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Qualitative Understanding on the Challenges and Issues on the Use of Information Communication Technology in English Language Education: Case Study of Jordan English Language Teachers

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ABSTRACT: Jordan's Ministry of Education mandates that EFL, teaching and learning require technology use in the classroom. However, not all English language teachers have implemented technology as an integral part of teaching. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate and elicit challenges and issues on using ICT as an instructional tool. The study was supported by theories of constructivism, multiple intelligences, and problem-based learning. The guiding research questions sought to explore teachers' perspective regarding integrating technology within the English language education curriculum. Qualitative data were collected via face-to-face interviews, field notes from classroom visits, and unobtrusive documents, which included lesson plans and check-out logs for equipment from eight (8) English language practitioners. Open coding was used as themes emerged during the data analysis. A qualitative typological analysis was used to analyze individual cases, and a cross case analysis clustered themes from participants' interview responses. Finding suggested teachers' limited use of technology resulted from inadequate access to equipment, inability to troubleshoot minor technology problems, and the absence of training in learning activities. Recommendations include initiating opportunities for teachers to demonstrate proficiency in embedding technology as a pivotal teaching strategy in all disciplines. By providing effective technology training and embedding technology in instruction, Jordanian student may be better prepared to compete in the technological society of the 21st century and global workforce.

KEYWORDS: Instructional technology, Technology training, ELA instruction, embedding technology.

I.INTRODUCTION

Education has always been seen as an enabler to one country's progress and development. Many countries are investing large percentages of their GDP budget on education. Better infrastructure, schools, universities, systems, curriculum change and new technology are always been sought to provide better education to the learning communities. This is even much more important today than ever. The information revolution, and advancement of technology has certainly made all stakeholders in education to focus on technology to grow and progress into the future. Similar change and progress is seen in the English language teaching and learning. The conventional way of teaching and learning of English language with heavy reliance on selected textbooks within the four walls of a classroom is no longer the norm. More and better educational software and hardware are available to assist and make language classrooms much more interactive, fun and engaging. Language is of great importance to human life and activities. With the advancement of information technology (IT), education and business, English has become an important language for business transactions, and consequently English is an international language vital for communication in almost every country. English has recently established itself as the most popular language in the world, become an international language and is a large-scale language (Crystal, 2003). Given the importance of and entered in Jordanian schools this study was to identify trends in teachers and students about e-learning.



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II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The demand of the English language is growing all over the world because the language plays an important crucial role in human lives (i.e. communication, education, politics, trade and commerce, security, etc.). However, learning a foreign language is never easy and may be a difficult for some learners. English is a foreign language in Jordan. It is not the Lingua Franca for education and government, but is taught in schools and universities as an international language. The English language is only becoming a language of great importance. However the mastery of the language is still very poor among Jordanian students. The students in Jordan learn English in a very unnatural environment where their native language is Arabic. English has been taught as a compulsory subject to Jordanian students from primary school up to university. 12 years of English classes have not organized the expected competency and efficiency among Jordanian students on the use of the English language. Evidently, literature has revealed that learning English in country like Jordan has always been a major task for EFL learners (Al Hosni, 2014) due to many reasons such as the lack proper learning environments, dreadful teaching methods, low students' motivation towards English, limited contact with native speakers and dearth of opportunities to practice English in their daily life (Rababah, 2003; Eslami&Fatahi, 2008; Khan, 2005). Given the importance on using ICT as an instructional tool and entered in Jordanian schools this study was to identify trends in teachers about using technology.

III. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF PRESENT STUDY

Language is a vital tool for communication among people regardless of their native language, ethnic, and skin colors. It is the code we all use to express ourselves and communicate with others. No one can imagine life without language; it is the basic means of oral communication among individuals, groups and people. There are many languages in this world. English is the most popular language becoming gradually more important in the world today. English language is the official language for international business and commerce; language use as the United Nations, for Diplomacy, air traffic control, world banking, science and technology, academic research, space travel and global computing. Evidently, the English language is perhaps the most flexible of all languages. As (Haydn, 2008) states:

“Despite the extraordinary changes of the last few years, one thing appears to remain the same. More people than ever want to learn English. English learners are increasing in number and decreasing in age. We've become used to English growing in popularity across the world. Far from being news, it has become one of the few enduring facts of global modern life”.

English language is the primary language through which Jordan communicates with the world. It is therefore an important language for the cultural, social, and the economic development of the country (Ministry of Education, 2003). For these reasons, English has occupied a prominent place in all educational stages in Jordan. For the economic development in Jordan, King Abdullah the second, issued a royal decree to teach English language in all the public and private schools from the first Grade in 1999 (Ministry of Education, 1999). Since then, the government has designed and developed language policies that will support English language development among students. The major research question the study seeks to explore was as follows:

-What are the specific challenges and barriers faced by the English teachers and school when adopting and using ICT in the English language classrooms?

IV. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many kinds of EFL teachers in Jordan. Some are always seeking ways to improve English language skills among their students while others are teaching English without much concern for this at all. They use the same methods of teaching over and over again. There is not much variety in their teaching methods to enhance student-teacher interactions. Students could be victims of less competent and quality teachers. In particular, with the expansion of technology advancements on educational software and tools, this study intends to investigate the supervisors' perspectives on the use of ICT and technological tools on English language education in Jordan. As one of the important stakeholder and gatekeeper to any improvement and employment of educational technology in the classrooms.

A) Plausible Challenges on Teaching and Learning of English in Jordan

Literature has shown that EFL teachers use various ICT and educational technology in multiple teaching and learning activities. These include using technology inside the classroom to prepare activities and materials for teaching



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pronunciation (Lee, 2008), reading (Akyel&Ercetin, 2009), communication skills (Lee, 2002), and grammar (Al-Jarf, 2005).

According to the English Language National Team in Jordan (2002), the following are some of the specific advantageous of instructional technology and media in English language education (teaching and learning): (1) minimizing the authoritarian role of the teacher by enhancing student-directed learning and emphasizing more active student (FL) acquisition. (2) Facilitating effective management for teachers. (3) Giving the students a rich linguistic environment. (4) Assisting teachers in creating computer-delivered exercises. (5) Providing diversity in teaching methods. (6) Assisting teachers in creating computer-delivered exercise.

Kozma (2006) pursued a study to evaluate the impact of using technology on principals the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) had positive impacts on teachers where they integrated a variety of ETT skills such as Internet, email, and software applications in their teaching. On the other hand one of the primary challenge teacher's face is often (1) the lack of time to perform all the required duties they need to do in the classroom (Haager et al, 2009). (2) As insufficient income, (3) students' misbehavior, insufficiency of peer cooperation, and home life quality has also been considered as sources of stress for teachers. (4) EFL teachers do not have self- confidence in using English in interaction with their students a good number of schools did not have Internet or computers. (5) Al-Noman (2002) suggested that the performance of the EFL teachers' in Jordan is low on the use of instructional media such as wall pictures, cassettes, and flash cards.

B) Studies on the use of ICT in school

Abu Hamid, (2014) study focuses on the teachers' perspectives on two main aspects of the integration of IWBs in four different Jordanian private schools. The study used a 26-item Likert scale. It was administered to 200 teachers in the respective schools. The results revealed that the participating schools spent extensive efforts and resources on integrating IWBs into their contexts. In contrast to what some professionals might have expected and some vendors might try to promote, IWBs did not facilitate teachers' jobs "easier" in terms of relieving teachers' workloads, despite their values as reported by some of the practitioners.

Jwaifell&Gasaymeh, (2013) explained the use of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) by English female teachers in the Modern Systems School in Jordan. The study used qualitative case study approach. Data were gathered through various instruments such as semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and participatory observations. The study suggested that the extent of teachers' use of IWB was related to their perceptions of the five major attributes. These include relative advantages, compatibility, simplicity, trial-ability, and observability.

Literature has also shown that the external and internal factors, both effect on the use of ICT in education (Al-Ruz&Khasawneh 2011; Lin, Wang and Lin 2012; Sang et al. 2011; Tezci 2011). Among the influencing external factors, the common factor is access to computers, and software, and inadequate time to plan the course, and insufficient technical and managerial support (Al-Ruz&Khasawneh, 2011). Among the internal factors were the teachers' attitude, and their confidence on the use of ICT is commonly found in the literature (Al-Ruz&Khasawneh 2011; Chen 2008; Lin, Wang and Lin 2012; Sang et al. 2011; Tezci 2011).

V. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design that has chosen for the current study is the survey research other scholars for example affirms that data analysis comprises open coding (categorizing data) for this research data analysis, the researcher will follow the advice and guidelines provided by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Erickson (1986) and the categories for the Jordan English language teachers' research analysis will be inductively derived, attaching meaning to the categories and themes will emerged from the data. The classified data for this research was fitted together under meaningful categories. Recurring regularities of patterns in the data will be sought, linkages will be found and new themes was likely be emerged among the categories. The themes were then be interpreted in a way that were contributed to new knowledge.

A) Analysis procedure

Conduct individual interviews with the English language teachers to get more accurate and clear information and had some observation, which can give feeling or a sense of the actual teaching and learning of English language in the classrooms. The collection of data start from the March until June 2015, most of the essential collaborators were the boys' secondary schools and mixed schools were in Amman Directorate first and second the in Jordan. Also



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participated some of the different stakeholders in this study and the purpose was to have a better understanding about the teaching and learning of the English language.

B) Results

The most important characteristic of a good teacher considered in a language proficiency (Lange,1990) Butler confirmed (2004) that English teacher must be proficient in the target language and good prepared in using technological tools. (1) Most English teachers expressed their weakness in the language, which made them unable to communicate and interact to the extent that they do not perform their tasks well in the classroom and enhance English language. (2) Teachers do not work to develop themselves with the language, also they were not willing for it originally, where they do not read nor use the technology to develop their abilities. (3) The fluency of teachers in teaching English language is very important, where teachers can interact and communicate with their students freely and smoothly, and one of the reasons of the teacher's weakness is the lack of practicing the language continuously. (4) Teachers considered their weakness as cumulative due to they did not receive a good education from the ground up as students throughout their period of study and they did not receive any practical training or any training sessions during their career, and this explains the everyday abilities as the target English language teacher.(5) The lack of modern teaching techniques (educational technological tools) and using Arabic language in the teaching English in the classroom by teachers caused by the bad policy of the Ministry of Education. (6) It is known widely that the lack of policy support that should be provided by the educational authorities constitutes a disincentive to teach (IssaMeyes, 1994). (7) The curriculum and the high school exam is dominant on the path of learning and teaching English language in Jordan, the rigorous of the curriculum makes it imperative for teachers teaching what is specified and this allows it to be creative for simple degree. It is clear that the challenges and problems that English language teachers lose their motivation which led to a decline in performance in the classroom, which in turn led on student achievement and their level of English, qualitative approach discovered and identified the challenges and problems that English language teachers faced in Jordan.

VI. DISCUSSION

Research question was aimed to investigate the specific challenges and barriers for teachers and schools to use ICT in English language classrooms. The study also revealed that teachers of English are facing many challenges and barriers in teaching English language such as that teachers do not have the motivation to teach and learn, as they do not receive adequate salaries as well as they bear the extra burden of work, society's perception of negative toward teachers and their job. One of the challenges is also the shortage of technological techniques suffered by the schools and other teaching aids were not available in the schools teach only simple language means, and if these technological materials are available the teachers do not use them permanently and effectively. Al-Noman (2002) stressed this fact in his study that in turn revealed that foreign language teachers do not have enough educational technological tools to use in teaching. Add to student discipline problems that disturbed teachers and affect them emotionally and psychologically. With all these challenges, English language teachers in Jordan trying their best to cope with these challenges and obstacles that prevent them from performing their duties effectively. The challenges and problems are so gigantic that many teachers of English were thinking about quitting their jobs to get other jobs. Oga-Baldwin and Praver (2008) supported this fact, which stipulates clearly that teachers who do not have a motive and have no satisfaction, they will not work hard and efficient thus the learning will be adversely affected. As well most of the students assured that an effective teacher is a teacher who can be used and speaks English fluently and vary in the methods of teaching. As where it was clear that the teachers of the English language is incompetent in Teaching English due to their proficiency lack in the language. This fact is also propped by a study conducted by Rababah (2003), which clearly states that English language teachers were ineffective and cannot teach English language effectively in Jordanian schools.

It has been clearly shown that teachers of English language have realized the importance role of technological tools in English language teaching, where all English teachers mentioned that the technological tools such as computers and other tools could help to get students to be excited towards learning English, but the major difficulty that encounters the English language teachers is the deficiency of technological tools in secondary schools have also been mentioned earlier by most English language teachers in the interview. Since the Ministry of Education decided to focus on teaching English language by using technological techniques as they try to provide secondary schools with these technologies and to train teachers with technology skills, which in turn can enhance the teaching of English Language



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(MOE, 2006). Concerning the use of technological techniques in the secondary schools in Jordan. Most of the English teachers acknowledged the key role of technologies in promoting English language learning. However, the problem is in the lack of these technologies, such as computers and their accessories, which hinders them from implementation the use of these computers at the teaching and learning. The teachers of English language proposed that the Ministry of Education must make every possible effort to supply schools with such technology as stated by all the English teachers, "As you can see we have computers in school and the Ministry of Education has trained teachers to use these technologies in the classroom, but the main problem we faced is that Ministry did not supply us with the devices such as compact discs, therefore the ministry should do more efforts to provide these accessories with computers to help us in teaching".

On the other hand, EFL teachers should update their knowledge and provide themselves with the development of the use of technology (Khan, 2005). In order to be qualified as teachers, English teachers should attend training programs, which are deemed to be crucial in this fast changing society. Thus, in order to be sophisticated, teachers should attend these in-service training programs or professional development programs. It can be said that professional development is important for all EF teachers even if they are highly knowledgeable, experienced and trained. Furthermore, English teachers need support and assistance during training programs from supervisors or colleagues to enhance their development in which they can raise their awareness through reflecting on their own situation. This fact is supported by Bailey et.al. (2001) Who state that working in isolation holds teacher's back and subjective experience can't enhance their development.

VII. SUMMARY

This study examines the specific challenges and barriers for teachers and schools to use ICT in English language classrooms. The findings of this research have given more attention to the challenges and barriers for English language teachers the study contributed to the existing body of research regarding the utilization of technological tools and ICT for educational purposes in Jordan. The study recommends that future researchers need to consider the in-depth qualitative studies such as classroom observations and in-depth interviews to investigate the level of ICT use by English language teachers.

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