

**THE USE OF COMPUTERS BY ESL TEACHERS IN  
PREPARING AND CONDUCTING LESSONS**

**Christopher Christie Anak George Teron**

*Demo (Visit <http://www.pdfsplitmerger.com>)*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the use of computers by ESL teacher in preparing and conducting their lesson. The main objectives are to determine the main types of computer application used by the Secondary School teachers and their preferences on the use of computer applications when preparing and conducting lesson. It will help them to enhance the quality of teaching as a means towards supporting and increasing their computer skills for their own self-development. All the 30 participants were selected among the ESL teachers from the four secondary schools located in the Serian District through the quota sampling procedure. The data was collected through documentation analysis and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that a large majority of the teachers agreed that they preferred the use of computer as the instructional tool in preparing and conducting their lesson in ESL classroom. Consequently, the research findings can effectively help the English Language teachers in heightening their concerns about the benefit of technology integration in the schools for achieving their teaching goals and increasing their students' motivation and improve their learning performance in the English Language classrooms.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **PENGGUNAAN KOMPUTER DI KALANGAN GURU-GURU ESL BAGI PERSEDIAAN DAN PENGAJARAN DI KELAS.**

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji penggunaan komputer di kalangan guru-guru ESL bagi persediaan sebelum dan semasa sesi pengajaran dan pembelajaran di dalam kelas. Objektif utama menjalankan kajian ini ialah untuk memastikan jenis-jenis program yang terdapat di dalam perisian komputer yang digunakan oleh guru-guru ESL di sekolah-sekolah menengah. Di samping itu, ia juga dijalankan untuk memastikan jenis-jenis program yang terdapat di dalam perisian computer yang sering digunakan untuk persediaan sebelum dan semasa pengajaran dan pembelajaran di dalam kelas. Kajian ini juga dapat membantu para pendidik khususnya guru-guru ESL untuk mempertingkatkan kemahiran dalam penggunaan computer. Seramai 30 orang responden yang dipilih untuk menjayakan kajian ini. Mereka terdiri daripada guru-guru yang berpengalaman dan mengajar di sekitar empat buah sekolah menengah di daerah Serian dengan menggunakan kaedah quota sampling. Data-data dikumpul menggunakan kaedah analisa dokumen dan semi-structured interview. Daripada hasil data yang telah dikumpul, majoriti guru-guru tersebut bersejutu yang mereka memang menggunakan computer bagi tujuan persediaan sebelum dan semasa pengajaran dan pembelajaran di kelas. Ianya secara tidak langsung dapat membantu guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris untuk mengetahui keberkesanan dan kelebihan teknologi yang dilaksanakan di sekolah-sekolah. Oleh itu, penerapan teknologi di dalam kelas bukan saja membantu guru-guru untuk mencapai target mereka tetapi ianya juga dapat memotivasi pelajar-pelajar untuk meningkatkan prestasi mereka dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	i,ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vii
<b>1. CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.0 Chapter Overview .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	
1.2 Statement of Problem .....	4
1.3 Research Objectives .....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	7
1.5 Operational Definition of Terms .....	
1.5.1 The Use of Computer in Education .....	
1.5.2 Computer Programmes .....	8
1.5.3 Lesson Preparation in ESL Classroom .....	9
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	10
1.7 Limitation of the Study .....	11
1.8 Summary .....	12
<b>2. CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.0 Chapter Overview .....	13
2.1 Methodologies and Approaches in TESL .....	
2.2 The Use of Computer in Education .....	17
2.3 The Roles of teachers using Computer .....	20
2.4 Preparing a lesson .....	22
2.5 Conducting a lesson .....	25
2.6 Review of Previous Study .....	26
2.7 Summary .....	30
<b>3. CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.0 Chapter Overview .....	31
3.1 Research Design .....	
3.2 Sampling Design .....	32
3.3 Instrumentation .....	33
3.3.1 Documentation .....	
3.3.2 Semi-structured Interview .....	34
3.4 Data Collection Techniques .....	36
3.5 Data Analysis .....	37
3.6 Ethical Considerations .....	38
3.7 Summary .....	39

<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS</b>	
4.0	Chapter Overview .....	41
4.1	Data Analysis and Findings of the documentation Analysis .....	
	4.1.1 Findings of the Documentation Analysis .....	42
	4.1.2 Results and Findings .....	45
4.2	Data Analysis and Findings of the Semi-structured Interview ....	46
	4.2.2 Results and Findings .....	
4.3	Discussion on the Findings of the Study .....	49
	4.3.1 Research Question 1&2 .....	
	4.3.2 Research Question 3 .....	50
4.4	Summary .....	52
<b>5.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>	
5.0	Chapter Overview .....	53
5.1	Summary .....	
5.2	Implication .....	54
5.3	Recommendation .....	55
5.4	Conclusions .....	55
<b>6.</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>59</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	
7.1	Appendix 1: Documentation	
7.2	Appendix 2: Semi-structured Interview Questions	
7.3	Appendix 3: Copy of Application Letter for Data Collection	

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure 1

2.4.1 Steps of the Systematic Planning ..... 23

### Figure 2

4.1.1.1 Type of computer programmes used for preparing lesson ..... 42

### Figure 3

4.1.1.3 Type of computer programmes used for conducting lesson ..... 44

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b>	
2.1.1 The Language Teaching Methods .....	15
<b>Table 2</b>	
4.1.1.2 The use of computer in preparing lesson by ESL teachers .....	43
<b>Table 3</b>	
4.1.1.4 The use of computer in conducting lesson by ESL teachers .....	44
<b>Table 4</b>	
4.1.1.5 Comparison on the use of computer programmes by ESL teachers .....	45
<b>Table 5</b>	
4.2.1 Respondents' Responses to Semi-structured Interview .....	47
<b>Table 6</b>	
4.2.2.1 The use of computer by ESL teachers .....	48
<b>Table 7</b>	
4.2.2.2 Reasons for using computers by ESL teachers .....	49



## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter will discuss the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study and definition of terms. The background of the study focuses on the integration of computer in the classroom as a tool for teaching and learning. The statement of problem highlights the changes of the teaching methodology and approaches which requires the teachers to shift from the traditional to the new method of teaching with the incorporate of the latest technology. All these establish the reasons that lead to the present study. The significant of the study discusses the importance of this study in relation to the use of computers among teachers in preparing and conducting lesson in ESL classroom. It also represents the definition of terms used in the study. Finally, it states the limitation of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Malaysia has a long-term vision, usually referred to as “Vision 2020” which calls for sustained, productivity-driven growth which will be achievable only with technologically literate, critically thinking workforce prepared to participate fully in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the same time, Malaysia’s National Philosophy of Education calls for “developing the potential of individual in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious.” This is including in the Ninth Malaysian Plan (NMP) (Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan, 2006). In the NMP,

Malaysians are urged to equip themselves with the latest technology such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

As such, there is much endeavour by the Ministry of Education to make technology available for all students. This is also a step towards narrowing the digital divide between those who have and those who cannot afford to enjoy such technology. Beginning in 2003, the National ICT developmental plan started to transform our Malaysian education system with the aim to emphasize technology integration in teaching and learning processes in the Malaysian schools that will enable to improve the knowledge and skills of the students. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has earmarked 30 per cent of its annual budget (approximately RM 4.2 billion) to enhance ICT development over the next five years (Economic Report-RMK9, 2006).

Regarding the use of computer in preparing and conducting lesson for instructional, what should be concern to teachers are, to take the advantage of those technologies to enhance the quality of teaching and also to motivate and stimulate their students in learning process. Kurland & Kurland (1987) have stated that technology allows the teacher to simulate situations that would be impossible in the real world and maintain traces of student actions that can be used in improving the teacher's teaching strategies.

Currently, the process of teaching relies on knowledge instruction with the focus on transmission of facts through lectures, recitation and drills. Thus, the existence of computer as a tool has changed the teaching methodologies and approaches. It also serves as a means to increase productivity and efficiency of educational institutions by

offering a cluster of basic generic skills that are necessary for all students in their educational pursuit. Salomon (1991) supports that what is important in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as tool is how computers can facilitate teacher in his/her teaching job, that is how teachers can present the designing materials more effectively and how learners can acquire most of the teaching process through practice and language used so that learning is effective.

Forcier & Descy (2002) categorized three different use of computer in education by teachers. The functional uses of computers are management, instruction and learning and action research. They further explain that the management category includes school and classroom application in budgeting, accounting, record keeping, printed and electronic communication and information retrieval. Next, the category of instruction and learning is subdivided into teacher centred instruction. At this stage, teacher will manipulate and control in the design, development and delivery of instruction which also includes software functions interacting directly with students. The other stage is the student centred which exemplify the recognition of functions in constructive activities which lead to learning. The last category is the action research which places the teacher into the role of a researcher. This category requires the teacher to master some aspect of classroom practice such as in data storage and statistical analysis.

The use of computer as a tool has attracted the attention of educators to incorporate the technology in their instructions (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). A well-accepted and sound practice in education is to utilise ICT as a vital pedagogical tool to spearhead the efficacy of teaching and learning. ICT helps to transform learning within the

confines of printed books to learning from a plethora of enriched environment beyond school. Despite the fact that computer abilities as a tool and enabler, it cannot replace but augment meaningful learning. Ahmat et al (1985) points out the auxiliary role of computer in education characterizing it as a medium applied by teacher to serve him in teaching and not to replace teacher in class. Computer is a versatile instrument which could offer the users to store, manipulate and retrieve information. Apart from that, the use of computer will encourage the users to engage themselves in the teaching and learning environment.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The integration of computers requires a change in teaching approaches as well as the use of materials in the language classroom. Besides that, the Computer Assisted Instruction or CAI reinforces the teachers to shift from the old fashioned or traditional way to new method of teaching. This also provides new strategies and techniques in teaching and learning environment.

According to McMenemy & Evans (1998) stated that language teachers show positive effects of the new teaching method on quality of learning outcomes and also develop expertise in the new method. It is also support by Loveless, Devoogd & Bohlin (2000) stated that teachers who were positive about technology tended to be more constructivist in their teaching and gain confidence in the use of digital tools. However, Debski (2000) argues that many educators or teachers insist to incorporate technology in their teaching even though the computers offer much potential in teaching strategies and learning environment.



A study done by Smerdon et. al (2000) reports that teachers in the United States of America frequently use computer to prepare instruction rather than for instructional delivery. The use of computer in preparing a lesson could offer the teachers to retrieve the previous data and also change it by deleting and editing to a new one. In contrast, it could be a time constraint process for a teacher especially when he/she planning an instructional activity for a group of students with different levels of abilities.

The issues of teachers' negative attitude and rejection for not integrating new and advanced technologies into their syllabus because teacher education in computers often focuses on older and simpler instructional applications of computer technology such as word processor rather than multimedia, problem- solving applications and other newer tools (Abdal-Haqq, 1995). Thus, the integration of the latest technologies cannot be implemented if the teachers are not familiar with the programs.

It is therefore important for the teacher to know the nature of technologies and related equipment that can be used for their language teaching and learning process, in creating and supporting an interactive and effective learning environment for their students. Therefore, the empirical research on how to enhance teachers' interactive instructional techniques as well as provide an effective learning environment is necessary.

The use of technologies in lessons will be able to enhance enjoyment and interest in learning and the subject; enhanced self-esteem leading to expectations of achieving goals (Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002). When the teachers are using technology as a tool or a support in preparing and conducting their lesson in ESL classroom, they are in an



active role rather than the passive role in arranging of information transmitted by a textbook.

In addition, the teacher is actively making choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate or display the information to his/her students. The use of computer in the language classrooms will also allow many more students to be actively thinking about information, making choices and executing skills than is typical in teacher-led lessons. Therefore, this study aims to address the issue of teacher's preferences of the types computer application and to determine the types of computer application used in their language classrooms. As a result, it also aims to investigate whether they use the computer in their planning as well as when conducting the lesson.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the computer applications used by the teachers in preparing their lesson.
2. To find out the teachers' preference of computer applications when conducting the lesson.
3. To determine the types of computer application used by the ESL teachers.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

This study examines the following research questions:

1. What type of computer application do teachers use in their planning?
2. What type of computer application do these teachers use when conducting the lesson?
3. Why do these teachers prefer to use the computer application?

## **1.5 Operational Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be used and are defined as follows:

### **1.5.1 The use of computer in Education**

The use of computer in education refers to its use in the classroom with the purpose to enhance the quality of teaching and learning process. It could offer linguistic input and output, feedback, student collaboration, interactivity and fun (Brown, 2001).

According to Murcia (2001), a computer is a tool that can store, retrieve and process enormous amounts of information. It can be programmed with instructions and offer the teachers to plan as well as to conduct their lesson in a systematic way. Whereas, Sivert and Egbert (1995), computer is a useful tool for teaching and learning English language throughout the world. It can be added with multimedia system which can visualize materials and also encourage interactive activity.

For this research, the use of computer is referred to as an instructional technology used by teachers in the process of teaching and learning. It is an educational technology that can be used for a series of instructional purposes and to increase the quality of teaching. Consequently, using computer-based materials in the language classroom is one of the ways to increase students' self-development by creating novelty, applying relevance and increasing accountability that impacts learning and student motivation in a dynamic and positive way.

### **1.5.2 Computer Programmes**

The computer is an instructional tool in which it is similar to a pencil, typewriter, microscope, slides rule, piano or drafting table. It also plays the role of an assistant and serves a utilitarian function in getting a job done. The programmes in the computer will determine the type of job that the computer can perform. The major applications of computer as a tool are; word processing, create graphics, database management, spreadsheets, chart, desktop publishing and presentations. These computer tools are available as stand-alone applications or an integrated software package that combines several of these tools into a comprehensive programme (Salomon, 1991).

In addition to that, a computer is an electronic machine that stores, retrieve and process data, and it can programmed with instructions. It is a composed of hardware and software, and can exist in a variety of sizes and configurations (Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002).

Therefore in this study, the primary focus is on computers programmes that used by teachers in preparing and conducting their teaching and learning processes in the ESL classrooms.

### **1.5.3 Lesson Preparation in ESL Classroom**

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), lesson preparation or planning involves the teachers in making decisions about goals, activities, resources, timing, grouping and other aspects of the lesson. Towndrow & Vallance (2004) state that teachers have to consider the abilities and interests of the students, the objectives to be achieved, the time available, the routine the teacher has set with the class and the teacher's repertoire of activities when planning a lesson. Reiser and Dick (1996) supported that lesson preparations are important for determining what students will learn and what teachers will teach. Hence, this could provide a lesson which is more systematic and also meaningful for the teachers while planning instructional events.

In this study, ESL classroom refers to the setting or context where teaching and learning environment is conducted in English. As in the case of Malaysian secondary and even primary schools, English is taught as a second language followed by Bahasa Malaysia which becomes the medium of instruction in National Level (Curriculum Specification for English Form 5, 2003).

Warschauer & Meskill (2000) mentioned that the integration of technologies in ESL context implies differences in terms of learner populations, goals and processes. Therefore in this study, the primary focus is on the use of computers in the ESL classroom as a tool for teaching and learning, the effects of their use on teaching and



learning as well as other factors that might influence its use in preparing and conducting a lesson.

Therefore, the use of Microsoft Office Tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint or other computer programmes that can include with attractive and effective texts, graphics, audios or video clips will enable our English Language teachers to plan, create and conduct an interesting lesson activity. As a result, the use of computer in preparing and conducting a lesson in ESL classrooms will encourage the teachers to evaluate and modify their own teaching strategies which meet a desired objective of the lesson with the particular group of students' needs.

#### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The research aims to find out the use of computer programmes such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint or Windows Media Player among teachers in preparing and conducting lesson in ESL classroom. It is crucial for educators to understand how the teachers implement the computer application in the classroom. In the new era of globalizations, teachers must also be proactive in today's challenge where technology plays a part in the education system. In addition, the existence of computer as a tool for instruction and learning has changed the teachers' core business from a distributor of knowledge to a facilitator in the learning process. However, the incapability of the teachers in using computers and the lack of integration before and during instruction might decrease the quality and quantity of learning the subject. Even though, the Ministry had supplied the electronic equipments as part of the schools' facilities to support the teachers in their jobs but it will not benefit any parties if the tools are not fully used.



Apart from that, the findings of this research are likely to have implications for different other population and it may be useful to language teachers in Malaysia. Specifically, it may be able to give insight to educators especially the English Language teachers on the use of suitable computer programmes as this study attempt to examine the effectiveness of using computer among teachers in preparing and conducting a lesson that used currently in the English Language classrooms. Consequently, the use of computer in planning and conducting the teaching strategies may be able to give insight to our English teachers to discover the new opportunities which will increase and reshape their sense of professionalism and achievement in the new era of our Malaysia education system among the ESL secondary school teachers in the particular district.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

One limitation of the study is that the study will involves only 30 secondary teachers who had the prior experiences in using computer in preparing and conducting lesson in ESL classrooms from the selected four secondary schools. Therefore, it only reflects the data findings based on these accumulated respondents and cannot be generalized to a wider context as to represent all secondary schools found in the district, or even the whole region. The findings of the study may not necessarily be relevant in other secondary schools found in Malaysia. Apart from that, the researcher has only managed to use documentation analysis report and semi-structured interview. It is suggested that observation would provide more legitimate information with relation to the research findings. However, due to the time constraint, the researcher had to do without observation. In conclusion, this study will not be able to represent

the actual findings about the use of computer in preparing and conducting lesson in ESL classroom among teachers in Malaysian secondary schools.

## **1.8 Summary**

In the introduction, it starts with a background about a pilot project launched in 1992 by Ministry of Education. Next, is the discussion on the use of computer in preparing and conducting in the language classrooms. For the statement of problem, it highlights the teachers' acceptance and insistence in cooperating the use of computer in the classroom. Then, followed by its objectives, the research questions and the definition of terms in the study which are relation to the study. Lastly, it concludes with the significance of the study and its limitation.

The following chapter will focuses on the literature review in which it will reflect on the objectives of the study, conceptual framework and research questions. This will be followed by the definition of concepts or variables and their role in organizations and also the theories, research findings that support the relationship between variables.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter focuses on the literature and researches related to this study. The literature review will cover the methodologies and approaches in teaching English as a Second Language, the development of CALL in ESL classroom, the roles of teachers using computers, preparing and conducting a lesson using computer and also related studies done by other researchers.

The aim of this research study is to determine the type of computer application used by the teachers during instructional in ESL classroom. Besides that, it also investigates the teachers' preferences of using the computer application while preparing and conducting the lesson. Therefore, the literature review will provide some information and explain how educators especially the teachers implement their teaching based on Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) or Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

#### **2.1 The methodologies and approaches in teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)**

In the language teaching environment, methods refer to the procedures of language teaching and also the overall plan for systematic presentation of language used based upon a selected approach (Brown, 2001). The method is implemented by techniques which the teacher selects to achieve the lesson objectives. However, the selection and sequencing of these strategies are based on the method. Approach plays a significant

role in implementing the teaching of language. It is the set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and learning. Therefore, it is also the theoretical foundation upon which any systematic method is based.

The methodology in language teaching includes:

- (a) study of nature of language skills (eg. Reading, writing, speaking, listening) and procedures for teaching them.
- (b) study of preparation of Lesson Plan, materials, and textbooks for teaching language skills.
- (c) The evaluation and comparison of language teaching methods (eg. The Audiolingual method)

(Richards, et. al., 1985)

Nunan (1995) distinguishes between syllabus design and methodology in language teaching where it concerns the selection, sequencing of learning tasks and activities. He pointed out that syllabus design is concerned with what, why and when it occurs in the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, methodology is concerned with how the educators deliver their teaching during instructional process. As Brown (2001) suggests that methodology is a pedagogical practice which include theoretical studies on how to teach in the classroom setting. Whereas, syllabus or curriculum is design to carry out a particular language program. It features the specification of linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing and materials to meet the needs of a designated group of learners in a defined context.



The development of language teaching methods which employ the teaching of English language has transformed rapidly since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Richards and Rogers (1991) cited in Towndrow & Vallance (2004, pg.32) commented that;

*“Changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners need, such as the move towards oral proficiency than reading comprehension as the goal of language study; they have also reflected the changes in theories of the nature of language and language learning.”*

A summary of these developments is shown in Table 1.

(Table 1) 2.1.1: The language teaching methods

<b>Key date</b>	<b>Language teaching method</b>	<b>Learning</b>
Pre-1960s	Grammar translation	Translation from L1 to L2
1961	Audiolingualism	Behaviorism: stimulus-response-reinforcement. Emphasis on habit formation and repetitive drills.
1971	Communicative Language Teaching	Developing communicative competency. Utilizes discrete items (giving directions, etc.)
1977	TPR (Total Physical Response)	Functional and transactional situations.
Post 1978	Natural Approach	Learning versus acquisition.
	Learner-centred Method	Needs analysis. Different learning styles considered. Balance between form and function.

Source: Towndrow & Vallance (2004, pg.35).

All these stages corresponds to the development of language teaching methods. The grammar translation method was first introduced in the 1960s. It was a method utilized to manipulate the morphology and syntax of a text through the memorization



of grammatical rules such as dissecting texts, parsing sentences, studying verbs and nouns. In addition, this method often encourages the teacher to use the first language instructional.

Then, in 1961 audiolingualism was developed to train students to attain conversational proficiency in a number of foreign languages. Learning was seen as a behaviour dependant upon stimulus, response and reinforcement resulting in habit formation with the emphasis on pronunciation. However, the method was not effective where students had difficulty in transferring their skills to authentic communication outside the classroom. In order to promote the students to communicate frequently, the communicative language teaching was implemented in 1971. It focuses on meaning rather than the traditional schema of grammar. This method also emphasizes the use of activities such as pair work, role plays and relia to support communicative acts.

In 1977, the total physical response was given the priority where it emphasizes comprehension and corresponding physical actions. This method combines the verbal instructions with a motor activity which is also similar to the process of a child learning the first language. The next method is known as the natural approach where it emphasizes comprehensible input. At this stage, learning is seen as a process whereby conscious rules are developed whereas acquisition is a process of language proficiency and understanding gained through meaningful communication. Currently, the learner-centred method focuses upon general language learning requirements such as the learners' proficiency, their goals and their specific requirements such as speaking and writing.