

A Detailed Analysis over Iranian EFL Teachers' Beliefs towards Using Pronunciation Software in Teaching English Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

One of the useful ways of teaching English pronunciation is the application of pronunciation software. Pronunciation software supplies a personal and stress-free setting for both teachers and learners through which they can have infinite input, exercise at their own pace, and get feedback through the automatic speech recognition. This study investigated the Iranian teachers' beliefs towards utilizing pronunciation software in English pronunciation instruction. The researchers applied a qualitative method to investigate the impact of pronunciation software on teachers' pronunciation instruction. The researchers used a belief questionnaire to choose teachers for the semi-structured interview and distributed it to 28 teachers at the two Islamic Azad Universities of Iran. The researchers chose 14 of them based on their answers to the belief questionnaire. Therefore, these 14 teachers participated in the qualitative aspect of this study. The researchers collected data and analyzed them. Qualitative data analysis was done through reducing and displaying the collected data and drawing conclusions from the collected data. The findings obtained from the qualitative research demonstrated that Iranian university teachers held positive beliefs towards the application of pronunciation software in pronunciation instruction. These positive beliefs provided teaching and learning opportunities and appropriate resources for teachers, met their teaching needs, and solved some of their pronunciation difficulties.

Key words: Beliefs, Iranian Teachers, Pronunciation Instruction, Pronunciation Software

INTRODUCTION

Courses and materials should be provided for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to improve the impact of their pronunciation instruction. ESL/EFL learners' pronunciation can be affected by the high quality materials and specifically computer-based materials and teachers need these materials in their classes to improve the quality of their instruction (Fraser, 2000). According to Morley (1991), understandable pronunciation is one of the primary aims of teaching instruction not accurate pronunciation.

Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016), Sadeghi and Mashhadi Heidar (2016), and Haghghi and Rahimy (2017) declare that pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills in learning and teaching language. According to Farhat and Dzakiria (2017), pronunciation has been ignored and nobody has made serious attempt to realize the great value of this communication skill. Hayati (2010) says that Iranian EFL teachers and learners do not pay close attention to pronunciation because they do not have sufficient time for its teaching and overcrowded classes do not allow them to teach it easily and effectively. Some Iranian teachers have great difficulties in the teaching of English pronunciation. They are challeng-

ing with the serious problems they face with pronunciation instruction.

One of the key components of higher education is to use computer technology. Through applying this technology, learners can control their own learning process and have access to a lot of information over which their teachers do not have any control. Teachers are the active agents of changes whose beliefs support or stop the success of any educational reform such as the application of computer technology (Woodrow, 1991). According to Thompson, Schmidt and Stewart (2000 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2014), the real purpose of using computer technology is to develop fundamental changes in the teaching and learning of language skills. Teachers and learners can use computer technology in their classes because they can have access to the target language in various subjects. It helps teachers guide their learners' learning and relate curriculum to the real world tasks (Pourhosein Gilakjani, Sabouri, & Zabihniaemran, 2015).

Zheng (2009 as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) states that beliefs are very important in realizing teachers' thought processes and their teaching methods. These beliefs are of vital importance in teacher education that can help teachers develop their teaching principles. The activ-

ities teachers perform in their classes are affected by their beliefs that can have a key role in understanding teachers' actions. According to Williams and Burden (1997), teachers' beliefs have an impact on the way they prepare their classes and the types of decisions they make. Beliefs impact what is done in teachers' classes. The researchers continued that teachers' beliefs towards learning influence everything they perform in their classes and what teachers believe about how a language is learnt is much stronger than a specific teaching method to be selected. Therefore, it is concluded that examining teachers' beliefs help us realize what ideas lay beneath the decisions teachers make about using computer technology activities in their instruction.

Understanding teachers' beliefs towards computer technology plays a key role in the successful adoption of technology. Teachers' beliefs are very important to the successful integration of computer technologies in the classrooms (Wetzel, 2002). Teachers will not use computer technology if its use is not consistent with their beliefs (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Teachers' teaching beliefs should be modified according to the application of computer technologies (Hokanson & Hooper, 2004), and if these changes are not in accordance with their educational goals, they will stop using them (Zhao & Cziko, 2001).

Teachers can decide *whether* and *how* to use computer technology for instruction in the classrooms. Thus, if teachers want to be the effective users of computer technologies they should have positive beliefs in their usage (Becker, 2000; Pourhossein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2014). Iranian EFL university teachers use computers in their classes because they provide them better ways of instruction that can help them improve their pronunciation teaching and learning. Of course, this does not mean that teachers have no great difficulties in using computers or can use them appropriately (Fathiyan, 2004).

Attaran (2004) says that some Iranian teachers do not have good beliefs towards using computer in teaching pronunciation. Due to the lack of good beliefs, they cannot get their desirable outcomes towards using computer to increase their learners' learning. The usage of computer technology is one of the good methods of improving pronunciation teaching and learning. Computer technology presents good teaching and learning opportunities and creates an appropriate and natural environment for both teachers and learners to effectively teach and learn pronunciation (Hayati, 2010). Thus, the researchers examined the Iranian teachers' beliefs towards using pronunciation software for teaching pronunciation.

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON TEACHERS' BELIEFS TOWARDS USING COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Previous studies indicate that beliefs can affect the choices teachers make concerning the integration of computer technology for educational objectives (Ertmer, 2005; Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001). According to Falba, Grove, Anderson, and Putney (2001), teachers who have access to computers increase their technology confidence and knowledge and use them more in their instruction. Germann and Sasse (1997)

carried out a study towards the use of technology in teaching and understood that teachers who take part in a technology integration program better their technology self-efficacy and their eagerness in learning more about how technology influence their teaching. Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, and Hannay (1999) found that access to technologies enhances teachers' opportunities for effective teaching experiences that lead to greater confidence in their educational skills.

According to Lam (2000), before teachers use technology for their teaching they should know its advantages and should observe the usefulness of applying a specific technology. Norton, McRobbie, and Cooper (2000) express that teachers' technology beliefs are affected by their teaching methods. Teachers' opposition to adopt new technologies originate from their present teaching beliefs. Hardy (1998) says that if teachers want to adopt technology successfully they should change their roles in the classroom. When teachers use technology as an important teaching tool, they can be a facilitator and learners will have a proactive role in the learning process.

There is a close relation between teachers' beliefs about the instructional applications of computers and the kinds of software they use with their learners (Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001). According to Windschitl and Sahl (2002), successful computer technology integration into teaching is dependent on changing teachers' beliefs and their methods. A study was done about the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the instructional application of technology. The teachers received technology equipment, professional development, and teaching support to improve their technology integration activities. The obtained results indicate that there is a relationship between teachers' beliefs towards learning and teaching practices and their technology integration practices (Kim et al., 2013).

Simonsson (2004) examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs towards using computer technology and its integration in the classes. A questionnaire was used to examine the beliefs of 103 teachers toward the use of computer technology. The results indicate that the application of computer technology is pertinent to teachers' teaching beliefs (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray & Hannay, 1999). Andrew (2007) and Hermans, Tondeur, van Braak, and Valcke (2008) examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs and the use of technology. The results show that teachers who have constructivist beliefs use technology to support student-centered method and those with traditional beliefs use computers to support teacher-centered method. It was also concluded that just increasing computer access is not enough to change teachers' technology practices.

The importance of teachers' beliefs towards computer technology and its effect on teachers' teaching has been demonstrated by a lot of researchers (Ravitz, Becker, & Wong, 2000; Riel & Becker, 2000; Saye, 1998). According to Saye (1998), the use of computer technology in the classes can be influenced by the teachers' beliefs. The amount of training, time spent towards using computer technology, and openness to change predict the overall use of computer technology among teachers. Teachers who spend extra time

and have positive beliefs towards technology can effectively integrate it in their teaching (Vannatta & Fordham, 2004).

Levin and Wadmany (2005) examined the effect of technology-rich learning environment on teachers' beliefs. Participants received professional development in the form of trainings concerning the effective integration of technology for teaching and learning. The results show an important change in teachers' teaching methods and their beliefs. Mich, Neri, and Giuliani (2006) examined teachers' beliefs toward using Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) system based on Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology. Italian students learning English were the participants of this research. The researchers compare a group of students receiving teacher-led instruction with a group receiving ASR-based CALL for word pronunciation. It was revealed that the ASR system improves students' pronunciation. Both groups improve the pronunciation quality of both general words and difficult/unknown words.

Rationale of the Study

Teachers and learners have a lot of problems in English pronunciation teaching and learning. There is a close relationship between pronunciation and communication. That is, wrong pronunciation can stop communication. Teachers and learners who have understandable pronunciation are more skilled speakers than those with poor pronunciation. University learners are concerned about the pronunciation of English words because their teachers pronounce words differently.

Researchers were concerned about teachers' pronunciation because they had some mistakes in their pronunciation. Researchers examined into the reasons for this and they understood that due to the lack of time, knowledge, skill, and experience, some Iranian teachers did not pay attention to pronunciation. Iranian teachers should pronounce almost like native speakers because their pronunciation can affect their learners' pronunciation. That is the main reason why teachers' weak pronunciation has been a serious concern to the researchers.

There has not been performed any study in Iran to investigate teachers' beliefs in pronunciation software and its impact on the quality of teachers' English pronunciation. Iranian teachers' beliefs in pronunciation software were the main focus of this study. Because of the significance of pronunciation in English language learning and the poor pronunciation of some teachers, the researchers decided to change teachers' pronunciation course with the hope to improve their pronunciation.

Significance of the Study

Pronunciation software has a key role in pronunciation instruction and just using this software cannot bring about a big change in the learners' learning process. Teachers can use pronunciation software for teaching pronunciation because it provides an interactive and enjoyable environment. Teachers and learners will be more motivated to learn pronunciation when they find that the learning environment is very enjoyable for them. One of the important findings of this paper is

to encourage teachers know how to use pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. This is the responsibility of teachers to create the awareness among their learners.

Teachers can select appropriate pronunciation software for their instruction and their learners' pronunciation learning. The results of this research can be useful in recognizing teachers' beliefs towards pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation in the fields of word stress, sentence stress, intonation, rhythm, and particularly American accent. The results of this paper represent that teachers can be trained and equipped with the better ways of strategies, techniques, and approaches to use pronunciation software in pronunciation instruction.

Statement of the Problem

In many Iranian English classrooms, teachers do not pay enough attention to pronunciation instruction because it includes a lot of challenges. Some teachers lack enough time in their classes to teach pronunciation. Sometimes they have sufficient time for pronunciation instruction but it has a lot of irrelevant subjects. Negative results will be brought about by just repeating sounds and this may stop teachers and learners to teach and learn pronunciation (Gilbert, 2008, as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari, Mehrabi, & Mousavinia, 2013). The other important point is that appropriate text books and teaching materials are not provided for teachers to better their instruction (Fraser, 2000 as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari, Mehrabi, & Mousavinia, 2013).

English textbooks have some weaknesses in the presentation of materials, text selection, and pronunciation exercises. As a result, a lot of Iranian teachers are not interested in teaching pronunciation in their classes. In Iranian English classes, exact pronunciation is not emphasized and learners do not have adequate knowledge about it (Hayati, 2010 as cited in Gooniband Shooshtari, Mehrabi, & Mousavinia, 2013). One of the great difficulties is that multimedia is not used in educational environments. Language institutes are book-based and universities are teacher-centered and multimodality does not have any place in these centers (Abdolmanafi-Rokni, 2013).

In Iran, English is regarded as a foreign language and learners do not use it out of their classes and because of the large number of students in every class teachers are not able to control the classes and check their learners' pronunciation (Abdolmanafi-Rokni, 2013). Some Iranian teachers do not have good beliefs toward applying computer technology in their teaching particularly in their pronunciation instruction. Although teachers use computer technology in their instruction, because of the lack of good beliefs, they cannot obtain their favorite results toward using computer technology to enhance their learners' learning (Attaran, 2004). Therefore, the researchers investigated the Iranian teachers' beliefs towards using pronunciation software for teaching pronunciation.

Objective of the Study

This study examined Iranian EFL university teachers' beliefs towards pronunciation software in teaching English pronunciation.

Research Question

This research answered the following question:

What are the Iranian EFL university teachers' beliefs towards using pronunciation software in pronunciation instruction?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Dörnyei (2007) and Mehrpour and Agheshteh (2017), some research questions lend themselves to either qualitative or quantitative methods. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) also supports the idea that qualitative research provides a detailed investigation of the phenomenon. Because the researchers were concerned with the perspectives and experiences of the teachers, a qualitative study design was used (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The qualitative method design consisted of semi-structured interview questions with a sample of 14 Iranian university teachers that were selected from the two Islamic Azad Universities of Iran.

Population and Sampling

In order to choose participants for the semi-structured interview questions, the researchers used a belief questionnaire adapted from the study of Al-Asmari (2005) to measure the Iranian teachers' beliefs towards pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. This questionnaire possessed high reliability ($\alpha=0.91$). Three professors were chosen to establish the face and content validity of questionnaire. The obtained feedback from the professors was used to make changes and clarifications. Through these changes, the researchers provided the suitability and comprehensibility of questionnaire for the participants.

The Al-Asmari's questionnaire involved five parts and part four was selected by the researchers for this research. This questionnaire had 24 items. Item number 14 was removed from the questionnaire because it was not pertinent to this research. Therefore, 23 items were chosen for the aims of this paper. Items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5).

The participants in the study were Iranian EFL teachers with an age range of 33 to 42. Before the research instrument was distributed, all of the teachers were informed of the purpose of the study and invited to participate on a voluntary basis, with no penalties attached if they elected not to take part. The researchers distributed the belief questionnaire to 28 Iranian teachers who are teaching English at the two Islamic Azad Universities of Iran. Out of these 28 teachers, the researchers chose 14 of them who returned a completed survey. Then the researchers got teachers' agreement to take part in the qualitative aspect of this research. Instead of using teachers' real names, Iranian teachers' pseudonyms were used. They were called P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, and P14.

Research Instrument

One instrument was used to examine the goals of this research. Semi-structured interview questions were used for the qualitative research (See Appendix A). Semi-structured interview questions were carried out with 14 participants selected from the two Islamic Azad Universities of Iran. A high quality small size tape recorder was used for recording interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded. After recording interviews, the interview transcripts were independently coded by the researchers. Word-by-word transcription was done by the researchers. When the researchers transcribed the tapes, they carefully revised them to be certain that their transcription matched the real interviews. The researchers met to share and discuss their independent codes and collaboratively agreed upon the names of the codes. This collaboration resulted in four main themes that emerged from the data-pronunciation software vs. traditional teaching methods, pronunciation software as an additional financial burden, role of pronunciation software in solving pronunciation problems, and usefulness of pronunciation software.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers used qualitative data for analyzing the semi-structured interview questions. The following order is used by the qualitative researchers for the analysis of the collected data: reduction of collected data, theme construction or indicating the collected data, and theory building or drawing conclusions from the data. Therefore, the researchers followed the above order in analyzing the data. They decreased the collected data according to (1) simplifying the collected data (2) choosing the relevant data (3) removing the irrelevant data by changing the written parts of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The unit of analysis for indicating the collected data was themes. The researchers constructed important themes. They extracted these themes based on the collected data. These themes were common for all interviewees. Two Iranian professors were asked to validate the validity of their themes. They verified the themes. Then researchers categorized them in separate tables to do the process of data analysis. After decreasing and showing the data, the researchers drew conclusions. The units of analysis for drawing conclusions were quotations from the participants input. The researchers used the different parts of the interviews for showing the themes and this helped them see the relevant data and use quotations obtained from the interviewees' input to support arguments. The research questions were used as a guide to make sense of the collected data.

FINDINGS

Iranian teachers believed that pronunciation software was a good technology that made their pronunciation instruction very easy and interesting. It met their personal needs, had high potential to improve teachers' instruction, and provided ample opportunities and suitable resources for their instruction. Pronunciation software made teachers' classes very

enjoyable for their students and brought about good results in their instruction. Teachers stated that the software was regarded as an effective part of teaching pronunciation not an additional financial burden. There were some pronunciation problems pertinent to the differences and similarities of the phonetic features of words and mistakes caused by similar sounds that have different spellings and this software helped teachers solve some of these problems. Iranian teachers believed that pronunciation software helped them have good pronunciation, be familiar with American accent, and abandon traditional teaching methods in the instruction of pronunciation. Important themes in Iranian teachers' beliefs are exhibited in Table 1.

Pronunciation Software vs. Traditional Teaching Methods

According to the obtained findings from interviews, pronunciation software was regarded as a reliable source of improving pronunciation and a good technology in teaching pronunciation that was actually better than traditional teaching methods. This software made Iranian teachers' classes more enjoyable for both themselves and their students.

In my idea, pronunciation software is a useful means of teaching English pronunciation. That is to say, I can get better results by using it so it is certainly better than traditional pronunciation teaching methods. (P5)

To the best of my knowledge, pronunciation software is better than the traditional methods because through using pronunciation power software, I have a reliable support and my classes will be more enjoyable for my students. (P9)

The findings indicated that pronunciation software helped Iranian teachers teach more than one pronunciation feature. Teachers could improve their accent, stress, intonation, and rhythm through the application of the software.

Well, I preferred using pronunciation software in pronunciation instruction because the use of pronunciation software made me teach more than one pronunciation skill like American accent, intonation and the ability to pronounce words with correct stress. (P2)

In my belief, pronunciation software teaches more than one pronunciation skill like stress, intonation, rhythm through seeing, hearing and repeating them that are not found in traditional teaching methods. (P7)

Pronunciation software improved the quality of Iranian teachers' instruction. The researchers realized that the software improved Iranian teachers' instruction in the fields of stress, accent, listening, and speaking.

Table 1. Important themes in teachers' beliefs towards utilizing pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation

Themes
Pronunciation software vs. traditional teaching methods
Pronunciation software as an additional financial burden
Role of pronunciation software in solving pronunciation problems
Usefulness of pronunciation software

In my idea, pronunciation software meets my needs in English pronunciation such as learning correct stress and improving American accent. (P1)

I believe that pronunciation software improves the quality of my instruction in the fields of pronunciation, listening and speaking. (P14)

According to the teachers' interviews, Iranian teachers gained accurate English pronunciation through the use of pronunciation software.

Yes, I personally believe that pronunciation software in the instruction of English pronunciation is a necessity for me. It is an effective tool that helped me to have better and more accurate English pronunciation. (P8)

I believe in using pronunciation software because I corrected my pronunciation especially accent, stress, intonation, articulation of sounds in order to teach them better to my students. (P3)

Pronunciation Software as an Additional Financial Burden

The use of computer technology such as pronunciation software will have certainly so many advantages for its users and the provision of different kinds of pronunciation software by the university authorities will not be so expensive and they do not need to spend many budgets for providing them. Pronunciation software should be regarded as an essential element of improving teachers' teaching and learning. The findings obtained from the teachers' interviews showed that this software was a significant element of teaching pronunciation and it was never regarded as an additional financial burden or a luxury for their universities.

Effective pronunciation instruction is done by using pronunciation software and in my opinion this software is a necessary part of improving pronunciation skills such as correct production of sounds, stress, accent and intonation. (P10)

In my view, pronunciation software is never an additional financial burden but a significant part of teaching pronunciation and it is used for improving some aspects of pronunciation like changing our native accent, learning American accent and learning how to put correct stress on words, etc. (P13)

I am completely certain that pronunciation software is not an additional financial burden but a necessity. The use of pronunciation software is no more a luxury but it has become a necessity in the field of teaching English pronunciation. (P4)

Role of Pronunciation Software in Solving Pronunciation Problems

Pronunciation problems were considered as one of the fundamental issues for the Iranian teachers. Many teachers thought about these problems and the ways of solving them. Some of their main problems were stress, intonation, accent, and perceiving of some words that had various spellings and meanings but had the same pronunciation. The interviews represented that pronunciation software was a valid technology in solving pronunciation problems and its instruction.

Iranian teachers could solve some of their pronunciation problems that were related to the features of intonation, stress, accent, and the true production of words and this indicates that the software is of vital importance in solving parts of the pronunciation problems that they had in their instruction.

Through using pronunciation software, I can solve learners' pronunciation problems in the fields of stress, intonation, correct articulation and accent. (P6)

Pronunciation software helps me show the differences and similarities of the phonetic features of words to my students. (P11)

Through using pronunciation software, I inform my students about the possible mistakes caused by similar sounds that have different spellings. (P12)

Pronunciation software is a valid source of solving pronunciation instruction problems like incorrect stress and intonation and bad accent. (P8)

Usefulness of Pronunciation Software

The findings obtained from the teachers' interviews represented that pronunciation software helped Iranian teachers improve their pronunciation instruction. The software helped them make better their pronunciation. It met teachers' needs in teaching pronunciation and provided a lot of teaching and learning opportunities and appropriate resources for teachers. The other usefulness of this software was that it really improved teachers' American accent when talking English.

Pronunciation software is a very useful means of teaching and learning pronunciation and meeting my teaching needs like improving my American accent and being able to pronounce words correctly. (P5)

Positive results such as good pronunciation and being familiar with the accent of native speakers are obtained by the use of pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. (P14)

Pronunciation software is a significant tool in teaching pronunciation and it meets my personal needs in pronunciation instruction like improving my American accent and producing English words properly. (P3)

On the whole, the findings showed that Iranian teachers had positive beliefs toward pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. The software was generally better than traditional teaching methods because it had a lot of teaching and learning opportunities that Iranian teachers couldn't find them by using traditional methods. Pronunciation software as a useful computer technology and it was never considered as an additional financial burden on the universities. On the contrary, it was a useful technology that actually helped Iranian teachers improve the quality of their pronunciation instruction. Moreover, this software helped Iranian teachers solve some of their pronunciation problems like stress, intonation, and specially their American accent.

DISCUSSION

In the following section, research question concerning the Iranian teachers' beliefs is discussed in detail. By compar-

ing pronunciation software and traditional teaching methods, Iranian university teachers revealed their positive beliefs towards this software that made their classes more enjoyable. This finding has been supported by the study of Apple Education Inc., (2009), saying that computer technology provides personalized, just-in-time instruction for all teachers and learners and having access to computer technology brings about great effects on the learning of pronunciation than traditional teaching methods. Iranian teachers had good beliefs towards the software because it was as an effective tool that helped them gain accurate pronunciation and improve the quality of their instruction. The above finding is in accordance with the high capability of pronunciation software described by Finely (2004) who said that this software helps teachers improve their pronunciation instruction. The researcher stated that while learners are learning on their own, teachers can work with learners separately to better their pronunciation.

The findings of this study displayed that pronunciation software was regarded as an effective and useful way of pronunciation instruction and it was not considered as an additional financial burden. The software presented acceptable pronunciation and provided abundant teaching resources for teachers. This finding has been supported by Iding, Crosby, and Speitel's (2002) study who said that teachers who used computers personally and had a lot of information about computers were very interested in using computer technology for educational purposes without thinking about the financial burden that computer technology can have on their institutions. That is, they didn't think that computer technology has a heavy financial burden on them and this never frustrated them to use computer technology in their instruction.

The teachers' interviews demonstrated that they were worried about their pronunciation problems and did not know how to solve them. Iranian teachers solved these problems by using computer technologies and specifically pronunciation software. The findings of this research are in accordance with the past literature (Finely, 2004), indicating that pronunciation software has a high potential to solve some of the teachers' pronunciation problems. Pronunciation software can solve teachers' pronunciation problems because it has a lot of exercises and techniques that can have a great impact on teachers to solve their problems. Generally, when teachers use a particular technology like pronunciation software, they will have some problems in applying it. Those who are familiar with this software, have sufficient knowledge of the software, and have high confidence can solve their pronunciation problems and those who do not have these skills will have certainly serious problems.

The findings showed that pronunciation software offered teachers so many teaching opportunities. For teachers, this software had a great impact on their pronunciation instruction and created a very good environment for its instruction. This finding is consistent with Hişmanoğlu's (2010) finding. He said that Internet-based materials are the teaching tools that improve pronunciation instruction and its learning process. Pronunciation software made Iranian teachers' pronunciation

instruction easier and was a necessary part of making better their pronunciation. This finding is consistent with the study of Derbyshire (2003) and Kazu and Yavulzalp (2008) who said that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is of great importance for improving instruction and the use of ICT is a necessary condition of enhancing teachers' instruction.

Regarding the findings obtained from the semi-structured interview questions, it was concluded that the Iranian teachers generally held positive beliefs in using pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation and they were very pleased and happy to use this software for improving the quality of their pronunciation instruction.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative method investigated the Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs towards using pronunciation software in teaching English pronunciation. Pronunciation software improved Iranian teachers' pronunciation instruction and made it very interesting and more enjoyable. This software was more effective than traditional teaching methods. The software created enjoyable classes for both teachers and learners, brought about good results for teachers' instruction, helped teachers gain good and acceptable pronunciation, be familiar with American accent, offer interactive ways in teaching pronunciation and these things created positive beliefs in Iranian university teachers to use pronunciation software easily and effectively. This software was regarded as one of the useful methods of teaching pronunciation not an extra financial burden for the universities. Pronunciation software had the great potential for teachers, provided teaching opportunities and appropriate resources, met their teaching needs, and solved their pronunciation problems. The findings of this research suggest better ways of training and equipping teachers with strategies, techniques, and approaches towards using pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. The findings of this study revealed Iranian teachers' eagerness for using pronunciation software in teaching pronunciation. The results of this research can be useful for both EFL teachers and EFL learners. Whereas experienced teachers know how to teach pronunciation through pronunciation software, many teachers should have training periods in how to teach pronunciation successfully so that their learners make the most of the software. Moreover, EFL teachers should recognize the advantages that pronunciation software brings to their teaching program and the advantages that it brings to their learners.

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APPENDIX A. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are meant to cover Iranian EFL university teachers' beliefs toward using pronunciation software in English pronunciation instruction.

Questions:

1. Which one do you prefer?
 - a. Pronunciation software
 - b. Traditional teaching methods. Why?
2. Do you think that using pronunciation software makes your English pronunciation classes more interesting and enjoyable?
 - a. If yes, how
 - b. If no, why?
3. Do you think that the use of pronunciation software increases your confidence in teaching English pronunciation?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. If no, why?
4. Are you interested in using pronunciation software for teaching English pronunciation?
 - a. If so, how?
 - b. If no, why?
5. If you feel that using pronunciation software can be a threat to the traditional teacher-centered methodology, will you resist the use of pronunciation software in the instruction of English pronunciation? Explain.