

ICT AND THE INTERNET APPLICATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING A LOOK AT DIP12A INTAKE - HO CHI MINH CITY OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays nobody can deny the application of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and the internet to serve human beings in a lot of fields. Therefore the application of ICT and the internet has been increasing in such leaps and bounds rate that the vast of language teachers must consider how to make use of ICT and the internet in their language teaching. This study is with an aim to find out the viewpoints of the teachers teaching English of DIP12A Intake at Ho Chi Minh City Open University relating to the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching and its advantages and disadvantages. Questionnaires and interviews were designed and administered to collect the data. SPSS and excel software was used to analyze the collected data. Based on the findings, some recommendations will be raised so as to draw certain lessons to maximize the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching.

Keywords: computer, English language teaching, English language learning, ICT application, the internet application.

Introduction

The perception of applying ICT and the internet in English language teaching together with the advantages and disadvantages in the application is reviewed as follows:

“Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) is making a serious demand on education, more specifically in teacher education” (Olede & Williams, 2012). Therefore living in the 21st century with a lot of new technologies coming into beings, teachers of English need to make use of these new technologies to apply in their English language teaching. Computer is the one among the achievements of the new technologies and related to computer,

Ambedkar (2013) said “Computer is the finest and most important gift of the science and technology to the mankind”. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has developed gradually over the last 30 years (Warschauer, 1996), and computers have had a great marvelous impact in English language teaching. Levente (2007) also states that computers, nowadays are continuously becoming more and more widespread as technology gets more available for the masses of people everywhere and English language has gained such an importance and popularity in the massive globalization; so merging these two fields - computers and English language - is inevitable in a world

where many things are being automatized and implemented into computer program. Teachers teaching English in general and teachers teaching English in Ho Chi Minh City in particular have been trying to enhance their teaching skills to bring more benefits to their students and ICT and the internet application is one way for the enhancement of their English teaching skills. In this paper, a brief research on ICT and the internet application in English language teaching will be presented based on the interaction with the teachers attending DIP12A Intake in Ho Chi Minh City Open University only. The aim of this study is to find out their perceptions, advantages and disadvantages on the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching through their real English teaching activities. Then some recommendations will be considered and suggested to contribute to the activities of English language teaching.

Concerning Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching, Sanchez and Aleman (2011) conducted a study of teacher's opinion survey on the use of ICT tools to support attendance-based teaching in Spain. The objective of this study is to find out the teachers' opinions about the use of ICT tools to support attendance-based teaching. According to the Council of Europe, one of the strategies to ensure learning with such a long life time is by the application of Information and Communications Technologies (Unknown, 2000) due to its overcoming of cost, time or space obstacles. The University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) has been promoting among teachers and students the use of the available ICT tools in its virtual campus with an aim at making teaching-learning process more accessible to everybody and ensuring the process of lifelong learning. To proceed the study, questionnaires were designed to collect data from all in-service teacher from the academic years

2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 with access to ULPGC Virtual Campus. The findings show the in-service teachers and students keep open mind on integrating ICT tools into their daily practice. So the study has contributed marvelously to the educational institution through its accurate information about ICT use. Besides the study has also encouraged the university in its work on the incorporating of ICT in any areas where it is possible so as to increase access to learning, providing fair educational opportunities for all students to ensure their lifelong learning. The gap of this study is just applied for attendance-based teaching only.

Computers as learning tools provided by schools and institutes for students to obtain knowledge and experience then by using computers, students can easily be aware of what teachers have taught in class. Rahimi and Yadollahi (2010) conducted a study so as to determine Iranian EFL teachers' level of computer anxiety and its relationship with ICT integration into English classes. The participants comprised of 139 males and 115 females selected randomly. The findings of this study revealed that a positive relationship between computer anxiety and age. It meant that older teachers had higher levels of technophobia than younger teachers. However, no relations could be recognized in computer anxiety, gender, and experience of teaching. Moreover, through this study, an inverse correlation between computer anxiety and ICT integration into English classes was found as well, means that the teachers who had lower levels of technophobia had higher level of ICT integration in their English classes. One more thing was that ICT integration was discovered to be negatively correlated with age and years of teaching experience, therefore we could be aware that younger teachers had higher level of ICT integration and experienced teachers had lower level of ICT integration. This study could be

valuable in Iran only and we could not be sure it would happen more or less the same in other countries.

Related to computers, Khamkhien (2012) stated that at this time being, computer assisted language learning has been widely accepted to be a tool which could be used to facilitate the language learning process, especially English language teaching. It means that teachers can maximize the facilitation of computer in teaching English skills to bring more benefits to learners. To be in line with this idea, Lee (2008) conducted the research to investigate how the characteristics of two Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) programs assisting Taiwanese students to learn English pronunciation and integrating computer software into the pronunciation teaching by teachers. This research looked for the ways to develop and improve English pronunciation learning by applying computer technology, in addition to teacher-directed learning. The participant in this study comprised of 153 college students coming from four classes and the setting was at an Institute of Technology in Taiwan. Two separate computer software programs were used by all students in a computer laboratory for several weeks. Data collection was from the students' feedback, questionnaires, and portfolios. The key finding of this study was when CALL was used alongside with the traditional teaching, teacher directed language teaching was really an effective tool to improve students' English pronunciation and teachers could heighten students' low motivation and low English pronunciation ability. The value of this study was for Taiwanese students and it is necessary to conduct more researches for the consideration to apply in other countries.

Problem statement

It is obvious that the teachers who have been attending at DIP12A Intake in

Ho Chi Minh City Open University have a lot of passionate to strive for their goal of achievement of TESOL diploma and each of them owns a computer/laptop. So far there has been no research or study to find out the situation of ICT and the internet application in English language teaching from these teachers. Therefore this study is conducted to find out:

Their perception of applying ICT and the internet in English language teaching

The advantages and disadvantages in this application.

Rational of the study

This research will examine how teachers use ICT and the internet as the tools in a certain ways so as to obtain more effective in English language teaching as well as to enhance their teaching skills in the age of modern world with a lot of technology achievements. The advantages and disadvantages when applying ICT and the internet in English language teaching will be also found out for teachers as well.

Research method

To carry out this study both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. In this case, the use of research may be directed by emphasizing on either quantitative or qualitative approaches in the mixed method research (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and qualitative data were collected by interviews.

Participants

The participants taking part in these research questions were the teachers who had been attending in DIP12A Intake of Ho Chi Minh City Opening University locating at 97, Vo Van Tan Street, Ward 6, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City. The number of attendees was 42 which comprised of 30 females and 12 males. The convenience sampling method was used to choose

participants because we were classmates in DIP12A Intake and we could easily contact each other. Each participant possessed a computer/laptop therefore it was relevant to ask them to joy in this research. Moreover with their current English teaching at different organizations such as in state schools, private English centers, colleges and universities, data and information were to be collected will be more fruitful.

Instruments

According to Hannan (2007), one of the obvious of questionnaires is that they are able to supply data amenable to quantification, either through the content to be aimed at the interviewees or through the simple counting of boxes for their responses. Moreover, the survey questionnaire used in the study is to collect an amount of information from the sample and can be easily and speedily analyzed when the data have been collected (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003 cited in Pham Vu Phi Ho, 2012). In this study the questionnaire comprises of 23 questions. The first three questions focus on gender, age and computer/laptop possession. Question 4 refers to the main reason to search resources for English teaching. Question 5 relates to the frequency of access in the internet for English teaching. From question 6 to question 23, the answers of these questions are designed based on Likert Type Scale Response with a scale from 1 (strongly disagreed) to 6 (strongly agreed). Question 6 to question 10 are with the purpose to ask the perception of the interviewees concerning the internet as the resource, the motivation of English teaching. Question 11 to question 23 are to ask the application of ICT and the internet so as to find out the perception of the interviewees related to English skills of communication, listening, speaking and learning autonomy, teaching enhancement,

classroom management as well as other advantages and disadvantages of computer application in English language teaching.

In order to gain more relevant data through qualitative method, a structured-interview question sheet was designed and randomly delivered to 25 teachers learning at DIP12A Intake in Ho Chi Minh City Open University. 20 structured-interview question sheets were gained back. Three questions were the perception of the application of ICT and the internet in teaching English, some advantages and disadvantages of applying ICT and the internet in teaching English. From these responses, we would be able to have a better recognition of the interviewees for this study.

Data collection and analysis

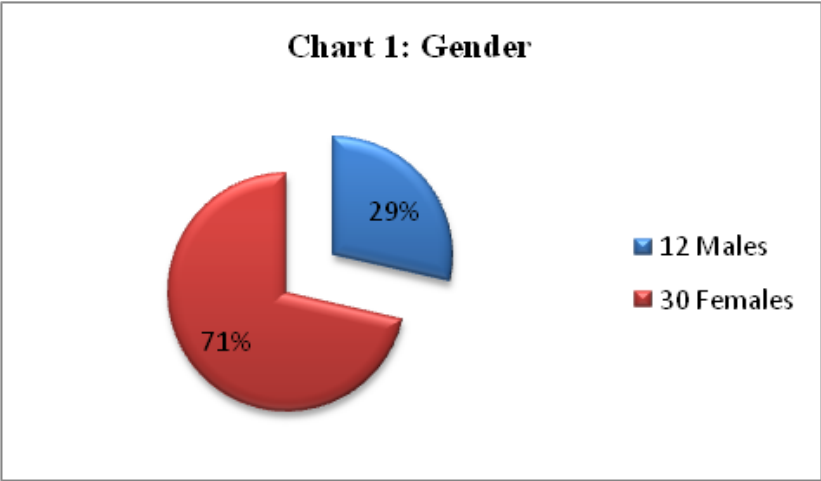
The convenience of this study was that it had been carried out in DIP12A Intake of Ho Chi Minh City Open University. Consequently, all the questionnaires and interview sheets were delivered during break time in the morning session of the first stage of this study period. The decision to deliver these questionnaires and interview sheets during break time was with an aim at minimizing the negative impact of the learning of the interviewees. Then, in the afternoon of the same day, 42 questionnaires out of 50 and 20 interview sheets out of 25 were collected with full response.

Question 6 to question 23 were processed by SPSS software, version 21 to find out the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum and that led to a picture of the situation of the computer application in English language teaching of a sample of 42 teachers learning TESOL diploma in DIP12A of Ho Chi Minh City Open University.

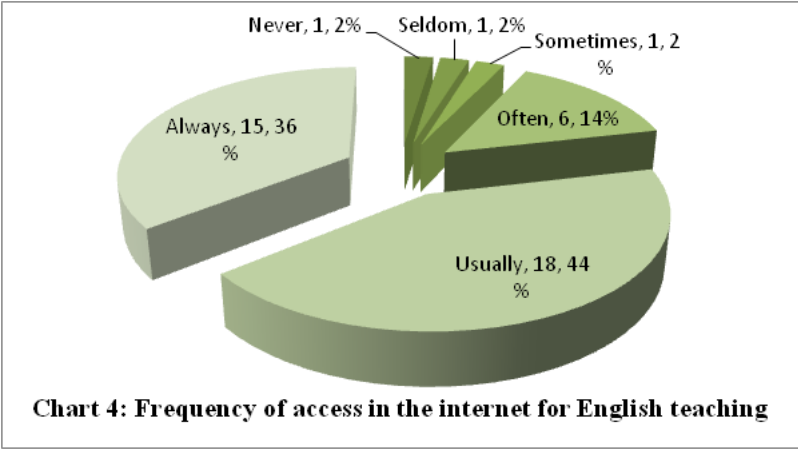
Findings and discussion

As mentioned above the study was

conducted in DIP12A Intake of Ho Chi Minh City Open University and the findings were revealed through the viewpoint of 42 teachers comprised of 30 males (71%) and 12 males (29%) illustrated in chart 1 as following:



As mentioned above, it is very convenient for the teachers to access in the internet to serve for their English teaching and we have all known that today the internet plays a vital role in the teaching, research and learning process (Kumar & Kaur, 2006). Chart 4 below suggests 18 teachers (44%) always access in the internet for their English teaching.



The overall findings of question 6 to question 23 show the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum through the statistics processed by SPSS software:

Table 1. ICT and The Internet Application in English Language Teaching

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
	Valid	Missing				
Q.6 Theinternet provides rich teaching materials	42	0	5.4286	.66783	4.00	6.00
Q.7 Internet resources can replace textbooks	42	0	2.8333	1.14587	1.00	5.00
Q.8 Using internet can motivate students	42	0	4.6667	1.02806	2.00	6.00
Q.9 Integrating internet resources makes interesting	42	0	5.1667	1.01011	2.00	6.00
Q.10 Maximizing internet-based materials	42	0	4.5714	1.03930	2.00	6.00
Q.11 ICTs & communication skills	42	0	4.2619	1.46603	1.00	6.00
Q.12 ICTS & listening skills	42	0	4.6429	1.32189	1.00	6.00
Q.13 ICTs & writing skills	42	0	4.2143	1.29795	1.00	6.00
Q.14 ICTs & learning activities	42	0	4.7619	1.00752	2.00	6.00
Q.15 ICTs & motivation	42	0	4.7619	1.05483	2.00	6.00
Q.16 ICTs & learning autonomy	42	0	5.2857	.89131	3.00	6.00
Q.17 ICTs & teaching skill enhance	42	0	5.0000	1.20972	2.00	6.00
Q.18 ICTs & competency	42	0	4.7857	1.24029	2.00	6.00
Q.19 ICTs & traditional textbooks	42	0	4.0238	1.27811	1.00	6.00
Q.20 ICTs & classroom management	42	0	3.4286	1.61007	1.00	6.00
Q.21 ICTs & time consumption	42	0	4.0952	1.49486	1.00	6.00
Q.22 ICTs & soft-ware skill training	42	0	3.9762	1.42261	1.00	6.00
Q.23 ICTs used as an effective tool	42	0	4.7381	1.06059	2.00	6.00

As can be seen in table 1 - question 6, most teachers of DIP12A Intake strongly agreed that the internet provides rich teaching materials. This implicates a

good perception on the use of computer to access in the internet to search for diversity materials served for English teaching. To have the same view Becker, Ravitz and

Wong (1998) states that “Teachers’ access to personal computers at school and at home has increased to the point where, by 1998, 93% of teachers in grades 4-12 were using computers as a part of their professional lives”.

Related to question 7 to find out the viewpoint to see whether internet resources can replace textbooks, as revealed by table 1, more than half of the teachers deny internet resources can replace textbooks (mean = 2.8). We can understand that in the viewpoint of most of these teachers teaching materials can be considered as the supplementary teaching materials to support for the textbooks only and of course, particularly in state schools in Vietnam, EFL textbooks used are compiled by a group of Vietnamese teachers/officials and decided by the Ministry of Education and Training. To reinforce this idea, Chung, (n.d) mentioned that the EFL textbooks currently being used in Vietnam were a “created material”.

“A modern education system must be equipped with relevant technology such as internet service to facilitate information generation” revealed by Ejimaji and Obilor (2011). The question is whether teaching English by using internet through computers can motivate students or not. It is obvious that learning English effectively, students need to be motivated. As shown in table 1 - question 8, the mean is 4.6 inferring that most of teachers agree using internet through computer can motivate students to learn English effectively.

The main impact of ICT in education can be considered to improve the capabilities of instructors, change the education structure, create opportunities for greater and more comprehensive learning, enhance educational quality and improve teaching skills (Ahmadi,

Keshavarzi & Foroutan, 2011). One way to improve teaching skills is to make use of ICT as just mentioned and teachers can apply new technology in their English teaching. Could the integration of the internet resources into classroom curricular make English teaching more interesting? This is issue raised by question 9 and table 1 shows that most teachers strongly agreed on this integration of the internet resources into classroom curricular making English teaching more interesting (mean = 5.1). So this viewpoint of the teachers of DIP12A shares the same voice with Sanchez and Aleman (2011) in the literature review of the author.

Take a look at American classrooms, Cotton (1991) revealed that not so long ago, the microcomputer was a rare and exotic then, during 1970s, a lot of schools began acquiring microcomputers and putting them to use for instruction, drill and practice, recordkeeping, and application. In Vietnam in English classrooms, the majority of participants enjoyed the technology-enhanced class in general (Long, 2011). Concerning this concept, the question for the teachers of DIP12A is whether internet-based materials and activities should be maximized in English teaching. Table 1, question 10 shows that the majority of the teachers agreed on this maximization (mean=4.5). This implies a positive perception of the teachers during their English teaching, they try their best to take the internet-based materials and activities at most to use them during teaching periods.

The advantages of the computer application in English teaching were designed in questions 15, 16, 17 and 18 to recognize the feedback from the teachers. Specifically in table 1, question 15 shows that most of teachers agreed on the use of computer being able to motivate

students to get more involved in learning activities (mean=4.7), question 16 reveals that the majority strongly agreed that learning autonomy for students could be contributed by the use of computer technology (mean=5), question 17 suggests the similar result as question 16 with the recognition of strong agreement by most of teachers on teaching being able to enhance by computer technology application (mean=5), and question 18 shows that most of teachers strongly believed they felt more competent as educators with the use of computer technology (mean=4.7).

Questions 20, 21, and 22 were designed in the questionnaire to obtain the feedback from the teachers. Question 20 displayed in table 1 assumed around one-fourth of teachers rather agreed the use of computer technology would make classroom more difficult (mean=3.4). This can be interpreted that how to manage the classroom in a good order to facilitate the lesson to students effectively is a challenge for the teachers. Question 21 shows that more than half of teachers rather agreed too much time would be spent on technical problems when using computer technology in English language teaching (mean=3.4). Question 22 illustrates that most teachers agreed software-skill training with much time consumption would be required (mean=4). It is for sure teachers need to be trained to use computer skillfully to perform productively in their English language teaching.

Apart from data obtained from the questionnaire, as mentioned previously, interview sheets were delivered to 25 teachers and 20 sheets were collected back. We could notice the teachers' ideas of advantages and disadvantages of application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching. In terms of the advantages, teachers could apply

modern technique to present the lessons interestingly, download useful resources and materials, save time of lesson preparation as well as in the classroom due to reduction of writing on the board, teach and improve English speaking and listening skills of students, teach pronunciation effectively, motivate and attract students highly through live programs of music, travel, sports, etc., store materials to be used at once or whenever necessary, interact easily and speedily by facebook, blog, wiki, webquest, etc., learn experience from other teachers, control exactly the organization of the teaching. Teachers also could make their teaching image more professional and dynamic, bring the whole world into the classroom, obtain a lot of software programs, websites as fruitful resources, send lessons, tests, exercises to the learners fast and in large number by using email, update the content of teaching effectively and diversify lesson designing. On the contrary, disadvantages could be realized in terms of training, technique, specializing knowledge, etc. such as wasting time for training soft skills, occurring technical problems such as power shutoff, computer suspension, etc., being attacked by virus, spending much time to download data and information, facing difficulties in classes with different ICT knowledge of the learners, getting certain information and data not reliable, limiting the creation of teachers due to relying too much on ICTs and suffering low speed of internet connection.

Based on the findings from the literature review and this study, certain gaps in the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching as follows:

In the case of a study of teacher's opinion survey on the use of ITC tools to support attendance-based teaching in Spain

carried out by Sanchez and Aleman in 2011, the findings show open mind on integrating ICT tools in daily practice goes along with the in-service teachers and students. The gap of this study can be understood only attendance-based teaching is applied. In 2011, Odera proceeded a research on the implementation of Computer technology into Keyyan secondary school classrooms, the results state that most teachers felt that it was essential for students to be computer literate and state schools are responsible for the implementation of computers. Therefore, this research just stops at the examination stage, not in action process. Rahimi and Yadollahi in 2010 conducted a study to determine Iranian EFL teachers' level of computer anxiety and its relationship with ICT integration into English classes and teachers' personal characteristics. The findings show that ICT integration was discovered to be negatively correlated with age and years of teaching experience. This study is just valuable in Iran only and these findings cannot be sure to be similar in other countries. In 1998, Nutta conducted the study to examine whether computer-based grammar instruction is as effective as teacher-directed grammar instruction for postsecondary students being at multiple levels of proficiency in an intensive ESL program. The results show that the computer-based students scored higher on open-ended tests covering the structures in question than the teacher-directed students. However it's hard to say computer-based instruction can be an effective method of teaching other English skills. Lee in 2008 proceeded the research to investigate how the characteristics of two CALL programs assisting Taiwanese students to learn English pronunciation in an effective way and how teachers can integrate computer software into their pronunciation teaching

to enhance students' abilities of English pronunciation. The key finding of this study was CALL which was used alongside with the traditional teaching, teacher directed language teaching was really a tool having its potential to address some of the English pronunciation issues. This study limits in Taiwanese students and it is necessary to conduct more researches before it is applied in other countries. Back to Vietnam, there has been no study of the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching so far in DIP12A Intake of Ho Chi Minh City Open University. The teachers who have been attending in this intake have their passionate to heighten their English teaching skills so this is a good opportunity to conduct this topic. The findings show that they have very positive and optimistic opinion on the ICT and the internet application in English language teaching and to make a comparison of pros and cons, more advantages to be drawn out than disadvantages. Recommendations can be considered as the teachers should maintain their positive and optimistic viewpoint of the ICT and the internet application in English language teaching. New technology has changed so fast, it is necessary for all teachers to learn by themselves and to learn from their peers to update their ICTs. Teachers should make use of ICTs to interact with students in teaching and learning in a harmonized manner and due to teaching considered as an art, teachers should be flexible to combine different methods of teaching with ICTs to make interesting and dynamic English lesson delivery.

Conclusion

The key finding of this study was the advantages of ICT and the internet application in English language teaching outweigh the disadvantages. ICT and the internet application used alongside with

the traditional teaching, teacher directed language teaching were really a powerful tool for teachers to teach English language efficiently and productively. Further more, the finding also showed that DIP12A teachers had a very positive and optimistic opinion on the application of ICTs and the internet in English language teaching.

The limitation of this study is that the recommendations are just able to apply for the teachers attending DIP12A Intake only; due to the small size of the sample and the data and information are

just based on the subjective feedback from theirs. Another limitation is the constrain of the time and the limited capability of the author leading to the choice and usage of words having not enough relevant terminology. It is recommended that the same topic be carried out on a larger scale in state schools, universities, colleges, English centers in Ho Chi Minh City to have better findings to draw practical lessons to maximize the application of ICT and the internet in English language teaching.

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