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Integrating ICT in language acquisition planning to enhance writing skills: Challenges and perspectives

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Abstract

As the world undergoes rapid technological advancements, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of various domains, including education. While ICT tools have revolutionized teaching and learning by providing diverse platforms and opportunities, fundamental language skills such as writing continue to face challenges in digital integration. Despite the growing adoption of ICT in education, there remains a gap in understanding how these technologies influence writing proficiency. Accordingly, this study examines both teachers' and learners' perceptions of ICT's role in enhancing writing skills. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research gathers data through student questionnaires and teacher interviews to gain comprehensive insights. The findings reveal a spectrum of attitudes, with both positive recognition of ICT's potential benefits and concerns regarding its limitations. These results underscore the need for strategic incorporation of ICT in language acquisition, emphasizing the development of adaptive digital literacy skills to optimize teaching and learning outcomes.

Keywords: ICT; language acquisition planning; learning experience; writing skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As our society becomes more technologically advanced, there are new issues for education, considering that schools are supposed to be at the forefront of knowledge societies. First of all, technology may offer the resources required to enhance instruction while also opening up new doors and opportunities. For instance, it could improve the student's writing abilities in terms of sentence form, grammar, punctuation, and language use. These abilities assist students in arranging their thoughts and data into logical arguments and in expressing their views in clear, well-written English. Since preparing students for the future is the goal of education, they must acquire the skills and information necessary to prosper in a society where technological proficiency is becoming more and more crucial (Soomro et al., 2025).

Among the various available tools that contribute to shaping the character and direction of society are language policy and planning (Abedi, 2023). Understanding its scope, stages, and structural frameworks is crucial for making it operate in a particular society. Government officials frequently turn to planning as a logical and coordinated state action to solve issues and accomplish objectives that are for the collective good. It is hardly surprising that language has been included in policy-makers planning efforts as a means of fostering culture and coexistence. Governments, educational institutions, and professional organizations are invited by UNESCO to intensify their efforts for the individual and collective promotion and preservation of all languages through a strategic LPP.

On one end of the spectrum, the representational value of language in constructing ethnic identity, its primacy to social life as a medium of social inclusion and collective interaction, its value as a strategic way to gain access to power and influence, and its worth to establish a uniform articulation between the local and the global all produce circumstances where people want to learn, preserve, and promote the language. Therefore, a language policy, which is regarded as a subservient element in the history of any nation, is an effective way of resolving conflicting linguistic issues. According to Diki-Kidiri (2004), the proper history of each country and its local sociolinguistic conditions are usually valued upon the energetic decisions or absence of decisions in the case of a language policy. Communities that speak many languages can be found in most nations. Governments undoubtedly feel a strong need to designate one or more languages as national or official languages as a result of this. It is intriguing to highlight the function of non-governmental organizations such as institutions, committees, people, and groups. Additionally, language policy represents a variety of viewpoints and interests because it is objectively created to protect ethnic diversity.

The creation of a language policy allows for the rational, thorough, and fair discussion of linguistic concerns by decision-makers. On the other end of the spectrum, language planning refers to the intentional, purposeful human manipulation of a society's linguistic resources to further specific educational, political, and economic goals. In the modern world, language planning is a common practice, particularly in the management and growth of multilingual states and newly decolonized regions. Careful and systematic language planning has become necessary and required to participate in modern state construction due to the growing complexity of societies and the demands for linguistic equality made by minority groups around the world.

Furthermore, the choice of official or national languages, the creation of writing systems, the creation of dictionaries, the promotion of literacy and standardization, and the modernization and technical enrichment of both majority and minority languages are all tasks that language planners are involved in. A language academy or language regulatory body is given the job of planning once a government or agency has decided on the choice of a language or language. The practical implementation of language policy across various domains of language use, as outlined in policy frameworks, is commonly referred to as language planning. According to Grin (2003), language planning constitutes a systematic, rational, and theory-driven initiative undertaken at the societal level to shape the linguistic landscape to enhance overall social well-being. This process is typically carried out by governmental authorities or their designated representatives and is directed toward a specific segment or the entire population within their jurisdiction.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Language acquisition planning (or language-in-education planning)

Language Education Policy is a relatively recent area of study that bridges the gap between research on educational policy and research on language policy. It draws on a wide range of intellectual and methodological traditions while introducing fresh viewpoints that concentrate on the connection between the formulation of public policy and its implementation in a learning setting. The study of the relationship between macro-level policy decisions in the political sphere and micro-level educational policies in practice highlights how overarching policy frameworks are translated into concrete regulations that shape individuals' experiences in educational settings. Within this dynamic, educational stakeholder including teachers, students, and administrators interact with, respond to, and ultimately influence the policies established by various governing bodies. This interaction underscores the importance of deriving principles that can inform more effective language policy-making, particularly in fostering linguistic diversity across different educational stages, from elementary schools to higher education institutions.

Language acquisition management is now primarily discussed within the framework of language in education policy (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003) or language education policy (Spolsky, 2004). According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), educational language planning policy seeks to determine the desired linguistic repertoire within a community and define the functional roles of those languages. This perspective encompasses both acquisition planning focused on developing language skills and status planning concerned with the social positioning of languages within the education system. Similarly, language learning curricula emphasize the needs of language users, aiming to support their proficiency development and cultural awareness both within and beyond the classroom.

Formal education serves as one of the most influential mechanisms in language management, as it provides a structured environment where language planning is operationalized through policies that govern curricula, teaching methodologies, and resource allocation (Spolsky, 2019). Language education policies, therefore, shape both instructional approaches and learning outcomes. Moreover, the social functions of a language are deeply intertwined with the acquisition of linguistic and cultural competencies by its users (Hult, 2004), reinforcing the critical role of education in sustaining and promoting linguistic diversity.

To put it briefly, a major component of Language Education Policy was once named Language Acquisition and Planning. This idea combines status planning with corpus planning, two concepts that describe societal choices regarding what, how, and why certain languages are taught and acquired. These two domains provide Acquisition development, which is important because it interfaces with actual practices in school settings. However, few Language Policy specialists have considered Acquisition Planning to be worthy of attention. Its effects on curriculum development and classroom implementation are substantial.

1.1.2. Key takeaways in educational language planning policy

According to Baldauf et al., (2008), decisions made in various areas of language acquisition management are governed by language-in-education policy as follows:

- “1. Who should study what languages at which levels for how long (issues related to access management)?
2. What are the requirements in terms of teacher education (personnel training policy)?
3. What curricula are mandated and developed by whom (curricular policy)?
4. What instructional methods and materials should be used and how to evaluate their implementation (instructional policy)?
5. Who supports language education? How and who will pay for it and is it fair to all (resources policy)?
6. What agency is provided to students and populations? Are local communities consulted about the languages being offered and the way it is being done (community policy)?

7. What are the criteria used to evaluate the impact of language education policies? Is teacher quality evaluated through students' measures? Are multiple-choice tests exclusively used and are the evaluation modalities congruent with the proposed approaches? Is culture integrated into proficiency assessment (assessment policy)?

8. Do teachers have agency in curriculum building and their classes (teacher policy)?”

The aforementioned elements affect the method of instruction, the languages selected, and how they will be taught in schools, such as through monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual planning. Additionally, according to Fettes (2003), the following factors affect the function, modes, and management of language learning in non-mainstream, local contexts:

- the importance of language ability as a professional qualification in a multilingual environment;
- the globalization of economic activities and mobility;
- the effects of information technology on human and vocational life; • lifelong learning and the deregulation of education sectors.

1.1.3. ICT in education

Over the past two decades, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has gained significant prominence, evolving into an indispensable tool in various aspects of daily life, particularly within the educational context. UNESCO, on the other hand, characterizes ICT as a plural term, encompassing a wide array of technologies. It refers to the comprehensive set of electronic tools used for the collection, recording, storage, exchange, and dissemination of information (Carmona & Marin, 2013).

ICT has become a priority for educational policies, and teaching and studying a foreign language has become an important issue in our country. As a result, many attempts have been made to stay up with these modern issues and adapt to the actual needs of the learners. It is defined as "the collection of resources, tools, equipment, IT programs, applications, and networks that enable the compilation, processing, storage, and transmission of information" The usage of these devices may enrich EFL activities by providing meaningful and engaging input to support language learning. According to Haddad and Draxler (2002), diverse ICTs can contribute to various elements of educational development and effective learning: increasing access, encouraging efficiency, improving learning quality, enhancing teaching quality, and improving management systems.

However, helping pedagogy keep up with technological progress while providing a quality education for a new generation of students has been a challenging problem for higher education. According to Kvavik et al., (2005), a great unspoken fear in the halls of higher education is that these digital sophisticates will arrive at our institutions to find aging technologies, legacy systems, congested (or bandwidth-shaped) networks, and decidedly unsophisticated purveyors of institutional IT services, or, even worse, a technologically unsophisticated faculty who will dampen their enthusiasm for cyberspace.

1.1.4. ICT and the development of writing skills

Suswati and Saleh (2019) suggest that social media is important in English language learning since it allows English language learners to enhance their writing and reading skills, as well as study new texts and phrases to expand their vocabulary. Software solutions, educators have discovered, can be tremendously effective in meeting the needs of English Language Learners. The endless exposure to academic writing allows learners to improve their fluency and comprehension as well.

Educators believe that the internet and digital tools like social networking sites, and mobile devices, typically encourage learners to express themselves creatively and individually (Malpique et al., 2024; Fitzgerald & Evans 2024). According to Dean-Rumsey (1998), writing skills are essential components of literacy; students must be skilled and well-trained to participate in a future literate society. According to Naveed and Bhowmik (2016), writing is a series of processes that begin with pre-writing, then progress through while writing, and finally to post-writing activities.

1.2. Purpose of study

Accordingly, this study examines both teachers' and learners' perceptions of ICT's role in enhancing writing skills.

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

To address the practical challenges outlined, this study employs a research methodology that primarily utilizes a questionnaire and interviews as the principal instruments for data collection. Research methodology is defined as "a way of thinking about and studying social reality" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It serves as a systematic approach to answering research questions and involves a series of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data.

For this investigation, an explanatory sequential mixed-method design is applied, which entails the sequential collection, analysis, and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach involves combining or embedding the two research strands, with quantitative data being collected first, followed by qualitative data to clarify and deepen the findings.

2.1. Data collection tool

To examine perceptions of ICT, it was crucial to engage directly with those affected by the process. Therefore, a series of interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were conducted to gather participants' perspectives on ICT. The interview protocol consists of open-ended questions designed to explore opinions regarding the availability of ICT resources, students' performance in writing tasks, and the challenges encountered by both teachers and students in using ICT. Teachers, as key informants, are central to the pedagogical activities and their insights are pivotal.

Additionally, a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized, comprising both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions, widely used in research, require respondents to select from a range of predefined options, making them easy to administer and automatically record. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, allow respondents to provide more elaborate and flexible responses. A questionnaire is considered standardized when all participants are presented with the same set of questions and responses are coded uniformly, ensuring that differences in responses can be meaningfully interpreted. The mixed format of the questionnaire makes it well-suited for diverse research contexts.

The questionnaire is divided into three main sections: the effectiveness of ICT, and the benefits and drawbacks of ICT. The other questions were specified for background information on students' assessment level in writing and the frequency of ICT use.

2.2. Participants

The questionnaire was administered to third-year students at the University of Tahar Moulay in Saida. The sampling approach was non-probability purposive sampling.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Questionnaire: Background Data

As far as the first statement is concerned, the majority of students rated their writing ability as good (49%) or very good (31%). This could be due to the constant use of ICT tools (46% = always and frequently).

3.1.1. Part 1: Attitudes towards the efficiency of ICT

Table 1

The effectiveness of ICT on writing -Frequency of Item (%) & Mean

Items Frequency and mean	1- ICT as a tool (Moodle platform, YouTube, Facebook) for enhancing comprehension of the writing course	2- Using ICT to facilitate and speed up the learning process	3-ICT tools are innovative and creative used to support face-to-face classroom interaction.	4- enhancing writing by receiving constructive Feedback from instructors or fellow students	5- ICT tools boost the likelihood of communicating in English outside of the classroom.
Strongly agree %	22	54	22	22	44
Agree%	56	38	58	28	40
Not sure%	22	12	20	34	18
Disagree%	6	4	8	22	6
Strongly disagree%	2	0	0	4	0
Mean score	4,09	4,5	4,28	2,16	3,8

As indicated in Table 1 above, a substantial majority of respondents (51,85%-35, 18%-53,70%) think that educational platforms (Moodle), YouTube, and Facebook are valuable as engaging peripheries. They are essential for boosting comprehension of the writing course. Respondents also believe (54%) that these websites facilitate and accelerate the whole learning process, such as the utilization of internet assets such as videos, pictures, and other articles posted by teachers. To promote face-to-face class engagement, they are also dynamic and innovative. It is crucial to enhance communication in both official and casual contexts. (31.48%) were unaware of the importance of online feedback.

This group of statements obtained a mean score of 4,9, 4,5, 4,28, 3,8 which shows that generally, respondents are inclined towards the perception of 'Agree' in the questionnaires.

3.1.2. Part 2: Attitudes towards the advantages of ICT

Table 2

Positive impact of ICT on writing- Frequency of Item (%) & Mean

Items Frequency and mean	1-ICT allows quick interaction and smooth online course discussion with professors students	2 and assignments performing online tasks and undemanding when platforms Facebook Moodle).	3- Taking and other is easy using (like and	3- ICT makes it possible for me to quickly and readily access references and get lecture explanations.	4-Online activities and discussions encourage me to learn more about English writing.
Strongly agree%	38	22	26	40	40
Agree%	50	46	56	34	34
Not sure%	14	26	20	22	22
Disagree%	6	12	6	12	12
Strongly disagree%	0	2	0	0	0
Mean score	4,13	3,17	4,21	3,11	3,11

In terms of ICT benefits, the majority of students (51,85%- 46,29%-42,59%) agree that it allows them to have comfortable interaction, full access to a plethora of resources (references, videos, images, etc.) smoothly and quickly, and to be eager to learn about language regularly. "I generally surf websites like essay.pro and free essay.com, I go in and start watching YouTube. I also contact the Moodle platform. I've discovered that these electronic arenas are quite handy.", one student says. Other respondents (40%) strongly believe that numerous internet platforms are a source of inspiration for learning more about writing through activities, making discussions, and receiving feedback. Based on the result shown, the items obtained a mean value of 4.13 and 3.17 (table 2). Hence, the study concludes that in general, respondents agree that social media helps

in generating and promoting learners' freedom and self-discovery skills, such as searching for instructional materials online. Besides, social media also promotes collaborative and intensive learning.

3.1.3. Part 3: Attitudes towards the disadvantages of ICT

Table 3

Negative impact of ICT on writing- frequency of item (%) & mean

Items Frequency and mean	1-inability to get access to the net, and the paucity of laptops for students make learning writing daunting and demanding	2- Students find it difficult to understand and follow the platform access guidelines	3-Online especially assignments discussions is demanding and time-consuming.
Strongly agree%	66	6	6
Agree%	28	36	22
Not sure%	10	30	22
Disagree%	4	28	40
Strongly disagree%	0	8	18
Mean score	3,2	2,63	2,35

In terms of ICT downsides, students have a negative attitude (61,61%-33,33%) regarding several issues such as a lack of internet connectivity, students' lack of PS(s), complexity in using platforms, and complications in applying teachers' online instructions (table 3). A student goes on to say, "ICT is critical, but it is a double-edged sword. We must use it consciously and cautiously." The mean score obtained by the three items proves that in general, students are aware of the hurdles ICT poses in front of them.

3.2. Interviews: Teachers perceptions on the use of ICT to enhance students writing abilities

The participants are almost unanimous in their belief that ICT facilities are critical in today's universities. Though they claim to be beneficial, the reality is that students do not have access to support services and electronic equipment such as laptops, smartphones, YouTube channels, social media, and so on. Their responses demonstrate that incorporating these catchy tools is neither easy nor efficient because actors such as teachers and students face numerous obstacles in entering platforms to post lectures, provide feedback, and the way to synergize these platforms to the syllabus on the part of teachers and, revise and receive evaluation on the part of students. One teacher further contends,

"The availability of ICT facilities is essential and substantial. However, there are several deficiencies as regards students' lack of access to proper laptops and internet connection. The university does not provide any alternatives"

The second section of the interview examines the role of ICT in enhancing students' writing performance. A majority of teachers highlight the crucial role of ICT in facilitating writing instruction, particularly through tools like MS Word and grammar checkers. These tools enhance students' capabilities by allowing them to self-correct grammatical and spelling errors, review language content, and refine their syntactic and morphological structures.

Furthermore, all participants recognize that ICT tools increase students' engagement and awareness in foreign language learning, fostering greater interaction, collaboration, sharing, and insight generation. Additionally, these tools are seen as bridging both formal and informal learning contexts. However, one teacher argues that improving writing skills requires face-to-face interaction, where students write and teachers provide direct guidance, correction, and evaluation, particularly with first-year students.

Regarding the challenges of using ICT, participants emphasize the need for both teachers and students to acquire the necessary ICT skills, noting a lack of clarity regarding which technologies to use. Time constraints for mastering these skills also emerge as a significant barrier. Moreover, respondents point out the insufficient training available for using new platforms, such as Moodle (specifically in the case of Saida). Teachers further report that students often exhibit carelessness and a lack of commitment.

4. DISCUSSION

ICT has become a significant component of the educational landscape. This study aims to explore the role of ICT in writing instruction by investigating the perceptions of teachers and students on its effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. In light of recurring educational challenges, the introduction of a strategic ICT framework aligned with effective writing skills is highly advantageous. The analysis of data obtained through a mixed-methods approach yields key conclusions regarding the positive influence of ICT on students' engagement with writing tasks, promoting collaborative and skill-based learning. The study acknowledges the merits and drawbacks of these digital resources, revealing crucial insights despite the challenges.

The findings emphasize the following priorities for boosting ICT use and improving students' writing abilities, categorized into key areas:

Axis 1: Educational Language Policy: ICT integration should be increasingly promoted in language acquisition planning to meet the demands of 21st-century skills. This entails reconsidering aspects such as defining language proficiency goals, and focusing on both formal accuracy and communicative fluency in target languages. It is also vital to ensure that qualified teachers are appointed, with comprehensive pre-service and in-service training. Interestingly, students recognize the importance of educational planning and advocate for meaningful language exposure rather than additional, optional instruction. Moreover, educational policymakers must engage the community's support, conducting thorough language needs analyses to balance governmental policies with community needs. A clear methodology for teaching and assessment should be developed to guide both teachers and learners effectively.

Axis 2: Teachers as Agents of Change and Success Drivers- Teachers are fundamental to the pedagogical process, and their ICT knowledge must be continuously updated. Teachers suggest that creating digital spaces for students, such as dedicated groups and accounts, could enhance the exchange of information and student work. Additionally, teachers must foster accountability to ensure that writing skills are developed effectively, as these skills are essential for academic success and personal fulfillment.

Axis 3: Learners- Students should be provided with unrestricted access to digital media, including websites, blogs, and social networking sites, to increase their exposure to writing activities. This exposure can foster greater self-confidence and independence, enabling students to become more efficient and flexible writers. The internet's capacity for communication offers diverse platforms for students to interact and express themselves, motivating them and encouraging social networking practices.

Axis 4: The Learning Context- The learning environment also plays a crucial role. Digital technologies must be embedded in educational settings through the development of reliable and equitable ICT infrastructure, ensuring that students can effectively engage with these resources.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is undeniably demonstrated that social media is one of the most useful instruments for improving writing abilities and giving students access to a variety of language learning chances. The stakeholders must take steps and efforts to encourage students to post regularly on social media. In particular, for English teachers, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education can take the initiative to offer some seminars and workshops on how to include ICT in language acquisition planning.

To prepare themselves for future problems and impart the proper knowledge to students, teachers should periodically upgrade their knowledge of ICT. From another parameter, ICT is a double-edged sword as it has merits and demerits. Teachers and students should be conscious and cautious when using it since it is the throbbing heart of today's knowledge without which we can't row against the current of the world's technological progress.

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Ethical Approval: The study adheres to the ethical guidelines for conducting research.

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