



## Teaching experience and Iranian EFL teachers' technophobia in using online teaching platforms

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### INTRODUCTION

Due to the universal pandemic, in 2020, traditional face-to-face education was alternated by a new form of online education called emergency remote teaching (ERT). Emergency remote teaching "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery model due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges et al., 2020, p. 6). This sudden shift to online education was followed by the vast use of learning management systems (LMSs), which has been a demanding task for teachers and caused serious anxieties known as technophobia (Rosen & Weil, 1990).

The unreasonable fear and uneasiness that teachers faced in reaction to the use of LMSs differed with regards to different factors. Teaching experience have been identified as one of the influential factors. It is believed that experienced teachers have positive states of mind toward teaching and manage their classrooms more successfully than less experienced teachers. They have more control over classroom schedules and are less concerned about students' negative responses to class exercises or to the learning process. Therefore, the present study tried to investigate how Iranian EFL teachers' teaching experience related to their technophobia in using LMSs through the below research question:

**How does Iranian EFL teachers' technophobia relate to their teaching experience?**

### METHOD

#### Participants

This study collected the data from 6 Iranian EFL teachers in a language institutes in Tehran, named Salehin Village, which is equipped with a special LMS, called Samane Jamee Madares. This selection was based on convenience sampling and the researcher's access. The teachers were grouped based on their level of teaching experience, including both novice (N=3) and experienced teachers (N=3). The participants were in the age range of 20 to 45 years old, and 5 teachers were females and 1 teacher was male.

#### LMS

The data of the study were collected at the Salehin Village institute that is located in Tehran and is equipped with an LMS named Samane Jamee Madares. This LMS is facilitated with some tools like synchronous online classes in Big Blue Button, asynchronous offline classes (for further practice of learners), virtual storage where learners can upload their homework and where teachers can assess learners based on what they have done, and finally, online social groups for sharing information and ideas after the virtual classes.

#### Data Collection

##### Step 1:

In order to gain comprehensive data, the researcher requested the participants to explain their problems, complaints, feelings (anxious, stress), and suggestions based on their experiences in the use of LMSs through reflective journals. Three times throughout the term the teachers expressed their experiences through reflective journals, and 18 journals were collected for the final analysis. The reflective journals were gathered in two formats: some voice messages via WhatsApp and papers. Researchers requested the teachers to send these journals during one term in three occasions (at the beginning, mid, and end of the term).

##### Step 2:

the researchers conducted interviews with 6 teachers according to teaching experience. Some sessions were online via video call in WhatsApp and some were face to face meeting at the institute. The researcher attempted to make the sessions friendly, and asked interview questions in normal speed that helped the respondents to express their feelings or experiences easily.

#### Data analysis

The interview sessions and reflective journals were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The term coding process was introduced by Charmez (2006). Coding may be a way of making a connection between the gathered data and a theory appears from them. The researchers read the data many times and began to separate, sorted and categorized the data through coding system. First coding was started by studying and reading transcribed interviews and reflective journals meticulously researchers found out some frequent issues, challenges and experiences then highlighted them in different colors After that in a secondary coding researchers put the same codes in a group and categorized some patterns. Eventually, the textual data were coded and the themes were extracted.

### RESULTS

Addressing the guiding research question the researcher sought to provide an overall image of the collected data the following is the outline of the themes and subthemes emerged out of the data. How does Iranian EFL teachers' technophobia relate to their teaching experience?

Technophobia	Thematic classifications	Frequency
Experienced teachers' technophobia	• Not being able to get a facial expression from all learners and to read their minds	21
	• Interacting with learners and keeping them on a task	10
Novice teachers' technophobia	• Working with LMSs and platforms	6
	• Controlling/managing the class	3

#### Some extracts of the data:

The biggest concern of teachers is having live interaction with learners in a way that they are able to see all learners faces and they can receive any feedback as soon as possible therefore they are able to read learners mind. But these features are not possible in our context due to weak quality of internet and servers.

#### Teacher 1

*One big reason is the technology here we have the low quality of internet connection and not being able to see students face to face. Therefore you are going to have some interruption in your teaching process.*

According to the teachers' explanations, engaging learners' attention and keeping them on tasks even by the occurrence of disconnections are not an easy job.

Some teachers had difficulty in working with platforms they confessed that they felt stress at the beginning of starting teaching online.

#### Teacher 6

*To be honest I had a little stress at beginning of teaching online for about some sessions.*

### DISCUSSION

Not all teachers' technophobia in using LMSs have contributions in relevant literature, however some of their concerns may refer to the use of computers; when teachers are unsure how to do a task, they are prone to computer anxiety (Russel & Bradley, 1997). Or according to Pina and Harris (1993), many teachers feel ill-prepared and resist the incorporation of computers and other technologies into their classrooms. Furthermore, as Kim (2002) points out, a teacher is the key "actor" who deals with technological devices for teaching and determines the success or failure of learning. Teacher-related factors such as anxiety can be one of the critical causes influencing the success of integrating technology into the classroom (Kim, 2002). Therefore teachers' anxiety may lead to the success or failure of learners' learning. On the other hand, not all teachers' technophobia refer to their knowledge of technology or their experience in this area some level of their anxiety may refer to low quality of internet and site problems which is led to lessen teachers' concentration as they complained.

In general, there have been several factors influencing teachers' anxieties with technology during the quick shift to online education among which this study investigated teaching experience. Knowing the major causes of both experienced and novice teachers' anxieties can assist authorities in resolving them. Overall, ERT started in 2020 and significantly influenced actual online education in both positive and negative ways. This area needs vast continuous research to resolve the negative effects of ERT on online education.

### SELECTED REFERENCES

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