

## Insights Regarding the Assimilation of Technology in the Learning Process of Learners in Higher Education in Morocco

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### ABSTRACT

The use of technology has become an important part of the learning process in and out of the class. Every language class usually uses a form of technology. It has been used to both help and improve language learning. This study focuses on the important role of using new technologies in the process of learning a foreign language. The participants were 20 university professors of English, who teach in various Moroccan private and public institutions. The instruments used in the present study was a questionnaire. It also tackles different attitudes, which support learners of English to substantially increase their learning skills through using technologies. It aims at emphasizing the significance of the integration of technology in learners' language learning strategies. It summarizes the background of language learning strategies, in addition to defining the concept of a language learning strategy and outlining the taxonomy of language learning strategies proposed by several researchers. It also takes into account the teachers' role in strategy training while providing a number of questions for further research on language strategies and stating certain recommendations for the most convenient use of those technologies, which are likely to assist learners in enhancing their learning skills. The Findings of the study are clearly noteworthy; for instance, passion and motivation are two fundamental keys to lift students' learning process. Besides, it is very significant to consider a cherished element in the research and that is "motivation" without which no learning could take place. Learners would not learn anything if they are not encircled by inspiring teachers who are ready to help, who encourage their students to do their utmost while enjoying learning. Teachers do not have to be perfect teachers who know how to use technology, they have to be human beings and love their noble job.

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### Introduction

Language is regarded by many scholars in the field of teaching and learning that it is one of the significant components, which impacts international communication activities. As it is maintained by Grabe and Stoller (2002), learners practice the four English language skills, like writing, speaking, listening, and reading in order to communicate effectively and proficiently. According to Ahmadi (2017), learning a language can highly be effective thanks to the techniques applied by teachers in their classroom settings in order to facilitate the learning process of learners. Moreover, learning through the access of computer technology is regarded as an

outstanding teaching tool in the classrooms, where teachers have appropriate access, are adequately equipped and free to carry out the lessons as planned in the syllabus program, and thus learners can be provided with a high quality education thanks to computer technology (Becker, 2000).

## **The Effective Integration of Technology in the Learning and the Teaching context**

### ***Definition of Technology***

Technology has been defined by many scholars. For example, as it is illustrated by ISMAN (2012: 117), it is the genuine use of knowledge, exclusively in a specific area and it is a technique of carrying out a task particularly through the use of technical processes, methods, or knowledge. The manipulation of technology necessitates not only machines, meaning computer hardware and tools, but it also involves planned relations with people, machines, in addition to the environment, in which the learning process will prevail (ISMAN, 2012).

### ***The Use of Technology in English Language Classroom***

Technology is a resourceful instrument for learners. They have to apply it as a noteworthy part of their learning process. Also, teachers should enhance the use of technology to fortify the curriculum so that learners can develop the valid use of technology in learning their language skills (Costley, 2014: 117). Likewise, Bennett (2000), maintained that the use of computer technology pilot to the development of the teaching skill of teachers and the learning process of learners in the classrooms.

## **Language Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching**

### ***Definition of Language Learning Strategy***

The term language learning strategy has been identified by many scholars. Richards and Platt (1992:209) illustrate that learning strategies are “intentional behavior and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information.” Furthermore, in the same line, Faerch Claus and Casper (1983: 67) point out that a learning strategy is an effort to enhance linguistic and sociolinguistic capacities in the target language. Besides, Rubin (1987) state that there are actually three kinds of strategies applied by learners namely, learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies.

### **Learning Strategies**

They are of two major kinds, being the strategies participating directly to the progress of the language system structured by the learner namely the cognitive learning strategies and the metacognitive learning strategies. For the first ones, they refer to the steps employed in learning or problem-solving that necessitate direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin classified some major cognitive learning strategies participating directly to language learning, such as classification, guessing, practicing, memorizing, and monitoring. As for the metacognitive learning strategies, they are applied in order to supervise, control or self-direct language learning. They include different processes as planning, prioritizing, setting objectives, and self-management.

### **Communicative Strategies**

They are less directly associated with language learning since their focal point is on the process of taking part in a conversation and getting meaning across or explaining what the speaker meant. Communicative strategies are practiced by speakers when encountered some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends excel their communicative means or when faced with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.

### **Social Strategies**

Social strategies are those activities learners participate and which provide them with opportunities to be exposed to and apply their knowledge. Even though these strategies offer exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning as they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and practicing of language (Rubin & Wenden, 1987:23-27).

## **Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Technology in Higher Education Language Learning**

The major aim of this paper is to mainly investigate on teachers' use of technology as part of their teaching process inside the classroom. Hence, a questionnaire has been focused on as the major data collection procedure. Concerning the respondents, they are twenty university professors of English, who teach in various Moroccan private and public institutions. 20 copies of the questionnaire have been distributed and the return rate is 100%. Many questions have been tackled in the questionnaire namely, whether they adopt technology in their teaching methodologies, whether they advise their students to have access to technology in order to improve the four skills of English, whether they actually believe that the adoption of technology in

higher education mainly in the classroom setting has benefitted both the teacher and the student, and whether they allow their students to use technology (smartphones) for translation purposes in the classroom?

QUESTION1 :	<b>Do you use technology to prepare your teaching lectures?</b>
a- Yes	65%
b-No	0%
c-To some extent	35%

One of them illustrate the following quote

*"I use the internet because it facilitates the job. For example, for grammar and reading comprehension, we can have plenty of EFL and ESP teaching materials in the form of ready-made reading comprehension texts and a variety of grammar exercises".*

QUESTION2 :	<b>Do you think that technology has contributed greatly in improving your teaching methodologies in comparison with the past?</b>
Strongly agree	60%
Strongly disagree	30%
Neutral	10%

It seems that the majority of respondents strongly believe that technology makes teaching more interesting, more lively and enjoyable. It certainly makes it easy for the teacher in helping his/ her students to assimilate and learn better whatever subject they are being taught.

One of the respondents states:

*"In the past, we had to prepare our own texts, design comprehension questions and vocabulary too. It was time consuming and tiresome".*

QUESTION3 :	<b>In your opinion, do you think that teachers should advise their students to have access to technology in order to improve the four skills of English?</b>
a-Strongly agree	100%
b-Strongly disagree	0%

Apparently, all respondents believe that they should advise their students to have access to technology so that they can enhance the four skills of English.

One of the respondents states:

*"Yes, I do but it should be outside the classroom. I even give them links that they can use for reading stories, doing TOEIC and grammar exercises. I would allow the use of mobiles in case of looking for words or expressions that they cannot figure out".*

QUESTION 4:	<b>It is believed that the adoption of technology in higher education mainly in the classroom setting has benefitted both the teacher and the student.</b>
Strongly agree	20%
Strongly disagree	20%
To a certain extent	60%

The majority assume that the adoption of technology in higher education particularly in the classroom setting has contributed to a certain extent in enhancing the learning process of learners and the teaching process of teachers.

One of them illustrates the following quote:

*“Yes, to a certain extent. The use of data show has encouraged my students for example in presenting their themes in class, and at the same time, the teacher gets some feedback on his or her students’ proficiency through their presenting performance”.*

<b>QUESTION5:</b>	<b>Do you allow your students to use technology (smartphones) for translation purposes in the classroom?</b>
<b>a- Yes</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>b-No</b>	<b>0%</b>

All the respondents confirm that they do allow their students to use technological devices for translation purposes in the classroom.

One of them illustrate the following quotation:

*“I encourage them to do so but I also request that they ask me first to explain whatever they want to know. I always control the use of the mobiles in my classes for some are so mesmerized by their smartphones by their smartphones that they end up playing games instead of taking care of their work. I rather prefer that they use their phones for learning purposes outside class.*

<b>QUESTION6:</b>	<b>How often do you use any technological device in presenting your lessons?</b>
<b>a- Once in a while</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>b- Most of the time</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>c-Never</b>	<b>50%</b>

Apparently, it appears that most of the respondents never use any technological device in order to present their lessons while 30% use it once in a while and 20% for most of the time.

One of the respondents illustrates:

*“I would present my lessons orally using the board most of the time. You may say that I am an old-fashioned teacher”.*

<b>QUESTION7:</b>	<b>In your opinion, do you think that watching movies or documentaries in English contributes better than reading in improving the speaking and listening skills?</b>
<b>a-Yes</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>b-No</b>	<b>100%</b>

All of the respondents confirm that watching movies or documentaries in English does not not contribute better than reading in improving the speaking and the listening skills.

One of the respondents says that:

*“No it is wrong. The best way to learn how to speak and understand can be achieved through reading. As for watching movies and documentaries at home, they can be very helpful as well”.*

Most of the respondents recommend that technology might be a good means that contributes to language learning. It is also very important to consider a valuable element in the research and that is “motivation” without which no learning could take place. In addition to this, listening to music or watching movies on those smart phones, using data show for the learners’

classrooms' presentations would not help them a lot if they are not motivated enough to read books intensively and extensively, to speak the language whenever they are given the opportunity. Likewise, learners would not learn anything if they are not surrounded by inspiring teachers who are ready to help and who encourage their students to do their utmost while enjoying learning. Lastly, teachers do not have to be perfect teachers who know how to use technology, they have to be human beings and love their noble job.

### Students' Attitudes towards the Use of Technology in Learners Language Learning in Higher Education

The purpose of this questionnaire is to mainly elicit students' feedback with regard to their perceptions towards the impact of technology on their learning situations; meaning their excessive use of those technological gadgets like smartphones inside and outside the classroom. A number of questions related to the theme of the study have been tackled in this questionnaire. (not yet finished)

### Background Information

Gender	
Male	55%
Female	45%
Age	
Between 20 to 25 years old	65%
More than 25 years old	35%
Branch of Study	
Civil engineering	25%
Industrial engineering	25%
Software engineering	25%
Automation engineering	25%
The Study year	
4 <sup>th</sup> year	100%

Apparently, it seems that most of the respondents are males as it is shown in the table 55% and 45% are females. 65% are between 20 to 25 years old while 35% are more than 25 years old. Also, they are all fourth-year students and they belong to the Moroccan School of the Sciences of the Engineer. Their branches of study ranges from industrial engineering 25%, civil engineering 25%, automated and industrial computer engineering 25% and software engineering 25%

-QUESTION1	1- How many phones and laptops do you have so far?
A. One smartphone and one laptop	65%
B. Two smartphones and two laptops	35%
C. More than that	0%

Apparently, 65% of the respondents own one smartphone and one laptop while 35% own two smartphones and two laptops.

QUESTION2	Do you think that it is better to rely on the teacher in the classroom or on your phone?
Yes	75%
No	25%

The majority of the respondents claim that it is better to rely on the teacher in the classroom rather than on their cellphones. They claim that technology can never replace the worthy presence of the teacher in the classroom.

QUESTION3:	For which skill do you think that it's important to rely on the teacher in the classroom?
Reading	60%
Writing	50%
Speaking	40%
Listening	60%

The respondents were provided with the right to choose more than one alternative. Hence, it seems that the four skills of English are essential important in order for the learner to be proficient in English. As a result, 60% is given to both the reading and the listening skills while 50% is for writing, and 40% for the speaking skill.

QUESTION4:	In order to learn some vocabulary, most students rely on games on their phones. Do you agree or not?
Yes	45%
No	55%

The majority of the respondents illustrate that they do not rely on games on their phones to learn vocabulary. They state that there are better ways to learn English, such as Reading novels, short stories, newspapers in English, or through watching documentaries and movies in English. They also believe that an easy way for beginners to improve their English can start from listening to music with lyrics. As for the 45%, who state that they rely on games to learn vocabulary, they believe that there are some video games, which have assisted them in improving their skills in English, such as Pro 2019 (game of fight), PUPG (an action game where you fight against other players and communicate with the teammates in English) ,FIFA (a football game, MMORPG ( a game where the players interact and communicate with other players from other countries in English), and crossword (provide the players with the opportunity to discover new words and improve their language in English).

QUESTION7:	Do you rely on your phones and on your laptop to do the assignment?
Yes	85%
No	15%

Apparently, most of the respondents consent on the fact that they use technology to carry out their assignments. They believe that it helps them translate tough terms and sometimes they are embarrassed to ask their teachers which words they did not comprehend. Consequently, technology is the solution.

10- What do you think teachers must forbid the use of mobile phones and laptops in the classroom?

QUESTION10	Do you think that teachers must forbid the use of mobile phones and laptops in the classroom?
Yes	70%
No	30%

70% of the respondents illustrate that teachers have the absolute right to forbid the use of mobile phones and laptops in the classroom. They state that the classroom should be the setting where students are required to interact dynamically with their teachers through discussions and debates, and that technology should emerge when it is actually needed for the learning process and allowed by the teachers through classroom activities.

QUESTION13	In 24 hours a day, how many hours DO you spend of your time on mobile phone?
Less than 2hours	45%
2 to 4 hours	35%
4 to 8 hours	10%
More than 8 hours	10%

Actually, it seems that 45% of the respondents strongly disagree on spending a great deal of time chatting with their friends on their mobile phones while 35% strongly agree on spending a quality time with their friends on their mobile phones.

QUESTION15	Is it so important for you to use it on a daily basis?
Yes	70%
No	30%

Apparently, most of respondents believe that it is crucial for them to use their cellphones on a daily basis. They think that they have become part of their lives because they not only facilitate the learning process, but it is necessary for them to keep in touch with their parents.

QUESTION17	How many novels have you read so far this year?
More than 2 novels	45%
More than 4 novels	0%
Less than 2 novels	55%
None	0%

The majority of the respondents claim that they have read less than two novels this year; whereas, 45% of respondents state that they have read more than two novels.

QUESTION 22:	You scan and save the study-related reading materials to your mobile phone.
Strongly disagree	15%
Disagree	0%
Neutral	10%
Agree	25%
Strongly agree	50%

Apparently, the majority of the respondents prefer to scan and save the study-related reading materials to their cellphones. They believe that it is better to keep the documents in their smartphones for further revision after their lectures instead of wasting them and become stuck and lost.

One of the respondents claims:

*"I prefer to scan and save my documents in my smartphones and then I send them to my mailbox for further revision. I think this method has allowed me to keep all my documents since my first year till now".*

QUESTION 25:	You can remember everything if you read from your mobile phone.
Strongly disagree	30%
Disagree	0%
Neutral	25%
Agree	0%
Strongly agree	45%

The majority of the respondents believe that they can remember everything they read from their mobile phones. They illustrate that having their cellphones in their pockets is like having information in their hands. They think that they are able to do so many things at the same time; meaning that they can read their documents in their cellphones and talk and chat with their friends at the same time. Their minds are capable of working on too many tasks at once.

QUESTION26	Because of mobile phone, you stopped writing notes on paper.
Strongly disagree	35%
Disagree	0%
Neutral	10%
Agree	0%
Strongly agree	55%

Apparently, it seems that the majority of the respondents believe that writing notes on paper is an old fashioned technique while 35% strongly disagree. They believe that the world has changed thanks to the emergence of technology. As a result, notebooks and pens should be replaced by laptops.

## Conclusion

Language is one of the crucial elements which impacts international communication activities. Students apply numerous parts of English language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for their proficiency and communication (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). However, although the importance of the four language skills, most ESP respondents believe that the most important skills for them are mainly speaking and listening; a fact which is linked to the communicative competence. They think that as future engineering in the domain of industry, computer science, automation, and civil engineering, their major concern is to be able to communicate fluently through the use of technology.

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