Attitudes towards Tablet Use in Language Teaching

Sarp Erkir
Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East Egaila, Kuwait
E-mail: sarp.erkir@aum.edu.kw

Ulas Kayapinar
Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East Egaila, Kuwait
E-mail: ulas.kayapinar@aum.edu.kw

Nurcan Köse
Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East Egaila, Kuwait
E-mail: nurcan.kose@aum.edu.kw

Abstract
With an increasing enthusiasm, tablet use and integration in language teaching environments have been debated intensely in recent years. Still, limited evidence exists to reveal attitudes of English language teachers towards tablet use at different levels. This study measures the attitudes of English teachers towards tablet use in primary and higher education contexts. Participants comprised 143 volunteer higher education faculty and primary/secondary education English teachers around the world. Scale of Attitudes towards Tablet Use in Teaching was employed to reveal evidence of the attitudes of English teachers and higher education faculty of English. The data analysis and results of this study can contribute to decision-making processes of schools or universities by giving an idea and raising awareness of language teachers' attitudes and readiness on use of tablets in English language courses.
Keywords: Tablet, language teaching, attitude, English teachers, English faculty

1. Introduction
Today, our educational system is entangled with technology, so much so that it is not possible to think of education in a context where many different kinds of technology is not used to support education. In the turn of 21st century, the introduction of new devices to education gained momentum, while interactivity became increasingly possible using new software, social network and mobile applications. As a result of the dense interaction between technology and education, we have even witnessed the creation of the field of educational technology, the disciplinary application of knowledge for the purpose of improving learning, instruction and performance (Spector, 2012). This interactive feature of technology became more widespread with the mobilizing of personal computer and particularly with laptops (Lepi, 2012).

Technological developments have historically been a catalyst for social and institutional change. Technology enthusiasts wishfully predict that recent developments in digital technologies must also transform the education system. There are many studies aimed at showing how and why the effort to integrate technology into the classroom is worthwhile (Culp, Honey, & Mandinach, 2003; Collins & Halverson, 2009). According to Ozbek (2014), the expectations of the technology enthusiast can be categorized under three main titles:
1.   Technology as a change agent and maintaining economic competitiveness
2.   Technology as a means to address difficulties in teaching and learning
3.   Technology as an answer to the rooted problems of education

The first group of expectations focus on the argument that we are living in a world that is rapidly changing, and the only way to prepare next generations for this fast change is to school the young generations with technology (Ozbek, 2014). The second set of expectations is the belief that technology provides enriched capabilities for educating learners, and that schools can embrace these capabilities to reshape education (Collins & Halverson, 2009). The third group of expectations is that technology can find solutions to the rooted problems of education (Ozbek, 2014).

Despite all these expectations, Faure and Orthober (2011) discuss the love and hate relationship between today's technologies and education. There are as many opponents of digital technologies in the classroom as the proponents. Therefore, this study aims at measuring the attitudes of English language teachers' towards tablet use. While many educational institutions are incorporating tablets to the programs, there is only limited evidence to justify this integration, and it is important to understand where teachers stand.

2. Method
2.1 Participants
The participants who responded to the scale consisted of 143 volunteer teachers and faculty members of English

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from different countries (51 from Turkey, 24 from Canada, 15 from the USA, 14 from Kuwait, 4 from Saudi Arabia, 2 from Germany, 2 from Greece, 2 from Indonesia, 2 from Iraq, 2 from Morocco, 2 from Pakistan, 2 from South Korea, 2 from Taiwan, 2 from Ukraine, 1 from Austria, 1 from Croatia, 1 from England, 1 from Italy, 1 from Kosovo, 1 from Malta, 1 from Mauritania, 1 from Moldova, 1 from Oman, 1 from Poland, 1 from Russia, 1 from South Africa, 1 from Spain, and 1 from Vietnam). Participants were invited randomly via social media and email invitations, and the sample was selected because of the participants' convenient accessibility to an online attitude scale and to the researchers. No personal identifying information was requested from the respondents except some particular information for descriptives which are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Study Sample

English Teachers	f	%	Experience
Primary/Secondary Education	51	35.66	2-25 years
Higher Education	92	64.34	1-25 years

2.2 Data Collection

The data were collected by using an attitude scale called Scale of Attitudes towards Tablet Use in Teaching developed by Kayapinar, Spathopoulou, Safieddine, Nakhoul, and Kadry (2016). An online survey software was employed to collect the responses of the participants. In order to guarantee anonymity, no personal identifying information was requested from the respondents, and Respondent Anonymity Assurance (RAA) was enabled by the researcher(s). Once RAA is enabled, it will remain perpetual and cannot be rescinded by the researcher(s) or anyone else. In this way, the software never presents a respondent's email address linked to the response data in any of the analysis tools, reports, and data downloads. Here, the operational definition of attitude is taken as "a psychological tendency" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) expressed by evaluating tablet use in teaching with some degree of favour or disfavour. The scale is in Likert format ranging from "Strongly Agree (4)" on one end to "Strongly Disagree (0)" on the other on a 5-point scale. A 5-point scale was chosen for collecting levels of agreement of the respondents as keeping response categories on a 5-point scale was seen more convenient, meaningful, and easier to respond (Kayapinar et al., 2016). The scale has three factors which was defined as teaching practices, student learning, and faculty development. These three factors comprise 71.848 of the total variance. Cronbach's Alpha (Crα) reliability of the scale is .88. At the end of the scale items, a comments box was provided for the participants to put their ideas and further comments about tablet use in language teaching.

2.3 Data Analysis

In order to analyze quantitative data and obtain descriptive statistics for the item results, SPSS 16.0 and Microsoft Office Excel 2013 were employed. To investigate the correlation between English teachers and language teaching faculty in higher education, Spearman rank correlation, the equivalent of Pearson correlation, was computed.

The first step to organize the qualitative data was analyzing the open-ended responses line by line, and some memos were written (Glesne, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) for a manageable classification. After categories were reviewed, recurring themes, core consistencies and meanings were identified by using pattern codes. Those codes were then identified as smaller sets, themes or constructs with content analysis (Miles & Hubermas, 1994; Patton, 2002). The process was as follows:

(a) underlying key terms in the responses;
(b) restating key phrases;
(c) coding key terms;
(d) pattern coding;
(e) constructing themes;
(f) summarizing themes; and
(g) integrating theories in an explanatory framework

3. Findings

While examining the findings, it would be better to keep in mind that the percentage of the respondents who own a tablet was 75.2, and the percentage of the respondents who used a tablet in teaching practices was only 39.8 in total. The analyses of the scale results were made considering the factor structure, but first it is better to give some descriptives below:

Table 2. Some descriptive statistics on the total scores

Mean	Median	Mode	Variance
56.85 (71.1%)	58 (72.5%)	76 (95%)	217.568

As seen in Table 2, the mean of the total scores might mean that the participants mostly have a positive attitude towards tablet use in teaching with a 71.1%. The minimum score and the variance might mean that some participants almost totally disagree with the idea of tablet use in teaching, and there is a variety of attitudes

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towards tablet use in teaching even if the mean is meaningfully high and positive.

The percentages of the responses are given for each item to see the evidence of attitudes towards tablet use in teaching practices more clearly in Table 3. The table shows that, among the participants, 60-to-81.3% have a positive attitudes towards tablet use in teaching practices. Additionally, undecided ones are in a range of between 14 and 26.4%. Finally, the disagreement proportion ranges from 4.8 to 25.6.

Table 3. Percentages of Participants' Scores of Subscale of Teaching Practices

Items	0	1	2	3	4
The courses I am teaching would greatly benefit from the use of tablets.	4.1	9.1	26.4	**24.8**	**35.6**
The courses I am teaching would not benefit from the use of tablets.	**36.4**	**24**	14	14.9	10.7
Using tablets would help me present my material in a more organized way.	3.3	8.3	21.5	**30.6**	**36.3**
A tablet would contribute to my development being a more effective teacher.	2.5	11.6	19.8	**31.4**	**34.7**
A tablet would contribute to my development being a more creative teacher.	1.7	7.4	19.8	**28.9**	**42.2**
A tablet would contribute to my development being a more organized teacher.	3.3	9.9	19	**30.6**	**37.2**
I would use a tablet for presenting the material in the classroom.	3.3	5	19.8	**24**	**47.9**
Tablets would be used in innovative ways that go beyond the traditional approach.	0.7	4.1	14	**34.7**	**46.5**
A tablet would contribute to organizing the teaching material.	2.5	4.1	17.4	**37.2**	**38.8**
The courses I am teaching will greatly benefit from the use of tablets.	5.8	9.9	18.2	**38**	**28.1**

The responses provide evidence of positive attitudes towards tablet use in teaching practices. Most of the participants (60.4) believe that English courses will greatly benefit from the use of tablet. Still a group of participants including 26.4% does not agree or disagree with the ideas of using tablet in the courses they teach. The reverse item which is the equivalent of the item previously mentioned has almost the same percentage. This result supports the previous responses, but the percentage of the undecided participants seems lower (14%). Teachers, in a range of 66.1%-to-81.2%, also have a positive attitude in using tablets to be more organized, effective, creative, and innovative in teaching. Most (76%) of them believe the materials could be presented in a more organized way by using tablets, and they would present their materials using tablets in the classroom (71.9%).

Table 4 below gives some evidence of participants' attitudes toward student learning.

Table 4. Percentages of Participants' Scores of Subscale of Student Learning

Items	0	1	2	3	4
A tablet would increase student-student interaction in the classroom.	8.3	15.7	28.1	**19**	**28.9**
A tablet would increase teacher-student interaction in the classroom.	9.1	13.2	21.5	**29.8**	**26.4**
A tablet would contribute to student participation in the classroom.	3.3	12.4	24.8	**30.6**	**28.9**
Tablet use promotes an active learning environment.	5.8	5	15.7	**38.8**	**34.7**
Tablet use would have a positive impact on their learning experience.	0	6.6	14	**42.1**	**37.3**
A tablet would be encouraging for the student to explore learning topics.	1.7	6.6	17.4	**36.3**	**38**

Taken the responses into consideration, there is a tendency to have a positive attitude towards the idea that using tablets increase student-student (47.9%) and teacher-student interaction (56.2%). Still, the percentages of the undecided ones (28.1% and 21.5%) are pretty higher when the responses to the other items are examined. Student participation ratio is thought to be higher by tablet use in the classroom as 59.5% of the participants responded as Agree and Strongly Agree. Still, 24.8% is undecided. When it comes to active learning environment, the percentage gets higher and it becomes 73.5%. The highest percentage is in the item measuring the attitudes on the impact of tablet use in students' learning experience (79.4%). There is no one who does not literally strongly disagree this item, and there is only 6.6% disagreement on this item. The undecided ones has the lowest percentage, which is 14%. Second highest response is on encouraging side of tablet use for students in exploring learning topics with a percentage of 74.3. Below, the responses to the items on the attitudes toward tablet use in faculty development are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Percentages of Participants' Scores of Subscale of Faculty Development

Items	0	1	2	3	4
Instructors would be more motivated to adopt a more personalized way to approaching the subject.	**36.4**	**24**	14	14.9	10.7
Instructors would be more motivated to review the way they teach.	3.3	7.4	**32.2**	**30.6**	**26.5**
Instructors would be more motivated to adopt a more proactive way to approaching the subject.	3.3	5.8	24	**31.4**	**35.5**
Instructors would adopt a more proactive way to approaching the subject.	1.7	4.1	26.4	**37.2**	**30.6**

The last subscale of the attitudes toward tablet use is the faculty development subscale. Participants mostly do not agree the idea that instructors would be more motivated to adopt a more personalized way to approaching

the subject with a 56.8%. This might be because of a strict curriculum content. Another item on development is using tablets would let instructors review the way they teach. More than half of the participants (57.1%) agree with this idea, but a high percentage of undecided ones still draws attention with a 32.2%. It seems they did not find using tablets related to reviewing the way they teach. The responses given to the items about motivation to adopt a more proactive way and adoption of a proactive way to approaching the subject are mostly agreed (66.9% and 67.8%). This might indicate that they think use of tablets is helpful in creating a proactive way to approaching the subject.

In order to find the relationship between English faculty and primary/secondary English teachers' attitudes towards tablet use in teaching, a correlation coefficient was calculated, and it was found .86. This coefficient shows that there is a significant and meaningful correlation between the two groups.

An open-ended item was employed to reveal the views of participants on tablet use in language teaching as in the following:

"Please add your comments about tablet use in language teaching"

The transcripts were analyzed line by line and memos were written (Glesne, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Categories or labels were reviewed and recurring themes, core consistencies and meanings were identified by using pattern codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

The themes encountered were mostly on the positive side. The most recurring themes that led to the codes were: classroom management, motivation and different kinds of contribution to the lesson.

Classroom management. According to McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003), "the efficient use of time is an important variable in helping students achieve learning goals and making the classroom a pleasant place for teacher and students" (p.3).The analysis of the open-ended item indicates that tablet use helps classroom management especially in terms of timing since it requires proper timing and careful lesson planning. The answers given to the open-ended item are in accordance with the results of the questionnaire which state that a high percentage (66.1%-to-81.2%) of the participants agreed that tablet use will help them in being more organized, effective, creative, and innovative in teaching. These qualities are necessary for being a good classroom manager.

Motivation. Motivation is a necessary precondition for student involvement in any type of learning activity (Malone & Lepper, cited in Ciampa (2014)). As a result of the analysis, it can be concluded that a high percentage of the teachers agree on the importance of attracting students' attention. Being attracted to the subject matter is a result of being motivated since it is accepted as a precondition. Participants mentioned the benefits of tablets as ways of engaging students, driving students' attention, enhancing their performance and promoting student learning. This code also corresponds to some of the items in the questionnaire.

Contribution to the lesson. The item mentioned the most by the participants was how much tablets would contribute to the lessons in various ways. The answers varied from being an effective audio-visual aid to creating more learning opportunities by having easy access to the material itself. Participants also stated that active learning due to more interesting and constructive lessons will occur as a result of tablet use.

4. Conclusion

This study measures the attitudes of English language teachers' towards tablet use as there is only limited evidence to justify the integration of tablets into language teaching while many educational institutions are incorporating tablets to the programs. The study revealed that the participants, both school teachers and higher education faculty, mostly have a positive attitude towards tablet use in teaching with a 71.1%. The responses also provide evidence of positive attitudes towards tablet use in teaching practices. Most of the participants (60.4) believe that English courses will greatly benefit from the use of tablet. Teachers, in a range of 66.1%-to-81.2%, also have a positive attitude in using tablets to be more organized, effective, creative, and innovative in teaching. They mostly (76%) believe the materials could be presented in a more organized way by using tablets, and they would present their materials using tablets in the classroom (71.9%). Additionally, there is a tendency to have a positive attitude towards the idea that using tablets increase student-student (47.9%) and teacher-student interaction (56.2%). The percentage gets higher, and it becomes 73.5% when it comes to active learning environment. The highest percentage is in the item measuring the attitudes on the impact of tablet use in students' learning experience (79.4%). Another highest response is on encouraging side of tablet use for students in exploring learning topics with a percentage of 74.3. Still, some participants do not agree the idea that instructors would be more motivated to adopt a more personalized way to approaching the subject with a 56.8%. This study was limited to the attitudes of language teachers at schools and higher education faculty, but further correlative and/or experimental studies using longitudinal research might be held for monitoring the effect of tablet use in teaching and learning environments considering a variety of variables such as methodology, practical techniques, classroom management, motivation, and success.

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Notes

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