

Students' Voice in ICT-Enhanced Learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom: Benefits and Challenges

Laxmi Mustika Cakrawati ^{1*}, Indrie Setya Lestari ²

^{1,2} Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

^b SMPN 3 Soreang, Indonesia

*E-mail: laxmi.mustika@unsoed.ac.id

KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

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Considering the rapid advancement of technology, teachers are encouraged to integrate ICT into their lessons. It is also needed in order to meet the demands and challenges of 21st-century education. This study attempts to investigate students' voice in ICT-enhanced learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, focusing on the benefits and challenges. The study involved 100 high school students from some schools in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The data were obtained from questionnaire and interview and were analyzed by using a mixed-method approach. The questionnaire, which consists of closed-ended questions using the Likert scale, was administered to students to explore their voice while the interview was conducted to gain in-depth opinion on the ICT use in the classroom. The participants of the study showed various responses toward the use of technology in EFL classroom. The findings reveal that many teachers have integrated ICT in their classroom. Although slow-speed internet and school facilities are considered as the main challenges in ICT use, the results of the study indicate that technology-rich environment can motivate students and promote learner-centered classroom. Therefore, based on the findings, it is suggested that teachers to effectively and creatively explore ICT-enhanced learning to engage students, who are considered as digital natives, in meaningful learning experiences.

Keywords: 21st century education, EFL classroom, ICT-enhanced learning, students' voice

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Introduction

Education which has a crucial role in the development of a nation is expected to be able to transform and adjust its elements in facing challenges of the 21st century learning. Due to the rapid advancement of technology, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in

any field is unavoidable and one of them is in education. Teachers are expected to be able to exploit the use of ICT in their teaching and learning process so that the students acquire the skills to cope with challenges in the era of 21st century.

The skills in using and exploiting technology is one of the competencies that have been acquired by students. Based on one of the frameworks in 21st century education, education and learning in the 21st century education should focus on four competences: collaboration, critical thinking, technology and digital literacy, and problem solving. In technology and digital literacy competencies, students are expected to be able to master skills related to information, media, and technology such as accessing and evaluating information, analyzing information and media, creating digital media product, as well as using technology effectively (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2009).

Nowadays, students have mastered the use of digital technology on their daily basis. A survey administered to Y and Z generation show that they spend about three to five hours accessing internet. Most participants mention that they use internet access to interact in social media, finding information for school assignment, and finding entertainment such as game, listening to song and watching videos (SiBerkreasi, 2017). Therefore, considering that the access to technology has been really common, teachers are expected to explore digital technology in a class and exploit it in teaching and learning process. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also mentioned in learning principles stated in ministerial regulation. Information and Communication Technology is utilized in improving efficiency and effectivity in learning (Permendikbud No. 65 year 2013). Thus, ICT-enhanced learning or the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning process is one of the important aspects to make the learning process more engaging, accessible, flexible, and effective.

Due to the increased expectation in the use of ICT in learning and the number of teachers that have applied various method in using using ICT, a lot of research have been conducted related to the use of ICT in classroom and education setting. A research done by Kuppens (2010) shows that the students who often watch television programs or play computer game in English receive positive input in their English acquisition. On the other hand, the use of social media can also be used to help students in learning language. Interaction happens between instructor and students as well as the immediate feedback can create the efficient and effective communication pattern (Archambault, Wetzel, Foulder, and Williams, 2016).

Moreover, with the increasing development of online learning platform, a lot of researcher are encouraged to explore the use of effectiveness in using online learning platform. Manowong (2016) and Kongchan (2012) in their research explain that teachers feel that online learning platform help them during the teaching and learning process. Students also feel that online learning platform can help them in learning and motivate them to actively participate in learning activities. In the context of English learning in Indonesia, some research on the use of online learning platform have been conducted (Cakrawati, 2017; Purnawarman, Sundayana, & Susilawati, 2016; Saptani, 2017). Based on those research, not only teachers but also students give positive response toward the use of online learning platform. Besides accommodating teachers and students interaction who are not exist in the same space, according to the results of the research, students believe that online learning platform allows them to help in comprehending learning materials, obtaining new vocabulary, as well as helping them in improving their language skills.

Those research indicate that ICT-enhanced learning has crucial roles in education. Teachers and educators have explored the use of LMS, online learning platforms, educational apps, and others in their teaching practice. Thus, this study seeks to achieve aforementioned purposes and the issues to be explored in the paper will be summarized in the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive ICT-enhanced learning in the English classroom?
2. What benefits and challenges are experienced by students related to the use of ICT in the English classroom?

Method

The study employed mixed-method approach. In order to better understand and address the research topics examined in the study, the paradigm of the research include the gathering and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. It is consistent with Creswell's (2012) argument that mixed techniques make use of the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative research.

This study involved 100 high school students from few areas in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 57 students from urban school and 43 students from sub-urban schools. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data in the research. The questionnaire consists of ten closed-ended questions using a five-Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered to figure out students' perception on the use of ICT in the classroom. The items in the questionnaire were developed based on various theories related to the integration of technology in education. Meanwhile, interview was conducted to 10 students. The interview aimed to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of ICT in learning English.

The data from students' closed-ended questionnaire was statistically computed to analyze the percentage of each statement and then was interpreted descriptively. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis for repeating key features which were related to the use of ICT in learning English. The reappearing of particular opinion can be assumed as the participants' concern towards the issue. The data from the questionnaire and interview were used to provide description of students' voice in ICT-enhanced learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

Results

This section presents and discusses the findings related to the research questions on students' voice in ICT-enhanced learning in EFL classrooms. The discussion is shown through the interpretation of the results shown in the tables elaborated with the findings from the interview.

Students' Voice in ICT-enhanced learning in EFL Classroom

The use of ICT in the classroom have sparked interest and concern from any components in education setting. It has been discussed by a lot of scholars and researchers. Some of them show positive response and some of them show that the use of ICT brings some challenges in classrooms. The following table show how students perceive the use of ICT in the classrooms.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions on the Use of ICT

Questions	Never/ Strongly disagree	Seldom/ Disagree	Sometimes/ Neutral	Often/ Agree	Always/ Strongly Agree
My teachers use ICT as learning media in the English classrooms.	14	11	35	31	9
Teachers who use ICT in teaching are relatively better than teachers who don't use ICT.	1	2	40	31	26
I enjoy learning by using digital technology and I am confident with my ability in using technology.	1	8	20	39	32
When I face some difficulties in learning, I can find abundant information by myself through the internet.	2	5	14	31	48

The table above shows that according to the students, their English teachers often integrate digital technologies to their learning process. Although there are some teachers who do not use digital technologies, the students did not think that teachers who use technologies are better than teachers who do not. Based on the interview, students mentioned that the most important thing is how teachers design their instructions and how learning media can help students to understand the materials. It is in line with the result of the research conducted by Michos and Markovic (2020) which mentions that students think new technology is not too significant but it may be beneficial as an additional aspect. Students added that teachers can use various methodology as long as those help them enhancing language and communication skills.

The table also shows that most of the participants enjoy technology-based learning and since they are called as digital natives, they were confident with their ability in using technologies. Furthermore, they understand that books are not the only source when learning. By having the internet access, the students are able to search information that can help them when they have difficulties.

Digital Technology Used in EFL Classroom

There are abundant technologies that can be explored by teachers when they decide to integrate technologies in their classrooms. Considering one factor and another, based on the data from the questionnaire, here are various ICT tools used by teachers in the classroom.

Table 2. Technology used by teachers during teaching and learning process

Technologies used by teachers in English learning:	
Learning Websites	41
YouTube videos	37
Digital storytelling	22
Social Media	16
Online Quiz	24
Online Learning Platform (Quipper, Google Classroom, Moodle, etc.)	19
Duolingo	2

Table 2 shows types of technologies that are usually used by teachers in the classroom. Online learning platform such as Quipper and Google Classroom as well as online quiz such as Kahoot and

Wayground are quite popular since they are used by many teachers nowadays. It is said that the use of learning online platform in learning is beneficial to (1) create regular opportunities for self and peer review; (2) support a range of innovative forms of assessment; (3) provide students with materials over time to allow them to review their own work and progress; (4) create opportunities for online dialogue between students, teachers, and parents; and (5) be aware of the potential for permanent digital records to follow students in positive and negative ways (Jewitt, Clark, & Hadjithoma-garstka, 2011). Moreover, the participants stated that learning websites and YouTube videos are the most used media in English learning. On the other hand, although Duolingo is used by a few teachers, some students think that Duolingo has a good potential for language learning, especially when teachers ask them to have an exercise in their home.

Benefits and Challenges of Using ICT in EFL Classroom

Among factors that have been a concern in the use of ICT tools in the classroom, a lot of researchers and scholars have discussed the benefits and challenges. Here are some benefits and challenges of ICT-enhanced learning based on the students' opinion.

Table 3. Challenges in using ICT in English learning

Challenges in using technology in English learning	
Time consuming	13
Poor internet connection	59
Insufficient school facilities	45
Teachers' ability in using new technologies	30
Students' difficulties in adjusting with technology-based learning	16

The table above shows student responses regarding the challenges felt by the students when teachers try to utilize ICT in English classes. Participants in this research were able to choose one or several challenges they felt or faced and the responses given by the students were quite varied. A total of 59 participants stated that the biggest challenge in using ICT was a slow internet connection.

"ICT-enhanced learning provides many benefits. The learning process can be more effective and faster if the internet connection is good." (interview, student I)

The statement above shows the response of one of the students during the interview. Students think that the internet connection is very crucial in ICT-enhanced learning. This is also related to the opinions of students who state that school facilities, especially for schools located on the outskirts of the city, must be sufficient so that teachers do not experience many difficulties. According to the students, another challenge that is also important to notice is teachers' ability to use ICT tools.

"Using Quipper or other learning platforms can actually help students but don't use it as a 'shortcut'. It's best to just use it as a complement and support, not as the main source ... Sometimes, teacher provides the material, asks the students to read it, then answer the questions and the lesson ends. The use of technology is to help and ideally make teachers think that this is not as easy as watching videos - reading - answering questions.

Teachers still have to explain and work hard so that students can understand." (interview, student G)

"Sometimes my teachers seem confused when using the computer. "So it's best for teachers to get a lot of training in the form of workshops." (interview, student R)

The two statements above represent some of the same opinions regarding teacher abilities. The students noticed that some teachers had difficulty adapting to the use of ICT for learning. The results of previous research which focused on teachers' perceptions of the use of ICT showed that teachers responded positively and showed great enthusiasm. They also realize that their limited skills and knowledge in the field of ICT can be an obstacle in using technology in the classroom (Hu & McGrath, 2014).

The students added that this was definitely caused by many factors and was understandable. However, schools should be able to facilitate teachers by providing lots of training related to the use of technology in learning. It is best if the training provided does not only cover how to use digital technology but also includes how to design teaching using ICT so that learning objectives can also be achieved. Canese, Paez, & Amarilla (2023) and Li (2021) emphasized that teachers encountered difficulties in integrating technology into their teaching not merely in using ICT tool. By having a lot of training, it is believed that the teacher will be better in responding to the challenges of using ICT tools in the classroom. Related to this, to emphasize the significance of computer literacy for EFL teachers in EFL contexts, Stockwell (2009) also emphasized that students are now more aware of and competent in the use of technology and this issue requires teachers to be familiar and proficient in using ICT in the classroom.

On the other hand, teachers' beliefs and practices is also critical for the successful integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Thus, continuous professional development efforts are still necessary to encourage, motivate, and enhance teachers' practices and beliefs in the use of technologies in their lessons (Tay, Lim, & Lim, 2015; Dashtestani, 2014).

Due to technical obstacles, several students also mentioned that sometimes using digital technology can take a lot of time. Apart from that, some students also mentioned the factor of unpreparedness on the part of the students themselves, especially in terms of responsibility, independence and honesty.

"Sometimes because learning often uses PowerPoint or Canva, when a group makes a presentation, many other students become lazy and don't listen to their friends. This kind of learning method needs to be evaluated and revised a lot." (interview, student A)

"Sometimes when doing assignments via Quipper, there are children who cheat. It should be independent practice, but there are some who do it together with other friends, tutors, or look for answers from other sources. Well, if learning like this is not effective, both for teachers and students. Sometimes it seems like neither of them is ready. There should be a clear system, especially if the work is done at home." (Student G)

The statement above shows that there were some students who are not ready and just take the short route. The interviewed participant added that it could actually be that the teacher's goal is

to train students' honesty. However, strict regulations are still needed. In addition, assignments given online should not be used as the main assessment. They thought that the teachers may consider the result of the online quiz or online assignment, but also had to consider other factors. The findings regarding these challenges are in accordance with the opinion of Ertmer (1999) cited by Tay, Lim, and Lim (2015) who revealed that barriers to the use of ICT in learning consist of two factors: extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include facilities and access to technology in a school, school policies and curriculum, and opportunities for professional development. Meanwhile, intrinsic factors relate to teachers' values, beliefs and motivation, skills and knowledge about the use of technology in learning.

Therefore, professional development efforts are needed on an ongoing basis to encourage, motivate and increase teachers' confidence and ability to utilize ICT in classroom learning. Teachers will be able to answer challenges comprehensively if facilities and support in the form of professional development are sufficient (Dashtestani, 2014; Hu & McGrath, 2014; Tay, Lim & Lim, 2015).

In addition, to prepare prospective teachers before they carry out teaching practice, teacher education programs in universities should promote ICT-enhanced learning in their curriculum so that prospective teachers can improve their ICT skills (Okan & Taraf, 2013). Professional development or training efforts in teacher education programs should also pay attention that technology is not just something that can stand alone and teachers are not only required to use it in their daily lives or learning. More deeply than this, teachers are expected to be able to design appropriate learning and be able to choose the type of technology that suits the learning objectives and then ultimately be able to evaluate student progress by considering many aspects. Thus, the latest concepts in education regarding new literacy, multiliteracy, or Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) should be introduced to teachers. The concept of TPACK, for example, is important for teachers to understand because with this theoretical framework teachers are expected to be able to understand basic theories related to technology-based teaching effectively, how to provide material by utilizing technology, and how technology plays a role in developing and strengthening knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

On the other hand, regardless of the challenges and obstacles faced by both teachers and students, it cannot be denied that the use of ICT in education has a positive impact.

Table 4. Benefits of The Use of ICT Tools in EFL classrooms

Questions	Never/ Strongly disagree	Seldom/ Disagree	Sometimes/ Neutral	Often/ Agree	Always/ Strongly Agree
The Use of ICT in the classroom can motivate students and encourage them to learn independently.	1	4	29	41	25
The materials in the internet can improve students' knowledge.	1	12	32	22	32
<hr/>					
The Use of technology in learning English can help students in:					
Understanding learning materials better	46				

Practicing speaking and listening skill	81
Practicing writing and reading skill	51
Improving vocabularies	77

The table shows that most of the participants agreed that the use of ICT can motivate them and encourage them to learn independently. For example, by using online learning platforms, students can learn and practice their language skills independently whenever and wherever they want. They also agreed that since internet provides abundant learning materials, internet can improve their knowledge. Students also mentioned that the use of technologies can help them in improving language skills, especially, listening and vocabularies. The finding is supported by Chapelle (2003) who states that the improvement of students' linguistic input is one of the benefits in integrating technology in the classroom. Technology-based instruction can engage adolescents in learning vocabulary knowledge (Li 2010; O'Hara and Pritchard 2008), reading (Dalton et. al. 2002), and writing skills (Warschauer 2009).

The table above also points out that the majority of participants in the study agreed that the use of ICT in learning could motivate them and encourage them to learn independently. For example, through online learning platforms, students can learn and practice their skills independently whenever and wherever they want.

“The use of technology can facilitate student learning. There is a lot of interesting material on the internet that teachers can actually use. Apart from that, students can actually bring fewer books to school.” (interview, Student S)

"If the teacher delivers material via video or there is additional video playback related to the material, it usually makes students less sleepy. Technology-based learning can be more practical, efficient and paperless. But teachers also still have to teach and provide explanations of the material or ask questions, don't just play videos." (interview, student T)

The students agreed that the internet provides many interesting resources that teachers can explore, making learning more interesting but still meaningful. Students can gain new knowledge and vocabulary and practice English language skills. These results are supported by Chapelle's (2003) statement which states that the development of students' linguistic input is one of the benefits obtained when teachers implement technology-based learning. Teaching that utilizes ICT can also improve vocabulary knowledge (Li, 2010; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008), reading skills (Dalton, et al., 2002), and writing abilities (Warschauer, 2009).

The use of technology in learning is also considered capable of attracting students' interest and satisfying their passion for using devices and accessing the internet. Today's students, who can be called digital natives, will feel interested and challenged because they use technology in the classroom (Mustafa, 2015). One approach that is often used in ICT-enhanced learning is blended learning. This approach allows teachers to combine conventional face-to-face learning with an online-based approach. Blended learning can make students control learning and organize the information they need. They can access the material anytime and anywhere. Apart from that, they

can also adjust their learning based on their rate of progress which can ultimately make them motivated, responsible and independent learners (Klimova, 2011). However, teachers should still pay attention to how they could explore the use of ICT tools and integrate them properly into the materials being taught in the classroom.

Furthermore, because students realize that the use of ICT tools can help them in learning, to improve their own language skills, they also explore various ICT tools that can be used. The following table show various activities that incorporate the use of ICT tools done by students.

Table 5. Digital technologies Used by Students

Students try to improve their English by using technology through these activities:	
Writing blog article in English	8
Writing Instagram caption or Twitter tweet in English	71
Reading webtoon or online English novel	47
Creating vlog in English	6
Using penpal sites to communicate with English speaking people	18
Participating in fans international forum	22

Besides exploring students' perceptions, challenges and benefits felt by students, the questionnaire distributed in this research was also aimed at identifying habits or activities carried out by students to help them improve their English skills. Many students choose Instagram captions or tweets on X (Twitter) as a medium to improve their English language skills, especially increasing vocabulary and recognizing sentence forms in English. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Cruz and Cruz (2013, as cited in Manowong, 2016) which states that the use of social media can enrich students' learning experiences because these activities can increase student involvement. Apart from that, the activity that many students choose is reading webtoons and online novels. For students who like to read, reading webtoons or online comics or novels can be a fun activity because with an interesting storyline, they unconsciously increase their English vocabulary and increase their exposure to the use of English. Moreover, some students also choose activities in international fan forums. With the increasing popularity of pop culture, quite a few students are taking part in discussions on international fan forums, interacting with many people and exchanging opinions about the dramas or music they like. These are the things that teachers should take into consideration when developing technology-based learning. By knowing students' habits and needs, teachers are expected to be able to explore many sources related to students' interests and ultimately be able to design meaningful learning. Teacher beliefs and the practices carried out by teachers play a crucial role in the success of ICT-enhanced learning.

Since ICT was introduced and integrated into the field of education, ICT has been able to provide benefits in various levels of society, both in developed and developing countries. With the existence of ICT, relations and communication between schools in urban and rural areas and the outside world can be created and connected because of the internet. However, several problems were found in line with the use of ICT in education, including insufficient access and facilities, policies

that were sometimes unfavorable, lack of technical support, lack of skills and knowledge of ICT, and insufficient professional development. In fact, in ICT-based learning, the teacher's role becomes more important because teachers must be able to answer the new challenges they face (O'Mahony, 2003).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that many teachers in Bandung, West Java, have already integrated the use of ICT tools in their classroom. Students participating in the study showed various response towards ICT-enhanced learning. However, there are several issues should be concerned in the implementation such as school facilities, slow-speed internet, and teachers' competencies. Thus, both pre-services and in-services teachers should get more training and workshops regarding how to use ICT in the classroom and how to design language instruction that will be able to cope the challenges of the 21st century education.

In line with the widespread suggestions for the use of ICT in classrooms in learning settings, further research should be carried out with a variety of regional coverage, methods and regional participants, ranging from urban school contexts to rural schools, involving participants from both teachers and students. Given the differences in the context of each school, there will be no learning method that will produce the same output. However, with increasing research, it is hoped that teachers can learn from each other's experiences and then apply a variety of methods that are appropriate to the context and setting in which they serve.

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