Saudi Intermediate Schools EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Using the Internet in Teaching Vocabulary

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الملخص العربي :

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استقصاء مدى استخدام معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) في المدارس المتوسطة السعودية للإنترنت لتسهيل تدريسهم للمفردات ، وتصوراتهم عن الفوائد والعوائق التي تحول دون هذا الاستخدام. كما بحثت فيما إذا كان المعلمون والمعلمات يختلفون في استخدامهم وتصوراتهم. المشاركون في البحث ٨٣ معلماً (ذكور = ٣٤ ، إناث = ٤٩) تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من مجتمع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المرحلة المتوسطة في المدينة المنورة. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان مصمم ذاتيًا عبر الإنترنت. أثارت الأداة المستجيبين الذين أخبروا عن استخدامات الإنترنت (٩ عبارات) ، وتصورات عن الفوائد (٩ عبارات) والعوائق (٩ عبارات) ، باستخدام مقاييس ليكرت المكونة من ٥ نقاط. كما تم جمع البيانات الديموغرافية. كشفت النتائج أن المدرسين أفادوا عن استخدام عالٍ للإنترنت لجميع الأغراض المقترحة، مع توافق معظم الدرجات المتوسطة مع "عادةً". ومع ذلك، استخدم المدرسون الإنترنت "في بعض الأحيان" فقط لتبادل الخبرات مع المعلمين الآخرين. أدرك الغالبية فوائد الإنترنت على اهتمام الطلاب ومشاركتهم وثقتهم وتعلمهم المستقبلي. ومع ذلك، فقد لاحظوا وجود عوائق تتعلق بغياب التسهيلات وضغوط الوقت ونقص التدريب والدعم. لم يختلف المعلمون والمعلمات بشكل كبير في إجاباتهم. وخلص إلى أنه من أجل تحسين استخدام المعلمين للمصالح لتحسين تدريس المفردات ، هناك حاجة إلى توفير البنية التحتية والتدريب والدعم بشكل أفضل.

كلمات مفتاحية

اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، الإنترنت ، المعلمين ، التصورات ، تدريس المفردات

Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Saudi intermediate schools use the internet to facilitate their teaching of vocabulary, and their perceptions of the benefits and barriers to such use. It also investigated whether male and female teachers differed in their usage and perceptions. The research respondents were 83 teachers (M=34, F=49) randomly selected from the population of intermediate school EFL teachers in Al-Madinah. Data were collected via a self-designed online questionnaire. The instrument elicited respondents reported uses of the internet (9 items), perceptions of benefits (9 items) and barriers (9 items), using 5-point Likert scales. Demographic data were also collected. The results revealed that teachers reported high use of the internet for all the suggested purposes, with most mean scores corresponding to "usually". However, teachers only "sometimes" used the internet to share experiences with other teachers. The majority perceived the benefits of the internet for students' interest and engagement, confidence and independent learning. However, they perceived barriers related to absence of facilities, time pressures and lack of training and support. Male and female teachers did not differ significantly in their responses. It is concluded that, to optimize teachers' use of the interest to enhance vocabulary teaching, there is need for better provision of infrastructure, training, and support.

Key Words:

Introduction

Vocabulary has a great significance in language learning since students cannot understand the content of what they are reading without understanding the meaning of words in the context. "Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful." (Al-Baqarah, 37). Since ancient times, words have been the means of communication. In other words, vocabulary is to language as bricks are to a huge building (Abduramanova, 2020).

Vocabulary needs to be a part of students' daily courses to support their progress in the English language. To read confidently and understand what is written, students need to use not only phonics, but also context. Thus, it is conceivable for students to be able to read phonetically yet not comprehend what they have read, because they do not have the vocabulary (Ferreira, 2007). Drawing attention to the learning of vocabulary as a significant aspect of foreign language acquisition and academic achievement, McKeown et al. (2012) maintain that vocabulary knowledge is the core of language understanding. Readers need to know at least 97% of the vocabulary in a text in order to understand it, and without such knowledge, readers may have anxiety in understanding the meaning (Masrai, 2021).

Soleimani and Dehghan (2021) indicate that teaching the meanings of words is just the tip of what students need to succeed. Using the analogy of the food pyramid, definitional instruction on specific word meanings is the "fat" that is needed but should be limited. However, this type of instruction is often the only aspect that receives attention in reading programs, although a diet of "only fats" is unhealthy. For balanced language learning, students need a program that contains frequent servings of problem solving, word consciousness, attention to words through wide reading, reading aloud, and a foundation of rich oral language.

As Khan et al. (2018) emphasise students must overcome the lack of vocabulary knowledge to communicate successfully. For this reason, EFL teachers should focus on effective tools to teach vocabulary that can help students to develop their vocabulary knowledge so they can communicate effectively.

Using technology is an increasingly important aspect of modern school life and it has changed the way that teachers and students go about their daily activities. Thus, there are suggestions that it is necessary to use technology in learning and teaching as well. Al-Jarf (2007) argues that, besides new applications, the most important resource for teaching vocabulary is the internet, which is a powerful tool for improving students' achievement. Dakhi and Fitria (2019) note the ready availability of lesson plans, worksheets and extra texts that can be used in teaching English. Moreover, using the Internet can help students to increase their vocabulary easily through communication with others.

According to Joubert et al. (2020) the important role of technology in teaching can be observed in the ways in which teachers use technologies to support ideas and students' learning. For instance, using technology helps teachers to adapt lessons from online websites that may help student understanding as well as student motivation. Technology offers new ways to increase the quality of the educational process, such as instructional materials, methods and organization of work (Joubert et al., 2020). The Internet is an important part of technology, and it offers a lot more than e-mail, chat rooms, and web sites. It can be a great resource for discovering and learning. It is widely believed that the internet can help teachers to improve access to the diverse types of existing media in order to extend the materials used and it helps students to advance their knowledge, besides helping them enjoy English lessons more (Brandstorm, 2011). The effective use of educational technology in classrooms can not only help teachers in the teaching process but also give students an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of their technology use.

Statement of the Problem

According to the researchers' experience in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi schools, there is typically a reliance on traditional instruction in teaching vocabulary. Providing alternative methods for students can allow for the individual differences in learning style (Egbert et al., 2002) Teachers may not like to try new methods in teaching vocabulary for instance, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Snapchat…etc (Alakrash, 2020). However, Habbash (2015) argues that new applications that the Internet offers can help to improve vocabulary knowledge. As Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) mention, Internet access has been available to the public in Saudi Arabia since 1999 and there were about 200,000 Internet users in December 2000 then by 2005 this number had grown to 2.54 million users. Then the users of the Internet increase in 2007 to 6.4 million. Saudi students, in general, carry devices all the time for playing games, chatting with others on WhatsApp or Facebook…etc., shopping online and searching for information (Alqahtani ,2015). Therefore, it is desirable to benefit from the applications used in daily life, for academic purposes. Nevertheless, Sa'd and Göktaş (2014) pointed out that the role of the Internet in EFL classrooms still remains limited.

The researchers conducted an exploratory investigation in intermediate schools in Madinah, in May 2018, to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions on using the Internet in teaching vocabulary. It was found that, teachers had various perceptions toward using the Internet in teaching vocabulary; many of them perceived it as adding extra tasks to their responsibilities. Others seemed unwilling to use the Internet in their teaching. It is appeared that the use of technology was limited to the following: 1) searching for audio teaching materials, 2) doing administrative work, 3) using compulsory systems such as the Local Learning Management System (LMS), for example, the "NOOR program", which is only used to upload student results, and to register students in schools, 4) communication with the supervisors in the local authority.

Teachers may be unwilling to use the internet due to their negative perceptions toward using the Internet in classrooms. Furthermore, the various characteristics of teachers such as their sex, degrees, years of experience, ages and the kinds of school they work in, may have an effect on their perceptions towards using the Internet.

In the light of these preliminary insights, the researchers recognized the crucial necessity for a wider study, using descriptive methods and quantitative data. Therefore, this study was designed to explore the perceptions of the EFL teachers on using the Internet in teaching vocabulary in Madinah Intermediate schools.

The purposes of the study are to:

1. Explore the EFL teachers' perceptions of using the Internet in teaching vocabulary in terms of the most common practices actually used, benefits and barriers of using the Internet.
2. Investigate the differences between male and female EFL teachers in using the Internet in teaching vocabulary.

Research Questions

The current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers of actual use of the Internet in teaching vocabulary?
2. What are the benefits of using the internet in teaching vocabulary?
3. What are the barriers to using the internet in teaching vocabulary?
4. What are the differences between EFL male and female teachers in using the Internet in teaching vocabulary?

Research Hypothesis

The research questions are used to formulate the following null hypothesis:

There will be no statistically significant differences in the average mean score between EFL male and female teachers in their perceptions toward using the Internet in teaching vocabulary at intermediate schools in Madinah.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for its provision of an understanding of the perceptions of EFL teachers towards using the Internet in teaching vocabulary. This may help EFL educators to make relevant decisions on the use of the Internet in teaching vocabulary. In particular, it may help to make teachers more aware of the feasibility and value of using the Internet in teaching English vocabulary. In addition, it may pave the way for further research in the area of using the Internet in teaching not only vocabulary but also other aspects of the language.

Delimitations of the Study

The current study is delimited to the following:

1. Male and female EFL teachers' perceptions of using the Internet in teaching vocabulary in Madinah Intermediate schools.
2. The study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019.

Literature Review

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) define teaching vocabulary as concerned with students' knowledge of new words and comprehension about their meanings. The present study defines the teaching of vocabulary as concerned with good understanding of words, not just comprehension of their meaning, but also, comprehension of their origins, pronunciation, spelling and usage.

Learning vocabulary is an important part of language learning that relies on the interaction between words, showing students the types of words that appear in a text and helping them to think through word relationships (Dalton and Grisham, 2011). Most students who learn a foreign language face difficulties, and one of the main difficulties they meet is remembering words, so one of the most ambitious goals for foreign language students is to know the vocabulary of the target language (Ayub et al., 2014). In teaching, vocabulary plays a central role

in contextualization and many researchers believe that learning vocabulary items in context leads to a better retention of vocabulary than learning them in isolation but learning vocabulary in context involves learners' ability to infer or guess the meaning of words (Dalton and Grisham, 2011).

Teachers should find suitable technique, to implement with students, and a good teacher should be equipped with a wide repertoire of varied techniques (Alqahtani, 2015). Teachers need to be able to make students interested and happy in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. They should be aware that English vocabulary is something new and different from students' native language, and recognize that teaching English to young students is different from teaching adults. Moreover, teachers should know the different characteristics of students, and accordingly prepare effective techniques and suitable material in order to advance the goal of language teaching (Alqahtani , 2015).

There are several possible techniques for the teaching of' vocabulary. However, there are a few things that have to be remembered by English teachers, when conveying new vocabulary to their students. If English teachers want students to remember new vocabulary, then it needs to be learnt, practiced, and revised, to prevent students from forgetting (Alqahtani, 2015).

Vocabulary remains one of the most difficult skills to teach, but there are various strategies for teaching vocabulary, including teaching word origins and structural analysis, such as using semantic mapping, showing students how to attack analogies, reading aloud, showing them how to use the dictionary and computer programs (Mukoroli, 2011). Effective vocabulary instruction does not rely on definitions alone; vocabulary should be used in conversation, rather than learned only in the formal dictionary format. Although promoting conversations in classrooms can increase students' usage of language, teachers need to engage students in purposeful strategic conversations that focus on the development of vocabulary (Wasik and Lannone-Campbell, 2012).

One of the most accepted trends in the field of teaching vocabulary in foreign language teaching is Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (CALT). Its emergence helps many English teachers to shift their focus from teacher-centered or book-centered instruction to student-centered instruction by using the Internet in language teaching (Khiyabani et al., 2014).

The Internet has many good resources that help teachers, like worksheets, lesson plans, and teaching games (Jung and Lee, 2013). According to Dalton and Grisham (2011) creating a short video explaining the meaning of new words using multimedia is an effective way to help students to show off their vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, vocabulary learning strategies are important, not just to teach students but to help them to learn vocabulary effectively. Papers and articles online help to provide advice about vocabulary learning strategies and they can suggest strategies that teachers may use as a basis for in-class activities (Mukoroli, 2011). Additionally, teachers can present a variety of strategies to students and let them choose the strategies they prefer. The Internet provides teachers with means to encourage students to improve their vocabulary pronunciation also by listening to radio programs, television programs, the news, using social media like Snap Chat, Facebook, telegram…etc. (Alakrash, 2020).

However, while teachers use the Internet for various purposes, it is rarely used as a part of vocabulary instruction, although, the Internet has enhanced the growth of English by bringing new terms such as 'google. Almekhlafi & Almeqdadi (2010).

Habbash (2015) explored the effectiveness of using mobile phones in teaching vocabulary in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia among EFL teachers of undergraduate students at the university of Tabuk, using a questionnaire. The findings showed that most of the teachers perceived the advantages and conveniences offered by the latest mobile phones, but perceived tapping mobile resources in the classroom as risky.

Teachers' perceptions and acceptance of the use of technology have been studied, with the results suggesting that teachers believe technology is an important part of the procedure of teaching the students. Shin and Son (2007) explored EFL teachers' perceptions and perspectives on internet-assisted language teaching in Korean secondary schools. One hundred and one teachers responded to a questionnaire. The findings of the study suggest that there are three key factors affecting the use of the Internet in the classroom: teachers' personal interest in Internet use, teachers' abilities to integrate it into activities, and technical support in schools.

Kilicakaya and Krajka (2010) investigated what computer resources were predominantly used in vocabulary teaching and learning by 60 male and 20 female language teachers in university- affiliated language school in Ankara during the fall semester of the academic year 2008-2009, using a survey and interview. They found teachers were not aware of the opportunities that technology provided to them.

Jin and Deifell (2013) investigated the use of online dictionaries in language learning. The study sample were 250 language learners at 4-year college-level in the United States. The data were collected from a total of 265 respondents, representing learners of 18 languages, and were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results suggested that online dictionaries were most often consulted to learn vocabulary when students were creating and reading digital written texts.

According to Rowand (2000), a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics in US found that 39% of teachers used computers and the Internet to produce instructional resources and materials, 34% for administrative work, and fewer than 10% to access good practices (Almekhlafi, and Almeqdadi, 2010).

Studies of internet use in language teaching show a variety of benefits for example, previous studies on vocabulary learning with the use of the computer have confirmed the effectiveness of the electronic glossary in vocabulary learning among learners in general (Cho, 2017; Meara and Fitzpatrick, 2000; Rezaei and Davoudi, 2016).

Mustafa (2012) investigated whether the method of using computer as a tool of teaching vocabulary in TESL in secondary school can increase students' achievement. A pre-test and post-test design was used for both experimental and control group. Findings reveal that the experimental group had superior scores in vocabulary using the computer. Similarly, Al-Jarf (2007) compared the pre and posttest mean scores of 53 students in King Saud university. She found significant differences between the two groups, indicating that online instruction had a positive effect on vocabulary development. Furthermore, Koivuniemi's (2012) experimental study investigated how high school students used the Internet to encourage their English vocabulary skills in Jyväskylä. The sample was 28 first year upper secondary pupils and a questionnaire was used to measure the effect of the experiment. The result of her study showed that students who accessed more English-language pages achieved better results on a vocabulary task. There was a direct correlation between internet use and vocabulary knowledge.

Khiyabani et al. (2014) observed the impact of using multimedia on teaching vocabulary, to see if it could improve the learning of vocabulary in high school classes in Kashmir, during the academic year of 2012/2013. The study sample was divided into two classes according to their proficiency and each group had 28 participants. A pre-test and two delayed post-tests were used and the experimental group compared with a control group. The result of the study revealed that using multimedia was more effective in acquisition and learning of unknown vocabulary than traditional methods.

Rajayi et al. (2018) studied the association between teaching vocabulary via the "Kik' application and vocabulary learning. Sixty-one intermediate EFL learners were divided into two groups, an experimental and control group. There were significant differences in scores on a vocabulary test, with the scores of the experimental group higher than those of the control group. The results showed that using "Kik" for teaching vocabulary can have a significant effect on EFL learners' vocabulary achievements.

Eren (2015) examined the use of Web 2.0 tools to improve students' vocabulary knowledge at the School of Foreign Languages, Gaziantep University. There were 18 students in the experimental group. The pre-test, post-test experiment was supported with semi-structured interviews and field notes. The findings suggested that most students had positive attitudes towards the educational use of Web 2.0 tools.

In language learning, using the internet can provide a variety of learning conditions. It can help to enable cooperative learning and bring new chances to foreign language learners.

Al Zumor et al. (2013) explored students' views regarding the advantages of using the internet in EFL classrooms at King Khalid University. The results indicate the advantages for students' reading opportunities and enriching vocabulary.

The Internet also enables students to access useful language resources and communicate directly with native English speakers so they can learn listening, speaking, reading and writing English through real world situations (Yang et al. 2016). The students can gain access to the web resources at times and places of their own choice, without set deadlines by teachers (Al-Jarf, 2005). Riasati, et al. (2012) documented the use and benefits of the Internet to increase students' motivation. Bringing it into the classroom creates enjoyment and fun, which are key benefits in a language classroom. Gitsaki and Taylor (2001) state that using the Internet lets students practice English and computer skills at the same time, encourages them to explore rich input of English used in real life situations, allows students to direct their learning to areas that they are interested in, and assists students to communicate with native speakers through various applications.

In contrast to the above, however, Monica-Ariana, and Anamaria-Mirabela (2014) found inconclusive results when they investigated the impact of social media on vocabulary learning focusing on Facebook, in the University of Oradea. The study sample consisted of 127 intermediate and upper intermediate, first and second year ELT students in Economics at the Faculty of Economic Sciences in the academic year 2013-2014. A pre-test, post-test, design was used to measure the effect of the experiment. The results of the study did not support the assumption that the experimental group would outperform the control group, as the differences between the two groups were not very significant.

Masita (2020) explored vocabulary teaching based on a blended learning. The sample were 30 students and data were collected by interview and observation. The results indicate that: 1) using blended learning in teaching vocabulary can produce interactive teaching and learning, 2) the students found difficulties with the learning application, and using devices in accessing the learning application, 3) the internet connection was unreliable, and teachers should take care in preparation of alternative tasks, 4) regarding the selection of learning applications, it should matches students' needs, be fun, easy to understand, and develop teaching methods.

Al Zumor et al. (2013) explored the limitations of using the internet in EFL classrooms. It were technical problems, need for proper training for instructors and students, and a need to increase the number of laboratories.

Teachers use the internet in their teaching may be hindered by a variety of barriers, as reported in previous studies. For example, lack of access to websites and resources that require an Internet connection is a main barrier for schools and individuals who do not have access to such a connection (Riasati et al., 2012). Among the challenges reported by Lee and Exgord (2008) are low motivation, weak infrastructure, and teachers' lack of skills in using technology to enable students' improvement and encourage different tasks in EFL classrooms (Lee and Oxford, 2008). There are also possible drawbacks to using the Internet in teaching and learning language, which may include students cheating, and fake information (Brandstorm, 2011). Lai and Kritsonis (2006), Shyamlee and Phil (2012) and Wang and Chen (2020) indicate that complex software may dissipate students 'attention and overuse of computer technology may lead students to lose the interaction inside classroom, so students may become viewers rather than participants. Lack of teacher training and lack of practice are factors that prevent the successful use of the Internet as a learning tool (Riasati et al., 2012). Abdulwahed et al. (2010) report that, teachers' perceptions of the use of technology in teaching languages is influenced by lack of time for preparation which seems to be the most important barrier.

Regarding gender differences in technology integration, some studies found differences between male and female teachers in technology use, while other studies did not. Hong and Koh (2002) found female teachers were more worried than male teachers about hardware. However, the general computer anxiety of male teachers was not significantly different from that of female teachers. The hardware area was the only one where significant difference was detected between male and female teachers.

Previous studies support the idea of using the Internet in teaching EFL in general, and in teaching vocabulary in particular. All the reviewed studies focused on using technology in EFL teaching, and students were conducted with learners of a variety of levels. Although they used various instruments to collect data, and different experimental designs, all the studies confirmed the significance of technology, and especially the Internet, in teaching and learning language. There is evidence from studies that using the Internet in teaching is helpful, interesting, and encourages interaction. The related studies showed several methods that can be used in the area of EFL teaching. Some discussed the use of the internet in EFL classes (Ruzgar,2005; Shin and Son,2007; Abdulwahed et al., 2010; Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi, 2010; Brändström,2011; Koivuniemi, 2012; Johnson,2014; Alakrash, 2020). Some focused on the use of social media, (Alakrash, 2020; Habbash , 2015; and Monica-Ariana, and Anamaria-Mirabela, 2014). A few looked at the use of applications, such as Alakrash (2020) and Rajayi et al. (2018). In view of the promising evidence regarding the effect of the Internet on students' performance , it is of interest to examine the perceptions of Saudi EFL teachers of actual use of the Internet in teaching vocabulary.

Method:

A descriptive research design was adopted to give thorough consideration of the perceptions of male and female EFL teachers. The study population were teachers in Al Madinah region teaching English as a foreign language in intermediate schools. The researchers first obtained a list of all members of this population and allocated each teacher a specific number. Then, number generator software was used as fair method of selecting a random sample; it reduces bias as everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected.

The sample of the study was 83 EFL teachers who were teaching at intermediate schools at Al-Madinah in the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. The sample included 34 male teachers and 49 female teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1 Sample distribution according to demographic variables

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	49	59.0%
	Male	34	41.0%
Teaching experience	5-10 years	52	62.7%
	11-15 years	13	15.7%
	16-20 years	9	10.8%
	20+ years	9	10.8%
Age	25-34	57	68.7%
	35-44	20	24.1%
	45-55	3	3.6%
	55+	3	3.6%
Teachers' qualification	Diploma	4	4.8%
	Batchelor	49	59.0%
	Master	3	25.3%
	Other	9	10.8%

Instrument

A questionnaire was designed by the researchers. Initially based on the review of teachers' perceptions in the exploratory study, the researchers drafted a questionnaire about using the Internet in teaching vocabulary and learning. It contains three important dimensions to analyse teachers' perceptions (Actual use of technology, Benefits of using the internet in teaching vocabulary, and Barriers to using the internet in teaching vocabulary). As a guide, the researchers reviewed items in previous studies that dealt with teachers' perceptions about using the internet in teaching vocabulary. Then, based on the nature of the study, participants and context, the most relevant items were selected.

The Perceptions Questionnaire was divided into two main sections: (a) Demographic Information, with 4 items: teachers' qualification, years of experience, age, and gender. (b) EFL Teachers' Perceptions, with 27 items split into 3 dimensions. The first dimension

contained nine items about actual use of the internet, the second had nine items about benefits of using the internet in teaching vocabulary, while the third had nine items about barriers to using the internet in teaching vocabulary. Teachers were asked to express their level of agreement with each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale, scored Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) for perceptions. For actual use, the scale was Always (5), Usually (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), and Never (1). The questionnaire was distributed online by using google form, then a link was sent to sample members via Whatsapp, to enable them to answer the questionnaire.

Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity is the degree to which a variable measures what it is intended to measure (Kapur et al.,2011). The content validity was assessed by consulting a team of English language professors. Most of them suggested adding teachers' practices in class to compare between their actual use and their perceptions according to real attitude. Accordingly, the suggestions were taken into consideration.

Reliability

Reliability is one of the most important elements of test quality. It is the degree to which the measurements of a test remain consistent over repeated tests of the same subject under identical conditions (Kapur et al.,2011). The answers were analysed statistically using SPSS version 20 and the Cronbach's Alpha criterion to test the reliability, as indicated in Table 2:

Table 2 The Cronbach's alpha of the research instrument

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha
Actual use	0.802
Benefits	0.916
Barriers to using the Internet	0.827
Total	0.898

Table 2 indicates the questionnaire as a whole had an alpha coefficient of 0.898, which shows the instrument is highly reliable.

Data analysis

The collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) were used in analysing the data.

Results

Question 1: "What are the perceptions of EFL teachers of actual use of the Internet in teaching vocabulary?"

Teachers' responses on actual use of the internet are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Results regarding the actual use of internet in teaching vocabulary

No	Statement	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
1	searching for information and articles of TEFL.	33 39.8%	22 26.5%	20 24.1%	3 3.6%	5 6%	3.90	1.15	٢
2	communicating with other English teachers to exchange experiences.	18 21.7%	24 28.9%	16 19.3%	11 13.3%	14 16.9%	3.25	1.39	٩
3	gaining authentic materials from online web pages.	27 32.5%	22 26.5%	21 25.3%	4 4.8%	9 10.8%	3.65	1.28	٥
4	finding various teaching activities and resources.	26 31.3%	24 28.9%	20 24.1%	8 9.6%	5 6%	3.70	1.19	٤
5	looking for pictures to explain the meaning	25 30.1%	20 24.1%	20 24.1%	8 9.6%	10 12%	3.51	1.34	٧
6	practicing pronouncing vocabulary by using educational applications.	24 28.9%	24 28.9%	24 28.9%	9 10.8%	2 2.4%	3.71	1.08	٣

No	Statement			Frequencies and percentages			Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never			
7	creating visual representations of words enhance spelling of new vocabulary.	32 38.6%	30 36.1%	16 19.3%	3 3.6%	2 2.4%	4.05	0.97	١
8	playing online vocabulary games.	21 25.3%	22 26.5%	20 24.1%	12 14.5%	8 9.6%	3.43	1.28	8
9	show students synonyms and antonyms to emphasis meaning.	21 25.3%	26 31.3%	22 26.5%	9 10.8%	5 6%	3.59	1.16	٦
	Overall mean						3.64	0.75	-

The overall mean of all statements is (3.64) with a standard deviation of (0.75) , and this means that the EFL teachers used the Internet in teaching vocabulary "Usually". When the items were arranged in rank order according to the mean, the following were observed:

- Statement No. 7 (creating visual representations of words to enhance spelling of new vocabulary) ranked first, with a mean of (4.05) and standard deviation of (0.97), which means that the study sample responded " Usually " to this statement.

- Statement No. 2 (communicating with other English teachers to exchange experiences) ranked last with a mean of (3.25) and standard deviation of (0.85), which means that the study sample responded "Sometimes" to this statement.

By examining the results, it is can be seen that the most common practice in using the internet was to use visual representation to help teachers present meaning and spelling. However, all statements had high scores, showing that teachers claimed to use the internet for teaching meaning, pronunciation and spelling.

Question 2: "What are the benefits of using the internet in teaching vocabulary?"

Table 4 Result regarding the benefits of using the Internet:

No	Statement	Frequencies and percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1	increases students' interest.	42 50.6%	26 31.3%	12 14.5%	3 3.6%	-	4.29	0.85	1
2	helps students to engage effectively in the classroom.	41 49.4%	31 37.3%	7 8.4%	1 1.2%	3 3.6%	4.28	0.94	2
3	improves students' language skills; (reading, writing, listening and speaking).	42 50.6%	26 31.3%	12 14.5%	2 2.4%	1 1.2%	4.28	0.89	3
4	helps students to use and practice the language	37 44.6%	31 37.3%	11 13.3%	4 4.8%	-	4.22	0.86	4
5	encourages students to be attentive and focus.	42 50.6%	23 27.7%	13 15.7%	3 3.6%	2 2.4%	4.20	1.00	٥
6	adapts to individual differences among students.	35 42.2%	34 41%	9 10.8%	4 4.8%	1 1.2%	4.18	0.90	6
7	encourages students' independent learning.	35 42.2%	31 37.3%	13 15.7%	3 3.6%	1 1.2%	4.16	0.90	7
8	creates chance for students to be creative.	35 42.2%	30 36.1%	12 14.5%	6 7.2%	-	4.13	0.92	8
9	enhances students' motivation and self-confidence.	32 38.6%	31 37.3%	16 19.3%	3 3.6%	1 1.2%	4.08	0.91	9
	Overall mean						4.20	0.70	-

The results in Table 4 show that the overall mean of all statements is (4.20) with a standard deviation of (0.70), and this means that the study sample " Strongly Agree" on the benefits of using the Internet in teaching vocabulary.

Statement No. (1) (increases students' interest) ranked first with a mean of (4.29) and standard deviation of (0.85). More than half of the study sample responded " Strongly Agree " in this statement.

Statement No. (9) (enhances students' motivation and self-confidence) ranked **last** with a mean (4.08) and standard deviation (0.91); more than half of the study sample responded " Agree " to this statement.

It can be seen from the table that all items have high scores, which reveals that teachers favorably perceived the benefits of using the internet. They thought it influences students' motivation and enhances their interest, helping them to develop and enrich their vocabulary.

Question 3: "What are the barriers to using the internet in teaching vocabulary?"

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages, mean and standard deviation for each statement on barriers to internet use:

No	Statement	Frequencies and percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1	absence of facilities and devices.	37 44.6%	20 24.1%	14 16.9%	8 9.6%	4 4.8%	3.94	1.20	1
2	time needed for preparations in the classroom.	32 38.6%	23 27.7%	15 18.1%	7 8.4%	6 7.2%	3.82	1.24	2
3	lack of infrastructure in the schools, e.g. no Internet connections.	30 36.1%	25 30.1%	16 19.3%	6 7.2%	6 7.2%	3.81	1.21	3
4	lack of oppourtunity for teachers' training and workshops.	28 33.7%	22 26.5%	20 24.1%	8 9.6%	5 6%	3.72	1.20	4
5	lack of technical support and maintenance.	26 31.3%	24 28.9%	18 21.7%	9 10.8%	6 7.2%	3.66	1.23	٥
6	poor support from administration.	23 27.7%	23 27.7%	21 25.3%	11 13.3%	5 6%	3.58	1.20	6
7	weakness of teacher's skills in searching for suitable teaching materials.	22 26.5%	25 30.1%	20 24.1%	10 12%	6 7.2%	3.57	1.21	7
8	deficiency of schools' policy on using technology in teaching, which is optional but not obligatory.	21 25.3%	24 28.9%	22 26.5%	11 13.3%	5 6%	3.54	1.18	8
9	teachers' limited experience in using technology.	17 20.5%	24 28.9%	26 31.3%	10 12%	6 7.2%	3.43	1.16	9
	Overall mean						3.67	0.78	-

The overall mean of all statements is (3.67) with a standard deviation of (0.78), and this means that the study sample perceived some barriers to using the Internet in teaching vocabulary. Arranging the statements in order of mean scores revealed:

- Statement No. (١) (absence of facilities and devices) ranked **first** with a mean of (3.94) and standard deviation of (1.20). So, more than half of the sample responded "Agree " to this statement.

- Statement No. (٩) (teachers' limited experience in using technology) ranked **last** with a mean of (3.43) and standard deviation of (1.16). More than half of the study sample responded " Agree " to this statement.

Question 4: "What are the differences between EFL male and female teachers in using the Internet in teaching vocabulary?"

To answer this question, the researchers use, mean and standard deviation, and independent samples T test of significant difference, for each of the statements in the first dimension. The results are in Table 6.

Table 6 Mean and standard deviation, and independent samples T test of significant difference, for each statement on actual internet use:

NO	Statement	Male			Female			P-Value
		Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking	
1	searching for information and articles on TEFL .	3.88	1.09	2	3.92	1.20	2	0.89
2	communicating with other English teachers to exchange experiences.	3.44	1.31	8	3.12	1.44	9	0.31
3	gaining authentic materials from online web pages.	3.50	1.38	7	3.76	1.22	4	0.38
4	finding various teaching activities and resources.	3.76	1.07	3	3.65	1.27	5	0.68
5	looking for pictures to explain the meaning	3.41	1.33	9	3.57	1.35	7	0.60
6	practicing pronouncing vocabulary by using educational applications.	3.62	1.13	4	3.78	1.05	3	0.52
7	creating visual representations of words to enhance spelling of new vocabulary.	4.03	1.00	1	4.06	0.97	1	0.89
8	playing online vocabulary games.	3.62	1.33	6	3.31	1.25	8	0.28
9	showing students synonyms and antonyms to emphasise meaning.	3.62	1.13	5	3.57	1.19	6	0.86
	Overall mean	3.65	0.79	-	3.64	0.73	-	0.92

From table (6) it can be seen that:

- The overall mean of all statements for men was (3.65) with a standard deviation of (0.79), and this means that the male EFL teachers claimed to use the Internet in teaching vocabulary "Usually".

- For female teachers, the overall mean of all statements was (3.64) with a standard deviation of (0.73), and this means that the female EFL teachers perceived that they used the Internet in teaching vocabulary "Usually".

In addition, independent samples T tests were used to see if there were significant differences between male and female EFL teachers in their perceptions of all three axes of using the Internet in teaching vocabulary (see Table 7).

Table 7 Results of independent samples T test to significant difference between EFL male and female teachers on using the Internet in teaching vocabulary.

Axis	Category	N	Mean	Standard deviation	T-Test	Df	P-Value
Actual use	Male	34	3.65	0.79	0.10	81	0.92
	Female	49	3.64	0.73			
Benefits of using the Internet	Male	34	4.27	0.59	0.71	81	0.48
	Female	49	4.16	0.77			
Barriers to using the Internet	Male	34	3.77	0.79	0.91	81	0.37
	Female	49	3.61	0.77			

From table (7) it can be seen that there are no statistically significant differences in the average mean score between male and female EFL teachers in their perceptions toward using the Internet in teaching vocabulary at intermediate schools in Madinah.

The results are not significant at p < .05, which means the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

With reference to RQ1, teachers in this study claimed to use the Internet for teaching, or to interact for teaching vocabulary and interact educationally with colleagues, create multimedia presentations, and increase students' interest by using online materials. This result is consistent with the arguments of Rowand (2000), Almekhlafi, and Almeqdadi, (2010). Alebaikan and Troudi (2010), Masita (2020), Mustafa (2012) and Al-Jarf (2007), who suggested that, technology allows effective communication between teachers and students, which creates an attractive community for education.

Responses related to RQ2 revealed that most of the EFL teachers perceived the benefits of using the internet in teaching vocabulary. Specifically, the EFL teachers perceived technology as a resource that enhances students' self-confidence, improves their academic achievement, encourages them to be more productive, helps their personal learning styles, and helps to encourage independent learning. These findings are consistent with those of Al Zumor et al. (2013) Yang and Chen, (2016), Al-Jarf (2005), Riasati, et al. (2012) and Gitsaki and Taylor (2001) who concluded that technology enhances students' self-confidence, enables cooperative learning, enriches vocabulary, allows them to access useful language resources, aids communication, increases students' motivation, and brings enjoyment and fun into learning. It is also consistent with, Abdulwahed, et al. (2010) with regard to the advantage of technology in increasing students' independence. Wang and Chen (2012) also suggested that technology changes the class style from teacher centred to be more student-centred.

Responses related to RQ3 revealed that most of the EFL teachers, however, perceived barriers to using the internet. They perceived a lack of teacher training on how to add technology such as the internet in classes, and difficulty finding time for applying it in teaching. The findings are consistent with those of Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi (2010), who found that the major barriers to using technology included lack of time for preparation, and teachers' skills in using technology.

Prior studies have noted technical and systematic barriers to using the internet in the EFL classroom, for example Riasati et al. (2012). Lee and Oxford (2008). Brandstorm (2011), Lai and Kritsonis (2006), Shyamlee and Phil (2012) and Wang and Chen (2020). The finding of this study confirm the concerns raised by previous research, regarding the lack of access to websites and resources, poor Internet connection, weak infrastructure, and lack of teachers 'facilities. This study also agrees with the previous studies on the lack of training and support.

Regarding Question 4, no differences appeared between the perceptions of male and female EFL teachers, in contrast to Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi (2010), who found female teachers were more concerned than male about the availability and use of technology.

Interpretations of the above findings can be drawn from the findings of Warschauer (2000), who indicated that technology promotes EFL instruction through: (a) making lessons more effective (b) giving a variety of meaningful materials, and (c) giving reliable communication.

Conclusion

The study indicated that most EFL teachers perceived themselves as often using the Internet in their teaching of vocabulary. While the majority of the EFL teachers positively perceived the benefits of using the Internet, they also perceived a few barriers to technology integration. No differences were found between views of male and female EFL teachers regarding the use of the internet. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations can be made. EFL teachers need effective training on using the internet to increase their self-confidence and computer skills. It would be helpful to provide creative online services for teachers, including resources lab, data show and infrastructure of the internet. Finally, further research is needed to explore creative and innovative strategies to teach vocabulary in an interesting way.

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