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**Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Use of MALL Instruction in Iranian EFL Context**

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**Abstract**

This study sets out to explore English as foreign language (EFL) and Iranian teachers' attitudes ‎towards the implementation of MALL instruction. For that matter, a mixed-methods design, ‎including questionnaires, structured interviews and observation were employed. A total of 87 ‎EFL teachers participated in the questionnaire, which was the quantitative phase of the study. ‎In addition, 10 EFL teachers were interviewed and their classes were observed for the ‎qualitative phase of the study. The participant EFL teachers have been teaching at a number of ‎universities and language-teaching institutions in Mazandaran. One-sample t-test was used to ‎analyze the questionnaire data and the results suggested that the Iranian EFL teachers adopted ‎moderately positive attitudes towards the implementation of MALL instruction, but the ‎observation data indicated that most teachers preferred traditional ways of teaching English in ‎the EFL context. At the same time, the interview data revealed that the implementation of ‎MALL instruction in Iran is challenging due to a number of perceived barriers and obstacles. ‎The most considerable perceived challenges to the implementation of MALL instruction ‎comprise lack of online facilities and resources, lack of interaction in online instruction, and ‎teachers’ limited knowledge of online instruction. The findings provide crucial insights into ‎teachers’ attitudes towards integrating MALL into their EFL classroom instruction in Iran. ‎

**Keywords**: EFL teachers, Attitude, Mobile learning, TAM‎.

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**1. Background**

Signs of progress in educational technology are occurring at an admirable rate, but the speed at which they are being integrated successfully into an effective language teaching happens at a slower pace. Therefore, there is a need for a research, which looks into the effect of technology on the consequences of learning and teaching processes mediated by technologies (Walsh, 2013). Accordingly, many attempts have been made to implement technology-assisted instruction (TAI) in language and literacy education. Along with the same line, many studies were conducted to explore the attitudes of EFL/ESL stakeholders toward TAI and its classroom applications (Lai, 2015; Lai, Yeung, & Hu, 2016; Ledbetter & Finn, 2016; Teo, 2015; Toffoli & Sockett, 2015).

Nowadays, technologies, which become more portable and versatile innovations for communications, are increasingly affecting people’s lives. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) indeed made an appearance in the field of English language teaching (ELT), first around 2009 with the emergence of mobile ‘Apps' (applications, or programs) for language learning developed by the British Council, closely followed by major ELT publishers of stand-alone and course book-related apps (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012). The integration of mobile devices into the academic settings has produced the eternal effect on the modern learning system, which is not limited to classrooms anymore but is directed by instructors. Instead, it has turned to a new horizon of anywhere, any time and by anyone using mobile devices called Mobile-Learning. The latest definitions of mobile learning tend to focus on learners rather than technology (Winters, 2006). A study conducted by White and Mills (2014) examined the attitudes of Japanese university EFL learners toward using mobile phones in their classes. In 2008, mobile phones were the preferred device for young people to access the Internet, but 95.6 % of the public used mobile phones in 2012. Smartphones provide opportunities for students to use their mobile phones to improve learning through taking a screenshot of class whiteboard or other sources of information, recording lectures, and accessing L2 vocabulary learning apps, such as English news apps on the Web to improve reading and listening comprehension. Mobile Learning (M-Learning) focuses on the mobility of a learner who uses information and communication technologies. It is worth noting that another definition is argued by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) in an overview of mobile-assisted language learning. In their view, ‘M-learning’ refers to the one mediated via handheld devices and potentially available anytime, anywhere which may be formal or informal.

Mobile learning differs from more traditional modes that provide a greater opportunity to make learning portable, connected and individualized (Callum, Jeffrey, & Kinshuk, 2014). The recent literature on M-Learning has highlighted the impact of technology on stakeholders’ attitude toward it. Following Kukulska‐Hulme (2010), learning is open to all when it is inclusive, and mobile technologies as a powerful tool can help open up learning to all those who have missed out the opportunity to learn, and those who have been disappointed in their previous learning experiences. Mobile devices could be used for learning at home, in a classroom, in a social space, on field trips, in museums and art galleries, in work contexts or as part of everyday learning.

Along with ubiquitous use of M-learning worldwide, Byrne and Diem (2014) conducted a study focusing on mobile English language learners in different countries compared to EFL learners of university age in Japan in terms of using mobile in their daily activities. 1.37 % of active users of the grammar app, or 100 among N = 2214 were Japanese. French and Spanish 26 % each; Italian and Russian, 10 % each; German, 9 %; Korean, 7 %; Japanese, 5 %; and Thai, 3 % were native language respondents. Males totaled 56 % (64 % of Japanese), and nearly 50 % (44 % of Japanese) were under the 25 age group. Most regarded their English CEFR level as beginner (64 %) or elementary (12 %). A survey in a popular English grammar app for the Android platform was used and 3759 respondents in an authentic and voluntary context participated. They mentioned that smartphones and tablets help individuals personalize their learning through user profiles on campus classroom learning. Both teachers and students can have an App choice for academic interaction to support the university course studies. The report shows that students used different Apps such as dictionary, translators, flash cards and vocabulary games and found them quite comfortable and flexible to use and practice in target language anytime and anywhere. The results indicated that teachers should bear in mind students’ interest, the course purpose, and cultural, male and female consideration as well. Therefore, M-learning proved to be useful in helping learners share knowledge and create social interaction (Suanpang, 2012), and the use of Mobile learning tools was demonstrated to be useful in improving learners' knowledge structure as well as their learning achievements.

Despite such impacts, little is known about the factors that influence willingness to adopt this new technology (Akour, 2009). To date, studies into mobile learning have been mainly focusing on student adoption (Callum, Jeffrey & Kinshuk, 2014; Gikas & Grant, 2013; Hsu, 2014; Hwang & Chen, 2011; Lepp, Barkley & Karpinski, 2014; Oberg & Daniel, 2012; Park, Nam, & Cha, 2011; Reychav & Wu, 2015; Stockwell, 2008). Factors that affect the M-Learning adoption by teachers seem to have been largely ignored; therefore, considering the increasing use of mobile devices in the educational context and also the important role of teachers play as the most influential stakeholders for allowing educational innovations in the classrooms (Pelgrum & Plomp, 1993). However, if teachers fail to see the benefit of using mobile learning, it is more difficult for this technology to gain attraction within the educational area. They make their influence both explicitly through their instructional practices and implicitly through role modeling (Katyal & Evers, 2004). Moreover, these influences manifest themselves directly in students' intellectual and social engagement at school and indirectly in students' learning beliefs and ways to the learning (Davis, 2003). One of the best ways to support teachers’ innovation is to provide them with opportunities to witness how the specific innovations benefit their students (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Research by Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Glazewski, Newby, and Ertmer (2010) demonstrated that when teachers witnessed the

 Impact of technology on student learning, they were motivated to experiment with additional technologies. Therefore, factors that influence teachers’ adoption of the new technology include access to resources, quality of software and hardware, ease of use, incentives to change, support and collegiality in their school, school and national policies, commitment to professional learning and background in formal computer training (Mumtaz, 2000). Therefore, this study has explored teachers’ attitude towards MALL instruction using the theoretical model described below.

Since the 1970s, there has been a shift of focus on Information Systems (IS) and researchers concentrate on identifying the conditions or factors that could facilitate technology integration into businesses (Teo, Lee, & Chai, 2007). Subsequently, researchers concentrated their efforts on developing and testing models that could help in predicting technology usage. Among different models, TAM received much attention and has been widely applied and tested in educational contexts with students and teachers for predicting the acceptance, adoption, and use of information technology (Teo, 2015). Davis (1986) introduced TAM, which is specifically meant to explain computer usage behavior. TAM was an adaptation of the ‘Theory of Reasoned Action’ (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) specifically tailored for modeling user acceptance of information systems. TRA is a model from social psychology concerning the determinants of consciously intended behavior. According to TRA, a person’s attitude toward a behavior is determined by his or her salient beliefs about consequences of performing the behavior multiplied by the evaluation of those consequences (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989).

Teachers' attitude towards using technologies to facilitate language learning requires further research to be conducted in Iran due to different cultural aspects of educational settings. This is because of the influence of teachers' internal beliefs and attitudes on their usage behavior and how these beliefs and attitudes are influenced by various external factors such as cultural differences, technical design, user involvement, and cognitive style. However, the mixed findings reported in some studies (e.g., Chen & Tseng, 2012; Dogruel, Joeckel, & Bowman, 2015) may be due to the difference among teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and satisfaction (Davis, et al., 1989).

TAM is aimed to provide an explanation of the determinants of computer acceptance that is capable of exploring user behavior across a broad range of end-user computer technologies and user populations. The key purpose of TAM is to provide a basis for tracing the impact of external behavior on internal beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. As Figure 1 shows, TAM suggests a small number of fundamental variables suggested by previous researchers dealing with the cognitive and affective determinants of computer acceptance perceived usefulness (U) and perceived ease of use (EOU). TAM has also been extended to include a range of additional external variables to improve its predictive powers, such as subjective norms, experience, and motivation (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis et al., 2003). TAM model has been used extensively in educational settings to support teachers and students to adopt instructional technology.

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**Fig 1. Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989).**

TAM has played an important role in facilitating the process of teaching and learning in the classroom and has altered teachers' attitude towards using it as instructional technology. The technology integration process, which has played an important role in the classroom, is one of the factors leading to the technology adoption among teachers (Chiu & Churchill, 2015; Teo, Lee & Chai, 2007; Zhao, Hueyshan, & Mishra, 2001). Aligned with technology adoption among teachers, Chiu and Churchill (2015) measured factors influencing the beliefs, attitudes and anxiety levels of teachers before and after using such devices to teach different subjects. They used TAM as Perceived ease of use, Perceived usefulness, and Attitude. The result revealed that the teachers were capable of using mobile devices in teaching. Moreover, they found mobile devices easy to use and useful in teaching and that they held a positive attitude, although some felt strongly anxious even after using those devices. Therefore, the study of MALL has become popular among Iranian researchers in recent years (Atai & Dashtestani, 2013; Dashtestani, 2014, 2015), but inadequate research has focused on teachers' attitude towards MALL instruction in an Iranian EFL context.

**2. Objectives**

The objective of this research is twofold. It initially measures EFL teachers’ attitudes towards the use of MALL instruction, and the extent to which potential challenges EFL teachers have reported on implementing MALL instruction, then, are analyzed. The main questions are:

*What are Iranian EFL teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of MALL instruction?*

*What are Iranian EFL teachers’ attitudes towards possible challenges to the implementation of MALL instruction?*

**3. Materials and Method**

***Design***

A mixed-method design or the combination of qualitative and quantitative design was used to measure the research questions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a deeper understanding of the research problems (Creswell, 2009). In the current study, the qualitative data were collected through using interviews and observation while the quantitative data were collected by a questionnaire.

***Participants***

Convenience sampling was used to select 87 male and female EFL teachers in Mazandaran, Iran participated in this study. The sample size was chosen using a formula cited in <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html> with the 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level in population size of 20,000. The recommended sample size was 88. All of the participants were invited to fill out the questionnaire and only 10 of them were randomly requested for taking part in the interview and accepting for their classes to be observed to serve the purpose of this study. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, including the gender, age, EFL teaching experience, using the Internet experience, computer experience use, and university degree. The majority of the teachers were MA degree holders (72%), while the BA and Ph.D. degree holders comprised of 19% and 8% of the population, respectively. Furthermore, they were specialists in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), English literature, or applied linguistics (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Demographic information of participants**

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| **Gender Male= 31 Female= 56** |
| Average age 29.81Average EFL teaching experience 6.85 Average computer experience use 10.08Average use of the Internet experience 7.65University DegreesPh.D. holders 7MA holders 63BA holders 17 |

***Procedure***

The intent of this two-phase, sequential strategy is a popular technique for the mixed method design with strong quantitative weight, followed by a second phase of qualitative data collection that builds on the result of the first phase; therefore, mixing data occurs when the initial quantitative results inform the secondary qualitative data collection (Cresswell, 2009). The intent of these two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was to explore the teachers' attitude toward using mobile devices in teaching. In the first phase, quantitative research questions addressed the relationship of teachers' attitude and using mobile devices in the teaching area. After the participants approved their participation in this study, they (N = 87) were initially given the questionnaire through E-mail, social media and in person to measure teachers’ attitude. Information from the first phase has been further explored in the second qualitative phase. Then, the researcher observed audio-recorded and took some notes from 10 teachers’ classrooms regarding MALL implementation. Accordingly, the interviews and observations were used to explore the aspects of the central phenomenon with 10 teachers in their classrooms. The 10 classes were observed, and the 10 teachers were finally invited for structured interviews to find out the potential discrepancy between stated versus observed beliefs about MALL by obtaining deeper information from their responses to the questionnaire.

***Questionnaire***

A validated questionnaire was used to answer the research questions (Sanchez-Prieto, Olmos-Miguelanez, & Garcia-Penalvo, 2015). The questionnaire has demographic questions and an attitude scale. A five-point Likert scale was used as the measure of response with the extreme points being ‘Strongly Agree’, scored as five, to ‘Strongly Disagree’, which was scored as one. Initially, the Likert scale questionnaire was designed to investigate EFL teachers’ attitude towards implementing mobile devices in teaching in Iran. The questionnaire was constructed and developed based on reviewing previous research on theories. In addition, Cronbach’s Alpha (r = 0.827) coefficients were calculated and showed high levels of reliability for the 8 sections of the survey (Larson-Hall, 2010). Following the demographics items, a total of 26 items were organized in the 8 sections of the questionnaire. Each section is defined in Table 2. The first three sections of the questionnaire included items related to the teachers' attitudes towards TAM variables such as Perceived usefulness, Perceived ease of use, and Behavioral Intention. The items of the other section were constructed to identify other external variables such as Self-efficacy, Facilitating conditions, Subjective norm, Mobile device anxiety, and Resistance to change of MALL instruction from the perspective of EFL teachers.

**Table 2. Operational definitions of research variables**

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| Factor | Operational Definition |
| Self-efficacy (SE)  | "Judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required dealing with prospective situations" (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). |
| Perceived Usefulness (PU) |  “The prospective user’s subjective probability that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organizational context” (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989, p. 985). |
| Perceived ease of Use (EOU) |  “The degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort.” (Davis, et al., 1989, p. 985). |
| Subjective Norm (SN) | "Person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior or in question" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 302). |
| Anxiety (MA) | Defined as an emotional state of unpleasantness, fear, frustration, rumination, and apprehension (Nayak, 2014; Venkatesh, 2000), which threatens decision-making (Wray & Stone, 2005). Anxiety is an important predictor in technology acceptance (Celik & Yesilyurt, 2013; Hsu, Wang, & Chiu, 2009; Venkatesh, 2000), which has negative influences on technology integration (Celik & Yesi- lyurt, 2013; Hsu et al., 2009). |
| Resistance to Change (RC)  | The difficulty to break with routines and the emotional stress generated when facing the expectation of changes (Al-Somali, Gholami, & Clegg, 2009). |
| Facilitating Conditions (FC) | This construct measures the individual's perception of the resources at their disposal to support their behavior. This concept is integrated into the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, Gordon, & Davis, 2003). |
| Behavioral Intention (BI)  | Specific actions or behaviors on the part of teachers with respect to web-based e-learning courses were used to measure their behavioral intentions related to using web-based e-learning systems for in-service education (Chen & Tseng, 2012).  |

***Observation***

An observation was developed for evaluating mobile-based activities commonly practiced in Iranian classrooms. For this purpose, 10 English classes were observed by using a checklist that was developed based on relevant literature on the mobile-based instruction (Ataie & Dashtestani, 2013). The researcher was non-participant, took the field notes on the activities used by the 10 EFL teachers and recorded their 90 minute classes for four sessions in four weeks through a checklist in a semi-structured way. In addition, the teachers agreed to record their experiences, thoughts and feelings through audiotapes. The checklist included items addressing ‘mobile-based classroom activities,’ ‘mobile-based homework,’ ‘mobile-based discussions,' ‘encouraging students to make use of the Internet,' ‘referring to academic websites,' ‘online teaching,' and ‘mobile-based activities in the textbook or materials.' To assist in the data collection phase, the researcher used field notes providing a detailed account of ways he planned his time when he was on-site, and in the transcription and analysis phase. Furthermore, one follow-up interview with each of the teachers was scheduled for a week time period.

***Interview***

Conducting structured interviews with 10 EFL teachers, the researcher further collected the qualitative data focused on potential challenges EFL teachers encounter while using MALL instruction. The researcher determined on the time, place, instructions and invited teachers one by one at their convenience and took around 20-30 minutes each. The researcher took notes of interviewees’ responses while the interview sessions were recorded in the event that recording equipment failed. The interviews provided supplementary data to enrich those obtained from the survey. The participants were invited to interviews by sending e-mail and structured interview comprised four open/close-ended questions as follows:

1. *Do you believe in the usefulness of MALL (mobile-assisted language learning) instruction for Iranian EFL students? Why?*
2. *If you are engaged in MALL instruction, what are the current activities practiced in your class?*
3. *What are the obstacles to implement MALL instruction in Iran?*
4. *Do you have any other suggestions regarding the use the MALL instruction in the EFL teaching area?*

***Data Analysis***

The collected data addressed the teachers’ attitude toward the MALL instruction and the barriers that hindered them in M-learning. In order to answer the research questions, the quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS version 18, and collected through the structured interviews and observations. The researcher took the following steps to analyze the qualitative data. First, the data were organized and prepared through transcribing the interviews, typing the field notes/checklists (observation) and arranging the data for different sources. Second, the researcher read the data a few times to make the general sense and reflected on its overall meanings. Third, the researcher started the detailed analysis through coding, which is a process of sorting the texts into chunks or segmenting the text for making a sense of information. Fourth, after coding and carefully reading the interview data, the emerging themes were identified and reported. Fifth, the researcher used narratives to report on the findings of the analysis. Finally, the researcher made an interpretation of the data through understanding those emerged from one’s personal experience, history and culture.

**4. Results**

***What is Iranian EFL teachers' attitude towards the implementation of MALL instruction?***

To answer the first research question, the mean and standard deviations of teachers' attitude towards using mobile technology in EFL teaching was calculated. Then the one-sample t-test was used to check the mean scores found in the observed sample against a hypothetically-assumed value, which was calculated as 3. The result was reported in Table 3. The constructs or values with the negative lower and positive upper indicated the equal mean of 3 with the 95% confidence level. Although both lower and upper means were positive, the mean of the construct is over 3 in both.

After comparing the amount of assumed mean with the computed mean of perceived usefulness *Items 1-4* *(PU)*, the positive amount of both upper and lower means showed the positive attitude toward this construct.

*Items 5-8* *(PEU*) investigated the teachers’ attitude towards ease of use and showed their positive attitude by both positive amounts in the upper and lower means.

*Items 9-11* *(BI)* focused on the behavioral intention of participants, which showed their positive attitudes by both positive amounts in the upper and lower means.

*Items 12-14* *(SE)* explored teachers' attitude towards self-efficacy of using MALL instruction, which showed positively by both positive amounts in the upper and lower means.

*Items 13-15* *(FC)* investigated facilitating conditions that measure the individual’s attitude towards the resources at their disposal to support their behavior and they showed both positive amounts in the upper and lower means.

*Items 16-18* *(SN)*, with the construct of subjective norm manifested the equal value by the assumed mean (3) with a negative amount of lower and positive amount of upper which again showed the positive attitude of teachers towards the construct.

*Items 19-21* *(MA)* about mobile device anxiety showed a different result. The first two questions with both negative amounts in upper and lower showed the mean lower than 3 (indicating the teachers’ negative attitude) and the last one with both positive amounts showed a positive attitude.

*Items 22-24* *(RC)*, the last three involve information regarding teachers’ resistance to change of using MALL instruction. The questions with both positive amounts of upper and lower means showed their agreement about the construct. Therefore, the calculated data show a positive attitude towards teachers using M-Learning in the context of Iran.

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| **Table 3. One-Sample T-test** |
|  | Test Value = 3  |
| t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Lower | Upper |
| PU | 15.30 | 86 | .00 | 1.03 | .89 | 1.16 |
| PEU | 15.69 | 86 | .00 | 1.06 | .93 | 1.20 |
| BI | 9.38 | 86 | .00 | .65 | .51 | .79 |
| SE | 8.20 | 86 | .00 | .57 | .43 | .71 |
| FC | 7.25 | 86 | .00 | .46 | .33 | .59 |
| SN | 1.43 | 86 | .15 | .10 | -.03 | .24 |
| MA | -1.08 | 86 | .28 | -.10 | -.29 | .08 |
| RC | 9.44 | 86 | .00 | .61 | .48 | .74 |

***What are the Iranian EFL teachers’ attitudes towards the possible challenges to the implementation of MALL instruction?***

The study used interviews and observation as a part of qualitative data collection to respond to the second research question focusing on the EFL teachers’ attitudes towards potential challenges for using M-learning in the classroom.

***Interview Analysis***

In this study, the researcher randomly invited 10 EFL teachers to attend the interview through the structured questions. In the process of interview analysis, the data were read carefully and crosschecked by the researchers and the emerged themes, according to the second research question, were coded for instant access. There were four themes uncovered by the analysis of the data, qualitatively. The first theme demonstrated teachers’ attitude towards MALL instruction. The second theme included the practiced MALL-based activities in or out of their classes. The third theme focused on the obstacles concerned by teachers in implementing the M-learning. The fourth theme expressed teachers’ suggestion regarding the use of MALL instruction in the EFL teaching area.

***Theme One:* Teachers’ attitude in the usefulness of MALL instruction**

The results of the interviews were in line with the questionnaire data regarding teachers’ attitude. The responses to the first question of the interview regarding the merits of MALL instruction showed the positive attitudes of the majority of EFL teachers. The teachers pointed out some benefits of MALL instruction, including most interaction with their smartphones for students, advancement in the development of technology, being familiar with authentic material, reorganizing the traditional way of teaching, accessibility for all students, time and energy efficiency, and facilitating and motivating students’ learning. Excerpts of one of the participant quotations confirmed these positive attitudes:

 With the advancement in the development of technology and human beings’ dependence on it in everyday life, using MALL can open new windows to the realm of teaching and learning EFL in the Iranian context. According to my experiences, using a power point presentation in my classrooms adds clarity to the topics under discussion. More topics can be covered during a session when I do not spend time writing on the board (Teacher 3).

 Mobil can at least been used in the class to record teachers’ voice for EFL students to listen out of class to improve one’s English. (Teacher 8)

***Theme Two:* Practiced MALL-based activities in and out of the classroom**

Teachers were asked to state their current activities practiced in their EFL classes regarding MALL. Most of the uses were limited to the implementing of M-Learning in class including a laptop, smartphone, tablet, and DVD player. They used the devices in the class to look up new words in the electronic dictionary, presenting materials via PowerPoint, and recording the voice for listening classes. However, the use of these devices outside the classroom was limited for receiving e-mails to check students’ projects, sending materials to be read, and also online text messaging discussion. Excerpt from one of the participant quotations that shows the limited use of technologies in EFL classes in Iran according to the reports given by teachers.

I use vocabulary learning apps such as Memorize. Of course, it is what I suggest, not part of the class activities. (Teacher 1)

Many students have technology devices at home but don’t know how to use for improving English. (Teacher 4)

***Theme Three:* EFL teachers’ attitude towards challenges while implementing MALL instruction**

The EFL teachers were asked about the challenges, which might impede the inclusion of MALL instruction. The majority of participants reported that there was a serious lack of online and the Internet-based facilities in Iranian EFL courses. These challenges were reported on almost all the responses of 10 EFL teachers. Some EFL teachers asserted that the lack of technology and computer literacy could lead to the limited use of technology in classrooms. The following excerpt shows the claim of participants:

People should be more acquainted with the culture of MALL instruction usage and benefits. (Teacher 6)

The government should provide enough technology facilities and infrastructure for MALL instruction. (Teacher 5)

***Theme Four:* Suggestions regarding using MALL instruction in EFL teaching area in Iran**

Teachers were asked to share their suggestions about MALL instruction to be implemented more efficiently. The excerpts from the participants’ quotations indicate the need for teacher training for technological literacy:

A lot of good suggestions have been designed by good theories and we should try to implement them in our classes. (Teacher 8)

 Training MALL to teachers, increasing teachers' awareness of its importance and contribution, getting students busy with activities done through smartphones e.g., voice recording, a group working, providing feedback, vocal interaction can be useful. (Teacher 2)

 It would be more nature-friendly if we could avoid paper-based examination and use online exams. (Teacher 3)

To explore the common MALL-based activities practiced in the Iranian EFL courses, the 10 EFL teacher participants’ classrooms were observed. The results indicated that there were little MALL-based activities, homework or discussions in EFL classes. In some of the classes, EFL teachers made no attempts to either raise the students’ awareness regarding the educational potentials for M-Learning or refer them to the relevant academic websites.

**Discussion**

Regarding the first research question examining EFL teachers’ attitudes toward MALL instruction, the finding revealed that the teachers generally held positive attitudes towards M-Learning. With rapid advancements in technologies and ubiquitous use of M-learning worldwide, there is greater pressure on teachers to engage with various types of tools in conceptualizing, preparing, and delivering their lessons (Byrne & Diem, 2014; Teo, 2015). Some researchers have shown that teachers’ attitudes towards technologies influenced the effective use of them in teaching and learning (Paraskeva, Bouta & Papagianna, 2008; White & Mills, 2014). Despite the significant role of technology in effective EFL instruction, there is evidence to suggest that teachers had lackluster responses from using technology for teaching and learning in many parts of the world (Zhao & Cziko, 2001), which was also true about Iran after one and a half decades.

EFL teachers in the current study considered MALL as a powerful tool for improving students' facilitation and motivations for learning. Also, they maintained that M-Learning promises some benefits including up-to-date information, authentic materials, and accessibility for all students, time and energy efficiency, though in reality through observation, their practice was against their stated beliefs. The findings are consistent with the previous empirical literature (Aydin, 2013; Kukulska‐Hulme, 2010; Li &Walsh, 2011; Suanpang, 2012; Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Tondeur & Ertmer, 2010)*.* As Jones (2001) argues, technology-based language teaching cannot be implemented unless teachers and students are eager to use it. Thus, curriculum developers, syllabus designers, and EFL practitioners should revisit these technology-based needs in order to improve the efficiency of the MALL instruction. Teachers are as the most influential stakeholders in allowing educational innovations to enter into the classrooms. Therefore, one of the key factors for the integration of mobile technology in the school curriculum is sufficient teacher training in handling and managing these new tools in their daily practices. In this regard, those who are responsible for the classroom should be considered before the technology to make changes in the classroom (Fullan, 1982). Teachers should learn as how to use technology and integrate it in the teaching methods. It can be done by providing opportunities to witness how the specific changes can help students, to experience and get familiar with new effective instructional methods, and to connect technology learning to their professional knowledge (Hall & Loucks, 1982; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2010; Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Regarding the second research question, concerning the teachers’ attitude towards the limitations and challenges of using the MALL instruction in EFL courses, most teachers had a consensus on the slow speed of the Internet, unfamiliarity with major academic websites, inadequate Internet-based facilities at universities and institutes, inadequate Internet-based skills, and inaccessibility of the major academic websites. The findings are generally consistent with teachers’ comments elicited through the interviews. Therefore, if the technology is going to be incorporated into the Iranian EFL courses, universities’ and institutes’ authorities should resolve these limitations and challenges.

Considering the implementation of MALL-based activities in the current Iranian EFL courses, the majority of teachers asserted the types of these activities that they implemented in their classes, such as looking up the new words in electronic dictionary, presentation via PowerPoint, recording voice for listening classes, receiving e-mails to check students’ projects and sending materials to be read and also using messaging application, Telegram, as an application to connect to students and share information outside the classroom. This is in accordance with Atai (2006) who asserted that the scope of beyond-the-classroom activities in the Iranian EFL courses is far too limited. He claimed that textbooks are the only materials used in the Iranian courses. Although teachers maintain that technology is one of the ways to bring variety into EFL courses and the Internet is one of those variety-making tools; textbook writers and instructors should realize the potential of the Internet as a useful tool in their instruction (Atai & Dashtestani, 2013).

Teachers’ attitude towards using M-Learning is positive among the Iranian EFL teachers; however, its implementation was not in exact alignment with their attitude. The EFL teachers suggested the lack of M-Learning knowledge in the teacher training program and teachers were not satisfied with the training program provided and supported by the ministry of education. Therefore, to provide language teachers with appropriate resources, it is essential that a number of language-teaching stakeholders, including authorities, course designers, providers, supervisors, funders, and curriculum planners implement strategies to eliminate or at least alleviate the problem of the resource unavailability (Dashtestani, 2014).

**5. Conclusion**

This study examined the Iranian EFL teachers’ attitudes towards using mobile technology for language learning inside and outside the classroom. Since teachers play pivotal roles in motivating students to use technology for their learning, the positive perspectives of teachers on the implementation of M-Learning would facilitate the integration of the MALL instruction in the EFL curriculum in Iran. However, there were mismatches in teachers’ attitude towards the degree of their involvement, the specific roles of teachers, and their actual use of technologies in the classrooms. The study further indicated that the EFL teachers did not make use of a wide range of mobile devices’ technology and applications. In particular, the findings of observation demonstrated that technology is used in universities far more than in institutes. Therefore, the EFL teachers should be able to use a wide range of computer software tools and applications to respond to the needs of students and develop professionally.

First-order barriers, including lack of access to the Internet and software, insufficient time to plan instruction, and inadequate technical and administrative support face the Iranian EFL teachers. About second-order barriers which are internal to the teachers and include beliefs about teaching, attitudes toward computers, comfort with established classroom practices, and openness to change, there is a need for some teacher training programs to make some crucial changes and revise the present training programs for implementing M-Learning in the classroom. It is critical that teachers should possess both a positive attitude and adequate computer literacy skills to successfully incorporate technology into the classroom. Future researches should focus on the kind of strategy taught in the teacher-training program. Finally, policy makers need to acknowledge the latest technological tools of education and apply expert mentor rather than using only traditional approach through which teachers in the teacher-training program feel frustrated to continue the verbatim methods and tools of teaching.

Given the typically low MALL-based activities implemented in EFL classes in Iran, it is strongly recommended that the Iranian EFL curriculum developers and syllabus designers incorporate well-designed MALL-based courses in the curriculum. The research findings of the study suggest that instructors need training on MALL-based skills too. One of the important measures that might help Iranian EFL teachers improve their computer literacy is to invite them to take part in CALL materials development workshops and activities. Moreover, EFL authorities may plan to raise the awareness of all educational participants regarding the potentials of M-Learning in terms of fostering the motivation of undergraduates and instructors, particularly in the Iranian EFL context, which is characterized by some cultural resistance against adopting pedagogical innovations. This study calls for greater efforts in understanding various roles that teachers could play in making active use of technologies for language learning. More researches could be conducted to focus on the kind and time of workshops during which teachers can enhance their teaching knowledge and explore various teacher technology education models that could help teachers develop the necessary awareness and abilities to promote learner autonomous language learning with technology.

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**ویژه‌نامۀ آموزش زبان انگلیسی**

**نگرش معلمان نسبت به استفاده از دستورالعمل‎ MALL ‎**

**در کلاس‌های زبان انگليسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه ‏در ایران**

**حسین بزرگیان1**

**تاریخ دریافت: 11/10/1397 تاریخ پذیرش: 20/3/1398**

**چکیده**

این مطالعه با هدف بررسی انگیزه معلمان زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه در ایران برای اجرای دستورالعمل‏‎ MALL ‎ انجام ‏شده است. این تحقیق به منظور دستیابی به اهداف مورد نظر از روش تحقیق ترکیبی و ابزاری ازجمله پرسشنامه‌ها، مصاحبه‌های ‏ساختار یافته و مشاهده استفاده می‌کند. در مجموع 87 معلم زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه در پرسشنامه شرکت کردند که بُعد ‏کمّی این مطالعه را تشکیل می‌داد. علاوه بر این، با 10 معلم زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه مصاحبه شده و کلاس‌های آنها ‏برای مرحله کیفی مطالعه مورد مشاهده قرار گرفت. معلمان شرکت کننده در این مطالعه در تعدادی از دانشگاه‌ها و مؤسسات ‏آموزشی زبان در مازندران تدریس می‌کردند. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌های پرسشنامه از آزمون ‏t‏ یک نمونه‌ای استفاده شد و ‏نتایج نشان داد که معلمان زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه در ایران نسبت به اجرای دستورالعمل‎ MALL ‎ نگرش مثبتی ‏داشتند، اما داده‌های مشاهده شده نشان داد که اکثر معلمان روش‌های سنتی آموزش زبان انگلیسی را در کلاس‌های انگلیسی به‌عنوان ‏زبان خارجه ترجیح می‌دادند. داده‌های مصاحبه نیز نشان داد که اجرای دستورالعمل‎ MALL ‎در ایران با توجه به برخی موانع ‏موجود چالش‌برانگیز است. مهم‌ترین چالش‌ها در اجرای دستورالعمل‎ MALL ‎ عبارت‌اند از عدم وجود امکانات و منابع آنلاین، ‏عدم تعامل در آموزش آنلاین و معلومات محدود معلمان در رابطه با آموزش آنلاین. یافته‌های این مطالعه بینش قابل ملاحظه‌ای ‏دربارۀ نگرش معلمان نسبت به استفاده از‎ MALL ‎در کلاس‌های درس زبان انگلیسی به‌عنوان زبان خارجه در ایران را فراهم می‌‏کند‎.‎

**واژه‌های کلیدی**: معلمان زبان خارجه به‌عنوان زبان انگلیسی، نگرش، یادگیری از طریق موبایل، ‏TAM‎.

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