

Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Impact of Information and Communication Technology in Improving English Language Skills: Case of Second Year Students at the English Department, Oran 2 University

مواقف وتصورات الطلبة نحو تأثير تكنولوجيات الإعلام والاتصال في تحسين

مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية: حالة طلبة السنة الثانية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية جامعة وهران 2

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DOI: 10.46315/1714-014-001-038		

Received: 28/ 02/ 2024 Accepted: 13/ 11/ 2024 Published : 16/ 01/ 2025

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Abstract

English nowadays is a must, and we must think about new methods of teaching for its success. Moreover, the teaching of the four skills is a necessity in this process. In this regard, this study aims at investigating the student's attitudes and perceptions towards the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in improving English language skills of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. The objective of this paper is to shed some light on how ICTs can improve English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners' abilities. The study is descriptive and qualitative. The research sample is fifty second year students at the English department, Oran 2 University. Based on the data collected through a questionnaire, it was found that using online books and dictionaries while reading and writing seems to help learners to improve their vocabulary luggage. In addition, the positive attitude toward integrating ICTs in teaching seem, too, to develop EFL students' language proficiency. Accordingly, it can be concluded that ICT has the capacity to somehow change students' attitudes towards this kind of learning. Thus, ICTs can evenly be suggested as a teaching aid that is expected to improve English language learning.

Keywords: ICT, EFL student, attitudes, reading, speaking, writing, listening.

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ملخص باللغة العربية

إن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في تغير دائم حيث تبحث هذه الدراسة عن أفضل الطرق لاكتساب المهارات الأربع بشكل جيد في هذا الصدد، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى التعرف على اتجاهات و تصورات الطلاب حول استخدام تكنولوجيايات الإعلام والاتصال في تحسين مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في الكتابة، القراءة، التحدث والاستماع الهدف من خلال دراستنا هذه نسلط الضوء على مدى إدماج تكنولوجيايات الإعلام والاتصال في تحسين مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية. إن الدراسة وصفية ونوعية شملت خمسين طالبا من طلاب السنة الثانية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة وهران2. و بناءً على البيانات التي تم جمعها من الاستبيان، تم إيجاد نقاط مختلفة حيث أن استخدام الكتب و القواميس عبر الأنترنت أثناء القراءة و الكتابة تساعد بشكل واضح المتعلمين على تحسين رصيدهم اللغوي. بالإضافة الى ذلك، إدماج تكنولوجيايات الإعلام والاتصال يساهم في تطوير الكفاءة اللغوية للطلاب. وبناء على ذلك خلصت الدراسة إلى أن هذه الطريقة تغير تصورات الطلاب بخصوص تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية و تقترحها كوسيلة تعليمية ذات أبعاد هادفة في تحسين جودة تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. الكلمات المفتاحية: تكنولوجيايات الإعلام والاتصال، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية، اتجاهات، الكتابة، القراءة، التحدث، الاستماع.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of technological resources and devices is an ever-growing medium for language learning and teaching methods, that offer alike teachers and students enormous and diverse opportunities to deliver teaching targets. Whatever the technological tool is used, the main purpose of ELT teachers is to increase students' interest. In the context of EFL, it has been proved by many researchers how ICT is effective in teaching the English language. (Ahmadi, 2018) reveals that technology is considered essential in the English teaching-learning process due to its positive points for teachers to support learner's learning progress. Hence, Adams and Brindley 2007 cited in (Poudel, 2022) state that "English is a subject ready to think about new ways of constructing reading and writing and about the pedagogical value of collective work and the possibilities afforded by the renaissance of learning made possible through ICT".

Additionally, the integration of information and communication technology in teaching the English language plays a vital role in acquiring this foreign language. In other words, the use of ICTs in teaching and learning the English language would not only enhance it but also give a high status to this process, this is aiding the effectiveness of learning, and adding a new horizon, which has not been previously used in learning. It would also make it possible to have a rich environment and motivation for teaching and learning process by offering new and easy possibilities to improve language skills, speaking, reading, writing, and listening. In this sense, (Tri & Nguan, 2014) "the application of the online recourses available to the inside and outside classroom activities can result in the enhancement of their competencies in listening, speaking, reading, and writing".

The importance of ICTs in advancing the world goes hand in hand with the spread of the English language as a powerful language that drives this progress. What if ICT were to be integrated into

teaching and learning the English language? This would make this teaching and learning process is going to be more effective.

Given the significance of education as a fundamental tenet of future life and Algeria's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of its higher education system, as well as the benefits of utilizing information and communication technology to enhance the quality educational process. ICT integration has achieved positive results and radically positive changes in all fields in general, and the educational system in particular. Since learning a foreign as English necessitates mastering its four skills, this change allows to use a variety of teaching methods. In addition to enhancing language proficiency, ICTs help teachers better understand and execute language on behalf of their students.

Recently, the English language learning process has been shifted from face-to-face classes to online classes. This turning point in methods sparks questions about students' attitudes and perceptions toward the new digital learning process. Moreover, the present study intends to uncover the impact of ICTs integration on EFL learners' ability to write, read, listen, and speak. At the end of the study, the challenges and obstacles are investigated. Thus, to ensure the objectives, this research is guided by the following questions that should be asked:

1. What different attitudes and perceptions do second year students hold toward ICT use to learn the English language?
2. To what extent are ICTs used to improve the four English language skills of students?

In this article, we tried to demonstrate the importance of ICT and the integration of the four skills in the teaching process.

2. ICT and English Language Teaching

At the university, it has been noticed that students tend to use their mobiles and smartphones every day affecting even their way of learning and adopting distance education. The use of different electronic tools to learn seems more facilitate comprehension of most courses. Many researchers have indicated that most higher education institutions are integrating ICTs across the curricula to meet the rapidly growing demands (Oliver, 2002). In the same line, (Akir, 2006) states that "tools such electronic mail, the use of computers in conferences, and the World Wide Web were able to strengthen communication and collaboration between students and faculty numbers" (Akir, 2006: 21).

As technology becomes increasingly integrated into our daily lives, students need to adopt a contemporary view of how to use it to enhance their learning through technological devices. Due to this modern, view that information and communication technology holds, flexibility and creativity have been brought in many fields such as education. Therefore, supplying teachers and students

with ICT use can overcome the obstacles that occur in the learning process, and can stimulate thoughts, feelings, attention, and learning interest to be active in language skill learning so that the learning process can run more effectively and efficiently achieve the intended target (Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2023).

The outbreak in technological advancements is not only affecting the social, economic, cultural, and political arenas, but it is also integrating into the current and future education system. This has emerged in the teaching and learning of the international language "English" where teachers use ICTs which gives teaching the English language different guise. With the presence of ICT in the classroom, EFL learners use the Internet, for instance, to help them gain access to a wider range of genuine resources to make the mundane process of English teaching and learning more gratifying (Ghazi, 2019). According to (Jayanthi and Kumar, 2014), ICTs have changed the pace of English teaching methods to fit the targets of teachers' materials and students' needs to practice English in and out of the classroom. They added also that technological devices are integrated into modern education to give more time and freedom to EFL learners to understand, reflect, and analyze what has been exposed. Now, the role of ICTs to teaching English seem to increase the status of this language in comparison to other wide world languages.

In addition to that, the main role that ICTs play in teaching and learning the English language is that they give a novel vision that teaching this language needs a modern way to do so. For (Srijana, 2021), ICTs offer many occasions to access learning, improve teaching methods quality, and develop EFL learners' skills. (Çakici, 2016) states that the implementation of ICT will lead to a variety of English teaching in content, context, and innovative pedagogical methods in class and it makes lectures more interactive, flexible, and innovative.

The impact of ICT on the English language is mainly related to the cornerstones of learning the English language skills which are speaking, writing, reading, and listening. In the following, we will present the impact of ICT.

2. ICTs' Impact on English Language Skills

2.1.1 ICTs Improving Speaking

Since the English language is a lingua franca, speaking skills are very important to master it, especially for non-natives. This skill is crucial to acquire as it demonstrates proficiency in a foreign language.

In this sense, ICT plays a vital role in facilitating the speaking English language by learners when teachers use video, online pronunciation words, and transcriptions. They can improve their speaking skill directly from natives' speech and learn to better pronounce words. The English language classroom becomes fun and dynamic when the activities are created in modern ways to raise

learners' motivation toward successful performance. (Lozano, 2022) makes a similarity to information and communication technology as sunlight that provides energy to the plant which is the speaking skill. ICT provides the resources, platforms and elements required for the the plant (speaking skill) to grow through virtual learning (water and minerals), resulting in to enhancing this skill

In a recent study, (Al- Sulami and Alnajami, 2023) investigated the use of ICTs to develop students' speaking proficiency from EFL teachers' perspectives. This study was conducted based on the importance of speaking skills to practice the target language functionally and accurately to achieve better communication. These researchers concluded that speaking proficiency requires the use of ICTs for its usefulness and effectiveness concerning this skill. They say that they support students in ways that best fit their abilities, spreading knowledge faster, and helping students become more motivated to learn English. They also provide students with more practical activities to improve their speaking proficiency, and encourage them to practice and develop their speaking skills (Al- Sulami and Alnajami, 2023).

2.2.2 ICTs Improving Writing

Different tools with the support of ICT in general and computers can improve writing skills in particular. Research studies have brought forward the fact that are ICT used to motivate EFL learners to write with high confidence and in developing their own style (Yunus et al, 2013; Boudjadar, 2015; Kademi, 2021).

The learning environment also is an important parameter that allows students to study with ease and convenience and tackle writing obstacles independently (Kademi, 2021). For instance (Yunus et al, 2013), offered their participants the opportunity to write within ICT, and they reported that ICT could be a tool in supporting a creative atmosphere for students to improve quantity and quality of their writing. Therefore, writing using computers becomes effective when the EFL learners write without making mistakes and computers are provided with the application to detect errors and suggest the right corrected spelling. This helps to developing their competence to produce more and even publishing online can be easy in the next stages (Boudjadar, 2015).

Another study by (Alkhaldi, 2023) examined the impacts of technology on students' writing abilities. This study dealt with twenty first-year students who study English at the Department of Al-Bayt University of Jordan. After obtaining the survey, interview, and online survey, the researcher found varying opinions on the subject of technology in the classroom among the research participants. The methods of his study turned around how students are influenced by the way of reading and writing when technology is integrated. The findings indicated that technology has the potential to improve students' motivation, creativity in writing, and writing performance. However,

the students were supposed to learn how to use technologies effectively for academic writing and technical writing. On the other hand, Apriani and his colleagues (2022) revealed in their study that all EFL students had positive attitudes towards using ICT to enhance their writing skills. They also added that ICT can build up their motivation, independent learning, critical thinking creativity, and discipline time and provide a favorable environment for students. Thus, higher ICT proficiency among the students may enable them to confidently integrate technology into lectures, which could improve their academic performance (Apriani et al, 2022).

2.2.3 ICTs Improving Reading

Since the Reading Skill in English is considered to be challenging, especially for non-native students, this skill requires hard effort, motivation, consistency, and innovative methods. For this reason, teachers have to find new methods to develop learners' ability to read, and this is realized by changing materials to explain lectures. The use of ICT in enhancing reading skills in EFL classes creates an active area of study among teachers. The Reading Skill is mainly reinforced with easy access to technological materials as word processing software. The effectiveness of this latter was investigated by (Alhumsi et al , 2021). The results they obtained revealed that students considered that reading was more productive when using computers, laptops, and even mobiles.

Unlike the printed books which are sometimes unavailable in bookshop library and most of time are highly cost, taking resource to reading e-books online is expected to increase learners' reading competence and yields better outcomes than face-to-face approach (Mahmood, 2023).

Similar studies have shown how can students take all the stress away and turn it to enjoyment in reading books and novels online (Drigas & charami, 2014). In this context, the idea behind using technological devices in reading comprehension is gaining much freedom to learners whatever they want with the interference of teachers and building their intellectual knowledge in English because reading more is feeding their minds. (Drigas & charami, 2014) added also that the internet is considered as the magic tool making students swim in a big sea plenty of books, stories, plays, and novels. In fact, EFL students can share online books and interact with other readers to enhance their critical thinking and provide them with strategies for ameliorating their performance.

2.2.4 ICTs Improving Listening

Listening as one of the skills that is a source of learners' knowledge, and since it is so, it requires the integration of technology to better English language acquisition as "learning a foreign language is nowadays not difficult to do as technology has provided all skills that students should be mastered" (Alfiani & Wijayati, 2023). This could be due to variety of tasks and activities that hold music, songs, and videos to support students in listening comprehension. As far as listening comprehension is concerned, teachers can use MP3 players and podcasts to play listening exercises for the students.

She also added that teachers make the lecture enjoyable by playing, pausing, repeating, forward, and stopping the play. Moreover, students can acquire listening skills from native speakers directly through YouTube, TikTok, VOA news, and BBC channels. This latter is an application that provides a huge number of varied lessons, dealing with updated subjects and topics that are very useful to English learners. According to (Palma and Garzon, 2023) connecting language skills to technology can be drawn through online activities. These online activities can be effective items to support, motivate, and boost students' motivation to practice and interact with others, in formal, and informal settings, inside and outside the classroom.

Nowadays, with the widespread of smartphones, this allows students learn the English language more easily. TikTok, for example, is an application used by students for watching videos that has an effective impact on listening skills and this is what has been investigated by (Rahmawatti, 2022). The use of the TikTok application' and its influence on listening skills are the subject of this study. Watching instructional videos has a big impact on EFL learners and plays a humorous role to improve their listening comprehension (Rahmawatti, 2022). In the same vein, (Ferstephanie and Pratiwi, 2022) claimed that learning English is a process that should extend outside of the classroom. The integration of TikTok gives the learners this chance allowing their in-class experience to supplement their academic learning. According to (Bal, 2019), TikTok changes the class atmosphere by motivating students to more engaged and eager to attend listening lectures regularly.

2.2 Algeria and ICT Integration in Higher Education

Algeria as the other countries in the world gives much interest to integrate ICTs in its educational system. In effect, the Algerian government launched E-Algeria program concerning the national education sector to be more modernized by providing a network allowing to the digital training (Gherbi, 2015). According to (Benherzellah, 2021), the Algerian Research Network was established to support educational system and keep pace with development in order to address specific, frequently to meet urgent needs, particularly those related to Internet access. Through this change, higher education has established distance learning to ensure relationships between teachers and students by providing courses, tutorials, and different practical tasks offered in e-learning platform.

It is also worthy to mention how the Algerian universities worked hard to accelerate the educational progress with the interference of ICT. The purpose is offering raising more opportunities for teaching and learning in either virtual, face-to-face, or open universities (Bensafa, 2015). In addition to that, it is very important to empower teachers' and learners' motivation and move the teaching and learning process from being highly authoritative teachers to autonomous learners. In particular, e-learning; as an ICT implementation in many Algerian universities, can increase students' learning performance who can receive courses anytime and anywhere, thereby developing new

skills in the process leading to life-long learning. Still, the constraints of group instruction and workshops scheduling in Algeria make it challenging to implement this learning approach (Guemide and Maouche, 2020).

On the same line, (Boumediene and Hamel, 2022) have investigated in a study that “Algerian students considered the use of visual methods of learning especially video novels in literature classes were the suitable tools of learning; in which they improved their communication skills as well as their levels of learning” (p, 901). Despite the numerous advantages, distance learning in Algerian higher education encounters difficulties and barriers due to the lack of fully implemented online infrastructure in universities, low internet speed, limited internet access, and availability, the need for technological proficiency (Guemide and Maouche, 2020).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

In order to investigate students’ attitudes and perceptions towards ICTs use, an online questionnaire was sent to the selected participants in the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Mohamed Ben Ahmed University Oran2 via Facebook, along with the study information paper and in word format. This online questionnaire serves as the primary tool for data collecting and formulates the study topic.

3.2 The Research Sample

The targeted participants for this study are 2nd year EFL students at the University of Oran2, Mohamed Ben Ahmed. These students are twenty-three males and twenty-seven females. In the table below, there is a description of the participants of this study.

Table1. Students’ Profiles

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	23	46%
Female	27	54%
Total	50	100%

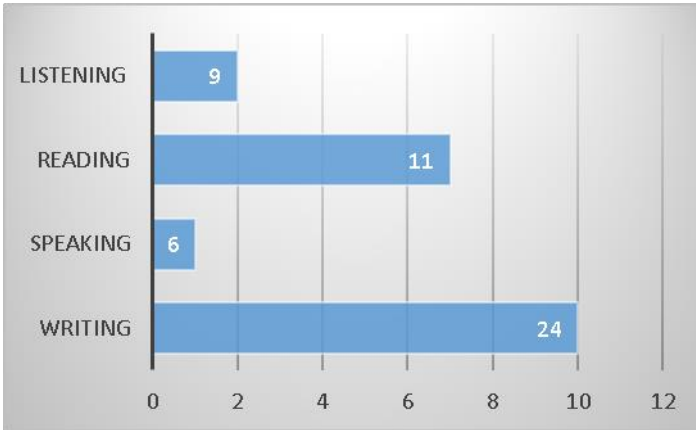
3.3 Discussions and Data Analyses

Table2.Students’ attitudes and perceptions towards ICTs use

Perception	Answer counting	Answer percentage
Good	11	22%
Average	25	50%
Poor	14	28%
Total	50	100%

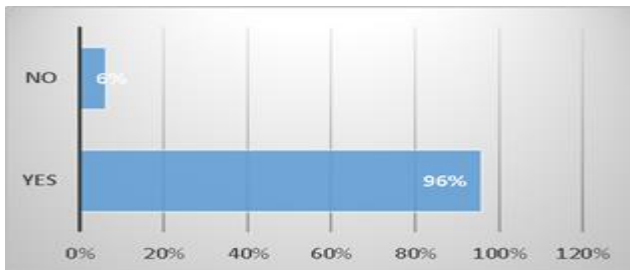
As shown in the above table, 50% of the respondents said that they have average attitudes to learn the English language, while 28% said it as “poor”. Yet, 22% said provided this question with good responses.

Fig.1. Description of implementing ICTs in English language skills



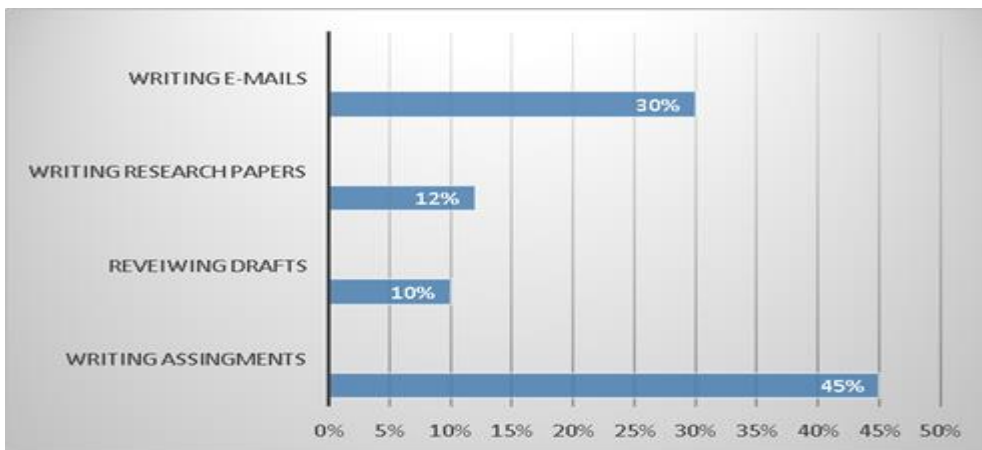
If we examine the responses of the students in this question, we can see that there are variety of responses and some that rather slightly similar. (48%) of them have chosen Writing Skill since it is the most dominant skill in this learning because EFL students rely much more on writing tasks and replying to their teachers’ activities via emails. While of the respondents, (22%) considered that Reading Skill can be improved by using ICTs. For Speaking and Listening skill , were both deemed it to be challenging and minimal for 9% and 6% of EFL learners to improve. Through this learning, the Speaking Skill is somehow neglected by both teachers and learners who are still incompetent in communicating orally in English.

Fig.2.The students’ perceptions toward word office processor to develop writing skill



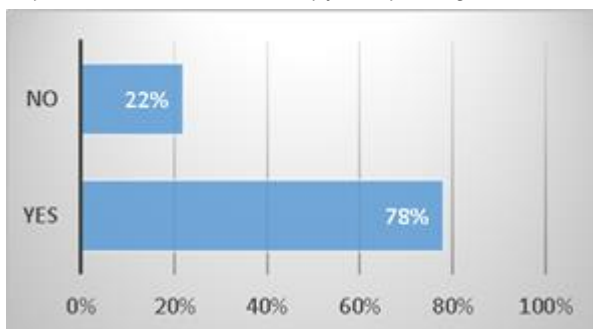
As can be seen in this figure, about 94% of students said "yes" to this question. This explains that the Writing Skill has been improved when they used technological devices in learning English; against (6%) of the students who said that still cannot improve their writing skills by using word office processor.

Fig.3.The use of Word Office processor develops writing skill.



As shown in Fig.3, the results show that (48%) of the respondents said that they use the Word Office processor to write their assignments and (10%) use it to review their drafts. A significant rate of (30%) of the students use it for writing emails; whereas, (12%) declared they use it to write their research papers.

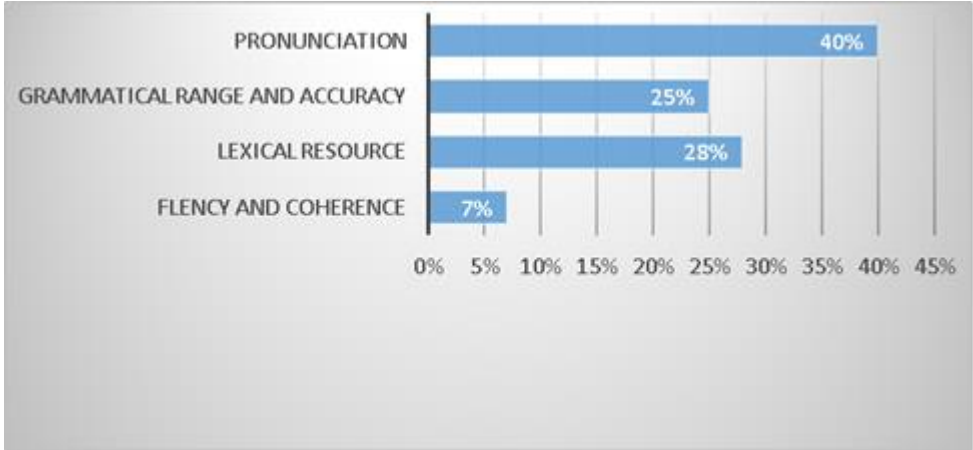
Fig.4. Students' perceptions toward ICTs to develop your speaking skill



This question has shown that (78%) of students with them have taken many benefits to enhance their speaking skills. This implies that speaking skills are improved especially with the use of the latest technological tools and apps such as WhatsApp, Messenger, YouTube, and other applications.

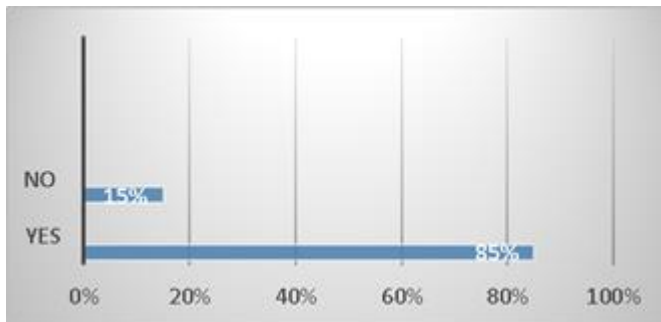
Nevertheless, (22%) of the participants are against the idea of using technology to improve speaking abilities.

Fig.5. ICTs improve speaking skill features



Regarding the Speaking skill features, the answers of the participants were slightly similar. (40%) of students said they consider that using ICTs can help improve their pronunciation, which is the most difficult. Other groups find themselves that their lexis; 28% said it helped them improve their grammatical range and accuracy; against, 07% of respondents who indicate EFL students have adequate speaking fluency and coherence.

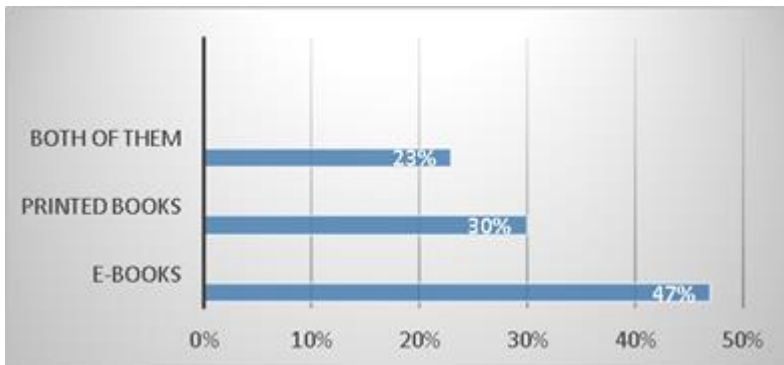
Fig.6. The students' perceptions toward ICTs to develop reading skill



The above graph (Fig.6) represents students' answers about attitudes and perceptions towards ICTs use to improve reading skills. According to the results, (85%) of the respondents claimed that reading class with incorporating ICTs tools facilitated the teaching and learning process and

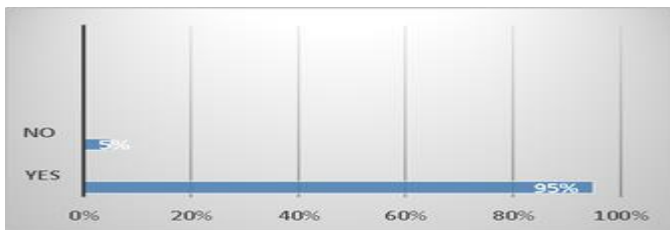
contributed to learners' autonomy and motivation. against , only 15% of the respondents disagreed with technology use in improving reading comprehension.

Fig.7. Reading strategy to improve your Reading Skill



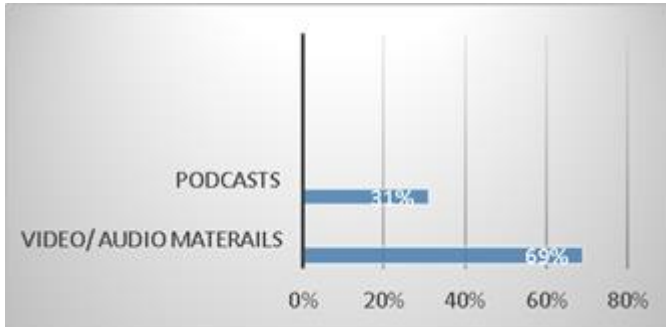
According to Fig.7, 47% of students have chosen e-books, 30% said they have selected the printed books. And (23%) who favor both printed and e-books. This result indicated that students can use e-books and printed ones depending on the availability of books. In some cases, students prefer downloading books, novels, and dictionaries by smartphones instead of looking for them in libraries. Thus ICTs make things easy.

Fig.8. The students' perceptions towards ICTs to develop the Listening Skill



The results shown in the graph above (Fig.08), it is clearly demonstrated that approximately all students hold positive attitudes towards the integration of ICTs in teaching listening skills. (95%) of the respondents agreed that integration of new technologies have positive impact on their Listening Comprehension. This indicated that they welcomed the way technology provide easy techniques to understand well what they listen as audio recordings, electronic dictionaries, songs, and short videos. On the other hand, (5%) of the respondents didn't accept this idea due to troubles concerning hearing sounds, intonation, and stress. They reported that they have misunderstanding native speakers and prefer listening to their teacher only.

Fig.9.The most appropriate strategy to improve your Listening Skill



The aim behind this question is to see what is the most interesting and helpful method to improve their listening. (69%) of students said they believe that audio and video aids are authentic and real-life learning materials and sources. They meet the real performance of the communicative language when they listen to audio recordings and watch more videos. Against (31%) who claimed they prefer podcasts because they are encouraging them to get used to the native language speakers' pronunciation.

4. Interpretations of the Findings

This paper seeks to find out attitudes and perceptions second year students hold toward ICTs use to improve their English language at University of Oran 2, in general and investigates to what extent this integration helps enhancing their language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening) in line with the modern technological methods.

After analyzing the students' questionnaires in the previous stage, we tried to see how they dealt with ICTs integration concerning their perceptions and attitudes. EFL students have provided insight into the blend of traditional teaching and modern methods, such as assignments, video conferences, and online tasks used by their teachers. From this research, it is evident that most students value the use of ICTs while a smaller number do not. This indicates the availability of technical devices and computer knowledge. When it comes to benefits of ICT, students passionately express their comfort and excitement in using technological devices.

The results show which factors significantly influenced EFL learners' readiness to use ICT applications in the classroom. Consequently, this study on students' conviction of ICTs advantages in EFL learning had the greatest impact on their experiences in using ICT materials. From their experiences to ICT applications, its use has significantly heightened awareness regarding the implementation of appropriate technological for enhancing language skills.

This included the reality that authentic English materials, such as word processor, audio, podcasts, songs, and others, paved the way for students to become creative learners in a collaborative atmosphere. From the data analysis, the use of ICT can help students improve English language skills. For example, Microsoft Word can assist students write and read without errors. They can find more opportunities to enlarge their vocabulary luggage. Enhancing reading skills can be achieved through reading stories and short plays. Additionally, it can help students their listening and speaking skills. They learn English in enjoyable ways while practicing listening and repeating. The use of technology improves speaking skill in terms of fluency and coherence, lexical resource grammatical range and accuracy (Akkara et al, 2020, Asratie et al, 2023). Since then, the process teaching and learning English has increasingly demand ICT implementation.

5.Conclusion

To sum up, it seems obvious to say that information and communication technology can be an essential tool for the teaching process and that will continue to play a decisive role in high education. Therefore, ICT integration is essential and primordial that should be adapted to support the EFL face-to-face class. The results found in this paper show that students took benefit from using ICTs for improving many areas of the English language proficiency. So, they agree that ICTs help to improve skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. In this sense, ICTs materials provide interaction between the teacher and the learners who become more autonomous and feel more confident to learn a foreign language and its four skills, writing, speaking, reading, and listening. As a conclusion, the use of ICTs in the Algerian universities has been highly encouraged as the present students are the future generation.

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