

Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions Towards the Use of ICT in EFL Classrooms: Moroccan and Korean High Schools

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Abstract

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in many aspects of life, not only, has brought dramatic changes in the paradigms and methods practiced in the developed countries, but also, it has been expanded in developing countries. The present paper attempts to explore and shed lights on the perceptions towards the ICT use in high schools in Morocco, as a developing country, and South Korea, as a developed country. To this end, a mixed method has been designed and conducted with a total of 412 high school students and 212 EFL teachers; including the focus group participants. In this study we review the related literature and we have chosen the two appropriate research instruments to collect the data; a survey questionnaire for 400 students and a survey questionnaire for 200 EFL teachers, and a focus group for 12 students and 12 teachers. The findings reveal the levels of ICT skills of the participated teachers and students. Additionally, the data collected demonstrate that although both students and teachers possess positive attitudes towards the ICT use in EFL classrooms, the ICT integration in learning and teaching has two sides impact, positive and negative, not only on students but on teachers as well. The results recommend that ICT in education should be given higher consideration than it currently receives.

Keywords: ICT integration, ICT in education, English as a foreign language, attitudes, ICT perceptions

1. Introduction

Undeniably, technology revolution, in the 21st century, affects all aspects of modern society as it has a potential role in work place, business, entertainment, health, industry, agriculture and education. According to OECD (2008), technological advancement has demonstrated its transformative impact on the way we speak, learn and socialize in cultural, social and economic spheres in many developed countries. Day by day, Information and Communication Technology makes a dynamic change in our daily life not only in the developed countries but also in underdeveloped countries. Learners, as members of society, have access to electronic devices and spend time online through social media and video streaming websites more than any time before. This has brought ICT smoothly to the field of education and paved the way for new classroom approaches. Thus, as it is claimed by Lotheta (2022), teachers and learners can access to the learning content and teaching materials thanks to the advancements in technologies. Considerably, Livingstone (2003) identified ICT as catalysts for change;

change in learning approaches and in access to information. The use of ICT has changed our traditional ways of learning and proposes the need to rethink education in terms of a more current context (White, 2010). The same idea has been described by Watson (2001), stating that ICT has revolutionized the way people work today and is now transforming education. Consequently, learning cannot be effective and fit in tomorrow’s world if learners are trained in yesterday’s skills. In other words, today’s generation of learners have changed to a great extent (Kress, 2003), and teachers need to tailor their teaching to match the skills, experiences and expectations of their “digital native” students (Prensky, 2001). Furthermore, the quality of education is not only related to offering the infrastructures but making teachers updated by providing training programs about the latest knowledge and information and continuous developing skills, is among the factors that guarantee the quality of teaching (Lotheta, 2022).

As the fact as in modern society, where information is globally shared and more easily accessible, the traditional way of gathering information and knowledge is no longer be sufficient in order to live, work and learn successfully. On that account, it is inevitable to use ICT in the educational field as it concerns how to improve people’s learning with information technologies. In the current article, we tried to reveal the attitudes towards ICT from the eyes of teachers and learners hoping that their perspective can contribute to our understanding and application of ICT as a power to boost the quality of teaching and learning.

The study aspires to explore and analyze the merge between ICT and education through the perceptions of both teachers and students and their use of technology in the EFL classroom. These objectives have been turned into the following empirical questions.

- What are the attitudes of Moroccan and Korean high school teachers towards using ICT in teaching?
- What are the attitudes of Moroccan and Korean high school students towards using ICT in learning?
- How can ICT affect EFL teachers and students’ intrapersonal skills in terms of adaptability and self-development?
- How can ICT affect EFL teachers and students’ inter-personal qualities?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

The data of the study derives from a questionnaire designed and distributed to 200 EFL teachers and 400 high school students from Morocco and South Korea, and a focus group. Table 1 presents additional information about the subjects of the study.

Table 1: Participants

<i>Morocco</i>		<i>South Korea</i>	
EFL teachers	Gender: M 50%, F 50%	EFL teachers	Gender: M 39%, F 61%
	Age: 20~30 (44%)		Age: 20~30 (3%)
	31~40 (37%)		31~40 (52%)
	41~50 (12%)		41~50 (36%)
	50> (7%)		50> (9%)
	Teaching sector: Public 69%		Teaching sector: Public 96%
	Private 20%		Private 4%

	Both		Both 0%
	11%		
	Teaching grade: 1 st grade 16% 2 nd grade 34% 3 rd grade 50%		Teaching grade: 1 st grade 33% 2 nd grade 35% 3 rd grade 32%
	Teaching experience: 1~5: 51.1% 6~10: 24.4% 11~15: 9% 16~20: 4% 21>: 11.1%		Teaching experience: 1~5: 22.6% 6~10: 27.8% 11~15: 16.5% 16~20: 10.3% 21>: 22.7%
High school students	Gender: M 40.5%, F 59.5%	High school students	Gender: M 50%, F 50%
	Age: 14~16 (41.5%) 17~19 (55.5%) 20~21 (3%)		Age: 14~16 (1%) 17~19 (99%) 20~21 (0%)
	Level of study: 1 st year 12.5% 2 nd year 36.5% 3 rd year 51%		Level of study: 1 st year 43.5% 2 nd year 56.5% 3 rd year 0%

2.2 Data Collection

The present study uses mixed method that combines the qualitative and the quantitative data. The quantitative takes the form of self-perspective questionnaires that were written in English and supported by Arabic translation for Moroccan students and Korean language for Korean students. The questionnaires comprise close-ended and open-ended questions for all subjects; the collected data from this instrument are analyzed via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20. The qualitative data emanates from 4 focus groups; two for teachers (6 Moroccans and 6 Koreans) and two for students (6 Moroccans and 6 Koreans). We used this tool as an exploratory data collection method and an effective and efficient way to gather information from a small number of people. Besides, this tool is formed by semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to provide more flexibility for both the researcher to ask additional questions and for participants to provide more details. As the questionnaires, the focus group is translated into Arabic and Korea languages following the same process of translation used for the questionnaires. The translation is used to simplify the meaning of each question in the focus group.

3. Results.

3.1 Questionnaires' results:

The current study's main results are categorized according to: students' ICT skills, Students' attitudes towards ICT, Teachers' attitudes towards using computers, Teachers' self-confidence in integrating ICT, School setting's support of using ICT, and ICT usage in teaching practice.

Students' ICT skills:

To address students’ ICT skills, the researcher asked students to react to a list of tasks in different two settings. The results show that there is between 40% and 60 % among Korean students who can do the listed tasks using ICT and have the access at school whereas about 60% to 80% of Moroccan students can do these tasks but do not have the access to do it at school. On the other hand, more than 80% of students in both countries can do the tasks and have the access of doing it at home environment. As a result of the independent sample t-test, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied via Levene’s F test, in the case of using ICT for completing tasks at school (table 1), there are 12 variations in which are significantly different (in twelve items the value of p is less than 0.05). Thus, there are significant differences between Korean students and Moroccan students in terms of the accessibility of using ICT to complete different tasks at school.

On the other hand, the results getting through the independent sample t-test on using ICT to complete tasks at home (table 2) indicates that there are 8 variations out of 14 in where the p value is <0.05 which means that the variability is significantly different. Additionally, in terms of frequency analysis, more than 80% of students in Korea and Morocco are highly skilled of using ICT devices for different purposes and for tasks related to learning at home in where they have the access to use their ICT devices freely unlike at schools in where the accessibility of using ICT, especially in Moroccan schools, is very low.

Table 2: Students’ ICT skills at school

Tasks at school	Korean student		Moroccan student		t	P
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Look for information on CDs, DVDs, and USB	1.59	.74	1.78	.51	-3.03	.00
Use educational software to learn some lessons	1.74	.82	1.82	.47	-1.26	.20
Watch videos on computer	1.43	.57	1.93	.43	-9.77	.00
Create/edit pictures and videos for presentations	1.58	.73	1.80	.77	-2.97	.00
Use computer for writing	1.38	.54	1.92	.57	-9.60	.00
Use computer for reading	1.70	.69	1.90	.54	-3.20	.00
Put programs in the computer	1.68	.73	2.21	.64	-7.75	.00
Design websites	2.44	.87	2.50	.65	-.77	.43
Download music and files from the internet	1.66	.71	2.08	.56	-6.51	.00
Send and receive emails	1.43	.55	2.07	.54	-11.70	.00
Watch TV or listen to radio on the internet	1.61	.74	2.05	.52	-6.71	.00

Use computer or internet to revise for exams	1.58	.69	1.90	.52	-5.20	.00
Play games on the computer	1.69	.77	2.08	.58	-5.58	.00
Shop on the internet	1.71	.79	2.39	.79	-8.51	.00

Table 3: Students' ICT skills at home

Tasks at home	Korean student		Moroccan student		t	P
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Look for information on CDs, DVDs, and USB	1.30	.71	1.08	.39	3.71	.00
Use educational software to learn some lessons	1.43	.85	1.09	.47	4.84	.00
Watch videos on computer	1.05	.30	1.08	.44	-.66	.51
Create/edit pictures and videos for presentations	1.25	.64	1.29	.76	-.56	.57
Use computer for writing	1.04	.26	1.18	.64	-2.95	.00
Use computer for reading	1.17	.52	1.15	.61	-.26	.79
Put programs in the computer	1.12	.44	1.55	.97	-5.69	.00
Design websites	2.02	1.05	2.02	1.07	.00	1.00
Download music and files from the internet	1.14	.51	1.25	.75	-1.69	.09
Send and receive emails	1.04	.27	1.21	.70	-3.17	.00
Watch TV or listen to radio on the internet	1.10	.44	1.22	.70	-2.04	.04
Use computer or internet to revise for exams	1.11	.43	1.11	.54	.00	1.00
Play games on the computer	1.04	.27	1.22	.69	-3.40	.00
Shop on the internet	1.10	.42	1.75	1.14	-	.00

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Students' attitudes towards ICT:

The majority of students stressed out their agreement with positive statements about the ICT usage of ICT, and their disagreement with negative statements; 62% among Korean students and 75.5% among Moroccan students agreed with the statement "I enjoy learning with ICT". In another positive statement, "I feel comfortable doing tasks using ICT", 69% of Korean students and 72% of Moroccan students answered by "agree/ strongly agree". On the other hand, the highest response was 'disagree/ strongly disagree' with statements such as "I am scared of using ICT in school" (Korean students 64%, Moroccan students 65.5%), "Learning with ICT makes me nervous" (Korean students 73%, Moroccan students 72.5%), and "I know how to use ICT devices but I do not like using it to learn" (Korean students 61.5%, Moroccan students 71.5%). Thus, both Korean and Moroccan students have positive attitudes towards using ICT in their learning processes.

Teachers' attitudes towards using computers:

The findings in this study, also, revealed that the great proportion of teachers from Morocco and Korea agreed with the positive statements towards the use of computers in teaching and disagreed with the negative listed items towards the computer use in teaching. For example, 82% of Korean teachers and 96% of Moroccan teachers agreed with the statement that said, "I feel comfortable with the idea of the computer as a tool in teaching and learning". Also, there were 85 Korean teachers (85%) and 91 Moroccan teachers (91%) believed that "the computer is a valuable tool for teachers". On the other hand, about 72% of teachers from both countries disagreed with the idea that said, "Using a computer in teaching and learning makes me skeptical"

As a result of the independent sample t-test, there are 10 variables that are significantly different: "I feel comfortable with the idea of the computer as a tool in teaching and learning" ($p = .05$), "If something goes wrong I will not know how to fix it" ($p = .00$), "The use of the computer as a learning tool excites me" ($p = .00$), "The use of computers in teaching and learning scares me" ($p = .00$), "The computer will change the way I teach" ($p = .00$), "The computer will change the way students learn in my classes" ($p = .00$), "I can do what the computer can do equally as well" ($p = .00$), "The computer helps students understand concepts in more effective ways" ($p = .00$), "The computer helps students learn because it allows them to express their thinking in better and different ways" ($p = .03$), and "The computer helps teachers to teach in more effective ways" ($p = .00$).

Teachers' self-confidence in integrating ICT:

The data collected showed that a vast number of respondents (Korean and Moroccans teachers) are quite confident in computer integration in their classrooms. For example; "I can select appropriate software to use in my teaching" (mean = 3.71 (Korean teachers), 4.00 (Moroccan teachers)), "I can use power-point in my class" (mean = 4.09 (Korean teachers), 4.30 (Moroccan teachers)), and "I can use the internet in my lessons to meet certain learning goals" (mean= 3.95(Korean teachers), 3.97 (Moroccan teachers)).

School setting's support of using ICT:

The striking finding of the study is that teachers did not have enough support from their school staff or colleagues to integrate ICT in the classroom. For example; about 50% of the participants claimed that

they did not get encouragements from their colleagues to integrate ICT in their classroom. Also, 61% of Korean teachers and 55% of Moroccan teachers did not get support from their principal to integrate computers in teaching. Besides, the responses revealed that there are some differences between Korean and Moroccan school environments in terms of ICT infrastructure. Korean teachers (82%) reported that “a variety of computer software is available for use in my school”, while Moroccan teachers (67%) reported that it is not. The same gap is shown in terms of adequacy of the technical infrastructure in schools (yes = Korean 71%, No = Moroccan = 74%).

ICT usage in teaching practice

Another striking finding of this study is that most of Korean teachers occasionally used the ICT tools for teaching and vast number Moroccan teachers never used it (table 4).

Table 4: ICT usage in teaching practice

ICT usage in teaching practice	Korean teachers				Moroccan teachers		
	N	Mean	S.D	N	Mean	S.D	
	Valid Missing	Mode		Valid Missing	Mode		
Creating a document using a word processor	98 4	2 1.97	1.47 1	1 1.18	.78	96	
Using graphics software to manipulate graphics or images	98 7	2 3.01	3.75 4	4 1.33	1.19	93	
Look up information on USB, hard disc or CD	98 4	2 1.96	1.63 1	1 1.28	1.02	96	
Using the internet to obtain teaching resources	98 4	2 1.55	1.46 1	1 1.12	.66	96	
Creating lessons that incorporate student's use of a digital video or sound editor	96 4	4 2.82	3.68 4	4 1.42	1.25	96	

Using Email to communicate with other teachers	98 6	2 2.63	2.63 4	3 1.42	1.23	94
Using Email to communicate with your students	98 4	2 3.57	3.44 5	4 1.47	1.08	96
Using Email to communicate with your student's parents	98 5	2 4.44	4.30 5	5 1.20	.96	95
Using online interactive discussion with students (forum, blogs, group chatting, Skype...)	98 4	2 3.43	3.55 5	4 1.52	1.21	96
Using software to monitor the student's scores	97 4	3 3.60	3.54 5	4 1.45	1.23	96
Using interactive whiteboards	98 5	2 4.30	3.70 5	5 1.35	1.55	95

3.2 Focus Group results

Based on the data collected from the focus group, the overwhelming agreement among the two categories of the participated students stresses their awareness of the importance of ICT and its role in developing their language and communication skills, and their interactions while they have team work tasks. Also, teachers from Morocco and South Korea believe that ICT is a tool that improves interactions among teachers; they can easily collaborate, share and exchange teaching experiences. However, we cannot ignore the fact that there are some students in the focus group who have acknowledged that ICT interferes with communication in real life.

The research indicates that there are two categories of teachers; those who are familiar with ICT and more flexible to adapt to new technologies, and others who are not frequently in use with ICT, they prefer to stay in their comfortable zone. These findings emphasize the importance of the teacher's psychological approach to ICT, which was previously asserted by Eshet (2012), Terras et al. (2011) and Underwood (2003). If the teacher has the ability to adapt and adopt to new changes without resistance,

he/she will have confidence in using ICT and self-esteem will be even higher. For the same concern, the focus group data showed that ICT does not always have a positive impact on students; there are among the participated students who claimed that ICT increases their confidence and self-esteem, and others who insisted that ICT lowers their confidence and raises emotional filters. The finding toes the same line of previous studies by Schacter (1999), Albion (2001), and Bethel et al. (2007).

4. Discussion

Although the overwhelming agreement towards the importance of ICT in the development of any discipline, there is still a controversy in integrating ICT in educational sector; which is based on the fact that ICT is not always effective in every educational atmosphere (Schacter, 1999). The effective integration of ICT in education, particularly in EFL classroom, resides basically on the teachers' and learners' perceptions and ability to deal with the ever-growing flow of technological data and meet the global tendency towards smart education. The success or failure of a teaching-learning situation depends considerably on the teacher as it is recommended by Taiwo (2004):

“Teachers should upgrade and familiarize themselves in the use and application of ICT facilities in the acquisition of language education. The commitment and enthusiasm to the teaching and learning of English through the effective use of ICT should be of utmost importance not only to the curriculum planners and education policy makers but also the teachers and the learners of English”. (Taiwo, 2004 p.4)

The findings of the current study go hand in hand with a number of other studies. For instance, the participated teachers possess positive attitudes towards the use of ICT for an educational purpose is the same findings of Abdullah et al. (2006). Besides, the study showed that teachers, whose technological level is very low, do not like to integrate ICT in teaching and do not see any use of ICT devices in their teaching. Consequently, in a way or another, their attitudes function as an obstacle element which hinders the integration of ICT in education. This is similar to the findings of Ertmer et al. (1999), Cuban, Kirkpatrick and Peck (2001), Jones (2003), and Winter et al. (2021). These researchers argued that teachers' attitude to ICT was an example of barriers to the integration of ICT.

After the analyses of the qualitative data, we conclude that teachers, who use ICT, believe that it helps to create a context in where enjoyment, relaxation and motivation were aroused for both teachers and students. Also, those who do not use ICT in their classrooms, prefer to stay in a comfort-zone in order to avoid being in a ridiculous situation in front of their students. These results emphasize the importance of the psychological approaches of teachers towards ICT as it was previously claimed by Eshet (2012), Terras et al. (2011), and Underwood (2003). So, if teachers have resistance towards what is new they will feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable to take risk, unlike, if they have the capability of being adapted and flexible with new changes without resistance, they will feel confident using ICT and their esteem will be higher.

Moreover, the findings of this study fall in with the findings of Poudel (2022), Edmunds, Thorpe and Conole (2012) and Saunders and Pincas (2004). It brings to light the overwhelming believe among students from Morocco and Korea about the significant role of ICT in supporting and enhancing their learning experience, but principally do not use it for their learning purposes. Additionally, our findings, particularly in the focus groups, indicated that ICT does not always have positive impact on students; some of the participated students claim that ICT increases their self-confident and self-esteem. While, others see that ICT lower their confidence and make their affective filter higher. The findings go in

keeping with the reports of Winter et al (2021), Bethel et al (2007), Albion (2001), and Schacter (1999). If ICT is used effectively, it can shift the classroom atmosphere to a learner-centered environment and enhance the learning opportunities for learners. It is a motivating factor for developing the experiences of both teachers and learners (Kilag, et al., 2022).

Citably, students who believe that using ICT for their studies has positive impact claimed that ICT helped them improve their self-efficacy and self-confidence. By this, this group of students showed their capability to adapt with new technological tools, and ability to increase their self-esteem with the use of ICT in their learning tasks. On the other hand, the study significantly turns up the fact that there are some of the participated students think that ICT functions as a barrier in their learning processes. In this case, students feel low confidence, uncomfortable and shy to study with ICT in the classroom. Thus, the implementation of ICT devices in the classroom has a crucial impact on the development of students' intrapersonal skills; it affects their self-confidence and their adaptability with new different learning tools such as ICT devices. The use of technology opens up doors for personalized instruction to fulfill each learner's needs and helps teachers create learners who are actively interested in their lessons (Kilag, et al., 2022).

By the same token, based on the data collected, it was determined that ICT improves the interaction between teachers. It makes collaboration between teachers easily, enabling them to share and exchange their teaching experiences; it helps them share the learning resources and information in easier and less effortful ways. Despite that, the questionnaire results came out with the conclusion that most of Moroccan and Korean teachers were occasionally or never used emails to communicate with other teachers, students or students' parents. Also, they occasionally used online interactive discussion board with their students. As for students, it was shown that ICT develops students' linguistic and communicative skills; it improves interaction among students especially when they have team-tasks or projects outside the classroom. Thus, the findings in this study consonants with the findings of Poudel (2022), Reid and Ostashevski (2011), Shih et al. (2010), and Koc (2005). In whatever way, we cannot ignore that there were some students in the focus groups who admitted that ICT hinder communication to take place in their real life, it makes them become introvert students.

5. Conclusion

None can negate the essential role of ICT in the EFL teaching and learning context. Yet, the idea of applying or integrating ICT in teaching/ learning is surrounded by many factors among which the perspective of the educational members, particularly teachers and students. Our objective behind this study is to delineate teachers and students' viewpoints towards ICT utilization in education in Korea and Morocco. The current study showed that the participants from both countries possess positive attitudes towards the ICT integration in their teaching and learning processes. Additionally, high school students, from Korea and Morocco, are highly competent in using technology however they do not frequently use it for educational purposes. Whilst, teachers' frequency use of ICT for teaching is occasional and their competency with technology is very low.

The present paper is based on my PhD thesis under the title of "ICT Using and Attitudes: Comparative study between Moroccan and Korean High School EFL teachers and students", Ait Hajji (2018). It is the first study that takes into consideration the comparison between teachers' and students' perspectives about ICT in education from Morocco and Korea. Finally, there are vast areas of research needed with the use of the efficacy of ICT tools in teaching and learning. This includes all school levels from

elementary to university. We have to believe that further researches about the perspectives and attitudes of educators, students, teachers, administrators and policy makers towards the integration of ICT into education are potential if the improvement of the quality of education is to occur.

6. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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