

Chapter 4

Exploring Educational Technology in Language Education: Empirical Evidence From Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The integration of educational technology in language education, particularly in the realm of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction, is a topic of growing importance. This chapter aims to investigate the utilisation of technology in L2 teaching classes from 50 EFL university teachers' perspectives in Iraqi Kurdistan. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining an online survey questionnaire with semi-structured interviews, to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences. This chapter equips readers with the benefits and challenges of educational technology while teaching an L2. It offers several theoretical and pedagogical implications for policymakers, educators, and teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has immensely affected all aspects of modern life, including education, which plays a pivotal role in human development. The intersection of technology and education, particularly in language instruction, has garnered considerable attention due to its potential to revolutionise learning paradigms (Becker et al.,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-4310-4.ch004

2018; Luo & Yang, 2018; Zinn, 2000). Educational technology (*henceforth* EdTech) holds promise for transformative improvements in learning methodologies through innovative applications of emerging technologies (Spector, 2001). The landscape of language education has undergone a seismic shift, catalysed by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which precipitated an abrupt transition to online instruction and prompted the widespread adoption of diverse technological tools (Bao, 2020; Tafazoli & Meihami, 2023).

This transition has fuelled research efforts to optimise the effectiveness of technology-enhanced teaching methods, with Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies playing a prominent role in reshaping pedagogical approaches (Luckin et al., 2016). Notably, the integration of technology, especially in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts, has shown promise in enhancing learner engagement and improving learning outcomes (Aubusson et al., 2009; Clark & Mayer, 2016; Crompton et al., 2017; Rashid & Muhammad Asghar, 2016; Swan, 2003). Moreover, the proliferation of educational technologies has expanded learning opportunities for learners, making education more accessible and inclusive (Lai et al., 2015).

Despite the extensive research on technology integration in language education, there remains a gap in understanding teachers' perspectives, particularly at higher education levels. Many in-service teachers struggle to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices due to limited professional development opportunities and supportive environments (Lim & Khine, 2006; Mueller et al., 2008). Understanding teachers' beliefs and perspectives is crucial, as these beliefs significantly influence instructional practices and the outcomes of educational interventions (Pajares, 1992).

Recognising the importance of addressing this gap, this study aims to explore EFL teachers' perspectives on EdTech in language teaching. By investigating teachers' experiences and insights, the study seeks to contribute theoretical and pedagogical insights to the discourse on technology-enhanced language education. Through empirical inquiry, the study aims to provide actionable insights for improving language teaching practices and advancing digital learning in EFL settings. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are EFL teachers' perspectives on the implementation of EdTech in their classrooms?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of EdTech from teachers' perspectives?
3. How do EFL teachers perceive the impacts of EdTech on second language (L2) teaching and learning?

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