

## Examining the Role of Technology in English as a Foreign Language Instruction Benefits and Drawbacks

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استكشاف دور التكنولوجيا في تعلم اللغة الانكليزية بوصفها لغة اجنبية: المزايا والعيوب

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### Abstract

In the current world, we are all living in a global village so making communication across languages easily accessible. With the advancement of digital technology, this paper investigates how it impacts English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms and consequently manipulating the existing definitions on teaching and learning languages. Digital media, which consist of all digital materials available through internet or other devices have radically changed the cycle of teaching, learning and practice of foreign languages. Thus, the author points out that despite some challenges that come along with the use of digital media, the overall positive effects are remarkable as such benefits, for instance, engagement and motivation of students, access to authentic language input, teachers' collaborative learning, covered the whole process of language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking) the students' learning tailored to their needs, and finally, the teachers' support for different styles and paces of learning are all among the listed advantages of digital media incorporation. Teacher training, both in terms of content and methods, is one of the challenges that the use of digital technology faces. Other difficulties encountered include lack of proper infrastructure, software problems, teachers' lack of willingness to adapt to new technologies, and variations in students' backgrounds and involvement. AI-based technologies have opened up new avenues and at the same time raised ethical issues. This paper thus suggests that teacher training programs should be extensive, technology access should be equal, and the use of digital media in EFL classes should be carefully planned in order to reap the maximum benefits. **Keywords:** English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Educational Technology, Language Learning, Digital Tools in Education, Teaching Effectiveness

### المستخلص

أصبح عالمنا اليوم كأنه قرية عالمية تُسهّل عملية الاتصال؛ عابرةً للحدود اللغوية. وتبحثُ هذه الدراسة عن دور التكنولوجيا الرقمية في صفوف متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية؛ بوصفها لغةً أجنبيةً والتغيرات الناجمة عن تعلم وتعليم اللغات. إن استخدام الوسائط الرقمية بمجملها من مصادر الالكترونية المستلمة عن طريق الأنترنت أو الأجهزة الأخرى أدت إلى تحوّل عملية التعليم والتعلم وممارسة اللغات. كذلك تُشير الباحثة إلى أنه بالرغم من وجود بعض التحديات التي تُصاحب الوسائط الرقمية، لكن مجمل الفوائد الإيجابية كانت ملحوظة. ومن هذه الفوائد: مشاركة الطلبة، وتحفيزهم، والوصول إلى مدخلات اللغة الأصلية. فضلاً عن ذلك؛ التعلّم المدعوم من قبل المعلمين، فقد شمل العملية الإجمالية للمهارات اللغوية (متمثلة بالقراءة والكتابة والاستماع والتحدث) وكذلك تعلم الطلبة، الذي ينسجم مع احتياجاتهم. وأخيراً دعم المعلمين للأنماط المختلفة، وسرعة التعلم والمدرجة ضمن قائمة مميزات دمج الوسائط الرقمية. ويعدّ تدريب المعلم من ناحية المحتوى والمنهجية أحد التحديات التي يواجهها استخدام التكنولوجيا الرقمية. فضلاً عما ذكر آنفاً؛ هناك مصاعب أخرى كنقص البنى التحتية الملائمة، كذلك مشاكل البرامج ورغبة المعلمين بتبني تقنيات حديثة، وأخيراً مشاركة الطلبة وتنوع خلفياتهم. وقد فتحت التقنيات الحديثة المبنية على الذكاء الاصطناعي أفقاً جديدةً، لكنها، في الوقت نفسه

أظهرت مشاكل أخلاقية. ولذلك تقترح هذه الدراسة بأن تكون برامج تدريب للمعلمين مدروسة بشكل جيد، وكذلك أن تكون فرص الدخول إلى التقنيات متساوية، واستخدام الوسائط الرقمية في صفوف اللغة الإنكليزية؛ كلغة أجنبية، مخططة لها بعناية من أجل الوصول إلى أكبر قدر من الفوائد المرجوة. الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية، التكنولوجيا التعليمية، تعلم اللغة، الأدوات الرقمية في التعليم، فعالية التدريس.

## **Introduction**

### **Definition of Digital Media**

Generally speaking, digital media is a term that refers to all the contents that are created, managed, and distributed in the electronic form by various devices like computers, tablets, and smartphones. It includes text, audio, video and other interactive forms of media. Digital media includes text documents (e.g. books, magazines), music files, films, pictures and videos (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). In an educational context, digital media is learning resources in electronic format, including text, images or multimedia and spread through internet channels. These channels also encompass the educational resources that have been created to enhance the quality of teaching (Puentedura, 2014). Yunus, Alshaikhi and Aliia (2025) elaborates that digital media are electronic devices or equipment such as computer/laptop, mobile phone in which might be connected either looking online (internet-platform based) or offline making it significant with EFL setting since they change the traditional ways of language instruction and learning even its utilization. Through the work of Erlam et al (2021), it is established that the main feature of digital media is its computer-readable nature that allows clear and direct modifications, duplications, and sharing to various digital platforms. In EFL situations, this feature opens up more room for creation of flexible and personalized language learning experiences. In a similar vein, Manovich (2001) points out the programmability of digital media in a manner that allows the creation of adaptive educational systems capable of presenting content according to individual learner's needs. If these viewpoints are taken together they show that digital media brings about heightened reality in the most theoretical, active and learner-oriented settings thus, being a great help in EFL teaching.

### **Benefits of Digital Media**

#### **Enhanced Engagement and Motivation**

Digital media have an important role in EFL classrooms because they engage students and motivate their interest in the learning process. With interactive gaming, videos and audio that makes the learning dynamic and relatable to their life, engaging the students in activities (Chapelle, 2003). These resources would allow learners of the English language learning process to communicate based on the authentic material, and connecting them with the real world (Vurdién, 2013). Moreover, Godwin-Jones (2018) mentions that the interactive as well as the multimodal features of digital media are able to meet different learning needs and at the same time, take advantage of the students' innate tech-savvy nature, hence motivation is raised. For example, the use of YouTube videos with English-speaking creators allows the learners to acquire listening skills. The real videos not only capture students' attention but also familiarizing them with real language usage.

#### **Access to Authentic Language Input**

Digital resources not only provide students with the opportunity to work with authentic English materials but also with the essential requirement of language acquisition. Various forms of media such as podcasts, e-newspapers and social networking sites expose the students to the real slangs, idioms and different variations of the language which together equip the students with a better understanding of English. This exposure closes the gap between academic English and the language of real life (Godwin-Jones, 2018). As Jenkins (2017) states, using digital media in EFL allows learners to practice language as real material that is found in everyday conversations by native speakers. For instance, podcasting offers great chances for learners to be in contact with authentic language and thus to understand English in non-formal conversations with the help of slang, metaphors, and even different accents. When the learners read blogs or social media posts written in English by native speakers on sites like Reddit or Twitter, a nearly identical result can be achieved. A similar effect can be reached when learners read blog entries or social media posts from native English speakers on platforms such as Reddit or Twitter. .

#### **Fostering Collaborative and Communication Learning**

Digital media resources like social networking sites, message boards, and video calling tools support and expand collaborative learning between EFL learners. Exposure to English can be in the form of classmates from the world over, language partnership programs, for example, school, or students of the world talking on a platform. All these digital media resources allow for collaboration but also encourage acquisition by engaging learners with in social contexts that mirror the real world by connecting teachers and students social and cultural

interaction to visible reality in classroom (Marschauer, 2019; Thorne, 2008). The formats selected for DM may include Zoom- or Skype-style digital communications between EFL learners in different countries or Padlet or Flipgrid spaces to share video presentations and contributions on topics related to language practice. So is negotiating meaning, selecting vocabulary, and offering supportive feedback, things that students do while fully participating in peer teaching and the collaborative practice. Moreover, this kind of interaction allows students interact in the authentic language through the deliberate, technology-mediated interaction (Warschauer, 2019).

### **Development of Language Skills**

Digital media in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes have transformed teachers' approaches to teaching, as well as students' paths to learning English. Using digital media can offer meaningful, immediate, often tactile and experiential ways of engaging with the four domains of language learning (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Digital media allows students to experience multiple multimodal resources, and to use the language in real time, at their pace (Hockly, 2013). Hearing skills: The BBC Learning English podcasts allow students to hear spoken English in conversation and use vocabulary to learn about using it in the real world. During class, teachers often employ Edpuzzle to include questions with TED Talks videos in order to quickly assess how well each student understands what they have watched. These types of learning opportunities give students a chance to work together as "co-learners" and therefore develop real-world speaking environments through their interactions, resulting in an oral connection between school and life. Vandergrift & Goh (2012) believe that these resources give learners a rich variety of exposure to spoken English and improve their abilities to understand what is said and produce sounds that will help them communicate more effectively. The Google Voice Typing option or the voice feature on Duolingo assists learners with their speaking skills by providing practice in pronouncing and forming sentences correctly. Students can use Flipgrid to role-play in videos and respond to prompts with audio recording of their speech. Students receive immediate feedback on their recordings through the use of these virtual tools, which create a non-threatening learning experience for students and allow for development of skills in a relaxed, supportive setting (G. Jones, 2011, 2018). Reading proficiency is developed through the use of digital reading platforms such as Newsela; this site allows students to read news articles in English that are adapted to their reading level, most frequently through associated assessments that measure comprehension and help students strengthen their ability to understand material. To supplement these digital programs, teachers frequently employ a variety of resources, including the use of Project Gutenberg and Oxford Bookworms eReaders to provide students with short fictional texts and related vocabulary activities to help students develop their language skills. According to Grabe & Stoller (2013), "Digital reading platforms enable learners to interact with texts more dynamically and personally," which indicates the benefit of using technology to provide varied, meaningful experiences for each reader. Writing Skills: In addition, students create their own blogs on WordPress or Blogger to post their private ideas and experiences, while collaborating with their classmates on Google Docs to receive immediate feedback from the teacher with comments and suggestions. According to Hyland (2015) "the addition of digital tools can add relevance and collaboration to writing". (p. 70).

### **Personalized Learning and Autonomy**

In addition, the evolution of digital media has significantly impacted developing personalized learning experiences for each student individually. With different resources available for learning languages, language learning applications (Duolingo, Babbel) or personalised learning systems, each student can decide how fast or slow they want to learn. Moreover they can report back to difficult content, get tailor-made feedback and go ahead at their own speed or move on. Basically, the whole learning experience is tailored to the student, and thus the learner is put more in charge of his/her learning, which will help build independence and self-efficacy. While evidence from Dabbagh & Fake (2017) illustrates how personal learning environments and digital tools promote self-directed learning; Peng, Ma & Spector (2019) have shown that adaptive learning plays a crucial role in the digital environment personalisation. This is echoed by Mirari (2022), who has confirmed that adaptive learning technologies can also support student-centred teaching strategies, which provide individualized learning experiences based on students' requirements. An intermediate EFL student for instance uses language learning apps like DuoLingo and Rosetta Stone and gets personalized learning experiences when the learning application delivers personalized learning experiences by adapting the difficulty of the assigned tasks based on previous responses during the time the learner is using the application to practice English. If a student has difficulty with grammatical accuracy, the learning application will increase the number of activities provided for them to practice that skill; conversely, if a student has an advanced level of proficiency with English, then the application would give them more challenging vocabulary and sentence structures to work with. The student's progress

through the application can be tracked in several ways: through the completion of daily logs, through points earned (from tasks completed), and through representing their advancements in language proficiency; therefore, students can set their own weekly targets. As stated by Godwin-Jones (2017) and Stockwell (2012), this approach to learning provides personalization through the modification of learning materials to meet individual requirements for personalized learning and also provides autonomy for learners through giving learners control of their pace and goals for learning a new language. There are a number of tools available to assist students in their development, such as Quizlet, which enables them to build their own customised vocabulary stacks according to their personal interests. These interests could include travel, technology or business English, for example. Such stacks can be enhanced further by students by providing images, audio and contextual sentences to aid in contextualising the vocabulary. Various study methods (e.g., flashcards, games, and spelling tests) are available to students via Quizlet and will help to provide them with evidence of their progress to allow them to concentrate on their areas of weakness with respect to vocabulary studies. This approach also encourages independence, as students will have control over what they study and how they study, while promoting personalised learning through topic-based learning. (Reinders & White, 2016).

### **Learning Portfolios Using Google Sites or Blogs**

Through sharing weekly writing, thoughts/speaking recordings, and their vocabulary list, students build a digital portfolio on their own on either Google Sites or WordPress. While building a portfolio, they will decide which materials to include and in which order, they will be creating their own personal goals (like using better transition words etc.) and they will have a chance to see growth and progress over time. Research shows that this approach leads to better learner control over knowledge representation, greater metacognitive awareness, and personalized learning paths. (Di Gregorio & Baker, 2009; Zubizarreta, 2009; Boud & Falchikov, 2007).

### **Supporting Differentiated Learning**

EFL education can be improved by using digital media. The ability to implement differentiated instruction is the primary benefit afforded by this medium. Differentiated instruction is defined as modifying at least one of the three variables most often used to determine the success of students in the classroom - i.e. content, methods and assessment to accommodate differing student characteristics (Tomlinson, 2001). ). For the majority of part, students have diverse language-based abilities in an average EFL classroom. Moreover, students learn at different paces and also have diverse interests as well as unique forms of learning. And one through the use of digital media where teachers are able to provide their students with flexible, adaptable and multimodal 21st century-learning opportunities that assist students in meeting their individual needs. (Anderson, 2008).

### **Digital Media in EFL Classrooms**

The Education sector has embraced digital transformation alongside most sectors of the world; therefore, educators are now more frequently using primarily electronic resources to deliver English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Teachers and educational institutions are currently trying out many of these electronic resources that have changed educational practices; this has led to the idea of "personalized learning," in that each student learns in a manner unique to himself or herself (Reinders & Benson, 2017). From teachers using technology as a tool in the classroom, for instance, could eventually lead to the development of independent learners who will now be able to dictate the pace at which they are able to learn due to the increased emphasis on cultivating metacognitive ability and continued exposure to the English language (Inayati & Karifianto, 2022). boilerplate According to Warni, Aziz, and Febriawan (2021), one of the best ways to support learner autonomy is by using technological methods that are not limited to a classroom. Additionally, as noted by Bahar and Husain (2021), English is an international language, making English a subject that must be taken at the university level. Whereas, therefore, college students now are raised, and technology has defined how they think and how they learn. Researchers found that only 72.9% of students have used technology daily, including using computers and connecting to the internet (Kurniawati, Maolida, & Anjaniputra, 2018). The current classroom practice of using digital technologies as the primary means of supporting EFL instruction is well established. Today, EFL instructors and students face many challenges finding effective ways to employ new forms of digital media in their classrooms while making maximum use of the available electronic devices for their learning experiences. (Erlam, Philp, & Feick, 2021).

### **Authentic Materials and Technology**

Numerous instructors of ESL/EFLs use or produce authentic resources to supplement their instruction. Authentic resources, as defined by Richards, Platt and Platt (1993), are tools that facilitate our ability to communicate in a truly authentic manner. According to Richards, Platt and Platt (1993), the term "authentic material" refers to any resource that accurately represents the style or type of authentic communication that

occurs in natural contexts; generally speaking, this means any article published in a newspaper or magazine or any recording of an actual person speaking in a natural way for radio, television or film. Therefore, resources used by the media can provide an environment that contains authentic resources within the confines of the classroom and form a direct connection between the student and the outside world. Additionally, Brinton (2001) suggests that the use of materials in the classroom will not only expose students to various forms of input but also assist them with their learning of a language rather than causing them to rely on the idiolect of their instructor(s). The types of materials that can be used in teaching English as a Foreign Language or English as a Second Language include: a) Audio/Visual materials - Examples would include commercial advertisements that are shown on TV, news broadcasts from the radio, cartoons, comedies, films from the local cinema, music, etc. b) Visual aids - Examples would include the use of slides, photographs, road signs, paintings or other works of art, postage stamps, postcards, children's storybooks, etc. c) Printed materials - Examples would include sports articles and reports, program listings for television, birthday cards sent and received, postcards sent and received, local train/airplane/bus schedules, local maps of cities, etc. d) Realia: dolls, puppets, scissors, walkie-talkie, dishes, glasses, sand clay, balls, telephones, wall clocks, etc. (Gebhard, 2009).

### **Kinds of Technology ELS/EFL Teachers Use**

Most everyone who hears of technology thinks about computers, the worldwide web, satellites and e-mail. All cultures utilize technology, it is just done uniquely by each culture. For that reason, some countries have technology that is extremely up to date, and some countries are still using technology that is outdated. Well, the same can be said about how do we use technology in foreign language teaching and learning. Some teachers have computers and hi-tech equipment while others are stuck with chalkboards and/or blackboards. This Technology Continuum (adapted from an original model created by Gebhard, 2009) provides a variety of advanced and basic examples of technology that EFL/ESL teachers can use for teaching and aiding student-learning in the classroom. Basic technology has been defined as the least advanced form of technology with respect to types of materials available for classroom use. For educational purposes, basic materials are anything in our environment that can be used for instructional purposes. In addition to providing numerous ways to use technology in the room, EFL teachers in Indonesia had the ability to access many new digital tools to enhance their teaching effectiveness during the first decade of the 21st century. Teachers had access to numerous types of traditional technology that could be used to create instructional materials to enhance their abilities to use these examples; this includes using the Internet and the technologies of Web 1 and Web 2 technologies to create instructional materials. We supported EFL instruction with wiki and discussion forum (Priyanto, 2009). Priyanto (2009) carried out a study by requiring the students in this experiment, all students from English Department of one university in Central Java, to leave a comment or a description of different fields of linguistics on a Wiki created for that Linguistics subject. Then he asked the students to tell how they learned from the Wiki and from the Discussion Board. Then Findings revealed, both forums "allowed students to collaborate together and learn from their peers," (p. 4) and both forums "were a way for them to learn from their peers" (p. 4). Towards the end of the decade, I had students in an ELT master's degree program do an assignment in which they researched either web-based resources and/or applications for EFL teaching. Published as an edited volume named "Teaching English Using the Internet" (Cahyono, 2010), the fruits of the project were compiled. Some topics were very traditional types of assignment based around traditional areas of study all in Web 1.0 form (i.e., Word processor without internet embedded, use of a paper based dictionary, Encarta web based encyclopedia, online magazine, Wikipedia, etc.) while others have the traits of Web 2.0 writing opportunities (i.e., ones that use the affordances of various type of software such as Moodle, Virtual Classroom, Weblogs, YouTube, etc.). Web 2.0 technologies is a name that covers most of the technological resources developed for use in EFL instruction over the next decade. Web 2.0 Technologies and EFL Instruction: Some examples of Web 2.0 technologies used for EFL instruction (Chaerunnisa et al., 2018; Sa'diyah & Cahyono, 2018; Sulistyio et al., 2019): blogs, Edmodo (Purnawarman et al., 2016), Google Docs (Sudrajat & Purnawarman, 2019), Sway, (Fakhmawati, 2018) Accordingly, Sulistyio et al. Writing Performance of Some Students Was Enhanced Through Blog-Assisted Language Learning (BALL) with Process Writing on the Factors of accuracy, complexity, and fluency (2019). In addition, there were many new types of technological resources created during this decade that were referred to as Web 3.0 technologies (Radwan et al., 2015). Some examples of technological resources in the Web 3.0 category that have been successfully introduced in EFL instruction and have received high ratings from students are Quipper School (Agustina & Cahyono, 2017; Purnawarman et al., 2016), Tumblr (Rahmanita & Cahyono, 2017a, b), and Instagram (Handayani et al., 2018). Likewise, as stated by Handayani et al. (2018), the use of Web 3.0 technology in EFL instruction can result in students' work being published more often and

help students work at their own pace. The research of (2018) provided evidence of how the use of Instagram improved the ability of EFL students to write opinion essays due to a notable increase in their average scores on opinion essay writing assignments. Furthermore, analysis of data collected through a questionnaire showed that EFL students had positive opinions on using Instagram to help them write opinion essays based on three areas: perceived competence, interest, and learning through experience. We have seen that EFL instruction has evolved over the first two decades of the new millennium aided specifically by Internet usage in conjunction with traditional (face to face) EFL instruction. As a consequence, an intermix of EFL teaching was imparted through the net. Thus, there are two components to blended learning (the offline component and the online component). Moreover, blended learning consisted of technology-enhanced EFL instruction through the Flipped Classroom. In Flipped Classroom, students performed individual activities beforehand (watching the video instruction related to their learning material and doing practice exercises at home) before attending the classroom, in which they had to express their knowledge and understanding within discussion with classmates and/or problem solving under teacher supervision. Many studies have revealed that the flipped classroom model may improve EFL learning outcomes (Afrilyasanti et al., 2016; Ghufuron & Nurdianingsih, 2019; Mubarak et al., 2019; Santosa, 2017) whereas students tend to have a positive view toward the use of the flipped classroom model (Afrilyasanti et al., 2017). Several educational entities have attempted to implement a hybrid learning format, however technical challenges often hindered their ability to do so effectively. Hybrid learning would be implemented more efficiently and effectively when one is engaged in a large venue setting such as a conference rather than in an isolated setting; this is usually possible because there is adequate technology and human resources available to assist in the successful completion of these types of events. The Covid-19 pandemic changed the way education was delivered. Remote (online) learning or emergency remote teaching (ERT) replaced the previous mode of instruction (in person). The majority of the research which examined the use of technology in the pandemic were either surveys of many EFL teachers or studies set in the classroom documenting the use of a specific type of technology to teach EFL carried out by one or more teachers. The surveys regarding technology use in ERT revealed a plethora of online platforms that substitute for in-person instruction. For example, Syafriyadin et al. Heidi, M., Azizah, B., & Sofyan, R., (2021) Surveying 30 pre-service teachers in this study, The use of digital platforms during the Pandemic period when they were taking the Micro-Teaching course with 750 senior high school students in the Bengkulu Province. They assigned to provide information about the platforms they employed in teaching EFL. The study found that various digital platform that are used by pre-service EFL teachers (for listening skill they use of Discord; Hello English for speaking skill; and for reading, writing skills Google Classroom, Edmodo, Edlink; and TFlat for pronunciation skill; and for vocabulary using Kahoot! Fill quick but useful knowledge gaps, Elementary, including applications such as Yuya, Simpler App, Memrise and Busuu Apps, Vocabulary. com.). Apriani et al. Lookman et al. (2022) have discussed different digital platforms employed by 210 female and 210 male learners for developing all four skills of EFL and have compared the use of digital platforms based on gender. Most female and male students employed the software; Google Classroom; Google Meet; WhatsApp; and Zoom in learning all four skills in EFL. They further discovered the gender of the student seemed to affect his or her use/use intention of Email, Facebook, Instagram, Kahoot! and/or Youtube for mastering EFL skills according to the skill type. Other surveys also included teachers and students of English as a foreign language (EFL). In the study by Amin and Sundari (2020) conducted at universities and institutes in Jakarta and Aceh with 140 EFL students, the students agreed on some evaluation standards through online tools used in the ERT, namely Cisco WebEx and Google Classroom, all three were featured as WhatsApp was used by the teacher as a facilitator of EFL. In terms of the criteria for focusing on authenticity and meaning, the highest score went to the Cisco WebEx meeting. The second-highest score for potential to support language learning was received by the Google Classroom, while the criteria for focusing on meaning and authenticity were all also scored highly here. WhatsApp scored highest by the students on all three criteria for being convenient for learners, being beneficial for learning, and being practical for using/just like personal email communications). Muhaji et al. (2023) also reported on the online platforms used by 16 university EFL teachers (on-site and their functions) during Covid-19 at two locations (East Java, West Java). The EFL teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences with the help of narrative frames and narrate what their experiences have been about using the mentioned platforms. The study results indicate that EFL teachers utilized 23 types of online platforms for EFL instruction?. One of these platforms has great importance for the majority of EFL teachers as follows: 13 teachers used Zoom, 11 teachers used Google Classroom, 10 teachers used SPADA Online Learning Management System, 10 teachers used WhatsApp, 7 teachers used Google Meet, and 6 teachers used Edmodo. Platforms used exclusively by 1 EFL

teacher YouTube, different Google Apps (3 teachers), Moodle, Jitsi, and Cisco WebEx (2 teachers each), Blogs, Canvas, email, Facebook, Quizizz, Schoology, Socrative, and TedEd (1 each). The findings from the survey on the utilization of technology in educational settings during Covid-19 were in part validated by at least one teacher that documented how their personal practices in online teaching had also produced learning outcomes from the Internet. Examples of this are Rosyada & Sundari (2021) which holds an online academic writing course in Google Classroom for EFL underpinning students (students who learn English as a foreign language) under a home learning condition. They found that strongly correlating the Google Classroom use and students' writing competence (writing success). Similarly, Santoso (2021) delivered a Critical Reading course through a closed group format on Facebook using ERT (emergency remote teaching) as an alternative method to provide a quality experience for students. Santoso determined that the use of a closed Facebook group can help students develop their critical reading skills as they share information with members of the closed FB group and assist each other with their critical reading skills. Nafik (2022) used Padlet to teach first-year university students basic writing for communication purposes during Covid-19 through the hybrid method of instruction; to collect feedback from these learners, she also distributed a survey questionnaire. Her findings showed that Padlet could be effectively used as a tool for hybrid instruction and it assisted students with collaborative work while increasing their participation in writing activities. Various studies have demonstrated how diverse types of online learning materials offered via the internet and other applications not only enhance learners of English as a foreign language but have also supported their autonomous learning. For example, Arigusman et al. Many of the students were also accustomed to using technological sources for independent learning such as Internet browsers, MP3 players social networking sites through mobile devices smart phones, tablets, iPads or computers/laptops (Dahlstrom et al., 2018). Furthermore, Umamah and Cahyono (2022) show students can access online blogs, Ebooks, email, Facebook, Instagram, online dictionaries, Telegram, Tik Tok, WhatsApp, YouTube for self-regulated writing in English. As stated by Defianty and Wilson (2023), the findings of this investigation regarding the link between ERT and autonomy are inconclusive. Namely, the authors concluded that because of excessive teacher control during online learning (i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic), there was not a movement toward increased learner autonomy. And after the pandemic, EFL seemed to come full circle to online to F2F. As a result, the platforms, which were frequently employed in online EFL instruction have begun to fade. Cisco WebEx, Google Meet, Zoom, etc are examples of such platforms. These platforms, however, have been occasionally used for non-teaching related purposes such as for coordination meetings, course / program planning, and final evaluation tasks. Besides, these platforms are being utilized as the online element of the mixed mode scholarly occasions/conferences/seminars/workshops. Other than the platforms that were originally used as online EFL teaching platforms during Covid, the platforms that were originally used in blended/flipped learning models prior to Covid-19 are beginning to have their second life and continue to have an ongoing role in EFL teaching. In this study, we explored English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors' perceptions of the implementation of the practical teaching techniques, conducted by means of technology, prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data presented here were collected through interviews with 6 university EFL instructors at 5 universities. The interview question for these teachers was: "How has your past impacted future teaching with devices?". The results of the analysis of the data from these interviews revealed that the 6 teachers used a variety of teaching approaches in their EFL classes, and that these approaches were improved upon by the use of technology. Moreover, because they currently use the LMS represented by their universities (Google Meet, WhatsApp, and Zoom) for most of their teaching and learning interaction in the COVID-19 present-day situation, they also intend to maintain using several other platforms/applications (Canva, Google Classroom, Padlet, Quizlet, Socrative, Telegram, WhatsApp, and YouTube) for their students after COVID-19. According to the findings of their research, Cahyono, et al. In another research, cited by Chien et al. (2023), teachers were found to be continuously reflecting on their pedagogies in their motivation and intention to adopt effective pedagogies/technologies to attain enjoyment toward learning, manageability in teaching practice and develop autonomous learners. As they noted, Another study investigated expectations of EFL writing (English as Foreign Language) instructors about implementing technological tools at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cahyono et al., 2023). This research was evidenced through interviews (the primary genre type and data point) conducted with six EFL writing instructors; hence, considerable data was collected from the subjects. All of the two EFL writing instructors teaching in urban settings and four EFL writing instructors teaching in rural settings were incorporated in the study. Cahyono et al. (2023) did not mention types of technological resources of EFL teachers in the classroom lesson design when they return to face-to-face education. Instead, Cahyono et al. (2023) examined what EFL writing instructors expect students to do and

what EFL writing instructors expect to accomplish. Therefore, EFL writing instructors expect to see students becoming more actively engaged, independent learners, and using technology (i.e. technology-based tools and resources) in their writing lesson. At the same time, EFL writing instructors expect their own abilities to locate new, useful, and efficient applications for writing, and some of them wish to continue using the same technology and tools they currently use.

### **The Use of AI-driven Technological Tools**

Apart from the widespread utilization of actual assets of Web 3.0 technological resources, the advanced developments of technology provide them with a structure, which appears as if the system itself functions like human brain. This type of system is typically studied under the topic of "Artificial Intelligence" or "AI" and it falls under the Web 4.0 technology dimensions. AI-driven technological resources usually have a specific capability, according to the purposes of their development. Studying the literatures, the capabilities of AI-driven technologies reviewed in its library research by eight technological resources (Fitria, 2021, pp. 218-220) are in summarised below:

1. Google Translate (turns texts written in the language that the user wants, into the language that the user is targeting.)
  2. TTS (converting some desired text into the speech form or pronunciation or uttering)
  3. English ABLE (Assisting Students to Get to Grips with Grammar)
  4. Orai (an application that helps English Learners to get better at speaking English)
  5. ELSA (English Learning Speech Assistant to help learners pronounce English words correctly)
  6. Chatbot (functioning as a chat partner, to help students model in English)
  7. Duolingo (make learning many different parts of the English language fun via games)
  8. Neo (Nexgen English Online, helping learners learn pronunciation and English speaking more effectively.
- Fitria (2023) has recently created a summary of how ChatGPT can be implemented in English as an instructor. The author mentions that ChatGPT is useful in helping students to gain knowledge as well as give them solutions to problems they might face while learning English. Evidence from multiple studies conducted in Indonesia concerning the adoption of AI-based technology into EFL instruction demonstrate the effectiveness of using AI-based technology to create a level of productivity for students; further, the studies reported a positive reaction by the students toward these technologies. In a study by Sumakul et al (2022a), the authors found that the use of a Plot Generator allowed EFL students to learn theoretical concepts about grammar and vocabulary as they composed. In another study by Sumakul et al (2022b), the authors used both Plot Generator and ELSA in EFL classes to assess teachers' implementation. As for the impact of AI on the roles of the language teachers, the teachers were very positive in all responses (all respondents agree that AI could support teachers and improve the teachers' roles.) 6) In fact, there are numerous other research studies indicating the benefits of AI-driven technology on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) student outcomes through Novolearning (as illustrated in Arini et al. 2022) as well as utilizing applications for language such as Cake, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak (Mujahidah et al. 2023). Our data resembles the teachers' enthusiastic acceptance of employing AI-driven technology in the classroom, as EFL students also had a strong positive response to integrating AI-driven technology in their EFL courses using the Plot Generator (Sumakul et al. 2022) and Novolearning (Arini et al. 2022). Thus we find no evidence as such, in any one of the 5 co-researchers, as to the notion that (a) EFL teachers, nor (b) EFL students believed that the use of AI driven technology would do damage to their learning or instruction; in such a way as to inform substantial change in either, while teaching EFL in Indonesia at least. Teachers must possess an extensive knowledge base of those AI-supported technologies used in their classroom environment (Jati, 2021, p. 29). As facilitators, teachers must change how they interact with learners by supporting how students utilize various types of artificial intelligence as well as by offering meaningful interactions and support. Teachers must be responsible in how they implement AI through continual monitoring and adherence to ethical standards; in doing so, they will facilitate the ethical and equitable use of AI technologies. (p. 1556)

### **Challenges in Integrating Digital Media into EFL Classrooms**

#### **Teacher Training and Professional Development**

According to the study by Greenhow (et al, 2018, March), a major obstacle to transitioning to technology integration is the insufficient digital skills possessed by teachers and their lack of knowledge regarding technological resources. Professional development can help teachers develop the confidence and expertise necessary to use digital media. Overall, most educators do not have the skills needed to utilize digital media in their teaching effectively and are especially less able to do so if technology is entirely new or used infrequently

at their school. As a result, the changing of teachers' previous knowledge of using tangible resources to using digital resources will have negative impacts on their effectiveness as EFL instructors. The majority of EFL instructors have been trained in traditional forms of education and learning processes using face-to-face methods. The use of digital resources today is often very different than using face-to-face or tangible resources, and many EFL instructors might not know how to take advantage of this shift in their teaching practices. Some institutions provide professional development opportunities for instructors who may have difficulty transitioning to using digital resources. However, some EFL instructors may experience difficulty using digital resources, which could result in negative outcomes from a pedagogical perspective and language acquisition achievement. Ongoing training and professional development related to new media can impede the ability of a teacher to integrate the latest tools and methods, like language learning apps, online classrooms, and virtual assessments, into his or her instruction appropriately. According to Aghaziarati and colleagues (2023), teacher familiarity with digital resources and proper training on those resources are necessary for successful implementation of technology in a classroom..

#### **Technological Infrastructure and Access**

The lack of access to digital technologies and the lack of reliable internet service greatly impedes the ability of individuals, particularly in many poorer countries and rural communities, to utilize digital media for EFL learning and represents a significant aspect of The Digital Divide. Given this situation, if students do not have any way to access these tools- i.e. through smartphones or laptops or an internet connection - it is impossible for them to participate in mobile learning opportunities, to access online resources, or to take advantage of e-learning programs. Additionally, the unreliability of the technological resources at schools (e.g. out-of-date hardware or slow internet), also limits the ability to use educational technologies effectively. Ultimately, both of these resource disparities affect the ability of different groups of users to have equitable and effective use of digital media, thereby creating significant variability in their levels of engagement. For many students, who have limited access to technology, this is compounded by their access to higher technology available to others is further privileging them (Warchauer, 2006). A study done in Saudi Arabia reported difficulties teachers faced using technology in class; among those were technical difficulties to insufficient resources (e.g., poor or non-existent internet connections). These impediments resulted in teachers who were unable to effectively use technology to support their instruction. (Alibraheim & Alsaad, 2022).

#### **Platform Limitations and Technical Issues**

While there are several digital media platforms to choose from, they all can present challenges when it comes to learning. Technical challenges to digital learning include software failures, unreliable internet connectivity, incompatible devices, and lack of a usable interface, which all create problems when using digital learning resources. For example, an app on a mobile device may be designed for a specific mobile device or may have an internet connection that is so slow that you are unable to watch the educational videos. These technical difficulties are frustrating to both teachers and students and can lead to a lack of interest in teaching and learning. If students have multiple instances of technical challenges, they may stop believing that they can use digital technology for learning. Similarly, teachers may choose to eliminate digital resources from their lesson plans due to a lack of confidence that the digital resources will work. (Sitzmann et al., 2010).

#### **Resistance to Technological Change**

Many different reasons make it difficult for teachers to embrace using new technology in their classrooms. Among these various reasons, many have more to do with how comfortable the teacher is with new technology, whether they feel confident using it, and whether they believe traditional ways of teaching work better than modern ones. Many teachers still prefer to teach using only traditional methods because they feel that those methods are easier for them to use and are more familiar than using more modern methods, like digital tools or the internet for lesson planning. Many teachers are also afraid that using digital tools will complicate lesson planning and take away from their personal interaction with their students during class. Additionally, many teachers are hesitant to use digital tools due to concerns over issues of data privacy, how much time teachers spend on a screen, and the perceived lack of depth in digital learning. The ability of teachers to effectively teach with digital tools may be hampered by both the resistance of the teachers themselves and by their tendency to revert back to traditional teaching methods. Also, from a students' perspective, the confusion and hesitation caused by a teacher's reluctance towards digital technology may lead to less interest or willingness to use it while learning (Hamlawi, 2021). According to Jomezai and Baloch (2023), instructors need to be provided with comprehensive training and support to alleviate any concerns they may have with respect to using digital tools, ultimately decreasing the odds of resistance and increasing the speed of adoption of digital tools in the

classroom. Furthermore, older teachers are typically less willing to use digital tools for teaching than younger teachers, due to generational differences in comfort level and familiarity. Research by Gilakjani et al., (2013) and Howard and Mozejko (2015) found that veteran educators tended to be hesitant about using technology in the classroom because they were not trained on how to use it, and continued to use traditional methods of teaching, therefore this was a significant barrier to their comfort with using technology in the classroom.

### **Diverse Student Skills and Engagement**

The technological abilities of the students, their levels of interest, and their comfort with the use of digital media all determine the productivity of the digital media in the classroom. It is no question that some students are very familiar with technology while others are not even skilled in the most basic ways, which leads to different results in the learning process through digital tools. Hence, differentiated instruction becomes essential as the demand for ensuring that less tech- savvy students are given proper support still exists. In this context, an academic performance gap can emerge which is compounded by learners' motivation to continue study (Barlow-Jones, 2014). Major factors affecting students' behavior and interaction with the digital content based on the online learning digital skills among students are also studied and a thought is given to teachers like Kaeophanuek, Na-Songkhla & Nilsook (2018) that they should gauge the digital skills of their students (Kaeophanuek, Na-Songkhla & Nilsook, (2018)).

### **Conclusion**

The use of digital media in EFL classrooms can be seen as a significant milestone in the history of language teaching, since it not only opened great learning avenues but also posed some serious challenges that would need to be solved with precision. The study spells out that digital media has completely reformed the old-fashioned way of teaching foreign languages by making them via, and to some degree, all the skills of the language that are destined to the individual student provides student activity and participation. The incorporation of digital media in EFL classrooms, although brings with it many advantages that are already worthy of very serious consideration, yet it is a very large and spread out area of concern to the teachers involved practically. Worlds where animation, and visuals, etc. Teachers often rely on student talk, discussions, and group projects as very powerful and effective daily activities. However, sometimes the opposite happens - students get used to the patterns of teacher-dependence and maybe never really learn how to communicate properly due to the fact that they lack the needed proficiency in the language. Thus, it is the teachers who decide, through their strategies, when and how these situations would occur. For example, when a teacher uses speaking activities that only require the use of the target language and for others only allow the use of students' first language as a means of checking understanding, gradually, the students are being exposed to the second language. The progress made in language skills through digital media has been, above all, significant. For listening skills, BBC Learning English podcasts and Edpuzzle are examples of platforms that provide the rich exposure of spoken English, thus improving the understanding and making the pronunciation aware (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Speaking skills are supported through Google Voice Typing, Duolingo, and Flipgrid, where one can practice with no pressure, receive immediate feedback as a result (Godwin-Jones, 2011, 2018). Reading habits of students are developed through Newsela and Project Gutenberg, which enable users to engage with the text in a lively, customized manner (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Writing skills are developed in connection with blogging, WordPress, and Google Docs, which in turn make writing more meaningful and engaging through collaboration (Hyland, 2015). The advent of tools based on AI technology has opened up a whole new chapter in the digital media for EFL teaching. The likes of Google Translate, ELSA, Chatbot, and Duolingo provide different functionalities which are aimed mainly at different areas of language learning, e.g. translation, pronunciation practice, etc. (Fitria, 2021). The publications in recent years present the case of AI-driven tools like Plot Generator, Novolearning, and ChatGPT as great supports in EFL learning. Both students and teachers have expressed their positive reactions regarding the use of these tools in the classroom (Sumakul et al., 2022a, 2022b; Arini et al., 2022; Fitria, 2023). Nonetheless, the use of AI technologies in the classroom brings forth a series of questions regarding teacher functions, student imagination, and the moral issues involved in assessment and technology use (Mushthoza et al., 2023). The obstacles that stand in the way of the effective incorporation of digital media into the EFL classrooms are quite numerous, even though, at the same time, the benefits coming along with the incorporation are substantial. Professional development and teacher training come to the forefront as major issues, considering that many teachers do not possess the requisite digital skills as well as the necessary understanding of the new pedagogy to make the most out of the integration of technologic tools (Greenhow et al., 2018; Aghaziarati et al., 2023). The majority of EFL teachers are trained to use conventional, in-person methods and the switching over to digital resources can be quite overwhelming if there is no continuous

professional development and practical training. The difference between the old school teaching preparation and the new technology based requirements often results in the wrong use or pedagogically unsuitable technology being implemented. The prosperous incorporation of digital media into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, to say the least, requires an approach that is multifaceted and that tackles both the good and the bad sides of the issue. Comprehensive teacher preparation programs will have to give digital media pedagogy extensive training, so the educators will develop not only the technological competencies but also the pedagogical knowledge needed for the effective implementation of tools. Teachers, in turn, must be given continuous professional development opportunities that will help them keep up to date with the changing technology and also share their best practices with their peers. The educational institutions along with the policymakers must give priority to equitable access to technology by allocating resources to the construction of reliable infrastructure, purchase of modern devices and making sure that there is internet connectivity everywhere, especially in the underserved areas. Solving the digital divide issue is the only way to ensure that the integration of digital media reaches the entire student community regardless of their economic status. Gradual, strategic implementation approaches should be the ones teachers will take up, and they should progressively move from the more demanding tools to the less complex ones after learning how to use the platforms. By making the experimenting with technology of the teachers supported and fear-free, the resistance will be lessened and the innovation will be easier. Teachers' roles will change from delivering knowledge to guiding learners in the effective use of AI tools besides giving the interaction and support needed as the AI tools keep on getting more present in the classroom (Mushthoza et al., 2023). Ethical guidelines for AI use in education, especially in the areas of assessments, academic honesty, as well as setting the limits of AI and students' creativity, are a must to be established. The responsible use, continuous monitoring, and observing of the ethical guidelines are the key factors to the just and advantageous application of AI technologies (Mushthoza et al., 2023). All in all, digital media has changed EFL teaching undeniably, and at the same time, it has given teachers powerful tools to increase engagement, give learners real language exposure, and help them work together, among others, thus developing language skills and facilitating personalized learning.

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