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AUTHORS: Hatice Saliha CUKUR

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# TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF TURKISH NOVICE EFL TEACHERS AFTER ONLINE PRACTICUM

**Hatice Saliha CUKUR**
ORCID: 0000-0001-6564-4171
Department of English Language Teaching
Anadolu University Eskisehir, TURKIYE

## ABSTRACT

Although technology is a vital part of 21st-century education, teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts face challenges when using digital tools in their teaching. Studies have been conducted with in-service teachers to understand their beliefs and practices with digital learning of English. However, there is a gap in the literature about investigating the technology integration beliefs and practices of newly graduated EFL teachers who experienced online teaching practice during their pre-service education. Thus, this study aimed to investigate how novice teachers' online practicum affects their teaching with technology in face-to-face classrooms. To this end, this study adopted a qualitative case study research design and collected data through six open-ended questions from 20 Turkish novice EFL teachers who received their teaching practice and school experience courses online and conducted semi-structured interviews with 5 participants. The thematic analysis of the data showed that the participants were aware of the importance of technology use, and their online teaching practice experience helped them get familiar with teaching English with digital tools before graduating. However, the lack of resources and support in their current face-to-face teaching contexts prevented them from using technology. The findings revealed that teacher education programs should offer updated content and opportunities for creating digital material to prepare EFL teachers for the future.

**Keywords:** Turkish EFL teachers, novice teachers, online practicum, online teaching, technology integration.

## INTRODUCTION

As technological developments and inventions keep snowballing, so do the areas where we use and benefit from technology. The integration of technology is a means to improve human life and provide easy access to things we usually could not afford. Language education is one of the areas where technology integration is encouraged to benefit from its many affordances. In English language classrooms, this integration would not only help the students improve their proficiency, motivate them for learning, address their needs and interests but also prepare them for the technology-rich world that is always changing (Celik & Aytin, 2014; Kuru Gonen, 2019). Hence, the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in facilitating students to learn English efficiently is crucial (Aslan & Zhu, 2017).

However, when looking at the research done in understanding teachers' implementation of ICT in their classrooms, it can be found that teachers face some problems (Alimyar & Lakshmi, 2021; Celik & Aytin, 2014; Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020; Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). These studies point to the main cause of these problems to be lack of sources in schools, support from school administration, teachers' competence, and readiness to use technology to teach English.

### Investigating EFL Teachers' Experiences with Technology Integration in the Classroom

To understand teachers' competence with using technology and their readiness to adopt it in their daily practices, several studies have been conducted. In Celik and Aytin's (2014) study conducted in the Turkish EFL context, teachers felt confident about their skill sets when it comes to technology integration. However,

lack of access to digital tools and internet connection were among the limitations they had regarding their practices using technology. In another study, Hol and Aytin (2020) explored the beliefs of Turkish EFL teachers and found corroborating results from 563 participants working at various parts of Turkiye, which shared positive views about the importance, use, as well as expertise when it comes to their digital technology use in the classroom. Differences between teachers' beliefs were only visible among those who had received training related to technology use, as they showed more positive views about technology integration. This finding supports Ardic and Ciftci (2019) that language teachers who have professional development in ICT have positive impacts on their practices compared to those who do not.

Regarding the factor of language teacher training programs in relation to technology use, Asik et al. (2020) investigated the integration of technology in second language teacher education (SLTE) programs in the Turkish, Portuguese, and Polish EFL contexts, and found these programs to offer training at similar levels, and revealed some factors such as limited institutional resources, support, and qualified teacher educators to be standing between successful technology integration of teachers. Results that point to similar limitations were found among EFL teachers who are working in the Vietnamese context (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). Nugroho and Mutiaraningrum (2020) found that although language teachers showed competence when it comes to teaching with the technology they also revealed some hesitations regarding their practices, indicating insufficient training and limited digital sources.

Consequently, there are other studies that confirm similar findings regarding the pre-service teacher education programs EFL teachers undergo. In 2016, Uzun conducted a mixed-method study to investigate the contribution of courses in pre-service teachers' ICT knowledge and skills at English Language Teaching programs in Turkish universities. The findings revealed that the education that pre-service teachers receive in both technical and educational courses failed to facilitate their knowledge in implementing technology for pedagogic purposes, leaving them unprepared for implementing a much-needed tool in the 21st-century; technology (Uzun, 2016). Ultimately, their lack of training would also lead them to leave technology out of their classroom practices.

In addition to the received training with technology at the undergraduate level, English language teachers globally feel that support from the school administration regarding professional development, technological tools, and internet connection is needed for successful technology integration in the classroom (Alimyar & Lakshmi, 2021; Ardic & Ciftci, 2019; Hol & Aydin, 2020; Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020; Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). In the Indonesian context, Silviyanti and Yusuf (2015) found that out of 41 EFL teachers, 11 did not incorporate technology in their teaching due to lack of training and financial support available at their school institutions, even though they had positive perceptions when it comes to the benefits of technology integration. Their study also pointed out that despite the need for better sources, teachers remained motivated to implement technology (Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). Ardic and Ciftci (2019) also determined support and sources for better digital tools, internet connection and professional development opportunities as the primary needs of Turkish EFL teachers for technology integration.

So far, the research on technology integration in English language classrooms has revealed teachers who want to implement technology but have limited opportunities and support (Celik & Aytin, 2014) or the skills and training to do so at a satisfying level (Ardic & Ciftci, 2019). Unfortunately, teachers in both situations were put in a new challenging situation that came with the COVID-19 and the shift to emergency online teaching (Li, 2021). In emergency remote teaching (ERT), teachers had to take huge leaps in a short period of time to maintain their face-to-face teaching schedules online. This meant shifting their normal ways of teaching and materials they used to be delivered on fully digitalized online platforms.

## Emergency Remote Teaching and English Language Teachers

In this unprecedented moment in history, students and educators were caught off guard in most parts of the world, as many students and teachers had no distance education experience before the shift in compulsory distance education (Demir & Kale, 2020). The limitations that teachers already faced before COVID-19 with technology integration intensified with ERT. An investigation of Turkish EFL teachers' views towards online instruction (OI) during COVID-19 revealed that teachers' attitudes were mostly negative, one reason being due to their incompetence with using educational technology (Civelek et al., 2021). This study also

added to the previous research about Turkish EFL teachers' inadequate training for adapting to teaching online during their education. Alimyar and Lakshmi (2021) explored the readiness of language teachers during COVID-19, and the results of the questionnaire distributed online to teachers in Afghanistan and India showed that several factors affect teachers negatively. Among these were the limited student participation, and the time-consuming material preparations for teachers without having the training to do so for successful online teaching (Alimyar & Lakshmi, 2021).

## Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Practicum

Meanwhile, with schools and universities turning to ERT, so did pre-service teacher education programs. According to Anderson and Stillman (2013), one of the essential key elements of teacher education is the teaching practice opportunities, and with this experience, pre-service teachers can implement their theoretical knowledge into real-life classrooms. However, due to practicum courses becoming online, pre-service teachers were also thrown into the world of online instruction, with no formal real-life classroom experience to rely on. Thus, studies on this topic have been conducted with pre-service teachers (Elcicek, 2021; Ersin et al., 2020; Gok Colak & Efeoglu, 2020; Kosar, 2021; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020; Shinta and Aprilia, 2020; Varela & Desiderio, 2021; Yuksel & Uysal, 2021).

In the Chilean EFL context, a study with 27 pre-service EFL teachers experiencing an online teaching practice course partook in a mixed-method study (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Findings collected from the study showed that, although the pre-service teachers were mostly positive about what this unique experience would contribute to their professional development, factors such as the limitation of teacher-pupil interaction in virtual classes turned the situation into a challenge. As Anderson and Stillman (2013) had stated, school experience is considered to contribute a lot to pre-service teachers' education, and this study by Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) showed that, even though the participants were able to discover and learn new technologies, the shortcomings such as lack of sufficient training with ICT and the non-existence of their education with virtual teaching ruled out the benefits of the experience.

Furthermore, in a study conducted in the USA, pre-service teachers in online teaching placements reported that although they had challenges as pre-service teachers, their supervisor teachers were in similar conditions in terms of facing problems related to distance teaching, as well as lacking technical support and skills (Varela & Desiderio, 2021). Some of the participants in this study also mentioned positive attitudes for experiencing this unique situation, similar to other participants' experiences in other studies in the literature (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020; Shinta & Aprilia, 2020). Shinta and Aprilia (2020) conducted a mixed-method study with EFL pre-service teachers in the Indonesian context and found that the online teaching experience provided new ideas about teaching and lesson planning. Based on the findings, the researchers suggest considering the implementation of online teaching courses as a precaution for future situations (Shinta & Aprilia, 2020).

Similar experiences were reported in the Turkish EFL context as well, where pre-service teachers experienced the two courses offered during their practicum period, School Experience and Practice Teaching, online. In studies conducted during this period, pre-service EFL teachers who participated reported benefits and challenging aspects regarding their distance teaching practice experience. Yuksel and Uysal (2021) studied the reflections of pre-service EFL teachers during a 14-weeks online practicum course. The participants shared technological problems, the lack of interaction, and classroom management, as some of the challenges of online practicum. Likewise, Gok Colak and Efeoglu (2020) also found that pre-service teachers had similar views regarding their experience during online teaching practice and reported the negative aspects of managing the students and graduating without having a face-to-face teaching experience. However, they were able to learn to create online content due to the increase in digital tools during COVID-19, as well. Additionally, Kosar (2021) explored the effect of online teaching practice on 42 pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach in the future. The participants believed that they had missed out on a crucial experience and that their online teaching practice could not replace face-to-face teaching. Moreover, they felt unprepared to start their teaching career due to a lack of confidence to be teaching face-to-face.

During this period, Ersin et al. (2020) designed an alternative to the teaching practice course where pre-service teachers could practice teaching online with their peers, who acted as students. The pre-service

teachers who participated in this course had positive feelings about online teaching, despite some issues with classroom management. However, they still preferred in-class teaching practice. Moreover, the researchers suggested adding material design and technology integration for online teaching to the practicum courses in teacher education programs.

To investigate pre-service teachers' levels of technology integration during this compulsory distance teaching in Turkiye, Elcicek (2021) utilized a mixed-method research design with 414 pre-service teachers, 23 of them from an English Language Teaching (ELT) department at a public university. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers reported high levels of technology integration, saying that distance education has helped them develop their digital literacy levels by increasing the time they were engaging with technology. It is also reported that through the shift from paper and pencil to the digitalization of their homework and project designs, the process also increased the pre-service teachers' abilities to prepare online teaching materials. Moreover, due to the high interest in technology shown by the participants in this study, pre-service teachers reported confidence within teaching via technology.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Numerous studies have shown that EFL teachers generally have positive attitudes when it comes to integrating technology in English classrooms and report technology as an important tool that can motivate learners, increase participation, and provide exposure to the target language (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). However, some barriers hold teachers from applying their beliefs in their practices, such as lack of professional training (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020) and limited access to resources and tools (Celik & Aytin, 2014).

Research on pre-service teacher education programs in terms of training with using ICT has been found insufficient (Asik et al., 2020; Merc, 2015; Uzun, 2016) and creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice their theoretical knowledge through practice has been suggested (Asik et al., 2020; Uzun, 2016; Voogt & Mckenny, 2017). Keeping these in mind, pre-service teachers who experienced an online teaching practice course during ERT were placed in a situation where they had to implement technology into their practices with no prior experience regarding online instruction or in-class teaching experience.

Thus, it is important to investigate the technology integration beliefs and practices of newly graduated EFL teachers who had an online teaching practice experience and were thrown into the online teaching world before any face-to-face teaching experience. Therefore, it is noteworthy to see whether having online school experience and teaching practice courses influences their integration of technology in their current face-to-face classrooms after they have graduated and become novice teachers. After all, there are studies that suggest that adding online teaching and material design for online instruction courses would be beneficial. As there have not been studies on the technology integration practices and beliefs of novice teachers who had online practicum courses rather than face-to-face ones, the current study asks the following research questions to fill this gap and find out if the online teaching experience was able to provide the practice pre-service teachers need for fostering their ICT use:

1. What are the beliefs and practices of newly graduated Turkish EFL teachers about digital learning of English?
2. How do they feel about the ICT education they have received affecting their current classroom practices using technology as novice teachers?
3. How does their online teaching practice experience affect their current ICT use in the classroom?

## METHOD

### Participants

Twenty Turkish EFL teachers, selected through convenient sampling, participated in the current study, named P1-P20. They had all graduated in the 2020-2021 academic year and experienced the final year of their teacher training programs online due to the pandemic outbreak. According to Farrell (2009), novice teachers are those who have just completed their training as teachers and are in their first year of learning

to teach in an educational setting. Thus, the participants were all novice teachers who graduated from state universities located in the Central Anatolian and Marmara regions of Turkiye and were in the first year of their teaching careers. They had received the same courses, following the curricula designed by the Council of Higher Education.

Regarding information and communication technologies (ICT), all participants completed the two courses named "Computer" and "Instructional Technologies and material design in ELT" during the four-year-long teacher education program. These courses include both theoretical and practical knowledge about tools used in ICTs and how to use them in teaching English.

In terms of practicum, two courses named "School Experience" and "Teaching Practice" in ELT were completed by all participants during their final year. These courses include opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe the teaching activities at their practice schools and practice teaching weekly by preparing and applying their lesson and activity plans (YOK, 2007). Due to ERT, teachers completed these courses online and joined online lessons at the partnering schools to observe the online classroom environment and practice teaching online to achieve the requirements of these courses.

### Research Design and Instruments

This study adopted a qualitative case study design, which is used to explore a phenomenon through participants' interpretations of their experiences (Merriam, 2009). This research design was chosen to gain deeper insight into the experiences and beliefs of newly graduated teachers with technology integration after completing an online practicum. Regarding data triangulation, two different instruments, a form with six open-ended questions for written reflection and semi-structured interviews, were used. Obtaining written answers to open-ended questions collects in-depth responses from participants based on what they want to share about their experiences (Nunan, 1992; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were preferred over other types of interviewing techniques because of their flexibility and shape around the participants' responses to the questions, therefore, providing opportunities for new ideas and questions when interviewing novice teachers about their experiences (Harding, 2018; Nunan, 1992).

The list of open-ended questions written in English was shared in the format of an online form. The first four questions were related to the investigation of the first research question, which were designed and used in the study of Nugroho and Mutiaraningrum (2020). These questions aimed to investigate the beliefs and practices of newly graduated teachers after completing an online teaching practice course to explore whether this experience affects their beliefs and practices about digital learning of English.

The fifth question, designed by and used in Celik and Aytin's (2014) study, was used to shed light on the second research question by inquiring about participants' perspectives on the related courses they were offered about ICT. The last question was added by the researcher to understand the effect online practicum has on the participants regarding their current technology integration and to answer the third research question. Expert opinion on the final version of the open-ended questions was taken from a Ph.D. holder in ELT who worked at the department of one of the universities the participants graduated. Furthermore, as all participants except P8 responded to the final question, the number of participants who were eligible when analyzing this question was 19. Lastly, the online form also inquired the participants about whether they would be interested in taking part in a semi-structured interview with the researcher.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The online form with the written reflection questions was shared through messaging application groups that the participants were using to communicate with their old classmates to start the first stage of the data collection process. The process of receiving answers from participants took four weeks. After reviewing all the responses and experiences shared by participants and considering their willingness to participate in the semi-structured interview, five participants (P2, P3, P5, P10, and P11) were contacted based on the unique experiences and disagreements they mentioned in their responses compared to other participants when reflecting on their current teaching experiences at their schools with technology, challenges they faced, and lessons they learned from the previous online practicum courses they completed.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant over the previously used messaging application through voice messages for the convenience of later transcribing these recordings and due to the need to conduct the interviews online. The interviews were carried out in English, and each one lasted around two to three hours. Then, voice messages were transcribed and double-checked by the researcher.

The data from written reflections and the transcriptions of semi-structured interviews were analyzed and compared to determine the main themes of the study using the thematic analysis model (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To accomplish this, the researcher first coded the data from the instruments and categorized them into sub-themes based on similarities to establish the main themes. Then, these themes were placed under four titles as novice EFL teachers' technology integration beliefs and practices, their challenges and needs, their thoughts about the education they received on technological instruction, and their online experiences of the school experience and teaching practice courses. The final themes were compared with the analysis of an independent researcher who was a PhD candidate in ELT who had experience in thematic analysis and qualitative research. Using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula for calculating intercoder reliability, an 83% agreement was found between coders, which is regarded as a considering agreement according to Hallgren (2012).

The results from the data analysis of written open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews are presented according to the themes which emerged from the collected data. The quotes that represent the themes are also presented to support these findings. Participants' quotations from written responses are named "WR", and "Int" for semi-structured interviews.

## FINDINGS

### Novice EFL Teachers' Technology Integration Beliefs and Practices

To answer the first research question, "What are the beliefs and practices of newly graduated Turkish ELT teachers about digital learning of English?", the participants were asked to write their responses, by reflecting on their experiences with technology, to the first two questions.
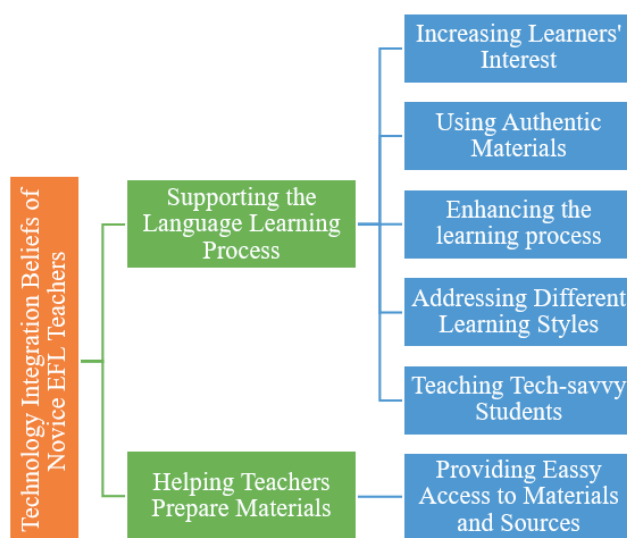


**Figure 1.** Technology Integration Beliefs of Novice EFL Teachers

In response to the first question, "in your beliefs, what is the importance of digital technology in English language classroom?", participants shared that technology is an essential part of today's world and the English classroom. Among their responses, two themes emerged: supporting the language learning process, and helping teachers prepare materials. These themes, along with their subcategories are presented in Figure 1 above.

Regarding the theme of supporting the language learning process, novice teachers shared viewing technology as a crucial part of their lessons that makes them more interesting and increases engagement, as seen from P20's written response, *"it is quite important both for interaction and the engagement of the students."* (P20, WR) and P6's below:

> *I think the integration of digital technology into the English language classroom is quite important because it is inspiring to both learners and teachers in terms of finding new information and interesting materials. Also, most of the online materials are designed to be interactive. Therefore, learners become a part of the lesson thanks to digital technology. (P6, WR)*

Additionally, under this theme, using authentic materials was another common belief participants shared regarding technology integration to provide language exposure, to enhance students' learning and the classroom environment. This is seen in P2's response, *"for me, in English classrooms, teachers should keep the students in the context of English with the maximum of visuals and authentic materials such as movies, etc. If not, they easily lose their interest."* (P2, WR), and in P3's interview answer:

> *You can use technology to expose yourself to native people speaking English, with authentic materials. In that sense, technology provides all the things our students need to learn English, and as teachers, we need to use it. I do not think that without technology, language learning would be beneficial. It would be too limited, and students would not learn properly. (P3, Int)*

Following teachers' beliefs, addressing different learner styles was another recurring theme, as most participants believed that technology use is beneficial for presenting materials suitable for different learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory). Two participants explained this in their answers, according to P10, *"when you use technology in the classroom, you can reach more than one student. So, not using technology means you can easily lose some of the students' attention in your lesson."* (P10, Int).

> *The contribution of technology in an English language classroom is enormous. Especially since we have access to more tools in language teaching, it is much easier to teach lessons that appeal to all senses and learning styles. I think that language teaching has become more efficient with these opportunities. (P11, WR)*

Besides these, another subcategory was teaching tech-savvy students. The participants believed that, as learners of today are born in the digital era, they are used to interacting with technology, which is why it is important to integrate it in the English classroom as well.

> *When we consider today's conditions, the focus of new generation students can disperse very quickly. One of the most important reasons for this is that they were born in the age of the internet/technology, so we should integrate digital technology in our new education models in a way that they can best understand. In this way, we will prepare more interesting environments for them. (P9, WR)*
>
> *We live in a modern world, so technology has a big role in our lives. Students are familiar with it, and this helps us to make our lessons enjoyable. Students not only learn the language but also learn how to use it in their daily language. (P7, WR)*

Lastly, participants believed technology to be a helping source when it comes to preparing and adapting materials and providing easy access to various online sources, as told by P18 in his response: *"digital technology enables us, teachers, to adapt classroom activities and materials and enhances the language learning process."* and by P2:

> *I think with the existence of smartboards, it is easier and at the same time inevitable to use the technology in our classrooms. We even open the online versions of the course books used and teach our lessons with them. (P2, WR)*

To investigate novice EFL teachers' practices with technology, the participants were asked about how they integrated digital technology in their classrooms in the second reflection question. From here as presented in Figure 2 below, four main themes emerged: presenting materials, online platforms, increasing learner engagement, and preparing and adopting materials.
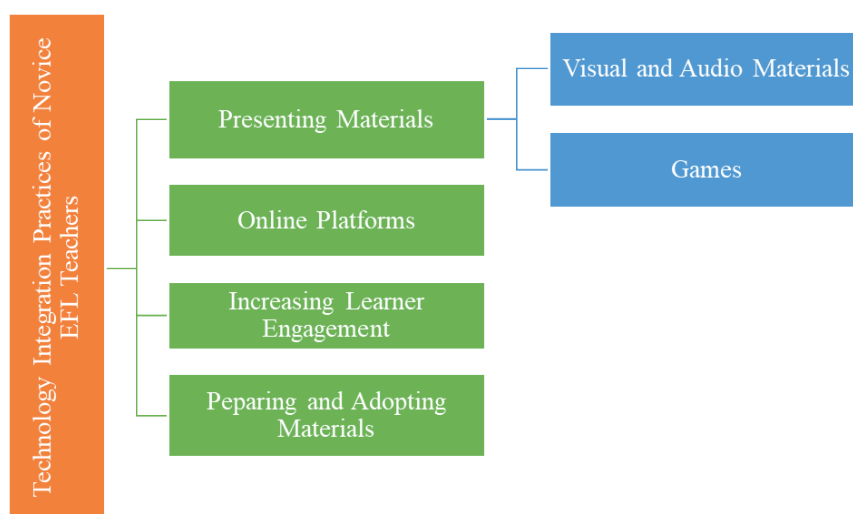
**Figure 2.** Technology Integration Practices of Novice EFL Teachers

First, as all teachers believed in the importance of technology integration, participants reported using it to present materials through the Smartboard in the classroom, to show visual and audio materials (e.g., the e-book version of the coursebook, movies, cartoons, online museums), and to play games (e.g., Kahoot, Quizlet, Kidzwonder). Online platforms were also used in novice teachers' practices when assigning homework, sharing materials, and checking student progress. P17 wrote: *"well, I usually prepare materials via digital technology tools. Additionally, I consider it very useful when it comes to gamification. Because of this reason, I use them to prepare games, activities, or tasks for my students."* (P17, WR).

> *I use online versions of the books that we use in the classroom. I open the digital books on the smartboard so that learners can follow easily, listen to tracks and watch videos related to our topic. Also, I assign online games and readers that I can check their progress and answers. With learners, we visit online museums and make research on the things we see in that museum. (P6, Int)*

In addition to presenting materials, teachers shared using technology in their practices to prepare and adopt regular materials into online teaching materials.

> *For my context, I make use of online tools such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Padlet, Kidzwonder, Google Classroom, and many others by creating activities using them, and creating students a chance to access materials that are gamified to engage them with my teachings. (P18, WR)*

Lastly, teachers integrated technology to increase the overall student engagement and participation in the subject, as explained in the participant's quote below:

> *I created each class a separate Padlet blog where they write in English. Even though the students were against using Padlet in the beginning, in a few weeks they started to ask me, "when are we getting a Padlet homework, or using the internet again?", and "it was different, we never did that before" kind of questions. (P10, Int)*

Novice EFL Teachers' Confidence Levels, Challenges and Needs for Technology Integration

In the third question, when asked about their confidence levels regarding teaching English using digital technology, most of the participants shared feeling confident about using technology, because of their familiarity with technology and efforts to keep up to date with new digital tools. Two participants, P6 and P11 wrote in their responses, and according to P6, *"I feel quite confident about using digital technology. It's because I've got familiar with technology use during my online practicum."* (P6, WR) and P11 wrote, *"I'm confident about technology. I am constantly trying to improve myself in this regard."* (P11, WR).

This question further investigated the challenges of novice teachers by inquiring them of the limitations they face when using technology in the classroom. As seen in Figure 3 below, three recurring themes emerged: limited technological sources, classroom management, and student profile.
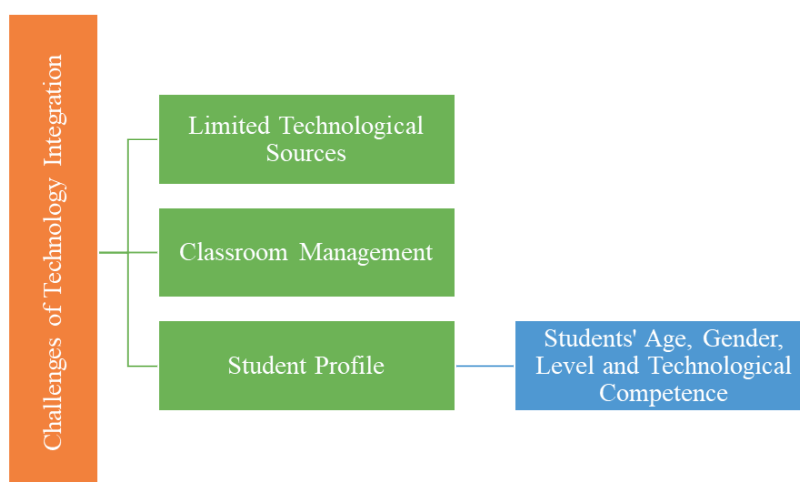


**Figure 3.** Challenges of Technology Integration

Among these themes, limited technological sources (e.g., internet connection, slow/old equipment, or lack of it) were mentioned, as shared by P6, *"the only challenge that I face is the Internet connection problem. If I arrange my lesson according to digital platforms, it becomes a big obstacle for me to continue my lesson."* (P6, WR) and P11, *"the only problem I encounter with technology is that the technology resources provided by the place I work at are old and in poor condition"* (P11, WR).

Following this, another theme was classroom management when using technology in the classroom, such as activating the device taking too much time and causing students to get distracted or lose interest altogether. The following extracts from P10 and P2 explain this issue.

> *At the school I work at, classrooms do not have smartboards. But I use my laptop. One of the issues with using my laptop is that since it has a small screen, students at the back cannot see the screen and were uninterested, as they could not see or hear properly from the back. I would move their seats to the front of the classroom, but they do not like this as well. (P10, Int)*
>
> *When you try to open materials on the smartboards, it can be time-consuming. Plus, if something happens to the internet connection, your entire lesson may be ruined and you must always have a B plan for the class since, with the technology, nothing is stable. (P2, WR)*

Regarding the theme of student profile, some of the novice teachers shared that using technology in their lessons can be challenging for them, due to students' ages and behaviors. P3 shared their experience in this quote: *"I struggle when students get too excited and answer the questions loudly and randomly. Some students miss their turns, and they may not understand the correct answer due to this noise."* (P3, WR), and P2 shared the following:

*In one of my classes, the students hacked my link in the bookmarks for opening the online version of their book. At that time, I did not understand what was going on and thought the webpage of the publisher was down, but later I realized that they did it on purpose. (P2, Int)*

In line with what P2 mentioned, P10 shared in her semi-structured interview session that when using technology, students' technological competence can be intimidating.

*The reason I felt nervous when using technology sometimes is that I knew the students were more capable of using technology than me, and I would not like to miss something since the students can be quirky and can say "teacher you don't know this". I am not scared of not knowing, but some students are difficult to handle, and I don't want to give them something they could use against me. When it comes to technological trends, when you do not know something, students can mock you. I have seen it happen a lot to others. Thankfully I use Instagram so they could not mock me too much. (P10, Int)*

Lastly, another challenge related to student profile was preparing digital instructional materials according to different age groups and gender, as seen in the quotes of P10, *"it was easier to create materials for an all-girls classroom [during online teaching practice]. Creating materials for both girls and boys that would suit them is more challenging."* (P10, Int), and P5, *"with young learners, once they do not like your material, then you are done with that, as they will never want to participate and get involved in that activity."* (P5, Int).

To better understand the needs of novice EFL teachers, the fourth question, "what support (e.g., school curriculum, professional development, and authorities) do you need to improve the efficacy of your technology-based teaching?" was asked. The recurring themes, shown in Figure 4 below, were curriculum support, professional development courses, and equipment and materials.
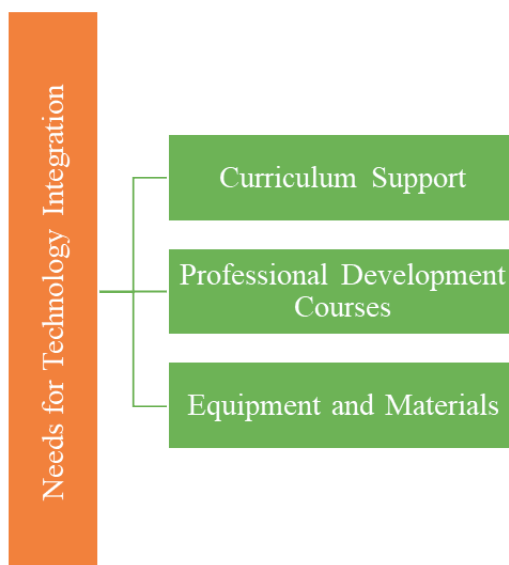


**Figure 4.** Needs for Technology Integration

Novice EFL teachers shared that curriculum support is needed to integrate technology at satisfactory levels and for guiding EFL teachers. P4 wrote that, *"I need to learn about more technology-based teaching and apply more of it to my classroom. However, I do not think I have enough sources and an appropriate curriculum to apply technology-based teaching in my classes."* (P4, WR).

*I would like to have curriculum support since I must think about all the elements such as what I am going to use, what I am going to show them and what can be more beneficial and attractive for students for all my classes. So, it is a bit frustrating. I would appreciate more help from the lesson plans and authorities beforehand. (P2, WR)*

In addition to this, the need for professional training programs to be available to EFL teachers was mentioned by participants, as seen in the extract from P19's response, *"I think authorities can give detailed training about how to use digital technology in classes, and they can provide examples."* (P19, WR).

Lastly, under the theme of funding from authorities, most participants reported the need for equipment and materials in their classrooms for technology integration. The following answers form P11, *"school curricula are generally not built on the use of technology. Even if they are, the teachers are limited by poor-quality tools and materials."* (P11, WR), and P3, *"I find a lot of materials online; however, they are all for sale, which I cannot afford to buy. So, authorities can provide English language teachers with free digital materials."* (P3, Int) explain this need.

## Novice EFL Teachers' Views about Their ICT Training

The participant's responses to the fifth question, which aimed to investigate novice teachers' feelings about the training they received during their pre-service teacher education program, revealed that participants believed that the training was not sufficient to prepare them for teaching English in the 21st-century.

Reasons novice teachers listed for finding their instructional courses about technology integration as insufficient were its (outdated) content and short duration. Moreover, the participants shared that more practice was needed not only in terms of technology integration but also with classroom management issues when using technology, as seen from the following quotes of P19, *"thanks to the material design course, we explored several websites. However, that part of the course wasn't enough to become knowledgeable about educational, digital technology."* (P19, WR), and P10:

> We are living in the technological era right now. So, while getting our education as pre-service teachers at universities, we should have technology integration into language teaching courses for at least two semesters. I believe taking it for one semester is not enough. (P10, Int)

In response to the second segment of this question, which asked participants about the availability of technology integration training programs, participants shared that training opportunities are unavailable, or they are not aware of available training courses. P14 wrote: *"I only had a course in my first year at university, so there is nothing much to say about my training, and I do not think there are enough training opportunities accessible to excel in the field."* (P14, WR).

In contrast, P6, and some others wrote that face-to-face or online training opportunities for knowledge about technology integration are accessible and sufficient. P6 wrote: *"I followed many online training seminars about how to integrate technology in lessons. They were accessible for free and presented by instructors or curriculum designers working under Cambridge or Oxford University Press. I feel that they are quite sufficient."* (P6, WR).

## Novice EFL Teachers' Views about their Online Practicum

Another critical factor in these novice EFL teachers' teaching experience is that they all had to conduct their school experience and teaching practice courses online -due to the global pandemic- and had to use digital tools to teach English. Therefore, the third research question explored whether this experience influences their teaching with technology in their current face-to-face teaching contexts. To this end, the impact of online teaching practice on their technology integration levels was inquired in the last question, to which participants responded by mentioning some benefits and challenges.

Based on their responses, what participants mentioned their online teaching practice was its benefits, as it challenged their skills in preparing digital materials, finding, and selecting which materials to use, and having the opportunity to practice what they learned in theory. P6 explained their experience like this: *"I had to find online and beneficial materials for my practicum. Now I know how to look for what I need on the Internet. I immediately realize whether what I've found is beneficial for my students."* (P6, WR).

> *I think I can find what I'd like to use in my lessons easily, as I know more about the sources, thanks to my online practicum. For example, for doing tests, I use a website that I used during my practicum last year. (P12, WR)*

In addition to these, another benefit of online teaching practice shared by P9 and P11 was that this experience made it possible to switch to online education when the need arises. P11 shared: *"I had the opportunity to develop myself more in the use of technology. Even if there is a situation like online education again, at least I have knowledge and experience in this subject."* (P11, WR).

> *Doing my internship online really helped me integrate technology into my lessons well. In this way, I was able to develop many nice activities/games. At the school where I am currently working, a class continued its education online for two weeks due to quarantine, so I taught online with them. And our lesson was more fun than usual. (P9, WR)*

Lastly, all the interviewees thought online teaching practice as part of their instructional technologies and material design course would be beneficial for future teacher education programs, as explained by participants P10: *"I think they should teach the pre-service teachers how to teach English lessons online. I think we will need online teaching in the future even more than now. They could split the practicum as online and face-to-face."* (P10, Int), and P2:

> *I think online practicum courses should be added to the ELT departments because if we did not have the online practicum, we would be lacking something as well. Both [online and face-to-face practicum] is a must in teaching because we cannot predict what will happen in the future, so we need to experience the online practicum, too. (P2, Int)*

Regarding the challenges with the online teaching practice and novice teachers' current technology integration, most shared that transitioning from online teaching to in-person teaching is more demanding due to classroom management and the absence of technological devices available at their schools.

> *Well, there are different applications in schools to open the smartboards and to use an online version of a coursebook within the smartboard. In my first week, it took some time to figure the whole situation out while trying to manage the class. Thankfully, I somehow coped with it. (P14, WR)*

In addition to these challenges, P2 shared in the interview session that technology integration in the classroom can be riskier, as using the smartboard in front of the classroom does not give the teacher any privacy and can lead to students' distraction.

> *In terms of privacy issues, students can see everything you open, and once you turn your back to the student they can start talking or getting lost in other things immediately. So, it is a risk in the face-to-face classroom. But when you are ready with everything you need on your personal computer and internet connection, it is safer and easier, which makes the lesson flow more smoothly. (P2, Int)*

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to understand the beliefs and practices of Turkish novice EFL teachers with online school and teaching practice experience. Regarding the first research question, the results of the open-ended questions and the semi-structured interviews revealed that all novice teachers believe in the crucial place of technology integration when it comes to learning and teaching a foreign language. This finding is in line with other studies in the literature conducted with in-service teachers (Celik & Aytin, 2014; Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). Although teachers believe in implementing digital technologies for learning English and using them to increase students' interest and engagement, their main limitation is the poor condition of technological devices or lack thereof in their current classrooms. This finding is not unexpected

and is a reality in schools not only in Turkiye but also in other countries where technology is not available in every classroom (Chung, 2014; Celik & Aytin, 2014; Hol & Aydin, 2020; Prasojo, et al, 2018; Shinta, & Aprilia, 2020).

In addition to the absence of technological tools, the findings revealed that EFL teachers need better curriculum adjustments that offer a diverse variety of digital components and more opportunities for technology integration. This finding coincides with Celik & Aytin's (2014) study that although teachers have the skills to use digital tools, the missing equipment in their classrooms prevents them from doing so. After all, even teachers who have the best training for technology integration face boundaries due to things controlled by authorities.

Another factor that inhibits novice teachers' technology integration in their current technology use is their training with technology instruction and digital material design, which was investigated through the second research question. Although some of the participants mentioned that they benefited from the courses they received at university, they agreed with the rest of the group of novice teachers, who had graduated from both universities, on the insufficient training provided within these courses. This finding mirrors other studies conducted with pre-service teachers (Uzun, 2016) and in-service teachers. (Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). Moreover, the content of these courses is also found unsatisfactory in terms of offering ideas for digital tools, online platforms, and addressing different learner groups.

Another finding is how teaching tech-savvy students can both motivate and demotivate EFL teachers to use technology in their practices. As mentioned by the participants, this generation of students learns to interact with technological devices even before they enroll in primary education. However, they can use this knowledge to disrupt the lesson from progressing by playing tricks, and in the end, students' tech-savviness can lead to some teachers feeling anxious about using technology in their practices. Thus, it is apparent that to close this digital divide, in-service teachers should feel fully competent with using technology in their lessons. To this end the education they receive throughout their undergraduate studies plays an important role.

Furthermore, this study investigated the technology integration practices of EFL teachers who experienced online teaching practice, where these teachers had to conduct online lessons with digital tools. The findings derived from the results show that, although this experience prevented teachers from having an in-class teaching practice, it provided the opportunity to practice teaching with technology. This finding supports Elcicek's (2021) and Gok Colak and Efeoglu's (2020) studies with pre-service teachers in online education during the pandemic that distance education improves pre-service teachers' skills when it comes to teaching with technology. As it was also found in studies conducted before, pre-service teachers should have the practice to develop their ICT skills (Asik et al., 2020; Voogt & Mckenny, 2017). In addition to helping pre-service teachers practice technological tools, online teaching practice prepare them for cases such as ERT, during which most teachers were caught off guard. Moreover, there is always the possibility of shifting to distance education to maintain public health. Thus, preparing future teachers for teaching online is a necessity in today's world.

Besides, the finding that novice teachers improved on selecting online sources and finding quality materials for their classroom activities shows that online teaching practice had what it takes to enhance EFL teachers' skills regarding material and lesson plan design. This finding supports other studies in the literature (Elcicek, 2021; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020; Shinta & Aprilia, 2020). Ultimately, pre-service teachers should have the training to design digital materials for successful technology integration (Basal, 2013). Thus, the continuation of such online practices in future programs could provide pre-service teachers the chance to develop their theoretical knowledge, to gain confidence, and agency, as was also suggested by others (Elcicek, 2021; Ersin et al., 2020; Gok Colak & Efeoglu, 2020; Kosar, 2021; Shinta & Aprilia, 2020).

In addition to these, another finding that is important not to overlook is the classroom management abilities of novice teachers. The chances of having a classroom management experience, which is an imperative part of teacher education (Anderson & Stillman, 2013), were hindered when they had to conduct their teaching practice course online. Furthermore, classroom management was already mentioned as a challenge during online teaching practice, and pre-service teachers reported feeling unprepared to teach face-to-face (Kosar, 2021). Thus, classroom management issues when integrating technology are another challenge these teachers may encounter in their face-to-face practices. Further studies can investigate the experiences of these teachers

with classroom management concerning technology integration or in general. A comparison between novice and experienced EFL teachers can also offer a better understanding of this area.

To summarize, the present study investigated the beliefs and practices of 20 Turkish novice EFL teachers who completed online school experience and teaching practice courses. The results showed that all participants were aware of the importance of technology integration in this digitalized world. Regarding EFL teachers' current practices, their online teaching practice experience helped them get familiar with digital platforms and teaching in an online environment. However, the lack of resources in their current face-to-face teaching contexts, as well as the lack of curriculum support, prevents them from integrating technology at a satisfactory level.

## Suggestions and Limitations

Considering the findings, some suggestions can be offered for pre-service teacher education programs. Firstly, in light of novice teachers' experiences with teaching tech-savvy students, teachers need to feel confident using technology. However, it is unfortunate that in this century -where humans use technology for all kinds of purposes- courses that should educate future teachers about how to use and incorporate technology for language teaching are being viewed as insufficient, outdated, and overall limited by students who completed them. As technology is an inevitable part of 21st-century language education, ELT department curricula should be revised to offer up-to-date course content, which will inform future teachers in both theoretical and practical knowledge about different trends and teaching methods; online, face-to-face, or mixed. The ICT courses they receive through the courses offered to teachers at the undergraduate level should be ready to equip future teachers with the necessary knowledge to use technology in all teaching formats. Some actions must be taken to improve the courses that target technology use, digital material design, and online teaching, such as incorporating the use of student portfolios as an assessment for pre-service teachers to showcase their skills with digital tools and the creation of online materials, and practice online learning and teaching tools and how to employ them in their teaching while doing so.

Secondly, as the role of online instruction became more permanent in the last two years, adding online teaching practice opportunities as part of pre-service education could be suggested. After all, this study shows that while having their school experience and teaching practice courses online made it impossible for pre-service teachers to experience a face-to-face classroom environment, it pushed them to practice their theoretical knowledge of technological tools, test and explore new digital tools, and gain confidence in a new area of teaching, which has now become an important part of our lives due to COVID-19. So, as a second suggestion, pre-service teachers should be provided with the opportunity to train about designing and presenting materials in an online environment. Online communities, where pre-service teachers can practice teaching online with their peers and receive feedback from peers and mentors, could be created. Incorporating opportunities for practicing online teaching materials was also suggested by Ersin et al. (2020), Kosar (2021), and Shinta and Aprilia (2020) as well.

Moreover, due to COVID-19, a new population of novice teachers who received their school experience and teaching practice courses online has been added to ELT teachers in Turkiye. As reported in Kosar' (2021) study, these teachers may not feel confident teaching in person yet. Considering the importance of classroom management not only for technology integration but also in general, the challenges of these teachers when it comes to this topic should not be overlooked. It would be a good opportunity for teacher training programs to consider including classroom observations or practices in earlier years not only to prepare them better for the real teaching environments but also to spare another generation of EFL teachers from missing out on having an in-class teaching experience in case of another global crisis.

Other suggestions can also be made for higher authorities regarding technical equipment that should be available at schools for technology integration, such as smartboards and internet connections. Based on the findings, teachers' competency when it comes to teaching with technology is of no use when these tools are unavailable. As this and other studies point to the lack of technological tools at school, authorities should acknowledge these studies and move forward in ways that will help both teachers' practices with technology and students' language learning by equipping schools with the needed tools, such as smartboards for teachers use visual and audial materials during their lessons. Therefore, teachers' voices and whether the opportunities are available to them at their schools in terms of digital tools should be considered when expecting them

to execute the curricula. Their voices, as stated earlier in this study, call for a curriculum that incorporates technology use and for sufficient tools to be made available in their classrooms.

Lastly, some limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The results are not generalizable to all novice EFL teachers, as the current study adopted a qualitative case study research design. To better understand the influence of online teaching practice on these teachers' current classroom practices, such as issues related to technology integration, further studies can investigate the experiences of these teachers concerning technology integration by comparing novice and experienced EFL teachers. Additionally, as participants with similar backgrounds were recruited, the results of this study yielded recurring themes, which could be enriched through a sample more diverse in educational contexts and size. Lastly, the data collected in this study comes from qualitative data instruments. Future studies in this area are suggested to adopt quantitative data for data triangulation and more in-depth results.

## BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of AUTHOR

**Hatice Saliha CUKUR** holds a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching from Marmara University, Turkiye. She continues her graduate education in the English Language Teaching Department at Anadolu University. She is currently working on completing her master's thesis. In addition to her studies, she is working as an online English language teacher to provide effective language instruction to students. Her studies and personal experiences with teaching have shaped her research interests, which include teacher education, novice teacher experience, reflective practice, and technology use in language teaching.

Hatice Saliha CUKUR
Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education
Address: Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, Yunus Emre Campus, 26210, Eskisehir, Turkiye
E-mail: haticesalihacukur@anadolu.edu.tr

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