



## Click Here for L2 Learning!

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### Abstract

*The study, Click here for L2 learning!, qualitatively investigates the utilization of technology in the foreign language classroom. Five instructors (n=5) integrated two types of technological components, textbook and non-textbook, into ten (n=10) intact classes over the course of ten weeks. Textbook activities, resources that are extensions of the textbook, included but were not limited to, short video clips and online homework. Non-textbook activities consisted of radio feeds and newspaper webpages. Through the integration of these elements, the five French, Italian, and Spanish instructors brought supplemental activities to sixty-seven participants (n=66) in order to provide “interactive, authentic environments” [8, p.39]. In order to eliminate any confounding effects of chapter material and presentation order, the counterbalancing of treatments and presentation orders across each intact class was included in the experimental design. Each class was assigned one of two presentations: textbook (Chapter 3 or 9) followed by non-textbook technology (Chapter 4 or 10) or non-textbook (Chapter 3 or 9) followed by textbook technology (Chapter 4 or 10). After these two chapters, instructors chose the type of technology to integrate for Chapter 5 or Chapter 11, if any at all. Qualitative results of participant surveys reveal that technology integration created links between chapter material and L2 learners that are highly dependent on learners’ individual experiences. Instructor surveys also illustrated that the ease in which implementation occurred not only influenced participant satisfaction but also instructors’ sustained use of technology. Results also confirmed that the integration of authentic materials and meaningful activities are important components in the L2 classroom [1,2,3,4,5].*

### 1. Introduction

Information and communications technology (ICT) has become an integral part of daily life. In order to capitalize on what today’s students use on a regular basis, foreign language instructors should integrate technology into their classroom planning. Through this implementation, instructors will be able to transport their students to geographically distant cultures with a click of a button, stay connected with them in the “wired, networked, and computer-savvy” [6, p.xi] world, and help strengthen their language skills outside of the classroom.

Without the proper resources and training, it can be difficult to incorporate technology into the second language (L2) classroom. Utilizing technology has not become commonplace for all instructors and is frowned upon by some as it can bring challenges. Nonetheless, it is imperative that “the scope and style of pedagogy change as . . . technology changes” [7, p.xvi]. Many textbook programs have made technology integration more manageable with supplementary online platforms where students and instructors can access materials in a central location. Available materials can help instructors bring authentic materials to the classroom so that students are engaged in meaningful interactions. Since the integration of these materials and interaction are integral components in the L2 learning process [1,2,3,4,5], ICT should be used more frequently. Consequently, pedagogy will be in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> century L2 learner and language classroom.

### 2. Purpose of study

The study, Click here for L2 learning!, focuses on the application of technology in the foreign language classroom and examines the benefit of technology across languages and levels. Over the course of ten weeks, five instructors (n=5) integrated textbook and non-textbook technology into ten (n=10) intact classes. There was a total of sixty-six (n=66) student participants in these classes. Textbook components were resources found on the supplementary online platform where non-textbook components were resources accessed through Internet websites, other than the online platform. This research examines the benefit of technology across languages and levels as well as the effectiveness of technology implementation by the instructor.



### 3. Participants

#### 3.1 Student participants

All student participants were enrolled students in an intact 111 or 115 level language course. The majority of students were in their late teens and early twenties.

#### 3.2 Instructor participants

All instructor participants had prior experience teaching the level(s) that they were teaching during the study. The average age of the instructor was 52 years old.

### 4. Experimental design

Each intact class followed one of two presentation orders: 1) textbook followed by non-textbook technology or 2) non-textbook followed by textbook technology. Each of the treatments, either textbook or non-textbook, lasted for one chapter of material. After two chapters worth of material, instructors chose the type and amount of technology to integrate into the following chapter's material. Chapters of focus for level 111 were Chapter 3, 4, and 5 while Chapters 9, 10, and 11 were the emphasis for level 115. Two instructors decided that they did not want to follow the design as detailed above. In order to still be part of the study, they were given more flexibility and had the choice of type and amount of technology to implement across three chapters. Table 1 details the experimental design as well as lists the number of instructors and participants.

Table 1. Study Design

Class number	Instructor number	Language	Level	Number of participants	Chapter 3/9 technology type	Chapter 4/10 technology type	Chapter 5/11 technology type
1	1	Spanish	115	12	Textbook	Non-textbook	Instructor's choice
2	1	Spanish	115	8	Non-textbook	Textbook	Instructor's choice
3	2	Italian	115	8	Textbook	Non-textbook	Instructor's choice
4	3	Italian	115	5	Non-textbook	Textbook	Instructor's choice
5	3	Italian	111	6	Textbook	Non-textbook	Instructor's choice
6	3	Italian	111	5	Non-textbook	Textbook	Instructor's choice
7	4	Spanish	111	7	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice
8	4	Spanish	111	10	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice
9	5	French	111	3	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice
10	5	French	111	2	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice	Instructor's choice

All classes followed a common syllabus and utilized a textbook program by the same publisher in order to achieve greater consistency among courses. The textbook programs that were used are designed so that the material being covered at a certain level is near identical across languages. Therefore, language classrooms at each level and language were comparable for the study. Through funding, five laptops were purchased and made available to instructor participants. Each had prior training utilizing the supplemental online platform of their textbook program. A how-to info session on laptops was also available for instructors.



## **5. Data Collection**

Qualitative data was collected. Student and instructor participants completed pre- and post- surveys to share their feelings toward technology before and after the study. Instructor participants also completed weekly surveys to document the type and amount of technology that they were using during the treatment period.

## **6. Coding**

For questions that were answered by choosing one option, results were tallied. For open-ended responses, patterns were identified that emerged from the data.

## **7. Results**

### **7.1 Student pre-survey**

Every student participant noted that they used technology every day. Although a greater majority had utilized technology in much of their coursework and had benefitted from it, when it came to past language learning, only about half the student pool had used technology. Some student participants commented that technology might not have been utilized in these courses since instructors might have been more efficient without it. For those student participants that did use technology, they noted that it consisted of in-class slides and various types of applications for home study.

### **7.2 Instructor pre-survey**

All instructors indicated their daily use of technology. Even though four out of five instructors agreed that the benefits of technology outweigh the challenges when it comes to integrating it into the classroom and that technology integration is interesting for the learner, four of the five instructors had not utilized the most up-to-date technology in their lesson planning. These instructors noted that, for the majority of time, they used technology in the form DVDs, in-class slides and a projection system. They also commented that they found it easier when not integrating more sophisticated forms of technology due to the challenges or difficulties associated with them.

### **7.3 Instructor weekly surveys**

Weekly surveys indicated that instructors followed the experimental design and implemented the use of technology via a laptop. When instructors were able to choose the type and amount of technology to integrate into their lesson planning, instructors continued the use of technology that proved to be beneficial during the previous two chapters. Depending on the ease at which it was implemented, some instructors utilized more technology than others.

### **7.4 Student post-survey**

Almost 90% of student participants indicated that they benefited from using technology in their language course during the treatment period. They indicated that it helped to reinforce course material and that hearing native speakers via authentic materials helped in the learning process. Based on their classroom experiences, more than 65% of student participants would like to utilize technology during almost every class meeting or every class meeting in future language coursework. Almost 70% believe that technology is needed for the language classroom. However, over 50% of student participants found that technology used both in and out of the classroom was the most helpful.

### **7.5 Instructor post-survey**

All instructors commented that technology made class more interesting, and they felt that students really enjoyed this new method. In addition to noting that technology made each task different, instructors commented that technology made learning easy and fun for students. All instructors believed that technology was helpful and needed for the language classroom. Based on their experiences during class meetings, four out of five instructors wanted to use technology for almost every class meeting or during every class meeting in the future. However, it was noted that additional practice with technology would be helpful. In addition, instructors also indicated that technology both in the and out of the classroom was the most useful for the language classroom.

## **8. Discussion**

Qualitative results revealed that technology implementation into the language classroom created links between the student, instructor, and learning and teaching processes. Instructor and student participants agreed that technology should be used in L2 classroom frequently. Although student and teacher participants indicated that they used technology on a daily basis, not all of them used

technology in their previous language experiences. However, after having witnessed the first-hand benefits of technology and being satisfied with its implementation, the majority of participants believed that technology is needed in the language classroom. Open-ended responses revealed that learner autonomy and technology go hand-in-hand as technology allowed L2 learners to make individual connections with language that would not have been possible otherwise. Because of this, the majority of all participants believed that the most useful technology is technology that is used both in and out of the L2 classroom.

## 9. Conclusion

The value of technology integration into the L2 classroom was observed across various languages and levels during the study. In a world where technology is easily accessible, it should be used more regularly in order to improve experiences with language learning, which in turn, will improve student learning. Not only did student participants comment about becoming more excited about learning languages, but instructors also noted that teaching was a lot more fun. Just as language instructors are passionate about the languages they teach, it is important that instructors fall in love with technology. By integrating technology into coursework and using what is readily available, instructors can bring authentic materials into their classrooms at a click of a button in order to make lessons more meaningful and interactive. This may mean that additional training and practice are necessary for instructors who lack experience, but as seen with this study, the benefits far outweigh the challenges. The results showed that textbook or non-textbook technology or a combination of both is essential for the language classroom. By utilizing a variety of ICT, an instructor can appeal to students' individual preferences and learning styles. In this way, technology can be a value-add for L2 language learners. Just as one teaches to shape minds, ICT is shaping the way in which learning and teaching can take place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Changes must occur and can start when instructors and students alike Click here for L2 learning!

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