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EFL teachers' perceptions of the use of e-textbooks at secondary schools in Dong Thap province

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive quantitative study is aimed to investigate the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of using e-textbooks in EFL classes at secondary schools in Dong Thap province and what they perceived in terms of the benefits and challenges in using the digital version of the current textbooks. The data were collected through thirty-five Likert scale items and two open-ended questions in the form of online questionnaire from 155 EFL teachers at twelve secondary schools in Dong Thap province. The findings showed that the participants' perceptions towards applying e-textbooks in their EFL classes are highly positive. These teachers agreed that using e-textbooks is not only convenient for them in teaching but it also has positive effects on enhancing learners' English vocabulary, pronunciation and communication competence thanks to the vivid interactive features of the digital version of the current textbooks. In addition, teachers working at schools in urban areas have a higher tendency of using e-textbooks than those in the rural ones. Moreover, the results also showed that e-textbooks will be difficult to be applied in the case of unstable internet connection and lack of digital facilities. In addition, it is necessary for teachers to update their technological skills and prepare the lesson plans under the use of e-textbooks to make their teaching practices effectively.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this digital age, the usage of e-textbooks in the classroom is becoming increasingly popular (Shepherd *et al.*, 2008; Tees, 2010; Woody *et al.*, 2010). E-textbooks can be seen as e-books which contain educational materials and functions, and which can be used for educational purposes (Landoni & Diaz, 2003). Currently, e-textbooks usually offer various

major features which are described as follows. First, e-textbooks can display various digital resources, such as digital texts, photos, animations, simulations, videos, audio and other resources (Shepherd *et al.*, 2008; Woody *et al.*, 2010; Chen *et al.*, 2013). Second, e-textbooks can support learning with some basic text functions such as highlighting, annotating, searching, bookmarking, referring and editing (McFall *et al.*, 2006; Lam *et al.*, 2010; Woody *et al.*,

2010 Chen *et al.*, 2013). These functions make the usage of e-textbooks more efficient and convenient, especially in EFL classes. The features and functions of e-textbooks are better than those in the past (Woody *et al.*, 2010). Thus, teachers' perceptions regarding the features and functional use of e-textbook have become an interesting issue for the researchers to explore.

From the academic year of 2016-2017, the Department of Education and Training (DOET) of Dong Thap province completed the pilot implementation of the 10-year English program of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in both secondary schools and high schools. From the 2017-2018 school year, the DOET was expected to carry out a mass deployment of the 10-year English program from Grade 6 and Grade 10 to follow the roadmap of renewing the English curriculum in accordance with the project of teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system for the period of 2017-2025.

For the purpose of helping teachers innovate teaching methods towards developing learners' competencies, hundreds of teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Dong Thap province were provided with an account on the website www.sachmem.vn as a source of e-textbooks. This is a product of Vietnam Education Publishing House with the desire to help teachers have more teaching aids and help students have more materials to review and study in addition to the printed version. The e-textbooks have now adapted the entire content of the MOET's English textbooks, from Grade 1 to Grade 12, into learning units that can foster the interactions with users vividly. In addition, these digital books are also supplemented with many photo materials, videos and games to help teachers and students exploit the strengths of information technology in teaching and learning. This is really a useful source of teaching and learning materials for both EFL teachers and students in Vietnam.

It is easy to recognize the viable use of e-textbooks in teaching and learning English. In line with the technological integration approach, a current trend in education, it is of importance to see how teachers responded to this implementation. Therefore, this research is aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of using e-textbooks in English language teaching (ELT) within two aspects: benefits and challenges in implementation.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 E-textbooks

Researchers proposed that e-textbooks, digital form with textual and other content, are established as a result of combining the familiar concept of a book with interesting features that can be existed in an electronic device (e.g. Vassiliou and Rowley, 2008). In this study, e-textbook is mentioned as a digital version of the printed textbook that is published under the government's guideline of educational contents. It can be run by using a computer or other electronic devices through an account on the website www.sachmem.vn. The content of these digital textbooks is the same as the printed version but it is more vivid due to containing texts, images, audios, videos, and virtual features.

As mentioned earlier, most of the EFL teachers in Dong Thap province were provided with an account of web-based e-textbooks. These e-textbooks are run online in web browsers and have a modern interface with a structure that is easy to follow and use. In addition, those are well designed and programmed, integrated with many tools to create high interaction with users such as videos, audio, songs, images, games, and exercises to help the lessons become lively and interesting for learners, especially very convenient when teachers teach new words or pronunciation, with just a mouse click for sounding and meaning of words in Cambridge Dictionary.

2.2 Benefits of using e-textbooks

First of all, the vital advantages of using e-textbooks are the abundance of interactive and accessible features that they offer. For example, one main benefit of e-textbooks is the ability to integrate multimedia elements in an e-textbook. This allows users to watch and listen to non-written material along with the text (Bidal, 2013; Feldstein and Martin, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2013; Gisbert-Cervera *et al.*, 2014; Walling, 2014). Such a feature is especially useful for language learning purposes as it offers the ability of listening to written content to support and develop reading and speaking skills. The search feature in e-textbooks has also been frequently cited to be one of the mostly appreciated features by users (Cassidy *et al.*, 2012; Elias *et al.*, 2012; Sun *et al.*, 2012; Philip & Moon, 2013). Although not reported in the literature, recent updates of some e-textbooks give teachers an ability to create customized table of contents to add direct links to specific pages and/or chapters in an e-textbook.

Many academic institutions have utilized the advantages of technology in the area of e-learning, and the addition of e-textbooks can be proven to be a shift from the traditional printed textbook. Obviously, it can be said that there are plenty of advantages of using e-textbooks thanks to its interesting features. First, e-textbook features may influence learner's literacy skills by font size manipulation, text-to-speech tools, dictionaries, automatic page turning, and animation hotspots. It means that e-textbook features are complete and more exciting. Absolutely, it can build up the motivation of the learner (Larson, 2010; Jones and Brown, 2011; Vaala and Takeuchi, 2012). Furthermore, e-textbooks also help experienced teachers provide the best teaching practices, including different strategies. E-textbooks allow them to take notes and highlight in the text or use the search function to find relevant information and access learning aids with plenty of incorporating applications.

Finally, Vandenhoeck (2013) identifies availability of "vocabulary support" (p. 38) as a valuable feature that further facilitates a learner's comprehension rates of e-texts. While such a feature may not be readily available within all e-textbooks, ease of access to dictionaries while reading from an e-textbook may well facilitate reading comprehension for learners. Another important language feature of e-textbooks is ease of access to audio versions of reading passages – a "text-to-speech function" (Lai and Rushikesh Ulhas, 2012, p. 323), allowing learners to listen to a passage before reading it aloud.

2.3 Challenges of using e-textbooks

Although e-textbooks are proven to have many advantages over printed textbooks; e-textbooks still have some challenges for users in several cases (Nicholas and Lewis, 2010). Initially, the devices like personal computers, laptops or tablets make everything easy and practical; nevertheless, these gadgets must be run within a source of energy. Moreover, to access the web-based e-textbooks, the internet connection is necessary, but it is not always available in the remote area. Sometimes, the users may experience technical problems, and they would not have access to e-textbooks. In this modern era, there are many new technological gadgets innovated. Some people try them out, just because they are new, but others avoid changing the traditional ways. The same thing happens to the use of e-textbooks, many people are hooked on using them, but others, especially older generation is still fond of using the printed version.

A further challenge is that many teachers received their training before mobile technologies entering the educational area, which may lead to insecurities about usage, instruction and incorporation and that some teachers are wary about adopting social media (Brueck and Lenhart, 2015). Generally, Holmberg (2016) and Tallvid (2016) found that technology uses that resembled traditional teaching were much more common than using collaborative tools and methods. The reasons included traditional views of learning as an individual activity, school culture, and lack of knowledge of, and skills in using information technology.

Previous studies have shown that there are benefits and challenges in using e-textbooks in educational contexts in general. Whether EFL teachers experience similar or different advantages and difficulties in the context of ELT in Dong Thap province is worth investigating. This current study, therefore, was conducted, and expected to contribute more findings to the research in e-textbooks in Vietnamese context which has been scarce so far.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by a research question:

1. What are teachers' perceptions towards the benefits and challenges of using e-textbooks in EFL classrooms at lower-secondary schools?

To identify the secondary school teachers' perceptions about e-textbooks use in EFL classrooms and the challenges they may face in using them, the study followed a descriptive quantitative design to collect data. The quantitative method was employed because it is believed to be objective and it can be used to survey a large group of people and it is helpful when the researcher's goal is to find out the quantity, or the frequency of a phenomena (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2006). In addition to Likert-scale items, two open-ended questions were used to more deeply obtained teachers' opinions. The instrument was constructed based on previous studies in the field.

The research was conducted with 155 teachers from 12 secondary schools in Dong Thap province. These teachers voluntarily took part in the research as they admitted having e-textbook accounts and use them regularly in their teaching process under the support of DOET of Dong Thap province. The total number of participants was 155 and approximately 60% of whom were female, 40% were male. Among them, 67 teachers (43%) were working in five secondary schools in the countryside, whereas the others were

working in seven urban schools. The participants all got their Bachelor's degree in English Education.

4 RESULTS

The results collected via Likert scale items and open-ended questions are presented within two categories: benefits and challenges.

4.1 Beneficial factors

A descriptive statistics test was run on the mean score of four clusters including *necessity*, *effectiveness*, *applicability* and *convenience*. Table 1 shows the teachers' perceptions of beneficial factors of e-textbooks in English teaching. It reveals that the teachers in the study perceived e-textbooks as highly necessary and convenient in English teaching procedures, with the mean scores $M=4.07$ and $M=4.01$ respectively. Besides, other aspects of e-textbooks including the effectiveness of using e-textbooks in teaching skills and its applicability were perceived relatively positive. The mean scores ranged between 3.84 and 3.96.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the necessity of using e-textbooks (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q1: Using e-textbooks in teaching English is necessary.	3	5	4.05	.728
Q19: Teachers of English should often use e-textbooks in teaching periods.	3	5	4.09	.461

It can be inferred that information technology has positively changed the current context of foreign language teaching. Interactive features in e-textbooks help teaching and learning become more interesting and understandable with useful expanded information. At the same time, the interactive features of e-textbooks also help teachers and students communicate in teaching and learning more effectively.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

The results for effectiveness are presented in Table 3. Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of using e-textbooks were investigated in 10 items and it indicates that teachers had a high positive perception towards the effects of e-textbook-based lessons

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of teachers' perceptions towards the beneficial factors (N=155)

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Necessity	3.00	5.00	4.0710	.51736
Effectiveness	2.90	5.00	3.9665	.35735
Applicability	3.00	4.88	3.8476	.35876
Convenience	3.00	5.00	4.0129	.37080

4.1.1 Necessity

The results for *necessity* are presented in Table 2. The analysis results show that the teachers highly appreciate the regular use of e-textbooks and the need to use it in English language teaching procedure with the mean scores $M= 4.05$ and $M=4.09$ respectively. Both aspects of using e-textbooks in teaching English are highly appreciated by teachers (at the strongly agree level).

in English teaching. Moreover, the students are quite interested in the audio-visual features of electronic textbooks ($M = 4.09$). Those teachers also agreed that audio-visual features in e-textbooks provide the authentic materials and bring good effects on language acquisition ($M= 4.06$) and the features of e-textbooks can engage learners in the lessons attentively ($M=4.01$).

It can be inferred that the effectiveness of e-textbooks in promoting students to study, creating excitement, increasing the interaction and acquiring the target language actively and effectively was appreciated (strongly agree) by the participants. The application of e-textbooks in teaching English brings new and vivid experiences to learners which paper textbooks have not brought.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the effectiveness of using e-textbooks (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q2: The features of e-textbooks can engage learner’s attention in the lessons	3	5	4.01	.603
Q3: Lessons taught with e-textbooks can make the classroom atmosphere more interesting.	3	5	4.06	.705
Q4: Using e-textbooks can increase learners’ retention of the contents.	1	5	3.66	.847
Q13: E-textbooks provide various applications to teach vividly.	2	5	3.77	.818
Q20: Students in general like learning with E-textbooks.	1	5	3.73	.885
Q21: Students are interested in audio-visual features in e-textbooks.	3	5	4.09	.514
Q22: Using e-textbooks makes students learn actively.	2	5	4.07	.604
Q23: Audio-visual features in e-textbooks provide the authentic materials and bring good effect on language acquisition.	3	5	4.06	.406
Q24: The use of e-textbooks in language teaching helps motivate students to learn.	2	5	4.12	.613
Q25: The use of e-textbooks in language teaching helps motivate students to learn.	3	5	4.08	.603

4.1.3 *Applicability*

The results for *applicability* are presented in Table 4. The analysis results show that teachers highly appreciate the criteria of the effective application of electronic textbooks in teaching listening, vocabulary, and phonetics. These criteria were evaluated at the level of strongly agree. Compared to paper textbooks, e-textbooks are designed and developed with

plenty of multimedia contents, images, annotations, audios, videos, games, simulation experiments, guilds, voice recording, spelling, dictionaries and especially interactive exercises to make learning process more effective, and teachers can self-assess students' level of knowledge acquisition. It can be seen for teachers' perceptions, the use of e-textbooks in teaching English has a high applicability in teaching listening, phonetics and vocabulary.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for applicability of using e-textbooks (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q5: All language skills can be taught with e-textbooks.	3	5	4.01	.592
Q6: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>listening</i> .	3	5	4.15	.722
Q7: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>speaking</i> .	2	5	3.68	.634
Q8: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>reading</i> .	3	5	3.62	.584
Q9: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>writing</i> .	2	5	3.61	.706
Q10: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>vocabulary</i> .	3	5	4.12	.596
Q11: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>grammar</i> .	2	5	3.54	.808
Q12: E-textbooks are used most effectively in teaching <i>pronunciation</i> .	3	5	4.04	.468

In addition, the criteria of e-textbooks application in speaking, reading, writing and grammar were assessed averagely by teachers. Although the ultimate purpose of learning foreign languages is communicative competence, teachers' perception still shows that the application of e-textbooks is still not effective in teaching speaking, reading and writing. In addition, for lower-secondary school students, it is important for them to practice writing and speaking, while e-textbooks have not carried out these tasks effectively. In fact, writing skills - reading - speaking still need a lot of teachers’ facilitation to students instead of digital devices.

4.1.4 *Convenience*

The results for convenience are presented in Table 5. The analytical results indicate that teachers had a

positive appreciation towards the convenient criteria of e-textbooks. For instance, the participants agreed that e-textbooks can not only help them create classroom activities more easily than the printed version (M = 4.12) but save time to prepare teaching aids (M = 4.07) due to the examples and illustrations presented clearly in the electronic versions. The results show that teachers can enhance their teaching quality and create a high interactive learning environment through the application of e-textbooks to teaching. However, teachers underestimated that electronic textbooks are able to replace other teaching aids like cassettes, pictures or CD players, etc (M = 3.74).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for convenience of using e-textbooks (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q14: E-textbooks can replace other teaching aids (pictures, CD, cassette)	1	5	3.74	.912
Q15: Teaching English with e-textbooks is convenient.	3	5	4.07	.548
Q16: E-textbooks can help teacher save time to prepare teaching aids.	3	5	4.07	.524
Q17: E-textbooks can help teacher create activities more easily than printed books.	3	5	4.12	.394
Q18: Examples and illustrations are shown clearly by e-textbooks.	3	5	4.07	.666

Although there are many advantages in teaching using e-textbooks, the EFL teachers still encounter many challenges while using them.

4.2 Challenging factors

4.2.1 External challenging factors

The results for external challenges are presented in Table 6. The participants in this study quite agreed that e-textbooks cannot be used in case of insufficient digital devices such as computers, monitors, projectors, etc (M = 4.13), and lack of the support

from management levels as well as the school board (M = 4.08). In addition, e-textbooks are not able to be applied if the internet connection is not stable (M = 4.03). According to the renewal of learner-centered teaching methods, it requires EFL classrooms need to be equipped with projector and sound systems to make the applying of ICT in foreign language teaching more effectively. In short, the support of the school's management and adequate material facilities plays an important role in order to increase the application and efficiency of e-textbooks use in EFL classes at secondary schools.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for external challenges of e-textbook use (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q26: E-textbooks can not be used in case digital devices are not sufficient (computer, screen, projector).	2	5	4.13	.621
Q27: E-textbooks can not be used in case internet connection is not stable.	3	5	4.03	.711
Q28: E-textbooks can not be applied in the case of lack of administrators' support.	3	5	4.08	.491
Q29: E-textbooks cannot be applied easily in rural schools.	2	5	3.53	.573
Q30: E-textbooks cannot be applied in overcrowded classes.	2	4	3.50	.551

However, teachers admitted that e-textbooks can still be used without difficulties in rural schools (M = 3.53) and in overcrowded classes (M = 3.50). Therefore, the lessons can be transmitted directly to students through electronic learning equipment in any context. Therefore, the number of large classrooms is not an important barrier in the application of electronic textbooks. As a matter of fact, in rural areas, the economic and living standard are lower than in urban ones, yet the application of electronic textbooks at schools in rural areas is still feasible if it is supported by administrators.

4.2.2 Internal challenging factors

The results for internal challenges are presented in Table 7. The analytical results show that teachers actually have difficulties with information technology (IT) skills in using e-textbooks (M = 4.12), which leads them to be anxious with the variety of features in electronic versions of the current textbooks (M = 4.09). Therefore, the participants strongly agreed that they need to update their technological skills to use e-textbooks effectively (M = 4.07).

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for internal challenges of e-textbook use (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q31: Teachers can be anxious with the variety of functions in e-textbooks.	3	5	4.09	.330
Q32: Teachers may face some difficulties with IT skills in using e-textbooks.	2	5	4.12	.394
Q33: Teachers need to spend more money to get user account or updated version.	2	4	3.45	.525
Q34: Teachers need to spend more time to prepare lesson plans for teaching with E-textbooks.	2	4	3.78	.431
Q35: Teachers need to update technological skills to use e-textbook.	3	5	4.07	.344

Obviously, teaching English with the application of e-textbooks, beside the professional qualifications, teachers need to have a certain level of IT skills. This is a prerequisite, deciding the success of the lesson with the support of e-textbooks. However, the application of ICT in teaching and learning also has limitations. Thus, teachers need to have the knowledge and skills of ICT enough to deal with the challenges when teaching with e-textbooks.

4.3 Evaluating differences in teachers' perceptions of using e-textbooks between groups of ages

ANOVA analysis results in Table 8 show the teacher's awareness of Necessity, Effectiveness, Applicability and Convenience between groups of ages with

Table 8: T-test for teachers' perceptions of using e-textbooks between groups of ages

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value
Necessity	Between Groups	.904	2	.452	1.703	.186
	Within Groups	40.316	152	.265		
	Total	41.219	154			
Effectiveness	Between Groups	.055	2	.028	.214	.807
	Within Groups	19.610	152	.129		
	Total	19.666	154			
Applicability	Between Groups	.027	2	.014	.104	.901
	Within Groups	19.794	152	.130		
	Total	19.821	154			
Convenience	Between Groups	.103	2	.052	.372	.690
	Within Groups	21.071	152	.139		
	Total	21.174	154			
External challenges	Between Groups	1.843	2	.921	6.604	.002
	Within Groups	21.204	152	.139		
	Total	23.046	154			
Internal challenges	Between Groups	.488	2	.244	4.130	.018
	Within Groups	8.981	152	.059		
	Total	9.469	154			

In addition, from the open-ended questions, many teachers who are over 40 years old conceded that their skills of using technology are limited. In fact, the process of designing a lesson via using e-textbooks and operating these digital versions for practical teaching in class requires the EFL teachers to be familiar with using technological devices. This is a fundamental factor, which decides the success of teaching periods using e-textbooks. For example, teacher B, an experienced female teacher said, "I am not good at IT, so I have many difficulties using the computer or operate the technological devices."

Meanwhile, many EFL teachers also mentioned the loss of students' concentration on the lesson in case of teaching with e-textbooks application. This is a

no difference ($p > 5\%$). Meanwhile, teachers' perceptions of e-textbooks' challenges with $p = .002$, and teachers' challenges with $p = .018$, so there is a difference in the significance level of 0.05 (significant at the 0.05 level). It can be seen that the teachers who are over 40 years old have been reported to perceive more challenges when using e-textbooks compared to other age groups (challenges of using e-textbooks $M = 4.04$; teachers' challenges $M = 3.99$). This may be explained that teachers' ability to apply technology into their teaching could be declined when they get older. In other words, younger teachers will adopt technology more easily and know how to apply technology into teaching better than the older teachers.

basic but unexpected shortcoming of using e-textbooks in teaching English. Specifically, teacher C said, "In my class, some students do not take note anything, they just focus on the e-textbook effects on the screen rather than the content of the lesson".

Last but not least, teachers who answered the open-ended questions said that the failure of technology was a big challenge. It means a computer does not work as usual, the mistakes of software programs, the unstable connection of the internet or even the power runs out while teaching. Teacher D, one elder male EFL teacher admitted, "Problems with digital devices are vital problems of using e-textbooks in teaching English".

To conclude, most of the teachers in this study approved that it is helpful to use e-textbooks for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching English at lower-secondary schools. However, the limitation of using e-textbooks in teaching English should be also taken out.

5 DISCUSSIONS

In terms of teachers' perceptions of e-textbook use in EFL classes, the results of this study show that EFL teachers in Dong Thap province had a highly positive assessment of e-textbook use in EFL classes at lower-secondary schools. Particularly, those teachers highly perceived the necessity, effectiveness and convenience of e-textbooks for English teaching. This concedes that e-textbooks were fully exploited in the context of English language teaching at lower-secondary schools in Dong Thap province. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies (Bidal, 2013; Feldstein and Martin, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2013; Gisbert-Cervera *et al.*, 2014; Walling, 2014) that multimedia elements in an e-textbook are especially useful for language learning purposes as it offers the ability of listening to writing content to support and develop language skills for learners. Specifically, the results from the questionnaire revealed that most of the participants hold positive perceptions towards the use of e-textbooks in teaching phonetics, vocabulary and listening. This indicated that most of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that it is useful to teach listening, vocabulary and phonetic with e-textbooks because electronic features in an electronic book have the potential to foster learners' understanding of the content, increase their vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness and story recall abilities. These findings are in line with other studies conducted by Underwood and Underwood (1998), Labbo and Kuhn (2000), Chera and Wood (2003).

In addition, the findings of this study also provide strong support for the results of the previous research. EFL teachers believed that using e-textbooks makes lessons more enjoyable and memorable so that it can build up the motivation of the learners (Larson, 2010; Jones and Brown, 2011; Vaala and Takeuchi, 2012). Besides, the investigation into e-textbooks' features in this study is similar to the result of the previous research done by de Jong and Bus (2003), Lefever-Davis and Pearman (2005). These researchers concluded that the language classroom environment that was created with the addition of e-textbooks' features facilitated the overall

engagement of the learners in the lessons. The multimedia features in e-textbooks increased the level of classroom interaction and stimulated discussion among students.

Furthermore, the current study is similar to previous researches regarding the most significant challenges that teachers may face in using e-textbooks for their teaching practices. For example, the present study indicated that teachers usually have problems with the supporting of digital devices while using e-textbooks in teaching. This was also shown in the research of Nicholas and Lewis (2010). These authors found that e-textbook users may have technical problems, and they would not have access to the e-textbooks since the internet connection is not always available and the lack of facilities, especially in the remote area.

In addition, EFL teachers in the current study reflected to students' low attention as a challenge of using e-textbooks for teaching. Likewise, Seung *et al.* (2014) analyzed the viewpoints of EFL teachers who used e-textbooks in class through interview surveys, and identified some negative facets including device errors and in-class student distractions. Also, Jeong *et al.* (2017) showed teachers' perceptions on the main drawbacks of using e-textbooks are gadget errors, students' low concentration, and dependence on digital devices.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the findings from the study indicate that the teachers' perceptions towards the use of e-textbooks in EFL classes at lower-secondary schools are highly positive. These participants agreed that their students are interested in e-textbook use by its vivid features and functions. They perceived that e-textbooks are used most effectively in listening, vocabulary and phonetic lessons thanks to the audio-visual functions. Besides, the teachers in urban areas have a higher tendency of using e-textbooks than those in the rural ones since the teachers working in the countryside found it more challenging to use digital textbooks due to the lack of digital facilities, device errors and internet connection. In addition, in terms of gender, the findings also revealed that female teachers have a higher perception of the necessity of using e-textbooks in teaching than the male ones. Especially, regarding age, the group of teachers who are above 40 years old face more challenges in using e-textbooks as they lack some knowledge and skills of information technology and it takes time to prepare for lessons modified by e-textbooks.

Therefore, it is suggested that the well-equipped facilities should be supplied for teachers to use and improve the lesson instruction. For more integration of ICT into the classrooms, e-textbooks need to be proved to be potential such that they are flexible and friendly to users. However, teachers' perceptions of using this software play a crucial role in their application. It is important that they need to be aware of how to use e-textbooks creatively in their teaching so that it becomes part of their daily work, rather than preparing an e-textbook-based lesson just for the sake of teacher appraisal. While e-textbooks will not replace printed books at all, it will definitely be used to complement printed versions. In classrooms, both teachers and students will value the convenience, effectiveness and applicability of e-textbooks for teaching and learning practices. It is one of the latest advances in education technology. Indeed, the introduction of e-textbooks in English classrooms could be a jump-start in promoting a highly literate society. A framework for e-textbooks' assessment may also need to suit our educational curriculum. Thus, more research will be needed to shed light on the wider scope of this intellectual endeavor.

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