

Teachers' Expectation and Acceptance of a Home-grown Networked Automated Essay Scorer with Feedback (AESF) for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) Classroom

Ng Sing Yii
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Hong Kian Sam
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Lee Nung Kion
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Bong Chih How
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Abstract

In the process of introducing any system into the classroom context, the teachers' acceptance and expectation are the prerequisite for its success because teachers are the ones who implement the system. They are the driving forces that ensure the system takes place, works and serve its purposes. This study aimed at determining teachers' acceptance and expectation of the introduction of an automated networked-based essay scorer that provides immediate feedback in terms of score and remarks as a whole and even at the paragraph level called the Automated Essay Scoring Feedback (AESF). A total of eight experienced MUET teachers were selected to be interviewed. The qualitative findings were analysed, coded and trended. The findings indicates that essay writing is the most underdeveloped skills. It is very demanding on the students and is definitely the most laborious task for the teachers who guide, assess, respond and document their student's writing. The proposal of a home-grown and networked AESF was positively accepted by the teachers despite some who were unsure about its ability in mimicking human raters and other possible concerns such as the lack of computer resources, technical support and proper training for teachers and students. The findings of this study provided some practical considerations towards the design and development of AESF that include the need for immediacy, ease of use, usefulness, reliability and validity. The AESF is an innovative solution that assist the most challenging language teachers' task; essay marking. Being home-grown, AESF can overcome a fundamental drawback of commercially available Automated Essay Scorer (AES), namely cultural-sensitivity and validity.

Introduction

Teachers play a key role in implementing a lesson within the overall requirement of the schooling system. They are the ones who plan, judge, decide and carry out a lesson that best suit the needs of the outlined lesson objectives derived from the curriculum as well as their students' needs (Nikian, Nor, & Aziz, 2013). Teachers would accept new technological teaching innovation if the tool appears to be useful and appropriate to the lesson and students (Wozney, Venkatesh, & Abrami, 2006). However, the skills involved in using the tool have to be within the ability of both the teacher and students (Uzunboylu & Ozdamli, 2011).

In order to design and introduce a teaching tool for essay marking, the teachers' point of views about an ideal pedagogical tool is of utmost importance because they are the ones who know what are most needed and useful in their classroom (Nikian et al., 2013). If the end users' needs are not fulfilled there will be no reason for them to jeopardise their teaching time for learning and using an unnecessary and unjustified teaching tool. With teachers' needs being considered, they will be more receptive towards the new technology and with their cooperation in implementing the system, the usability and effectiveness of the system can be determined for further

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Hence, in order to design and introduce AESF, a writing assistance tool, that could ease teachers' burden, the tool is designed to assist students in improving their writing skills, a detailed study on teachers' opinion and expectations is necessary to craft it as closely as possible to their needs to ensure that this tool will be put into full use.

Factor Affecting Teachers in the Implementation of Technological Innovation

Teacher's acceptance in using technology is influenced by motivation and beliefs that the system could ease their burden and not add on to their heavy workload (Nikian et al., 2013). Teachers who see success in using an innovation will have higher chances of using them in their lesson (Ferede, Melese, & Tefera, 2013). With teachers' positive view, more emphasis will be given and their students will automatically be influenced to believe the benefit of such a tool (Ferede et al., 2013).

Immediacy

Immediacy in feedback and scoring is crucial to maintain interest and motivation in students and teacher in the writing process (Barker, 2011). In the traditional classroom, time is the main obstacle because teachers require time to thoroughly