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Attitudes of Foreign Language Teaching Students and Teachers about Interactive Whiteboards

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Abstract

In this study, researcher tried to understand Foreign Language Teaching (English Language Teaching – ELT, and German Language Teaching – GLT) students' and teachers' attitudes on interactive whiteboard (IWB) that they would use in foreign language teaching. A descriptive study was selected by using survey method. In this respect, data were gathered from 210 ELT and GLT students and 8 teachers from these two language teaching departments in Erciyes University. Two questionnaires prepared by Manny-Ikan, Tikochinski, Zorman and Dagan (2011) were administered to understand attitudes of students and teachers: Teacher Attitudes Questionnaire (TAQ) and Students Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ). According to results; students mostly see learning via the IWB is enjoyable, easier, understandable, favourable, and interesting. Moreover, teachers mostly expressed that instruction with IWB is more enjoyable, brings more workload, allows better access to up-to-date learning materials, and contributes teachers' professional development.

Key words: interactive white boards, attitude, foreign language teaching

Introduction

Until 2003, Turkey has engaged in The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies to understand the trend in education by years. Between 2003 and 2009 there was a slight improvement in test scores of Turkish students. Turkish government did not satisfy with this slight improvement since they have made lots of reforms in education among these years. Ministry of National Education (MoNE) searched new projects to increase level of Turkey above the average rise in PISA tests. So, they started a new project named FATİH (Movement to Increase Opportunities and Technology) in 2010 to enrich technology of all the classes with IWB, tablet and e-books (Çelen, Çelik&Seferoğlu, 2011). In this project, it is aimed to increase the quality and ensure equality of Turkish education. For this reason, MoNE distributed IWB, tablets and electronic materials via EBA (Education Information Technologies Network) to schools, teachers and students. However, use of IWB technologies come up with some problems such as administration-related issues, need for in-service training, insufficient digital educational material, support and maintenance

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(Somyürek, Atasoy, Özdemir, 2009). These type of problems decreases the motivation of the teachers to use of IWBs in their courses (Al-Qirim, 2011).

Most of the Technology Acceptance Models (TAM) agree that a significant predictor of the technology integration is teachers' attitudes towards the material (Sendurur, 2012; Sabzian, Gilakjani, 2013). In this respect, increase in pre-service teachers' attitudes towards IWBs will be resulted in high level of IWB and other technological materials use.

ICT in foreign language learning is widely used since visual or audio-visual media ease students understand abstract concepts and ideas (Jones & Arkansas, 2012). Foreign language teachers use visuals, teaching, audio, video, computer or Internet-based activities to teach grammar, reading, listening, vocabulary and pronunciation lessons (Figure 1).

The importance of ICT in foreign language teaching is incontrovertible, so it is expected from Turkish foreign language teachers to use IWBs in lessons much. however, if we expect these teachers to use technology in their lessons, we have to ensure that they have positive attitudes towards the IWB.

Figure 1. Sample visual, video and audio CD applications in foreign language teaching

(Source : Barrett, 2014; Luk, 2014)



Researcher aimed to answer two key questions in this study:

- what are the attitudes of the foreign language teaching students towards the IWB?
- what are the attitudes of the foreign language teaching teachers towards the IWB?

Methodology

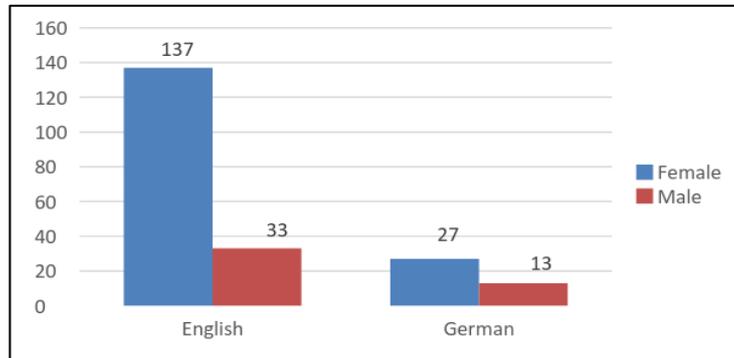
Survey method was used in this study to reveal foreign language students' and teachers' perceptions about interactive whiteboards. Permissions were taken from foreign language department of Education Faculty in Erciyes University to implement paper-pencil based questionnaires.

Participants

A total of 326 foreign language students are studying in two language teaching departments of Education faculty in Erciyes University. After removal of invalid questionnaires and answers of participants unwilling to join in the study, there were 210 valid

answered questionnaires from students studying in foreign language teaching departments: 170 ELT and 40 GLT students. Moreover, 8 out of 10 foreign language teaching teachers attended and filled out the questionnaires voluntarily.

Figure 2. Demographics of participants



As shown in Figure 2, there were 137 female – 33 male students in ELT and 27 female – 13 male students in GLT. These proportions were similar to the female/male ratio in target population.

Questionnaires

Foreign language students' and teachers' attitudes towards IWB were collected through Students' Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ) and Teachers' Attitudes Questionnaire (TAQ) respectively which were prepared by Manny-Ikan, Tikochinski, Zorman and Dagan (2011). In SAQ, there were 12 questions assessing foreign language students' opinions about IWB regarding their motivation and interest to learn, enjoyment of lessons, ease of studies, endeavour to class discussions and group work. In TAQ, there were 13 questions measuring teachers' opinions about IWB regarding enjoyment of teaching, fulfilment of foreign language students' needs and learning goals, being up-to-date, enhancement in professional development, allow teaching topics in depth, meaningful teaching, and discipline problems. Items in both two questionnaires were assessed using Likert type 5 point scale: 1- Completely Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4- Agree, 5- Completely Disagree.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study was collected in Spring 2015-16 semester to two programs (English & German) in foreign language department. First, researcher gave brief information about the study and announced that voluntary foreign language students can participate in the study. The paper-based questionnaire were distributed to foreign language students who were willing to participate in the study. Collected data was entered into MS Excel 2010 program via computer.

Table 1. Ranges of Questionnaires scores

Item options	Scores	Range of Scores
Completely Agree	5	4.20 – 5.00
Katılıyorum	4	3.40 – 4.19
Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	3	2.60 – 3.39
Katılmıyorum	2	1.80 – 2.59
Completely Disagree	1	1.00 – 1.79

Calculation of mean and standard deviations and sketching of graphs were achieved via this software program. Analysis of the items in the questionnaires were scored through Table 1.

Results

In analysis of the questionnaires, mean and standard deviation of the scores were calculated by pairwise method. It means if student left an item blank, only this item was excluded in calculation, the other answers were included in the analysis. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the foreign language students' attitudes towards learning via IWB.

Table 2. Students' Attitudes Questionnaire Results

<i>Students' Attitudes toward Learning via the IWB</i>	n	Mean	SD
Enjoy learning	210	4,40	0,73
Studies are interesting	209	4,14	0,80
Can understand the learning materials	209	4,17	0,76
Students want to participate in the lesson	210	3,99	0,82
Studies are easier	210	3,90	0,85
Students are more focused	208	3,89	0,95
The teacher involves students in class discussions	209	3,85	0,84
I like to come to school	210	3,39	1,14
Students work in groups	209	3,67	0,89
The topics we learn are connected to my life and are relevant to me	210	3,78	0,86
Discipline problems	208	3,19	1,05
The IWB distracts students from the lesson	209	2,77	1,19

Foreign language students only completely agree about enjoyment of learning (M=4.40, SD=0.73) with IWB. They agree that IWB makes studies interesting (M=4.14, SD=0.80) and more easier (M=3.90, SD=0.85), lessons enthusiastic to participate (M=3.99, SD=0.82), students more involved (M=3.85, SD=0.84), focused (M=3.89, SD=0.95) and working in groups (M=3.67, SD=0.89), topics relevant to students and their lives (M=3.78, SD=0.86), learning materials more comprehensible (M=4.17, SD=0.76). Lastly, they neither agree nor disagree about IWB that it endear students to come schools (M=3.39, SD=1.14), cause discipline problems (M=3.19, SD=1.05) and distracts students from the lesson (M=2.77, SD=1.19).

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the foreign language teachers' attitudes towards teaching via IWB. Teachers are completely agreed about using IWB making teachers open up-to-date materials (M=4.38, SD=0.74), teaching enjoyable (M=4.25, SD=0.89), and bringing more workload (M=4.25, SD=1.04). They agree about using IWB that it brings



better access to learning materials ($M=4.13$, $SD=0.64$), enhances teachers' knowledge about the subject ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.20$), matches learning materials and students' needs ($M=3.88$, $SD=0.83$), raises teachers' expectations about students ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.04$), eases students to reach goals ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.93$), and makes teaching topics in depth ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.93$). Finally, they are neither agree or nor disagree about IWB that it makes their instruction more professional ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.06$), decreases the discipline disturbance ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.06$), makes teachers more adorable ($M=3.38$, $SD=0.92$), and makes them more dominant and meaningful ($M=3.25$, $SD=1.04$).

Table 3. Teachers' Attitudes Questionnaire Results

<i>Teacher Attitudes toward Instructing Using the IWB (n=8)</i>	Mean	SD
I enjoy teaching	4,25	0,89
I need to invest a lot more work	4,25	1,04
I can more appropriately match the learning materials to the needs of different students	3,88	0,83
I have better access to learning materials and resources at different levels	4,13	0,64
I can teach topics in greater depth	3,50	0,93
I feel that my instruction is more professional	3,38	1,06
I am open to more up-to-date materials	4,38	0,74
I am strengthening my knowledge in the subject areas I teach	4,00	1,20
I can more easily fulfill the learning goals	3,50	0,93
I raise my expectations from students' work	3,75	1,04
I feel that the students appreciate me more	3,38	0,92
There are fewer discipline disturbances in the class	3,38	1,06
I am more dominant and meaningful in the school	3,25	1,04

Discussion And Conclusion

Based on the mean scores for SAQ, it can be seen that language teaching students have mostly positive attitudes towards the IWB. They scored high on some advantages of IWB such as; enjoyment, enthusiasm, making studies interesting, comprehensibility, active participation, attracting focus on subject, connecting the relationship between real life and subjects. This finding is very similar to study of Mathews-Aydinli and Elaziz (2010). Their research results showed that English Foreign Language (EFL) students had positive attitudes toward the use of IWBs in language instruction. Besides, they had knowledge about how to use IWB technology. SAQ also revealed that students are indecisive about IWB that it attracts students to come school, discipline problems and cause distraction in lessons. Besides item attracting students to come schools, these items were negative items ($M=3,19$ and $M=2,77$). However, the scores of these negative items are not too low. Students think that using IWB come up with some discipline problems and distracting features also. Pamuk, Çakır, Ergün, Yılmaz and Ayas (2013) also mentioned about these issues. Participants of their research argued that if they had less technical problems with IWB, there would be less discipline problems.

If we look at to the TAQ results, foreign language teaching lecturers also have positive attitudes about IWB. They confirm that IWB have advantages such as making teaching enjoying, meeting the learner needs and instructional goals, accessing learning up-to-date materials, professional teaching. Moreover they have less attitude on IWB that it makes

teachers more professional, dominant, and be appreciated by students. Only they expressed negative attitude on IWB about requiring a lot more work. This is irrepressible outcome since all the time new technology come up with new workload (Pamuk et al, 2013). Teachers have to search about new materilas such as visuals, audios, videos, and other staff while teaching students via IWB. However, teachers would change their opinions after they had constructed their own digital content library since digital materials on IWB are reusable all the time.

Finally, we can say that teachers and students have mostly positive attitudes towards IWB. Teachers IWB use and their positive attitudes towards IWB would influence pre-service teachers' opinions. Campbell and Martin (2010)' s study also supports this argument. They recommended teacher educators to use IWB in their lessons to integrate IWB technology into ICT classes and to inform pre-service teachers about advantageous sides of IWB by being a role model.

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