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Original Article

Iranian Novice and Experienced EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Challenges and Affordance of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in an EFL Context

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Abstract

From an ecolinguistic perspective, affordance and technology might be issues of great concern in recent decades in computer assisted language learning (CALL). The present study was conducted to investigate Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' perspectives on challenges and affordance of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) in an EFL context. To this end, a total of 80 EFL teachers at different universities in Iran were randomly sampled. The data were collected through a validated 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire including two sections, each section of which focused on a particular aspect of MALL, including items evaluating EFL teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of mobile phones and items exploring EFL teachers' perspectives on the challenges to the use of MALL instruction. The results revealed that the novice EFL teachers significantly agreed more than experienced teachers with the idea that MALL based instruction should be used in Iranian EFL context. The results also indicated that the experienced EFL teachers significantly "strongly agreed" more than novice teachers concerning the idea that MALL based education created challenges in Iranian EFL. In general, the findings suggest that both novice and experienced teachers had positive attitudes towards MALL instruction. However, there are some challenges which make teaching and learning less efficient and these obstacles need to be tackled by authorities. Implications have also been introduced in the paper.

Keywords

EFL context, Experienced teachers, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Novice teachers

Introduction

Today, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a field that has been quickly maturing over the past decade, with an expanding number of articles which inspect the various mobile devices and the procedures of using them in the teaching and learning of languages. MALL is the intersection of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and mobile learning (m-learning) which can be defined as "any educational provision where the sole or dominant technologies are handheld or palmtop devices" [1]. It has also been mentioned that MALL simply describes mobile learning as the implementation of mobile or wireless devices in instructional contexts [2]. M-learning would become a fashionable channel for language study in the modern educational contexts [3].

MALL has developed to support students' language learning with the use of mobile technologies such as mobile phones, MP3 and MP4 players, PDAs and palmtop computers. They also mention that MALL is different from CALL due to using personal portable devices that allow continuity of access and interaction in different contexts [4]. Similarly, MALL is defined as an approach to language learning that is supplemented through using mobile devices [5]. Mobile

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device is "... any device that is small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment" [6, p. 3].

, Furthermore, MALL is "a branch of technology-enhanced learning which can be implemented in numerous forms including face-to face, distant or on-line modes", which refers to the blended learning atmosphere that can provide online and offline learning experiences [7]. MALL is gaining ground as it is merged into the foreign language curriculum, and it offers new learning tools to the ''net generation''. Also it provides language learners with an ease of access to learning materials and communicating with their teachers and peers. Learners perceive language learning through using MALL devices relatively motivating due to their portability and ubiquity, furthermore promotion of interactivity and collaboration, easy access, low cost and personalizing learning procedure are among those educational benefits of MALL that make it popular among language learners [8,9].Research that examines MALL effect on language learning proves that MALL consistently improves young EFL learners' reading skill, EFL learning attitude, and it strengthens learners' cooperative learning skills, also MALL helps learners to engage with teachers learning resources and their peers asynchronously [10].

The research conducted so far shows that MALL offers lots of benefits to language learners. Regarding mobile devices, research has suggested that mobile phones offer rich activities such as reading e-books, listening to audio and audio-visual materials, sharing visual materials, making social contact, recording audio and video documents that promote self-directed language learning and greater learner autonomy [11.9]. MALL research projects have declared ease of communication with teachers and peers is a main affordance of the implementation of mobile phones for language learning purposes, also EFL researchers over the last decade have shown more interest in examining the role of mobile phones in improving learning and teaching [12]. Moreover, mobile phone's mail affordance in language learning using multimedia capabilities of mobile phones, and using mobile phones' games in language learning process are declared as educational affordances of mobile phones [13].

In spite of existing affordances and generally accepted educational benefits of mobile phones such as promoting interactive learning, high motivation, and immediate feedback for learners both in and out of the classroom, some studies have specified challenges concerning the use of mobile phones in language learning and teaching. Students' lack of enthusiasm to use mobile phones for educational purposes [14], small screen and keypad of mobile phones [15,16], high cost of the use of mobile phones for academic purposes [17], input limitations, limitations of accessing the Internet, lack of standardization and compatibility, requiring amount of time to psychologically feel ready to engage in m-learning activities [18] are some of the challenges to the use of mobile phones in learning and teaching that are mentioned in previous studies.

On the other hand, by alleviation of potential challenges to the use of mobile phones for language learning, mobile phones are claimed to be facilitator of learning process [14,19,20]. Generally, as the findings of the studies were indicative that mobile phones together with their various functions could be considered as a useful and promising medium for teaching and learning English, and since they are widely integrated into learners' daily life for various purposes including educational goals, affordances and limitations of the mobile phones need to be taken into consideration while using mobile activities [20]. The most obstacles that keep people away from using mobile phones for language learning will be removed due to the increasing familiarity of teachers and learners with mobile learning that also lead to new shapes and forms in mobile learning [12].

Following the significance of examining the perception and attitudes EFL teachers regarding the MALL, we examined what the attitudes and perceptions of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers about the use of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context are.

Literature Review

Technology has been considered as a useful and effective teaching aid that would present many affordances and advantages for both teachers and students. Most teachers showed a general acceptance and satisfaction regarding the suitability of technology utilization for EFL and educational purposes [21,22,23,24,25,26,27].

Concerning EFL teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CALL and educational technology, EFL teachers' perceptions of CALL and variables influential on teachers' attitudes in Turkey were examined [28]. This study revealed EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards the use of CALL in their English classes. Furthermore, regarding the factors which are influential on teachers' integration of CALL, the teachers showed some concerns involving the lack of training, technical support and equipment, anxiety, and lack of knowledge. In another study, prospective EFL teachers' perspectives were focussed on the use of CALL resources in EFL context, prospective teachers believed that they feel comfortable using technology and reflected on their intentions to use technology as soon as they start teaching English. The findings showed prospective teachers beliefs about the effectiveness of the technology tools in the classroom were higher than their confidence in finding the correct methods of using technology in their classes. The prospective teachers also pointed out easiness, inevitability, and accessibility as features of technology [29].

In addition, EFL teachers' perceptions of CALL and ways to increase CALL practice in school settings were studied in another study. Despite teachers' expression of enthusiasm toward the use of the computers, it was revealed that the presence of external factors such as limited time, lack of computer facilities, rigid curricula and lack of administrative support negatively affected the use of CALL [24]. Furthermore, it was found that teachers' limited knowledge about computers and perceptions of CALL as internal factors considerably affected teachers' decisions on the implementation of CALL. In addition, Iranian EFL teacher trainers' perceptions on the importance of computer literacy for EFL teachers were studied and it was found that the teacher trainers considered the role of computer literacy important in EFL teachers' professions. The teacher trainers specified some challenges to EFL teachers' development of computer literacy including lack of obligation to use computers and technology in the classroom. Furthermore, based on the findings, it was indicated that the trainers did not have satisfactory computer knowledge to prepare EFL teachers for teaching in CALL courses [30]. In another study, EFL teachers' perceptions on possible challenges and affordances of the implementation of CALL were examined and it was revealed despite Iranian EFL teachers' general agreement on CALL implementation and its educational benefits, the existence of various obstacles including lack of teacher training and education programs, lack of accommodations and technical support, inflexible curricula, and lack of teachers' knowledge of CALL had made CALL implementation not efficiently possible [12]. Similarly, it was found that Syrian EFL teachers embraced technology implementation, and pointed to the significant role of teachers' experiences with technology, and the cultural conditions while introducing technology into schools in shaping their attitudes toward technology [31, 32].

Although some studies have explored teachers' attitudes towards mobile leaning in different educational contexts, not many studies examined language teachers' attitudes towards MALL in EFL contexts. Despite the demonstrated general acceptance of mobile learning in research, some concerns and challenges over its implementation are specified by teachers [32]. The attitudes of EFL teachers towards using smartphones in the classroom among Palestinian secondary students during COVID-19 pandemic were moderately positive and also it was shown that there were no statistically significant differences between the teachers' attitudes due to teachers' gender, years of experience, qualification and the grades the teachers teach. These results shed some light on the readiness of Palestinian EFL teachers to update their methods of teaching and to cope with the ongoing challenges [33].

In another study on mobile learning, some researchers captured the views of faculty members regarding usage of smartphones for promoting learning at the tertiary level in developing countries. The findings of their study showed while the faculty members considered smartphones to be a useful medium for off-campus learning and communication with peers and students, they were also uncertain about using smartphones for educational purposes. Majority of the faculty members considered smartphones to be a source of distraction, loss of time, techno-stress (that is inability to cope with new technologies in a healthy manner), and emotional detachment. Finally, it was reported that small size of both the screen and keyboard, lack of training and support, lack of technical knowledge and background, excessive work load and lack of incentives for using technology in education were main hindrances in adoption of smartphones in learning contexts [34].

A qualitative exploration of teachers' perspective on smartphones usage in higher education in developing countries

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Furthermore, the lecturers' perceptions toward the use of smartphone as an educational tool in classroom were studied and it was found that the lecturers allow the use of smartphone as an educational tool in classroom for all its functions apart from the use of social media. It was also revealed that the lecturers found smartphones implementation beneficial in the learning process, also no major obstacle was indicated regarding smartphone implementation in the classroom. [35]. Teachers' attitude towards mobile learning was positive among the Iranian EFL teachers; however, its implementation was not in exact alignment with their attitudes. He declared that the implementation of MALL instruction in Iran was challenging due to some perceived obstacles including a serious lack of online and the Internet-based facilities, lack of technology and computer literacy, insufficient time to plan teaching, lack of technical and administrative support, and lack of interaction in online instruction [36]. Another study found that Korean teachers' mobile learning attitude was low at large and female teachers were more positive than male teachers in their attitudes towards mobile learning [37].

Moreover,) also investigated teachers' perceptions of how mobile technology impacted learning and its relation to applications (Apps) use in the classroom. They concluded that easier access to information and increased engagement in learning were two main impacts of mobile technology in the classroom. On the other hand, collaborative learning was indicated as the least appreciated learning impact. Furthermore, it was shown that the choice of Apps in mobile learning was affected by the teachers' perception of how mobile technology impacts in learning. [38]. Also, pre-service teachers' acceptance and use of mobile learning were explored in Malaysia. It was revealed that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, attitude toward technology and self efficiently are all significant determinants of behavioral intentions to use mobile devices for learning [39]. Following the same research line, some examined the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of mobile learning via mobile phone at schools in Malaysia. They found that the adoption of mobile learning via mobile phone at schools was not perceived well among respondents. "In other words, not only the respondents did not perceive the benefits of mobile learning for their professional development, they also did not consider mobile learning to be useful in assisting teaching and learning process at schools" (p. 43) [40]. Moreover, there was no significant relationship between respondents' perceptions on the future of mobile learning for teachers and how they used mobile phones. Finally, it was claimed that that teachers' readiness

for mobile learning would probably increase if their awareness and motivation to use technology was increasing. Another study directed to teachers' acceptance of mobile learning was conducted by Serin who investigated teachers' acceptance of mobile learning. It was found out that prospective teachers' mobile learning perception was, in general, low and they believed that mobile learning will reduce the quality of communication in the classroom [41].

EFL teachers' positive attitudes toward using technology has an important role in inspiring students toward using technology in learning contexts [12]. Therefore, language teachers' perspectives on challenges and affordances of a certain technology can have significant effects on students' use of that technology in the future, teachers' attitudes toward mobile phones take an important role in initiating its usage in schools and learning contexts. Although there are some studies on the learners' and teachers' perceptions of MALL implementation, there is still a paucity of research investigating the perceptions of less experienced versus those of more experienced teachers on implementation of mobile phones. Therefore, this study was conducted to contribute to this area of research that has been limitedly investigated. Specifically, this study examined Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' perspectives on challenges and affordance of MALL in an EFL context. To achieve this aim, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the attitudes of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers about the use of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context?

2. What are the perceptions of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers on the possible challenges concerning the use of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 80 EFL teachers (40 novice EFL teachers and 40 experienced EFL teachers) including both male and female teachers who were sampled non-randomly using availability technique. The criterion to select the participants was based on their teaching experience (less or more than 5 years of experience in language teaching). All the participants were native speakers of Persian, from 7 different language teaching institutions in Iran. The participants' age ranged from 22 to 45.

3.2. Instrument

The Questionnaire on EFL teachers' MALL Perspectives developed by Dashtestani [12] (2013) was used in this study. It includes four sections based on a Likert-scale format, and in this investigation the first and the second sections of this questionnaire were used. The first section (Cronbach Alpha = 0.85) includes 10 items examining EFL teachers' attitudes toward the use of mobile phones for language learning/teaching and was based on a four-point Likert scale format from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The second section (Cronbach Alpha = 0.82) also involves10 items exploring EFL teachers' perspectives on the challenges to the use of mobile phones for language learning/teaching based on a four-point Likert scale format from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach Alpha (r=0.83).

3.3. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to 80 Iranian EFL teachers from 7 different language teaching institutions in Iran. After the questionnaire administration phase of the study, based on their reports in the questionnaire the participants were assigned into two groups of experienced and novice teachers. In this study the participants who had less than 5 years of EFL teaching experience were considered as novice teachers, and those who had more than 5 years of EFL teaching experience were grouped as experienced EFL teachers. After the participants were assigned into two groups, their questionnaires' results were analyzed.

3.4. Data Analysis

After data collection, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data to examine the performance of both groups of the participants. Then the results from the two groups of participants was compared to see if there was any significant difference between novice EFL teachers' attitude and experienced teachers' attitudes on challenges and affordance of MALL in teaching and learning contexts in Iran.

4. Results

4.1. Introduction

This study was an attempt to explore Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' perspectives on challenges and affordance of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) in an EFL context. Since the two research questions raised in this study were descriptive, the data were analyzed through frequency counts, percentages and standardized residual (Std. Residual). Before discussing the results, the demographic information is reported.

Table 1 displays the distribution of the participants based on their jobs. The results showed that majority of the participants were teachers (55 %), 43.8 percent were English teachers; and only a single person was a lecturer. Figure 1 displays the percentages discussed above.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by job

		Frequency	Percent
	English teacher	35	43.8
	Lecturer	1	1.2
	Teacher	44	55.0
	Total	80	100.0

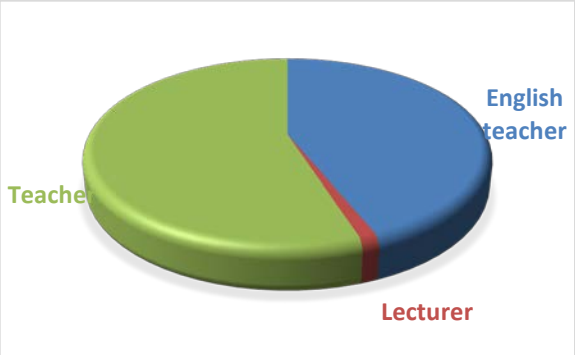

Figure 1. . Distribution of participants by job

Table 2 displays the distribution of the EFL teachers by their gender. Majority of the EFL teachers, 55 percent, were female.

Table 2. Distribution of participants by gender

		Frequency	**Percent**
	Female	44	55.0
	Male	36	45.0
	Total	80	100.0

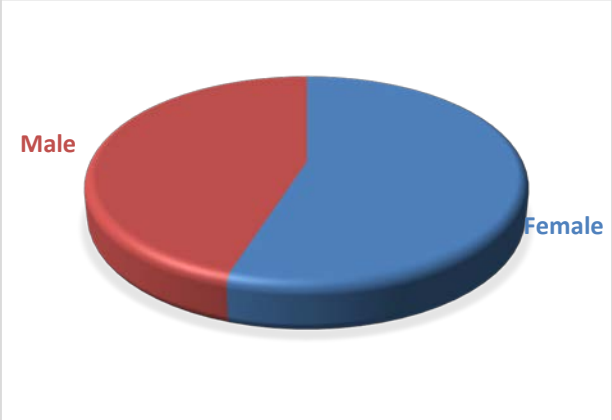

Figure 2.Distribution of participants by gender

Table 3 displays the percentage of EFL teachers who had passed teacher training courses. Majority of the EFL teachers, 78.8 percent, had passed teacher training courses.

Table 3. Distribution of participants by teacher training courses

		Frequency	Percent
	No	17	21.2
	Yes	63	78.8
	Total	80	100.0

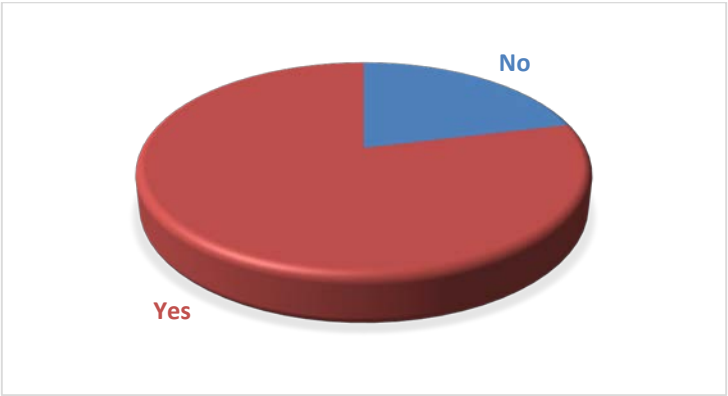

Figure 3. Distribution of participants by teacher training courses

Table 4 displays the distribution of EFL teachers by their proficiency levels. Majority of the EFL teachers; 87.5 percent, believed that they were at an advanced level. Another 11.3 percent evaluated their proficiency as upper-intermediate; and only one teacher; 1.2 percent, considered his proficiency level as intermediate.

Table 4. Distribution of participants by proficiency levels

Frequency	Percent	
BA	34	43.3
MA	42	53.1
MS	1	1.2
PhD	2	2.4
Total	79	100.0

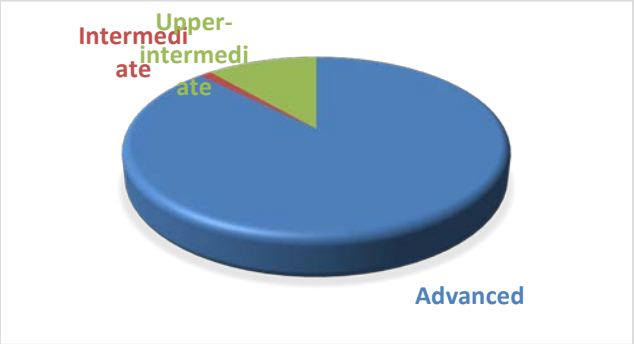

Figure 4. Distribution of participants by proficiency levels

Table 5 displays the distribution of EFL teachers by their degrees. Majority of the EFL teachers, 53.1 percent, had MA degree. Another 43.3 percent held BA, 2.4 percent had PhD; and only one teacher, 1.2 percent, had MS.

Table 5. Distribution of participants by degree

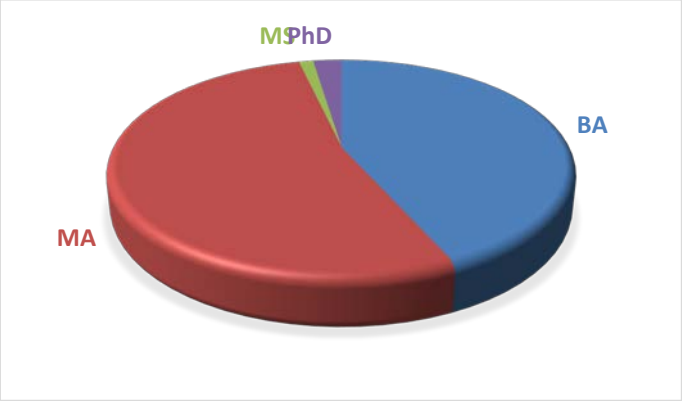

Figure 5. Distribution of participants by degree

Table 6 displays the distribution of EFL teachers by their majors. Majority of the EFL teachers, 50 percent, studied teaching. Another 30.3 percent studied literature, 3.9 percent were students of literature; and only three teachers; 3.9 percent, studied TEFL.

Table 6. Distribution of participants by major of study

	Frequency	Percent
Literature	23	30.3
Teaching	38	50
TEFL	3	3.9
Translation	12	10.8
Total	76	100.0

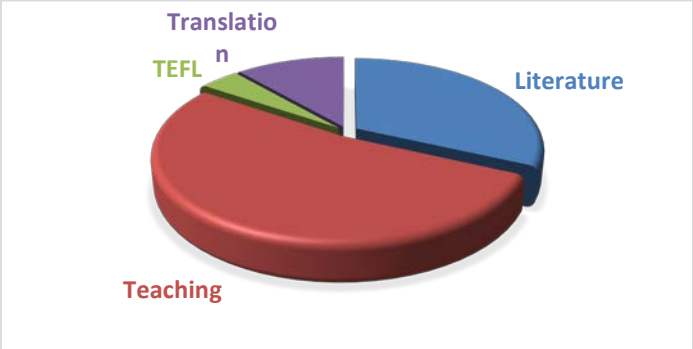

Figure 6. Distribution of participants by major of study

Table 7 displays the distribution of EFL teachers by their teaching levels. Majority of the EFL teachers; 30 percent, taught at elementary and intermediate levels. Another 26.3 percent taught at an advanced level. 25 percent taught at intermediate and upper intermediate levels. 13.8 percent taught at upper intermediate and advanced levels. 3.8 percent taught at an upper intermediate, and only 1.3 percent taught at an elementary level.

Table 7. Distribution of participants by teaching level

	Frequency	Percent
Advanced	21	26.3
Elementary	1	1.3
Elementary; Intermediate	24	30.0
Intermediate; Upper-intermediate	20	25.0
Upper-intermediate	3	3.8
Upper-intermediate; Advanced	11	13.8
Total	80	100.0

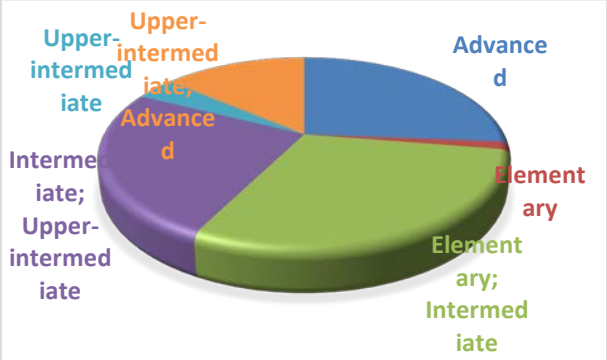

Figure 7. Distribution of participants by teaching levels

And finally, Table 8 displays the descriptive statistics for the EFL teachers age and their years of teaching experienced. The EFL teachers' age ranged from 23 to 42 years; and their teaching experience range was 16 years; i.e. from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 20. The average age and years of experience were 32.05, and 10.11 respectively. The demographic information also included the teachers' institutes where they worked; and their provinces. They worked at 34 different institutes; and they were from 16 provinces.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of teachers' age and years of teaching experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	80	19	23	42	32.05
Years	80	16	4	20	10.11

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Indices

Table 9 displays the Cronbach's alpha reliability indices for uses and challenges of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context. The results showed that the use, and challenges enjoyed reliability indices of .93 and .92 respectively. These reliability indices can be considered as "appropriate"; [42] and it is believed that a Cronbach's alpha value of .70 is the adequate reliability index for an instrument [43]. "There is no set interpretation as to what is an acceptable alpha value [44, p. 244]. A rule of thumb that applies to most situations is .9 = excellent, .8 = good, .7 = acceptable, .6 = questionable, .5 = poor and .5 = unacceptable". Based on these criteria, it can be concluded that theses reliability indices can be considered excellent (=>.90).

Table 9. Cronbach's Alpha reliability indices

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Use	.938	10
Challenges	.928	10

4.3. Exploring First Research Question

What are the attitudes of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers about the use of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context?

Table 10 displays the frequencies, percentages and standardized residuals (Std. Residual) for the novice and experienced EFL teachers' attitude towards the uses of mobile phones in Iranian EFL context. The former two indices are descriptive; however, Std. Residuals are standardized

indices based on which cell frequencies can be compared for any significant differences. If any Std. Residual is higher than 1.96, it can be concluded that the observed frequency is significantly beyond what was expected while any Std. Residual higher than -1.96 indicates that the observed frequency is significantly less what was expected.

The results showed that majority of the novice teachers (75.7 %) strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context; whereas only 5.6 percent of experienced teachers held such view. The Std. Residual of 11.4 (> 1.96) indicated that novice EFL teachers significantly more than experienced teachers strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context.

Table 10. Frequencies, percentages and std. residual; use of mobile phones in Iranian EFL context by teachers' experience

	Choices				**Total**	
	SD	**D**	**A**	**SA**		
Novice	Count	0	0	89	277	366
	% within Years	0.0%	0.0%	24.3%	75.7%	100.0%
	Standardized Residual	-8.0	-10.1	3.9	11.4	
Experienced	Count	135	215	36	23	409
	% within Years	33.0%	52.6%	8.8%	5.6%	100.0%
	Standardized Residual	7.6	9.5	-3.7	-10.8	
Count		135	215	125	300	775
% within Years		17.4%	27.7%	16.1%	38.7%	100.0%

Moreover, 24.3 percent of novice EFL teachers agreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context while the same percentage for the experienced teachers was 8.8. The Std. Residual of 3.9 indicated that the novice teacher significantly more than experienced teachers believed that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context. The results also showed that none of the novice teachers disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context; while the same percentages for the experienced teachers were 33 and 52.6 percent. Figure 8 displays the percentages discussed above.

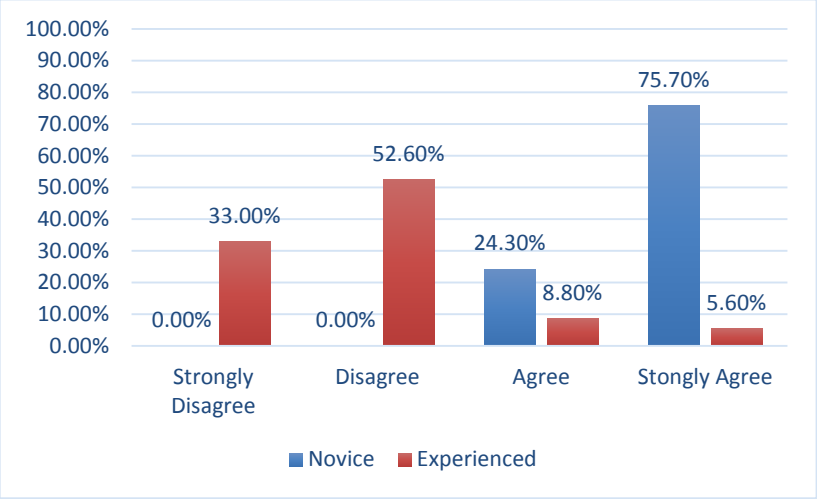

Figure 8. Attitude towards using mobile phones in Iranian EFL context by teachers' experience

4.4. Exploring Second Research Question

What are the perceptions of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers on the possible challenges to the use of phones in the Iranian EFL context?

Table 11 displays the frequencies, percentages and standardized residuals (Std. Residual) for the novice and experienced EFL teachers' attitude towards the challenges of mobile phones in Iranian EFL context. The results showed that majority of the experienced teachers (75.6 %) strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones create challenges in Iranian EFL; whereas 14.6 percent of novice teachers held such view. The Std. Residual of 7 (> 1.96) indicated that experienced EFL teachers significantly more than novice teachers strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL.

Table 11. Frequencies, percentages and std. residual; challenges of mobile phones in Iranian EFL context by teachers' experience

			Choices				Total
			SD	D	A	SA	
	Novice	Count	26	124	183	57	390
		% within Years	6.7 %	31.8 %	46.9 %	14.6 %	100.0 %
		Standardized Residual	2.6	5.6	2.1	-7.2	
	Experienced	Count	6	30	138	236	410
		% within Years	1.5 %	7.3%	33.7 %	57.6 %	100.0 %
		Standardized Residual	-2.6	-5.5	-2.1	7.0	
Total		Count	32	154	321	293	800
		% within Years	4.0 %	19.3 %	40.1 %	36.6 %	100.0 %

One other hand, 46.9 percent of novice EFL teachers agreed with the idea that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL context, while the same percentage for the experienced teachers was 33.7. The Std. Residual of 2.1 indicated that the novice teacher significantly more than experienced teachers believed that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL context. The results also showed that 31.8percent of the novice teachers; more than experienced teachers' 7.3

percent, disagreed with the idea that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL context. The Std. Residual of 5.6 indicated that the novice teachers had selected the "disagree" option significantly more than the experienced teachers. And finally; 6.7 percent of the novice teachers; more than experienced teachers' 1.5 percent, strongly disagreed with the idea that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL context. The Std. Residual of 2.6 indicated that the novice teachers had selected the "strongly disagree" option significantly more than the experienced teachers.

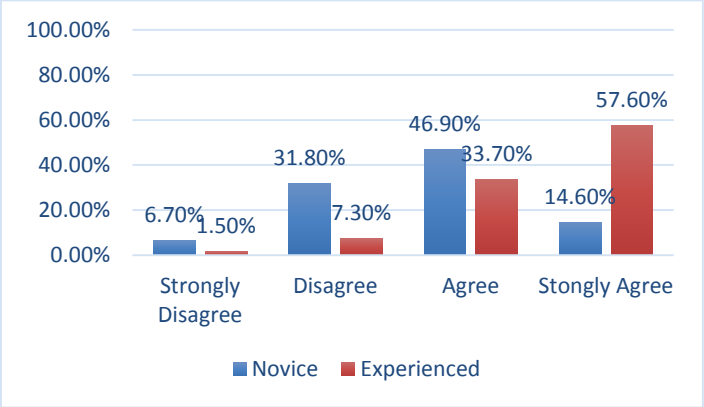

Figure 9. Attitude towards challenges of using mobile phones in Iranian EFL context by teachers' experience

4.5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers' perspectives on challenges and affordance of mobile assisted language learning in an EFL context. As to the first research question which dealt with the attitudes of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers about the use of mobile phones in the Iranian EFL context, the results of data analysis indicated that majority of the novice teachers strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context whereas only small percent of experienced teachers held such attitude. The findings also exhibited that none of the novice teachers disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the idea that mobile phones should be used in Iranian EFL context while most of the experienced teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed with this view.

The results of this study are consistent with previous studies [21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27] which showed general acceptance, positive attitude, and satisfaction in regard with the affordance of implementation of technology and mobile phones for EFL and educational aims. These findings support the previous claims for the efficacy of MALL and the ease of interaction with teachers and students by implementation of mobile phones in EFL/ESL contexts [12]. The findings also lend support to the previous studies which have represented the benefits of MALL in the process of language learning. For example, It was found that MALL is useful for both teachers and students to interact with each other even in form of mail. The findings of this study are partially in line with the arguments that using mobile phones' games in language learning process and using multimedia abilities of mobile phones are declared as educational affordances of MALL [15].

The present study corroborates with the findings mentioned by İnce [28] that showed the positive attitudes and perceptions of English teachers towards the use of technology and CALL for language learning. It should also be mentioned that the lack of training, technical support and equipment and lack of knowledge in using MALL by experienced teachers might be the reason for showing less positive attitudes by experienced teachers.

Moreover, the results of a study in case of novice English teachers may be partially in line

with a study [29] which demonstrated that some characteristics of mobile phones such as portability, interactivity, scaffolding, cost-affectivity, time-efficiency, easiness, and accessibility are helpful in the process of language learning.

The findings contradict a study that indicated a low perception by language teacher in the implementation of mobile phones. English teachers believed that MALL reduces the quality of interaction in the classroom [41]. Moreover, the findings of the present study are not consistent with the that investigated the instructors' attitudes toward the implementation of mobile phones for language learning. The outcomes indicated that teachers had not positive attitudes towards the implementation of MALL and they did not consider MALL to be useful in the terms of language teaching and learning [22].

The results of the present study contradict a study that analyzed the lecturers' perceptions toward MALL. They found the use of mobile phones was helpful and instrumental in the process of language learning, and also no challenge was observed in regard with smartphone implementation [35]. Furthermore, the findings also contradict the results obtained in the study that investigated the attitudes of EFL teachers towards using MALL in the classroom and reported moderately positive attitudes by the teachers. They found that there were no remarkable significant differences between the teachers' attitudes in terms of teachers' gender, years of experience, and degree [33].

As to the second research question which is concerned with the perceptions of Iranian novice and experienced EFL teachers on the possible challenges to the use of phones in the Iranian EFL context, the results revealed that majority of the experienced teachers strongly agreed with the idea that mobile phones make challenges in Iranian EFL context whereas a small percentage of novice teachers held such perspective. The results also indicated majority of novice teachers strongly disagreed with the idea that mobile phones created challenges in Iranian EFL context.

In case of the challenges of mobile phones in the EFL context by both the novice and the experienced teachers in the EFL context, the results are partially congruent with the outcomes of some related studies [14, 17, 15,16,18]. These studies demonstrated that pupils' lack of motivation to use mobile phones for educational purposes and learners' lack of skill to use mobile phones for academic purposes, high costs of mobile phones, the small screen size of mobile phones, input limitations including slow internet speed, internet connectivity problems, high cost of connectivity to the internet are some of the challenges that English teachers may face while using mobile phones in EFL context.

The results of the present study are partially in line with some studies in regard with challenges the experienced teachers face by using technology. The presence of external factors including lack of computer facilities, rigid curricula, limited time, and lack of administrative support negatively impact the implementation of CALL in teaching and learning context. One explanation for these different findings between novice and experienced teachers is that teachers' limited knowledge about mobile phones and perceptions of MALL as internal factors may impact their views on the use of MALL. The results of this study are also partially in line with a study which reported the existence of different challenges such as lack of technical support, lack of teacher training and education programs, and lack of instructors' knowledge of CALL have made its implementation not properly viable [12,24].

The findings of the present study in regard with experienced teachers partially contradict a study which reported easier access to information, high involvement in learning, and collaborative learning as the main effects of mobile technology in the classroom [38]. However, the findings of the current study regarding experienced teachers are consistent with a study which found out that the use of MALL instruction is challenging because of some obstacles such as the lack of Internet-based facilities, lack of technology and computer literacy, lack of technical and administrative support, and lack of cooperation in online instruction [36]. Concerning the experienced teachers, the findings of this study are also congruent with the study which found some challenges of using

mobile phones in the domain of language learning including loss of time, techno-stress, lack of training, emotional detachment, small size of both the screen and keyboard, lack of technical knowledge and background, and lack of incentives for the implementation of MALL instruction in education [34].

Finally, the use MALL instruction has not been investigated from different perspectives. There is need for further research in order to ascertain what factors need to be taken into account while using mobile phone in both learning and teaching. Further research which examines not only teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of MALL, but also learners' perspectives on MALL instruction is therefore needed. Further research investigating novice and experienced EFL teachers' perceptions toward the use of mobile learning with more sample size is also required.

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