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THE MANAGEMENT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING EFL IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, thanks to globalisation (and more recently to the COVID-19 pandemic), African universities have integrated digital tools to transform the way they operate. This article aims to highlight the state of digital transformation in the Department of Bilingual Studies and the Department of English Modern Letters at the University of Yaounde I in Cameroon, particularly in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The paper is divided into three sections: Section 1 discusses the evolution of digital transformation in higher education in Cameroon, Section 2 reviews and compares the practices of digital transformation in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign/second language in both departments and Section 3 makes some suggestions or recommendations to improve the successfulness of the process of digital transformation in teaching and learning English. The framework adopted for this study is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The objective is to build awareness for digital transformation for school administrators, teachers, and students.

Keywords: digital transformation – higher education – EFL/ESL – language teaching and learning – digital tools – TAM

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation (DT) has been on all lips recently, especially in the domain of education in Africa. In all fields, schools in tertiary education have resorted to integrating digital tools into the classroom. Vial (2019), cited in Mikalef and Parmiggiani (2022), defines digital transformation as "a process that aims to improve an entity by triggering significant changes to its properties through combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies". It has to do with improving business processes of companies by integrating technologies in all activities to effectively fulfil customer expectations. In the field of education, technology tools help students improve their learning, while the teaching staff uses them to improve teaching, and the administrative staff uses them to improve the quality of services. The discipline that involves the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning is called digital pedagogy.

1.1 Digital transformation in language learning and teaching

In his 2024 report entitled "How 15-Year-Olds Learn English", the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that the first language laboratories appeared

in the 1960s and were dedicated physical spaces where students could use audio technology to engage in independent study. Then, in the 1980s, the communicative language teaching approach was in vogue. In the 1990s, the Internet and the spread of personal computers and multimedia technologies facilitated listening practice and increased the availability of non-pedagogical texts in the target language. The 2000s really pushed the development forward with 2.0 technologies (discussion forums, blogs, wikis, etc.) and output-oriented media channels such as YouTube, TikTok, X, to name a few. Today, we notice the emergence of AI-powered technologies.

As can be seen above, language teachers and learners have always been on the lookout for ways to improve EFL and ESL teaching and learning. Teachers, in particular, keep on looking for ways to help the learner learn the language as best as they can. They consider various methods and techniques to ease their jobs and make them effective and efficient. The introduction of technology in teaching tools has helped a lot in the development and spread of teaching. Yang (2023) argues that "digital transformation of foreign language education is reshaping the future in empowering smart foreign language teaching environment, providing immersive foreign language resources, realise personalised foreign language learning activities, realise intelligent teaching evaluation, and innovative, intelligent foreign language education services." Language learners prefer the introduction of technology in their teaching and learning practices to traditional methods, which they find boring. Remizantseva and Ablyazov (2019) found that Generation Z has become accustomed to using digital tools and even expects that the process of education will also relate to an active use of digital tools. For them, teachers find it a little more complicated than learners. Some of them are still hard on crossing the fence of traditional teaching to get to that of the digital. Samea Quora (2022) quoted Guemide, Benchaiba, & Bouzar (2012), who explain that e-educators in developing countries are frustrated with two types of digital divide, which are the digital divide between developed and developing countries and the digital divide between students and teachers. Some teachers dread the use of technological tools as was highlighted by Sokeng Piewo (2022).

The importance of discussing the digital transformation of teaching and learning in higher education cannot be emphasised. As technology continues to reshape the educational environment, educational institutions need to adapt and leverage these advancements to enhance their programmes. The aim of this study is to explore the state of digital transformation in higher education in Cameroon, the practices/challenges and the coping strategies regarding the digital transformation of English language teaching in Cameroon higher education with a focus on the Department of Bilingual Studies and the Department of English Modern Letters by reviewing the practices of teachers to make some realistic/practical recommendations. The paper will provide insights for both teachers/researchers and the administration on effectively managing the digital transformation of teaching English in higher education.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What is the state of digital practices at the Department of Bilingual Studies and the Department of English Modern Letters post-COVID?
2. What are the coping strategies?

1.2 Digital transformation in higher education in Cameroon

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) were introduced in Cameroonian private schools in the 1990s (source). In 2001, the government officially introduced them in education (source). Noticeable achievements included the establishment of multimedia resource centres in universities, professional, and technological schools, and some government secondary schools, training monitors to manage them, creating learning platforms, interconnecting the six (ten?) State universities, and establishing training units in professional schools and universities, some of which are now operational (Tetang Tchinda, 2007). In 2008, the National Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (Republic of Cameroon, 2008) developed the National Policy for the Development of Information and Communication Technologies.

According to Nayah (2024), The E-National Higher Education project was initiated by President Paul Biya to give a better cybernetic visibility to Cameroonian universities and, to allow the appropriation and generalization of new teaching and learning methods based on ICT (E-Learning). It is an online platform established to interconnect universities through the Internet. On 18th June 2015, an agreement was signed between The People's Republic of China and the Republic of Cameroon to meet up with international standards and the rapid transformation of higher education systems. This project, according to Nayah (op.cit.) has brought about the creation of public university institutions in all regions of the country, the distribution of laptops to university students and the creation of ten digital centres.

On the 16th April, 2021, the Rector of the University of Yaounde I signed a circular letter, N°211153, providing instructions for the bimodal management of teaching activities at the University of Yaounde 1. The key resolutions included:

- the switch to a bimodal or hybrid (face-to-face and online) system with online activities on a platform that will be administered by the university. The online activities were to take Form 1, Form 2 or Form 3.
- In Form 1, digital training aids were to be made available to learners for lectures and tutorials.
- Form 2 was an asynchronous mechanism for interaction between the teacher and the learners, where the latter could leave a series of questions for the teacher, who in turn provided them with answers that could be consulted later.
- Form 3 involved a synchronous interaction device between teacher and learners allowing learners to interact directly with the teacher.

In 2024, in accordance with Law No. 2023/007 of 25 July 2023 on Higher Education Policy in Cameroon, a University Digital Development Centre was inaugurated in the University of Yaounde I (as well as in other universities like the University of Buea, the University of Dschang, or the University of Yaounde II) with facilities like virtual classrooms, a computer system for the management of distance learning, a studio for the digitisation and production of multimedia courses, and a server for access to the national digital library. In the long run, the centre is expected to facilitate the rehabilitation of local computer networks and the installation of wi-fi hotspot networks on the main campuses of the beneficiary universities.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The digital transformation of education uses digital technologies for teaching and learning. It is a very powerful means to upgrade educational models in a system. DT in education implies

rethinking education by injecting technology in teaching and learning systems. The objective is for technology to empower not only teachers but also learners for 'productive' education. Thus, it offers a lot of advantages but also some disadvantages. The OECD (2024) identifies several advantages in the use of technology in foreign language learning today. They span from offering teachers and learners easier access to a greater range of foreign language material than ever befo2re, making available digital tools to enhance the reading, listening, speaking or writing experience for foreign language learners, to allowing for collaborative and interactive learning spaces to exist beyond the foreign language classroom to developing AI-powered technologies to make learning activities easier and more rapid to respond to individual needs. Digitalisation in education does not only have advantages. Some of its disadvantages include Internet connection issues, poor participation of students online, unequal opportunities among students to be engaged in class activities, lack of devices for online teaching, technical issues with teaching platforms, inefficient support for online classes, significant investment in the scripting and production of course resources and at times, lack of recognition of this investment by the students who do not attend online classes and prefer only face-to-face, inability to follow up students online and in face-to-face, extreme criticism from some colleagues who develop resistance to change and lastly but not the least, the sudden shift from traditional to online teaching. (Sokeng Piewo, 2024).

Research on the digitalisation of education in higher education in Cameroon is relatively recent. This section provides a comprehensive overview of the current state and challenges of digital transformation in higher education, highlighting various initiatives and research findings.

Maguatcher and Ning (2023) discussed the challenges facing Cameroon's higher education system in digital transformation, focusing on the University of Maroua and the Universities of Yaounde I and II. The study's findings reveal that digital transformation faces a lot of challenges in Cameroon, amongst which lack of digital infrastructure and Internet access and insufficient university budgets. The authors suggest that the State should invest in digital infrastructure and Internet access, strengthen international partnerships, improve investment and governance for lifelong learning in the digital age. Agbor (2024) reported similar challenges faculty members and students face in the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning in State universities in Cameroon. The most prominent ones identified were poor Internet connection, distraction, and frequent power cuts. Eyenga Ovono et al. (2023) used the Actor Network Theory to define a digital transformation model and its implementation to facilitate the adoption of technologies in the teaching and learning process in State universities in Cameroon. They recommend that, to implement a digital transformation model in a given State university in Cameroon, the top management of this university should make an inventory of the existing technological equipment and assess the level of research enhancement in this area to see what remains to be done and seek help from partners.

While these studies provide valuable insights into digital transformation, they focus only on general aspects of digital transformation, covering State universities. This study focuses on specific departments in one of the universities, highlighting the transformation of teachers of English as a second or foreign language.

Outside Cameroon, Fleaca et al. (2022) investigate the initiatives at the European Union level concerning digital readiness and the state of play of higher education in Romania. The findings

reveal that Romanian higher education seems to be characterized by structural vulnerabilities in terms of low public expenditure, unsatisfactory public expenditures factory level of digital skills for both students and the workforce, a small number of ICT specialists in industries framed by digital transformation and a small number of tertiary-educated professionals, whose skills are not well aligned with labour market demands (p.1240). This means that Romania still must make considerable efforts to align with top performers in the European Union.

Limani et al. (2019) analyse the current readiness of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for the digital transformation of their processes in Kosovo. The findings show a significant change in the particular interest in the use of digital technologies at HEIs. The comparison of results from literature confirms the inclusive perception of HEIs management concerned with the understanding of institutions needs for digital transformation of their processes.

Pham et al. (2021) investigated the factors affecting the readiness of Vietnamese students for digital transformation during the COVID-19. They used the TAM model and sociological investigation method to collect data from many different individuals and perspectives to have a basis for assessing the level of influence. The findings reveal the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The COVID-19 also contributes to the dependent variable "Readiness for digital transformation", and at the same time makes the relationships between factors might change.

The above studies discuss digital transformation in Romania, Kosovo, and Vietnam respectfully, a different context from Cameroon.

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Fred Davis in 1989. It aims to understand how users accept and integrate new technologies. This model suggests that the perception of users of how easy and useful a technology can significantly impact their decision to adopt and use it. The model has been widely applied in various fields, including information systems and education, to predict user acceptance and guide the development of user-friendly technologies. TAM highlights the importance of user perceptions in the adoption process. It aligns with Rogers' work on how innovations diffuse through social systems.

Two variables in TAM; perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are pivotal in influencing information system acceptance behaviour. TAM posits that external variables indirectly shape users' attitudes toward system use by affecting these two constructs, which ultimately determine actual system usage (Lee et al., 2015). Davis (1989) quoted in Scherer et al. (2019) defines Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU) as the degree to which a person believes that using technology would be free of effort and Perceived Usefulness (PU) as the degree to which a person believes that using technology would enhance his or her job performance. Theo et al. (2009) report that recent studies employing the TAM as the framework have also shown perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use to be significant predictors of attitude towards technology use and intention to use. If PEOU and PU are the main external factors, all the other as quoted in Park and Park (2020) are supposed to influence intention and attitude indirectly through perceived usefulness and ease of use. Figure 1 shows the key variables and their relationship to TAM (Park and Park, 2020).

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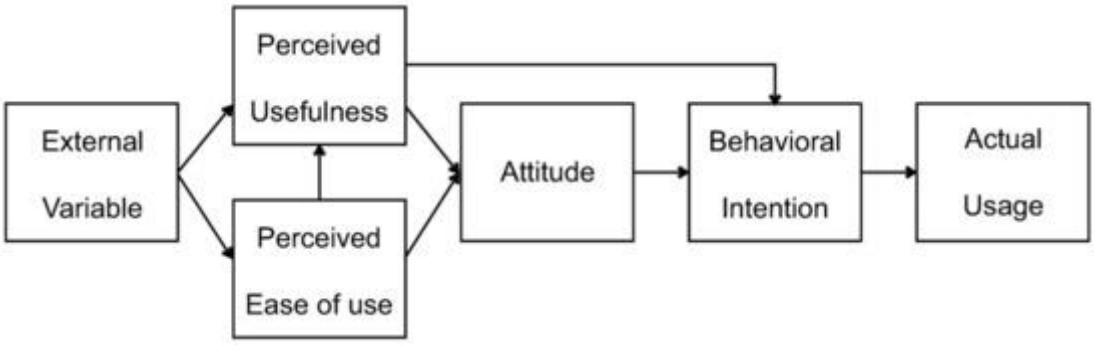

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989).

The next session discusses the methodology adopted for this work.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The population for this research included academic staff members teaching English as a foreign language. Eight (8) teachers (9 in the Department of Bilingual Studies and 9 in the Department of English Modern Letters) took part in the study. Fifty (50) students were randomly sampled to get students' views and feedback on digital transformation through an unstructured interview approach to ensure the trustworthiness of data collected.

The study adopted an exploratory, qualitative, and quantitative approach. This approach allowed the researcher to explore, analyse, describe, and discuss the management of digital transformation in the two departments because limited research has been done on the state of e-learning at the University of Yaounde I (UYI). Ten open-ended questions were asked to respondents to obtain detailed and personalised responses, providing qualitative insights. Those questions were broad, allowing them to expatiate on the topic for unexpected issues to emerge. The questions tackled various angles, like the types of digital tools they used during and post-COVID, the perceived ease of use and usefulness of the selected digital tools, the impact these tools had on EFL students, the digital transformation post-COVID (the tools they decided to keep or not, and why), their attitude towards them and the challenges they faced (and tentative solutions), and their perspectives on a possible successful integration of these digital tools in higher education in EFL teaching. We made sure these exploratory questions conformed to the TAM on the motivation of the respondents to adopt a range of technologies in education (Koç et al., 2021; Slimani, 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Kartika et al., (2024); Nopis and Hashim, 2024).

Data was collected from October 2024 to January 2025. Collection was done using WhatsApp chat and face-to-face interviews on the campus of the UYI. The interviews with teachers were conducted using a Word form shared on WhatsApp and in their offices on campus for face-to-face interactions. All informants consented to participate in the study. Their contribution was recorded (using a Samsung A54 cell phone) and transcribed with their permission. Moreover, ethical requirements such as voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of the respondents were also considered. Potential researcher bias was addressed through reflexive practices, and conflicting opinions among participants were reconciled by employing triangulation and member checking, allowing for validation and integration of differing viewpoints to enhance the credibility of the findings. The interviews were conducted in English

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and scheduled according to the availability of the informants. The data were then summarised, and the responses classified in tables.

4.0 FINDINGS

This section summarises the informants' key answers. Table 1 presents the findings on managing digital transformation, focusing on the tools, teachers' experiences and perceptions, and use post-COVID.

Table 1: Summarised key answers of the informants

Key answers	Findings
ICT tools	Integration of various digital tools: Smartphones, projectors, laptops, USB discs, Google Classroom/Meet, Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, Telegram, PowerPoint, Word, Canva
Strategies/organisation	- Flipped classroom - Traditional classroom
Setbacks/difficulties	- Limited access to ICT tools - Limited Internet connection - Lack of training - Digital divide - No Internet connexion on campus - Power outage - Lack of motivation - Difficulties in teaching aspects of language like phonology
Advantages	- Interest of students in virtual classes - Apps to help prepare classes - Timesaving - Familiarity with digital tools
Learners' reactions/appreciation	- Easy collaboration/Access to teachers - Difficulty to do group work - Distraction when online - Cost-effective - Easy access to documentation - Lack of adequate ICT tools - Boring classes - Limited Internet connexion - Flexibility - Discovery of learning platforms and social media - Room for creativity/critical thinking
Digital transformation in the Departments	- Purchase of some ICT tools by the Department and by teachers - Seminars for teachers in digital pedagogy - Tele-evaluation of students - Online classes on Google Classroom, Telegram or WhatsApp still going on

Projections	- Careful optimism towards digital transformation - Concern for the wrong use of artificial intelligence, especially in writing (ethical considerations) - Need for proper training of teachers (and awareness of students, from primary and secondary education) - A more interactive Learning Management System (LMS) like Moodle than Google Classroom - More technological infrastructure and a connected campus

Tables 2 and 3 disclose a few samples of lecturers' answers to the open-ended questions from the Department of Bilingual Studies (Table 2) and the Department of English Modern Letters (Table 3). These answers will help us understand their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with integrating digital tools in their teaching.

Table 2. Samples of informants' answers (Department of Bilingual Studies)

Variables	**Experience with integrating digital tools**
Experience with ICT tools	- "I was happy to discover and use Google Classroom and the whole Google pack. Experiencing online teaching gave me a new perception of teaching." - "I was worried about my assessment methods, but I really enjoyed trying quizzes online." - "To be honest, digital didn't have a real impact on the way I teach now because it did not go on for long, just for a period of time"
Perceived ease of use	- "I do not have a sound knowledge of digitalisation, I prefer traditional classes." - "Digital was not so efficient to transform." - "I send documents online prior to the class, and we discuss them later, it is interesting and makes work easier but I still need to learn how to use Google Classroom effectively."
Setbacks/difficulties	- "I need to be fully trained so I can master it. I also feel like it gives me extra work." - "I prefer face-to-face interaction, since our machines are not up-to-date, teaching is difficult online." - "Teachers cannot know how successful their lessons are, cannot identify weak learners from hardworking ones." - "Many students are not connected." - "Learners don't know how to answer essay questions because of digital teaching."
Perceived usefulness	- "At least, teaching was effective, though not easy." - "Some students seemed to enjoy this way of teaching."

	- "I could learn how to use a learning app, and other digital tools but I do not think I will still need them."
Intention to use	- "Train, train, train teachers and students to it, we are not yet ready." - "Make ICT tools available." - "Create a lab to help teachers record their lessons."

Table 3. Samples of informants' answers (Department of English Modern Letters)

Variables	Experience with integrating digital tools
Experience with ICT tools	- "Today teaching is easier for both learners and lecturers and the exchange of ideas does not necessary necessitate physical presence" - "I still have Telegram classes with students. They can also lay their complaints on topics they didn't understand for me to explain further. Most students' complaints are treated online"
Perceived ease of use	- "My students communicate with me by WhatsApp and email, when they have academic related problems and need solutions. It is easier for us." - "At first, the task looked humongous, but after few practice sessions, teaching online seemed possible, through stressful."
Setbacks/difficulties	- "As a lecturer, I had to start learning how to proceed with online teaching which wasn't common within the university cycles in Cameroon. [....] Challenges still exist, especially the cost of Internet connectivity. Connectivity is still very expensive in Cameroon. I think the powers that be should realize that online teaching and learning is today unavoidable. To this effect, connectivity should be the least of problems for both learners and teachers." - "As per challenges, they are numerous: a. Poor Internet connection; b. Some students don't have smartphones; c. Some students don't have Internet connection." - "Certain topics couldn't be well taught online, e.g . Phonetics and Phonology where transcriptions are involved couldn't be effectively taught online. Thus, I faced difficulties in maintaining student engagement and practicing speaking skills effectively in a virtual environment."
Perceived usefulness	- " I have continued to interact with my students the same way I did during the scourge period. Digital has facilitated the teaching and learning process." - "I continue online roll-call and assessments; it saves me time."

	- "I now incorporate online platform (WhatsApp) for lectures, discussions and assignments. WhatsApp allow me to reach out to students more faster and effectively."
Intention to use	- "As mentioned earlier, digital teaching and learning is the trend in academics all over the world." - "Digital has facilitated the teaching and learning process and should be encouraged in every academic setup. There is no magic in it."

Table 4 summarises students' experiences and perceptions.

Student (Anonymous)	Experience with digital learning
Student A	"I did not really like online classes because I missed my friends. It is true, we could chat online on WhatsApp, even during lessons, but the experience was not the same. All our small *kongossa* (gossip) did not have the same taste."
Student B	"It was good to have classes online because I could do many things at the same time. Plus, I saved money for taxi because I stay very far from campus."
Student C	"My experience was not pleasant; poor connection disturbed me all through. When I convert data, before I can connect to the class, MTN will tell me that my data is finished. It was worst when the teacher will ask us to download a document or watch a video. I will only wait till midnight when fewer people are connected and the connection is cheaper."
Student D	"If we do not have wi-fi on campus, it is very difficult to work online. At home, there is always noise and distraction."
Student E	"My *PB* (computer) got bad after some weeks. I resorted to using my phone. I think we need good computers to work effectively, but our parents are not yet ready to buy them."
Student F	"My worry was that some teachers will ask us to connect at a specific time, but they will not be present online because of poor connection. This was disturbing me."
Student G	"I did not understand how to use Google Classroom, it took me some time to know how to submit my exercises and I did not always see the correction. Tele-evaluation too is a nightmare, when I press, the remote will not always work."
Student H	"During that period, I did not have the chance to communicate in English. With my classmates, we would always use French or *Camfranglais*."

5.0 DISCUSSION

The informants revealed that they used varied digital tools during and after the pandemic. They highlighted some tools they used, like photocopiers and laptops, but some were new to them, like the introduction of learning management systems (LMSs) or social media to teach. The majority indicated that they still use these tools. Switching to online classes brought to light the problem of many African universities that were not yet ready for digitalisation in education and the extent of the digital divide in many developing countries, as reported in many similar studies (Aruleba et al., 2022; Sokeng Piewo, 2022; Ajonbadi, 2023; Appalsami et al., 2024; Babalola & Genga, 2024). The challenges include the lack of digital tools and training for teachers and students at different levels, the unfamiliarity with LMSs, and limited Internet connection. However, despite the above challenges, some teachers (and some students, as they reported) showed interest in digital education. They said they saw some advantages because they discovered a new way of teaching, which could save time, and noticed some students enjoyed virtual classes.

Digital transformation was also felt at the departmental and individual levels. At the departmental level, departments were equipped with digital tools, training seminars were organised for teachers, students were evaluated using tele-evaluation and Google Classroom, and other media were used to teach. At the individual level, teachers resorted to purchasing ICT tools, such as computers, printing machines, Android phones, and modems, despite financial constraints. They are conscious that digital transformation in education means driving innovation in teaching methods, as Erlangga et al. (2024) report. They also express their fears regarding digital transformation, as teachers in other African countries do in South Africa (Venketsamy & Hu, 2022) or in Nigeria (Oyewole, 2024) .

Students, on their part, understood the urge for digitalisation but were not fully prepared. 47 out of 50 students (94%) view digitalisation as a very challenging task with many setbacks that must be addressed (even post-COVID) for a better experience. The first challenge and the most recurrent was poor access to Internet connection and access to technology (Students C, D, E, F). Of the students interviewed, 49 out of 50 (98%) mentioned limited access to online classes due to poor connection or lack of appropriate tools (financial constraints). Another challenge they mentioned was the loss of interactions with their classmates, and thus a drop in their use of the English language. They will instead use French or Camfranglais (a mixture of Cameroonian indigenous languages, French, English, and Pidgin English used mainly by the urban youths), as Student H reported. Assessment and evaluation posed another challenge to students during online teaching (Student G). However, Table 4 also reveals that some students expressed their satisfaction with this form of learning (Student B, for example), which allows them more flexibility and discovery. Out of the 50 students that were sampled, 31 (62%) expressed their dissatisfaction, 9 (18%) their satisfaction, and 10 (20%) had mixed feelings about online teaching and learning.

Tables 2 and 3 reveal that the results for both departments were mitigated. Concerning the Perceived Usefulness of digital tools, 6 (66%) out of nine teachers of the Department of Bilingual Studies (Table 2) reported that the benefits perceived were present but not clear enough and did not add value in their teaching. This was not the case for teachers of the Department of English Modern Letters (Table 3). 8 (88%) out of nine found using technology

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very beneficial and could add value to their activity. This is portrayed in their Perceived Ease of Use. The data in Table 2 show that teachers were not very comfortable with the use of digital tools, and because of that, they felt that preparing their lessons using digital tools gave them extra work. In Table 3, teachers believed that technology did not require extraordinary effort. Table 2 reports (for the intention to use) that teachers and students were not yet ready, so digital transformation may need more time.

From the interviews with teachers from the Department of Bilingual Studies, it appears that the majority still prefer and stick to traditional teaching methods and are hesitant (or even reluctant for some) to embrace digital teaching/learning because they question their effectiveness in our context and realities and probably fear it will derange traditional practices. While Cameroon recognises the potential advantages of digital education and has made a move to promote and implement it in education, there are still gaps, such as the lack of digital infrastructure, internet access, and funding for higher education institutions (Maguatcher & Ru, 2023) that slow down or even impede the transformation. This was not observed with teachers of the Department of English Modern Letters who have decided to adopt technology largely in their teaching.

Concerning specific difficulties in teaching English as a foreign language, the following language skills were mentioned: reading, listening, and speaking. Literature teachers highlighted the difficulties of having students read long texts online, language teachers talked of sounds and checking the pronunciation of students, and oral communication with students was reduced.

All teachers affirmed that they will never go back to the traditional way and have stuck to the transformation they believe is at their own level. For example, they said they have decided to keep what was positive to them and even developed that, and left out what was too challenging for them. They acknowledge the numerous challenges but have kept some aspects of digital pedagogy that they were not using before, like taking the students to Google Classroom, having Zoom meetings with the students, or preparing their classes on PowerPoint and sharing them with students. This reveals that digital technology has not yet fully transformed EFL teachers, but hope exists.

5.1 Suggestions

The participants made recommendations to help them easily and fully manage digital transformation. Their recommendations are similar to those of Maguatcher and Ru (2023) in higher education. First, the government should develop a national digital education strategy with clear objectives/policies, partnering with international organisations that are advanced in the field. For example, the government can introduce social media in secondary school teaching, offer IT grants to students, or instigate a compulsory IT course from level I in tertiary education. Second, it should invest in infrastructure to reduce the technological gap for a more inclusive digital education. For example, it can partner with local tech firms or the National Advanced Schools of Engineering and Public Works (or similar institutions) for infrastructure. Thirdly, EFL teachers (and learners) should be trained, not just thrown into the lion's den without weapons for self-defence. For example, seminars should be organised at the University Digital Development Centre with EFL teachers from universities and institutions with well-developed online programmes for teaching English as a foreign language to see how digital tools are integrated into their teaching practices, and to keep up with technological

developments in English language teaching and learning. A practical course could also be offered online to learners, alongside a multimedia amphitheatre to train them. Students can be trained by senior peers from the Department of Computer Science on using digital tools and Google Classroom.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The coronavirus pandemic in 2019 had a profound impact on education in Cameroon. It not only accelerated the adoption of innovative teaching techniques but also revealed the lapses that the country had regarding technology in education. The government rapidly understood the potential advantages of digitalisation in education and started a digital change in higher education. Unfortunately, what was expected from teachers and students was implemented rapidly because of the corona outbreak, and the country still faces many challenges regarding digital transformation. English language teachers in the Department of Bilingual Studies and the Department of English Modern Letters faced the same challenges during and after the outbreak. Their post-COVID-19 choice is to return to their former way of teaching, incorporate some aspects of digitalisation into their teaching practices for the former, or adopt technology as much as possible for the latter. If applied, the solutions proposed in this study can foster the digital transformation of EFL teachers in higher education in Cameroon.

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