

Vol.16.No. 1

e-ISSN (online): 1858-6732

The Effect of Using Computer Technology on English Language Teachers' Performance

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ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of using computer technology on the teaching performance of Sudanese English language teachers. The researcher used the descriptive method of research. The data of the study was collected by the use of a questionnaire which was addressed secondary school English language teachers in Khartoum State who represented the sample of the study. The respondents of the study were 70 secondary school English language teachers, both male and female teachers. The data which obtained was analyzed by using (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Science. The main findings of the research revealed that most of English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer technology in EFL classroom. Also it showed that the majority of English language teachers are not sufficiently trained to use computer technology in an EFL classroom and computers are not available in most of secondary schools. The researcher recommended that English language teachers should be encouraged to acquire computer knowledge and computers skills which would enable them to use computer technology in an EFL classroom. He also recommended that regular in-service computer training should be held if computer is going to be used effectively.

Keywords: computer-based technology, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), classroom instruction, teaching performance.

المستخلص:

يهدف هذا البحث الي دراسة أثر استخدام الحاسب الآلي (الكمبيوتر) في اداء مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية في السودان. استخدم الباحث منهج البحث الوصفي في هذه الدراسة. تم جمع معلومات البحث عن طريق استبيان والذي صمم لجمع المعلومات من مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية بولاية الخرطوم وهم يمثلون عينة الدراسة. تم توزيع الاستبيان على عينة تتكون من 70 مدرسا من مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية وتشمل الجنسين الذكور والاناث معا. استخدم الباحث برنامج الحزمة الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية لتحليل بيانات هذا البحث والمعروف اختصارا ب SPSS.

تشير اهم نتائج البحث الي ان:

• معظم المدرسين لهم اتجاهات ايجابية نحو استخدام الحاسب الالي في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.

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- معظم المدرسين غير مدربين التدريب الكافي الذي يمكنهم من استخدام الحاسب الالي في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.
 - عدم توفر اجهزة الحاسب الالي في معظم المدارس الثانوية.

اوصى الباحث ان يشجع مدرسي اللغة الانجليزية على اكتساب المعرفة والمهارات في استخدام الحاسب الالي حتى يتمكنوا من استخدام الكمبيوتر في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية. كما اوصي الباحث ان يكون التدريب على استخدام الحاسب الالي ضمن المهارات الاساسية في تدريب معلمي اللغة الانجليزية لضمان استخدام الحاسب بكفاءة عالية في التدريس.

INTRODUCTION:

The role of computer technology as an aid in foreign language teaching and learning is increasing. Educators are recognizing its ability to create both independent and collaborative learning environments in which students can acquire and practice a new language. The rapid development of computer technology has changed the way lessons are being delivered. This is especially so in delivering of English language lessons where the use of computer technology has greatly enhanced the quality of the outcomes of the lessons taught. Although a large number of English language teachers around the world use computer in teaching English language, Sudanese English language teachers are still using traditional methods of teaching English language. Sparks, (1998) states that many English language teachers are inclined to use the more familiar methods of teaching they remember from their own experience as students (cited in Abdullah, Abidin, Luan, Majid & Atan, 2006), (1). These traditional conventional teaching techniques often conflict with new instructional strategies introduced in many educational developmental programmes such as computer using in their

teaching. Chapelle (2005), (2) pointed out that "technology is changing the jobs of language teachers through the changes it prompts in the language itself, the opportunities for studying language, and the options available for teaching language". Current computer technology provides new opportunities to increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching especially in the field of teaching and learning foreign languages. Taffe and Gwinn (2007), (3) wrote: There are at least two important aspects of literacy-technology integration: (1) using technology to teach more effectively and enhance the learning of skills and strategies that currently make up a strong reading / language arts curriculum, and (2) effectively teaching and enhancing the learning skills and strategies that make up the strong reading / language arts curriculum of the future. well-organized Incorporating and effective computer technology into foreign language learning and teaching for improving strategies students' language proficiency has been refined by researchers and educators for many decades. Based on the rapidly changing evolution of computer technology, it is important for English language teachers



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to recognize how effectively and integrate efficiently to computer technology into their curriculum design for helping students to acquire foreign or second language easily and to enhance their own teaching performance as well. nowadays. In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), educational applications related to the field of computer technology become more common in view of the need to present visual and interactive learning processes. On the other hand, some difficulties are encountered in the integration of computer technology into foreign language teaching situations and in using properly. tools English language teachers have to develop their computer knowledge and skills in order to use computer technology as a teaching tool.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of using computer technology the teaching performance Sudanese English language teachers. It seeks to find out answers to the following questions: To what extent is computer technology used in classroom instruction? What are the objectives of computer technology classroom? What are the obstacles that face teachers who use computer technology in classroom instruction? Abdullah, et al. (2006), (1) pointed out that it is generally believed that a teacher who is highly motivated and has the right attitude would always try hard to be excellent in his / her teaching practice. Ajzen, (1988) stated that English language teachers may welcome or resist introduction of computer technology into school. They may avoid it altogether. Ajzen claims

that using computer in education depends on teachers with positive attitude towards computer and who behave differently from colleagues with less positive attitude (cited in Abdullah et al. 2006), (1). This means that having positive attitude towards computer technology is very important to the teachers who use computer technology teaching English language. Professional development helps teachers to keep up to date with new and effective practices in computer-related technologies. This research seeks to describe the state of using computer technology in classroom instructions at secondary level in Sudan. So, it will be descriptive in nature. It will describe the extent to which computers are available in Sudanese secondary schools and the extent to which English language teachers are knowledgeable and skillful in the use of computer technology in classroom instruction. Also this study seeks to investigate the objectives of using computer technology in classroom instruction, the benefits of using computer-based technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the effect of using computer-based technology upon teaching English as a foreign language in Sudan general. Abdullah et al. (2006), (1) noted that the technology of information is progressing swiftly. English language teachers will have to prepare and equip themselves with the relevant knowledge and skills in the computer technologyrelated area. According to Abdullah, et al. (2006), (1), some teachers have access to the computer technology and are beginning to recognize it as a useful tool in the teaching process. Thus, English



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language teachers have to be aware of how they can address these needs through the use of this important technology in their classroom teaching. Rosenberg, (2001); Steeples and Jones, (2002) asserted that teaching practices have changed due to the use of information and communication technology in education (Naidu 2005), (4). This means that teachers will have to learn, and be familiar with using computer technology in their classroom instruction. This study focuses on the potential of computer-based technology as a powerful tool for teaching EFL. This is indeed an important area and a current trend in foreign language teaching, which is under the discipline of applied linguistics. However, it might be of help to know about the teachers own ideas about how can computer-based technology supplement their teaching performance. Actually English language teachers' attitudes towards the use of computer technology in teaching English language as well as the various obstacles that they face in using the computer technology must be investigated seriously and their own thoughts about this matter must be known.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at the following:

- 1. To investigate the effect of using computer technology on the teaching performance of Sudanese secondary schools' English language teachers.
- 2. To find out the objectives of Sudanese English language teachers in using computer technology in classroom instruction.
- 3. To find out whether using computer technology enhances teaching listening skills or not.

4. To find out the difficulties which English language teachers face when they use computer technology and to suggest some solutions.

Questions of the Study

The problem of the study may be represented by the following questions:

- 1. How competent are Sudanese English language teachers in using computer technology?
- 2. What are their objectives when using computer technology?
- 3. Which language skill does using computer technology enhance?
- 4. What are the obstacles that face Sudanese English language teachers when using computer

technology to teach in classroom situations?

Hypotheses of the Study

In searching for answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses are made:

1. Sudanese English language teachers are not sufficiently trained and skilled in computer

knowledge.

- 2. Sudanese English language teachers use computer technology as a teaching tool.
- 3. The use of computer technology enhances teaching listening skills.
- 4. Lack of access to computers at schools is an obstacle that hinders English language teachers from

making use of computer technology in classroom instruction.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research stems from the fact that it is an attempt to know about Sudanese English language teachers' attitudes as relate to using computer technology in classroom

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instruction. The findings of this research may assist policy makers in stressing the importance of using computer-based technology in teaching English as a foreign language in Sudanese secondary schools. The findings of the research may help Sudanese English language teachers

to examine the feasibility of using computer-based technology as a supplement in teaching English as a foreign language.

Previous Studies

The researcher has found many studies relevant to this study. Moreover, other researchers carried out different studies under different titles but they are relevant to this study. This section presents previous relevant studies

Liu, Moore, Graham and Lee (2002), (5) reviewed the literature on computer uses in second language and foreign language from 1990 to 2000 inclusive. Most of the literature originated in the United States; they included however. some international references. The goals of the review were (1) to understand how computers have been used in the past eleven years to support second language and foreign language learning, and (2) to explore research evidence as relates to how computer technology can enhance language skills' acquisition. Liu et al also discussed the findings of the mentioned review under the following categories: (a) potentials of computer technology and its use in specific areas, (b) software tools used in certain language skill areas, (c) software design considerations. computerized (d) language testing, and (e) research findings from studies using quantitative

or qualitative methodologies. The findings showed that:

- 1- The benefits of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have been widely accepted and educators agree that it can be an effective instructional tool.
- 2- Research from 1990 to 2000 provided some evidence on the effectiveness of computer technology in second language learning. For example, the use of visual media supported vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension and the use of online communication tools has been shown to improve writing skills in a number of studies.

Their implications for future research were:

- Research needs to have solid foundation in theories:
- Software needs to be based upon relevant pedagogical and design principles for them to be effective;
- Studies need to use well-established and reliable measures:
- Research focus should go beyond anxiety, attitudes, vocabulary acquisition, and language production.
- More research needs to be conducted in the less explored skills areas such as speaking, listening, and culture;
- More research needs to be conducted at K-12 level.

Arkin (2003),⁽⁶⁾ conducted a study to examine how teachers perceive the incorporation and use of computer technology resources in language teaching through investigation of teachers' attitudes and approaches to using an online supplementary resource in vocabulary instruction in an EFL context in Ankara-Turkey. The aim of



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the study was to explore the factors that affect teachers' use or non-use of the online programme for teaching purposes. The study finally examined whether and to what extent opportunities, facilities, and training provided to teachers contribute to their acceptance and use of these resources. The results of the research revealed that simply introducing computer technology resources does not guarantee teachers' use of these resources in practice. The provision of training is seen as a key factor in both changing attitudes and encouraging teachers in incorporating technology into their instructions. Abd El Baset (2004), (7) conducted a research to investigate the utilization of PowerPoint presentation in teaching English language, compared to the traditional method of teaching at secondary level in Karrari Locality- Omdurman - Sudan. Another purpose was to examine the effect of PowerPoint in immediate and delayed achievement for two groups of second year secondary school students. Ninety students were selected and divided into two groups. The experimental group and control group consisted of 45 students in each group. The experimental group was taught by the teacher aided by computer, whereas, the control group was taught without the help of computer. Each group took 15 teaching hours to complete their task. The results showed that: 1) there was statistically significant difference between the means of the experimental group and control group in immediate achievement. 2) there was statistically significant differences between means of experimental group and the control group in delayed achievement, in favour

to the experimental group. Naser (2005), (8) conducted a study to find out how much teachers benefit from computer and Internet in education and to find solution for the problems of the availability of this information technology devices in Sudan. The researcher applied the descriptive analytic method. The subjects of the study consisted of the Education College of Khartoum students University, Alzaeem Alazhari University, Sudan University, and Juba University. The researcher chose a random sample and some educationalists and specialists in the field from each university. It included 116 students (male and female). The questionnaire and the interview were the tools used to collect the data. The results revealed that: 1) using information technology participates in education development, 2) the trained cadre in the mentioned field are not available, 3) this technology is not available widely for institution in order to get benefit out of it and, 4) using Internet participates in solving problems of the university students, by using it in the system of distance learning. Abdullah et al. (2006), (1) conducted a study to clarify the level of the attitude and motivation of English language teachers in using computer for delivery of the English course and the associated problems and constrains faced by them. study was qualitative quantitative in nature and involved 62 English teachers from 12 schools in a selected district in Malaysia. findings revealed that the majority of the teachers had a positive attitude, the teachers were highly motivated towards the use of computers to teach English



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and actually used them for teaching and learning purposes. The findings also showed that intrinsic rewards, such as responsibilities, a sense of self-worth accomplishments played and important role in enhancing the positive attitude and motivation. Ahmed (2007), (9) conducted a study to examine the impact of instructional technology on teaching English in high secondary school in Khartoum State. The study aimed at searching for the trends of the English language teachers towards the use of educational technologies in secondary schools and the impact of that upon the students' learning. researcher used the descriptive method. A questionnaire was used as data collecting tool. The participants were teachers and directors of English language at secondary level in Khartoum State. The findings revealed that: 1) lack of the technological means, 2) absence of practical training of English teachers to use technologies and, 3) weak concern of the Ministry of Education in directing the English language teachers towards using educational technologies English.Usun (2007).teaching conducted a descriptive study to review the applications and problems on teacher training programmes for computer and computer education assisted education (CAE) in Turkey. According to the findings of many studies in the related literature; pre-service training of education students and in-service training of practicing teachers were the most important issues for the computer education of teachers. The results revealed that teachers were unprepared to use computers in their classrooms and they lack support and educational

guidance and teachers will need continuing in-service programmes as technology changes. The results also showed that teachers' use of computer technology was related to their training and preparation and standalone courses in instructional technology were not sufficient to prepare future teachers to use computer technology. An integration of technology application within existing teacher preparation courses was most desirable and had a greater effect on the use of computer technology in practice. Ahmed (2008), (11) conducted a study to examine which technologies are used in and learning of English teaching language skills and areas such as grammar and vocabulary acquisition in Sudan. The study, also, attempted to examine the impact of CALL courseware programmes in Khartoum secondary schools on teachers' achievement in English as a foreign Language (EFL) reading classroom in terms of their perceptions of learning effectiveness, teacher, classroom interest and difficulty. The study compared CALL-based English class traditional English class over four months. A group of 74 second year students from different schools were divided into two classes. Both classes were taught by the same teacher and covered the same topics in their weekly three-hour reading lessons. Also a written survey was administered at the end of the four months. The results revealed that most students in the CALL class showed positive response. They perceived their learning environment and they were offered ample opportunities for collaboration and mutual support, as well as for exposure to, and interaction



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with, a variety of interesting, enjoyable and useful materials and tasks. Many teachers are willing to use technology in their classes but they need training and they believe that students would be more motivated since they are far more familiar with technology than the teachers themselves.

Natalie (2009), (12) conducted a research about how English was taught with and without the use of ICTs in Hong Kong primary schools and compared and evaluated the use of ICT-supported activities alone or combined with non-ICT-supported activities. The study compared and contrasted the structure of English lessons in conventional classrooms versus computer-rich environments and highlighted what computers can and cannot do in comparison with other teaching tools in different instructional contexts. The study also was intended to investigate and analyze student-teacher interaction at various episodes in a lesson, i.e. how students responded to the teacher's questions and how the teacher provided feedback when the teacher switched between the use of different activities and tools. It was hoped to investigate the usefulness and effectiveness of teaching tools in a lesson. The research was developed in two phases: the pilot study and the main study. In the main study, before each lesson observation was conducted in a target school, the researcher interviewed the principal to get overall picture of school's policies on ICTs from an administration's perspective. Then. she interviewed teacher to be observed in order to collect information about lesson plan, lesson objectives and attitudes towards the use

of ICT in ELT. During the lesson observations in the main study, the researcher made notes of what was happening in the lesson and videotaped observations. the lessons. After questionnaires were administrated to students at the very beginning (stage 1 & stage 2) of data collection in the main study to elicit their perceptions of the use of computers. The findings of the research revealed that successful use of ICTs relies heavily on how teachers play mediating roles in selecting switching between different ICTs and non-ICT tools with associated amplification and reduction effects.Bordbar (2010), (13) investigated the reasons and factors behind teachers' use of computer technology in the classroom. Also the study aimed to explore teachers' attitudes towards computer and information technology and how they apply their practical computer-assisted language learning experience and knowledge to their language teaching. The participants of the study were 83 high school English as a Foreign Language teachers in Iran who had knowledge and experience of using computer for the purpose of learning and teaching English. The results showed that almost all the teachers had positive attitudes towards computer use in the class. The results also pointed to the importance of teachers' vision of technology itself, their experience with it, their level of computer skill and competence, and the cultural environment that surrounds introduction into schools and English institutes in shaping their attitudes towards computer technology.



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Materials and Methods Sampling

The target population of this study was Sudanese secondary school English language teachers in Khartoum State during the school year 2013 - 2014. The researcher thinks that the sample of the study from Khartoum State is suitable for the study because there are a great number of teachers in Khartoum State due to the large number of secondary schools in this state. So, the researcher believes that there is a big number of English language teachers in Khartoum State which is convenient to the purpose of this study. To carry out this study, the researcher chose some random samples of teachers. All of the samples are English language teachers at secondary level in Khartoum State. One hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the sample of the study; seventy-eight of them recollected. The researcher excluded some of the copies because the respondents did not fill all the statements and some of them marked on more than one option. About eight copies were invalid and they were excluded from the Seventy study. copies of the questionnaire were valid so they were included in this study.

Instrument of the Study

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data of this study. The researcher thinks that the questionnaire

is a good tool through which the relevant information can be collected easily. The questionnaire was designed in simple and clear language to avoid ambiguity misunderstanding and which misleading sometimes to the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of five sections and thirty statements. Each one of the statements was related to specific section. A pilot study was conducted with 45 volunteer English language teachers to establish its internal consistency and reliability. analyzing the data resulting from the pilot study, several items were removed from the instrument. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of information English language about teachers including gender, qualification and experience. The second part consisted of five sections and thirty statements.

Results

This study investigated the effect of using computer technology on English language teachers' performance. The instrument which the researcher used to collect the data was a questionnaire for English language teachers. English language teachers were the subjects of the study. Their number was seventy language teachers. The English questionnaire consisted of five sections and thirty statements. The data of the research was analyzed by SPSS program and tabulated by the researcher.

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Table (1) Gender of the Subjects

Gender	Frequ	Percent
	ency	
Female	30	42.9%
Male	40	57.1%
Total	70	100.0%

Table (1) illustrates the gender of the subjects. The total number of the subjects were 70 English language teachers; 40 of them were male which

represents (57.1%) and 30 of the subjects were female teachers which represents (42.9%).

Figure (1) Gender of the Subjects

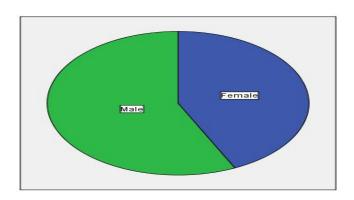
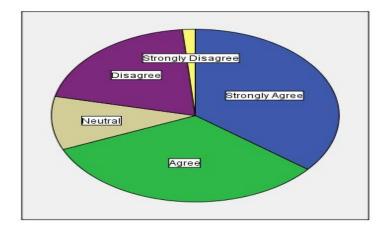


Table (2) The Importance of Computer Knowledge to an English Language Teacher.

Computer knowledge is important to an English language teacher.	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	25	35.7%
Agree	23	32.9%
Neutral	7	10.0%
Disagree	14	20.0%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100.0%

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Figure (2) The Importance of Computer Knowledge to an English Language Teacher.



From table (2) above, we can see that (35.7%) of the subjects strongly agree that computer knowledge is important to an English language teacher, (32.9%) were agree, (20.0%) of them were

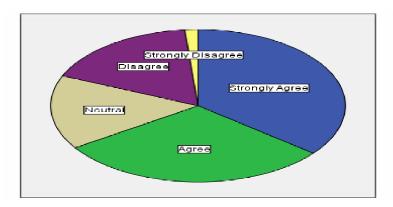
disagree, (1.4%) of the subjects strongly disagree and (10.0%) of them were undecided. According to figure (2), most of the subjects agreed with this statement.

Computer is an important teaching tool in an EFL classroom.	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	25	35.7%
Agree	21	30.0%
Neutral	11	15.7%
Disagree	12	17.1%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100.0%

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Figure (3) The Importance of Using Computer as a Teaching Tool.



According to table (3), the subjects who strongly agree that computer is an important teaching tool in an EFL classroom represent (35.7%), those who agree represent (30.0%), the subjects who disagree represent (17.1%), the ones who strongly disagree represent

(1.4%), whereas those who were undecided represent (15.7%). If we have a look at figure (3) above, we can see that the majority of the respondents agreed with this statement, about (65.7%) of the sample.

Table (4) English Language Teachers' Computer Training.

I am sufficiently trained to use computer in teaching.	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	9	12.9%
Agree	15	21.4%
Neutral	12	17.1%
Disagree	22	31.4%
Strongly Disagree	12	17.1%
Total	70	100 0%

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Figure (4) English Language Teachers' Computer Training.

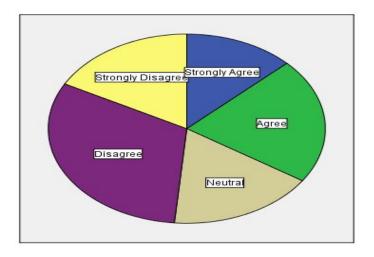


Table (4) shows that about (12.9%) of the respondents strongly agree they are sufficiently trained to use computer in teaching, (21.4%) of them agree with it, (31.4%) of the subjects disagree, about (17.1%) of them strongly disagree and about (17.1%) of the subjects were undecided. Having a look at figure (4) we can see that the majority of the subjects disagree with this statement.

Table (5) Availability of Computers at Secondary Schools.

Computers are available for teaching in my school.	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	2.9%
Agree	15	21.4%
Neutral	7	10.0%
Disagree	17	24.3%
Strongly Disagree	29	41.4%
Total	70	100.0%

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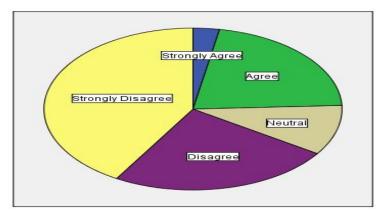


Table (5) indicates that computers are not available for teaching purposes at most of secondary schools. About (2.9%) of the sample strongly agree that computers are available at schools, (21.4%) of them agree with the statement, (24.3%) of the sample disagreed with it, about (41.4%) of them strongly disagree and those who were undecided represent (10.0%) of the sample. According to figure (5) above, the majority of the sample strongly disagree that computer technology is available for teaching in schools.

DISCUSSION:

This study investigated the effect of using computer technology on English language teachers' performance. The findings of the study revealed that most of the English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer in teaching English language. Several studies conducted in different countries also found similar findings about English language teachers' attitude towards computer technology, (1), (13). Although there seems some problems with using computer technology in classroom situations such as lack of access to computer, teachers' lack of computer skills, lack of computer

knowledge and teachers lack computer training, positive attitudes are promising for Sudan. The findings showed that computer is used as a teaching tool. Although computer technology can be used as a teaching tool in an EFL classroom, using it in teaching should not be understood as using it as a tool only to transfer instructional material and rehearsal but as a medium for learning, discovering, sharing and creating knowledge. The findings also showed that most of the English language teachers are not sufficiently trained to use computer technology in teaching situations. It can be stated that simply providing computer technology does not guarantee its use in English language instruction. Therefore, it is necessary to convince teachers of the usefulness and benefits of computer technology in improving teaching and learning English language. This suggests the need for effective guidance, support and training for teachers in integrating computer technology into language instruction through more hands-on and direct practical experience. It can be understood that there is a need for ongoing training and assistance in helping English language teachers to



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better employ computer technology in teaching situations. The findings of this study revealed that computers are not available for teaching purposes in most of schools. Findings of previous studies also showed that computer technology is not available widely for English language teachers in order to get benefit out of it (Naser 2005), ⁽⁸⁾. The results revealed that most of the English language teachers are not well prepared to use computer technology in teaching **CONCLUSION**:

The results of this study revealed that English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer teaching technology in English language. It can be understood that most of the English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of computer in teaching English language. The results clarified that English language teachers can use computer technology for different purposes. The majority of the respondents agreed that computer is an important teaching tool in an EFL classroom. The findings showed that English language teachers are not sufficiently trained to use computer in teaching. However, the majority agreed that computer training should

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situations. Some studies conducted also found similar findings. The findings of Usun's, (10) study revealed that teachers were unprepared to use computers in their classrooms and they lack support and educational guidance and English language teachers will need continuing in-service programmes as technology changes. Moreover, the findings of his study showed that teachers' use of computer technology was related to their training and preparation

included in pre-service teachers training. Most of the respondents agreed that regular in-service computer training is desirable. A great number of the respondents disagreed that the Ministry of Education provides computer training to English language teachers. The findings showed that English language teachers are not well prepared to use computer in teaching and having basic computer knowledge is not enough to start using computer in teaching English language. The results also showed that computers are not available for teaching in most of secondary schools and the Ministry of Education does not equip secondary schools with sufficient number of computers.

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