

English Foreign Language Teachers' Perception on The Use of Information and Communication Technology in Teaching English

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use in the English language teaching and learning process. Two experienced teachers, recognized for their ICT integration, were selected as the research subjects at SMK Negeri 3 Langsa. Employing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, data was collected through semi-structured interview. The findings reveal that both teachers acknowledge the positive role of ICT in enhancing teaching efficiency, student engagement, and diversifying learning resources. Despite encountering technical challenges, such as network disruptions, both teachers advocate for continuous teacher training, increased investment in ICT infrastructure, and innovative research to optimize ICT integration in English language teaching, ultimately contributing to a more effective learning environment.

Keywords: *EFL Teaching; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Teachers' Perception.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Abbot (2001), Information technology (IT) has evolved into information and communication technology (ICT) over the past few decades and has improved its standing in educational institutions. It can be seen that the implementation of technology in education has increasingly grown and be an effective means of assisting the learning process in the digital era that is becoming a global trend now. Utilizing ICT in educational endeavors

is thought to enhance the overall quality of the learning experience (Romero, 2008). Numerous past studies have demonstrated that incorporating ICT into teaching and learning activities has the potential to enhance students' academic performance, foster creativity, and develop critical thinking skills. ICT has been used as an alternative tool in teaching and learning, especially in learning language. In English language teaching, particularly in English foreign language context, ICT provides students opportunities to find study material and practice English skills (Ismail and Andi, 2018).

However, based on the data from UNESCO (2011) the use of ICT in schools in Indonesia, particularly in English language teaching, is still uncommon. In this case, the researcher focused on using ICT to teach foreign language, especially English. Due to that, educators need to integrate ICT into their teaching methods for enhancing the quality of English language learning. Therefore, English teachers must possess the proficiency to incorporate ICT tools into their classrooms effectively.

Moreover, the writer saw some of the benefits of integrating ICT in teaching English in the classroom for both teacher and student based on the writer's liminary study. For teacher, ICT enabling them to enhance their teaching effectiveness and efficiency. Many multimedia resources can provide teachers with a wealth of authentic materials and resources to use in their lessons. ICT help them to make their teaching more engaging and interactive, to promote student motivation, and enabling teachers to communicate with their students more quickly and efficiently (Abbas, 2012). Meanwhile, for students, ICT provide them with more engaging and interactive learning experiences, so it helps them to develop their language skills. ICT help to enhance their motivation and engagement in the language learning process (Elizabeth and Jeanette, 2019). And also, can help to overcome their barriers in learning. Seeing some of the benefits above, the writer thinks it is important to integrated ICT in the classroom.

In order to incorporate ICT into the classroom effectively, the way teachers perceive ICT plays a pivotal role in English language teaching (Park and Son, 2014). Teachers' perception regarding the advantages of employing ICT in language instruction significantly shape their choices about its utilization. However, there exists a gap between teachers'

attitudes and beliefs and the practical integration of technology into their classrooms (Egbert, Pulus and Nakamichi, 2002). In essence, having a positive attitude toward ICT doesn't necessarily guarantee that teachers will be adept at incorporating ICT in their teaching. It is most likely due to a number of factors that may prevent teachers from implementing ICT.

The writer found this gap in several junior and senior high schools in Langsa. In the current situation do not implement ICT in their teaching and learning activities. The conventional method is still commonly used even though much research has shown that ICT is very effective for teaching English. As we can see through some research, one of the is a research by Rena (2021), not just for teacher, this method of using technology in teaching helped students improve their skills and that students had good attitudes towards learning English.

Furthermore, numerous research studies have explored teachers' perspectives on incorporating ICT into English language instruction, delving into both the advantages and the deterrents that may dissuade teachers from embracing ICT. In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, an investigation conducted by Barnawi among college teachers at Yanbu Industrial College in Saudi Arabia revealed positive attitudes and a willingness to use ICT in English language teaching (Barnawi, 2009). The study highlighted teachers' attitude regarding the internet as an excellent and abundant resource for learning English.

Given the positive attitude of ICT in English teaching, especially in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, this study seeks to explore teachers' perceptions within the Indonesian setting. Diverging from numerous prior investigations that concentrated on college educators, this research is specifically designed to focus on the outlook of vocational teachers regarding the integration of ICT in English instruction. The study aims to delve into the teachers' perceptions using a qualitative research design. The scope of this inquiry is confined to examining how teachers perceive the utilization of information and communication technology in the English language teaching and learning processes within a vocational school in Langsa. The primary focus is on the context of employing ICT in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This research has two problem statements: 1) How

do teachers perceive the use of ICT in teaching and learning process?, 2) What challenges do teachers face in using ICT in EFL teaching and how do the teachers overcome these challenges?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative approach focused on the phenomenology design. Qualitative method is characterized by some points such as; exploring a problem, developing a detailed understanding of a phenomenon, collecting data based on words, analyzing the data for description using text analysis form and interpreting the more significant meaning of the findings (Creswell, 2017). Creswell stated that phenomenology is define a research strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Mohajan, 2018). Furthermore, phenomenology delves into the examination of knowledge derived from consciousness, exploring how we comprehend an object or event through conscious experience (Stephen, 2002). In line with Hegel's perspective, phenomenology revolves around understanding experiences as they manifest in one's consciousness. He elucidates that phenomenology serves as the discipline dedicated to articulating what individuals perceive, sense, and understand within their immediate consciousness and encounters. The outcomes of this consciousness are what we term as phenomena (Moustakes, 1994). This concept aligns with the definition of perception, wherein perception is the process of interpreting information received from human sensory organs or instructions regarding objects and events to construct meaning within one's environment. Hence, this research employs phenomenology as its methodological approach to explore the EFL teachers' perception on the use of ICT in teaching English, including the challenges they face in using ICT to teach English and how they overcome the challenges. The data of this research collected by semi-structured interview. The participant's interview result displayed descriptively to answer the research questions. Two English teachers were chosen as a participant in this research. The writer used the thematic analysis model from Miles and Huberman (1994) to analyze data from the

interview. The model has three link stages of activity: data reduction, data display, and data conclusion drawing and verification.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher presents the interview result, which is divided into two main topics to answer the research problem.

1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of ICT in Teaching and Learning Process

a. Teacher role as an English teacher before and after using ICT to teach English.

T1: "The role of being a teacher remains constant for me, even with the incorporation of technology as a tool. Technology cannot replace the teacher's role. How do we learn from YouTube? It's a form of teaching, but there's still something lacking. Learning is a two-way communication process. If we rely solely on technology without a teacher's presence, it becomes a one-way communication. I see it that way. So, my role before and after using technology remains that of a teacher. The difference is that the use of technology makes it easier and assists students."

T2: "Previously, it might have been a bit monotonous, you know, using books most of the time. But after incorporating ICT, it became more exciting and enjoyable. As teachers who create the medium, we can choose the elements ourselves. We can tailor it; for example, if we're teaching in a culinary class, we use cooking elements that align with the subject matter. So, after using ICT, it feels very helpful because we're not solely focused on the textbook. For students, constantly looking at books can be boring for them. However, when we teach using ICT, like a PowerPoint presentation, they see colors, especially for visual learners, making them more interested in learning."

The teachers in the study express a consistent view regarding their role before and after integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into their English teaching practices. One teacher (T1) emphasizes that, regardless of technological advancements, their fundamental role as a teacher remains unchanged. They assert that technology should be viewed as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for the teacher. The teacher highlights the importance of two-way communication in the learning process

and suggests that relying solely on technology could result in one-way communication, which lacks the interactive nature of traditional teaching.

Another teacher (T2) shares insights into the transformative impact of ICT on their teaching approach. Before incorporating ICT, teaching was described as potentially monotonous, relying heavily on textbooks. However, with the introduction of Technology in Education (TIK), teaching became more dynamic and engaging. The teacher describes the flexibility provided by ICT, allowing them to choose and adapt elements according to the context of their lessons. This adaptability is particularly evident in their example of teaching culinary subjects, where they can incorporate relevant elements related to cooking.

Furthermore, T2 acknowledges the potential boredom students may experience with traditional teaching methods and highlights the enhanced engagement that ICT brings to the learning environment. The mention of using PowerPoint presentations as an example of ICT integration illustrates how visual elements can capture students' attention and cater to different learning preferences, particularly those who are visually oriented.

b. The significant influence of ICT

T1: "Perhaps the increased access to learning resources is notable. Educational media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ease students' ability to visualize and comprehend the explanations. This essentially means visualization – what we describe can be directly seen through ICT. For instance, when explaining the difference between a 5-star hotel, a guesthouse, and a boarding house, students can immediately see it through visuals on ICT. Another benefit of ICT is the broader access it provides. In the past, learning resources were limited to books, but now students can explore information through various channels such as websites and Google. This widens the scope of learning resources. The third advantage is facilitation; it makes the teacher's work easier. Especially compared to the past when preparing materials required thinking about images, now it's readily available, and we can choose what best suits our needs. The fourth benefit is the shift to online activities, especially for assignments. It makes it easier for students to complete tasks but also opens the door to cheating, which is a downside. Lastly, the fifth benefit is that it makes lessons more interesting and interactive."

T2: "Yes, the most significant impact is probably that students don't get bored quickly. There is a wealth of learning resources available, for example, on platforms like YouTube, not just limited to books. Now, the learning source is not just from the teacher's center; there's also a student center. Learning resources for students are not only in books but also from platforms like YouTube and various applications. So, students can explore on their own."

T1 highlights several advantages. Firstly, ICT enhances the visualization of concepts by allowing students to directly see and understand what is being explained. For example, the use of visuals on ICT aids in explaining the distinctions between a 5-star hotel, a guesthouse, and a boarding house. Secondly, T1 notes that ICT expands access to learning resources, moving beyond traditional books to include information from websites, Google, and other online sources. This wider range of resources enriches the learning experience. The third advantage is the facilitation of the teacher's work, streamlining the preparation process as materials are readily available, eliminating the need to create visuals from scratch. Additionally, T1 mentions the convenience of online activities for assignments but acknowledges the potential downside of cheating. Finally, T1 emphasizes the transformative impact of ICT on making lessons more interesting and interactive.

T2 echoes the sentiment that one of the primary benefits is preventing student boredom. T2 also emphasizes the wealth of learning resources accessible to students through platforms like YouTube and various applications. This shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student centered one is highlighted, acknowledging that students can now explore information independently.

c. Teacher Experience Using ICT in The Classroom

T1: "A positive experience, especially during the COVID period, was when I didn't use Google Form but instead utilized WhatsApp. When I asked students to present, what intrigued me was their choice of comfortable places for their presentations. Some presented outdoors, under trees, with amusing backgrounds like bedspreads. It was unexpected; we usually assume they record presentations indoors, but some opted for outside locations. It was both interesting and, on one hand, sad but happy. Some even went to the roadside to

find a signal. That's one intriguing aspect. Another was the surprise that some students genuinely enjoyed the process. What I envisioned as a simple task turned into something more. They created engaging presentations using PowerPoint, going beyond my minimal expectations. Another interesting aspect was the increased enthusiasm and sometimes getting materials that aligned with our preferences. Learning felt enjoyable and satisfying because, at times, we have limitations in delivering content. But discovering videos or teaching materials that perfectly fit our needs made us happier and more assisted."

"As for negative experiences, are there any less favorable ones? It seems similar to the challenges mentioned earlier. Yes, those issues we thought were resolved suddenly, like the refusal to capture images. Even after troubleshooting, the problem was traced back to a cable. That was unexpected. Another downside is related to facilities. Facilities that aren't top-notch, like when using an Infocus, the size can't be adjusted—it remains fixed. This limitation is also due to the tool's specifications affecting our overall quality."

T2: "The best experience was when using TikTok. I assigned a task where students had to create a descriptive text video introduction since we couldn't meet in person during the COVID period. I assigned the task via WhatsApp, instructing them to record themselves introducing and share the link with me. The results were indeed creative and impressive. Providing them with the opportunity to explore led to exceptionally creative outcomes."

"As for less favorable experiences, what might those be? Sometimes, despite giving them the chance to pay attention, they use it for other purposes. For instance, if the assignment is to create something on Canva or using the CapCut app, they might open something else."

The teachers describe positive experiences with ICT use, emphasizing unexpected creative outcomes and increased student engagement. T1 highlights the joy of discovering materials that perfectly fit teaching needs. However, both teachers note challenges related to technical issues and limitations in facilities, showcasing the dual nature of technology in the classroom. These experiences underscore the potential for both innovation and challenges in incorporating ICT into teaching practices.

d. The differences teaching using ICT and not

T1: "What's the most noticeable difference when teaching with and without ICT? I think, personally, because I belong to the older generation, our education was based on communication skills, on explaining. That's a teacher's skill—explaining, breaking down the material, making students ask questions, encouraging curiosity. That's the true skill of a teacher. Honestly, I still find joy in teaching in the old-fashioned way, through explanations. However, especially now, with the new curriculum and diverse educational needs, there are students with different learning styles. Some are visual learners, some are auditory learners, and they may enjoy hearing me explain. My teaching style might not be suitable for kinesthetic learners and those with different abilities or intelligences. So, media use is a mediator, an answer for students with different learning preferences and styles than others."

T2: "The most significant difference is, for example, in the textbooks. Some students learn solely from textbooks, and sometimes, they don't even understand the meaning of what they read. But with ICT, they are assisted; they can use Google Translate or check the dictionary on their phones."

T1 emphasizes the difference in teaching styles between traditional methods and incorporating ICT. Despite being more comfortable with the traditional approach, T1 acknowledges the necessity of adapting to the new curriculum and catering to diverse learning styles. The use of ICT becomes a mediator to address the varied preferences and learning styles of students. T2 points out the practical assistance that ICT provides, especially in understanding content from textbooks. The interpretations highlight the dynamic shift in teaching methods and ICT's inclusivity to address individual learning needs.

e. Teacher qualities for success in teaching using ICT

T1: "It seems like technological proficiency is crucial, especially in creating teaching materials. Yes, something like that."

T2: "So, skills like using TikTok or focusing on laptops are important because we need to align with the students' era. In the current era of students, with smartphones and gadgets, teachers should not be technologically left behind; hence, we need to adapt to their era. It

also seems essential to understand classroom management. Yes, how to guide the class, understanding their dynamics, mastering the subject matter and classroom management.”

Both teachers highlight the importance of technological skills, specifically in creating teaching materials and using relevant tools like TikTok or laptops. Additionally, they stress the significance of adapting to the current era of students, characterized by the prevalence of smartphones and gadgets. Furthermore, T2 underscores the importance of classroom management skills in addition to subject matter expertise. These qualities are seen as crucial for success in teaching with ICT.

f. Using ICT is efficient

T1: “Yes, effective and efficient. Is there any downside? The downside is when there's a disturbance, but under normal circumstances, it's very helpful. Efficient because it assists both students and teachers.”

T2: “Efficient.”

Both teachers (T1 and T2) emphasize the effectiveness and efficiency of using ICT in teaching. They highlight its benefits in aiding both students and teachers. The term "efficient" is reiterated by T2, further emphasizing the streamlined and productive nature of integrating ICT into the teaching process. The only mentioned downside is when disturbances or technical issues occur, temporarily hindering the efficiency. Overall, their comments underscore the positive impact of ICT on the teaching and learning experience.

Moreover, T1's suggestion to use ICT as a facilitator aligns with the literature highlighting the role of technology as a tool to support and enhance traditional teaching methods (Kouser and Majid, 2021). This integration aims to create a balanced approach that capitalizes on the strengths of both conventional and technological pedagogies.

The recommendation to explore materials from diverse sources, such as YouTube and Google, echoes the literature on the significance of varied and rich learning resources. This aligns with the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) model, advocating for the transformation of learning tasks through technology integration (Wahyuni, 2020). T1's suggestion underscores the potential of ICT to not only supplement

traditional teaching materials but also transform the learning experience by providing multimedia resources.

T2's advice to utilize smartphones beyond social media and tap into the abundance of educational content available on platforms like Instagram aligns with the literature emphasizing the potential of mobile learning. This supports the idea that smartphones, when used purposefully, can serve as powerful educational tools (Kumar and Radcliffe, 2019).

In summary, the teachers' positive perceptions of ICT integration correspond with existing literature, highlighting the potential benefits of efficiency, engagement, and varied learning resources. However, acknowledging challenges, such as disturbances and the need for teachers to be adept with technology, also aligns with the existing discourse on the complexities associated with technology integration.

2. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Using ICT in EFL Teaching

T1: "The first challenge is with the network. Sometimes, even when our network is set up, it doesn't connect. The second challenge is our computer operating skills and the ability to find learning resources. Until now, we've mainly relied on platforms like YouTube and Google, unaware that we can explore resources directly from specific websites. I once attended a training, but unfortunately, I forgot the name. It turns out the website provided comprehensive English language materials. I'm currently searching for my notes on it; I'm unsure whether it's called Bright or something else. So, sometimes, we lack the skill of searching, limited by our access. This involves network issues and knowledge about websites and accounts. Even when we type, what usually comes up is videos, not the specific websites or accounts. The third challenge is personal capability—the ability to master ICT. For example, when using a projector, suddenly it doesn't project onto the screen. We're left puzzled about what buttons to press. It's about mastering the IT skills, not just the subject matter."

"Another challenge is the availability of tools. For instance, having a laptop and a projector but lacking speakers becomes a problem. It's a challenge. Additionally, facilities supporting the use of media are sometimes minimal. For example, a brightly lit glass room

like this one may be less effective when shot because it lacks proper facilities. Conditions such as closed doors and windows, a non-air-conditioned room, and external noises entering when doors are open are all technical issues. So, what efforts do you make to overcome these challenges?"

"To overcome these challenges, I first request and implore the school to provide facilitation. Then, I ensure equipment is complete. Regarding the classroom, it means conditioning the room to be suitable for using these tools. In my case, I used to call students to the lab because it has better sound insulation. Another challenge is learning to ask those who know. For instance, what's the issue if I call the technician when the projection doesn't work? It often involves jiggling the cables. How would I know to jiggle the cables? So, first, I seek help from experts, then condition the room and request facilities to be equipped."

T2: "If there's a challenge, it's mainly with unfamiliar applications, like Kahoot or quizzes. It requires relearning how to use them. The challenge for me means I need to study again. I search for information, sometimes asking other teachers how to use certain applications. As for the students, if we suggest downloading Canva, they might say there isn't enough space, or they don't have sufficient data. My students, who are part of Generation Z, are sometimes asked to edit TikTok videos, showing they are more creative or adept at using applications like CapCut than us."

"How do you address this challenge? From the various challenges mentioned, what solutions do you implement? The solution is like the discussion we had about the challenges, discussing with other teachers. If there's a constraint from students, like insufficient data, they might use a friend's data. Or sometimes, they need to try it out. Sometimes, they say they can't do it, questioning how an older person like me can, but they can't. So, the solution is to motivate the students."

First identifies network issues as a primary challenge, with connectivity problems even when the network is set up. The second challenge relates to computer proficiency and the ability to explore learning resources beyond popular platforms like YouTube and Google. The teacher reflects on a training experience where a specific website offered comprehensive English language materials, but unfortunately, they cannot recall the name.

The third challenge is personal competence in mastering ICT tools, illustrated by difficulties with a projector during class. Additional challenges include equipment availability, such as laptops and projectors without speakers, and the occasional lack of facilities supporting media use. T1's efforts to address these challenges involve seeking school support, ensuring equipment completeness, conditioning classrooms for effective tool use, and seeking help from knowledgeable individuals.

From the interview result both teachers reveal the multifaceted challenges associated with integrating ICT in the classroom. T1 emphasizes technical challenges, network issues, and the need for personal competence in using technology. T2 discusses challenges related to both teacher and student familiarity with applications, highlighting the generation gap in technological proficiency. The solutions provided by both teachers involve seeking support, collaborating with colleagues, and motivating students to overcome obstacles. These insights underscore the importance of continuous professional development and adaptability in navigating the evolving landscape of educational technology.

The challenges identified by the teachers shed light on the practical hurdles and considerations associated with incorporating ICT into English language teaching. T1's mention of disruptions as a downside aligns with prior research emphasizing technical issues as a potential impediment to the seamless use of technology in the classroom (Dee and John, 1997). This finding underscores the importance of schools and institutions investing in robust technical infrastructure to support effective ICT integration.

T1's mention of the need for teachers to enhance their technological skills aligns with the existing literature emphasizing the significance of teacher training and professional development in fostering successful technology integration (Hixon and Buckenmeyer, 2009). This emphasizes teachers' dual role as content experts and technology facilitators, necessitating ongoing training to keep pace with technological advancements (Safdar, 2013).

The discussion on the availability of equipment and facilities, such as laptops, Infocus projectors, and speakers, resonates with the literature highlighting the importance of adequate resources for effective technology integration. Limited access to essential tools can

impede the implementation of ICT-enhanced lessons, reinforcing the need for educational institutions to invest in infrastructure.

T1's acknowledgment of the technical challenges, such as projecting issues with Infocus, underscores the importance of teachers possessing troubleshooting skills. This aligns with Mishra and Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, emphasizing the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. Teachers must be familiar with technology and possess the skills to troubleshoot and adapt to unforeseen issues.

T2's discussion on students' potential misuse of technology, such as using Canva or CapCut for purposes other than educational tasks, raises ethical considerations. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the need for educators to address digital citizenship and responsible technology use (Prasetiyo, 2021). The findings underscore the importance of integrating digital literacy into the curriculum to responsibly equip students with the skills to navigate the digital landscape.

The identified hurdles mirror the broader discourse on the complexities of technology integration. They emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach, encompassing technical support, teacher training, and the development of digital literacy skills among students.

In conclusion, the challenges identified by the teachers underscore the practical considerations and obstacles associated with ICT integration in English language teaching. These findings align with existing literature, emphasizing the need for investment in infrastructure, ongoing teacher training, and a holistic approach to address the multifaceted challenges of technology integration. The discussion serves as a valuable contribution to the broader conversation on optimizing the use of ICT in educational settings.

CONCLUSION

The teachers recognize ICT as a valuable tool that enhances traditional teaching methods, providing efficiency, engagement, and varied learning resources. Their acknowledgment of ICT's transformative potential aligns with existing literature,

emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that leverages technology to augment and redefine educational practices. Despite challenges and the recognition of a learning curve, the teachers view ICT as an efficient and effective means to facilitate learning, catering to today's students' diverse needs and preferences. Their advice to fellow teachers underscores the importance of embracing technology as an integral component of modern education, fostering adaptability and continuous professional development.

Moreover, the challenges identified by the teachers shed light on the practical hurdles and considerations associated with incorporating ICT into EFL teaching. These challenges range from technical issues, such as network disruptions and equipment limitations, to the need for continuous teacher training and addressing ethical concerns related to students' potential misuse of technology. The teachers' strategies for overcoming these challenges include seeking school support, conditioning classrooms for effective tool use, and fostering collaboration among teachers. The findings underscore the complexity of integrating technology in the classroom and emphasize the importance of institutional support, ongoing professional development, and cultivating digital literacy skills among teachers and students. Overall, the study contributes valuable insights into the nuanced perceptions and challenges associated with the use of ICT in EFL teaching, offering practical considerations for educators and policymakers alike.

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