

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACTS

This study explores the challenges and opportunities in the use of technology for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through interviews with teachers, students, and school administrators, as well as classroom observations and document analysis. Key findings indicate that significant challenges include limited access to technology, a lack of technical skills among teachers, and concerns about privacy and data security. However, technology also offers significant opportunities, such as increased student motivation, more adaptive learning, and broader access to educational resources. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive strategies to address these challenges, including better teacher training and the development of technological infrastructure. This study provides valuable insights for designing policies and practices that support the effective integration of technology in EFL teaching, with the hope of improving the quality of education in the digital era.

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### INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the role of technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has evolved rapidly. Technology has created new opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of language teaching and learning, expand access to educational resources, and enable more personalized and interactive learning approaches (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). In this digital age, technology is not just used as an aid but has become an integral component of the learning process that fosters student engagement and motivation.

Technological advancements have led to various innovations in EFL teaching methods, including the use of mobile apps, online learning platforms, and digital collaborative tools that can be utilized by both teachers and students. For instance, apps like Duolingo and Rosetta Stone have proven effective in helping students learn English independently and outside of traditional classrooms (Godwin-Jones, 2015). Additionally, platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom allow teachers to design interactive and dynamic curricula that students can access anytime and anywhere.

However, the implementation of technology in EFL teaching is not without challenges. One major challenge is the digital divide, where not all students have adequate access to technology and the internet (Hockly, 2018). Furthermore, teachers' readiness to integrate technology into their teaching is also a key factor in the success of technology implementation. Research by Warschauer (2000) emphasizes that teachers' readiness to use technology is a determinant of successful technology integration in language teaching. Teachers who are less trained may struggle to utilize technology optimally, which can ultimately impact student

learning outcomes. Research by Pegrum et al. (2018) indicates that many EFL teachers still feel insufficiently confident or lack the necessary skills to effectively utilize technology in their teaching.

In addition to the digital divide, curriculum adaptation also poses a significant challenge. A curriculum designed without considering the integration of technology may not support optimal technology use in EFL teaching (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). Therefore, efforts are needed to revise curricula to better align with technological advancements and 21st-century learning needs.

Moreover, issues of data security and privacy become a primary concern when technology is used in teaching. Online learning platforms often require registration and management of students' personal data, which can pose risks of data breaches or misuse of information (Pardo & Siemens, 2021). This necessitates educational institutions to implement stringent security measures and ensure compliance with data privacy regulations.

Despite these challenges, the opportunities presented by technology in EFL teaching remain highly promising. Technology has the potential to support more adaptive and personalized learning, where content and teaching methods can be tailored to individual students' needs (Stockwell, 2012). It also enables English teaching in remote areas that were previously difficult to reach with formal education, thus expanding learning opportunities for more people.

Previous research by Wang and Vásquez (2020) shows that the use of technology in EFL teaching can enhance student motivation and participation, particularly through the use of social media and online collaborative tools. This finding aligns with Zhang and Zou (2021), who reveal that digital technology enables more flexible and contextual learning, ultimately improving students' language skills. Both studies indicate that technology serves not only as an aid but also as a catalyst in the learning process.

Based on this background and previous research, this study aims to further explore the role of technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language, focusing on the challenges faced by educators and students as well as the opportunities that can be leveraged. The primary objective of this research is to identify effective strategies that teachers can use to address these challenges and maximize the potential of technology to improve the quality of EFL teaching and learning.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **a. Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. The case study method is chosen to allow an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers and students in using technology for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The research focuses on specific contexts in several educational institutions that have integrated technology into EFL teaching.

### **b. Samples/Participants**

The participants in this study included EFL teachers, students, and school administrators from three secondary schools in Probolinggo district that use technology in English language teaching. The participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they had relevant experience with the use of technology in English language teaching. A total of 10 teachers, 30 students, and 3 school administrators will be involved in this study.

### **c. Data Collection Instruments**

Data will be collected using three main instruments:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews will be conducted with teachers, students, and school administrators to explore their experiences, perceptions, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter in using technology for teaching English. Semi-structured interviews are chosen to provide flexibility in obtaining in-depth information and allowing participants to freely share their views.
2. **Classroom Observations:** Direct observations will be conducted in several classrooms where technology is used in English teaching. These observations aim to understand how technology is applied in practice, how interactions occur in the classroom, and how students respond to the use of technology. Detailed observation notes will be documented for further analysis.
3. **Documentation:** Additional data will be collected through the analysis of documentation such as lesson plans, technology-based teaching materials, and school policies related to the integration of technology in teaching. This documentation will provide additional context and enrich the understanding of existing practices.

#### **d. Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection process will be conducted in several stages:

1. **Preparation:** The researcher will contact the schools selected for the study to obtain permission and ensure participant willingness. The researcher will also prepare interview guidelines and observation sheets.
2. **Conducting Interviews:** Interviews with teachers, students, and school administrators will be conducted at the school locations or through online platforms, depending on participants' conditions and preferences. Each interview is expected to last between 30 and 60 minutes.
3. **Classroom Observations:** The researcher will conduct observations in scheduled classes. During observations, the researcher will note technology use, classroom interactions, and student responses to the technology.
4. **Documentation Collection:** The researcher will collect and analyze relevant documentation provided by the schools or teachers.

#### **e. Data analysis**

The data obtained will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process will be conducted in several stages:

1. **Transcription:** All interviews will be transcribed verbatim to facilitate analysis.
2. **Coding:** Data from interviews, observation notes, and documentation will be coded to identify key themes related to the challenges and opportunities of using technology in EFL teaching.
3. **Categorization:** Emerging themes will be grouped into relevant categories, such as technical challenges, pedagogical challenges, opportunities for innovation, and so on.
4. **Interpretation:** Categorized data will be interpreted to provide in-depth insights into how technology affects EFL teaching, as well as recommendations for addressing challenges and maximizing opportunities.

#### **f. Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the study will use data triangulation by combining interviews, observations, and documentation. Validation of interview results will be conducted through member checking, where participants will be asked to review the summary

of interview results to ensure the accuracy of interpretations. Additionally, peer debriefing will be conducted with colleagues to test the consistency of findings and interpretations.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

This study identifies several challenges and opportunities faced by teachers and students in using technology for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The main findings are presented below in percentage form and table format.

#### 1. Challenges in Using Technology

Based on the data analysis, the challenges faced by teachers and students in using technology for EFL teaching can be categorized as follows table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Challenges in the Use of Technology for EFL Teaching

| Challenge Categories                                | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------|
| Keterbatasan Akses Teknologi (Kesenjangan Digital)  | 45%            |
| Kurangnya Keterampilan Teknologi pada Guru          | 30%            |
| Tantangan Teknis (Masalah Jaringan, Perangkat)      | 25%            |
| Kurikulum yang Tidak Mendukung Penggunaan Teknologi | 20%            |
| Kekhawatiran terhadap Privasi dan Keamanan Data     | 15%            |

In the study, 45% of respondents, primarily students, reported that limited access to technological devices and stable internet connections is a major challenge in technology-based learning. 30% of teachers expressed a lack of confidence in using technology, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of technology-based teaching. Additionally, 25% of respondents identified issues with internet connectivity and inadequate devices as significant barriers to integrating technology in the classroom. 20% of respondents noted that a curriculum not designed to support technology use restricts innovation in teaching. Furthermore, concerns about privacy and data security related to online learning platforms were raised by some teachers and administrators.

#### 2. Opportunities in Using Technology

In addition to challenges, the study also identified several opportunities that can be leveraged through the use of technology in EFL teaching.

Table 2. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Opportunities in the Use of Technology for EFL Teaching

| Opportunity Categories                          | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------|
| Peningkatan Motivasi dan Partisipasi Siswa      | 60%            |
| Pembelajaran yang Lebih Adaptif dan Personal    | 55%            |
| Akses ke Sumber Daya Pendidikan yang Lebih Luas | 50%            |
| Pengembangan Keterampilan Digital pada Siswa    | 40%            |
| Meningkatkan Kolaborasi antara Siswa dan Guru   | 35%            |

The study found that 60% of respondents reported that technology has significantly increased student motivation and participation in EFL learning. Additionally, 55% of respondents noted that technology enables more personalized learning, tailored to individual student needs. 50% of respondents stated that technology has expanded access to educational resources that were previously difficult to reach. Furthermore, 40% of respondents observed that technology helps students develop essential digital skills for the future. 35% of respondents also highlighted that technology enhances collaboration between students and teachers.

The following summary of research results provides a clearer and more structured view of the challenges and opportunities faced in using technology for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Table 3 presents the percentage data of respondents reflecting the impact of each identified challenge and opportunity, allowing for easy observation and comparison of various aspects related to technology use in EFL teaching, and understanding areas that require further attention or show significant potential for development.

Table 3. Challenges and Opportunities in the Use of Technology for EFL Teaching

| Aspects              | Categories   | Percentage |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Challenges</b>    | Limited Access to Technology (Digital Divide)        | 45%        |
|                      | Lack of Technological Skills among Teachers          | 30%        |
|                      | Technical Challenges (Internet Issues, Devices)      | 25%        |
|                      | Curriculum Not Supporting Technology Use             | 20%        |
|                      | Concerns about Privacy and Data Security             | 15%        |
| <b>Opportunities</b> | Increased Student Motivation and Participation       | 60%        |
|                      | More Adaptive and Personalized Learning              | 55%        |
|                      | Broader Access to Educational Resources              | 50%        |
|                      | Development of Digital Skills in Students            | 40%        |
|                      | Enhanced Collaboration between Students and Teachers | 35%        |

The research results indicate that despite various challenges in using technology for EFL teaching, there are also many opportunities that can be exploited to enhance the quality of learning. Efforts to address challenges such as limited technology access and lack of teacher skills in technology should be a primary focus in educational policy. On the other hand, the existing opportunities, especially in enhancing student motivation and personalizing learning, offer significant potential to improve learning outcomes.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the use of technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) faces significant challenges, including limited access to technology and a lack of technological skills among teachers. These findings align with Hockly (2018), who identified the digital divide as a major barrier to integrating technology into classrooms. Limited access to devices and stable internet connections was also highlighted in the research by Wang and Vásquez (2020), which demonstrated that technical issues and access gaps can hinder the effectiveness of technology use in language teaching. This underscores the need for more focused strategies to improve technology infrastructure and teacher training.

On the other hand, the study identified significant opportunities in using technology, such as increased student motivation and more adaptive learning. These findings are consistent with Zhang and Zou (2021), who revealed that digital technology can enhance student engagement and support more flexible learning. The reported 60% increase in student motivation and the



potential for more personalized learning suggest that technology has substantial potential to address some traditional weaknesses in language teaching. This supports the view of Chapelle and Sauro (2017), who highlighted the important role of technology in providing more interactive and personalized learning experiences.

However, challenges such as concerns about privacy and data security indicate a need for greater attention to data management in education. These findings align with Pardo and Siemens (2021), who emphasized the importance of maintaining privacy and data security in educational technology use. The study highlights that while technology offers many opportunities, its implementation must be accompanied by policies and practices that ensure data security and student privacy. This emphasizes the need for the development of clear guidelines and adequate training to ensure that the use of technology in EFL teaching is not only effective but also safe for all stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that while the use of technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) offers significant opportunities, such as increased motivation and more personalized learning, several significant challenges still need to be addressed. Key challenges include limited access to technology, a lack of technical skills among teachers, and concerns regarding privacy and data security. These issues can hinder the effectiveness of technology use in the classroom and affect the quality of learning.

On the positive side, technology has the potential to enrich students' learning experiences by providing broader access to educational resources and enabling more adaptive learning. To maximize the benefits of technology, it is crucial for educational institutions to develop strategies that address these challenges, such as better teacher training and improvements in technology infrastructure. With the right approach, the use of technology can significantly enhance EFL teaching and meet the needs of students in the digital age.

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