vocational/ business training. The negative answers are sustained with two arguments. The former is that they do not intend to be technology dependent and the latter is that they want to become future craftsmen.

Question 4: How do you consider the learning process through ICT's tools?

The last question is analyzed qualitatively as the researcher has summarized the answers of the respondents in the following ideas. Learning through the use of ICT's tools though it needs betterment can solve many problems of learning and can easily attract students to follow or at least to participate and be involved in the lectures. It also encourages

some students to become active learners and suggest altered ideas which can be beneficial for both teachers and students particularly if the students master the ICT's instruments. Finally, ICT's instruments and their use cannot be fled in order to keep up with the developments.

Conclusion:

Research has shown that the use of Information Communication Technologies in the EFL classroom can improve and enhance students' language learning and prompt significantly student's motivation, creativity and interests. Henceforth, the research has shown that integrating ICT's tools can serve the teaching goals and syllabuses in all circumstances especially after the pandemic era when all the universities were closed and the alternative to pursue studies has been the employment of these new technological means. Furthermore, the survey also shows that a considerable number of teachers, students and policy makers' expectations can be attained with the adequate and professional use of these tools. However, we should not deny the challenges and barriers that many EFL teachers and students face during the intrusion of ICT in the teaching/learning process and which bring about many controversial opinions concerning the actual use of ICT in EFL classes. For this sake, handling a further study about the main hindrances that almost all Algerian teachers may face to work with ICT's and look for numerous ways to overcome them in addition to the main drawbacks and ethical issues of ICT'S can be of major importance.

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