

“The Significance of Using ICT to Develop EFL Learners”

(A Case Study Gezira University, Gezira State-Sudan)

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<https://doi.org/10.36571/ajsp773>

Abstract:

ICTs cover a wide range of technologies. ICTs include radio- television- telephone (mobile) computers, internet, social networks, and digital camera. Digital cameras can act as a fantastic tool for capturing students' work. The study aims to encourage English Language teachers to use technology, raise EFL students ' motivation to use ICT in EFL classes and detect the advantages of presenting ICT in the curriculum. The analysis has led to these results: ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services, communicative tools facilitate social participation structures between teachers and other educators, the integration of ICTs can help revitalize teachers and students and develop the quality of education, and the ICT environment improves the experience of the students and teachers. This study recommended that EFL teachers and learners should eliminate the beliefs, which subsidizes that the internet impedes learning process skills. EFL teachers and learners should relate to websites to acquire the English language to emphasize the study of the English language in a cultural context. EFL teachers and learners should be aware of how to deal with technology that uses the internet like computers, cell phones, etc... to have an additional base of knowledge and magnificent source of information, EFL learners and teachers should approach relevant websites to improve EFL teaching and learning process.

Keywords: ICT: Information and Communication Technology, Pedagogy, EFL, CALL, Digital Learning

1.1 Introduction

Technology plays an important role in fulfilling daily needs. Apart from its time and labour-saving functions, technology can inspire creativity and bring new opportunities to societies, connecting them to new ideas and innovations. It can also be a highly engaging and interactive tool, providing a source of real language, both written and spoken.

It is very important to talk about the implementation of technology in the educational environment. Technology in language teaching is not new; it has been around for decades. In the 1980s, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) provided language teachers and learners with authentic input with CD-ROMs to enhance their level. However, as access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become more widespread, CALL has moved beyond the use of computer programs to embrace the use of the Internet and web-based tools. The term TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning) appeared in the 1990s, in response to the growing possibilities offered by the Internet and communications technology.

The word integration is used when we talk about technology in teaching and learning or E-Learning. With technology being part of everyday lives, there is a need to rethink the idea of integrating it into the curriculum and aim to embed technology into teaching to support the learning process. That is to say, technology has become an integral part of the learning experience and a significant issue for teachers, from the beginning of preparing learning experiences through to the teaching and learning process. (Eady & Lockyer, 2013).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To encourage English Language teachers to use translation through Technology.
2. To raise EFL students ' motivation/awareness to use ICT in Translation in EFL classes.
3. To detect/discover the advantages of introducing ICT in the translation curriculum.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have had a significant impact on all features of our lives. In education, ICTs play crucial roles in facilitating teaching and learning. They have revolutionized the process of learning and language teaching. The use of technology brings a lot of advantages to the classroom. Students may have a chance to see the real world in the classrooms and they can be motivated easily. Ellis (1994:715) points out that creating challenging tasks and activities motivates language learners. Effective language teachers should be enthusiastic and creative because language learners can lose their motivation and desire easily. Movies, music, and different materials can help students 'psychological and social improvement. Therefore, the use of technology, and online/distance education may provide a good opportunity to develop and create different, enjoyable tasks in EFL classrooms. Demiray and Sever (2009:10) think that distance education has a great potential for global learning and it can offer new and active learning environment for language learners. Usun and Kömür (2009:331) claim that distance education and e-learning technologies can be used in ELT programs to motivate students.

According to Wang (2004: 643), when language learners have desirable and real communication factors, they can develop their language skills in the classroom. Using computers and every kind of technological equipment gives students a sense of freedom and encouragement. With the help of technology, students can be active, motivated, and involved in the language learning process. High quality of authentic materials and low price can be other advantages of technology and increase the popularity of distance education. Crystal (1997) assumes that educational technology takes a great role in EFL classrooms because of the current position of English as a global language. Jonassen (2000) discusses that technology in EFL classrooms encourages not only the students but the teacher in a positive way. Brown (2003) explains that Internet and distance education increase the quality of language learning and provide available education. Web learning offers well-selected activities and interactive learning.

Stepp-Granny (2000:165) reports that “technologically equipped classrooms increase student’s motivation because of the interactive nature of the activities”. İşman et. al (2004:3) imply that students always have positive and optimistic ideas for using computers in the classrooms and it allows students to create new ideas and develop their problem-solving skills while providing self-responsibility thus students feel comfortable. Kang (1999:37) explains the positive effects of computers and technology in EFL classrooms by allowing the students to observe real-life situations and meaningful communication. Zengin (2007) explains the importance of technological classrooms because students are more motivated and interested in multimedia and technological lessons. Mayora (2006) describes the advantages of multimedia technology in EFL programs and adds that using multimedia increases students’ interest in the classroom. Teachers can use online magazines, and newspapers as authentic materials. Harmer (2007) points out those students can become active and dynamic learners using online education and mentions the importance of computer-based technological classrooms because they provide learners with unreachable and fascinating activities that attract and motivate them.

Ellinger et.al (2001) conducted a study on the use of the Internet in language classes. They believe that the internet, as an important tool, encourages students, increases autonomous learning potential, and brings enthusiasm into the classroom. Arcairo (1993:109) states that using authentic video in EFL classrooms can be interesting and attractive for communicative dialogues.

Chapple and Curtis (2000:419) point out that using authentic films in the classrooms motivates the learners because of many contextual clues of films ‘and they make learners use both of their hemispheres which are very important for language learning. Using technology in EFL classrooms improves students’ four skills. Kung (2003:37) explains his research results about web and language learning. According to his research web, use enriches and supports good motivation in the development of speaking skills. Case and Truscott (1999:15) say that computers and the internet are good sources for developing reading skills. Computer-based reading texts are authentic, more effective, and motivating for every kind of language learner. Anderson and Speck (2001) mention that using technology in the classroom not only motivates the learners but engages them in speaking, reading, listening, and writing easily. Leu and Leu (1997) think that electronic books and stories used in EFL classrooms enrich students’ interests and lead them to be good readers. Deeler and Grey (2000:75) indicate, “The real motivating factor in using the internet for speaking skill can be videoconferencing and cross-curricular projects”.

Information and Communication Technology/Technologies (ICTs) refers to all the technologies that permit access, gathering, manipulation, and present or communication information, these technologies could include hardwires such as computers and other devices and software applications and connectivity such as access to internet, local networking infrastructure, video conferencing. Toomey, (2001).

According to Tinio, (2012), ICTs are a “diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information.” These technologies include computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephony. In the same vein, Cohen, et al (1996). Define ICTs as a means of accessing, storing, sharing, processing, editing, choosing, presenting, and communicating data through a selection of media that involves findings, sharing, and restricting data in its various forms. In this context, Nicholls, (2004:113) stated that “information communication technologies are electronic and computerized devices and associated human interactive materials in which we can apply in a range of teaching and learning processes”.

2.3 ICT Enhancing Teaching and Learning Process

The field of education has been affected by ICTs, which have undoubtedly affected teaching, learning, and research (Yusuf, 2005:316). ICTs have the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, motivate and engage students, help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, strengthen teaching, and help schools change (Davis and Tearle, 1999; Lemke and Coughlin, 1998; cited by Yusuf, *ibid*). In a rapidly changing world, basic education is essential for an individual to access and apply information. Such ability must include ICTs in the global village.

Conventional teaching has emphasized content. For many years, courses have been written around textbooks. Teachers have taught through lectures and presentations interspersed with tutorials and learning activities designed to consolidate and rehearse the content. Contemporary settings are now favouring curricula that promote competency and performance. Curricula are starting to emphasize capabilities and are becoming more concerned with how the information will be used than with what the information is. Contemporary ICTs can provide strong support for all these requirements and there are now many outstanding examples of excellent settings for competency and performance-based curricula that make sound use of the affordances of these technologies (Oliver, 2000:53).

The integration of information and communication technologies can help revitalize teachers and students. This can help to improve and develop the quality of education by providing curricular support in difficult subject areas. To achieve these objectives, teachers need to be involved in collaborative projects and the development of intervention change strategies, which would include teaching partnerships with ICT as a tool. According to Zhao and Czik (2001:30), three conditions are necessary for teachers to introduce ICT into their classrooms: teachers should believe in the effectiveness of technology, teachers should believe that the use of technology will not cause any disturbances, and finally teachers should believe that they have control over technology.

However, research studies show that most teachers do not make use of the potential of ICT to contribute to the quality of learning environments, although they value this potential quite significantly (Smeets, 2005: 343). Harris (2002:449) conducted case studies in three primary and three secondary schools, which focused on innovative pedagogical practices involving ICT. Harris (*ibid*) concludes that the benefits of ICT will be gained "...when confident teachers are willing to explore new opportunities for changing their classroom practices by using ICT". As a consequence, the use of ICT will not only enhance learning environments but also prepare the next generation for future lives and careers (Wheeler, 2001). The changed pool of teachers will come with changed responsibilities and skill sets for future teaching involving high levels of ICT and the need for more facilitative than didactic teaching roles (Littlejohn et al., 2002:313). According to Cabero (2001:447),

"The flexibilization time-space accounted for by the integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes contributes to increase the interaction and reception of information. Such possibilities suggest changes in the communication models and the teaching and learning methods used by teachers, giving way to new scenarios which favour both individual and collaborative learning".

The use of ICT in educational settings, by itself acts as a catalyst for change in this domain. ICTs by their very nature are tools that encourage and support independent learning. Students using ICTs for learning purposes become immersed in the process of learning and as more and more students use computers as information sources and cognitive tools (Reeves & Jonassen, 1996:693), the influence of technology on supporting how students learn will continue to increase. In the past, the conventional process of teaching has revolved around teachers planning and leading students through a series of instructional sequences to achieve a desired learning outcome. Typically, these forms of teaching have revolved around the planned transmission of a body of knowledge followed by some forms of interaction with the content as a means to consolidate the knowledge acquisition. Contemporary learning theory is based on the notion that learning is an active process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring knowledge and that instruction is the process by which this knowledge construction is supported rather than a process of knowledge transmission (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996:170).

In this domain, learning is viewed as the construction of meaning rather than as the memorization of facts (Lebow, 1993:4; Jonassen & Reeves, *ibid*). Learning approaches using contemporary ICTs provide many opportunities for constructivist learning through their provision and support for resource-based, student-centered settings and by enabling learning to be related to context and to practice (Berge and Barron, 1998:72). As mentioned previously, any use of ICT in learning settings can act to support various aspects of knowledge construction and as more and more students employ ICTs in their learning processes, the more pronounced the impact of this will become. Teachers generate meaningful and engaging learning experiences for their students, strategically using ICT to enhance learning. Students enjoy learning, and the

independent inquiry that innovative and appropriate use of ICT can foster. They begin to acquire the important 21st-century skills that they will need in their future lives.

2.4 The Using of ICT in Classrooms

In the developing world, more often than not, ICTs such as computers are installed in schools without sufficient thought given to how they will be used. In “Ten Lessons for ICT and Education in the Developing World”. Robert Hawkins (2002:38), from World Links 52 discusses his programme’s experience in connecting schools to the internet, training teachers, dealing with curriculum and education reform issues in developing countries. Citing a practical lesson that: “to take full advantage of new technologies, we need to fundamentally rethink our approaches to learning and education— and our ideas of how new technologies can support them.” Yet it is clear that many different types of technology can be used to support and enhance learning. The technologies available in classrooms today range from simple tool-based applications (such as word processors), to online repositories of scientific data and include other forms such as electronic versions of primary historical documents, handheld computers, closed-circuit television channels, and two-way distance learning classrooms. Prensky (2005) also strongly asserts that cell phones can be used to learn.

Lei and Zhao (2007:49) describe how each technology is likely to play a different role in students’ learning. Yet, rather than trying to describe the impact of all technologies as if they were the same, it is clear that we need to think about what kind of technologies are being used in the classroom and for what purposes. Two general distinctions are found in the literature. First, students can learn from computers where technology is used essentially as tutors to increase students’ basic skills and knowledge. Secondly, they can learn with computers where technology is used as tools applied to a variety of goals in the learning process and being a resource to help develop higher order thinking, creativity, and research skills (Reeves, 1998; Ringstaff and Kelley, 2002). According to UNESCO (2004), the three main approaches to ICT taken by teachers are:

- (1) An Integrated approach: planning the use of ICT within the subject to enhance particular concepts and skills and improve students’ attainment.
- (2) An Enhancement approach: planning the use of an ICT resource that will enhance the existing topic through some aspect of the lessons and tasks.
- (3) A Complementary approach: using an ICT resource to empower the pupils’ learning.

All three approaches can enhance attainment, but the effects may be different. In the integrated approach, students’ learning is enhanced because they are confronted with challenges to their existing knowledge and given deeper insights into the subject being studied. The enhancement approach presents knowledge in new ways, encouraging learners to formulate their explanations. The complementary approach frees the learner to focus on more challenging and subject-focused tasks (Kemmis et al., 1977 in UNESCO, 2004). These different types of use require the teacher to have extensive knowledge of ICT and to be able either to fit its use into their existing pedagogy or to extend their pedagogical knowledge so they can accommodate ICT effectively in their teaching.

Finally, ICT initiatives need to be driven by the provision of appropriate technological solutions for the challenges faced by communities rather than by an interest purely in these physical technologies themselves, particularly in countries where resources are limited. Those implementing technological solutions need to ensure that they are sustainable, context-specific, and adapted to local needs and conditions. Actual technologies by themselves have little development impact. It is only when potential users have a sound understanding of how they can use new ICTs effectively that they have real influence. Otherwise, ICT becomes just a drain on the organization or community (Unwin, et al., 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population of the Study

The populations of this study were English language teachers at the University of Gezira, Sudan. The researcher selected them because they are the field are their view will of great value to the study.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was Sudanese teachers of English from Gezira University. The total number was 20. Their average years of experience is about 20 years. They were males and females staffs.

3.3 Instruments of Data Collection

The researchers used tool to collect the data for this study. These tools were a questionnaire for teachers. The tool are designed to give evaluation about the importance of effectiveness using ICT by university teachers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

Statement (1): ICT provides a high quality audio-visual material for interpreting practices.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	12	24.0
Agree	35	70.0
Neutral	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

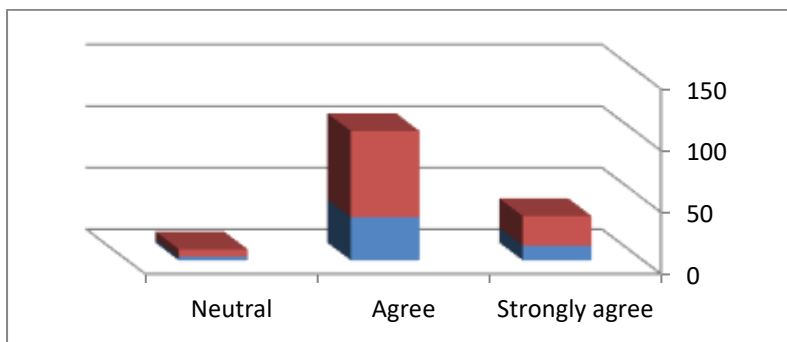


Figure (4.1)

Table and diagram (4.1) teachers who agree are (94%), neutral (6%) according to the result (94%) of the respondent agree that ICT provides a high quality audio-visual material for interpreting practices.

Statement (1): Pedagogy focused on the effective learning of subjects with the support of the various components of ICT.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	3	6.0
Agree	18	36.0
Neutral	23	46.0
Disagree	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

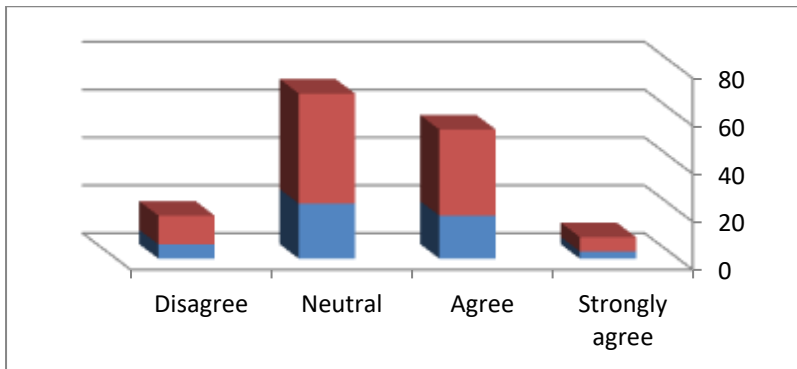


Figure (4.2)

According to the statistical analysis of statement (4.2) most respondent (46%) neutral that, pedagogy focused on the effective learning of subjects with the support of the various components of ICT. Only (42%) of the sample agree and (12%) disagree. Thus this statement is accepted.

Statement (2): ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	23	46.0
Agree	10	20.0
Neutral	17	34.0
Total	50	100.0

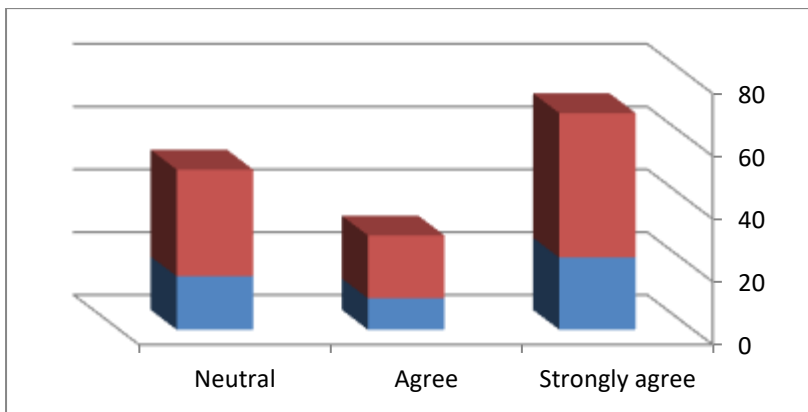


Figure (4.3)

Table and diagram (4.3) show that, ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services. Most respondents (66%) agree (34%) neutral that, ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

5. CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has become a necessity in the language educational setting, mainly in EFL, for the sole purpose of continuously facilitating and enhancing the teaching and learning process. When debating about learning English as a foreign language, it can be said that the ultimate aim of many learners is to be competent speakers of the target language. In other words, the EFL educational learning structure is built on too many factors that play a great role in creating a successful FL student.

5.2 Findings

ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services

1. Communicative tools facilitate social participation structures between teachers and other educators.
2. The integration of ICTs can help revitalize teachers and students and develop the quality of education.
3. ICT environment improves the experience of the students and teachers.
4. ICT provides a high quality audio-visual material for interpreting practices.

5.3 Recommendations

EFL teachers and learners should eliminate the beliefs, which subsidizes that the internet impedes learning process skills.

1. EFL teachers and learners should relate them self with websites to acquire English language to emphasizes the study of English language in a cultural context.
2. EFL teachers and learners should be aware how to deal with technology that uses internet like computers, cell phone etc... to have additional base of knowledge and magnificent source of information reading.
3. EFL learners and teachers should approach relevant websites to improve EFL teaching and learning process.
4. EFL learners and teachers should approach relevant websites to improve EFL teaching and learning process.

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"أهمية استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في تطوير متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية"

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الملخص:

تغطي تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات مجموعة واسعة من التقنيات. تشمل تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات الراديو والتلفزيون والهاتف (المحمول) وأجهزة الكمبيوتر والإنترنت والشبكات الاجتماعية والكاميرات الرقمية. يمكن أن تعمل الكاميرات الرقمية كأداة رائعة لالتقاط أعمال الطلاب. تهدف الدراسة إلى تشجيع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية على استخدام التكنولوجيا، وزيادة دافع طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لاستخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في الفصول الدراسية، واكتشاف مزايا تقديم تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في المنهج الدراسي. وقد أدت التحليلات إلى هذه النتائج: تعزز تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات البعد الدولي للخدمات التعليمية، وتساعد أدوات التواصل في تسهيل الهياكل الاجتماعية بين المعلمين والمعلمين الآخرين، ويمكن أن تساعد دمج تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في تنشيط المعلمين والطلاب وتطوير جودة التعليم، كما أن بيئة تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات تحسن تجربة الطلاب والمعلمين. أوصت هذه الدراسة بأن يقوم معلمو ومتعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بإزالة المعتقدات التي تدعم أن الإنترنت تعيق مهارات عملية التعلم. يجب على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الارتباط بالمواقع الإلكترونية لاكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية لتأكيد دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية في سياق ثقافي. يجب على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أن يكونوا على دراية بكيفية التعامل مع التكنولوجيا التي تستخدم الإنترنت مثل أجهزة الكمبيوتر والهواتف المحمولة، وما إلى ذلك، للحصول على قاعدة إضافية من المعرفة ومصدر رائع للمعلومات، ويجب على معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الاقتراب من المواقع ذات الصلة لتحسين عملية تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.