EFL Instructors' Perspectives on 21st-Century Digital Literacy Skills in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract. The importance of digital skills has increased dramatically after the coronavirus pandemic. Digital literacy (DL) is no longer an additional part of learning and teaching. It has become an essential part of the skills that teachers should have. This paper investigates English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perspectives on the importance of 21st-century Digital literacy Skills (DLSs). It also studies the type of skills EFL teachers should have, and the impact of gender, age, and years of experience on EFL teachers' perspectives on DLSs. The study sample consisted of 55 EFL teachers from different Saudi universities. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. Results revealed that most participants held positive attitudes toward DLSs and their importance in the EFL profession (M=4.36). The results also showed that although most EFL teachers felt the necessity of having computer and information literacy skills(M=4.36), some hesitated to state that they should be competent, critical, and literate in all media forms (M=4.15). Moreover, the study's results revealed that the teacher's years of experience significantly impact their views on the importance of DLSs (t=2.381,p=0.021)and the digital skills they should have (t = 2.40, p = 0.020). It is recommended that EFL teachers be enlightened about the importance of all digital skills, including information and media literacy, and be encouraged to use all types of digital information and media with their students and be trained, thus improving their students' digital skills.

Keywords: Computer literacy, digital Literacy, EFL teachers' perspectives, information literacy, media literacy.

1. Introduction

1.1. Digital Literacy and EFL Teaching

The landscape of digital technologies has rapidly expanded, permeating homes, educational settings, and workplaces. This proliferation has sparked a corresponding evolution in Digital Literacy (DL). The term first emerged in the late twentieth century (Gilster, 1997; Son et al., 2011; Ferrari, 2012; Dudeney et al., 2014). Gilster (1997) defined DL as the ability to understand and use information supplied by computers in various formats and from various sources. Subsequent interpretations have broadened this definition to encompass the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that enable users of digital technologies to effectively utilize them and understand the social practices that underpin such applications (Son et al., 2011; Ferrari, 2012; Dudeney et al., 2014). This comprehensive set of skills and attitudes equips individuals to thrive in a digital environment (Buckingham, 200^; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). DL is also called digital competence or computer literacy (Tafazoli et al., 2017).

Digital competence refers to the skills and techniques that enable an individual to address challenges in the digital environment with adequate digital support (Hepp et al., 2015). This competency is fundamental in lifelong learning and second/foreign language instruction, as stated by the European Parliament and Council (2006) and the Instituto Cervantes (2012). Recently, various terms have been used to refer to digital competencies. Some of them are technology skills, information technology skills, information computer technology skills, information literacy skills, 21st-century skills, digital skills, and digital literacy skills. Digital Literacy Skills (DLSs) have been employed to define the skills and competence of using digital technologies. In this paper, the researcher utilizes the term "digital literacy" to cover three basic types of 21st-century DL: computer literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. All these literacies, from computer to media literacy skills, are essential for English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning.

Therefore, teachers' digital competence encompasses the information communication skills and knowledge necessary for executing their professional work digitally (Claro et al., 2018). Digital formats have recently changed how people think about literacy (Al Seghayer,2020), and thus, second language (L2) DLSs are essential to maximize EFL teaching. The rapid development of digital technologies everywhere necessitates EFL teachers to be engaged in professional development courses to improve their DLSs and be well prepared to teach their students effectively in digital educational settings (Hall et al.,2014; Ferrari, 2012). McGuinness and Fulton (2019) indicate that the crucial necessity for higher education digital literacy improvement is apparent from the government's highest strategic priorities.

In addition, digital literacy involves technology and critical thinking skills for accessing various media sources and then absorbing, integrating, and delivering knowledge in a clear and accessible manner (Soifah et al., 2021). Improving these essential skills for instructors and students has become a demanding issue in worldwide education. The Saudi Government is no exception. It has included this need in its 20-30 vision document (KSA.gov., 2020). In so doing, instructors' voices must be heard since their attitudes towards such new professional development will seriously affect its outcomes. Su (2023) indicates that EFL teaching is about competence in English and how the EFL teachers feel. She adds that the teacher is one of the most significant active decision-makers.

Therefore, hearing EFL instructors' voices is essential for successfully implementing professional training suitable for the current era. It will also affect their students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Those students will, in the future, lead the educational processes. This paper investigates EFL teachers' perspectives on the importance of 21st-century DLSs, what skills they should have, and the impact of gender, age, and years of experience on EFL teachers' views on DLSs. The researcher hopes that the study findings will help raise EFL instructors' awareness about the required skills in digital literacy and shape suitable professional training for them as higher education faculties.

1.2 Research Questions

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers in Saudi universities on the importance of DLSs in their teaching?
2. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers in Saudi universities on the DLSs they should have?
3. What is the impact of gender, age, and years of experience on EFL teachers' perspectives on DLSs?

2. Literature Review

Utilizing digital tools has become an integral part of EFL teaching and learning. Looking at the people involved in the learning and teaching process, we can say that teachers utilize digital tools to help their students learn more effectively. During the journey of this implementation, there must be some stories of success and other stories of difficulties and challenges. That success or those difficulties are due absolutely to the digital tools themselves, the students and their skills of using those tools for their learning, or to the teachers and their readiness or hesitance to use those tools, in other words, to their digital skills and their perspectives about the use of the tools in their teaching. EFL researchers have contributed much to this crucial issue in EFL teaching and learning (Claro et al., 2018; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2016; McGuinness & Fulton, 2019; Soifah et al. (2021; and Zou & Wang,2024).

Research conducted about DL in EFL teaching and learning shows a back-and-forth composite of the advantages and drawbacks of implementing DL tools in EFL teaching and learning. For example, Durriyah and Zuhdi's (2018) and Cote and Milliner's (2018) studies emphasize how digital platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp can promote student engagement and motivation, allowing EFL instructors to enhance their instructional strategies. These studies highlight the need to enhance teachers' digital skills. Similarly, Eryansyah et al.'s (2020) findings indicate that although preservice teachers in Indonesia demonstrated adequate levels of digital literacy, they encountered significant obstacles like inadequate training and limited access to technology. Recurring challenges hinder the efficient deployment of digital technologies, although they can potentially improve teachers' learning outcomes.

Moreover, DLS's importance has dramatically increased after the shift to online learning caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. Studies such as those by Al Seghayer (2020) and Al Baqami and Al Zahrani (2022) show that although teachers generally favor online learning, they sometimes feel unprepared for this sudden change and struggle with both technological skills and the psychological demands of DLS integration to new teaching environments. Soifah et al. (2021) and Hakim (2021) highlighted the conflict between awareness and preparedness. Their studies called for tailored frameworks and support systems to increase digital literacy and handle inherent challenges associated with teachers' understanding and attitudes toward it.

Additionally, the impact of the teachers' demographics on their DLS perspectives has been investigated. Ertürk (2022) identified relationships between teachers' digital literacy levels and variables, including gender and academic background, while Ezza and Bakry (2014) and Zhang (2023) highlighted contextual elements, teachers teaching experience, that have little impact on DLS, indicating that attitudes and access to technology are more vital than them. These findings emphasize the need for professional development programs suitable for various teacher demographics.

Recent qualitative findings from Jusmawati et al. (2023) and Mudra (2020) illuminate the practical impacts of DLS on teaching strategies and student learning. Teachers should be able to deal with the challenges of turning electronic materials into readily available educational resources for their students, and they should interact with digital tools. Al Baqami and Al Zahrani (2022) also point out that the unanticipated shift and new restrictions put them under tremendous stress, causing them to worry and struggle to learn new digital skills to support the transformation quickly. They suggest that universities in Saudi Arabia fund similar studies to help policymakers and teachers evaluate the effectiveness of present teaching approaches and digital tools. Moreover, Zou and Wang (2024) argue that in response to digital education, there is a double need for both psychological adaptation and pedagogical transformation, a process toward advancement that follows a more general trend in the literature.

Although the DL's previous research indicates that it has become essential in EFL educational settings, it emphasizes that most teachers should be aware of its benefits. Such awareness is vital to cultivating an educational environment with practical digital tools, skills, and strategies essential for 21st-century teaching and learning. To the researcher's knowledge and depending on the above-mentioned related literature, a few studies have examined Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of the importance of 21st-century digital literacy skills and the digital skills they think they should have, as well as the impact of gender, age, and years of experience on their perceptions. This article aims to contribute to the existing literature. It examines the perspectives of EFL instructors on the importance of 21st-century DLSs, the skills they should possess, and the impact of gender, age, and years of experience on their views on DLSs.

3. Methodology

This paper utilizes a mixed-method approach. It supports quantitative data with qualitative one for a better conception of the EFL teacher perspectives of DLSs.

3.1 Participants

The study's sample is a diverse group comprising 55 EFL teachers from various nationalities who teach at different Saudi universities. They span a wide age range, from 20 to 50 years. The majority, 74.5 percent, are female, while 25.5% are male. 41.8% fall in the 30-39 age group, and 40% have more than 15 years of EFL teaching experience. They use computers (37, 67%), desktops (28, 51%), smartphones (26, 47%), tablets (17, 31%), smart devices (8, 15%), and others (6, 11%). They use YouTube (42, 76%), WhatsApp (19, 35%), Twitter (8, 15%), Blogs (7, 13%), Facebook (5, 9%), and other tools (7, 13%) in their EFL teaching.

Table 1 below provides details of the demographic data for the participants (N=55).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics		N	%
Gender	Male	14	25.5
	Female	41	74.5
Age	20-29	6	10.9
	30-39	23	41.8
	40-49	15	27.3
	50 and older	11	20.0
Years of EFL teaching experience	Under five years	8	14.5
	5-10	8	14.5
	10-15	17	30.9
	More than 15 years	22	40.0

3.2 Instruments

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of an introduction and three parts. The introduction was a consent form telling the participants about the questionnaire's topic and purpose. It also stated that there were no correct or wrong answers, and all their responses would be highly confidential and anonymous. This introduction also elicited their willingness to fill in the questionnaire by agreeing or not agreeing to participate. If they agree, they could continue. If they do not, they could exit without filling it in. Then, the first part of the questionnaire elicited the participants' demographic information, including the electronic devices and the digital social media applications they use in EFL teaching. The second part consisted of 16 items of a 5-point Likert scale for eliciting the EFL teachers' perceptions of their 21st-century DLSs. This part was divided into two sub-sections. The first was about collecting teachers' perceptions of the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers (N=10 items). The second part gathered teachers' perceptions of the digital skills they should have (6 items). The last part was devoted to collecting the participants' responses to two open-ended questions about the importance of digital literacy skills for EFL teachers after the pandemic and what types of digital skills they should have. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences program (SPSS v.26) analyzed the qualitative data by conducting questionnaire reliability tests and the numerical responses using descriptive statistics and Multiple Linear Regression analysis. This study performed thematic analysis to analyze the participants' responses to the open-ended questions.

3.3 Procedures

After designing the questionnaire, four colleagues specializing in Applied Linguistics (three assistant professors and one associate professor) reviewed its items for validity. Google Forms application was used to distribute the questionnaire electronically. The researcher used descriptive analysis methodology to gather data and understand the teachers' perspectives. A total sample of 55 teachers filled out questionnaires. All incomplete responses were deleted. The researcher then analyzed the available data using the SPSS v.26 program. The researcher first used Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability and dimensions of the questionnaire. The calculated Cronbach's alpha was (0.855) for the whole questionnaire, ranging from (0.762) to (0.785). These numbers indicate excellent questionnaire reliability because, according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), it is considered reliable if Cronbach's alpha ranges from r = 0 to 1. Table 2 illustrates the reliability test results.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Dimensions	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers	10	0.785
Digital skills EFL teachers should have	6	0.762
Overall	16	0.855

Then, the researcher used descriptive statistics to identify the basic features of the data in the study, such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The 5- 5-point Likert scale was used based on the work of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

The researcher employed the Relative Importance Index (RII) method to determine the relative importance of the study dimensions. Relative index analysis was chosen to rank the criteria based on their relative importance at five levels. These five important levels are illustrated in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Likert scales and importance levels

Scale	Agreement	Interval Length		Relative important index		Level
		From	To	From	To	
5	Strongly agree	4.20	5	0.8	1	High
4	Agree	3.40	4.20	0.6	0.8	High-medium
3	Neutral	2.60	3.40	0.4	0.6	Medium
2	Disagree	1.80	2.60	0.2	0.4	Medium-low
1	Strongly disagree	1	1.80	0	0.2	Low

Then, the researcher carried out a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the impact demographics have on the teachers' perceptions of the importance of 21st-century DLSs and their perceptions of the digital skills they should have. The responses gathered from the two open-ended questions about the importance of DLSs after the pandemic and the types of digital skills they should have were then analyzed using a thematic analysis.

4. Results
4.1. Importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers

4.1.1 Quantitative results

The first research question is about the perspectives of EFL teachers on the importance of computer literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. The participants agreed on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers, as evidenced by the descriptive statistics and the relative importance index (RII) analyses of the ten questionnaire items related to this research question. The overall mean score for the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers is substantial (4.36) out of 5, with a standard deviation of (.529) and a relative importance index (RII) of 87.2%. All the items had a high level of agreement with a mean score (> 3.40) and a relative importance index ranging from 75.2% to 98.2%. The following table and figure illustrate this finding:

Table 4. EFL teachers' perspectives on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers (N=55)

| No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	RII (%)	Level
1	Computer skills are essential for EFL teachers.	4.91	.290	98.2	High (H)
2	EFL teachers should possess digital skills.	4.65	.615	93.0	High (H)
3	I think that my teaching can be enhanced by improving my computer skills.	4.40	.852	88.0	High (H)
4	Computer skills should be one of job requirements for EFL teachers.	4.33	.883	86.6	High (H)
5	Digital Literacy is important for my job.	4.49	.814	89.8	High (H)
6	Being digitally literate is one of my teaching prerequisites.	4.00	1.036	80.0	High (H)
7	It is essential for me to be digitally literate.	3.76	1.465	75.2	High-Medium (H–M)
8	Being digitally literate is important for my EFL teaching.	4.55	.662	91.0	High (H)
9	Being digitally literate is a source of pride for me as a teacher.	4.44	.918	88.8	High (H)
10	I feel that being digitally literate should be one of the requirements for recruiting EFL teachers.	4.05	1.044	81.0	High (H)
Overall	Importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers	4.36	.529	87.2	High (H)
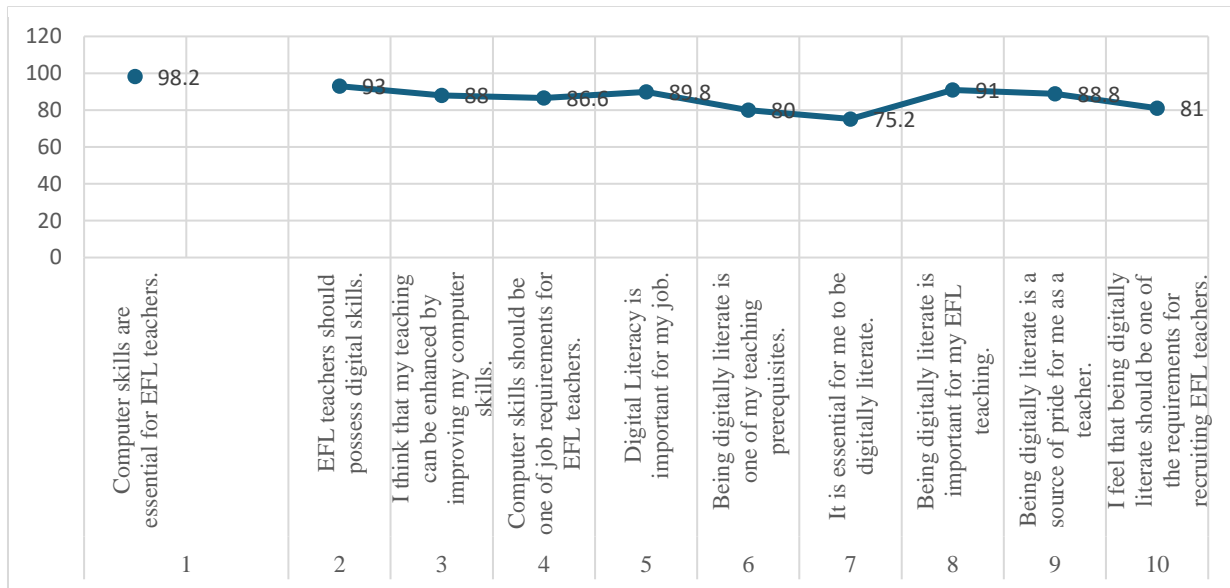
Figure 1. Importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers

Table 4 and Figure 1 above show that the majority of EFL teachers participating in this study agree that computer skills are essential for EFL teachers (98.2%), that EFL teachers should have digital skills (93.0%), and that being digitally literate is important for their EFL teaching (91.0%). They also believe that digital literacy is important for their job (89.8%), that being digitally literate is a source of pride for them as teachers (88.8%), and that improving their computer skills can enhance their teaching (88.0%). Moreover, they believe computer skills should be one of the job requirements for EFL teachers (86.6%). Furthermore, they feel that being digitally literate should be one of the requirements for recruiting EFL teachers (81.0%) and one of their teaching prerequisites (80.0%). However, it is noted that some of them are hesitant to state that it is essential for them to be digitally literate (75.2%).

4.1.2 Qualitative results

4.1.2.1 DLSs Importance

In their responses to the open-ended question about the significance of DLSs for EFL teachers in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the participants asserted that these skills are essential not only for teachers but also for everyone aspiring to be part of the world! They reported that DL is essential for EFL teachers in the post-pandemic period. Even though its importance is undoubtedly undeniable in pre-pandemic times, it has become a survival skill in teaching and learning. They also state that after the Corona pandemic, the importance of DLSs for EFL teachers has become increasingly crucial. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the educational process worldwide through online teaching and learning, which makes all teachers and students capable of using digital technology effectively. The participants noted that the disruption of traditional classroom settings and the rise of remote teaching have made DLSs crucial for effective teaching in this new era.

4.1.2.2 DLSs Benefits

According to the participants, DLSs enable EFL teachers to use various online platforms and tools for remote teaching, such as video conferencing tools like Zoom or Google Meet, learning management systems like Moodle or Canvas, and multimedia resources like YouTube or Khan Academy. Teachers can effectively utilize these tools

to engage students and deliver engaging lessons. Teachers must constantly enhance and refine their digital literacy skills to effectively navigate the unprecedented challenges it presents. Digital literacy is changing its face very rapidly, making it bound to be used for classroom teaching, remote practice, and providing feedback and assessments. As a result, instructors must develop their digital literacy skills to carry out successful teaching practices and professional growth. They report that incorporating DLSs into the curriculum is crucial for effective teaching.

4.2 EFL teacher digital skills

4.2.1 Quantitative results

The second research question is about the teachers' perspectives on digital skills that EFL teachers should have. As evidenced by the descriptive statistics and the relative importance index (RII) analyses of the six questionnaire items related to this research question, the participants agree they should have digital skills. The overall mean score for the digital skills EFL teachers should have is significant (4.48) out of five, with a standard deviation of (.510) and a relative importance index (RII) of (89.6%). All the items have a high level of agreement with a mean score (> 3.40) and a relative importance index ranging from 82.9% to 93.1%. The following table and figure illustrate this finding:
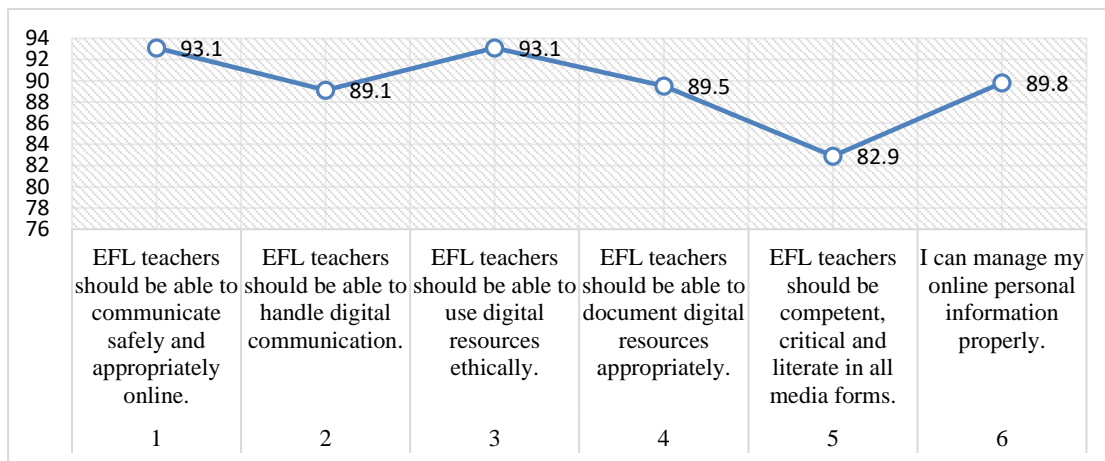

Table 5. Participants' perspectives of EFL teachers on what DSs they should have (N=55)

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	RII (%)	Level
1	EFL teachers should be able to communicate safely and appropriately online.	4.65	0.552	93.1	High (H)
2	EFL teachers should be able to handle digital communication.	4.45	0.899	89.1	High (H)
3	EFL teachers should be able to use digital resources ethically.	4.65	0.552	93.1	High (H)

4	EFL teachers should be able to document digital resources appropriately.	4.47	0.663	89.5	High (H)
5	EFL teachers should be competent, critical and literate in all media forms.	4.15	0.989	82.9	High (H)
6	I can manage my online personal information appropriately.	4.49	0.767	89.8	High (H)
Overall	Digital skills the teachers should have	3.33	0.510	89.6	High (H)

Figure 2. Digital skills EFL teachers should have

Table 5 and Figure 1 above show that the majority of EFL teachers participating in this study think that EFL teachers should be able to communicate safely and appropriately online (93.1%) and use digital resources ethically (93.1%). They believe that they, as EFL teachers, can manage their online personal information properly (89.8%). They also think that EFL teachers should be able to document digital resources appropriately (89.5%), handle digital communication (89.1%), and be competent, critical, and literate in all media forms (82.9%).

4.3.2 Qualitative results

The participants' responses to the open-ended question about the digital skills they should possess in the post-coronavirus era emphasize the critical importance of these skills. The participants also provided examples of digital tools and skills and showed how these tools and skills, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, should be used for effective and enhanced teaching.

4.3.2.1 Required Digital Skills

When the participants were asked about the digital skills they should possess in the post-coronavirus era, their responses emphasized the critical importance of these skills. One teacher highlighted the need to stay updated with the latest technology, including artificial intelligence tools, to make teaching and learning more convenient and enjoyable. Another stressed the importance of cognitive and technical teaching skills. The third teacher highlighted the role of EFL teachers in fostering their students' self-development, content-development skills, communication skills, ethics, and teaching methods and practices.

The participants also present a practical account of what digital skills EFL teachers should have. One of them stated that EFL teachers should use the Internet effectively. They must know how to use technology in teaching, such as mobiles and computers. They must know how to create PowerPoint presentations, give online instruction using a blackboard, design online exams, and communicate online through group discussions and emails. Another EFL teacher stated that EFL teachers should be able to create presentations by designing slides to be more straightforward for the students and interactive videos as communicative tools that teachers can use for various educational purposes. These interactive visuals make students ask questions and use their critical thinking skills, and digital assessments can evaluate students' understanding and overall learning effectively. One of them stated that, besides having a basic understanding of computers and MS Office, EFL teachers should also be able

to utilize various learning management and social media platforms, such as YouTube, to enhance their teaching methods in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic. Another teacher reported that various artificial intelligence tools, such as chatbots, QuillBot, and Insight, enhance pedagogical instructions and assessments and measure students' continuous and overall performance.

4.3.2.2 Required Digital Tools

One of the participants provided a practical list of digital tools that EFL teachers should have, reassuring us of the feasibility of acquiring these skills:

1. Online Teaching Platforms: Teachers should be comfortable using online platforms such as Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, and Google Meet to deliver virtual lessons.

2. Digital Communication Platforms: Proficiency in using email, chat applications, and online forums is necessary for effectively communicating with students and colleagues.

3. Multimedia Tools: Teachers should be skilled in using multimedia tools like PowerPoint.

4. Online Assessment and Feedback: Familiarity with online assessment platforms and tools enables teachers to assess student's progress and provide timely feedback.

5. Digital Resources: EFL teachers should be able to find and utilize digital resources, such as online textbooks, educational websites, and language learning apps, to supplement their lessons.

4.3 Impact of gender, age, and experience on EFL teachers' views on DLSs

The third research question concerns the impact of gender, age, and experience on EFL teachers' perspectives on DLSs. Here, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to investigate the relationship between gender, age, and experience and their perspectives on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers and the digital skills they should have. The following table illustrates the results.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Results of the demographics' impact on digital literacy for EFL teachers

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R	R Square	F	Sig.
		B			Beta						
Importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers	(Constant)	4.205		0.407		10.322	0.000**	.400	0.160	3.235	0.030*
	Gender	-0.167		0.162	-0.138	-1.030	0.308				
	Age	-0.057		0.096	-0.102	-0.596	0.554				
	Experience	0.199		0.084	0.403	2.381	0.021*				
Digital skills	(Constant)	4.118		0.402		10.237	0.000**	.344	0.118	2.281	0.040*

the teachers should have	Gender	-0.015	0.160	-0.013	-0.091	0.928	
	Age	-0.079	0.095	-0.145	-0.829	0.411	
	Experience	0.198	0.083	0.417	2.400	0.020*	

*: Significant at level 0.05

**: Significant at level 0.01

The above table illustrates the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, which show that the teachers' EFL teaching experience has an impact on their perspectives on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers (t = 2.381, p = 0.021, less than 0.05), as well as the digital skills they should possess (t = 2.40, p = 0.020, less than 0.05). The more years of experience the teachers have, the more optimistic their views on the importance of DLSs and the DLSs they should possess. However, the results show that gender has no significant impact on the participants' perceptions of the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers (t = -1.030, p = 0.308, which is higher than 0.05) and of the digital skills they should have (t = -0.091, p = 0.020, which is more than 0.928). They also show that age has no significant impact on the participants' perceptions of the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers (t = -0.596, p = 0.554, which is higher than 0.05) and of the digital skills they should have (t = -0.829, p = 0.411, which is higher than 0.05).

5. Discussion

The findings related to the perspectives of EFL teachers on the importance of computer literacy, information literacy, and media literacy showed that the participants agreed on the importance of DLSs for EFL teachers and on the necessity of being proficient in using digital technologies for effective teaching. This agreement shows their recognition of DLSs as EFL teaching core skills, indicating they are becoming as crucial as traditional teaching skills. Despite this overall agreement, some hesitated to declare that they must be digitally literate. This uncertainty might arise from a lack of confidence in their DLSs or resistance to change. In their responses to the open-ended question regarding the importance of DLSs for EFL teachers after the coronavirus pandemic, they referred to them as survival skills. The COVID-19 pandemic has speeded up the adoption of digital tools in education. EFL teachers view DLSs as essential for providing online teaching, activities, feedback, and assessments.

These positive perspectives and perceptions of the importance of DLS for EFL teaching are consistent with Cote and Milliner (2018), who reported that Japanese EFL teachers are comfortable using digital technologies to help them teach inside and outside the classroom and that they understand the need to improve their DL and actively seek advanced skills. They are also consistent with the findings of Durriyah and Zuhdi (2018), who reported that EFL student teachers felt safe expressing their ideas in a Facebook-restricted group. The belief that messaging platforms such as WhatsApp can provide intimacy and immediacy, fostering a dynamic community of learners, leads to a sense of togetherness and accessibility, making everyone feel connected and part of a more extensive educational network. In addition, they support Al Baqami and Al Zahrani's (2022) findings that Saudi EFL university teachers had positive attitudes towards online education during the COVID-19 outbreak. They, moreover, support the findings of Zhang (2023) that EFL teachers believe that using technology increases students' participation and engagement in the language classroom

and that technological literacy is necessary to increase students' engagement and participation in the classroom.

Moreover, these findings support the case study by Jusmawati et al. (2023), who reported that the two teachers studied had positive attitudes toward DL. Furthermore, the findings are also consistent with Zou and Wang's (2024) findings that EFL teachers appreciate that digital technologies provide them with enhanced teaching and learning opportunities. However, these findings do not support Soifah et al.'s (2021) findings that indicate EFL teachers' obstructive attitudes towards digital literacy, which refers to resistance or reluctance to adopt digital tools, as one of the obstacles reported by EFL teachers when investigating their experienced obstacles in implementing digital literacy in Yogyakarta schools in Indonesia. They also do not agree with Zou and Wang's (2024) findings that indicate the need for psychological adaptation to digital education on the part of EFL teachers as a significant change that improves their and their students' DLSs.

Regarding participants' views on the DLSs they should have, most believe they should be able to communicate safely and appropriately online, manage digital communication, use digital resources ethically, document digital resources, be competent, critical, and literate in all media, and manage their online personal information. In their responses to the open-ended question about the types of DLS they should have in the post-coronavirus era, they reported that they should possess cognitive and technical teaching skills to help them teach, communicate with, and assess their students online. They stated that they should be able to manage different types of digital resources, such as learning management systems, online textbooks, educational websites, and digital libraries, to teach and improve their students' skills.

The participants' awareness of the importance of using updated digital tools and skills indicates their current use of new technological tools and skills with their students. These findings are consistent with Durriyah and Zuhdi's (2018) findings, indicating that Indonesian EFL teachers use digital technologies such as Facebook, blogs, Skype, and WhatsApp in the classroom. They are also consistent with Cote and Milliner's (2018) findings, reporting that Japanese EFL teachers feel very comfortable using digital technologies to help them teach inside and outside the classroom, their awareness of the need to improve their digital literacy, and their active pursuit of advanced digital skills. In addition, these findings support Eryansyah et al.'s (2020) findings, stating that the students of preservice EFL teachers in South Sumatra have more than adequate digital literacy. Moreover, they align with Ertürk's (2022) finding that preservice EFL teachers at Amasya University in Turkey have high levels of digital literacy. Furthermore, they go with Zou and Wang's (2024) findings that digital technologies provide EFL teachers with enhanced teaching and learning skills.

However, these findings do not support Al Seghayer's (2020) conclusion that Saudi EFL learners need more digital literacy skills. It is also noteworthy that the EFL teachers participating in this study did not mention the digital literacy shortcomings that Mudra (2020) mentioned for young EFL learners, such as weak signal problems, their need for help in understanding and transforming the content of online digital materials into simple, self-regulated knowledge, the cost of digital literacy resources, the complexity of digital literacy technologies, the differences in young learners' reading comprehension, and the lack of familiarity of EFL teachers with digital literacy. The EFL teachers in this study might not mention these barriers because they teach adult EFL students. Another important reason might be that their positive attitudes and

enthusiasm for using updated digital tools in their EFL classrooms were prevalent. Their positive attitudes made them ignore the shortcomings and challenges and be more encouraged to embrace the opportunities digital literacy tools could offer their teaching.

Regarding the impact of age, gender, and years of teaching experience on the participants' perceptions of the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers and the digital skills they should have, the results showed that EFL teachers' teaching experience influences the participants' perspectives on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers as well as the digital skills they should possess. The more years of experience the teachers have, the more positive their views on the importance of DLS and the DLS they should possess. This finding is inconsistent with Zhang's (2023) finding that EFL teachers' teaching experience does not influence their DLSs. The results of the current study also showed that age and gender have no impact on their perspectives on the importance of digital literacy for EFL teachers and the digital skills they should possess. Gender and age do not affect EFL teachers' perceptions of the importance of DLS in teaching. This finding suggests that these skills are necessary for all teachers regardless of gender or age. It is consistent with Zhang's (2023) finding that gender does not influence EFL teachers' DLSs. However, it does not agree with Ertürk's (2022) finding that EFL teachers' digital literacy correlates significantly with their gender.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Most of the study participants, regardless of their age and gender, particularly those with more years of teaching experience, have positive opinions of DLSs and the relevance of these skills in EFL teaching and learning. Within the context of the post-pandemic era, it has also been observed that favorable perspectives have led to a rise in their enthusiasm for the efficient exploitation of digital literacy in EFL environments. Based on these findings, EFL teachers working in various EFL/ESL settings must be enlightened about the value of DLSs. They must be encouraged to use all digital information and media with their students, both within and outside the classroom, since this will improve their digital skills. In addition, they should educate their students about the most recent digital resources they can use for learning and how they might use these technologies in a successful, acceptable, and safe way. The authorities and decision-makers in higher education should ensure that the teachers and students have access to sufficient digital tools, training, encouragement, and support to use them properly in their EFL classrooms, empowering them and providing the necessary support for their DL journey.

The present study has some limitations that could be addressed in future research. First, the researcher studied EFL teachers working in Saudi universities. To support or reject the study's findings, researchers can further investigate the teachers' perceptions of DLSs in other universities with EFL programs, whether Arab or non-Arab. The second limitation is that the study dealt with the teachers' perceptions of the importance of DLSs and what EFL teachers should have of these skills. To complement the findings of this study, researchers can research the importance of DLS training. They can focus on the most updated digital tools, deeply investigating the teachers' attitudes and abilities to use them and their impact on improving the students' learning self and efficient learning. A third limitation is obtaining the perceptions of EFL teachers only. Thus, further researchers can also study EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of DLSs. For an understanding of the impact of DLSs on EFL teaching and learning,

applied linguists could conduct longitudinal studies using experiments, observations, and focus-group interviews with both teachers and students to investigate what types of DLSs are essential for EFL teachers and what types of digital tools have the most potent impact on EFL language learning and teaching. These suggested studies will help the EFL teaching and learning field, helping EFL teachers and learners be successful and, in the long run, making global communication more accessible and more sustainable.

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وجهات نظر مدرّسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول مهارات محو الأمية الرقمية في القرن الحادي والعشرين في المملكة العربية السعودية

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المستخلص. زادت أهمية المهارات الرقمية بشكل كبير بعد جائحة فيروس كورونا المستجد. لم يعد محو الأمية الرقمية (DL) جزءًا إضافيًا من التعلم والتعليم، ولكنه أصبح جزءًا أساسيًا من المهارات التي يجب أن يتمتع بها المعلمون. تستقصي هذه الدراسة وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول أهمية مهارات محو الأمية الرقمية في القرن الحادي والعشرين. كما تدرس نوع المهارات الرقمية التي ينبغي أن يتمتع بها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وتأثير الجنس والعمر وسنوات الخبرة على وجهات نظرهم حول مهارات محو الأمية الرقمية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من ٥٥ مدرسًا للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من جامعات سعودية مختلفة، وتم استخدام استبانة لجمع البيانات. وكشفت النتائج أن معظم المشاركين لديهم اتجاهات إيجابية نحو مهارات محو الأمية الرقمية وأهميتها في مهنة تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (4.36 = M). كما أظهرت النتائج أيضًا أنه على الرغم من أن معظم معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية شعروا بضرورة امتلاكهم لمهارات الحاسوب ومحو الأمية المعلوماتية(M=4.36) ، إلا أن بعضهم تردد في التصريح بضرورة أن يكونوا أكفاء وناقدين وملمين بجميع أشكال الوسائط(M=4.15) . كما كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن سنوات خبرة المدرسين تؤثر بشكل كبير على وجهات نظرهم حول أهمية مهارات محو الأمية المعلوماتية والرقمية (t=2.381, p = 0.021)، والمهارات الرقمية التي يجب أن يتمتعوا به(t = 2.40, p = 0.020) ، وتوصي الدراسة بتوعية مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بأهمية جميع المهارات الرقمية بما فيها محو الأمية المعلوماتية والإعلامية، وتشجيعهم على استخدام جميع أنواع المعلومات والوسائط الرقمية مع طلابهم وتدريبهم عليها، وبالتالي تحسين مهارات طلابهم الرقمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: محو الأمية الحاسوبية، محو الأمية الرقمية، وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، محو الأمية المعلوماتية، محو الأمية الإعلامية.