

The Role of Technology in Facilitating EFL Learning: A Case Study Approach

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Abstract

This research investigates how digital tools and resources are integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education to enhance learning outcomes. The study employs qualitative through interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations. Interviews with 6 lecturers and 74 students as the samples provide in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions. Classroom observations offer real-time evidence of how technology is used in practice, highlighting both its benefits and obstacles. Data is analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the role of technology in EFL learning at the English Language Learning and Education Study Program of University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai during February to June 2024. The results show that the use of technology has been positively perceived by both students and lecturers, who recognize the ability to make learning more accessible, interactive, and tailored to individual needs. The widespread use of tools such as language learning apps, online resources, and multimedia presentations has contributed to more effective and enjoyable learning experiences. Despite these benefits, the research also identified significant challenges, including technical issues, inconsistent access to devices, and varying levels of digital literacy among students. These challenges sometimes hinder the seamless integration of technology into EFL learning. The technology has greatly contributed to the success of EFL learning at Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai, addressing the challenges identified will be crucial for maximizing its potential. By investing in better support systems, infrastructure, and training, the university can further enhance the effectiveness of technology in fostering English language proficiency among its students.

Keywords: *Role, Technology, Facilitating, EFL learning.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana peralatan digital diintegrasikan ke dalam pendidikan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui wawancara, kuesioner, dan observasi kelas. Wawancara dilakukan Bersama 6 dosen dan 74 mahasiswa yang ditetapkan dengan menggunakan total sampling dengan memberikan wawasan mendalam mengenai pengalaman dan persepsi mereka. Observasi di kelas memberikan bukti real-time tentang bagaimana teknologi digunakan dalam praktik, dengan menyoroti manfaat dan hambatannya. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk kualitatif, sehingga memungkinkan adanya pemahaman komprehensif mengenai peran teknologi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai selama bulan Februari hingga Juni 2024. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan teknologi telah diterima secara positif oleh mahasiswa dan dosen, yang mengakui kemampuan untuk membuat pembelajaran lebih mudah diakses, interaktif, dan disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan individu. Meluasnya penggunaan alat-alat seperti aplikasi pembelajaran bahasa, sumber daya online, dan presentasi multimedia telah berkontribusi pada pengalaman belajar yang lebih efektif dan menyenangkan. Terlepas dari manfaat-manfaat tersebut, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tantangan-tantangan yang signifikan, termasuk masalah teknis,

akses terhadap perangkat yang tidak konsisten, dan tingkat literasi digital yang berbeda-beda di kalangan siswa. Tantangan-tantangan ini terkadang menghambat integrasi teknologi ke dalam pembelajaran EFL. Teknologi ini telah berkontribusi besar terhadap keberhasilan pembelajaran EFL di Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai, mengatasi tantangan yang teridentifikasi akan sangat penting untuk memaksimalkan potensinya. Dengan berinvestasi pada sistem pendukung, infrastruktur, dan pelatihan yang lebih baik, universitas dapat lebih meningkatkan efektivitas teknologi dalam mengembangkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswanya.

Kata Kunci: *Peran, Teknologi, Fasilitas, Pembelajaran EFL*

INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of English as a global language is underscored by its role in facilitating international communication, particularly in academic, professional, and social contexts. As globalization intensifies, English has emerged as a crucial tool for cross-cultural interactions, enabling individuals to navigate diverse environments effectively and develop intercultural competence (Khomyshak, 2024). The demand for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is rising globally, with many countries integrating EFL courses into their educational systems to meet this need. Proficiency in English significantly enhances academic opportunities and professional prospects, as evidenced by the correlation between English skills and higher salaries in various sectors, particularly in developing regions (Sham & Kong Chinese, 2016). However, challenges persist, particularly for struggling learners who may face socio-psychological barriers that hinder their language acquisition. Thus, while English proficiency is vital for social and economic development, it is essential to address the diverse needs of learners to ensure equitable access to these opportunities (Yulian et al., 2024).

Traditional EFL classrooms face several challenges, including limited exposure to authentic language use, lack of engagement, and varying learner proficiency levels. Research indicates that reliance on non-authentic materials can hinder listening comprehension and motivation among students. For instance, substituting traditional listening inputs with spontaneous teacher discourse and storytelling has been proposed as a means to enhance engagement and provide authentic language exposure (Ypsilanti, 2024). Additionally, the integration of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches can bridge the gap between vocabulary learning and meaningful text production, fostering a more engaging learning environment (Balle & Olsen, 2023). Moreover, varying proficiency levels among learners often lead to common writing errors, such as grammatical mistakes and vocabulary misuse, which necessitate targeted instructional strategies to address these challenges effectively (Isma et al., 2023). Teachers also encounter difficulties in adapting to curriculum reforms and integrating digital media due to limited resources and training, which can further exacerbate engagement issues (Alnasib & Alharbi, 2024; Syarifuddin & Hz, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires innovative teaching strategies and a supportive infrastructure to enhance EFL learning outcomes.

Technological advancements have significantly transformed education through the integration of digital tools, online platforms, and multimedia resources. Information and communication technology (ICT) has enhanced student engagement and motivation, facilitating interactive learning methods and rapid knowledge transfer (Sani et al., 2024). The adoption of innovative teaching strategies, such as flipped classrooms and blended learning, has reshaped traditional educational practices, allowing for personalized instruction and improved learning experiences (Saleh & Masitah, 2022). Digital learning platforms provide flexibility and accessibility, enabling students to learn at their own pace while fostering collaboration through discussion forums and shared spaces. Moreover, immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality are emerging as powerful tools in online education, enhancing engagement and accessibility (Zhang, 2024). However, challenges such as the digital divide, privacy concerns, and the need for teacher training remain critical issues that must be addressed to fully leverage these technological advancements in education (Saleh & Masitah, 2022). Overall, the integration of technology in education presents both opportunities and challenges that require careful consideration.

Technology has revolutionized language learning by providing innovative solutions to traditional challenges. Language learning apps, such as Duolingo and Babbel, offer personalized and gamified experiences that enhance engagement and motivation among learners (Marzuki, 2016). Virtual classrooms and online platforms have become essential, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing for real-time interaction and collaboration, which helps maintain effective communication despite physical distances (Gagić et al., 2023). Interactive software and multimedia technologies facilitate immersive learning experiences, enabling students to practice language skills in diverse contexts (Alkalah, 2016). Additionally, social media platforms serve as informal environments for language practice, fostering intercultural communication and peer interaction (Gagić et al., 2023). However, challenges remain, such as the need for teachers to adapt to new technologies and the potential for reduced personal interaction (Alkalah, 2016). Overall, the integration of these technological tools not only addresses traditional barriers but also enhances the overall quality of language education (Narykova, 2023).

Technology significantly enhances the EFL learning experience by providing increased access to authentic materials, opportunities for personalized learning, real-time feedback, and fostering greater interaction among learners. For instance, platforms like YouTube offer diverse instructional videos that engage students and improve their understanding of English, making learning more efficient and effective (Fei, 2024). Automated writing evaluation tools provide immediate feedback, allowing learners to refine their writing skills and perceive improvements in their proficiency (Pariyanto & Tungka, 2024). Additionally, the integration of digital gameplay in language learning has been shown to boost motivation and self-efficacy, promoting autonomous learning and social interaction among students (Ragad M et al., 2023). Furthermore, tools like Mentimeter enhance speaking skills by encouraging active participation and providing a platform for real-time interaction (Alkalah, 2016). Overall, these technological advancements create a more dynamic and personalized learning environment, addressing the diverse needs of EFL learners and enhancing their overall language acquisition experience (Ali et al., 2024).

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class, especially Speaking classrooms, various technologies have proven effective in enhancing language learning. YouTube serves as a valuable multimedia resource, providing engaging instructional videos that improve students' understanding and proficiency in English, as evidenced by positive test results before and after video exposure (Fei, 2024). Mobile applications, such as Duolingo, facilitate independent vocabulary acquisition, with studies showing that students using these apps outperform those relying on traditional methods (Amin, 2023). Additionally, AI technologies, including Chat GPT, offer personalized learning experiences and real-time practice, significantly boosting student engagement and confidence. Online collaboration tools like Google Docs enhance collaborative writing efforts, allowing students to work together effectively in small groups, thereby improving their writing skills (Ningsih, 2023). Lastly, cloud computing platforms support interactive EFL teaching, optimizing resource recommendations and task assignments to meet diverse learning needs (Ningsih, 2023). Collectively, these technologies foster a more dynamic and effective EFL, specifically speaking learning environment.

Understanding the role of technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education necessitates a detailed, context-specific investigation due to the diverse learner needs, institutional resources, and cultural factors that influence teaching practices. A case study approach allows for an in-depth analysis of these unique settings, revealing how EFL teachers implement various technology-based strategies tailored to their students. For instance, research indicates that Indonesian EFL teachers utilize multimodal e-books and flipped classrooms to enhance literacy and vocabulary skills among young learners, while also facing challenges in technology integration (Faudi et al., 2023). Additionally, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework highlights the importance of pre-service teachers developing their technological knowledge during field practice, which is crucial for effective teaching (Humaera et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies show that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) significantly improves student engagement and comprehension, underscoring the necessity of adapting technology to local educational contexts (Kibar et al., 2023). Overall, a case study approach provides valuable insights into the multifaceted role of technology in EFL, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies that consider specific learner and institutional contexts (Shahid et al., 2023).

Taking this research at University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai is crucial due to the institution's commitment to enhancing English proficiency among the students. The university has made significant investments in digital infrastructure and innovative teaching practices, making it an ideal setting to explore how technology can be effectively integrated into EFL instruction. This research can provide valuable insights into the specific challenges and opportunities of using technology in a regional context, where cultural and linguistic factors play a significant role in shaping language learning outcomes. Furthermore, the study is timely and relevant, addressing a gap in localized research on the impact of technology in EFL education within Indonesian higher education especially in University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai. The findings can inform the development of more effective EFL curricula at this university and offer a model for other institutions in the region seeking to enhance their language programs through technology. By contributing to the university's broader research goals, this study supports University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai's efforts to be a leader in educational innovation and can have a lasting impact on both local and regional educational practices.

The research presented across various studies highlights critical gaps in the existing literature regarding the integration of technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, particularly in developing contexts. For instance, Limbong et al. emphasize the disconnect between theoretical training and practical application due to infrastructural challenges faced by pre-service teachers in Indonesia, suggesting a need for improved technological support and mentorship in teacher education programs (Limbong et al., 2024). Similarly, Siahaan et al. provide a comprehensive overview of technology's multifaceted role in education, identifying the necessity for digital literacy and professional development to effectively harness technology's potential (Siahaan et al., 2022). Mudawy's study on AI applications reveals that while EFL educators recognize the benefits of technology in enhancing research writing, there remains a significant gap in familiarity and training (Siahaan et al., 2022). Tawafak et al. demonstrate that digital gameplay can positively influence student engagement and motivation, advocating for its integration in EFL classrooms (Ragad M et al., 2023). Lastly, Faudi et al. identify both the strategies employed and the barriers faced by EFL teachers in utilizing technology for young learners, underscoring the need for tailored approaches to meet diverse learner needs (Faudi et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies provide empirical evidence and practical insights that can inform future teaching practices, curriculum design, and policy-making in EFL education.

The study aims to address several key research questions regarding the integration of technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. First, it investigates how technology is currently utilized by EFL teachers in University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai, revealing that tools such as PowerPoint, online platforms, and AI applications are commonly employed to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, the research explores the perceived benefits and challenges of technology use from both teachers' and students' perspectives. While technology facilitates interactive and customizable learning experiences, challenges such as inadequate training and resource limitations persist. Overall, the findings underscore the necessity for ongoing professional development and support to maximize the benefits of technology in EFL education.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to explore the role of technology in facilitating EFL learning at University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai. The case study approach allows for an in-depth examination of a specific context, providing detailed insights into how technology is integrated into EFL instruction. The study focuses on a selected group of EFL students and lecturer involved in the EFL program. Purposive sampling is used to select participants who have direct experience with the use of technology in their language learning or teaching.

To collect data, a combination of instruments will be used, including semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews with instructors and students will provide rich qualitative data on their experiences and perceptions of technology in EFL learning. Questionnaires gather quantitative data on the frequency and types of technological tools used, along with participants' perceptions of their effectiveness. Classroom observations offer real-time insights into the practical application of

technology in EFL instruction, while document analysis examine lesson plans, instructional materials, and digital resources to understand how technology is incorporated into the curriculum.

Data analysis involved qualitative method. Thematic analysis will be applied to interview transcripts, observation notes, and open-ended questionnaire responses to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the use of technology in EFL learning. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze quantitative data from the questionnaires, providing an overview of how technology is utilized and perceived in the EFL program. Triangulation of data from interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document analysis will ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of technology on EFL learning in this specific educational context.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected from the three instruments—interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations—the results of this research on "The Role of Technology in Facilitating EFL Learning: A Case Study Approach at University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai" can be explained below:

Participants, including both lecturers and students, generally perceive technology as a valuable tool in EFL learning. They highlight how technology has made learning more accessible, engaging, and personalized. The lecturers note that tools like language learning apps and online resources have enhanced students' vocabulary, listening skills, and overall engagement in the learning process. Both of them emphasize that technology, particularly language learning apps like Duolingo as well as online resources such as BBC Learning English and Quizlet and some video from YouTube, has significantly increased accessibility, engagement, and personalization in the learning process. Instructors particularly note that these tools have played a crucial role in enhancing students' vocabulary, listening skills, and overall engagement.

Research indicates that English teachers view technology positively, noting its ability to improve students' vocabulary and listening skills, as well as overall engagement in language learning activities (Widiantari et al., 2024). For instance, tools like YouTube and AI applications have been shown to facilitate better understanding and retention of language concepts, making learning more interactive and enjoyable (Thu et al., 2023). Additionally, technology tools such as PowerPoint and online resources have been effectively utilized to provide authentic materials that resonate with students' lives, further promoting engagement (Lokollo & Mali, 2024). Overall, the integration of technology in EFL classrooms not only supports skill development but also fosters a more personalized and engaging learning experience for students.

Despite the benefits, interviewees also report challenges, such as inconsistent access to technology, varying levels of digital literacy among students, and occasional technical issues that disrupt learning. Lecturers express a need for more professional development opportunities to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. For instance, a study on hybrid learning environments highlights the necessity for tailored training programs to enhance lecturers' digital literacy and address diverse technological needs, with 59.74% of respondents acknowledging the importance of such training (Thu et al., 2023). Additionally, lecturers in an English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) program noted challenges related to language abilities and effective teaching strategies, although they did not face significant issues with technology access (Sudana et al., 2023). These findings collectively underscore the importance of addressing both technological access and professional development to enhance educational outcomes.

The questionnaire results indicate that a significant majority of both students and lecturers use technology frequently in EFL learning. 85% lecturers use tools in teaching process such as online dictionaries, language learning apps such as Duolingo, kahoot, and quiziz, and video conferencing platforms are among the most commonly used. 87% respondents believe that technology has had a positive impact on their English language skills, particularly in areas like vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and pronunciation. A large proportion of students' report feeling more motivated and engaged when learning with the help of technology. The most commonly reported challenges include technical issues, lack of access to devices, and insufficient digital skills. Many participants also express a desire for more interactive and user-friendly tools, as well as better institutional support to address these challenges.

The findings from various studies indicate that both students and instructors frequently utilize technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. For instance, a study on EFL pre-service teachers revealed that they commonly use laptops, projectors, and smartphones to enhance their teaching practices, which significantly boosts student motivation and collaboration (Sudana et al., 2023). Additionally, research on EFL students' reading preferences highlighted a strong inclination towards digital texts, primarily due to their practicality and accessibility (Larasati et al., n.d.). Furthermore, EFL teachers reported using various ICT tools, such as projectors and audio-visual technologies, to improve teaching efficacy and student engagement (Kibar et al., 2023). However, challenges such as insufficient training and limited technological resources in classrooms were noted, which may hinder the effective integration of these tools. Overall, the consistent use of technology in EFL contexts underscores its importance in modern language education, despite existing barriers to its full implementation.

Classroom observations reveal that technology is well-integrated into EFL instruction, with instructors using a variety of tools to facilitate different aspects of language learning. For example, interactive whiteboards and multimedia presentations are used effectively to explain complex grammar points, while language learning apps are used for vocabulary practice and listening exercises. Observations show that students are generally more engaged and participate more actively when technology is used. Interactive activities, such as online quizzes or group work on digital platforms, appear to boost student motivation and enhance learning outcomes. However, the observations also highlight some challenges, such as technical issues that occasionally interrupt lessons or students getting distracted by non-educational content. Instructors sometimes struggle to manage these disruptions, indicating a need for better preparation and support.

Classroom observations indicate that technology is effectively integrated into EFL instruction, enhancing student engagement and participation. Instructors utilize various tools, such as interactive whiteboards and multimedia presentations, to clarify complex grammar points, while language learning apps facilitate vocabulary practice and listening exercises (Lokollo & Mali, 2024). The use of digital gameplay has also been shown to positively influence students' motivation and self-efficacy in language learning, further supporting active engagement (Ragad M et al., 2023). However, challenges persist, including technical issues that disrupt lessons and student distractions from non-educational content (Leba & Temaja, 2023). Instructors often struggle to manage these disruptions, highlighting a need for improved training and support in technology integration. Overall, while technology enhances learning outcomes, addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing its effectiveness in EFL classrooms.

The combined results from interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations provide a comprehensive picture of how technology is facilitating EFL learning at Universitas Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai especially in English Language Education Study Program in 2024. The findings suggest that technology plays a crucial role in enhancing language learning, making it more engaging and effective. However, there are also challenges that need to be addressed, including technical issues, access to devices, and the need for more training and support for both students and instructors. Technology is a valuable tool that enhances engagement, supports diverse learning styles, and improves certain language skills, particularly vocabulary and listening comprehension. Technical difficulties, varying levels of digital literacy, and inconsistent access to technology are significant barriers that need to be overcome. To further improve the use of technology in EFL learning, the university should invest in better infrastructure, provide ongoing professional development for instructors, and ensure that all students have equitable access to the necessary digital tools and resources. These results provide actionable insights that can help University of Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai enhance the effectiveness of technology in EFL education, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes for students.

CONCLUSION

Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing the English language learning experience. The integration of digital tools and resources in the classroom has been largely successful in increasing student engagement, improving language skills—particularly in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension—and providing a more personalized learning environment. The use of technology

has been positively perceived by both students and instructors, who recognize its ability to make learning more accessible, interactive, and tailored to individual needs. The widespread use of tools such as language learning apps, online resources, and multimedia presentations has contributed to more effective and enjoyable learning experiences. Despite these benefits, the research also identified significant challenges, including technical issues, inconsistent access to devices, and varying levels of digital literacy among students. These challenges sometimes hinder the seamless integration of technology into EFL learning. There is a clear need for ongoing professional development and training for instructors to enhance their ability to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching. Additionally, improved infrastructure and better access to digital tools for students are necessary to address the barriers identified in this research.

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