# Exploring the Status and Teachers' Perceptions of Technology Integration in EFL Classrooms at Chadli Bendjedid University, Algeria

**Ladaci Naima**
Department of English
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf, Algeria

**Abstract:**
In the realm of language education, technology has reshaped the state of the teaching/learning framework in different ways and there is no surprise how a number of classes around the world have now turned from chalk and board classes to technology-based ones. However, whether teachers adopt or reject technology in their teaching depends primarily on the way they perceive it. Consequently, the current paper intends to capture the various perceptions of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers from the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf (Algeria) towards the use and the integration of technology in their teaching practices. It also aspires to answer the question: to what extent is technology used in their teaching? In order to collect data for this study; a questionnaire was administered to ten teachers from the above-cited department. Although the findings revealed that all the participants have a positive attitude towards technology; they all face different barriers that impede them from integrating it.

*Keywords:* Level of technology usage, problems of integration, teachers' perceptions and attitudes

**Introduction:**

      In educational settings, technology has earned a solid foothold owing to the qualitative improvements it brought to the language classrooms. Actually, it is very rare to find a modern classroom that does not make use of any form of technology as this latter is constantly offering a plethora of authentic resources that may emulate and bring real life language to the teaching/learning environments, and hence facilitates the teaching /learning of languages in efficient ways. Unfortunately, this technology appears to be inefficiently used in many developing countries and Algeria is no exception. Though this latter has laid great emphasis on the significance of enhancing a national policy for technology education and training, the level of technology integration is still in its beginnings.

      In fact, the Algerian government has initiated partnership with many international agencies to implement projects that would boost the status of technology in education and make it available for all; but unfortunately different educational institutions in the country still face problems of poor infrastructure and connectivity issues.

      Accordingly, this study intends to provide an account on the status of technology in the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University (El Tarf) and capture EFL teachers' perceptions of technology usage in language teaching. Moreover, it attempts to call attention on the challenges that hamper teachers from integrating technology into their teaching practices.

**1. Research Questions**

This study was designed to elicit answers to the following questions:

      a.  How do EFL teachers at Chadli Bendjedid University perceive technology in language teaching?

      b.  To what extent is technology used in their teaching

**2. Literature Review**

*Defining Technology*

      The term technology has been documented in literature under various concepts and this is due to its dynamic nature. Consequently, it has often been used as a synonym to words like : Computer Assisted Instruction(CAI), Computer Assisted Language Learning(CALL), Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL),Information Communication Technologies(ICT's),Media Technology, New Media ,etc. In fact, they all refer to the technical tools such as but not restricted to: software, email, interactive whiteboards, TV, computer and the internet that can be used to ease and heighten teaching and learning. However, the most dominant and favored term in technology is CALL "because of its now well-established presence in the discourse surrounding the topic" Hubbard and Levy (2006, p.9), and more importantly because of its inclination to focus more on learning than on teaching.

      A review of the literature about technology in language teaching reveals that it has gained considerable attention from a number of scholars. Satya (2007) ,for example, refers to it as "an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element"( p.125). Moreover, Chapelle and Jamieson (2008) define CALL as: "the area of applied linguistics concerned with the use of computers for teaching and learning

a second language" (p.1), and according to Egbert (2005) it means "learners learning language in any context with, through and around computer technologies" (p.4). However, the most succinct and ample definition is the one provided by Levy (1997) in which he considers CALL as "the search for a study of applications of the computers in language teaching and learning" (p.1). This definition draws attention on the empirical feature of CALL and stresses its importance to both teachers and learners.

Therefore, building on these definitions, one can simply define CALL as an approach or a device that is used by teachers to facilitate the transmission of knowledge and to assist learners to comprehend and acquire that knowledge. Moreover, what can be added here is that learners may deal with technology in two different ways; they can either learn from it when they will be only receiving the information, or they can learn with it when they do not only take the information but also interact with it.

## 3. Technology in FL Classrooms
It is definitely true that "everyday language use is so tied to technology that learning language through technology has become a fact of life with important implications for applied linguists, particularly those concerned with facets of SLA" (Chapelle 2001,p.1). In reality, technology has reshaped and refined the state of the teaching/learning framework in different ways due to the huge authentic material that has opened up the language classroom to the outside world. As a result, there was a clear shift from the familiar medium of textbook and its traditional literacy practices to the medium of the computer screen and its innovative form of multi-modal discourse (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001).

Generally what happens within the traditional methods of language teaching is that a very little time is devoted to the teaching of authentic language that learners may face beyond the boundaries of the classroom; they frequently fail to handle real life situations where language is used divergently. Moreover, teachers within these methods are often required to teach many hours so that to lead learners to a level where they will perform hesitantly and timidly. By contrast, in a technology based classroom, teachers are no more stuck to a prescribed syllabus which they need to follow to the letter since excellent material is available at their fingerprints. However, this is not to say that technology substitutes the traditional way of teaching and learning but rather enhances and supports the regular work done inside the classrooms.

Murphy (1995) summarizes the learning effects that technology usage may breed to the language classrooms. They are as follows:
1. Social growth.
2. Problem solving.
3. Peer teaching.
4. Independent work.
5. Exploration.

## 4. Relevance of Technology to Language Teaching
In education, technology has made its way in the mainstream teaching of second/foreign language (L2/FL) (Hubbard, 2008) and it would seem illogic for language teachers to stick to the traditional methods of chalk and talk without profiting from the various resources that are

regularly accessible at their fingerprints. In fact, a variety of media technologies seem to have the potential to meet the new demands of foreign language teachers and learners .e.g. more humanistic, student centered and communicative approaches (Training Agency.1990), and as Brinton (2001) puts it: "media material may lend authenticity to the classroom situation, reinforcing for the students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world" (p.461).

Therefore, technology has the considerable potentials to contribute to language teaching /learning development and admittedly, it has improved the quality of language education as it brought valuable applications to the field. There are abundant free of charge websites that afford excellent opportunities to learners to learn different aspects of language like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. Moreover, in modern classrooms where technology is applied, new strategies and approaches are constantly developed to satisfy the expectations and needs of the 21st century learners.

As with research on technology, several studies were empirically conducted to examine the efficiency it may breed to language teaching and learning. As a result, they have provided ample support for the assertion that the use of technology in language teaching/learning heightens learners' proficiency, raises their motivation and involvement in the classroom (Zhao2013, Grycrovic, Chapelle & Shelley 2013). Echoing this view, Odabasi (2000) maintains that among the benefits of technology usage is the increase in learners' motivation.

Eaton (2010) has also found that computer based communication is a critical feature for language teaching/learning, and computer based discussions are more liable to engender better participation than face-to-face discussions. Hence, it usually results in more collaborative and encouraging environments where all students are given equal chances of language practice.

In addition to that, Rivers (1987 as cited in Bani-Hani 2009, p.43) records different advantages of CALL from which we mention the following:

- *Interaction*: the computer is a beneficial instrument through which the interaction in the classroom can be effectively used. The computer can also help student-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, teacher-teacher (from other schools) interaction, school-school interaction and finally student –computer interaction.
- *Immediate feedback*: Rivers pointed out that the computer can provide immediate notification that an error has been made .It is worth mentioning here that the teacher may forget to provide feedback but, on the contrary, the computer will never do.
- *Error analysis:* the computer can identify specific errors and explain them.
- *Self correction:* clear error messages may help most students to achieve satisfaction of reaching the correct answer at the end.
- *Reinforcement:* through which students are encouraged by congratulatory messages for correct answers.

Hence, the aforementioned scholars have practically reached the same results i.e. all viewing technology as paramount to language teaching and learning and as a medium that has a positive impact on the learning process and the quality of language instruction.

## 5. Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Technology

One of the most serious challenges facing EFL teachers in the 21st century classrooms is how to meet the expectations and needs of today's' learners who grew using and breathing technology. Therefore, "the use of technology in teaching becomes more important in present times because teachers also have to keep with the technological knowledge of their students" (Richards, 2014.p.2).In fact, language teachers handiness to use technology is mentioned amongst the effective teachers' characteristics in higher education (Koureos & Everipidou, 2013) and it is a must for foreign language teacher candidates in many teacher training programs (Barzaq 2007).

Moreover, it should be noted that among the many factors that affect the success of technology usage in language classrooms apart from the teachers' knowledge of education is their attitude towards its use. Teachers' attitudes, then, is pivotal in whether they welcome technology as an integral tool in their teaching practices or they reject it.

Recently, several studies were conducted to examine teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards technology. Albirini (2004), for instance, explores the attitudes of EFL teachers in Syrian high schools towards the use of technology in education; he found that most Jordanian teachers possess positive attitudes towards the use of ICT for educational purposes .In the same vein, Mollaei & Riasati (2013) found that teachers in Iran had positive attitudes toward using technology to develop learning through a computer –oriented instruction. Thus, all the above mentioned researchers regarded the importance of teachers' attitudes as a key factor that can determine the extent to which technologies are used in language teaching.

## 6. Methodology
### 6.1. Participants

In order to attain the research goals and fully capture the perceptions of university teachers towards the integration of technology in their teaching practices, we conducted a study on ten teachers from the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University.

### 6.2 Data Collection Method and Instruments

To portray teachers' opinions about the use and usefulness of technology in language teaching, a quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire which was carefully designed to meet the purposes of the study. The questionnaire was printed and distributed to the participants.

## 7. Results

The analyses of the first three questions revealed basic information about the participants. All of them (100%) hold a magister degree; their ages range from 20 to 30 (40%), from 30 to 40 (50%) and from 40 to 50 (10%) and they have been teaching English for eight years (30%), some for a period of five years(40%)and the others for three years(30%).This indicates that most teachers of English at Chadli Bendjedid University are young teachers who may well have a

better disposition for technology use than older teachers. Turning to question (Q4) (see Appendix), all the participants confirmed their possession of personal computers which reveals the significance of computers in the life of every individual. For the purpose of answering question five (Q5), six teachers (50%) argued that they always use computers, three teachers (30%) use it often, while only two teachers (20%) selected sometimes. When asked whether they used the computer for teaching purposes in question (Q6), all the participants answered yes.

In question seven (Q7), respondents were asked to describe their experience in using technology. The majority of them (70%) reported that they are advanced users; the other teachers (30%) revealed that they are average users. In order to understand the policy of the aforementioned department towards the integration of technology in language classrooms, we asked question (Q8). The entire population (100%) confirmed that the department does not have a clearly set policy towards the integration of technology; some teachers added some notes next to this question saying that only in oral expression modules that the department mandates the use of language laboratories. Unfortunately, their answers to question (Q9) confirmed the absence of adequate technological devices that can be used in language teaching. They all selected computers in the language laboratory and overhead projectors as the sole tools available at the department. Moreover, when they were asked in question (Q10) to select among the tools those that are imperative in language teaching, the participants reported that they are all indispensable.

With reference to question (Q11), all the participants (100%) affirmed their interest in using technological tools for language teaching. The answers they provided to the next question (Q12) supports their interest. Ninety (90%) of the participants answered the first segment of the question by (yes) which means that they rely on the internet in the preparation of their lessons ,whereas only one teacher (10%) chose (No) .The second part of the question attempts to identify the reasons of their choices. The teacher who chose (No) claimed that s/he prefers using books for teaching; however, the nine teachers who chose (yes) stated that the internet is the technology that provides authentic up-to-date material that will greatly boost the teaching /learning of English. The comments they provided are summarized in the following points:

- Technology provides both teachers and students with authentic and original inputs that could improve the quality of EFL teaching and learning.
- It boosts students' motivation especially when it brings fun to the classroom.
- It encourages communication and collaboration in the classroom; it may also boost students' self confidence especially if they are familiar with technology use.
- It offers a sort of enthusiasm for students.
- It raises students' autonomy and allows them to learn freely and anywhere.
- The internet can deliver instantaneous and genuine access to the target language.

The nine teachers who answered question (Q12) positively, answered (Q13) as follows: they stated that they always use the internet to prepare their lessons (50%), and (40%) often prepare their lessons through the internet. The analysis of questions (Q14) and (Q15) respectively demonstrates that (70%) of the respondents think that technology is very useful for students while (30%) think it is somehow useful. Nonetheless, they all think that technology must be an integral part of the teaching /learning process as it makes the process more active and meaningful.

The last question of this study is crucial in finding the main barriers that impede teachers at the department of English from incorporating technology in their teaching. Sixty (60%) selected lack of technological material, (10%) claimed that they are unfamiliar with technology while (30%) added that beside the poor technological equipment of the department; the lack of time, training and support also impedes them from integrating any technology in their classes.

## 8. Discussion

There are many factors that contribute to the success of implementing technology in educational settings; primarily among them are teachers' attitudes towards the integration. As a matter of fact, it was clear from the results that the participants of the present study have positive attitudes towards the use of technology in English language teaching which means they are well aware and convinced that the ever rising stream of technical material has a lot to offer to foreign language learners. It appeared, then, that they accepted the use of technology as a binding facet of instruction. Actually, this finding is in compliance with other studies exploring teachers' perceptions and attitudes of technology inclusion in language teaching (Albirini 2004 ; Isleem 2003 ; Merç 2015).

However, while the findings provide evidence that the subjects in this study considered technology essential in foreign language teaching and learning, there is no correlation between their attitudes and their real adoption of technological devices in the teaching classrooms. In fact, these teachers complained about the dearth of technical software and they considered it as the main inhibiting factor that slows the adoption of technology and deprives students from broader learning experiences. Therefore, the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid Univsity was found to be poor as regards the technological equipments that it may provide to language teachers and learners.

In addition to that, the participants revealed that they received no support for technology use i.e., the department does not encourage them to use technological aids for teaching the language except for the language laboratories which do not satisfy their aspirations nor meet their learners' needs.

## 9. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, we may put forward the following recommendations:

- In order to lift the teaching and learning of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, the administrators should offer pedagogically firm ways of incorporating technology in the teaching methods. Successful technology incorporation must start from the curriculum wherein technology will no more be viewed as an optional teaching aid that can be adopted or abandoned voluntarily but rather as an integral part of the teaching process. Therefore, they need to provide larger opportunities for teachers to integrate technology into their curricula.
- EFL teachers need to receive adequate training and ongoing support to ensure an effective use of technology in the classroom. It is worth noting here that teachers will not be only trained on how to control material, but also on how to incorporate resources into classroom activities in order to attain successful technology integration.

- In order to expand education beyond traditional boundaries, teachers should use technological tools more often in the teaching of different tasks. Over head projectors, for example, can be used for the teaching of literature, civilization, grammar and other courses. Moreover, power-point may offer colorful texts, photographs, drawings and tables which will make learning motivating, attractive and more enjoyable.
- Teachers should also be convinced that 1) they are no more the omniscient sole sources of knowledge inside the language classroom and 2) technology in the 21st century classroom is a mandate requirement that will take their teaching one step further.
- In addition to that, there could be a culture of teamwork in which teachers work jointly, share and expend their experiences with technological equipment and resources.
- EFL learners at Chadli Bendjedid University could also be encouraged to use technology more often inside and outside the language classroom in order to boost their learning capabilities.

## Conclusion

Teaching with technology has become the number one fashion that is in favour of many foreign language teachers around the world who seek to render their classes livelier, more collaborative, and more learner-centered. Therefore, the overriding purpose of this study was to probe the level of technology usage in EFL classrooms at Chadli Bendjedid University (El Tarf) and how teachers perceive its integration. The findings of the study indicated that technological tools are barely used for the teaching of English the fact that deprives EFL students from a wide range of authentic material which may motivate them, engage them in different interactional tasks and boost their overall language proficiency. Besides, the results have also revealed that the main reason for not using technology in the teaching of English is due to its unavailability at the university. With regard to teachers' perceptions, it has been found that almost all the teachers who participated in this study have a positive attitude towards the implementation of technology and they are fully aware of the great potential it offers. Unfortunately, they are not provided with the adequate facilities that may support their teaching. In fact, this study is an appeal to the supervisors at the university to reconsider the relevance of introducing technological equipments in the language classrooms. Finally, teachers need to understand that successful language teaching cannot be met by courses only following traditional, instructional methods; they should rather believe that technology in the 21st century classroom is a must and not an option.

**About the Authors:**

**Naima Ladaci**: Assistant professor in the Department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University , El Tarf, Algeria. She holds a Magister in Language sciences and is currently completing a Doctorate research in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests are technology and language learning/teaching, learning strategies, and foreign language listening.

**References**

Albirini, A (2004). *An exploration of the factors associated with the attitudes of high school EFL teachers in Syria toward information and communication technology*. Unpublished PhD thesis. The Ohio State University.

Bani Hani, N. (2009). *Designing an English Computerized Instructional Program for Jordanian Sixth Grade Students and Measuring Its Effect on their Achievement*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

Barzaq, M. Y. (2007). *Student-teachers' training programmes evaluation in English Language Teaching Colleges of Education in Gaza Strip universities*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. The Islamic University, Gaza.

Brinton, D. M. (2001). The use of media in language teaching. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 459-475). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.Chapelle, C (2001).*Computer applications in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapelle ,C and Jamieson,J (2008) .*Tips for Teaching with CALL: Practical Approaches toComputer-Assisted Language Learning*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Eaton, S. E. (2010). *Global trends in language learning in the twenty-first century* . Calgary, Canada: Onate Press.

Egbert, J. & Petrie,G.M. (2005).*CALL research perspectives*. Mahwah, N.J. : L. Erlbaum Associates.

Grgurović, M., Chapelle,C. &  Shelley,M. C. (2013**).** A meta-analysis of effectiveness studies on computer technology-supported language learning. *ReCALL*, *25*(2), 165-198. doi:10.1017/S0958344013000013

*Hubbard*, P. (2008).*CALL and the future* of language *teacher education. CALICO Journal, 25(2),*175-188. https://www.calico.org/html/article_683.pdf

Isleem, M.B. (2003). *Relationships of selected factors and the level of computer use for instructional purposes by technology education teachers in Ohio public schools: A statewide survey.* Unpublished PhD thesis. The Ohio State University.

Kourieos, S., & Evripidou, D. (2013). Students' perceptions of effective EFL teachers in university settings in Cyprus. *English Language Teaching, 6*(11), 1-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p1

Kress, G.R. & Leeuwen, T.( 2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication.* London:  Oxford University Press.

Levy, M. (1997). *Computer-assisted language learning: Context and conceptualization*.NY: Oxford University Press

Merç, Ali.(2015). Using Technology in the Classroom: A Study with Turkish Pre-Service EFL Teachers.*TOJET*, *14*(2), 229-240. http://www.tojet.net/articles/v14i2/14225.pdf

Mollaei, F., & Riasati, M. J. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of using technology in teaching EFL. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 2(1),* 13-22. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/ijalel.v.2n.1p.13.

Murphy, V. (1995). Using technology in early learning classrooms. *Learning and Leading With Technology, 22*(8), 8-10.

Odabasi, H. F.( 2000) Faculty use of technological resources in Turkey, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International,37*(2),103-107.

Richards, J. C. (2014). Foreword. In J. D. D. M. Agudo, (Ed.). English as a foreign language teacher education: Current perspectives and challenges (pp. 1-3). Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Satya , R K.( 2007). *Modern Methods of Teaching English.* New Delhi: A P H Publication.

Training  Agency. (1990). *Educational Technology in modern  language learning*. Moorfoot, Sheffield:  Fox, J., Matthews, A., Matthews, C., & Rope, A.

Zhao, Y. (2013). Recent developments in technology and language learning: Literature review and meta-analysis. *CALICO Journal, 21*(1), 7-27.

## TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

*Dear Colleague*,
*This questionnaire is part of a research study carried at the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University(El Tarf); it attempts to provide an account on the status of technology and capture teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards technology use in the teaching of English as a foreign language. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions to help us accomplish this study.*

*Thank you for your collaboration!*

**1.** Degree:B.A. / Licence□       M.A. / Magister □          Ph.D. / Doctorate □
2. Age range (years):20-30 □ 30-40 □          40-50 □ over 50□
3. How many years have you been teaching English at the university?
…………………………………………………………….…………………………………….......
........
4. Do you have a personal computer?   Yes □    No □
5. If yes, for how often do you use it?
     a) Always □ b) Often □        c) Sometimes □           d) Rarely □
6. Do you use it for teaching purposes?    Yes □    No □
7. How do you describe your experience with technology?
a) Unfamiliar □             b) Newcomer □        c) Average □             d) Advanced □
8. Does your department have a clearly formulated policy about the use of technology in language teaching?
a) Yes □           b) No □
9. What Hardware facilities are available at the department?
     a) Classroom computer for teachers' use □                         b) Overhead projector□
     c) Students' computers in a lab□              d) Students' computers in a classroom□
     e) Digital camera □                  f) TV    □              g) CD/ DVD Player □
other…………………………………….................................................................................……....
.........................................................................................................................................................
................
10. Among these tools, which one(s) do you think is/are imperative for language teaching?
.........................................................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................................................
................
11. Are you interested in using these tools for language teaching?
a) Yes □           b) No □
12. Do you rely on internet in preparing your lessons?
     a)   Yes □                       b) No □
Please justify your choice?
.........................................................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................................................
................
13. If you answered yes, how often to you use it to prepare your lessons?

   a) Always □              b) Often □              c) Sometimes □              d) Rarely

14. How useful do you think technology is for students?

a) Very useful □          b) Somehow useful □        c) Not very useful □      d) Not useful at all□

15.  If you do not use technology is it due to:

a)    Lack of technological material   □                    b) Lack of familiarity with technology   □

c)     Lack of adequate content     □                    d) Dislike/Fear of using technology       □

Other(s)…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………….......................

...............................

16. Do you think technology in language teaching must be?

   a) An integral part                                b) A peripheral resource.


Why?...............................................................................................................................

..............................................................................................................................................

..............................................................................................................................................

........................