

# **The Role of Technology in Teaching English Language in Higher Secondary Schools**

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## **Abstract**

This paper highlights the importance of technology in teaching English language in Sudanese higher secondary schools. Dealing with computers in reading and writing nowadays is considered as a core element of literacy in the age of information. Many countries in the world have recognized the importance and the great value of using digital technologies in language learning. Teaching English language is a debate that thousands of scholars speak about. A lot of papers have discussed this matter because of its importance and because it is known that teaching is considered the first source of learning language. Gilster (1997) puts the assurance more specifically on digital literacy so as to understand information in a wide range of sources. Although many teachers and curricula designers neglect the role that technology can achieve in teaching English language, using technology to equip the teaching process with many choices, can make learning more motivating and make teaching more productive. One of the aims of this study is to investigate the importance of technology in teaching English language in secondary schools for those who deal with English as a second language.

The sample of this study consists of 141 English language teachers working at 15 different higher secondary schools (government and private). This small sample is a limitation of the research in Khartoum state. According to the questionnaire sample, the researcher divided English language teachers into two groups. The first group consists of 125 teachers, graduated from educational colleges and faculties. The other group consists of 16 teachers who have not graduated from Arts or other departments (those who don't have educational certificates but can teach English). The sample covers only English teachers working at higher secondary schools. The scale was handed to all the teachers in the sample in their schools and was collected in the same way. This study was limited to analyze and evaluate English language teachers who teach English language in Ministry of Education, secondary schools in Khartoum State, in the 2017 – 2018 school year.

**Keywords:** teaching, English language, technology

## **Introduction**

The new era allocates new duties and challenges on the modern teacher. The old methods of teaching English have been drastically reduced with the noticed entry of technology. During the last 20 years technology has, and continues to be, used to

support teaching and learning systems. Through technology teachers can make the learning and teaching process more effective and entertaining.

## **The Use of Technology in Teaching English**

Hundreds and thousands of research studies show that one of the problems of teaching English language is that teachers themselves know nothing or little about technological devices. Barton (1993) as quoted in (Bush, 2004) claims that there were two broad areas of technological focus a decade ago: "the use of computers in writing instruction and the incorporation of technology into concepts and definitions of literacy". Spoken language which is meant to recover or represent language within a certain cultural context. And he adds one of the important point that all curriculum designers should care about: "technology surely receives more exposure in mathematics and science, it has also affected the manner in which we approach the teaching of the English language arts in innumerable ways." (Berger, 2002) scouted out the effects of storytelling in the transition from print to electronic media. Briggs (1998) argues that technology provides affirming and enriching instructional-learning environments and lends itself well to individual use and collaboration. (Ilter, 2009) argues about why we should encourage students to use computers and other types of technological devices, and he said this can increase students' motivation in English courses which will directly affect many goals that we would like them to achieve. Gay (2011) shows that computers could be an effective teaching tools in the classroom and she shows that how to use this machine is not an easy job and skills are needed so as to be able to work with them. Later she expresses some of the skills and knowledge that teachers have to learn so as to be able to use technology in the classroom. Mortenson (1996) discusses three general requirements that are considered the key for the increased the use of educational technology by teachers, they are: " 1) access to equipment, 2) an expectation from the institution that effective educational technology be used, and 3) training and assistance to use technology, both personally and professionally, that is provided on an on-going basis." Ohler (2008) has created one of the best idioms recently used in education, in the field of technology: digital storytelling or active watching. He argues that digital storytelling should be considered as a good educational method.

Clements and Sarama(2003); Glaubke (2007); and Dynarski et al. (2007) have suggested five areas to focus on when using software programs. The first area is the educational value of the program. Teachers should focus on the educational value while teaching, not through technology only. The importance is the teaching process not the technology that we use. The second suggestion is the ability to engage learners in learning. The third area that should be focused on is the ease of use; try not to make things difficult for the teachers or the learners. The interactivity between the learners and the program is the forth area that we should be focused on. This suggestion achieves student-centered teaching. The last suggestion is the possibility that the program monitors the progress of the learners. The above suggestions have strongly influenced learning.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The intelligent way is the one way to teach language because of the difficulty for students to understand the genre or the culture. Not all teachers can teach English language in the right way. If the English language teacher wants to teach language they must learn all elements and techniques that help them firstly to understand the way of teaching. The first thing that they should learn is how to use technology.

Another problem that our students face is that most English language teachers do not stay updated with the methods of teaching, and technology is of course is one of the main tools these days. A lack of technology may take place for some teachers who only know how to teach grammar and dislike literary texts. Robertson (2008) claims that so as to make the most of instructional technology, ELLs require the language skills and vocabulary necessary to understand how to use the technology. Marcinek (2010) the Director of Technology & Educator Organization states that one of the distracters of technology integration is when the technology fails, which, according to him, is inevitable, but can be prevented by putting in place procedures that will allow the classroom to progress smoothly. He adds that the more we fail with technology, the more we will learn from it. According to him, not trying technology is doing students a major disservice.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To determine the attitudes and opinions of English teachers towards using education technology in teaching English language.
2. To show the advantages of teaching English language via electronic tools.

## **Research Questions**

1. Does using technology enhance students understanding of English language?
2. Do teachers need technology to teach English language?

## **Methodology**

The researcher designed a questionnaire which is divided in to two parts. The first part included information that deals with the teachers` technological knowledge and how they feel towards technology. The second part of the questionnaire is divided in to two areas. The first area examined the existence of technology in the teacher`s life and the other area examines some modern tools that could be used in the modern class room. The third and last part of the questionnaire examines teacher`s attitudes on technology integration.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 160 teachers in Khartoum state. The researcher received 144 answered questionnaires; only 141 have been well completed.

## Part One

Most of the teachers who filled out the questionnaire were working in both public and private schools (58%). Those who work only in public schools represent (29%) and (13%) work only in private school. See figure (1).

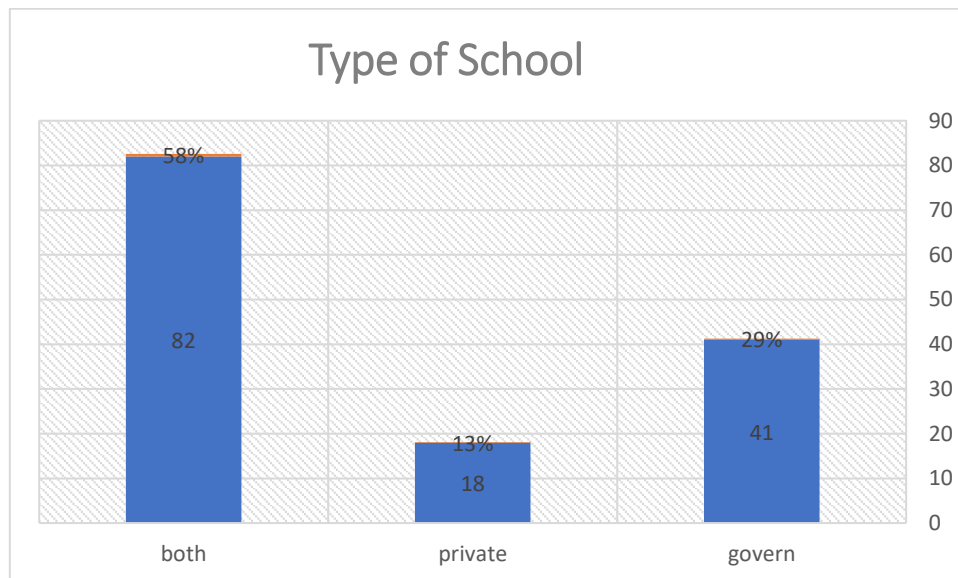


Figure (1)

The researcher found that more teachers graduated from educational colleges than those who graduated from non-educational colleges: 74% versus 26% respectively. See figure (2).

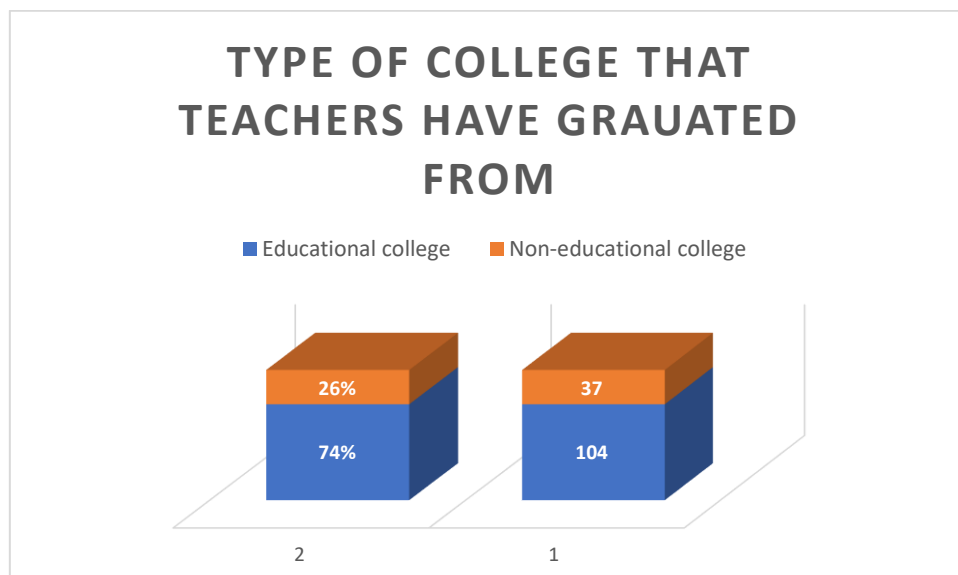


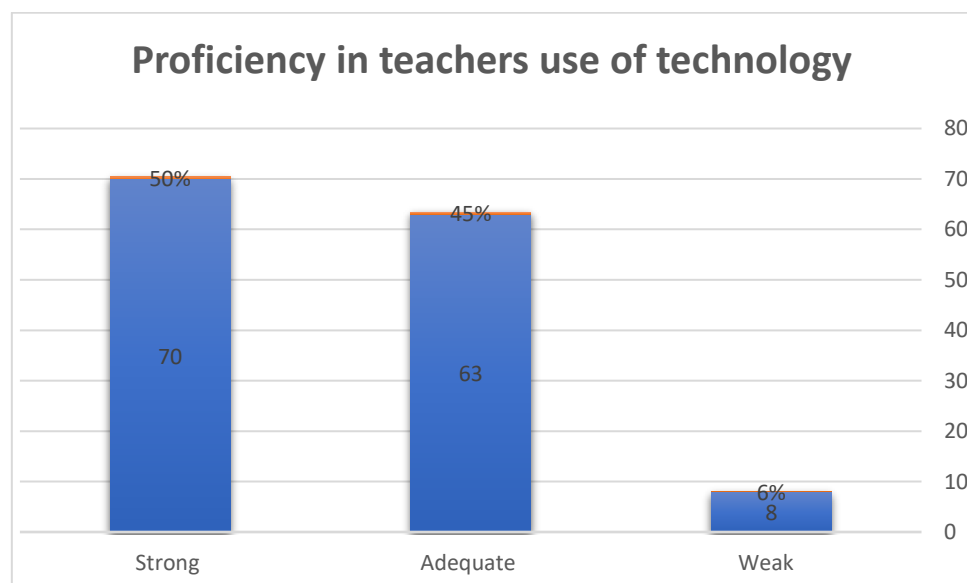
Figure (2)

## Part two:

### Section 1 (A)

This part of the questionnaire examined general technology use in education by the teachers and their level of proficiency.

The researcher founds that only eight teachers (6%) were weak in using technology, 63 (45%) were adequate and the highest percentage (50%) was for teachers who were strong in their use of technology. Figure (3) make the picture clearer.



**Figure (3)**

### Section 1 (B)

In this section, the researcher asked general questions. The researcher needed to in this section to collect information on the practical use of the technology in teaching English language. The researcher gave three possible degrees of integration the teachers can choose (1, 2 and 3). Number 1 represents the highest degree of integration, 2 is the medium degree and 3 is the lowest degree.

The first question (Integrating technology into daily instruction) frequency and percentages show that 121 teachers (86%) strongly reject this point are, 11 teachers (8%) are medium and only 9 teachers (6%) strongly agree. The researcher recommends conducting interviews so as to ask why teachers do not use technology in their daily instructions. Table (4) and figure (4) make the picture clearer.

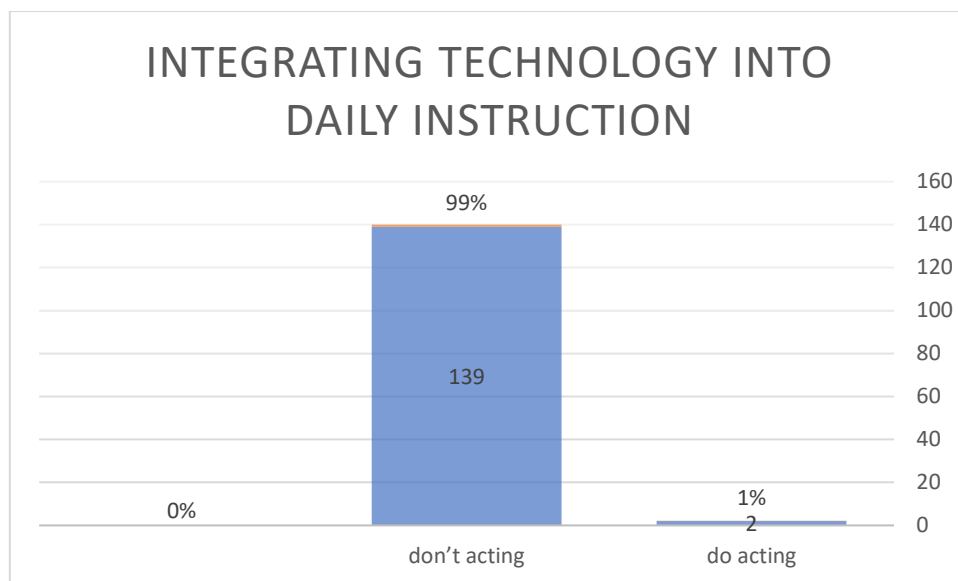


Figure (4)

The second statement shows the importance of learning how to use some new applications. The researcher was shocked by the result. Most of the teachers saw no need to learn new applications. The researcher, according to the previous question, assumes that if they do not use it daily, they should not view this as important. 131 teachers answered with no need (93%). 7 teachers found it somewhat important (5%), and only 3 (2%) strongly agreed with this point. Table (5) and figure (5) show the results.

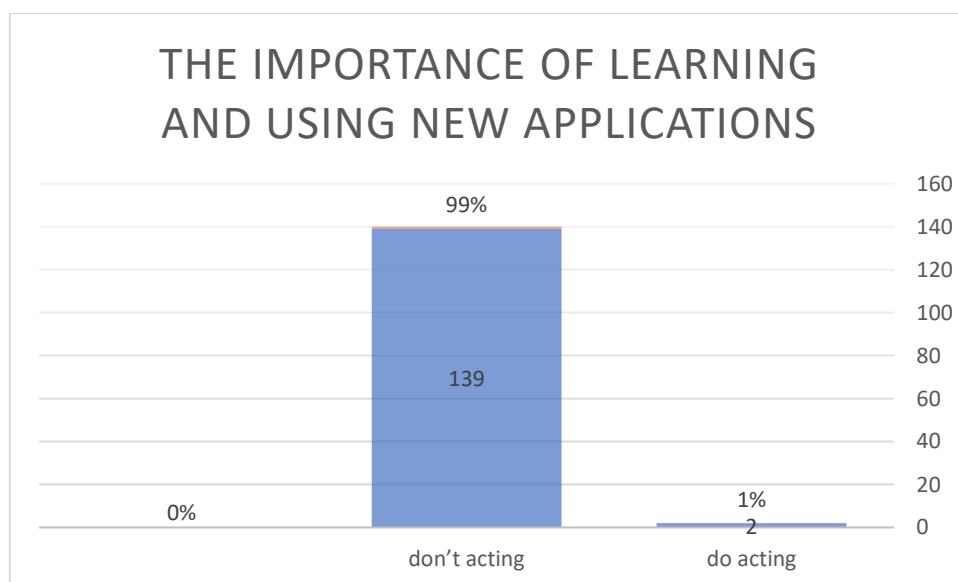


Figure (5)

Responses to the statement (Troubleshooting problems that occur when using technology) gave a similar result to the previous statement. 111 teachers (79%) knew nothing about how to deal with problems that occur during the use of technology. 29

teachers (21%) had some knowledge, and only 1 teacher (1%) was perfect on this point. Figure (6) explains this.

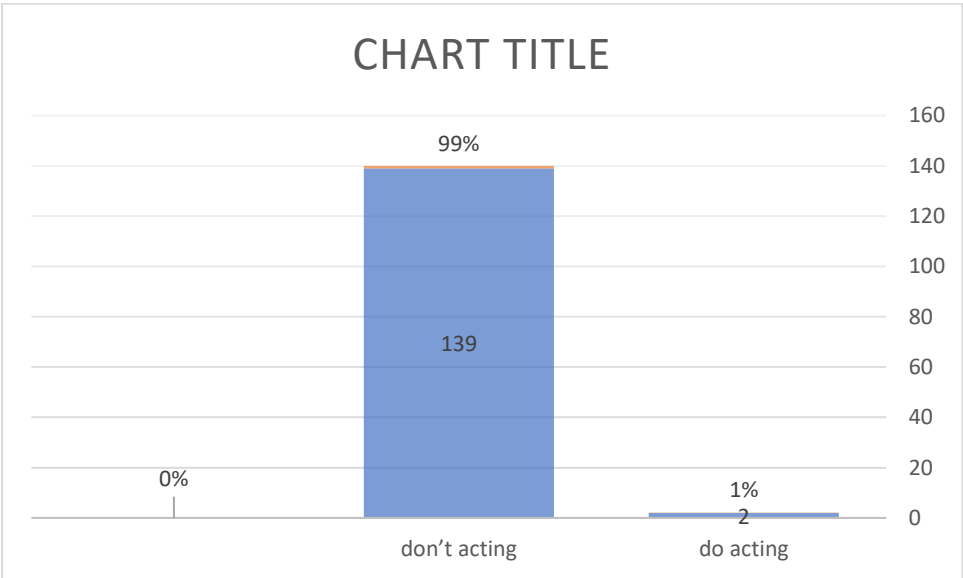


Figure (6)

More respondents agree that using technology can differentiate instruction. The results show that 129 teachers think that it is very important (91%), 9 of them (6%) do not completely agree with this point, and only 3 teachers (2%) disagree. The researcher thinks that those teachers are using traditional methods only. Table (7) and figure (7) show the result clearly.

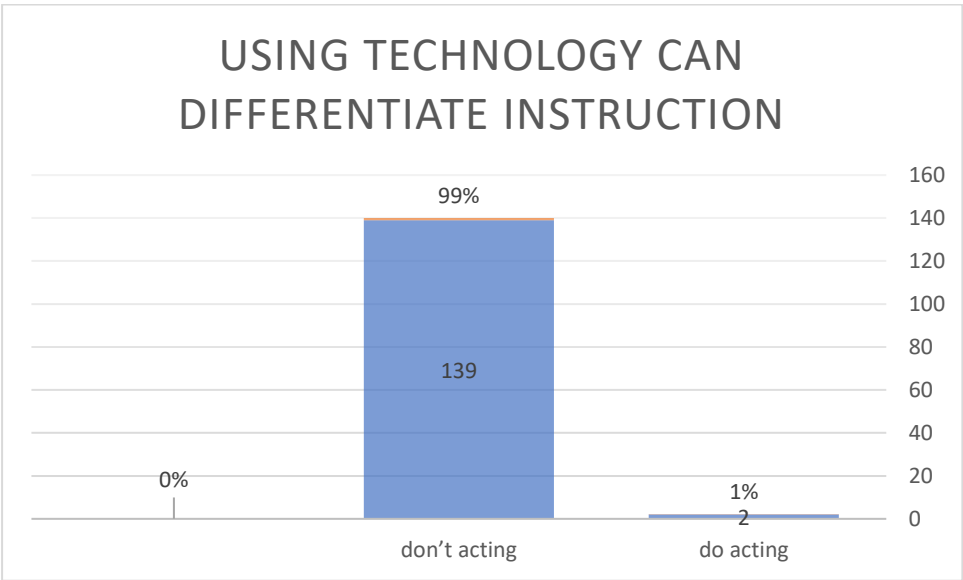


Figure (7)

Acting as a guide for students when researching on the internet was the statement presented. The researcher found that only 2 teachers (1%) are acting as a guide for the

students when asking them to do something on the internet, while all other teachers 139 (99%) don't do that. Table (8) and figure (8) show the results clearly.

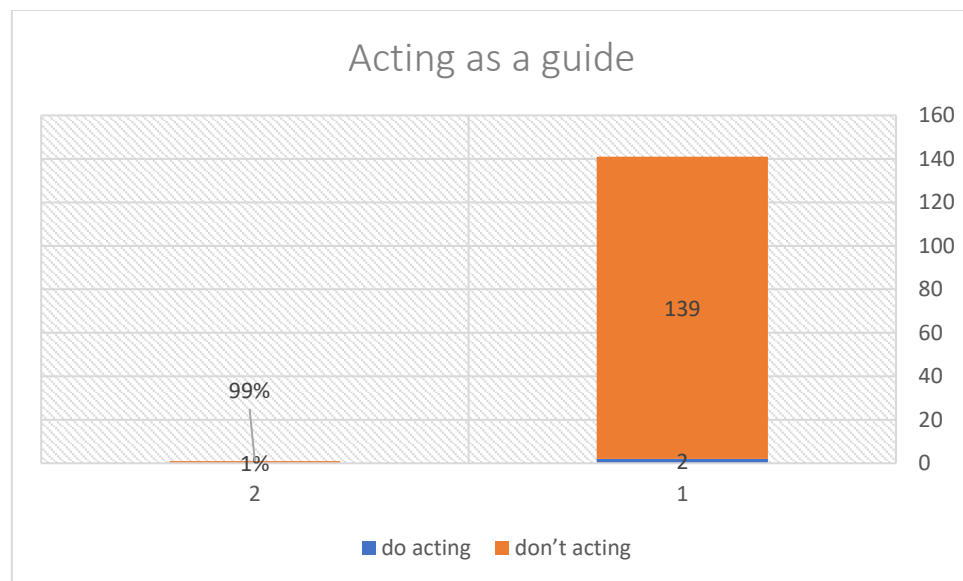


Figure (8)

## **Section 2:**

This section asked questions about the type of hardware or software that are used by teachers throughout the academic year. This section was divided in to five statements.

The first statement asked about the devices that are provided in lessons, either laptops or desktop computers that already exist in the classroom. 131 teachers (93%) never bring any device into the classroom, while 7 teachers (5%) used any one device daily in the classroom. Only 2 teachers (1%) used devices weekly, the same percentage used devices monthly, while no one use devices only one time a year. Table (9) and figure (9) show more.



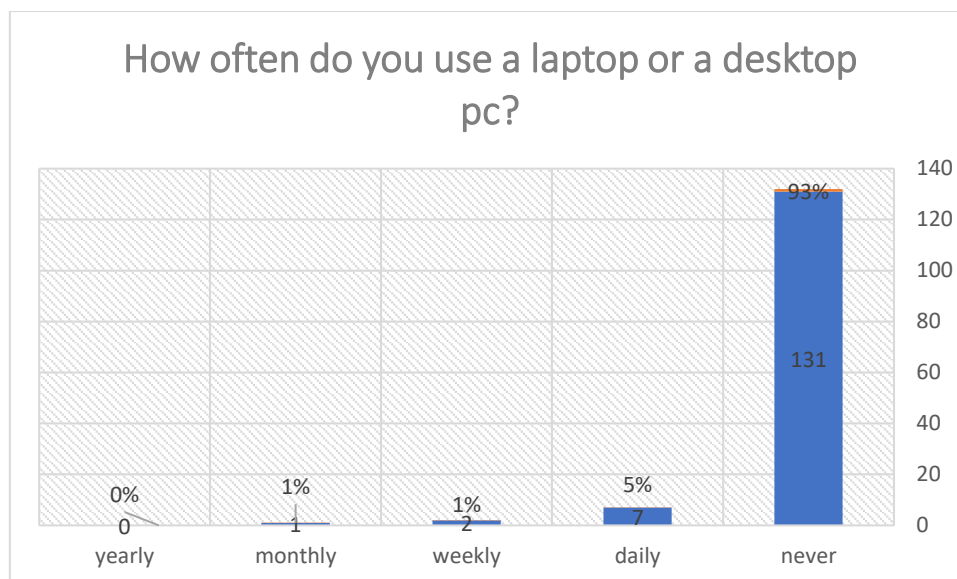


Figure (9)

The second statement concerned how often a modern board is used in teachers' classroom. The researcher expected the same result. Figure (10) show that.

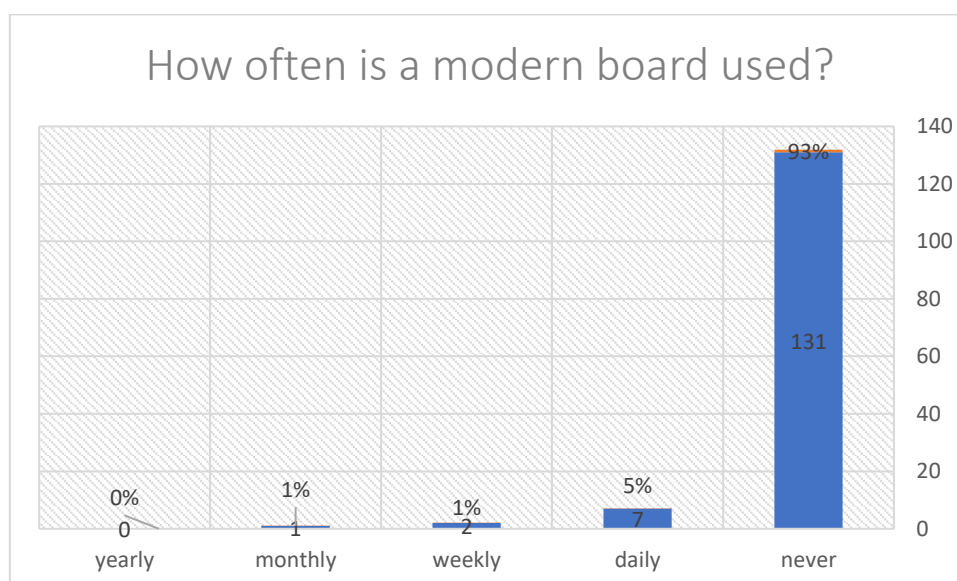


Figure (10)

The third question asks about the type of software that teachers either use or know. The result shows that 133 (94%) students never use any type of software, 2 (1%) only use it daily, 5 (4%) use it weekly, only 1 (1%) uses it monthly, and no one (0%) uses it yearly. Table (11) and figure (11) show that.

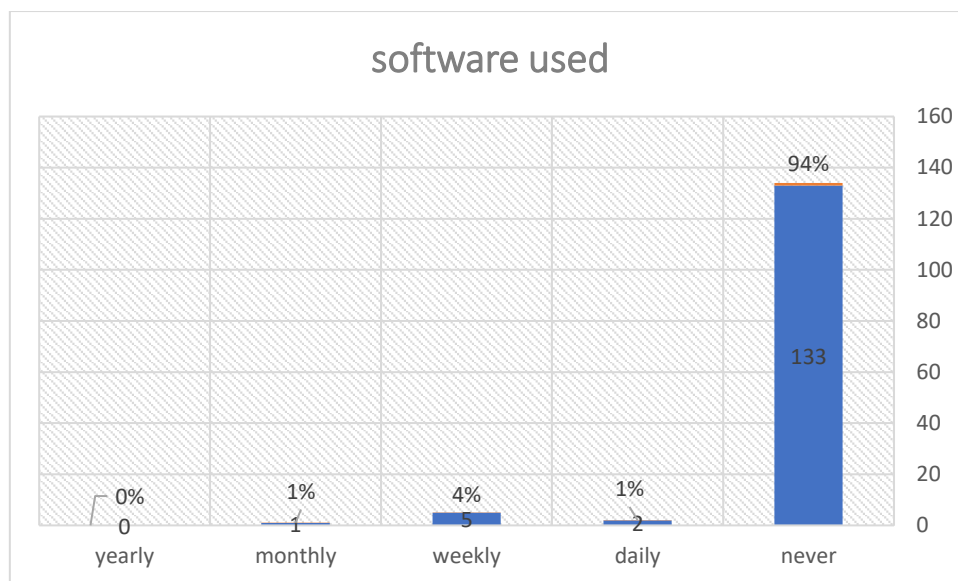


Figure (11)

Even your mobile phone can be used in the classroom as a device that can be used as an assistant tool in learning process, but unfortunately none of the teachers used it in the classroom.

The internet is considered the best and easiest way to find and collect data that help both teachers and learners. The researcher gave use of the internet a separate column so as to find how often teachers used it. The result of the questionnaire showed that none of the teachers use the internet yearly, 2 (1%) of the teachers use the internet monthly. 8 teachers (6%) use the internet weekly. 30 (21%) teachers use the internet daily, while 101 teachers (72%) never use the internet at all. Table (12) and figure (12) show that.

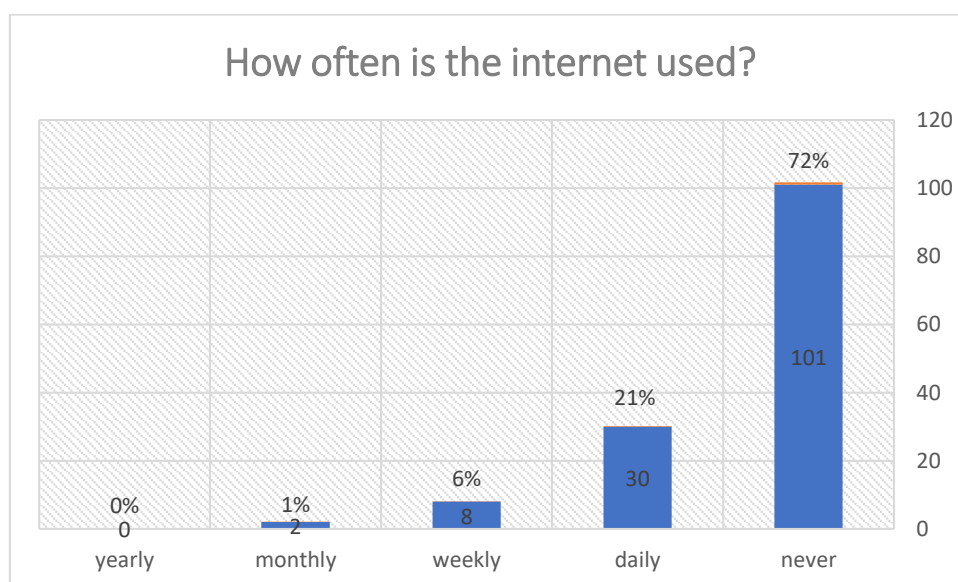


Figure (12)

### **Section 3:**

Statements used in this section examined teachers' opinions on and attitudes towards technology integration. The researcher divided the answers in to four categories: (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The first statement (Most technology would improve my ability to teach) is about the training needs of the teachers. 98 teachers (70%) strongly agreed with this point, and 35 teachers (25%) agreed. In total (95%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Only 7 (5%) teachers disagreed with this point and 5 (1%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. 6% of teacher in total disagreed or strongly disagreed with this point. Table (13) and figure (13) shows that.

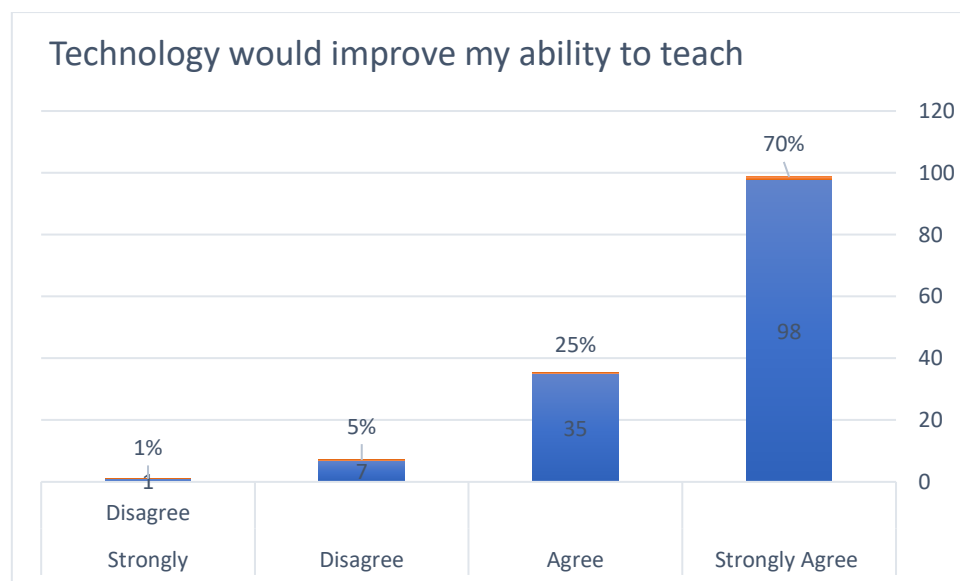


Figure (13)

The second statement (Students are more knowledgeable than I am when it comes to technology) shows the following. 88 teachers (61%) strongly agreed with this point, and 36 teachers (25%) agreed. A total of 86% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed. 10 (8%) teachers disagreed with this point, and 7 (6%) of the teachers strongly disagreed. A total of 14% of teachers either disagreed or strongly agreed. Figure (14) shows that.

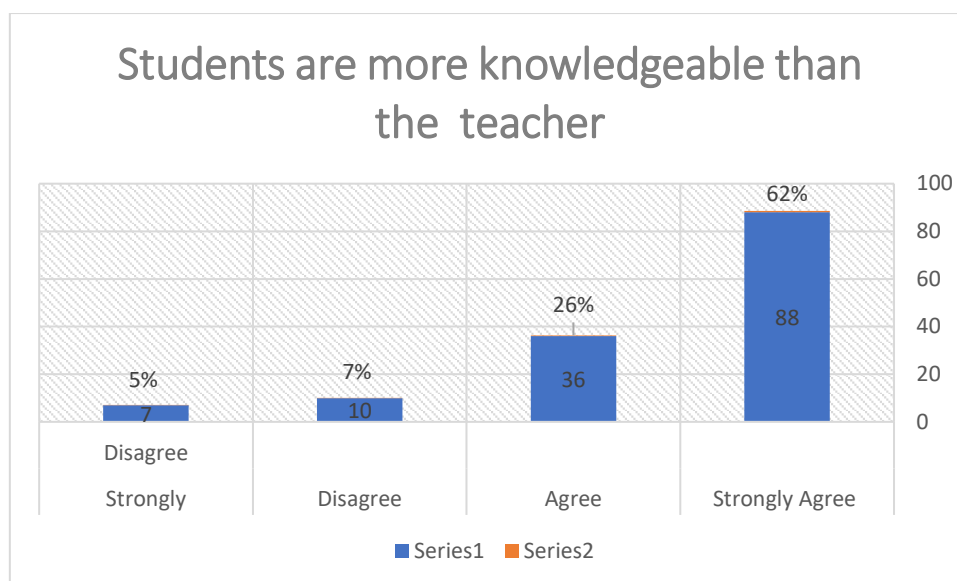


Figure (14)

Responses to the third statement (There is too much technological change, coming too fast without enough support for the teacher) shows very clearly what teachers felt towards educational technology. The result was that 120 teachers (86%) strongly agreed with this point, and 8 teachers (6%) agreed with total of (92%) that either agreed or strongly agreed. On the other side, there were 7 teachers (5%) who disagreed with this point, and 6 teachers (4%) who strongly disagreed with a total of 9% who either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Table (15) and figure (15) shows that.

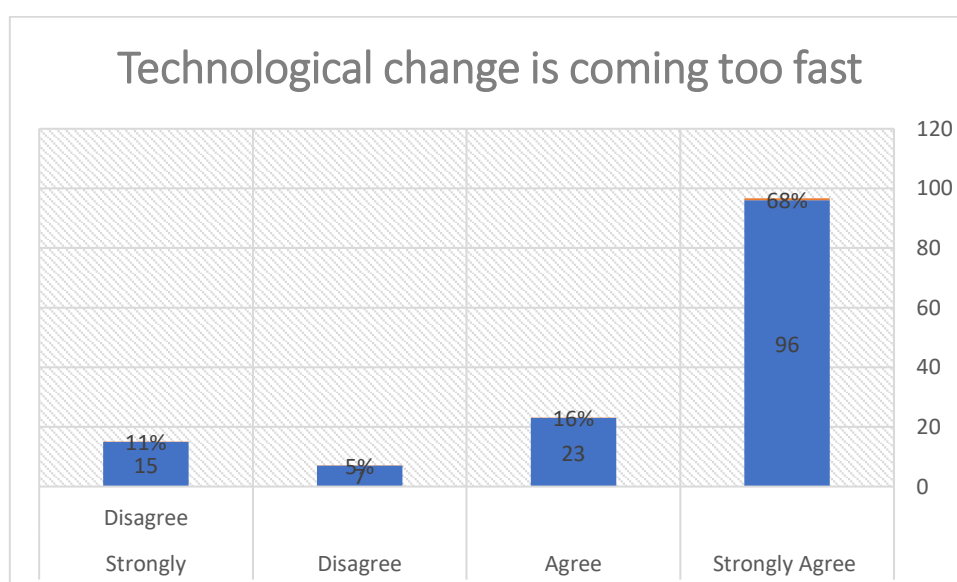


Figure (15)

Technology is unreliable is the forth statement in this section. The researcher found that 120 teachers (86%) strongly agreed with this point, and 8 teachers (6%) agreed with total of (92%) who either agreed or strongly agreed. On the other side, there were 7 teachers (5%) who disagreed with this point and 6 teachers (4%) who strongly

disagreed with a total of (9%) who either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Table (16) and figure (16) shows that.

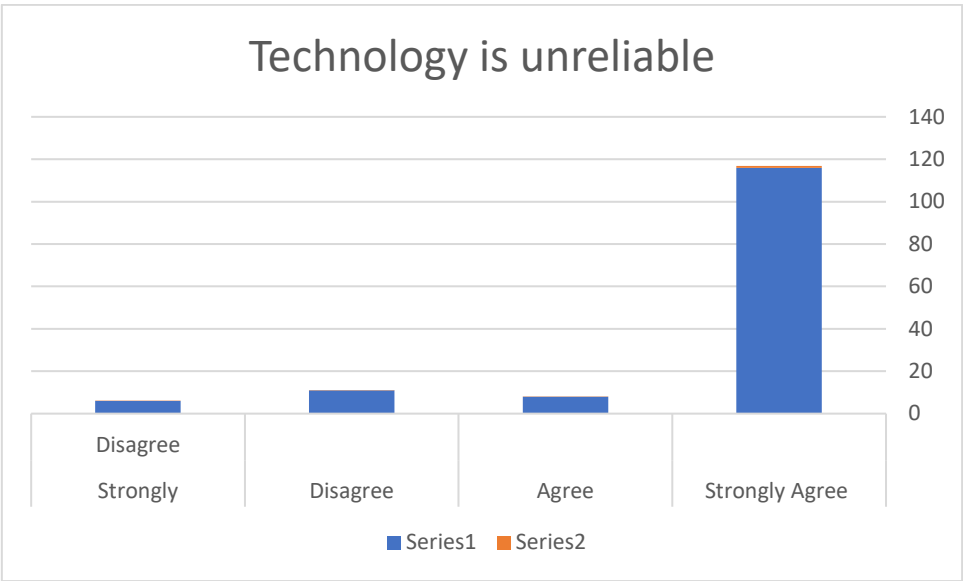


Figure (16)

The last statement in this section and the questionnaire is do schools expect teachers to learn new technologies without formal training. The result was that: 138 teachers (98%) strongly agreed with this point, and 3 teachers (2%) agreed with a total of (92%) who either agreed or strongly agreed. On the other side, there were no teachers who selected either disagree or strongly disagree options. Table (17) and figure (17) shows that.

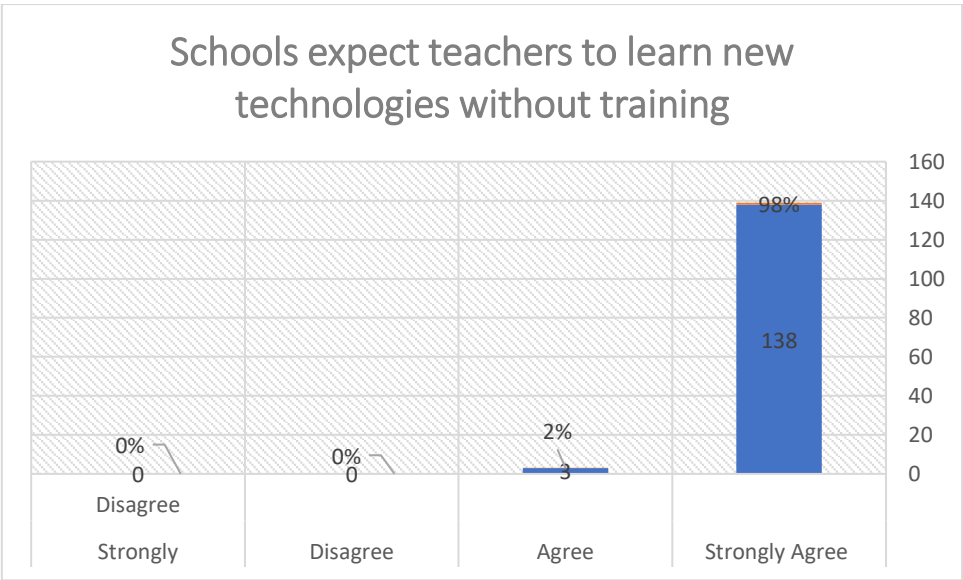


Figure (17)

**1. Recommendations:**

The researcher through the analysis of the data recommends that:

1. Teachers who have not graduated from educational colleges, or who have not taken additional courses in the methods of teaching should train themselves in this area.
2. Teachers should be updated with the new technological tools that are used in education.
3. The Ministry of Education must care about teachers' knowledge in the field of technology.
4. Promethean's software is one of the best software that can be used instead of using PowerPoint. An active board used with this kind of software can help to achieve a student-centered educational process.

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