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Teachers' Views of ICT in EL Classrooms in UAE Institutes of Technology

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TEACHERS' VIEWS OF ICT IN EL CLASSROOMS IN UAE

INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving mother, understanding wife, loving son and sweet little daughters for supporting me to complete this task.

Abstract

Influence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is very obvious in the modern education system. Schools, universities and institutes are trying to cope up with the modern technological devices, and exploit these tools for EL teaching. However, teachers play a crucial role in implementing the appropriate use of ICT in teaching. Even though the institutes of technology in the UAE provide many ICT tools for teaching purposes, very little investigation has been carried out regarding the attitudes of EL teachers about using them. As such, the focal aim of this study was to understand the attitudes of EL teachers working at the institutes of technology in the UAE concerning the use of ICT in EL teaching. The study investigated the extent to which the EL teachers at IAT and SIT use ICT in their teaching, the pedagogic purpose of using them, the pedagogic change that the use of ICT brings, and the factors which prevent teachers' use of ICT. Data for this study was collected through surveys distributed to EL teachers working at IAT Fujairah and Al-Ain branches, and SIT, and through follow-up interviews. Findings of the study indicated that the EL teachers at IAT and SIT have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT in EL classrooms as it raised the students' motivation level. However, it was found that all institutes did not offer the same support to teachers. While IAT teachers are provided with training on ICT, teachers at SIT are not. As a result, teachers at SIT take up the responsibility of training themselves.

Search Terms: ICT, Institutes of Technology, UAE, tools, websites, Web 2.0

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Changes to technology in the last two decades have influenced the teaching and learning of the English Language (EL). The launching of the World Wide Web in 1991 was the primary event that affected these changes as far as EL is concerned. The subsequent use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in EL classrooms has helped to increase the motivation levels of students and has made possible new ways of learning. There is no universally accepted definition for ICT since the methods, applications, and concepts involved in it are constantly changing as technology changes. However, according to the UNESCO publication, *Information and Communication Technology in Education; A Curriculum for Schools and Programme of Teacher Development*, (Anderson & van Weert, 2002) “Information and communication technology is defined as the combination of informatics technology with other, related technologies, specifically communication technology” (p.13).

Harris in his (2007) report, “What the Research says about ICT and Motivation,” discusses the role of ICT in motivating students in their learning. Harris points out that ICT used creatively and effectively can stimulate students’ desire to learn and may foster improved levels of performance. The key issue seems to be that ICT in EL teaching is effective if used regularly. Chambers and Bax (2006) describe a situation they term “normalisation,” where computers are integrated into pedagogy for meaningful and effective use of technology in regular EL lessons. According to Chambers and Bax, technology has to become a natural and normal part of daily class routines, just like whiteboards and pens, in order for technology to find its place in language education. Unfortunately, technology has not generally reached this level of integration, and as Chambers and Bax show, it is still seen as a novelty; often as an addition to the standard curriculum in many educational institutions, instead of a vital part of EL education. Hussein (2010) also agrees that technology will remain a novelty until teachers are adequately trained on effective integration.

Albirini (2006), author of, “Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Information and Communication Technologies: The Case of Syrian EFL Teachers,” discusses the

attitudes of high school EFL teachers in Syria toward ICT. The results of his study indicate the importance of three factors: the teachers' perceptions of technology, their experiences with it, and the cultural conditions that surround its introduction into schools. These factors play a role in shaping attitudes toward technology, and its subsequent diffusion in educational practice. Albirini identifies the role of teachers of English as agents of change with the potential to integrate technology into their teaching. According to Albirini, teachers must be able to effectively use technology in the classroom. Albirini continues by stating that technology integration will not occur in the classroom unless teachers are the catalysts to make that change happen. In other words, teachers are responsible for using technology effectively and incorporating ICT into their lessons. Of course it is important that teachers should make sure that there is not an over reliance on the use of technology for its own sake which would be counter-productive.

According to Chambers and Bax (2006), in a situation of normalisation, "Computers will be at the centre of no lessons, but will play a part in almost all" (p. 466). Hence, a balance should be maintained and ICT should be a part of but not the centre of lessons. Whether EL teachers are indeed 'effective agents' in fostering this ideal is a significant issue for investigation because of the key roles teachers have in classrooms (Albirini, 2006).

Clearly, whether ICT is used in EL classrooms and how it is used largely depends on the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the teacher. These two issues, "whether" and "how" are appropriate issues for research in Institutes of Technology in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This is because these institutions should be in the forefront of ICT use and innovation. This study investigates the attitudes of EL teachers and seeks answers to the following questions concerning ICT use in the UAE:

1. What is the extent of teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study?
2. For what pedagogic purposes is ICT used?
3. What pedagogic change does ICT bring?
4. What factors prevent teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study?

Significance of the Study

The integration of technology into EL lessons should be made with care and attention. According to Chambers and Bax (2006), the goal of EL teachers when integrating technology is to develop a seamless integration between teaching practices and the use of the computer that makes the computer an ordinary daily class resource. It is obvious that great effort from teachers is required to use technology in teaching without the students being overly conscious about its use.

Albirini (2006) believes that the use of technology is based on what the teachers think about its use and affects the teaching and learning process. Albirini claims that it is the attitude of the teachers that will not only determine whether educational technology is implemented into the classroom, but will also determine how the technology is used in the classroom. If teachers of English do not incorporate technology into their lessons, or if they use it minimally, it may be assumed that they have either a negative attitude towards the implementation of ICT or they lack the knowledge and skills required for using ICT in teaching. Other obstacles to implementation include inadequate ICT, evident in old and slow computers, weak audio systems and slow or weak Internet connections. Such inadequacies would have an adverse affect on the teaching and learning process. Effective implementation of ICT is best achieved when the teachers possess skills in using ICT, cultivate a positive attitude towards use and are supported by an appropriate technology environment.

Locations of the Study

This research was conducted at the Sharjah Institute of Technology (SIT) and the Institutes of Applied Technology (IAT) in Al-Ain and Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates. The Sharjah Institute of Technology is managed by the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah. This institution admits Emirati boys and girls who have completed grade nine in public schools. It offers certificate courses in mechanical, electrical and civil engineering, information technology, and business studies. Students who complete three years of successful study at SIT are awarded UK based Edexcel Certificates in their specialization. Classrooms at SIT are equipped with a variety of ICT tools. All classrooms have high speed wireless Internet connections, data display projectors, a desktop personal computer, audio systems, and interactive whiteboards connected to computers.

IAT Al-Ain and IAT Fujairah are managed by the Federal Government of the United Arab Emirates. These institutions cater to Emirati boys who have completed their class eight successfully in public schools. Classrooms at IAT are also equipped with high speed wireless Internet connections, data display projectors, audio systems, and interactive whiteboards. Moreover, teachers and students at IAT are provided with laptops to support teaching and learning.

It is hoped that this study will inform teachers of English as well as principals working at the participating technology institutes, as well as informing Ministry of Education officials regarding integration of ICT into EL classrooms at the three institutions. This research may bring to light current classroom use of ICT applications and perhaps indicate how to overcome hurdles preventing effective implementation and use.

Overview of the Chapters and Indices

This study is organized in the following manner. Chapter Two reviews literature about the use of ICT in English language classrooms. Chapter Three discusses the methodology that was used to conduct the present study and also presents information about the context of the study and about the participants. Chapter Four contains data collected during the investigation and presents an analysis of the facts. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the findings of the research, identifies its limitations, and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Modern education is influenced by technology in both teaching and learning. Traditional chalk and black boards have given way to interactive whiteboards and electronic pens. ICT has also allowed teachers to be more flexible in preparing suitable learning materials. Blake (2008) aptly points out that technology could play a vital role with assisting English as second language learners with acquiring English language skills. However, Blake contends that the benefit of technology use depends on how the technology is integrated into the course of learning.

Teachers' Beliefs and Attitudes

The influence of ICT in teaching and learning is largely based on the beliefs and perceptions of teachers who are responsible for using this technology. Prescott (2006) points out that effective integration of technology in language teaching is possible only with a shift in beliefs. Similarly, Zhong and Shen (2002) observed that the perceptions concerning learning and teaching must change in order to foster pedagogical changes in the classroom. The views of Prescott, and Zhong and Shen point to the importance of the beliefs of teachers in bringing about change in education. Albirini (2006) adds that teachers who hold a positive attitude towards the use of technology feel more at ease with using it, and these teachers generally incorporate it into their teaching. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) note the definition of good teaching needs to be changed to include relevant ICT tools and resources.

Teachers will be in a position to use ICT tools and resources effectively in the classroom only when they realize how useful these tools are in presenting material to the students and the overall learning process. The views of teachers have strong influence in the integration of computers in classrooms, and teachers need to be encouraged to explore the usefulness of ICT and its effective use in classrooms (Park and Son, 2009). Sangraa and Sanmamed (2010) observe that:

Teachers use technology depending on their perceptions and their trust in the way it can contribute to the teaching and the learning process. Through knowing what they think, we will be closer to understanding what they do or

what they might do with technology in their classrooms and in relation to their work (p. 208)

The previous experiences of teachers with the use of technology are another element which determines their attitude towards technology integration. Previous successful practice in using computers and positive attitudes towards technology are variables that favour success in teachers' integration of ICT (Sangraa and Sanmamed 2010). It is also well known and widely acknowledged that positive teachers can exert plenty of influence on learners to form constructive attitudes towards learning. Lafford (2009) notes student attitudes may be influenced when a teacher has technological proficiency and a positive attitude toward its use.

Advantages of Using ICT in Language Teaching

Hennessy, Ruthven, and Brindley (2005) believe that the exposure to ICT at the teaching and learning level has the potential to overcome various constraints teachers and learners face: boredom, lack of motivation, and insufficient teaching resources. Bate (2010) observes that "ICT has the potential to enhance both teaching and learning and it is for the teacher to decide if, when and how this can be done" (p. 1042). Technology opens up a number of potential areas for language learning: contact with native speakers, access to other learners of the language around the world, easy and constant interaction with a wide array of instructional and authentic language learning materials, and exposure to learning varied experiences and environments (Laia and Gu, 2011; Thorne, Black and Sykes, 2009; and Zhao 2007). It is clear that ICT can extend learning opportunities if used wisely.

A positive aspect of using ICT for language learning is that teachers can achieve many other goals besides language learning. Park and Son (2009) state there are benefits of integrating new technologies into the classroom. First, students will be exposed to and have the opportunity to achieve linguistic skills. The exposure to these skills will occur via technology of some kind. These skills include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Second, technology will offer students the opportunity for meaningful communication. Meaningful communication includes positive interactions between teacher and student, student and student, or student and technology. Third, using ICT will assist the students with developing cultural understandings. Cultural understandings will be developed as material is viewed using technology. For instance, a student may develop cultural understanding of a

different culture through media that is viewed using technology. Technology is a tool not only for teaching linguistic skills but also for providing exposure to different cultures, and for facilitating effective and meaningful communication. Bate (2010) notes that the integration of ICT into classroom practices can incorporate a range of activities such as using a reflective blog, building a collaborative wiki site, using a discussion board, and keeping an e-portfolio.

With technology such an integral part of society today, Kenning (2007) explains, it is certain that language acquisition will depend heavily on ICT. According to Blake (2008), technology provides educators with a set of tools which are mostly methodologically neutral. In this regard it is of importance to note that technology is a tool and it cannot replace the language teachers themselves; the success of the tool depends on the way it is used. Kenning (2007) adds that there are advantages to using technologically based tools with English language learners, and these advantages vary based on the tool used. Teachers are confronted with an array of theories and instructional designs, and with confusing views on what technology is capable of delivering (Bate 2010). Therefore, it is important that language teachers become acquainted with as many ICT tools as possible in order to be able to make informed decisions. According to Chapelle (2009), technology can provide a myriad of language learning materials that provides media for input and data collection in a way that far exceeds the variety available through paper materials. Clearly, if used appropriately, ICT can provide a plethora of input for language teaching and learning.

Role of Computers and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Various writers have shown that computers can support learning processes in a number of ways. For instance, Lee and Woods (2010) note that:

Obvious advantages of the use of computers include ease of accessing vast arrays of data, images, sound and text. In addition, there is the opportunity to encourage students to find, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information (p. 775).

Gorjian et al. (2011) observe that CALL is a computer-based system feature that can receive and send information in a variety of contexts, including interactivity, text, video, audio, graphics and animations. Yang (2011), and Park and Sun (2009) note that these computer -based, interactive features of CALL have the ability to motivate learners and that Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has the

potential to engage learners in meaningful communication in the target language by enhancing effective learning. CMC fosters human communication through computers and is a source for the learners to interact through negotiation of meanings on a whole range of practical and learning tasks (Yang, 2011). Negotiation of meanings can be completed without using the computer. However, the advantages of using the computer are motivating learner participation, increasing interest in content, and providing a learning tool, the computer, that the students enjoy using.

Another aspect of using computers is that they can promote collaborative learning if used appropriately. For example, the use of discussion boards allows the teachers and learners to post questions and comments for clarification. It also allows student access to the teacher in and out of the classroom. It also provides a way for various interactions including teacher to teacher, student to teacher, and student to student. Lee and Woods (2010) point out that since files and web addresses are easy to share the use of computers can foster collaborative learning. The ability to share materials quickly and easily is another benefit of using computers for collaborative learning.

Another commendable aspect of CALL is that it can provide a broad range of learning opportunities for L2 learners. Chapelle (2009) notes that CALL can provide a venue for students to interact in a way they understand by providing practice with specific problems areas, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics. Similarly, Garrett (2009) notes that the inclusion of the computer into daily class routines can assist with developing class activities that are interactive and require various levels of communication from the students. These L2 methods may include grammar-translation, audio-lingual, or cognitive analysis of language activities. Computers can be an effective tool for creating and providing suitable materials to the learners depending on the teaching approaches, methods and syllabus.

However, CALL is obviously more effective if it is interwoven with appropriate pedagogy and learning theory. CALL cannot stand independently as a tool for learning without the support of other factors. EL teachers need to be mindful that CALL is not a shorthand for using technology but something in which technology, pedagogy, and theory are deeply interwoven (Garrett, 2009). Hence, teachers need to be given the awareness that ICT tools or materials should be used with clear teaching objectives. Garrett (2009) emphasizes that within CALL, the use of pedagogy, theory, and technology should be balanced. None of the three should dominate any of the

others. A unified development of the three factors is essential for the improvement and implementation of CALL. In the opinion of Garret (2009), CALL should consist of current pedagogy, already-developed SLA theory and technology intertwined, evolving, and changing in response to each other. These components should not be viewed separately, but as a unit where each component is in continuous relationship with the others. Garret, in fact, notes that CALL is not the one prescription to fix the problems in the world of language education. However, Garret believes that CALL is a mandatory part of the solution to address those problems. Many ICT tools are readily available to language teachers which can be utilized in teaching. According to Garret, it is time for educators to use these resources to assist with addressing the educational problems within the EL classroom.

The Internet and World Wide Web

Many teachers use the Internet for language teaching as it can be very useful for language learners and may open up a wide range of opportunities for language teachers. Gunn and Kassas (2010) observe the availability of the Internet has reduced the confines of the language classroom and provided language educators with more opportunities to bring technology into the classroom than ever before. The advent of the Internet has also provided opportunity for teachers to enhance classroom experiences in creative ways and to invoke the use of technology within the classroom on a regular basis. Students can be encouraged to be active participants in the class by using the Internet appropriately. For example, using Internet polls and online quizzes provide the students opportunity to input individual responses and receive instant feedback. Similarly, online language games provide instant feedback while stimulating student interest and motivating student participation.

It is important also to consider the role and impact of the World Wide Web (WWW) in today's teaching and learning process. According to Berners-Lee (1992), the creator of the world-wide-web, the world-wide web is "a global information universe using techniques of hypertext, information retrieval, and wide area networking" (p. 54). In addition, the WWW has recently been further advanced with the introduction and application of Web 2.0 tools. According to Miller (2005):

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-

updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.

Web 2.0 is also known as the second generation of the World Wide Web. One of the major advantages of Web 2.0 over the first generation World Wide Web is that it is not static as the latter but is more dynamic and organized. Another functionality of Web 2.0 is the open communication facility it offers to Web-based communities of users opening up more potential for sharing of information. Blogs, Discussion Boards and Wikis are examples of Web 2.0 components.

There are many reasons for using the World Wide Web in language teaching. The WWW has a rich array of teaching tools available to language teachers as it creates possibilities for learners to come into contact with the target language and culture in various ways (Otto and Pussack 2009). These tools include multiple web browsers and search engines. Different browsers like Internet Explorer, Mozilla Fire Fox and Google Chrome, and search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Alta Vista support the teachers and the learners to make the best use of online resources and teaching/learning materials. A simple search using any engines such as – Google or Yahoo – will direct the searcher to many websites which are closely related to the search topic. Otto and Pussack (2009) further note that “Web development tools have matured and, consequently, there has been a dramatic increase in Web-based language learning materials” (p. 787). For example, websites used to provide information only. Now, websites are interactive, receiving input and providing feedback, and catering to multiple learning styles. Another reason for the successful use of the World Wide Web is the linking of information with the help of hypertext. According to Shin and Son (2007), the World Wide Web is a valuable tool, loaded with vast information, for students who are independent self-directed learners. Given these rich possibilities, it is clear that ICT has the potential to promote students’ motivation levels so that they may become more independent learners.

Web-based language instruction offers advantages for self-directed and independent learning. According to Pino (2008), “Web-based language instruction can promote independent learning in a nonthreatening environment” (p. 66). There is no doubt that learning will take place more effectively when there is a relaxed

atmosphere, and when the students feel the freedom to communicate without the apprehension of making mistakes. Pino further points out that web-based learning resources can cater to the needs of the individual learner by allowing the learner to select learning materials that suit his or her learning styles and personal preferences. Allowing students to have a say so in the way he or she learns is an important part of getting students to buy into the language learning expectations of any classroom. In addition, Pino observes that various online applications provide EL learners with opportunities to interact with other learners which facilitates a range of language functions in an authentic context, “asking questions, giving responses, sharing opinions, making suggestions, and correcting themselves and each other” (p. 66). Web-based education has the potential to lead learners to more self-directed and independent learning.

Learner Centeredness

The scope of ICT for EL teachers and learners in language classrooms is varied. Couse and Chen (2010) point out that technology allows students to be “in the driver’s seat” concerning their learning and problem solving and allows teachers a front row view of the process and the development of the student. In this way, technology is helpful to both the teachers and students. Prescott (2006) observes that ICT should make learners and teachers active participants in the learning process and promote interactions among them in lieu of passive intake and rote memorization. Therefore, it is clear that using ICT effectively means that new and appropriate teaching methods need to be utilized.

Park and Son (2009) point out that technologically enhanced circumstances can, with appropriate training and development, assist learners to take care of their own learning by searching for relevant information and negotiating meaning themselves. The advent of ICT in the education field has made student-centered learning possible and practical. There is considerable potential for learners to become individually responsible for their learning. This is clearly an advantage of using ICT in EL teaching. Ertmer, Gopalakrishnan, and Rose (2001) explain that the use of technology in fact prompts and encourages teachers towards student-centered approaches in teaching. Moreover, teachers can also benefit from a student-centered approach as it leads them to create variety of student-centered materials. According to Palak and Walls (2009), “Teachers who effectively integrate technology move toward

student-centered instructional practices, and this in turn suggests a shift in teachers' beliefs as teachers experience new patterns of teaching and learning" (p. 418).

Technology has the potential to transform traditional classrooms into contemporary ones provided that teachers are convinced of the benefits and have the confidence to make appropriate and necessary changes. Prescott (2006) observes that ICT has the potential to change the ordinary traditional classroom into a lively student-centered atmosphere.

However, Blake (2008) points out that "any activity without adequate pedagogical planning – technologically advanced or not – will produce unsatisfactory results with students" (p.11). Moreover, Means (2010) points out that "Effective teaching must include student-centered practices, supported by technology and effective teacher education and development, to sustain this goal through a range of recommended practices" (p. 226). EL teachers' ability to integrate ICT can be noticed by the ways in which they integrate technology with pedagogy. In the opinion of Zhang and Li (2011), "Capable teachers must be able to flexibly incorporate new resources including technology into their knowledge of subject pedagogy in ways that enhance learning" (p. 944).

Technology can also be used outside the language classroom. Laia and Gu (2011) note that "The power of technology for language learning may best be realized and maximized outside the language classroom, since after all, it is the learners' acceptance of the value of technology and their effective use of technology that really matter" (p. 317). Teachers have to consciously encourage and support students to use technology outside the language classroom by giving them information about useful technologies and resources, and instructing learners how to use them effectively. Laia and Gu (2011) further observe that "Various accounts of different population groups from all over the world have shown that language learners are actively engaging in self-initiated learning activities beyond the classroom" (p. 319). By training learners to use technology outside the language classroom, teachers are actually promoting lifelong learning. In the opinion of Garrett (2009), "Lifelong learning depends absolutely on students' abilities to engage with authentic materials in their areas of interest" (p. 723). The importance of using authentic materials in the language classroom to encourage the habit of lifelong learning is clear.

Current Situation

Despite all the discussion and evidence of the advantages of ICT in classrooms some writers argue that very little improvement and change have been brought to modern classrooms even with the introduction of ICT. If this is the case then clearly it is important to identify reasons for teachers not using ICT in EL classrooms. For instance, Hennessy et al. (2005) hold these views and according to them, “In practice, established curricula and teaching methods remain in place under a thin coating of technological glitter, and available technology is often underused and poorly integrated into classroom practice” (p. 158). Additionally, Hussein (2010) believes there is another basic reason for the inability of teachers to integrate ICT into their teaching, with particular reference to the local United Arab Emirates situation. In his opinion, technology integration in UAE schools is slow and difficult because teachers do not know how to use the available technology. Therefore, before teachers in the UAE can redevelop their teaching approach with the integration of technology, they must first learn how to use the technology. Integration of technology into teaching requires consideration of many factors related to both education and technology. Amongst these factors are the demand for training, the need for increased teacher ICT competence, the improvement of knowledge about methods of integration of ICT into syllabi, and the provision of technical support.

As ICT has changed the language teaching and learning process it has also imposed certain challenges to educators and teachers. Bate (2010) points out that “Each new wave of ICT innovation carries with it a barrage of opportunities and risks that challenge and constrain educators who seek to optimise the use of ICT for teaching and learning” (p. 1042). Teachers faced with the latest ICT innovations must be trained how to use these new tools. One of the significant challenges that schools face today is the managing and marshalling of resources to achieve desired, as well as, mandated school based ICT outcomes (Lee and Woods, 2010). For example, Garrett (2009) describes the advantages of video recording of class room activities to serve pedagogical purposes. But, Garrett also notes some challenges underlying the use of authentic video materials. According to her, “The extent to which authentic video can be genuinely integrated into a language course depends on teachers’ ability to gauge the comprehensibility of the language content and the intrinsic interest of the material for their classes” (p. 699). Videos can be a valuable ICT tool if it is used to assist the students with English language acquisition. Similarly, according to Harrison (2013),

the interactive whiteboard can be a valuable teaching tool. However, its true value can only be measured by the extent with which the teacher uses the whiteboard during instruction. It is clear from these examples and the preceding discussion that integration of ICT alone is insufficient to ensure success. Teachers have to understand how the integration will enhance the teaching and learning process of their students for there to be a reasonable possibility of success.

Role of Stakeholders

Information and communications technology in the education sector has gained importance because of the measures taken by governments and ministries of education. According to Hennessy et al. (2005), “A host of government initiatives in many countries has helped to dramatically increase the prominence of ICT” (p. 158). In the UAE, the Institutes of Applied Technology (IAT) and Sharjah Institute of Technology (SIT) are equipped with up to date technology. The intention is to improve and facilitate the teaching and learning process. Hennessy et al. (2005) note the drive from governments to provide “opportunities and experts” (p. 158) for using ICT at school level. While these programs are admirable in many ways, significant weaknesses are reported in the government policies and the actual practice at schools (Hennessy et al., 2005). This often means there is a disparity between the government or ministry policy and the implementation and practice in classrooms. Zhong and Shen (2002) reveal their belief that consistent efforts from all sections of education are necessary to promote the use of technology in schools. They point out that, “Effective integration of computers into English language teaching will not happen unless conscious efforts have been made at various levels” (p. 50). Garret (2009) notes three levels of infrastructure that have key roles to play for the effective technology integration: physical/technological setup of teaching and learning spaces, professional development support structure for technology use, and national structure of language education.

The effectiveness of technology integration must be analysed with these three levels of infrastructure in mind. An interesting implication is that teachers need to be given a suitable atmosphere for learning to use technology effectively. A conducive and non-threatening environment should be provided for teachers to build competence and confidence in using technology in language teaching (Teo, 2008). Sincere efforts have to be made from all levels for implementing technology successfully.

Importance of Training

Schools have vital roles to perform in the appropriate implementation of ICT based language teaching and learning in the UAE. According to Hussein (2010), technology progression in the schools in the UAE will not occur until teachers are proficient with integrating technology in to their classrooms. Hussein goes on to insist that this integration must include adequate professional development opportunities. Technology integration in conjunction with professional development will assist with developing technology skills among UAE teachers, according to Hussein. Teachers should have opportunities to attend professional development sessions to help them learn methods to integrate technology into their lessons effectively. Educational administrations should actually take on such initiatives (as is the case in Singapore). According to Fan & Ho (2012), in Singapore, the Ministry of Education (MOE) governs the schools of Singapore. Initially, the MOE began using a top-down model. Since that time, the MOE has encouraged autonomy and has implemented school based projects in recent years. Over the last few years, Singapore has devoted billions into implementing ICT in the classroom and their students are reaping the benefits of that investment (Fan & Ho, 2012). According to the Global Information Technology report in the Networked Readiness Index 2009-2010, Singapore was ranked number two of 133 countries that were examined.

Moreover, Hussein (2010) emphasizes that teachers should be given sufficient opportunities to observe technology integrated lessons, discuss creative ideas with colleagues and mentors, and collaborate with experts while they begin with any new projects. He further points out that, "Preparing teachers to use technology involves exposing them to a wide range of potential applications, teaching them how to select appropriate materials to meet their meeting and learning goals, and preparing them to manage logical considerations" (p. 71). If these elements are not taken care of, teachers may not be able to use ICT appropriately in their lessons. Schools have a duty to ensure that teachers are given adequate training for the benefit of students.

The ultimate aim of school is to provide the best education possible to students, but this may not be achievable if the teachers are not given appropriate guidance and training. Al-Mekhlafi (2004) notes that, "The emerging of a new informational society requires schools to equip students with special skills so that they can function properly in this modern society" (p. 89). Society expects students to have skills in modern technology. Therefore, it is the responsibility of schools to satisfy

this demand. One of the ways of helping students to achieve special skills in technology is through the teachers' appropriate use of it. In the opinion of Razak (2004), school is the best place for making students use modern technology proficiently and suitably. Al-Mekhlafi points out that, "Schools need to help students to master language as well as the communication skills needed in order to compete in the job market of an information technology driven society" (p. 89). Today, there are few jobs which do not require some knowledge of ICT. Employees in any office – from top to the bottom – are expected to execute responsibilities through ICT equipment. The responsibility resting on schools to educate students with the required ICT skills is clear.

However schools will not be in a position to provide society with ICT skilled graduates if their teachers are not appropriately trained. According to Razak (2004), "As the teachers are the catalyst in shaping the knowledge workers of the future, their competence in using ICT is crucial in order to accomplish the vision" (p. 2). The vision of graduating ICT skilled graduates can be realized by improving the competence of teachers in their use of ICT equipment. It is also equally important to consider that the teachers' use of ICT in teaching is proportionate to their understanding of the benefits it can bring to the teaching process. According to Akcaglu (2008), "The teachers' knowledge as to how to use technology effectively in ELT depends on the depth of their knowledge on the benefits and right usages of technology" (p. 12). In the opinion of Chambers and Bax (2006), technology ought to be so embedded in the daily practice of teachers "that it ceases to be regarded as either a miracle cure-all or something to be feared" (p. 465). Appropriate training leading to regular use of technology in teaching would endow ICT with a normalized status in the classroom.

Reasons for Teachers' Low Level Use of ICT

At this stage it is worth examining the reasons and constraints that prevent teachers from effectively using the technology resources often found in modern classrooms. Prescott (2007) points out that teachers need to gain new knowledge and skills concerning ICT use in the classroom. In his opinion, teachers often adhere to the norms with which they are familiar even when they are faced with the need to innovate. According to Park and Son (2009) one of the most common barriers that prevent teachers from using technology is the time factor. Similarly, Otto and Pussack

(2009) identify the issue of lack of time for teachers to deal with technology in language teaching. They observe that, “Combining the normal academic responsibilities of teaching, research, and service with the realities of busy family or personal schedules usually translates into little time to devote to technology, regardless of how compelling it may seem” (p. 787).

Another reason for the lack of enthusiasm about utilizing technology by language teachers is that they do not have a major role in the decision making body regarding which ICT devices or services should be bought for language teaching. Garrett (2009) observes that in many schools, teachers have no say so in deciding which technology items are purchased. The language media/resources centers in the schools are often taken over by information technology services and transformed in to mere computer labs with support staff who may know little about the ways in which language teachers might make use of technology in their lessons (Garrett, 2009).

A final reason for the poor implementation of technology in language teaching can be attributed to the gap between teachers’ beliefs and the schools’ strategic vision. Bate (2010) notes, “In the same way teachers’ beliefs shape ICT practices at the level of the individual, a school’s culture sets the conditions for ICT practices at the level of the organisation” (p. 1045). Hence, it is vital that there is a mechanism which allows teachers to bridge the gap between their beliefs and practices, and their school’s strategic vision.

Hussein (2010) argues that many teachers, even now, do not feel prepared to integrate technology into content and language classrooms. “However”, he points out, “regardless of the barriers involved, if teachers do not have sufficient training, or support, meaningful integration will be difficult, if not impossible to achieve” (p. 76). Therefore, it is important to identify the barriers that prevent the use of ICT in teaching, and take measures to overcome those barriers.

Various other reasons exist for not using ICT in the EL classrooms. Chambers and Bax (2006) conducted case studies at two institutions in South-East England and identified the following issues as hindrances for the normalisation of CALL in EL classrooms. The inconvenient distance between the institute and computer laboratories was a hindrance in using ICT effectively in EL teaching. They also found that activities that were hosted at the computer labs such as examinations, tutorials, and staff training were obstacles for using the labs for EL teaching. Chambers and Bax’ (2006) case studies revealed that poor layout of some classrooms also created

obstacle for appropriate integration of ICT in EL classrooms. Additionally, teachers' lack of time due to conventional administrative and classroom duties, and their lack of confidence in using technological devices in teaching further contributed to the poor or little use of ICT in teaching. Misconceptions of stakeholders concerning the role of computers in language learning, and the absence of evaluation of current ICT practices in EL teaching were also found as obstacles for using technology appropriately. Non-integration of CALL into syllabi, lack of support and guidance for teachers, and insufficient teacher training and development programs were seen as obstacles for the meaningful integration of ICT in EL classrooms. Moreover, insufficient CALL materials, lack of support to overcome technical failures, and little pedagogical support were further hindrances for the effective integration of ICT into EL teaching.

Conclusion

Overall, teachers in the UAE are eager to incorporate ICT in the classroom. However, the lack of training and the additional time needed to prepare technology-based lessons are great hindrances to the use of ICT in the UAE. According to Mansor (2007) ICT integration is having a positive impact on EL learning, but more integration through all sectors of the UAE is needed.

The literature review reveals the emphasis on the integration of ICT in EL classrooms in the UAE. However, Ismail, Almakhlafi, and Al-Mekhlafy (2010) insist that more integration of ICT must take place to assist students with English language learning. To aid in this endeavour, administrations must provide adequate training to teachers to promote integration of ICT. Almekhalafi & Al meqdadi (2010) remind us that integration of technology may be difficult. However, integration of ICT is particularly difficult if the school has fewer resources. Since the aim of this study was to determine the attitudes and perceptions of EL teachers concerning the use of ICT in the classroom, and the primary focus of the literature review was ICT use and integration, the literature review supports the aim of the study. The literature review also lists pedagogic change and practices, along with hindrances, to ICT use.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes and the perceptions of teachers of English concerning use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their classrooms. The study also endeavors to identify any benefits teachers believe can be gained from using ICT. Furthermore, the study attempts to identify any hindrances teachers face when using ICT. The study was conducted at three Institutes of Technology in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The review of the literature identified work that showed that effective use of ICT can enhance the teaching and learning process and that ICT has the potential to motivate both learners and teachers. This reality may be significant when compared to the use of more traditional teaching approaches and methodologies. In light of these factors, the study addressed four research questions:

1. What is the extent of teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study?
2. For what pedagogic purposes is ICT used?
3. What pedagogic change does ICT bring?
4. What factors prevent teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study?

Design of the Study

In order to answer these questions a questionnaire was distributed to English teachers at the Institutes of Technology investigated in the study. Interviews were conducted with those teachers who agreed to provide additional information. A combination of methods is generally assumed to be most beneficial in a study of this type. The variety of methods allowed some control via the questionnaire, but also reflective personal views via the interviews. The study took a mixed methods approach with a combination of quantitative data collection (the questionnaire), as well as a qualitative data collection (the interviews). In addition, open ended questions were included at the final section of the questionnaire. Obtaining information by using both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for differing perspectives of the same issues and the technique is endorsed by a number of writers including Lazarton, (2000) and Nunan, (1992). A mix of quantitative and qualitative data concerning the same issues is considered to provide complementary information from differing

perspectives. Nunan (1992) notes, that seeking responses to closed questions will help a researcher to quantify and analyze data while “Responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondents want to say” (p. 143).

In summary, the questionnaire contained demographic questions about gender, age, nationality and teaching experience; thirteen closed response items addressing aspects of the research questions and finally three open-ended questions. This mix was to allow respondents an opportunity to add personal observations and perceptions that might not have been covered by the closed response items but which might contribute important additional information to the investigation. The questionnaire can be viewed at Appendix A.

The Participants and Settings

Twenty-two English language (EL) teachers agreed to complete the questionnaire. The participation rates varied from institute to institute, possibly a reflection of the support the authorities at the respective institutes gave to the research. The twenty-two participants comprised teachers working at the Sharjah Institute of Technology, the Institute of Applied Technology, Al-Ain, the Institute of Applied Technology, Fujairah. One hundred percent of the English teachers working at the Sharjah Institute of Technology volunteered to participate in the study. At the Institute of Applied Technology, Al-Ain, 50% of the English teachers volunteered to participate in the study, and at the Institute of Applied Technology, Fujairah 42% of the English teachers volunteered to participate in the study. The participants included both experienced and novice English teachers, reflected in their teaching experience which ranged from two years to thirty years. The countries of origin included America, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates.

Pilot Study

I piloted the questionnaires with four English teachers. Two were full-time teachers, one was a part-time teacher, and one was a former English teacher. The former English teacher provided responses based on reflections of what was previously done with ICT when she was teaching. All were enrolled in the MA TESOL Program at the American University of Sharjah. The questionnaires were piloted in December 2010. The purpose of this pilot study was to check the reliability

and validity of the questionnaire statements and open ended questions. After piloting the questionnaire, the participants agreed that the questionnaire and open ended questions were valid and reliable. Therefore, the questionnaire and open ended questions were not altered and were used for the study in the original form.

Data Collection

Data was collected from March 2011 to May 2011. Before commencing the data collection, the Director of the Sharjah Institute of Technology and the principals of the Institutes of Applied Technology, Al-Ain and Fujairah campuses were contacted for permission to conduct research with their English teachers who volunteered to participate. Following approval from the Director of the Sharjah Institute of Technology the questionnaire was distributed to the thirteen English teachers at that institute who agreed to participate in the study. Permission was also granted by the principal of the Institute of Applied Technology, Al-Ain, and he nominated a contact teacher through whom the questionnaires were distributed and collected. There was no response from the principal of the Institute of Applied Technology, Fujairah and so the questionnaire was distributed to three English teachers through a volunteer.

Instruments: Questionnaires

The role of the questionnaire in data collection is widely acknowledged and is considered to be profoundly useful as an investigative instrument. A number of writers have endorsed the fundamental role of the questionnaire including Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2003). In this current study the questionnaire was used to collect responses to a set of questions answered by all the participating teachers. There were three sections to the questionnaire; first, questions to establish demographic information, second, closed response items concerning attitudes and perceptions about use of ICT in the English classrooms of the participants, and finally, three open-ended questions.

In the first section the standard information concerning gender, age, nationality, and teaching experience was requested. In the second section close-ended statements were used in combination with a five point Likert scale to allow respondents to register their level of agreement or disagreement. This set of items was used to determine the attitudes and perceptions of the participating teachers

concerning the use of ICT in English classrooms. The third section contained three open-ended questions which were used to seek qualitative data that might highlight teachers' individual attitudes and perceptions about the role of ICT in their classrooms. Open questions enable the participants to express their responses in a free manner, explain their responses, and reduce the limitations imposed by the pre-set categories of closed items. The addition of open ended questions in an otherwise closed item instrument is often made to provide some balance to the data since in responding to open-ended questions participants are likely to say what they want in their own way. According to Nunan (1992) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2003), this can result in unexpected data that might be helpful to a study, especially where beliefs and perceptions are concerned.

Interviews

In order to further understand teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the use of ICT in English classrooms of the teachers at the three institutes involved in the study, interviews were employed to balance the mostly quantitative approach of the questionnaire. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2003) note that, "Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (p. 267). In addition, qualitative researchers often conduct interviews in order to give participants the opportunity to share their stories without following a prearranged format (Lichtman, 2006). In this study four teachers were interviewed. They were the teachers who volunteered to be interviewed by indicating their readiness in the appropriate section of the questionnaire.

The four interviewees were two teachers from the Sharjah Institute of Technology, one male and one female, one male from the Institute of Applied Technology, Al-Ain and one male from the Institute of Applied Technology, Fujairah. This spread of interviewees meant that at least one teacher from each of the three institutes participated in this part of the study.

The interview questions were prepared to further probe teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the use of ICT in their classrooms. The questions covered issues such as use of available technological devices in their classrooms, the use of trainings received from their institutes, the use of language teaching tools, the frequency of use of these tools in teaching, the use of the most effective tool that they have ever come

across, and the reasons for the use of ICT in EL classrooms. The full set of prepared interview questions can be seen at Appendix B. During the interview, additional questions were used to probe the answers of each respondent for further clarification or for additional views. The use of refocus questions was occasionally necessary to keep a respondent on task. The TEDS approach, which involves probing and seeking clarification, was an important part of the interview process.

Each of the interviews was conducted at the convenience of the interviewees. Interviews commenced with an explanation of the reasons for conducting interviews in the context of the investigation. Whenever the interviewees provided brief answers the TEDS (T=tell, E=explain, D=discuss, S=specify) technique was used to try to obtain as much information as possible. For example, an interviewee might be asked, “Could you tell me more about ...?” or “Could you explain ... a little more?” or “Could you discuss the issue a little more?” or “Could you specify any particular issue/situation?” and so on. At the end of each interview, the participant was thanked for willingly participating in this aspect of the investigation. With respect to recording interview data, Nunan (1992) claims that, “The most sensible procedure would probably be to tape record interviews, but supplement these with written notes” (p. 153). Following this advice, the interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants, and notes were taken during the interview.

Richards (2003) states, “In interviews we are only concerned with encouraging the speaker, not with putting our point across, so the skills we need are still collaborative but they are focused on drawing from the speaker the richest and fullest account possible” (p. 50). Therefore, throughout these interviews no attempt was made to put across other viewpoints or to criticize the ideas of the interviewees. The researcher must word the interview questions very carefully in order to gain maximum information during the interview (Richards, 2003). Following the advice of Richards, caution was taken with the preparation of interview questions and follow up questions that were framed during the interviews. This can be seen by the use of the modal “could” in the TEDS probe questions.

Overall, the qualitative data collected through interviews complemented and consolidated the data obtained through the questionnaire. Through the interviews, attitudes and perceptions of teachers about using ICT in EL classrooms were gathered in detail. The findings of the interviews provided further insights on practical

implications and also helped in illustrating some of the limitations of this research study, suggestions, and recommendations.

Data Analysis

Data were attained by both quantitative and qualitative methods through a questionnaire and interviews. Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed to find out the frequencies and percentages of the responses. The questionnaire statements were grouped into four subgroups. Subsequently, the mean value for each subgroup was calculated. Descriptive analysis of the qualitative data collected through the questionnaire's open-ended questions and the interviews' questions were used to support and clarify the quantitative data. Data analysis and findings are discussed and illustrated with figures, and tables in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the research study findings. Following the introduction the second section deals with the demographics of the participants. The third section discusses the data analysis methods while the fourth section presents the responses of the participants to the questionnaire, open-ended questions, and interview questions in general. The fifth section deals with the participants' responses by institution to the questionnaire, open-ended questions and interviews. Finally, the sixth section presents an analysis of the demographic data. The relationship of the research questions to the findings will be discussed in sections three, four, and five.

Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of EL teachers working at the Institutes of Technology in UAE concerning the use of ICT in teaching English.

As explained in an earlier chapter, the data for this study were collected from teachers at the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) Al-Ain, Institute of Applied Technology (IAT) Fujairah, and Sharjah Institute of Technology (SIT).

Data were collected through questionnaires, open-ended questions, and by conducting interviews with the participants who consented to be interviewed. An overall analysis of the data was made in the first phase of the study by examining the responses of the participants to the questionnaires, the open-ended questions, and by listening to the recorded responses to the interview. The data were then tabulated, and quantified when necessary, by statement, by relation to research questions, and by institute. Further data analysis was undertaken during the second phase of the study through questionnaire analysis in which statements were grouped by what they revealed with respect to the research questions. From this point, the mean value of the responses per research question was calculated. These mean values were used to provide some insight into the level of agreement the participants revealed concerning each group of statements. The mean values ranged between one and five, where a value of five represented strong agreement and a value of one represented strong disagreement.

Demographics

Eighteen male EL teachers and four female EL teachers participated in the study. All of them completed the questionnaire and four of them were interviewed. All participants were experienced teachers. Table 1 summarizes the demographic data of EL teachers who participated in the study.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the EL Teachers who participated in the study

Gender	Experience				
	1 -5 years	6 – 10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	Above 20 years
Males (n=18)	0	2	9	5	2
Females (n=2)	1	1	2	0	0

Data Collection Instruments

A thirteen statement questionnaire which used a five point Likert scale of agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree was the main instrument in this study. The use of the questionnaire was intended to provide information on the use of ICT in the classrooms of the respondents. The questionnaire responses were tallied and percentage responses for the five points on the Likert scale were calculated.

The data obtained from the three data collection methods were compared in two ways. First, responses were compared for recurrent phrases or themes. For example, statement twelve on the questionnaire was concerned with student motivation. In open ended question two, student motivation was listed as an advantage of ICT. The recurrent phrase was student motivation. Therefore the responses on the questionnaire and the open ended question two were compared with respect to student motivation. In the same manner recurrent themes were identified among the three data collection vehicles.

Second, the responses of the questionnaire, open ended questions and interview questions were compared to determine if each represented the same level of agreement. In other words, the three were examined to determine if the responses

were consistently positive or negative relating to ICT use. Responses to the interview questions were compared to the responses on the questionnaire to determine if the responses matched. The correlation was considered positive if the interview question responses were consistent with the questionnaire responses.

Data Presentation

The data collected for this study is presented in two ways. The responses of the participants to the questionnaires, open-ended questions and interviews are presented in tables. The participants' responses to the open-ended questions are also presented in a bar chart in order to illustrate an overall pattern. For the questionnaire, results were calculated as percentages. Interview responses were tabulated by school for each question.

Questionnaire statements one, two and three related to research question one: What is the extent of teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study? Statements four, eight and nine related to research question two: For what pedagogic purpose is ICT used? Statements seven, twelve and thirteen related to research question three: What pedagogic change does ICT bring? Statements five, six, ten and eleven related to research question four: What factors prevent teacher use of ICT in English language classrooms in the Institutes of Technology investigated in this study? The results are arranged to show the respondents' answers to each of these questions.

For each open-ended question, the frequency for each response was calculated, but the open-ended questions were analyzed separately. For open-ended question one, the responses were categorized into four categories; resources, websites, audio visual aids and software applications. The frequency for each of these categories is depicted in a bar chart. For open-ended questions two and three, participant responses were categorized into two categories; topics pertaining to teaching or the teacher and topics related to the student.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

The data on the questionnaire was quantified by giving strongly agree a value of five, agree a value of four, neutral a value of three, disagree a value of two and strongly disagree a value of one. Quantifying the data provided a way for descriptive statistical measures to be calculated. Once quantified the mean for each set of

statements by research question was calculated. The mean values were considered supportive of the study for values between three and five; ambivalent to the study for a value of three; and not supportive of ICT use in the classroom for values between one and three.

In general, it was found that the responses to the questionnaire questions show a positive attitude towards ICT, its use, and its role in education. Table 2 gives a summary of the responses of the participants in general. The mean of the responses for the questionnaire was found to be 4.09, which suggests that the participants generally agreed with the statements presented in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Teachers' Attitude in General towards Using ICT in EL Classes

Q	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	EL/EFL teachers will use ICT effectively in classroom if they are given appropriate training.	68%	23%	9%		
2.	I like teaching English using the available technology.	68%	32%			
3.	I use technology daily in my lessons.	50%	36%	9%		5%
4.	I use ICT for keeping students attentive in the class.	36%	54%	5%		5%
5.	I take responsibility for training with new devices when the institute fails to provide any.	9%	64%	14%	9%	4%
6.	My institute organizes workshops/training concerning use of ICT in teaching.	13%	56%	13%	5%	13%
7.	Using ICT enhances student learning.	50%	45%	5%		
8.	I make use of language learning websites to teach English.	50%	40%	5%	5%	
9.	I use technology mostly for PowerPoint presentations.	31%	36%	5%	28%	
10.	Using technology without adequate training will produce unsatisfactory results.	23%	45%	9%	23%	
11.	I receive appropriate technical support for using ICT from my institute.		64%	18%	9%	9%
12.	Using technology helps to increase students' motivation.	45%	50%	5%		
13.	Technology helps me to clarify the difficult language items for students.	27%	73%			

Questionnaire responses to statements one to three showed a mean value of 4.52 which indicated a strong agreement amongst participants that ICT is used in their

classrooms. Research question one was concerned with the extent of ICT use in the classroom and the strength of the responses indicated that ICT was used extensively in the classrooms of the participants.

The mean for the statements pertaining to research question two was 4.09. Since this mean value indicated agreement with the statements pertaining to research question two, participants were in agreement with using ICT for keeping students attentive, using language learning websites to teach English, and using PowerPoint presentations. These responses addressed research question two pertaining to the pedagogic purposes for using ICT.

The mean for the statements pertaining to research question three was 4.38. The strong agreement value suggested these respondents believed that ICT enhances student learning, helps to increase student motivation and helps to clarify difficult language items. These are the pedagogic changes resulting from use of ICT identified by the participants.

Slightly different results were found when the mean was calculated for the statements pertaining to research question four. The mean for those statements was 3.54 which suggested that the participants were undecided between neutral and agree on the issue of the existence of certain factors that inhibit the use of ICT in the classroom. However, this mean value suggested that teachers were in agreement that lack of training, and insufficient technical support were factors that may prevent ICT use in classroom. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT and the strength of the responses indicated that training and technical support may hinder ICT use in the classrooms of the participants. All of the calculated mean values are within the range to provide support for the findings from the questionnaire.

With respect to training, the first statement addressed whether teachers would use ICT effectively in the classroom if given appropriate training, and nearly 90% of the participants agreed. The level of agreement was also high for statement eight. Many of the teachers agreed with using language learning websites to teach English. According to Table 2, the participants agreed that ICT can be used to keep students attentive in the class. Half of the participants strongly agreed with using technology daily in class lessons, which is evident in the responses of the participants to statement three. These responses indicated that in general the teachers who completed the questionnaire viewed training as important and agreed that technology would

enhance teaching, interest students and that they were predisposed to use it in their teaching. The level of agreement decreased for questions concerning training and the role of the institutes in meeting this responsibility for the participants. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes of ICT use in the classroom and the strength of the responses indicated that ICT was used extensively, used to keep students attentive, and used to enhance teaching.

Results derived from the questionnaires and the interviews indicated that the majority of the teachers from IAT and SIT appeared to use ICT in their EL teaching. For example, statements 2, 3, 8 and 9 were aimed to identify the use of ICT in teaching, and the responses indicated ICT was used in most of their lessons. Research question one was concerned with the extent of ICT use in the classroom and these responses indicated that ICT was used frequently in the classroom.

Similarly, statements 7 and 13 were aimed to discover if ICT enhances student learning and if technology clarifies difficult language items. Research question two was concerned with pedagogic purposes and the strength of the responses indicated that enhancing student learning and clarifying difficult language items were two of the pedagogic purposes for ICT use. Research question three was intended to determine the pedagogic change ICT brings, and based on the strength of the responses to statements 4 and 12 ICT assisted with keeping students attentive and motivating students. However, the responses to statements 6 and 11 indicated the teachers were not provided with sufficient training and appropriate technical support for using ICT. Research question four was concerned with the factors that may hinder ICT use in the classroom and these responses indicated that the necessary training and support was not received which may hinder effective use of ICT in the classroom.

Open-ended Questions

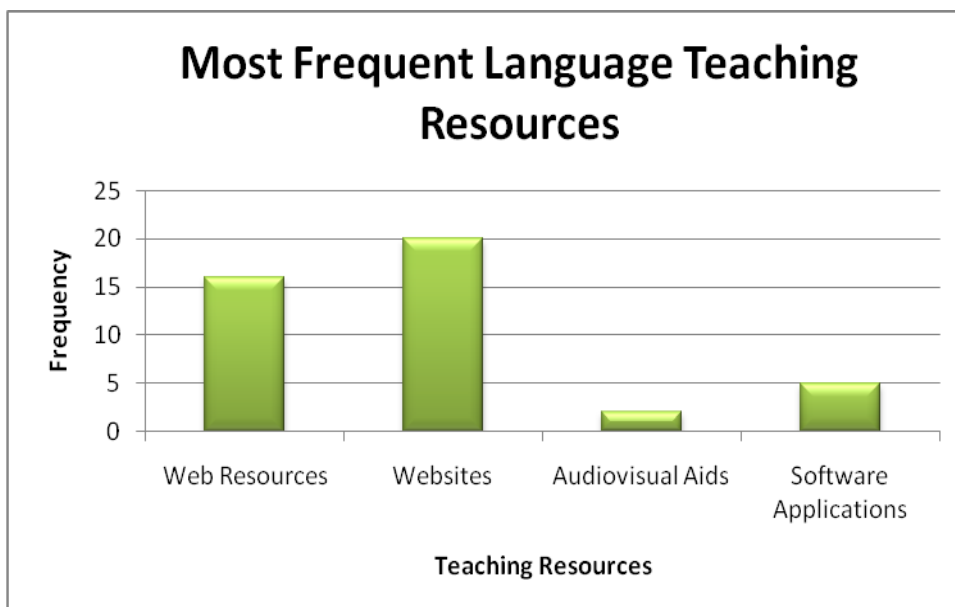
In response to the first open-ended question, the participants named all the resources used in the classroom. According to the responses, the following ICT learning resources were identified:

- language games websites
- interactive language learning websites
- British Council websites
- online quizzes & videos

- websites for listening and speaking skills
- audio recordings
- web dictionaries
- Hot Potato software application
- web quests
- PowerPoint presentations.

Additionally, ICT learning resources used frequently were blogs, discussion boards, wikis, Moodle, chat rooms, and interactive websites. These responses were grouped as previously indicated and the results can be viewed in Figure 1. Research question one was concerned with the extent of ICT use in the classroom and the strength of the responses indicated that ICT was used extensively in the classrooms of the participants.

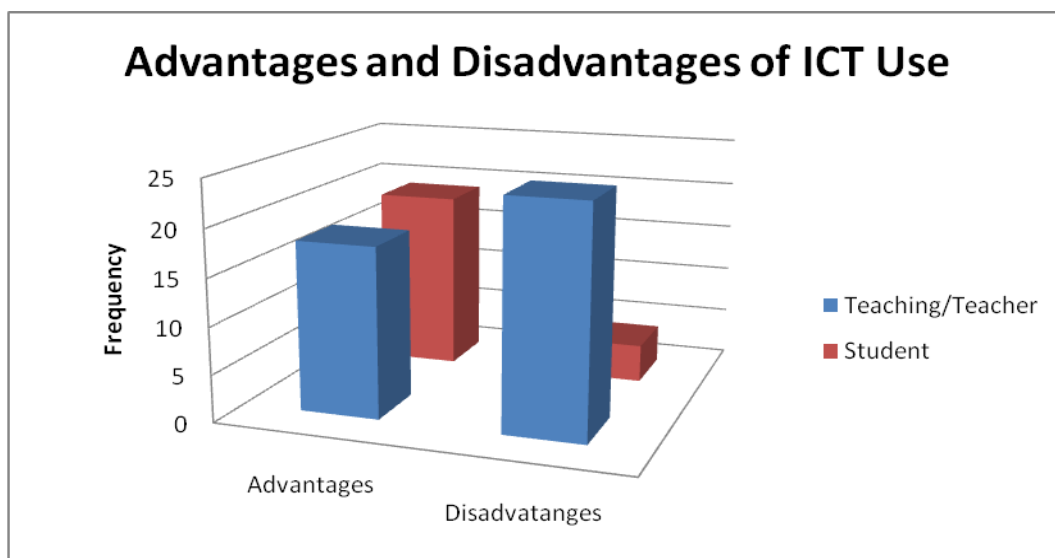
Figure 1: Most frequent language teaching resources



The second open-ended question asked participants to state the advantages of using ICT resources in language classrooms. The advantages that the majority of the teachers mentioned were the ability of ICT resources to motivate students, bring variety to the classroom, clarify difficult language items, keep students busy and active, allow students to be creative, help teachers save time, and allow access to

immediate information. Other advantages mentioned were that ICT resources have helped to reduce the monotony of traditional instruction, helped teachers produce dynamic and interactive lessons, and have encouraged learning outside the classroom. Figure 2 shows the frequency of responses to teacher related advantages and disadvantages and student related advantages and disadvantages. All of the aforementioned factors alluded to the pedagogic changes that ICT may bring and therefore addressed research question three.

Figure 2: Advantages and disadvantages of ICT use



The third open-ended question dealt with the disadvantages of using ICT in classrooms. A majority of the participants pointed out unexpected technical problems, power failures, damage to and loss of data as crucial disadvantages of using ICT. Other participants indicated the difficulty that many teachers faced when preparing technology-based lessons due to lack of training and knowledge, lack of time to prepare technology based lessons, issues with classroom management, and difficulties in controlling student use of computers as disadvantages of using technology in classrooms. Yet others expressed concerns about the creativity and innovation required on the part of teachers to meet with sudden technology failures if the lessons were dependent absolutely on technology. Some of the teachers also pointed out the danger of diminishing the communication skills of students due to the over use of technology in EL teaching. Additionally, a few believed that excessive

use of ICT could cause a decrease in verbal communication skills. Since all of the above represent factors that hinder ICT use in the classroom, the information addressed research question four.

Interviews

Generally, the teachers who participated in this study valued ICT devices and many felt that they could not now teach without using ICT. Complete interview data may be viewed in Appendix C. All teachers agreed that they received some sort of training. However, the extent and the length of such training differed. The language teaching tools used the most were Smart Boards, CDs, and websites. A few teachers did not rely solely on ICT and preferred to use paper and pencil activities.

The responses show that among this group of teachers PowerPoint is not used on a regular basis. One person even believed it to be obsolete, and there were better tools available such as Keynote and tools on educational websites. However, most still use it for infrequent classroom tasks such as checking for grammar or parts of speech. As for ICT use in teaching lessons, all stated that they used ICT on a daily basis. Some use was mandated by administration. However, those teachers recognized the value of ICT, enjoyed its use in class, and would now use it with or without compulsion to do so. Most of the respondents felt that there was no specific number of times that ICT should be used in class. Agreement also occurred with the point that as long as the ICT use serves stated educational goals, its use is warranted. Additionally, all of the schools have made huge investments into providing current technology devices and equipment. In return, the administrations are expecting the teachers to make good use of this investment. One respondent warned that over use of technology can cause distractions. Still another warned that a lack of clear learning objectives could make ICT efforts futile. These teachers said they found Microsoft Word and wikis to be the most effective ICT resources in their language teaching.

Based on the responses to the interview questions, the participants believed that listening, speaking, writing, and grammar could be taught better through the use of ICT. Using ICT would allow students to listen repeatedly until fluency in pronunciation was achieved. ICT would also allow more exposure to authentic English language materials to assist with grasping the context of the English language. Using email, social networking, and chat environments would allow

students to receive more feedback from each other, and allow the writing to become more personal and meaningful to the individual student.

Research question one was concerned with the extent of ICT use in the classroom and the responses to the interview questions indicated that ICT was used on a daily basis in the classroom and teachers did not feel they could teach without using ICT. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT and the responses indicated that teachers used ICT to check grammar and parts of speech, for teaching lessons, in response to administrative mandates, and to expose the students to authentic English language materials. Research question three was intended to seek the pedagogic change ICT brings and based on the responses teachers used ICT to serve intended educational goals, to provide additional feedback to students, and to allow materials to become more personal and meaningful to students.

Common Findings

The overall responses to the questionnaire were consistent among all teachers regarding statements 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 and 13. For these statements, the respondents generally agreed with the statements as can be noted in Table 2. Research question one was concerned with the extent of ICT use in the classroom and the strength of these responses indicated that the participants liked teaching using ICT and used ICT daily. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT, and these responses indicated that teachers used ICT to keep students attentive and used language learning websites to teach English. Research question three was intended to seek the pedagogic change ICT brings and based on the strength of the responses, teachers used ICT to enhance student learning, increase student motivation, and clarify difficult language items for students.

There were three major common findings for the open-ended questions. First, most of the responses indicated that ICT was time saving. Second, most agreed that using ICT assisted with classroom management. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT and these responses indicated that ICT was used to save time and assisted with classroom management. Third, most also agreed that technical difficulties and loss of instructional time due to technical issues, along with inadequate IT support were major hindrances to using ICT in the classroom. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher

use of ICT and these responses indicated that technical difficulties, loss of instructional time, and inadequate technical support was factors that prevented ICT use in the classroom.

Through the interviews, many advantages and disadvantages of ICT use were raised. The only common finding among all of the interview responses was that all agreed that there was a lack of technical support at the participants' schools. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT so these responses indicated that a lack of technical support was a factor that prevented ICT use.

Site Differences

IAT Teacher Responses to the Questionnaire

With regard to training and workshops the participants from IAT were clearly less positive than participants overall. For instance, there was a 31% difference between the responses of participants from IAT and the overall questionnaire results with regard to receiving training from their institute. Another difference concerned the effectiveness of teacher use of ICT if provided with appropriate training, where a 9% difference between the overall questionnaire and participants from IAT was recorded. There was also a difference on taking responsibility for training if none is provided which had a 5% difference between IAT responses and overall responses. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT and the strength of the responses indicated that for teachers at IAT training may affect ICT use in the classroom.

Table 3: IAT Teachers' Responses and Overall Responses to the Questionnaire

		IAT Responses	Overall Responses
Q	Statement	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Agree/ Agree
1.	EL/EFL teachers will use ICT effectively in classroom if they are given appropriate training.	100%	91%
5.	I take responsibility for training with new devices when the institute fails to provide any.	67%	73%
6.	My institute organizes workshops/training concerning use of ICT in teaching.	100%	69%
9.	I use technology mostly for PowerPoint presentations.	56%	67%
10.	Using technology without adequate training will produce unsatisfactory results.	100%	68%
11.	I receive appropriate technical support for using ICT from my institute.	56%	64%

SIT Teacher Responses to the Questionnaire

The overall responses to the questionnaire were consistent with the responses of the EL teachers at SIT to the questionnaire. However, there was a remarkable difference of opinion with regard to training and workshops concerning the use of ICT in EL teaching (Table 4). For instance, there was a 23% difference between the responses of participants from SIT and the overall questionnaire results with regard to receiving training from their institute. Another difference concerned the use of PowerPoint presentations, where a 22% difference between the overall questionnaire and participants from SIT was recorded. There was also a recorded difference on using technology without adequate training, which had a 9% difference between SIT responses and overall responses.

Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT and the strength of the responses indicated that for teachers at SIT training may affect ICT use in the classroom. Research question two was concerned with the

pedagogic purposes of using ICT and the responses of SIT teachers indicated using ICT for PowerPoint presentations.

Table 4: SIT Teachers' Responses and Overall Responses to the Questionnaire

		SIT Responses	Overall Responses
Q	Statement	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Agree/ Agree
6.	My institute organizes workshops/training concerning use of ICT in teaching.	46%	69%
9.	I use technology mostly for PowerPoint presentations.	85%	67%
10.	Using technology without adequate training will produce unsatisfactory results.	77%	68%

IAT Teacher Responses to the Open-ended Questions

Responses of EL teachers from IAT to the open-ended questions (see Table 5) matched questionnaire and interview findings. Although there were a number of ICT learning resources mentioned, mostly Web 2.0 resources were used on a daily basis. It was clear from the interview data that some teachers prepared tasks for students that enabled the use of paper and pen in EL classrooms. This was important to many of the teachers participating in this study since they believed students needed to practice writing for written examinations. Other teachers mentioned the use of ICT as a time saving factor. However, in the interview it was pointed out that at times ICT caused a loss in instructional teaching time due to technology failure, power failure, and delays in getting assistance from IT technicians and so on. With the second open-ended question, IAT teachers indicated that ICT based lessons helped with classroom management. However, answers to the third question suggested the use of ICT caused classroom management problems and distracted students.

Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT and these responses indicated that IAT teachers used ICT for the pedagogic purposes of saving time, enabling the use of paper and pen for writing, and assisting with classroom management. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT and the strength of the responses indicated that, according to IAT teachers, power failure, technology failure, failure to receive technical support, and distracting students were factors that prevented ICT use in the classroom.

Table 5: Responses of EL Teachers at SIT and IAT to the Open-ended Questions

SIT EL Teachers	IAT EL Teachers
1. What are your most frequent language teaching resources?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British council websites • Websites for language games • Interactive language learning websites • Videos • Online quizzes • PowerPoint • Listening/speaking websites • Web applications • Web dictionary • Audio recordings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion boards • Wikis • Moodle • Blogs • Web quests • Mac applications • Discussion board • Websites • Chat rooms
2. In your view, what are the advantages of using ICT in classrooms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student motivation • Variety of teaching materials • Spot on information • Independent learning • Interactive & Easy to use • Students' attention • Creativity • Interesting lessons • Reduces teacher talk time • Facilitates teaching • Saves time and efforts • Facilitates classroom management • Enhances learning processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased students' attention • Time saver • Meets students' needs • Facilitates out of class learning • Tracks students' work and activities • Active teaching and learning • Increased motivation • Classroom management • Interactive lessons • Spot on information
3. In your view, what are the disadvantages of using ICT in classrooms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over dependence • Reduce in teacher talk time • Infrequent system failures • Sudden network failure • Unpredictability of ICT resources • Teachers' lack of confidence • Lack of confidence with new software • Time consuming • Teachers' inability in using ICT due to the lack of trainings • Problem of maintenance due to the quick development of ICT • Waste of time if not used properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to control students' use of computer • Damage and loss of data • Electricity failure • Classroom management problems • Lack of communication • Causes students' distraction • Decline of communication skills • Cannot replace teacher's touch on education

SIT Teacher Responses to the Open-ended Questions

In response to open-ended question one, SIT teachers reported using language learning websites the most. These include websites for interactive language learning, language games, and listening and speaking. Blogs and discussion boards were the second most used language teaching resources mentioned. Online resources for teaching English were reported as the third most frequently used language teaching tool. There were a variety of responses given for open-ended question two. However, some of the common advantages listed were student motivation, time saving practices, and assisting with classroom management. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT and these responses indicated that SIT teachers used ICT for the pedagogic purposes of motivating students, saving time, and assisting with classroom management. These responses also align with the responses given by IAT teachers.

The two common disadvantages identified in response to open-ended question three were technical difficulties and waste of time due to technical issues. Research question four was concerned with the factors that prevent teacher use of ICT and these responses indicated that, according to SIT teachers, technical difficulties and the waste of time factors hindered effective ICT use in the classroom.

Interviews with IAT Teachers

Two teachers were interviewed from IAT Al-Ain and IAT Fujairah. Their responses in the interview matched their responses to the questionnaire and open-ended questions. However, some new and interesting information emerged. When asked about the advantages of ICT, one teacher said, “Easy access to authentic materials is a great advantage of ICT.” It is believed that access to authentic materials provide students with a realistic immersion into English language use and assists with English language acquisition. Laia & Gu (2011), Thorne, Black & Sykes (2009), Zhao (2007), and Garrett (2009) all agreed that the use of authentic materials can aid in the process of second language acquisition. When asked about the key factor for the appropriate use of ICT in the EL classroom this same teacher said, “It is the attitude of the teacher towards ICT that determines everything.” Therefore, positive attitudes about ICT and its use in class are considered by these teachers to be key factors to successful implementation of ICT. Another teacher mentioned that training and

support provided by the institute was an important factor to successful implementation of ICT in teaching. Research question three was concerned with pedagogic change and the responses of IAT teachers indicated that accessing and using authentic materials were types of pedagogic changes made by IAT teachers.

The interviews with EL teachers from IAT also pointed to the fact that teacher use of ICT would depend more on the attitude of the teachers than on training. This may account for the difference of opinion to the first statement. If the teachers had a positive attitude that ICT implementation would take place with adequate training, this positive attitude would lend these teachers to promote ICT implementation even if the appropriate training was not received. The IAT teachers also spoke about the training and workshops received from their institutes, which related to the responses to the sixth statement in the questionnaire. Although in the questionnaire a majority indicated that they used ICT for keeping students attentive, issues related to classroom management and discipline were raised in the interview. It was also found that the teachers at IAT were not given appropriate technical support due to insufficient number of IT technicians. This is believed as a hindrance to the effective use of ICT in teaching. During the interview, it was also pointed out that student use of laptops was difficult to control due to the ease in which students could move from designated tasks to other sites (eg. Facebook), or playing computer games. Research question four was concerned with factors that prevent ICT use in the classroom and these responses indicated that teacher attitude, issues related to classroom management, lack of technical support, and difficulty controlling student laptop use were major reasons why ICT may not be used effectively in the classroom.

However, it was noted that ICT use in classrooms raised the motivation level of students, and students seemed to understand the importance of learning outside the classroom. Research question two was concerned with the pedagogic purposes for using ICT and these responses indicated that student motivation and fostering learning outside of the classroom were pedagogic purposes for using ICT.

Interviews with SIT Teachers

The interviews of the SIT teachers revealed the major challenges with implementing ICT on the SIT campus. These included limited training for implementation of ICT, limited training with available technology, and very little time

devoted to professional development of any kind. Additionally, the lack of training led teachers to lack the confidence necessary to use the technology in class with students. The teachers also feared ridicule from students if mistakes were made using ICT during class. The responses suggested that there was no effective technology support to enhance ICT implementation at SIT. Research question four was concerned with factors that prevent ICT use in the classroom and these responses indicated that limited training, lack of training, and a lack of teacher confidence were factors in this regard.

Interviews with EL Teachers at SIT and IAT

Although the responses to the interview questions were consistent with the questionnaire responses in general, there was some dissimilarity with the responses of teachers from SIT. Major differences in interview responses may be viewed in Table 6. According to the results from the questionnaire, almost every participant was in agreement with statement one. Statement one alluded to teachers using ICT effectively with appropriate training. However, through the interview process it was found that teachers at SIT used ICT in teaching without appropriate training. Another contradiction noted was with statement nine in the questionnaire. Two-thirds of the participants agreed with using technology mostly for PowerPoint presentations. However, in the interview it was only one of the resources mentioned. Moreover, it was also revealed through the interview that SIT teachers believed that using technology without adequate training would produce unsatisfactory results. Additionally, it was also found that despite the expectations, the teachers at SIT were more forthcoming than the other respondents in spite of the supposed advantages of the IAT resourcing.

Table 6: SIT & IAT teachers' responses to the Interviews

SIT EL Teachers	IAT EL Teachers
1. Do you use all these devices in ELT classes? Why and why not?	
<p>Most of them. Now I can't do my teaching without these. It helps me to be organized, saves time. I have to organize everything in advance. It is a visual stimulator.</p>	<p>We use them depending on the activities. Moodle for tracking students' activities, Wikis for writing, Blogs for giving them feedback. We have everything that is required - big network, network engineers are available all the time, and laptops for students and teachers.</p>
2. Do you receive any training from the institute for using ICT in language teaching? If not, what do you do to acquire it?	
<p>One hour training for using smart board. I am trying to learn myself – through internet, reading articles, and by asking the experts (IT teachers).</p>	<p>Yes. We get INTEL – training for integrating technology into English language teaching.</p>
3. What are your most frequent language teaching resources? How often do you use these resources?	
<p>Smart board, CDs, and certain websites. Mostly I use some websites.</p>	<p>Never rely exclusively on technology. Still use paper and pen because it helps to see their mistakes in written form.</p>
4. Do you use PowerPoint Presentations in your ELT classes? What else is used besides PowerPoint presentations?	
<p>I use PPP for teaching grammar, vocabulary and parts of speech.</p>	<p>Obsolete! Use it very seldom.</p>
5. What technology did you find as most effective in your language teachings? Describe how effective it was.	
<p>MS Word – worksheet, easy to manage Online quiz and games help students to practice what they have learnt.</p>	<p>Wikis – its co-operative aspect is incredible. It provides students an opportunity to work together. They are responsible for everything – they write, they send, and they give feedback. Each student can learn at his own pace. Video clips like Mr. Bean are used for listening, speaking and writing.</p>
6. Do you use technology in your classes due to compulsion from the administration or of your own interest?	
<p>Of my own interest.</p>	<p>First, I used it due to compulsion from the administration. Now, I enjoy using ICT in my EL classrooms.</p>
7. What language elements and skills can be taught better through ICT? How?	
<p>Listening for pronunciation and grammar.</p>	<p>Plenty of authentic materials available for all skills. Writing skills also get improved as they send feedback to their assignments, email each other and through online chatting.</p>

Responses of EL Teachers at IAT and SIT

As stated earlier, the main purpose for separating the responses of the participating teachers was to ascertain if there were any differences that might exist between the two schools regarding the use of ICT in each place of work. Some differences were expected as these institutes are managed by two different governments. IAT is managed and run by the Federal Government of the UAE whereas SIT is run and managed by the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah. Moreover, IAT institutes are established at five different locations in the UAE in contrast to SIT which is under the Sharjah Government. As IATs are run by the Federal Government, it was possible that they might have better classroom facilities and superior teacher training to equip the EL teachers with the knowledge required for using ICT for teaching English. Of the nine participants from IAT branches who responded to the questionnaire six responded to the open-ended questions (Table 7).

Table 7: Responses to the instruments

Instrument	% completed SIT	% completed IAT
Questionnaire	100	100
Open-ended questions	100	67

Responses of EL teachers at SIT to many statements in the questionnaire were similar to the responses of IAT teachers. This similarity was especially noted with statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 and 13. However, responses to the sixth statement indicated that teachers at SIT were not given training on the use of ICT whereas all the participants from IAT claimed to have received training from their institute. Interviews with SIT teachers showed that they had been given only one hour of training on the use of interactive white boards, regardless of the number of years employed there. Responses to the fifth statement showed that they undertook the responsibility of training themselves with new ICT resources. This fact was emphasized during interviews: one teacher said that she tried to learn about using technology in language teaching through the Internet, reading online journal articles, and from the experts (IT teachers) at SIT. It could be noted from the responses to

statement 11 that although IAT provided training to their teachers, they were not given sufficient technical support. On the other hand, SIT provided better technical support to the teachers. However, the interviewees from both IAT and SIT claimed they were given insufficient technical support. The interviewees attributed this lack of support from their institutes to the insufficient number of technicians. There were not enough technicians to meet the needs of the teachers concerning ICT implementation.

Table 8: Summary of the Responses of EL Teachers at SIT & IAT to the Open-ended Questions

SIT EL Teachers	IAT EL Teachers
1. What are your most frequent language teaching resources?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British council websites • Videos • Online quizzes • PowerPoint • Hot potato software application • Audio recordings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion boards • Wikis • Moodle • Mac applications • Discussion board • Chat rooms
2. In your view, what are the advantages of using ICT in classrooms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of teaching materials • Reduces teacher talk time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracks students' work and activities
3. In your view, what are the disadvantages of using ICT in classrooms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over dependence • Reduce in teacher talk time • Time consuming • Teachers' lack of confidence and inability in using ICT due to the lack of trainings • Problem of maintenance due to the quick development of ICT • Waste of time if not used properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to control students' use of computer • Classroom management problems • Causes students' distraction • Decline of communication skills • Cannot replace teacher's touch on education

Responses of IAT and SIT teachers to the open-ended questions were similar in many aspects (see Table 8). On the other hand, there was some dissimilarity in the questionnaire responses as shown in Table 9. Responses to the first question in the

open-ended section indicated that the EL teachers at SIT were mostly depending on the usual websites, websites that provided information only, for language teaching whereas teachers of IAT were using Web 2.0 resources which generally have more interactive potential. This may be due to the lack of training offered by SIT to their teachers. A similar finding emerged from the responses to the questionnaire and interview questions.

Table 9: SIT & IAT Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

Q	Statement	SIT		IAT	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
5.	I take responsibility for training with new devices when the institute fails to provide any.	8%	69%	11%	56%
6.	My institute organizes workshops/training concerning use of ICT in teaching.	8%	38%	22%	78%
9.	I use technology mostly for PowerPoint presentations.	38%	46%	33%	23%
11.	I receive appropriate technical support for using ICT from my institute.		69%		56%

Responses of IAT teachers to the questionnaire and interview showed that they were trained to use new ICT resources. As a result, they could use these advanced resources in teaching. Respondents from both institutes had similar views about the advantages of ICT which matched their responses to the questionnaire (statements 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8), and interviews. However, it was obvious from the responses that the teachers of SIT attempted to use all the available technology. One teacher from SIT said, "I use all the technology available to teach English because it allows me to be creative and saves my time." Therefore, even in the absence of effective training, the benefits of using ICT in the classroom can be seen.

Gender Differences

An analysis of the questionnaire data by gender revealed that in general the responses were the same regardless of gender. Key differences were noted in response to all statements relating to training and technical support, statements 5, 6, 10 and 11. Only 67% of the men agreed with taking responsibility for training when none is provided as opposed to 100% of the women. In response to questionnaire statement six, acknowledging training offered in using ICT in teaching, 72% of the men agreed and 50% of the women agreed. The same results [72% of the men and 50% of the women] were obtained in reference to questionnaire statement ten concerning the belief that using ICT without training would produce unsatisfactory results. In response to the question about receiving appropriate technical support, 56% of the men agreed in comparison to 100% of the women. These results imply that women take more responsibility for their training than men, and men acknowledged the availability of training more than women. Additionally, women acknowledged receiving appropriate technical support at a rate that was nearly twice that of men.

Analysis of the Demographic Data

Analysis of the demographic data of the respondents (concerning their age and levels of teaching experience) showed that teachers with more years of experience were reluctant to cope with new technological devices. Those who marked 'neutral' to the statements on the research questionnaire were mostly from this group. The responses of these teachers to the questionnaire also indicated their refusal to take responsibility for obtaining training to use the new devices when the institute failed to provide training. In addition, teachers with more than 20 years of experience seemed to use technology mostly for PowerPoint Presentations. This same subgroup of teachers expressed difficulty with preparing technology based lessons.

The responses to the sixth statement in the questionnaire and the interview data indicated that IAT offered training on the use of ICT in teaching. As a result, IAT teachers were not forced to obtain training elsewhere like the EL teachers at SIT. However, the results showed that IAT teachers still lacked appropriate technical support from their institute, whereas the SIT teachers indicated that they received training.

In conclusion, findings of this study revealed that EL teachers of Institutes of Applied Technology (Al-Ain and Fujairah), and Sharjah Institutes of Technology had positive attitudes about the use of ICT in EL teaching. Participants from both IAT and SIT acknowledged the importance of incorporating ICT into EL lessons. Technology is developing at a quick pace, and students are eager to use and learn about technology. It was found that the IAT provided laptops to all the EL teachers and students, which facilitated the use of ICT. On the other hand, the students at SIT had limited access to computers based on the availability of the computer labs. The dilemma was that these labs were primarily used by IT teachers or for other purposes such as tests, exams, and department meetings.

The next chapter summarizes the major findings of this study. It will also provide some practical implications for teachers and administrators list some limitations of the study and suggest for further research. The chapter will end with the final thoughts of the researcher concerning this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of this study in response to the research questions. The main goals of the research were to discover the extent to which the EL teachers at the Institutes of Technology involved in the study use ICT in teaching, their pedagogic purposes behind using ICT and the pedagogic gains they identified from using ICT in EL teaching, and the factors which hinder their use of ICT in teaching. Implications for administrators and decision makers are also discussed in this chapter. In addition, the chapter also discusses implications for teachers wishing to undertake research on the same or similar topics. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future study are also presented.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study support the views of Zhou, Zhang and Li (2011) and Blake (2008) who believe that the use of ICT in teaching can enhance student learning, increase students' motivation, and help teachers to clarify difficult language items. The findings from this study show that the majority of the teachers who participated in the study have positive attitudes towards using ICT in teaching. The fact that all teachers favor the use of available technology in the classrooms for teaching English is an indication of their positive attitudes. For instance, it was found that all the teachers in the survey, regardless of institution, used ICT resources while teaching with or without any obligatory requirement from their administrations. This may be considered evidence of the positive attitudes of teachers towards the use of ICT in EL classrooms. In addition to the positive attitude towards ICT use in the classroom, it was found that 100% of the respondent used ICT on a daily basis. These results support the work of Bate (2010) who reported that extensive use of ICT in the classroom under the guidance of a teacher has the ability to support and enhance student learning.

There were several benefits for the use of ICT in the classroom that were found in this study. First, ICT was found to save instructional time. Despite the technical issues that may arise from time to time, the teachers in the study found ICT to save a lot of valuable instructional time. Second, the students enjoyed using ICT and wanted to do so. Therefore, the use of ICT assisted with classroom management. Third, the eagerness of the students to use ICT in and out of the classroom kept them attentive and focused on class objectives.

On the other hand, participants in the study in general expressed their concern through the questionnaire, the open ended questions, and the interviews concerning the technical problems faced while using technology their classrooms. The respondents indicated that there were sudden power failures, system failures, and network failures. Moreover, they pointed out that they were not provided with sufficient and timely technical support in response to such issues. At times, these occurrences led to loss of instructional time, but the bigger concern was the resultant hesitance to use ICT due to fear of technical issues.

Overall, the teachers at IAT agreed to the statements of the questionnaire at a much lower percentage rate than the teachers at SIT, but there were some similarities in the responses of EL teachers of IAT and SIT. Both believed that by using technology they could teach difficult language items effectively. Additionally, most of the teachers in the study believed that using ICT resources in teaching English motivates students and enhances the learning process. In addition, most of the participants of this study revealed that they regularly use technology in order to keep the students attentive in class. Nearly all the participants of the study made use of language learning websites such as websites for interactive language learning, language games, and listening and speaking to teach English which is also an indication of their positive attitude about using ICT in English classrooms.

However, there were some clear distinctions between the teachers from IAT and SIT regarding the support they receive from their institutes in using ICT for teaching purposes. All the IAT participants acknowledged that their institutes organized workshops and training concerning the use of ICT in teaching English. On the other hand, fewer than half the SIT teachers agreed that their institute organized workshops or training. Moreover, the teachers from SIT stated in the interviews that they had received only an hour training for using smart boards which was considered wholly insufficient. Clearly there is a need for providing more training in effective use of ICT in teaching English for the EL teachers of SIT.

The study also found that the use of ICT by teachers from SIT brought only satisfactory results. In other words, the use of ICT, with or without training, was found to be beneficial to both the teachers and students at SIT. Another significant difference was that the teachers from SIT depended mostly on the ordinary websites

for teaching English which included websites for language games, grammar, listening materials and websites such as languagegames.org, softschools.com, and ello.org. In contrast, the majority of IAT teachers claimed very good use of Web 2.0 resources such as wikis, blogs, Moodle, and discussion boards for teaching English. IAT teachers appeared more advanced in the use of second generation web resources due to the extensive level of training that was provided to these teachers, the consistency of such training, and the fact that they were supplied with laptop computers as were their students. IAT teachers reported receiving training on a regular basis.

Since IAT had more resources than SIT, it was expected that IAT would implement and use ICT at a much higher rate than the teachers of SIT. Despite the expectations, the teachers at SIT were a great deal more eager to use ICT in the classroom than IAT teachers. This was evidenced by the willingness of the teachers at SIT to use ICT without adequate training and the willingness for these teachers to train themselves or to research ICT use on their own. This study found that the difference in resources did not affect ICT use. The teachers at SIT, with fewer resources available to them, used ICT in a consistent manner as did the teachers at IAT.

But a major difference in the schools was that IAT provided each student with a personal laptop, and SIT teachers shared computer labs. The use of individual laptops sometimes made it difficult for IAT teachers to control student use of these laptops. It was easy for the students to deviate from desired locations and on to social networks, games, or other off task locations. IAT students always had access to a personal computer for ICT use in class. Students at SIT, on the other hand, had very limited access to a personal computer. Computer lab use was limited because the labs were shared and often used for other purposes. Most of the exposure to ICT at SIT occurred through the use of the teacher desktop and projector provided in each room.

Preparing lessons and finding resources for SIT teachers was difficult. Several issues contributed to this difficulty. First, SIT teachers did not have adequate training. Not only did the teachers have to discover best practices independently, the teachers had to plan lessons using ICT. Second, the lack of training made preparing these lessons difficult and time consuming. Third, SIT teachers lacked confidence in using ICT as a result of the aforementioned difficulties.

Teachers at IAT believed that excessive use of ICT would cause a decline in verbal communication skills. This decline would result from limited verbal interactions due to ICT expectations for chatting, email, discussions, blogs, and so. These teachers also believed that teachers must closely monitor ICT use to assist with making sure that students do not lose acquired verbal and written communication skills as a result of use of ICT.

Implications for School Administrators and Teachers

A number of implications can be drawn from the present study. To begin with, all the teachers who participated in the study expressed their interest in making the maximum use of technology in EL teaching. The EL teachers' responses to the questionnaire, open ended questions, and interviews indicated that the respondents believed using ICT resources in teaching helped to enhance student learning, increase students' motivation, and help them clarify difficult language items. Moreover, some of them mentioned that the students liked technology-based lessons. Therefore, it is recommended that school administrators provide EL teachers with better ICT resources that would help the teachers to make the teaching and learning process more productive and interesting. It is further suggested that administrators monitor ICT use and ensure that teachers are taking advantage of the resources offered. It is also noted that teachers incorporate the use of ICT in the classroom to make use of the investments made by administrators and enhance student learning.

Another implication of this study for school administrators was to provide appropriate training to teachers for using new ICT resources in teaching English. All the participants of the study noted that they would use ICT more effectively in teaching if they were given appropriate training. In addition, the majority of them believed that using ICT without adequate training could produce unsatisfactory results. Moreover, many participants revealed that their lack of confidence in handling technology was a hindrance to the effective use of technology in EL teaching. These issues were similar to the findings of Chambers and Bax (2006), Albirini (2006), Akcaglu (2008), and Hussein (2010). Hence, it is suggested that school administrators take necessary steps to provide the EL teachers with adequate training for using technology effectively and confidently in teaching. It is also recommended that teachers take full advantage of the training offered and use it to increase the ICT knowledge base and become more confident with ICT use in the classroom.

Additionally, the study also showed that nearly half of the participants used ICT for presentations – displaying materials using the teacher computer with a data display projector - for teaching English. Participants’ responses to the open ended questions and interviews revealed that nearly half of them were still depending on first generation websites, and using online quizzes, language games, and worksheets for teaching English. However, the remainder of the participants noted their use of Web 2.0 resources in language classrooms. These teachers revealed through the open ended questions and interviews that they made effective use of Web 2.0 resources such as wikis, Moodle, blogs, and discussion boards for teaching English. They also stated that these resources helped them to track the students’ work, to monitor their participation in group projects, and to foster students’ independent learning. Responses of these teachers also revealed that their institutes provided them with training and workshops regarding using ICT resources in EL classrooms. Thus, it can be concluded that EL teachers may use ICT effectively in teaching English if they are given appropriate training and workshops regarding the use of new ICT resources.

Another implication for stakeholders and administrators is that although classrooms are equipped with ICT resources, teachers often do not get timely support to solve the technical issues they face. Through their responses to the open ended questions and interviews the participants raised some of the common issues they face daily in their classrooms. The majority of them mentioned that they faced technical problems, system failures, network failures and power failures while teaching. Moreover, the majority of the participants were not satisfied with quality and amount of technical support they were provided with. Therefore, it is suggested that administrators take measures to provide the EL teachers with timely technical support by appointing required numbers of technical support staff to all the institutes.

All the participants in this study had been impacted in some way by technology failure triggered by power outages, network failure, and system failures. These problems caused a loss of instructional time and frustration for each teacher. Therefore, it is suggested that the administration take the time to ensure that the technology systems in place at each school can accommodate the level and amount of ICT use that is warranted. It is also suggested that teachers have adequate back-up plans to foster ongoing educational progress in light of any technical failure.

Limitations of the Study

This study investigated the attitudes of teachers and perceptions of using ICT in EL classrooms of Institutes of Technology in the UAE. Although there are many technical institutes in the UAE, this study was conducted with only three institutes. Another limitation of this study was that the study was limited to only three Emirates in the UAE, namely Abu Dhabi (Al-Ain), Sharjah, and Fujairah. Ideally, the study should have been extended to as many technical institutes as possible across the UAE. Also, at least one institute from each of the Emirates should have been considered with the study. Unfortunately such a target was not realized due to a number of administrative difficulties. Lastly, no classroom observations were made to compare the claims of participants with their actual practice in the classroom. Classroom observation could have provided reliable data, as the researcher can observe the actual classroom activities, to make a comparison of the responses of the participants to the questionnaire, open ended questions and interviews. Gaining permission to observe in classrooms proved too difficult for the time available for the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limitations of the present study, one of the recommendations for the future is to extend the investigation to more institutes across all Emirates in the UAE. Second, involvement of students would enhance the findings in this sort of investigation. Students would be able to report their views about how English is taught. Appropriate questionnaires designed for students, open ended questions, and interviews with representative samples of students would give more credibility to future studies. Third, actual classroom observation could be undertaken to compare the claims of teachers and students. Finally, involving school administrators may help to get valuable data which could be used to compare with the responses of the teacher participants as well as student participants.

Final Thoughts

A professional teacher is one who makes appropriate use of all the resources available by tailoring them to the needs of the students. As ICT is found effective in EL teaching, it is of vital importance that the educational institutes provide the teachers with required ICT resources and trainings to make the optimum use of the devices. However, it has to be noted that teachers' positive attitude towards the use of ICT in teaching is essential for the appropriate use of ICT in teaching English.

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Appendix A: Part A

Teachers' Views of ICT in EL Classrooms in UAE Institutes of Technology

I would like to thank you for responding to this survey. This survey is carried out as a part of my M.A (TESOL) program at the American University of Sharjah. Please respond to the statements given below by ticking the appropriate box for each statement. The time you put in to complete this survey is appreciated. The result of this survey may be published; so please complete it carefully and genuinely. All your responses will be confidential, and your identity will not be revealed at any time.

1. Gender

Male

Female

Nationality:

2. Teaching Experience: years

3. Number of teaching years at your current place of work:
years

4. The grade level you are currently teaching:

Part B

Directions: Please check (√) the appropriate option that best suits your opinion.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	EL/EFL teachers will use ICT effectively if they are given proper trainings.					
2.	I like teaching English by using the available technology.					
3.	I use technology in my daily lessons.					
4.	I use ICT for keeping students attentive in the class.					
5.	I take up the responsibility of getting trained with new devices when the institute fails to provide.					
6.	My institute organizes workshops/training about using ICT in teaching.					
7.	Using ICT enhances student learning.					
8.	I make use of language learning websites to teach English.					
9.	I use technology mostly for Power Point presentation.					
10.	Using technology without adequate training will produce unsatisfactory results.					
11.	I get enough technical support for using ICT from my institute.					
12.	Using technology helps to increase students' motivation.					
13.	Technology helps me to simplify the difficult language items in the class.					

Part C

1. What are your most frequent language teaching tools? (Example – Web, Internet, computer etc.)

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2. In your view, what are the advantages of using ICT in classrooms?

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3. In your view, what are the disadvantages of using ICT in classrooms?

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Part D

Please fill in the information below if you agree to be interviewed about the usefulness of using ICT in teaching English language. The interview should take around 20 minutes and will present an opportunity to discuss the topic in more detail.

Please tick one of the following:

1. Yes, I would like to be interviewed.
2. No, I do not wish to be interviewed.

If yes, Name:

Mobile Number:

E-mail:

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What technological devices are available in your classroom?
2. Do you use all these devices in ELT classes? Why and why not?
3. Do you receive any training from the institute for using ICT in language teaching? If not, what do you do to acquire it?
4. What are your most frequent language teaching tools? How often do you use these tools?
5. Do you use Power Point presentations in ELT classes? What else is used besides Power Point presentations?
6. How often do you use ICT in your teaching lessons? Why?
7. How often do you think ICT ought to be used in EL/EFL classes? Explain.
8. What technology did you find as most effective in your language teachings? Describe how effective it was.
9. Do you use technology in your classes due to compulsion from the administration or of your own interest?
10. What language elements and skills can be taught better through ICT? How?

Appendix C: Teacher Responses to the Interview Questions

1. What ICT applications are available in your classroom?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart boards • Display Projector • Power Points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wikis • Computer • Moodle • Websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Room • Internet • Blogs
2. Do you use all these devices in ELT classes? Why and why not?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of them. • Now I can't do my teaching without these. • It helps me to be organized, saves time and helps to engage students • I have to organize everything in advance. • It is a visual stimulator. • We use ICT depending on the activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moodle for tracking students' activities, Wikis for writing. • Blogs for giving them feedback. • We have everything that is required - big network, network engineers are available all the time, and laptops for students and teachers. • Helpful to explain difficult items • It keeps students attentive 	
3. Have you receive any training from the institute for using ICT in language teaching? If not, what do you do to acquire it?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One hour training for using smart board. • I am trying to learn myself – through internet, reading articles, and by asking the experts (IT teachers). • Yes. We get INTEL – training for integrating technology into English language teaching. • Trained to use Smart board – it is really a magic tool as we can use colors, access internet, upload videos, write flip charts, turn the pages, save everything and can be sent to students! • Parents are happy about it as they can see the materials covered in the class. 		
4. What are your most frequent language teaching resources? How often do you use these resources?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart board, CDs, and certain websites. Mostly I use some websites. • Discussion boards • Never rely exclusively on technology. • Still use paper and pen because it helps to see their mistakes in written form. 		
5. Do you use PowerPoint Presentations in your ELT classes? What else is used besides PowerPoint presentations?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use PPP for teaching grammar, vocabulary and parts of speech. • Obsolete! Use it very seldom. • It was used daily in the past but now its used once in a week • There are better tools now, for example Keynote • Video clips are used e.g. Mr. Bean. • PPP is used for teaching structure and parts of the speech • Many websites are used now 		
6. How often do you use ICT in your teaching lessons? Why?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily • Everyday 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every single day • It is recommended by the General Manager of IAT and the board of trustees • We have the equipment • ICT use motivates students • It provides exposure to native English
<p>7. How often do you think ICT ought to be used in EL/EFL classes? Explain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long as it serves the purpose. • Using ICT will be a waste of time if used without clear objective • We are not teaching technology but using it for teaching language • Students love teaching using ICT. • Using ICT depends on the nature of the lesson. • There should not be any fixed schedule for using ICT in teaching. • Over use of ICT can cause distraction.
<p>8. What ICT applications have you found to be most effective in your language teaching? Describes what makes it effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS Word – worksheet, easy to manage • Online quiz and games help students to practice what they have learnt. • Wikis – its co-operative aspect is incredible. It provides students an opportunity to work together. • They are responsible for everything – they write, they send, and they give feedback. • Each student can learn at his own pace. • Video clips like Mr. Bean are used for listening, speaking and writing.
<p>9. Do you use ICT in your classes due to compulsion from the administration or of your own interest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of my own interest. • First, I used it due to compulsion from the administration. Now, I enjoy using ICT in my EL classrooms.
<p>10. What language elements and skills could be taught better through ICT? How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening for pronunciation and grammar. • Plenty of authentic materials available for all skills. • Writing skills also get improved as they send feedback to their assignments, email each other and through online chatting. • Skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be improved as ICT allow the learners to practice as much as they want.

Vita

Rajesh Joseph received his first master's degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Calicut, India, in 1999. In the same year he began his teaching career as English teacher in the ministry of education, Republic of Maldives where he worked for four years. He moved to the UAE in 2004 and continued his profession in a private school. He did Certificate in TESOL from Dubai in 2007. After that, in 2008 he began doing his master's program in TESOL from the American University of Sharjah. In the same year, he joined as English teacher at Sharjah Institute of Technology. Currently, he is working at Secondary Technical School in Fujairah.