

ICT and Reading : In the Technology- Enhanced Extensive Reading Classroom.

The Case of 1st Year EFL Students at Hassiba Ben- Bouali University of Chlef (Algeria).

Miss. BENETTAYEB Assia
Assistant Teacher at Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef
benettayebassia@gmail.com

ملخص

لقد فرض عصر العولمة والمعلوماتية تغيرات عديدة على مستوى العالم اجتاحت جل القطاعات الحيوية في المجتمع بما فيها قطاع التربية والتعليم، فاصبح استخدام تكنولوجيايات الاعلام والاتصال السمعى البصري في حياة الافراد اليومية وكذا ادراج بعض منها كالكمبيوتر والانترنت في مختلف مؤسسات التربية والتعليم - خاصة الجامعات - واحدا من بين مؤهلات الرقي والعلمية . استنادا على ما تم ذكره تهدف هذه الدراسة الميدانية الى ابراز اهمية التكنولوجيايات الحديثة (الكمبيوتر والانترنت) في تعليم وتعلم اللغة الانجليزية الاجنبية بصفة عامة مع التركيز على فعاليتها في قسم القراءة المكثفة . اشتملت الدراسة التي تمت بقسم اللغة الانجليزية الاجنبية بجامعة حسيبة بن بو علي على 24 طالب و 4 اساتذة كمجموعة تجريبية . تمحورت اهم النتائج في التطور الكبير والسريع للطلبة فى مادة القراءة وتجاوبهم الايجابى مع التكنولوجيا كوسيلة ساعدت في تنمية بعض كفاءاتهم الاستيعابية عند القراءة ، كما ابرزت النتائج استحسان الاساتذة لدور التكنولوجيا في تنشيط حصص المطالعة المكثفة و تشجيع الطلاب على المثابرة عليها و الاستفادة منها في مشوارهم الدراسي ، العملي والعلمي .

الكلمات المفتاحية: تكنولوجيايات الاعلام والاتصال (الكمبيوتر / الانترنت) - المطالعة المكثفة - قسم اللغة الانجليزية الاجنبية .

Abstract :

Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as computers and internet to teach EFL reading- particularly extensive reading- is gaining wide concern among researchers and teachers in different settings. ICT are nowadays representing a sign of progress in education and a crucial factor to pursue requirements of the changing world and the digital generation of students. At the Algerian university level, some EFL reading classrooms are unfortunately still depending on traditional matters in teaching/learning reading (both intensively and extensively) allowing students no chance to interact with the technology in the reading session.

The present work is an experiment conducted at Hassiba Ben-Bouali University of Chlef, it aims primarily at investigating EFL university students' attitudes and teachers' reactions to computer/internet extensive reading classroom and seeks to shed light on the importance and benefits of introducing ICT in the EFL extensive reading classroom.

We thus address the following questions: How can the EFL teacher bridge the gap between traditional and technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom? What are the benefits of introducing ICT in the EFL extensive reading classroom? How to convince students of the important role of technologies (computers/ internet) in extensive reading? What are the main constraints faced by the teacher and the students in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom? To what extent will students and teachers benefit from the technology in extensive reading?

To this end an overview about technology-enhanced classroom is presented followed by an illustration of the principle benefits of ICT in learning EFL in general and the advantages of computer/internet technologies in reading/extensive reading in particular. A comparison between the traditional and the technology-enhanced reading classroom is also dealt with so that to serve as a background for the study. Participants in the experiment are 24 students and 4 teachers chosen randomly. Results of this investigation have reinforced the view that ICT, especially computer/internet have major benefits on students' achievement in reading/extensive reading in the sense that these technologies motivate students to read both intensively and extensively, strengthen their reading competence and make them enjoy the reading act. Findings of this study have also reinforced the important role ICT play in aiding EFL teachers introduce novelty in the reading classroom and engage students actively in the fruitful skill of extensive reading.

Key Words : ICT (computer/internet) –Extensive Reading - EFL Classroom.

1. Technology Enhanced Classroom: An Overview

Multimedia technologies (Computers, Internet, Videos, CD ROM...) are revolutionizing all aspects of life in today's world. The impact of the technological expansion has contributed to great achievements worldwide; in education, for example, research evidence about the advantages of technologies in the learning classroom have become the core focus of many contemporary researches.

However, introducing a technology in the classroom should not be done at random. Jones and Sato (1998) suggest that in adopting any technology one should consider the following questions:

- Does the technology facilitate the attainment of course goals?
- Is it cost effective? Do the benefits outweigh its cost?
- Are the teachers ready to work with the new technology? Is any training required?
- Does it help teachers make more efficient use of class time?

(Jones and Sato 1998, mentioned in Richards and Rinandya, 2002:361).

Providing answers to the above questions will make both teachers and students benefit from the technology to large extent. Here are some examples:

- Technology equipped classroom encourages not only the students but the teacher also in a positive way (Jonassen, 2000).
- It provides a good opportunity to develop and create different and enjoyable tasks in the EFL classroom (Gent Ilter, 2009).
- It helps students become active, motivated and involved in language learning process (Opçit).
- It motivates students and engages them in the

skill of speaking, reading, listening and writing easier (Anderson and Speck, 2001).

- It increases students' interest in the classroom (Mayora, 2006).

Unquestionably, the effective integration of any technology in the language classroom requires as claimed by Al-Mekhlafi (2004), Chen (2008) and Ertmer (1999) to take into consideration some factors such as teachers' attitudes, beliefs and willingness.

Compatible with this requirement, students' attitudes as users of the technology and active participants in the learning process are also important in the success or failure of any innovation in the classroom, especially when innovation has to do with the introduction of new technologies such as computers and internet in teaching EFL reading/extensive reading.

2. Computers, Internet and EFL Reading

Integrating computers or/and the internet technology in the Foreign language classroom is a subject of great debate. Most research findings in the field of ICT reveal promising results about the use of computers and internet in EFL reading. Kyeung Kim (2008) assumes that these technologies can provide "both ESL/EFL teachers and students with virtually boundless uses" (Kyeung Kim, 2008:242).

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) has nowadays become a common feature of most EFL classrooms. A wealth of research (e.g. Jonassen et al, 1999) stress the great benefits CALL has in increasing students' interaction (in the target language) in the form of exchanging, discussing and negotiating utterances and information to construct their knowledge about the target language. For Harmer (2007) computer-based instruction can also provide students with unreachable and fascinating activities which motivate them. Ybarra and Green (2003) state that computers can provide added practice when necessary. They in addition enable

students to engage with materials in authentic environments and to integrate various language skills and usage (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

With particular emphasis on the reading classroom, Case and Truscott (1999) stress the importance of computers and the internet as good sources in developing reading skills. They argued that computer-based reading helps increase students' interaction with texts, attention to individual needs, and increases independence through an ability to read texts they would not otherwise be able to read. It also helps them improve their sight word vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension which are crucial for improvement in reading. Similarly, AlKahtani (1999) comments that previous research about the use of computers for reading instruction clearly supported the idea that computer-based instruction facilitates students' reading comprehension and increases their reading speed such as studies conducted by (Kulik et al, 1983). Moreover, Pérez Correa et al (2004) provide guidelines for successful computer-reading instruction in the classroom:

1. Computer instruction in reading should focus on meaning and stress reading comprehension.
2. Computer instruction in reading should foster active involvement and stimulate thinking.
3. Computer instruction in reading should support and extend students knowledge of text structure.
4. Computer instruction in reading should make use of content from a wide range of subject areas.
5. Computer instruction in reading should link reading and writing.

Taking into account all that has already been mentioned about the important role of computers in the reading classroom, one can assert that successful computer instruction could be more efficient if students are actively engaged in their learning and made more responsible for their reading, because computer-based instruction is student-centered instruction (Pedersen & Liu, 2003; Sandholtz et al, 1997). Moreover and compared to direct models or teacher-centered teaching, "the use of computers in a student-centered approach involves active participation of students in their learning process" (Kyeung Kim, 2008: 243). In this respect, studies of some researchers (e.g. Miller and Olson 1994 and Cuban 2001) further state is that the use of computers can sometimes transform teachers' pedagogical practices from teacher-centered to student-centered ones. Due to the invaluable role of the internet technology in the classroom it has become as put by chen (2008) "possible and

feasible for language teachers to make effective use of instructional materials, especially in teaching language and culture" (Chen, 2008:1016). During the last 10 years, more and more language teachers have integrated the internet into the classroom (Fischer, 1999) for the simple reasons that:

- It offers "a new learning environment and a wealth of pedagogic possibilities" (Yang, 2001: 156).
- It could serve as technological scaffolding, which complements teacher scaffolding inside and outside the classrooms (Ibid).
- It encourages students, increases autonomous learning potential and brings enthusiasm into the classroom (Ellinger et al, 2001).
- It serves as a mediating tool for technology-enhanced and student-centered instructional environments (Watson, 2006).
- It helps motivate students (Warschauer, 1999 and Yang, 2001).
- It contributes to teacher professional development (Al-Mekhlafi, 2004).

In reading particularly, Leu and Leu (1997), for example, point out that electronic books and stories used in EFL classrooms enrich students' interest and lead them to be a good readers. Furthermore, the internet technology can be used to stimulate different tasks in the EFL reading classroom, for example online-reading materials such as reading online-news "prepare students to become life-long users of the language" (LeLoup & Ponterio, 2004: 06).

For better understanding of the various possibilities of implementing any technological device in the EFL classroom and to ignite teachers' curiosity to use ICT in teaching EFL reading, we deem it necessary to make a comparison between the traditional and the technology-enhanced reading/extensive reading classroom.

3. Traditional Reading Classroom Vs Technology-Enhanced Reading Classroom

The teaching of reading -particularly extensive reading- to first year EFL university students is a demanding task which needs elaboration of efforts between teachers and students. The majority of EFL reading comprehension teachers, if not all of them, are still locked in traditional patterns of teaching the fruitful skill of reading and for most of them innovation in the classroom is a nightmare. Extensive reading on the other side is given very small space in the classroom and students are only asked to read extensively outside the classroom without any help from the teacher.

It was clearly observed in this study that in teaching reading both intensively and extensively, teachers give more importance to the product of reading, paying little attention to the fact that reading is both process and product. In such cases teachers leave their students ill-equipped with the necessary reading skills and strategies or any training that enable them a full involvement in the reading task and help them practice extensive reading in and out of class. Evidence of this fact can be highlighted with reference to the way EFL reading is taught in our classrooms. As described by some EFL university teachers and observed by the researcher the main steps are as follows:

1. The teacher introduces the text in a form of oral questions in order to test students' background knowledge about the topic to be dealt with.
2. The teacher opens discussion with students about their answers.
3. The teacher reads the text aloud to the class (one time) then asks students to read the text silently.
4. Some students (four to five) will have the opportunity to read aloud.
5. The teacher presents new vocabulary and clarifies ambiguities.
6. He asks students about the content of the text (question-answer).
7. After a general comprehension of the main ideas of the text, the teacher gives students different reading activities including WH questions, yes/no questions, direct/indirect questions...ect.
8. The teacher provides general feedback.

Clearly and with reference to the already mentioned steps (which are nearly the same in many universities around the country as reported by other EFL reading teachers from different universities), one may assert that this kind of reading instruction which is typically teacher-centered reduces students' progress and autonomy, it does not involve students in active reading nor does it motivate them read extensively on their own.

Such prevalent situation is in fact weakening our teaching pedagogy and making the majority of our university students passive practitioners who always wait for the teacher to spoon feed them. Part of the responsibility in this situation is put on the teacher whose primarily task is to guide students in the reading process, stimulate their curiosity for extensive reading and more importantly teach them necessary strategies to cope with their reading problems. If the EFL teacher performs well his roles and responsibilities, he will undoubtedly

make of students efficient readers capable to defeat any novelty in the reading classroom. Contrary to the traditional reading classroom where the text and the teacher are the source of students' language input and instruction, today and with the worldwide perspectives about the role of technologies in education, new opportunities are offered to the foreign language student to achieve an advanced level in reading using ICT.

The technology-enhanced reading classroom is in certain extent different from the traditional classroom; the main differences are stated in the table below and can be generalized to the extensive reading classroom

EFL Traditional Reading Classroom	EFL Technology-enhanced Reading Classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More teacher-centered. - Teacher authority is limitless. - The text is the only used material. - Teacher monitors every step in reading. - Text selection is most of the time the teacher's responsibility. - Teacher instruction and control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More learner-centered. - Teacher authority is restricted. - The technology is an aid for reading. - Students monitor their own reading and the teacher guidance is provided only when necessary. - It is advised to provide students freedom for text selection when possible. - Teacher-student and student-student interaction.

4. Methodology

The present study seeks to know:

* Students' attitudes and reactions to technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom (computer/internet).

* Teachers' attitudes and reactions to technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom (computer/internet).

* Students and teachers benefits from the implementation of technologies in the extensive reading classroom.

In order to achieve the already stated aims, a number of questions are asked:

1. What are 1st year EFL university students' attitudes toward the presence of the computer/internet technology in the extensive reading classroom?

2. How will they react to the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom?

3. What are EFL university teachers' attitudes toward technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom?

4. How will they react to the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom?

5. To what extent will teachers and students benefit from the technology (computer/internet) in the extensive reading classroom?

Answers to these questions would pave the way to a thorough diagnosis of the problem, and would serve as groundwork for alternative remedies, suggestions and recommendations.

4.1. Participants, Design and Procedures

The participants in the experiment are EFL university students and teachers (Four teachers and twenty four students). The twenty four students (16 females and 8 males), have an intermediate level in the English foreign language and are aged between 19 and 24 years old. The number of students in this study is restricted to 24 students for some reasons, among which we mention:

- The multimedia classroom is our department is equipped with 13 computers only, all of which are fortunately linked to the internet. In such conditions even the 24 students did not have the chance to individual utilization of the computer; they were put in pairs.

- Access to the multimedia room is possible once a week only for a time allotment of one hour and a half (the same multimedia room is shared between two departments; the English department and the French department).

- Each group of the reading comprehension class is made of 35 to 40 students.

Few months before we launch the study, the researcher tried to prepare his students psychologically for the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom since using computers and the internet for reading was something new for most of them. Some of them were even very surprised hearing for the first time about technologies in the EFL reading classroom (precisely in extensive reading) a fact which was reflected in their answers to the questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

Teachers are also involved in this study since they represent an essential component in the teaching/learning process and their attitudes are important for any educational reforms. The four EFL university teachers are of varying teaching experience (from 5 to 12 years of English teaching) and aged between 26 and 45 years old as it will be described in teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

Because the multimedia classroom was not always accessible, the researcher managed to schedule three hours for extensive reading; one hour and a half each session. The researcher also consulted the multimedia room more than one time to get an idea about the type of computers and internet connection available. The investigation was conducted in a period of four months (one semester: from November 2010 to February 2011) during which students were exposed to diverse reading materials.

Each session the students were asked to skim over the internet and select what to read. At the beginning of the experiment the teacher's help was indispensable to monitor students' selection of some interesting materials and after a short period using the internet, students became more familiar with the technology in selecting their preferable material for extensive reading.

The teacher's supervision was sometimes necessary especially with reluctant students. It was noticed at this level that most students showed preference for materials about scientific and social topics dealing with animals, natural phenomena, family problems, marriage....ect. They also chose short stories and newspapers, a fact which was openly reflected in their individual choice of the extensive reading materials.

4.2. Research Instruments

The questionnaire was used as a main instrument to elicit data from the two omnipresent partners in the teaching/learning process: students and teachers for the reason that it allows the analysis of a large number of informants in a relatively short period of time anonymously (Wallace, 1998). In addition using a questionnaire is less time consuming-if compared with other instruments such as the interview. Thus two questionnaires were carefully prepared; the first one was addressed to 1st year EFL university students (Appendix 1) and the second one to EFL university teachers (Appendix 2).

Moreover and since the questionnaire serves to elicit students' attitudes towards a teaching method, their profile, learning styles and needs (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989), the first questionnaire was directed to 1st year EFL university students to determine their attitudes towards technologies in EFL learning in general and technology-enhanced reading/extensive reading classroom in particular. Simultaneously the second questionnaire was designed to EFL university teachers in order to collect data about their attitudes and reactions to the implementation of ICT (mainly computers

and the internet) in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. It should be noted that in both questionnaires the researcher used combined questions which are a mixture of both closed and open elements within the same question and most often used to yield satisfactory data. .

The two questionnaires were administered to the informants (teachers and students) few days before we started our experience with the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom.

4.2.1. Results of Students' Questionnaire

The general objectives of the questionnaire were clearly explained to the 24 students (who were selected randomly without having any idea about their real competencies in using ICT) in advance so that to lower their anxiety and give them more freedom to express their opinions openly without fear of the teacher's reaction. The questionnaire comprises nine questions which were carefully selected according to students' level and age so that to elicit necessary data that would help teachers integrate technologies in the reading/extensive reading classroom in the future. Investigation into students' reactions and attitudes towards the introduction of ICT especially computers and the internet in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom need to be valid and reliable. Hence, data gathered from the questionnaire were collected and analyzed. Each question was dealt with separately:

The first question was about students attitudes toward extensive reading in general. Students' answers revealed that of the total number of respondents, (75%) presumed that they like extensive reading (eighteen students), whereas six students, i.e., (25%) showed dislike toward this skill which they judge not always interesting. Here, all students' commented on their answers and referred their enjoyment or dislike of extensive reading to two reasons:

- The good or/and bad experiences they had with reading in general and extensive reading in particular.
- The good or/and bad (insufficient) instruction they received in extensive reading.

The researcher wanted through the second question to know more about students' interests in reading extensively in EFL. Most students (exactly twelve students) said that it is very rare when they read extensively in English representing a percentage of (50%). The minority (about four students) which means a percentage of (17%) responded positively; a fact which reflect their interest in EFL extensive reading. The remaining students: six students

(25%) stated that they sometimes read extensively in English and two students only (8%) do not read extensively at all.

At the level of this question, not all students commented on their answers. Those who did were mainly the ones who read the EFL regularly showing their love to the English language it self and their desire to learn from extensive reading. Simultaneously, students who rarely read extensively in English referred mainly to their previous bad experiences with reading in general, their fear of making mistakes, lack of interesting English reading materials and insufficient support for extensive reading.

When asked about their preferable extensive reading material (question three), the great majority of students (fourteen students) mentioned short stories as their preferable extensive reading material (58%), while only six students (25%) mentioned magazines and newspapers. The remaining four students, i.e, (17%) mentioned different texts and no one mentioned books. For this question not all students commented on their answers. Those who commented stated the same problem of lack of extensive reading materials (on the market) in general and the ones that interest them in particular. They added that materials available at the university library are not always interesting.

At the level of the fourth question students were asked about their opinions concerning ICT mainly computers and the internet. Equal percentages were noticed, (50%) for important and (50%) for indispensable represented by 12 students for each choice. As expected no one of the informants think that technologies are not interesting or boring. Approximately all of the respondents' comments supported the idea that technologies are a necessity in today's world. Some of them went further and state that they cannot imagine life in the absence of the internet and the other technologies such as cell-phones and computers.

As predicted, all the informants (100%) answered yes to the fifth question. All the respondents' commented openly on their answers. For them it is the new technological revolutions spread world wide and requirements of the century which oblige them to use the computer for different purposes.

In question six, of the total number of informants, twelve students mentioned that they use the internet for chatting (50%). A percentage of (25%), i.e, six students consider the internet as a source of entertainment. (17%) use the internet for research and a small number of students (two students

only) use it to learn and study. Unfortunately none of the students use this technology for extensive reading. Comments on this question were very few; only four students commented on their answers stating that the internet is an excellent medium for entertainment and leisure.

Answers were equal for reading interesting things only and reading everything (interesting or not) when connected to the internet, i.e, eight respondents for each choice (33%). Five of the informants (21%) preferred reading full texts while three of them only read newspapers, i.e, a percentage of (13%). In commenting on their answers, the great majority of students mentioned that when reading full texts from the screen they lose attention, they prefer reading short things that attract them such as titles, headlines, very short paragraphs and sentences.

Answers to question eight were heterogeneous. Great number of the respondents (sixteen students) representing a percentage of (67%) thought that using computers and the internet in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom is very interesting. Six students (25%) thought that it is an interesting idea, while two informants only, exactly (8%) had no idea. As observed by the researcher, most students did not comment on their answers to this question. The minority who commented (about six students) mentioned that using technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom will be a good initiative especially if the teacher's support, help and encouragement is provided.

The majority of students (twenty students) answered yes to question nine representing a percentage of (83%), while (17%) only (four students) think that implementing the new technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom is not a welcomed idea. The respondents commented on their answers stating that the use of technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom is something challenging and that they are enthusiastic for such learning. At the same time other students wonder about the type of extensive reading materials they will use in the internet classroom.

All in all, the great majority of the informants if not all of them showed interest in answering the questionnaire, they consequently commented on all the questions as we have already illustrated. Students' comments including their opinions were treated so that to provide insight for the effective implementation of the computer/internet technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom.

4.2.1.1. Students' Comments

Students' comments on their answers to the different questions of the questionnaire were treated by the researcher so that to take their preferences, views and interests into account when implementing the computer or internet technology in the EFL extensive reading classroom. In spite of the fact that a number of students did not comment on some of their answers (especially answers to questions two, three, six and eight), comments of the majority of the informants to all the questions revealed their interest and motivation to express their personal opinions about the issue under study. Treatment of students' comments on their answers to the questionnaire yielded important conclusions:

- Previous bad experience with reading in general and extensive reading in particular still handicap students' progress in this skill. Unfortunately some students have negative attitudes towards extensive reading and others do not read extensively at all. (Question 1)

- lack of interesting extensive reading materials and vocabulary problems are among the major reasons that decrease students' motivation to read extensively in English. (Question 2)

- Students are not encouraged to read extensively in English. (Question 3)

- Students are aware of the importance of ICT especially computers and the internet in today's world. (Question 4)

- Students are able to interact with the computers (they all know how to use this technology). (Question 5)

- The majority of students miss-use the internet. Most of them ignore the great benefits the internet may offer them in improving their EFL learning and research in different topics related to their studies. (Question 6)

- Students reading through the internet is very rare and if done it is limited to some short paragraphs or sentences as mentioned in their comments. (Question 7)

- Students showed motivation and interest for technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. They are also conscious that the implementation of ICT in the extensive reading classroom needs encouragement and instruction from the teacher. (Question 8)

- Students are enthusiastic for the idea of implementing the new technologies mainly computers and the internet in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. (Question 9)

In general students' comments reflect their awareness of the importance of ICT in today's world and the tremendous benefits of using computers and the internet in EFL in general and reading/extensive reading in particular. These results have indeed helped the researcher gather the necessary data required for his research work. Moreover the informants' positive attitudes and motivation for the use of technologies encouraged the researcher to introduce the internet in his EFL extensive reading classroom without fear of students' bad reactions.

4.2. 2. Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

A second questionnaire was prepared and addressed to four EFL university teachers at the English department, among whom two have already used computers in their EFL classrooms. The informants' age ranged between 26 and 46 years old. The questionnaire comprises six questions carefully selected to feat the aims of the study. In addition to the already mentioned reasons (See 4.2) the questionnaire was opted for this time because it brings under control the dimension of "self report" (Weir and Roberts, 1994) which was indispensable in this present research. It is worth reminding that teachers were involved in this study to know about their attitudes and reactions to the implementation of ICT (computers/internet) in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. Data collected from teachers' answers to the six questions of the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted; each question was dealt with separately:

For this first question all the informants (the four teachers) agreed that today's new technologies mainly computers and the internet play a crucial role in all aspects of life including education. One of the informants stated that "Computers and the internet are weapons of the century and every one should know how to manipulate these weapons and not let them manipulate him". Another teacher stated some examples were such technologies proved to be successful (business, commerce, medicine...)

When asked about their computer/internet skills, all the informants showed satisfaction. They have all the necessary skills of word processing, internet search and emails. The respondents' comments reinforced their answers: the four teachers stated that they have no difficulties with word processing or emails. One of them even said: "Internet is my best friend". For internet use, only one teacher mentioned that his internet connections are very rare and that his access to the internet can be limited to one or two times every month and when necessary (especially for research).

The respondents' answers to the third question were varied and unexpected. Three teachers answered yes without specifying the number of times. Among these three teachers only two ensured that they have not only thought of implementing a technology in their classes but they used it (referring to the computer technology mainly). One teacher answered that he has never thought of implementing any technology in his classes being it the internet, computers or whatever other new technologies.

Teachers' comments on their answers fall into three parts: those who thought about the technology without implementing it in their classrooms, those who implemented the technology in their classrooms and those who have never thought about the idea as a whole. For the first part, the concerned teacher commented that thinking carefully about the use of any technology in the classroom is a very important step that can automatically according to him lead to fruitful use of the technology. The two other teachers (concerned with the second part) shared the same comments since for both of them, as they mentioned, it is useless to think about a technology without using it. One of them added in his words: "practice may change your thinking." For the third part, the respondent said that "it is more important for any EFL teacher to think of ways to improve his students' level and motivation in the normal classroom before thinking about any other ways of teaching the language especially with the new technologies."

Surprisingly answers to the fourth question were all negative. In spite of the fact that all the informants seemed to be aware of the important role of technologies in today's world (as revealed in their answers to question one) and that some of them thought of implementing ICT in the EFL classroom (as revealed in answers to question three), all the informants answers to this question were negative, i.e, they all answered no. The two teachers who have already used computers in their EFL classrooms mentioned that they introduced computers mainly in listening comprehension and oral expression but never in reading or in extensive reading. One of them was even astonished for the idea, he said: "I don't think computers will be easily used in the reading/extensive reading classroom. I doubt their effectiveness, it is really a hard task!!". Another teacher commented in the following words: "Extensive reading is an important skill, but I fear the technology, mainly computers and even the internet will make my students interested in the technology itself and not the reading task or

my teaching”. Comment of the fourth teacher was in the following words: “Some times I feel very tired after my reading comprehension class, for the simple reason that I follow every step my students do. In my own opinion, using a technology in my reading or even extensive reading classes will make me very exhausted.”

The two teachers who have already implemented the computer/internet technology in their EFL classrooms either for listening comprehension or oral expression stated in their answers to the fifth question that the main constraints they faced were caused either by the students or the technology. No one of the two respondents mentioned the third proposition, i.e, the teacher. Here are their comments:

Teacher a: “students’ nervousness, indiscipline and reluctance were the first constraints I suffered from, in addition to their limited ability in using computers. They wait for me to do every thing for them. It is not easy at all to use a technology with reluctant students.”

Teacher b: “What to tell you about the terrible problems I faced when using computers in my listening classroom? Students were very noisy and I took long time to start my lesson. It was very interesting but effort demanding.”

Although the two other teachers have never used the computer and the internet technologies in their EFL classrooms, they both commented that using a technology especially the internet will make the teacher as expressed by one of them: “lose his mind because of the limitless problems he may face”.

In their answers to question number six, three teachers chose the second proposition. They stated that when implementing computers or the internet in their reading/extensive reading classrooms they will monitor every step in students’ reading and they added that students are not yet ready to use the technology in reading. One teacher only stated that he will try to experience the benefits of ICT in his extensive reading session.

The informants’ commented similarly on their shared choice for the second proposition of the research, they all referred to the important role of the teacher as an authority in the classroom especially in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom. One of these teachers commented saying: “I don’t know what the teacher will do if students manipulate the technology themselves!”.

The teacher who chose the first proposition commented in the following words: “Giving students a chance to choose from time to time the texts they want to read using a technology is a good opportunity to encourage them build autonomy in reading and enjoy the technology- extensive reading classroom.”

4.2.2.1. Teachers’ Comments

Teachers’ comments on their answers to the questionnaire were also gathered and analyzed. The crucial objective of the researcher behind the treatment of teachers’ comments fall into two points:

- a. To collect reliable data about the informants’ attitudes and reactions to the idea of introducing technologies in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom (computers/internet).
- b. To take into consideration teachers’ suggestions and views when instructing students in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom.

The treatment of teachers’ comments revealed the following results:

- Teachers are well aware of the important status of technologies in today’ hegemonic digital age as reflected in their answers and comments. (Question 1).
- Teachers have the necessary skills (word processing, internet search and emails) that allow them a good command of the computer and the internet if used properly in the extensive reading classroom. (Question 2).
- Although teachers’ awareness about the invaluable role of technologies in all fields of life, some of them are de-motivated to think about the implementation of any technological devise in their EFL extensive reading classroom particularly for extensive reading. Most of them believe that they have first to cope with their students’ shortcomings in the traditional technology free reading/extensive reading classroom before thinking about anything else. (Question 3).
- Restriction in the use of technologies to teach EFL (used only in oral and listening sessions) and absence of any initiative to use computer or internet technology in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. This fact is due mainly to:

- a. Teachers’ fear of losing their principle role

as the unique authority in the classroom in the presence of a technology.

b. Their discomfort with the idea of using computers or internet for the teaching of reading and unwillingness to shift from the traditional EFL reading/extensive reading classroom where (for most of them) progress is guaranteed to a technology- enhanced classroom where no thing is guaranteed.

c. Their fear of the bad reaction of students and the miss-use of the technology.

- All teachers, including the ones who had no experience with technologies in their EFL classes shared the same view that the source of constraints in the technology-enhanced classroom is either the students or the technology itself and never the teacher. (Question 5)

- Teachers' frustration of the idea that a technology may replace them is the reason of their hesitation in implementing technologies in their EFL classes mainly for extensive reading. (Question 6)

After the treatment of students' and teachers' comments a general interpretation of the study findings will be presented in the subsequent section.

5. General Interpretations

Students and teachers showed positive attitudes towards Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and are all aware of the numerous benefits of these technologies especially computers and internet. For students the presence of a technology in the classroom will make reading more enjoyable and help them practice this life long skill better than they do in the technology-free classroom where they do not have such an opportunity. In this context one of the students who participated in the technology-enhanced extensive reading experience states that: "The extensive reading lesson with the technology is more and more and more interesting than any previous reading classes where we did not have time to read at all". However, the technology classroom is not free of troubles. The major constraints faced by the students are as follows:

- Students' weak competence in reading in general.

- Students' interest in the technology itself and not in the objective of the teacher behind using this technology and which was in our case the practice of extensive reading.

- Students' frustration, anxiety and embarrassment in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom.

- Students' dependence on the teacher.

- Technical problems especially with the internet.

- Insufficient time for the practice of extensive reading.

Most EFL university teachers think that the use of any technology will minimize their roles in the classroom. For them, the chalk and the blackboard are better than any other new technology. In fact many constraints impede them to introduction ICT in their reading/extensive reading classrooms, such as:

- The insufficient training in the use of technologies (computers/internet).

- Lack of experience in teaching reading/extensive reading using the new technologies.

- Administration constraints (equipments, time schedule, financial support...ect).

- Students' weak command of the new technologies (computers/internet).

- Students' discipline problems in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom.

- Overcrowded reading groups.

- Time constraints which is a constant issue.

- Absence of collaboration between teachers, especially those who implemented technologies for reading/extensive reading and those who did not.

- Absence of a good management of the technology-enhanced reading/extensive reading classroom.

- Absence of teachers' dissemination of their successful experiences with the technology in the reading/extensive reading classroom.

- Technical problems especially with the internet.

All these constraints represent in fact a challenge for both teachers and students, especially those who want to pursue the world wide requirements of the century: the digital age teachers and learners.

6. Suggestions and Recommendations

With emphasis on results of the present study we thought it important to provide both

teachers and students with some suggestions and recommendations for the efficient use of ICT in the EFL reading classroom in general and the extensive reading session in particular.

a. Teachers: The following recommendations are addressed to teachers, especially those planning to integrate a technology (computer/internet) in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom. The teachers should keep in mind that:

- Any novelty in his teaching is a great step toward professionalism and development.

- He has to treat all the possibilities of introducing the technology in his reading classes and/or extensive reading sessions.

- He has to take into account other teachers experience in teaching reading/extensive reading using technologies.

- He has to take into account his students' age, interest and level before he steps for any new experience of introducing a technology for extensive reading.

- The selection of reading/extensive reading materials from the internet need careful supervision.

- Technical problems such as electricity problems, the speed of the internet or connection problems are not rare in the technology classroom, what is important is to know how to deal with such obstacles when not expected.

- Pre-training in the use of any technology is necessary for the teacher and students alike.

- Pre and post discussion sessions can aid him know more about students preferences, view points and more importantly about the problems they encounter in the technology-enhanced reading/extensive reading classroom.

- Supervision in the EFL technology reading/extensive reading classroom and the good command of the technology are not sufficient parameters for a successful technology-enhanced lesson, students' enjoyment and progress are other parameters to consider.

b. Students: As principle pillars in the teaching/learning process, students are also provided with some suggestions that may be of help for them in the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom. Students should bear in mind that:

- Learning the EFL cannot be achieved without at

least acquiring the reading skills that enable them read with comprehension.

- Technologies, especially computers and internet have become vital in education in general and in teaching/learning foreign languages in particular.

- They have to manipulate the technology for their own benefits: learning the EFL in general and improving their reading proficiency in particular.

- Relying totally on the teacher will never help them build their autonomy in learning the EFL and achieve the desired level of progress in reading.

- Training in the use of any technology is needed.

- It is never late to ask the teacher for help when needed.

- Extra collaborative work (pair and group work) in using the internet for material selection is encouraged as a way to learn from each other, for example, students can exchange materials they read via internet or comment on some of the texts they come across during their selection.

We hope these suggestions and recommendations will be of benefits for EFL university teachers and students alike, especially those who have not yet experienced the challenge of interacting with technologies in the EFL reading /extensive reading classroom.

7. Conclusions

Findings of the present study urge the need for educational reforms at the level of our universities, particularly in the implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching/learning the EFL in general and the reading/extensive reading in particular. The study shows the great benefits the technology-enhanced extensive reading classroom can offer students and teachers, particularly in helping the former introduce changes in the teaching of reading and in engaging the latter in the fruitful skill of extensive reading. It therefore becomes a canon for practitioners in higher education to interact with technologies in the language classroom and to reinforce the status of extensive reading in the curriculum so that it becomes one of their most preferable activities. We hope the present study will help both teachers and students step toward innovation in the reading classroom and cooperate to introduce ICT in the extensive reading classroom.

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Appendix 1

Students Questionnaire

Dear students you are kindly requested to answer the above questions. Put a cross in the right box. Add your comments when necessary.

Age:

Sex:

1- Do you like extensive reading?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Comment.....

2- Do you read extensively in the EFL?

Yes (regularly)

☐

No (never)

☐

Sometimes

☐

Rarely

☐

3-Comment.....

Magazines/ Newspapers

☐

Books

☐

Short stories

Different texts

Comment.....

4-What do you think of today's Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as computers and the internet?

Important

☐

Not interesting

☐

Indispensable

☐

Boring and Useless

☐

Comment.....

5- Have you ever used a computer for reading/extensive reading?

Yes (more than one time)

☐

No (never)

☐

Comment.....

6-What do you personally use the internet for?

Research

☐

Study or learn

☐

Extensive reading

☐

Entertainment

☐

Chatting

☐

Comment.....

7- What do you generally read on the computer screen when being connected to the internet?

Full texts

☐

Interesting things only

☐

Newspapers

☐

Everything (interesting or not)

☐

Comment.....

8-What do you think of using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as computers and the internet in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom?

Very interesting

☐

Interesting

☐

No idea

☐

Comment.....

9- Will you welcome the idea that your teacher implements ICT mainly (computers/internet) in the EFL reading/extensive reading classroom?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Comment.....

Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix 2

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleagues, you are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire. Your comments are necessary.

Teaching experience (number of years):.....

1- What do you think of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), mainly computers and the internet?

Indispensable

Interesting

Unnecessary

Not interesting

Comment.....

2- What are your computer/internet skills?

Internet

Word processing

email

Comment.....

3- Have you ever thought of implementing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in your EFL classroom (computers/internet)?

Yes (more than one time)

No (never)

Comment.....

4- Have you worked with computers or/and the internet in your EFL reading/extensive reading classroom?

Yes (more than one time)

No (never)

Planning for this
in the future

Comment.....

5- What were the main constraints you faced when introducing the technology in your EFL classroom?

Students

Technology

you (teacher)

Comment.....

6- If you have the opportunity to use computers or/and the internet in your EFL reading/extensive reading classroom what will you do?

Welcome the idea and try the experience

Prefer the traditional classroom

Comment.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation.