



**CHALLENGES FACED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN
INTEGRATING COMPUTERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS IN
THE SAMARAHAN AND KUCHING DISTRICTS**

By

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A project entitled **Challenges faced by secondary school teachers in integrating computers in English language classrooms in the Samarahan and Kuching Districts** was prepared by Prisca anak Ugus and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (English as a Second Language)

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ABSTRACT

This study identified the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in integrating computers in English language classrooms around the Samarahan and Kuching Districts and investigates the factors that contributed to such challenges. A questionnaire consisting of 20 items about the challenges faced by the teachers were administered to a group of 100 teachers from 12 secondary schools around the Samarahan and Kuching Districts. A semi-structured interview was also conducted to investigate the factors that contributed to such challenges. There were 6 semi-structured questions for the respondents to answer during the interview sessions. For this purpose, 12 respondents were chosen randomly to represent the target population. The questionnaires are analyzed by using the statistical analysis and the semi-structured interview was analyzed qualitatively. The findings and discussions appeared to show that availability which is 74% was the most challenges faced by the teacher in integrating computer, followed by 65% challenges due to time constraint, 49% challenges in teaching preparation, 24% challenges due to technical problems, next 15% challenges due to the teachers attitude and motivation and lastly, lack of technology skills that is 14% was the least challenges. Factors have been identified to be the causes to the challenges faced. The main factors are the limited number of computers, laptops, LCD and computer lab in school.

ABSTRAK

Kajian survei ini bermatlamat untuk mengenalpasti cabaran dalam mengintegrasikan komputer dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris oleh guru-guru di sekolah menengah di sekitar daerah Samarahan dan Kuching dan juga menyiasat apakah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi cabaran tersebut. Kajian ini dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan soalan-soalan yang diolah sendiri sebagai teknik untuk mengenalpasti cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh guru-guru di sekolah. Terdapat 20 item soalan berkaitan dengan cabaran-cabaran untuk mengintegrasikan komputer dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Seramai 100 orang guru-guru di sekolah menengah di sekitar daerah Samarahan dan Kuching terlibat untuk menjawab soalan-soalan tersebut. Instrumen kedua yang digunakan ialah temuramah berstruktur bagi menyiasat faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi cabaran-cabaran untuk mengintegrasikan komputer dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Seramai 12 orang guru terlibat dalam temuramah yang dipilih secara rawak dari 100 orang guru yang terlibat dalam instrumen pertama. Soalan-soalan dianalisis secara pengiraan statistik dan temuramah berstruktur dianalisis secara kualitatif. Terdapat 6 cabaran untuk mengintegrasikan komputer dalam pengajaran iaitu ketersediaan peralatan 74%, cabaran kerana halangan masa 65%, cabaran dalam persediaan pengajaran 49%, masalah teknikal 24%, sikap dan motivasi guru 15% dan cabaran yang paling kecil ialah kurang kemahiran teknologi sebanyak 14%. Hasil analisis dan perbincangan data mengetengahkan kekurangan komputer, komputer riba, "LCD" serta kekurangan makmal komputer adalah faktor yang membataskan penggunaan dan pengintegrasian komputer dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. CALL : Computer-assisted Language Learning
2. ESL : English as a Second Language
3. ICT : Information and Communication Technology
4. IT : Information Technology
5. LCD : Liquid Crystal Display

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter will view and discuss the importance of integrating computer in language learning and factors to be consider in integrating computer in language teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges faced by the teachers in integrating computer in the English language classroom.

1.1 Background of the study

Language teaching is a difficult and complicated process that requires careful and diligent work. Educators in the field of language teaching have always looked for ways to make language learning enjoyable and attractive to the learners.

However, at the beginning of 1980's, technology came into use in the language classrooms through films, television, and language labs with videotapes and audio cassettes. With the integration of computer, some computer-assisted language (CALL) software applications were introduced in the form of drill-and-practice (Cunningham, 1998 as cited in Kilickaya, 2007). Therefore, there is a crucial need for teachers and educators to equip themselves with the skills and

knowledge of technology and software applications. The role of the teacher in integrating computer is a crucial one because computers have changed the role of the teacher (and of the learner). We rely increasingly on information technology as the source of data and information and less on the teacher as the source of information. Every English teacher needs to consider a number of factors before integrating CALL into the language-learning curriculum such as the learners' different abilities, the curriculum and the learning environment.

Pre- and in-service language teachers should clearly learn about computer use because when integrated appropriately, CALL technologies can support experiential learning and practice in a variety of modes, provide feedback to learners, enable pair and group work, promote exploratory and global learning, enhance student achievement, provide access to authentic materials, facilitate greater interaction, individualize instruction, allow independence from a single source of information, and motivate learner (Lee, 2000; Warshauer & Healey, 1998 as cited in Egbert, Paulus and Nakamichi, 2002). The use of computers in teaching and learning has generated important discussions in the past few years, and the use of this new technology in the classroom has changed everyday teaching practices in schools. Realizing this fact, the government has taken various actions such as conducting courses and training programs for teachers in order to ensure that they will get at least the basic skills in using information technology when teaching in schools.

Fisher (1999) found that teacher' attitudes were strongly related to their success in using and integrating technology. However, a positive attitude toward technology does not ensure that teachers will be able to use it in the classroom. The National Mission in the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006 – 2010) is to raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurture 'First Class Mentality' by giving the priorities of improving the education system with an allocation of RM5.3 billion will be provided for Science, Technology and Innovation.

In the Second Thrust, the teacher training curriculum will be reviewed to improve subject content, enhance pedagogical skills and enable greater application of ICT in education. Better facilities will be provided in rural areas as well as in Sabah and Sarawak where more classrooms also be built to ensure the achievement of universal primary education. In effort to produce knowledge workers of the future who are adept at using technology and ICT, efforts will be taken to make all national schools 'smart' through the *Program Pembedstarian Sekolah*. (The Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Putrajaya, 2006)

1.2 Statement of Problem

In heading towards the globalization, multimedia and ICT are inseparable with the education field because the teaching and learning activities favour the integration and enhancement of technology.

However, despite the reality that computer-based technology is an accepted part of our society, the educational community, particularly school teachers, have not embraced technology in the same way (Ab.Rahim Bakar & Shamsiah Mohamed, 1998; Barron and Orwig, 1993; Sham Ibrahim, 2003; VanFossen, 2001, as cited in Mokhtar, Ahmad Fauzi, Wan Zali, Aida Suraya & Rohani, 2005). Traditionally, teachers have been wary of technology and are relatively slow to adopt the innovative methods in the teaching-learning process.

Past studies (such as Jaber and Moore, 1999; Sham Ibrahim, 2003 as cited in Mokhtar, Ahmad Fauzi, Wan Zali, Aida Suraya & Rohani, 2005) have reported some of the primary reasons or factors that seem to hindered the utilization of computer-based technology. The reasons include lack of training and support, school expectations, lack of standard of integration, perception of integration, access, teacher self-efficacy; many teachers may also do not want to use computers for teaching even when they are available.

As a whole, the integration of computer in the language classroom depends very much on teachers' motivation towards the use of computer in teaching, how well they are equipped with the skills and knowledge of computer. Therefore, this study is important to investigate, identify and find out what are the challenges faced by the secondary school teachers in integrating computers in ESL classrooms and to find out what are the causes that contribute to the problems faced.

1.3 Research Objectives:

This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in integrating computer in ESL Classroom

Specifically, the study will be conducted to fulfill the following objectives:

- (i) to identify the challenges faced by the teachers in integrating computers in the English language classroom
- (ii) to investigate the factors that contribute to the challenges faced by the teachers in integrating computer in the English language classroom.

Research Questions:

- (i) What are the challenges faced by teachers in integrating computers in English lessons?
- (ii) What contribute to such challenges?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Teachers need to be provided with substantiated findings and a rich pool of knowledge regarding integrating computer in language classroom, as this knowledge is significantly correlated with students' participation. This study is important because it serves as a feedback to English teachers to overcome the challenges that they might face in integrating computer in their teaching and learning process. Therefore this study help to provide feedback and information which will encourage English teachers to use, apply and integrate computer-based activities in their classroom such as for reading activity and to motivate

English teachers to integrate computer regularly in their teaching to ensure the successfulness of the use of computer-based activity for English subject.

1.5 Operational Definition of Terms

The following key terms are explained and defined to enable better understanding of the terms used and discussed.

1.5.1 Computer

Forcier and Descy (2002) define computer as a tool require an awareness of its component parts and appreciation of what each part may contribute as we attempt to use the computer to solve the problems we may encounter. In this study, computer will be referred to as an electronic device that can accept data, manipulate the data according to specified rules, produce results and store the results for future use.

1.5.2 Integration

Roblyer et al. (1997) defines integration as:

“In perhaps the most important – and the most difficult – challenge, teachers can help to improve existing conditions or to create important educational opportunities that did not exist without IT. As part of this process, teachers decide what they need to make these changes occur. This process of determining where and how technology fits is known among users of educational technology as integration” (p.2).

In this study integration refers to as the use of technologies to introduce, reinforce and extend skills in the language classroom.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study will only cover problems faced by secondary school teachers in two selected districts only and it will involve one hundred English teachers. This study identified and investigated challenges encountered by the English teachers during the teaching and learning in the classroom during school hours and do not cover the problems that the teachers might encounter outside the classroom or school.

1.7 Chapter review

This chapter discusses on the background of the study, aims and the objectives of the study and the importance of computer in the education especially for English language teaching and learning. The next chapter will review and discuss on previous and related studies to support the aims of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discuss on computer applications, challenges, advantages and drawbacks of integrating computer in the language classroom. Challenges faced by the teachers integrating computer in the English Language classroom and also a review of related studies presented.

2.1 Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) came of age in the early 1960's. Levy (1997) defines computer –assisted language learning as “the search for and study of application of the computer in language teaching and learning” (p.1). CALL developments over the past 30 years are accordingly categorized into three distinct phrases: structural CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). CALL has traditionally been associated with self-contained, programmed applications such as tutorials, drills, simulations, instructional games and tests and so on.

CALL also involves the use of various computer applications that promote educational learning, through word processing, presentation packages, guided drill and practice, tutor, simulation, problem solving, games, multimedia,

CD-ROM and internet applications such as e-mail, chat and the WWW for language learning purposes which encourage collaborative and interesting learning. Computers can do some of the work of the teacher and provide great assistance to the learners even without the presence of the teacher. New technologies have seen computers becoming smaller, faster and easier for the teacher to use (Levy, 1997). Technologies allow computers to do multimedia applications incorporating video, sound and text, and this capacity allows the learner to interact with both the program and other learners (Felix, 1998). The computer offers great flexibility for class; scheduling and pacing of individual learning and this help the teacher to organize her teaching and learning systematically and effectively. There has been tremendous development or integrating technology in teaching. According to Pisapia (1994), integrating technology with teaching means to introduce, reinforce, supplement and extend skills.

In order to integrate instructional technologies into curriculum meaningfully, it is important for teachers to know what predominant learning theories are and how the computer applications can be integrated. The theory of constructivism stresses that whatever gets into the mind has to be constructed by the individual through knowledge discovery as advocated by Piaget (1981) and Bruner (1990). This theory emphasis on how student constructs knowledge. The success of process-oriented learning with technology depends critically on a motivated, informed and involved teacher and at the same time the students active participation and engagement in constructing their knowledge either individually or socially. Hence, students too need to take responsibility for their own learning.

2.2 Roles of the computer in learning

Computer is an electronic device which it is a flexible machine that can perform a variety of task. Computers play a traditional role acting as a sort of ‘tutor’ (Taylor, 1980 as cited in Hsu, Chen and Hung, 2000) by performing a teaching role or providing a learning environment. In performing a tutor’s role, computer may be used to deliver instructions, reinforce practice and provide

feedback. For example, teacher can deliver information to the whole classes by projecting it through projector which this will also help teacher to attract students' attention. Apart from being a tutor, computer can be used as a tool.

2.3 Computer as a tutor

Computer as a tutor helps teacher to encourage students' participation in pair or group work that it allows for collaborative learning among them based on the task set or programmed in the computer. The computer as a tutor has its theoretical roots in behaviorism and programmed instruction, which assume that extensive drill and practice are the keys to second language acquisition (Levy, 1997). Role of the computer is based on two learning theories which are behaviourist and cognitivist.

Behaviourist learning theory is derived primarily from Skinner's stimulus-response-reinforcement theory (see Skinner, 1974) which learner will gradually develop patterns of responses to specific stimuli and follow by reinforcement. In this model of learning, the tasks of a teacher are to provide stimuli (practice) and reinforcement (rewards) to students following the desired response. However, Noam Chomsky (1956) argued that Skinner's model was inadequate for explaining the language acquisition; therefore he suggested that all people have certain innate linguistic structures. With of these challenges, behaviourism gradually evolved into another model, cognitivism.

The cognitivism model perceives human brains to operate analogously to a computer or an 'information-processor' (Newell, 1990). Under this model, a learner's mind is perceived to contain components of short-term and long-term memories, plus a working memory. Generally, in this model a learner receives information, stores them in their short-term memory then transfers information from short-term to long-term memory through a variety of internal mental activities. The similarity of behaviourism and cognitivism is that learning will take place when the knowledge can be transmitted to learner and emphasizes the importance of the product of learning. However the difference is that

behaviourists view the learning as occurring in the expressed behaviours of the learner, while cognitivists view the learning as that which happens in the internal processes of a learner.

Computer can be a tutor for the students especially outside the classroom or at home by doing the exercise through the existence computer applications such as interactive software where the computer plays a role of tutor when it is used to perform a teacher's role to present information and to provide a controlled learning environment. The computer encourage and provide individualized learning environments in which students can learn or practice according to their own pace, or the computer can be used as a remedy for students who lack the perquisite abilities to practise basic skills such as vocabulary and grammar. With the definitions above, teachers use the computer as merely “electronic baby sitting” or as a reward for good behavior or performance (Williams, 2000).

2.4 Computer as a tool

The computer plays a significant role as a tool to support and facilitate a variety of instructional activities. According to Levy (1997), the tool role of the computer is fundamentally non-directive. Tools are neutral, and how they are used is not predetermined. The language teacher may well have a pivotal role to play in giving the students direction, or the students themselves will have the knowledge and expertise to be self-directed that is, to work autonomously.

The constructive paradigm as advocated by Piaget (1981) and Bruner (1990), stresses that whatever gets into the mind has to be constructed by the individual through knowledge discovery where it emphasis on how a student constructs their knowledge. Students apply their newly constructed concepts and principles to a new situation. Through this experimenting process, students will validate, modify and generalise the acquired concepts and principles.

Depending on the instructional activities and learning theories, computer as a tool can be classified into five categories which are Informative Tools,

Communicative Tools, Constructive Tools, Co-constructive Tools and Situating Tools (Hsu, Chen & Hung as cited in Williams, 2000). Informative Tools are applications that provide vast of information in various formats such as text, sound, graphics or video. Another example of Informative Tools is multimedia encyclopedias or any resources available on the Internet. Informative Tools provide both teacher and student more details about the kinds of educational resources that can be found on the Internet such as The Internet in Education and also it allows students themselves easily download any relevant information for their own learning.

Communicative Tools are systems that enable easy communication between the teacher and the students. Communicative Tools can be divided into two sub-categories, Synchronous such as telephone conversation and Asynchronous such as e-mail. Communicative tools can be used for instructional activities that require higher degrees of interaction or for solving problems or issues. The most effective category is Asynchronous Communicative Tools because the activity require more time in thinking before responding (Hsu, Chen & Hung as cited in Williams, 2000).

Constructive Tools are general-purpose tools that can be used for manipulating information, constructing one's own knowledge or visualising one understanding (Hsu, Chen & Hung as cited in Williams, 2000). Concept map programs allow users to brainstorm and to visualise their understanding of relationships among a collection of concepts. Teacher can used commonly constructive tools such as word processors, spreadsheets, simulation and multimedia authoring to construct their knowledge. Another tool is a co-constructive tool. These tools are also tools that support students' construction of knowledge but it is differ from constructive tools which require students work collaboratively.

Finally, the situating tools are systems which situate users in an environment where they may experience the context and happenings. Examples

of situation tools are Simulations, Virtual Reality (VR), MUDs (Multi-User Domains or Dungeons), MOOs (MUD Object-Oriented; Haynes & Holmevik, 1998), WOOs (Web-based MOOs) and MUSHs (Multi-User Shared Hallucination) (Hsu, Chen & Hung as cited in Williams, 2000). Situating Tools are similar to Constructive Tools where both of these tools allow users to manipulate variables in the system. However, the focus of Situating Tools is more on situating students in an environment for certain instructional purposes. As a conclusion, it all depends to the teacher needs to solve the learning problems with the tools they have which they can use any software available and depending on the instructional problem at hand.

2.5 Roles of teacher

Teachers should understand that students need to develop strategies to respond and adapt to changes rather than approaching the task of language learning in a uniform way (Warschaeuer & Healey, 1998). The teacher should play the role of facilitator rather than being the found of all knowledge. As facilitator, teacher needs to guide students in learning skills which involving them in suitable activities and facilitate learning to the best of their ability.

Next, as a facilitator, teacher must be aware of a variety of materials or resources available for improving students' language skill, not just one or two texts. They also need to aware of their own expertise in language content, theories of language learning and techniques of language teaching; their knowledge of student characteristics like their level of proficiency, learning style, level of motivation; their time; their knowledge of the educational philosophy and syllabus they expected to achieve; and their knowledge of the immediate environmental features of their school (e.g. the administration's attitude towards and support of innovation and noise in the classroom, the attitude to 'finishing' the textbook; the number of computers available, the accessibility to the computer lab). (Chittravelu, Sithamparam and S. C. Teh, 2005)