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## **The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in English as foreign language learning: A review of recent practices in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

From the beginnings in the 1980s, information and communication technologies – ICTs have facilitated all aspects of life; work, leisure, and education (Pelgrum & Law, 2003). The Indonesian government has made it a policy to integrate ICTs within classroom settings as stated in numerous edicts and regulations in 2003, 2007, 2008, and 2009. However, at least in the published literature, there does not appear to have been much assessment as to whether the implementation is an effective or much assessment of government and educator's efforts to make the implementation effective in practice.

To address these questions, this review paper presents the context of information and communication technologies (ICTs) use in Indonesia including a description of the programs and a summary of various studies conducted by Indonesian teachers in integrating ICTs in English as foreign language learning. The programs are established by the Indonesian government in order to promote the use of ICTs in order to make them a part of everyday teaching and learning

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practice. The various studies investigate the usefulness of ICTs in the English teaching and learning context; ICTs include everything from word processing, to multimedia programs, to communication and social media tools. This review finds that the government has taken adequate steps to enhance the effectiveness of ICTs use in English education in Indonesia. It shows that the technology with a structured use within and outside schools play an important role in education development in Indonesia. For the future, it can be expected that the government should be able to promote the effective practices of technology integrated learning by establishing the facilities across the provinces with no exceptions in order to make technology equally available across the entire country so that all learners can receive the benefits of the programs.

*Keywords:* Information and communication technologies (ICTs), English as foreign language (EFL), language learning practices, and Indonesia

## **Introduction**

The growth of current technologies, particularly information and communication technologies (ICTs) has greatly changed many aspects of human life. The diversity and extended accessibility of ICTs have brought about a noteworthy transformation of learning systems in many parts of the world. This transformation in teaching-learning practice is thought to be a result of the close connection between literacy and technologies (Valmont, 2003).

The traditional learning environments have been transformed into new learning environments with the existence of ICTs. The traditional learning environment tends to be teacher-centered; students are regarded as having 'knowledge holes' that need to be filled with information, emphasis is placed on lesson content and delivery, and knowledge is mastered through drill and practice (Novak, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1991). When it is supported by ICTs, new learning environments which are centered on learners become achievable. With the advantages of ICTs, active learning that engages students through collaborative work and information exchange becomes possible. It promotes the students' ability to think critically, to make decisions, and to plan actions in authentic and real world contexts (ISTE, 2002).

The Ministry of Education believes that the use of ICTs can be a means of helping to meet the goals of education development in Indonesia. Specifically, the use of ICTs can help to meet the goals represented by what the government calls the ‘three pillars of education development’ namely: (i). Expansion and increased access to education, (ii) Improvement of the education quality and relevancy, and (iii) Improvement of good governance, accountability and national prestige. ICTs can be used in achieving these education development goals in Indonesia (Nandika, Priowirjanto, and Soekartawi 2006).

The government issued its call for educational development in the previous curriculum, i.e. the Competency Based Curriculum (2004) and School Based Curriculum (2006). Technology integration was attached to the Minister Decree no. 65 in 2013. Point no.13 stated that technology must be integrated in teaching all subjects at all levels of education in Indonesia to achieve the effective and efficient teaching and learning practices and results. The government’s policy favoring the use of ICTs is based on the belief that ICTs can be easily incorporated in both formal and non-formal settings and that ICTs can contribute to a technologically rich environment that will encourage student’ self-esteem, enthusiasm, chances for interaction, and knowledge building competence. (Fouts, 2000; Keengwe, et al., 2008). Thus, the government’s suggestion on the use of ICTs has been put forward recently. In any case, the use of ICTs has become the trend in re-shaping the education system in Indonesia.

Once ICTs was integrated into teaching and learning practice—in response to the government’s call--teachers and researchers began conducting studies on the effectiveness and impacts of using ICTs in teaching and learning contexts. Some researchers have found it effective; other researchers are more skeptical. For instance, Dreyfus & Halevi (1991) studied the use of computers from the perspective of constructivist pedagogy, and it was shown to be effective. They showed that the use of ICTs to provide an open learning environment, allowed learners to explore within a framework, allowed the teacher was working as a guide, and allowed the learners to be able to deal in depth with a difficult topic.

Prihatin (2012) studied the use of ICTs from the perspective of Engagement Theory to address the communicative language teaching principles in computer-enriched instruction, and they also found it to be effective. The results of his study

include the identification of effective strategies to establish computer integration into English language teaching. Furthermore, Cahyono (2014) also showed that the presence of technology in language classrooms was a prerequisite for interesting language instruction and success in language learning.

However, to some people the use of technologies is not very effective yet in practice (Munadi, n.d.); Yusuf, 2010; Fitriyadi, 2015). In some schools, the facilities have been already provided, but only few teachers used them in teaching and learning process. While, other schools needed more facilities to accommodate their teachers and students' demand of teaching and learning with technology. The problems also appeared to be intractable for not all teachers and educators have applied technologies formally or informally (Yusuf, 2010). Furthermore, they also have not been informed about the progress of information and communication technologies used in Indonesia.

The purpose of this paper is to review the programs of the government and summarize some representative studies conducted by Indonesian teachers in integrating the technologies within the classroom settings in order to assess the effectiveness and to suggest areas for improvement. Section I, gives background information about the types of ICTs for teaching and learning practice. Section II reviews the programs that are established by the government and section III summarizes the numerous studies which have been conducted by teachers in classroom settings. Finally, the discussion and the conclusion are given in section IV.

### **1. Types of ICTs for Teaching and Learning**

A paradigm shift in the educational policy and practice appears to be the upshot of the development and advancement of ICTs. People are shifting their manner of learning because ICTs offers innovative options to the traditional classroom setting. In this global era, it is considered important for learners to have access to education anytime and anywhere. Education is no longer only an activity in a classroom within a specific time allocation, but is an activity that can take place wherever and whenever the learner thinks appropriate. "Education will not be a location anymore, but a teaching/learning activity." ICTs have the capability of

providing “personalized, just-in-time, up-to-date, and user-centered education activities” (Haddad and Draxler, 2002).

There is a wide range of different technologies that can be used in teaching and learning. Each of them has its own strengths and limitations, and different situations call for different technologies. ICTs are those technologies that are used for accessing, gathering, manipulating, and presenting or communicating information. The technologies could include hardware, e.g. computers and other devices, software applications, and connectivity, e.g. access to the Internet, local networking infrastructure, and video conferencing (UNESCO, 2003). The variety of ICTs can be categorized into (a) multimedia programs or single courseware, (b) communication and collaboration tools, (c) mobile technology.

### **1.1. Multimedia programs/ Single Courseware**

A single courseware refers to multimedia programs integrated with texts, graphics, audio, and animations, created with the popular presentation tools, Microsoft PowerPoint, Prezi or interactive web development software, such as Adobe Flash. The multimedia-based courseware is often used to stimulate students’ interest in learning the language, to enhance reading comprehension, and to support interpretation of literature.

An example of single courseware use in Indonesia is reported by Megawati and Rachmawati (TEYLIN, 2014) in which power-point was used as a medium for vocabulary learning for students in an elementary school — obtaining good results. Hadriana (n.d) in her experiment research found M-WebQuest was an effective strategy to improve student’ reading comprehension. It showed that there was a significant difference between students’ who were taught by M-WebQuest than those who were taught by traditional method of teaching.

### **1.2 Communication and Collaborative Tools**

Communication tools involve emails, instant messages (e.g., MSN, Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, Facebook), chat rooms (Whatsapp, Bee Talk, FB Messenger, Blogs), a software application that allows users to make simultaneous voice calls over the Internet (e.g. Skype, Line, Face Time), and blogs. E-mails allow students to exchange information and additionally can be used to support writing skill



development, whereas the synchronous communication tools such as instant message/chat rooms can be used to support collaborative reading and writing tasks. For Indonesian setting, a useful study on the use of blogs has been conducted by Melati, Mardiah, and Ulfiati (2014) in integrating blog and culture to teach English for vocational high school students. They discovered there was a positive influence on students' English achievement.

In addition, the emerging online collaborative applications, such as bulletin board and wiki, have provided educators with additional tools to guide students in collaborative learning activities. The teacher can use the collaborative technologies mentioned above to guide writing on an interesting topic, provide prompt feedback, and students can make revisions based on the teacher's feedback and ask further questions or for clarification in a timely manner (Xia & Sun, 2010).

Furthermore, there are some learning management systems specifically designed to provide a platform for interactive and collaborative learning, such as Blackboard and Moodle, to create comprehensive courses for reading, writing and literature courses. A good example of such practice in the Indonesian setting is reported by Ulfiati, Kurniawan and Failasofa (2014) in which reading comprehension materials were developed and delivered in Moodle to enhance the effective learning of EFL students. This program not only allowed students to publish their works, but also engaged students in social interaction and peer review processes, included providing comments and feedback to each other, sharing information and resources.

### **1.3 Mobile Technology**

Indonesia supports the rapid development and wide use of mobile technology, such as smart phones, tablets, and netbooks. Mobile technology is exactly what the name implies, technology that is portable. It is typified by being small, light, easy to carry, and convenient for communication through voice or text messages. With a wireless Internet connection, users can search for resources and share information easily.

The technological affordances have caught the attention of Indonesian educators. Fortunasari (2014) explored how children acquired specific Internet

and game terms and their perceived meanings through intensive contacts with tablets and smart phones. She illustrated that mobile technology is highly successful to promote young learners to acquire L2 in informal contexts. Furthermore, Heriyawati (as cited in Fortunasari, 2014) also investigated the use of cell phone in the teaching of integrated English course to cultivate students' autonomous learning. In line with Heriyawati, Bona (as cited in Fortunasari, 2014) discovered that smart phones contribute effectively to develop English skills of undergraduate students. The issue of 'mobile comics' is also evidence to the effectiveness of mobile phones in enhancing the literature's sense of young learners.

Due to this phenomenon, teaching approaches are needed that can focus on the development of higher order skills and should highlight : 1) significant learner self-reliance in the selection of equipment and resource; 2) learners' active partaking in the process of planning and evaluating the use of ICTs in challenging situations; 3) teacher involvement in questioning to assist learners in the formation of generalizations; 4) the demand of learners to convey their thoughts about the opportunities and constrains offered by ICTs techniques, processes and strategies, which they have experienced (articulation may be verbal, written or via e-mail, but should be interactive); and 5) that teaching should develop learners' interests and confidence about ICTs; that learners should be given opportunities and encouragement to reflect formally on their ICTs learning (Kennewell et al., 2000). The cooperative actions between learners and teacher indicate that both play an interconnected role in the teaching and learning process. The successfulness of the learning process leads to the development of skills and competencies of the learners and teachers as the facilitators.

## **2. Government programs of integrating ICTs into education in Indonesia**

All types of technologies which are previously described have been used in integrating technologies within the government programs. Several programs on integrating ICTs into education in Indonesia are classified into 2 categories based on the settings; *in-class and out-class setting* (Nandika, Priyowirjanto, and Soekartawi 2006).

## **2.1 In-Class Setting**

The ICTs integration programs were initiated by the government from the in-class setting. In-class practices vary from primary, secondary, vocational, and tertiary schools.

The program, which is under the heading of the primary school level called *Radio Broadcast for Primary School Students* was begun in 1991/1992. It is conducted by the Centre for Information and Technology for Education. It was then followed by 600 radio program production and used in more than 20 provinces and 170 primary schools which were equipped with a radio and/or audio cassette players, teacher manuals, and workbooks for the students.

In secondary school level, there was a program called *ICTs Block Grants for Secondary Schools*. The Government through The Directorate of General Secondary Education (DGSE) initiated systems of block grants to procure computer facilities. Additionally, a program named *SMU-2000 or High School 2000* was initiated by the Directorate General of primary and secondary Education, Ministry of National Education. This project intended to connect 2000 high schools to the Internet by the development of an educational portal.

*ICT-based curriculum for technical and vocational schools* is also a program established by the government. It is a program initiated by The Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE). Another program called *ICT Centre* has been initiated since 2004 in several cities. It is planned as an infrastructure and structure of ICT training for all school levels started from kindergarten up to senior high school includes Islamic and vocational schools.

In tertiary education, a program called INHERENT (Indonesian Higher Education Network) had been implemented successfully by the DGHE (Directorate General of Higher Education). The program is focused on developing a network information system that could link all of the state universities in Indonesia through the Indonesian Higher Education Network.

## **2.2 Out of Class Setting**

The 'out of class' programs define all the government's effort to make Indonesian population to become familiar with the technology. These programs represent the small scale (schools) and the large scale (cities and trans-nationals).

A program called *Mobile Training Unit of ICTS (MTUICTS) for Education* has been started since 2004 in isolated districts and already had active School Information Network (SIN). MTU-ICT consists of computer laboratory on the van with facilities such as one unit of notebook server, notebook clients, LCD projector, handy camera, CDMA telephone, and Wi-Fi. Besides, a program named *Relay Station and Mini Studio of Education TV* was started in 2005 in several cities. It uses UHF or VHF frequencies with the power of maximum length broadcast for about 15 km. The TV viewers vary from students of Kindergarten up to college students. *TV-Education* broadcasts education program (80%) and entertainment (20%).

In line with the previous program, the government established a program named Cyber City for Supporting Education. This program was started in 2006 in several cities that have an active WAN (Wide Area Network) of Education such as in Jakarta, Bandung (West Java), Yogyakarta, Solo (Central Java), and Malang (East Java). It has been planned that all Cyber Cities will be connected in a wireless intranet which is supported by the WI-Max technology.

An Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) - related program initiated by South Korea through the Education Network (*Ednet*) was started in 2001 under the name of *the APEC Cyber Education Network (ACEN)* and developed further into *ALCoBs* in 2004. It is aimed at setting up and operating a trans-national educational network to reduce educational gaps in terms of learning resources, expertise, and pedagogy. This program is undertaken by the National Office for Educational Research and Development as the Indonesian coordinator for Education Network.

### **3. The summary of the studies on the use of ICTs in EFL teaching and learning practice in Indonesia**

The present studies about ICTs integration generally focus on three topics; (1) nurturing motivation and interest, (2) developing skills of the EFL learners and (3) improving teaching and learning practice for young learners.

### **3.1 Nurturing Motivation and Interest**

There are a large number of articles discussing how to use technologies to motivate students' interest in learning. For example, Wahyono (2008) described how to develop ICT based learning model to enhance students' self-management in learning. Statistically, pre- and post-test in the control and experiment group showed that there was a significant difference in the learning model with self-management compared to conventional learning model. The model significantly achieved students' cognitive, skills and motivation and it was recommended that the teachers considered the model as the alternative way to develop students' self-management in learning.

Noor Cahyanto (2007) identified the advantages of using ICTs in learning environment, i.e. (1) enhanced students' motivation, (2) provided an effective and efficient digital portfolio, (3) improved students' cognitive competence, (4) nurtured collaborative learning, and (5) being a standard of learning concept in schools. The study on students' interest and cognitive skills were also carried out by Rohaeni (2008). She evidenced the implementation of visual media and audio visual affected students' interests and cognitive skills in fashion designing. The students were contented and were free to suggest ideas fitting to their potential capabilities. Moreover, Komara and Ramdani (2014) discovered that 'EDMODO' one form of social media, was effective to motivate students to learn Grammar lesson. EDMODO succeed to build student' motivation in achieving affective, cognitive, integrative social relationships, and task goals.

### **3.2 Developing EFL Four Skills**

The multimedia affordances are not only used to motivate students' interest, but also to support their cognitive development in English language skills. Motivation and cognition are deemed to go hand in hand in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. A large number of articles examined how ICTs can be used to provoke language learning, and present simulated environments to immerse students in the environment depicted by the text and help them experience and understand L2.

In the area of listening, Suparjan (2014) investigated students' attitudes to Podcast as a supporting medium for enhancing listening skill. Podcasts are the

name of a digital recording of a radio broadcast (Constantine, 2007). The students of Tanjungpura University showed positive attitudes toward the use of podcasts and approved that podcasts were useful to sharpen listening skills. In comparing the use of video and audio in teaching listening, Prasetyo (2007) through his study discovered that video were recommended to enhance listening skill effectively.

In the area of speaking, the significant use of ICTs was also seen in Widiawati, Sukadi, and Sukra (2013) research on the impact of CALL. They demonstrated that video-based CALL is effective in improving students' English speaking achievement. Umasitah's idea of using digital series pictures from cellular phones also should be taken into consideration, since this technology had significant roles in improving EFL learner's speaking ability (2014). The strategies were described as follows; firstly, the learners were assigned to make a series of digital pictures telling about their activity individually, the document is completed by the crew who involved in the making of the product. Next, the learners presented the pictures document in front of the class; the audience gave comments about the pictures. Looking at different digital pictures stimulated active spoken commentary and responses from the students.

In the area of reading, Sudiran (2014) explored students' positive perception of the use of search engine in reading course. Students regarded the Internet as the important media in the learning process. They took advantage of the Internet to obtain meaningful information about reading materials from which they could enhance their reading comprehension. The students inclined to use the to find reading materials to complete their reading assignment.

The use of Facebook was also considered effective in teaching reading comprehension especially recount text. The study was conducted by Hanip and Sa'adah (2014) in the junior high school level. The students' reading indicators were that they could comprehend the recount text in determining the meaning of the word, phrase, based on the context. Firstly, the teacher explained about recount text and its components within the class. Then, the teacher created the Facebook group and posted the examples of recount text after the class. Questions and answers were also posted by the teacher to stimulate the students to discuss about the content and its structure. As a result, the study showed that the social media 'Facebook' increased the students' achievements on reading subject. The

'Facebook' was an effective medium in teaching reading comprehension to determine main ideas, written and implicit information, reference words, the meaning of the words and phrases based on the context.

In the area of writing, different kinds of technology and genre-based approach for teaching writing in an ESP class was also performed by Suparmi (2014) to support the benefit of ICTs in language skills development. In favor of satisfying to the specific needs of students, Suparmi shared a model of teaching writing by using video, computer, Internet, and genre-based approach. The use of various technologies was integrated into the three steps offered by genre-based approach, i.e. 1) building knowledge of the field (BKOF) and modelling of the text (MOT), 2) joint construction of the text (JCOT), and 3) independent construction of the text (ICOT). The finding suggests that the model is more interesting, more efficient, and the students achieve better result in writing.

A study conducted by Fajaria (2014) emphasizing on the idea that the use of the gadget was believed to be able to provide all of students' needs, especially enjoyment. Through the use of social media, Fajaria, presented a kind of writing assignment as follow up activities which was fun, original, and advantageous, 'an accordion book'. The result of the study showed that the students' favors of writing something in social media, reflected students' motivation in writing and they were able to write confidently.

NLM or narrative learning multimedia in the form of movie, pictures, and texts are also considered effective in making students be able to write a narrative text. Cahyono evidenced that the students became increasingly familiar with narrative writing by considering the schematic structures and linguistic features through NLM (2014). The students were asked to write a narrative text based on the instruction displayed in multimedia. After the students had listened and watched a movie presented in NLM, they wrote a narrative text based on some pictures given in NLM.

In the following section, the paper addresses the notion of the use of technology in improving the English teaching and learning for young learners. Some uses of technology contribute to the improvement of children's motivation and achievement, English four skills, literature's sense, and English word acquisition.

### **3.3 Improving English Teaching and Learning for Young Learners**

Children in Indonesia are increasingly attached to their cell phones, tablets, and laptops even for their personal use. A number of abilities can be fostered by the use of these technologies in science, math, and language. In response to children's familiarity with these gadgets and other forms of technology, ICTs have been used to support English for young learners. Some studies have been done by teachers concerning the use of ICTs in this area.

Based on the fact, Ratminingsih (2014) inspired to develop an audio media with scripted songs to create fun learning in teaching English for young learners. The effect of the media was proven to be effective to improve the students' English achievement and their motivation. Ratminingsih composed 21 scripted songs in this research. The songs were both taken from the source language and the target language. The aims were to make the students aware of their own culture and to introduce them to the target culture through simple songs. As a result, Ratminingsih discovered that the audio media with scripted songs increased the young learners' English achievement and motivation.

Diem and Novitasari (2012) highlighted the Online Resources Strategy (ORS) at the elementary school to cultivate the students' English learning habits. The experimental study found that ORS significantly affected the students' listening and reading skills which then followed by speaking and writing. It is assumed that the achievement in both listening and reading skills occurred as most of the online resources were the animated electronic books or materials provided with the text and the audio which enabled the students to listen to the pronunciation of the words during reading. The authors claimed good results from the study, however, they pointed out the importance of a good sound system to assist students in catching the words better.

'Mobile Comics' was also an interest catching way of enhancing literature's sense to young learners. According to Setyowati (2014) it was considered as a precious and essential pedagogical medium which provided visual movement, sound, and imagery characters. The features can be maximized to sharpen the young learners' literature sense through coloring, picking out the right pictures, singing, mentioning the object in the comics and getting the right pictures. Such



activities provide meaningful and enjoyable exercises and they encourage young learners to engage more in the wonderful world of literature.

Further emphasis on the effect of ICTs in the learning EYL was discovered by Fortunasari (2014) when she explored how children acquired specific Internet and game terms and their perceived meanings through intensive contacts with tablets and smart phones. She illustrated that mobile technology is highly successful in motivating young learners to acquire English words in informal context. The two siblings found their own ways of making meaning of the game and the Internet terms. The older girl inclined to give meaning on more terms correctly rather than the younger one.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

According to the recent Ministry of Education and Culture's regulation about Educational Curriculum, teachers are suggested to take advantage of the ICTs and promote technology integration in the curriculum. Based on the numerous studies, ICTs offer opportunities and possibilities in addressing teaching issues, improving the quality of literacy education in EFL context and promoting curriculum reform. The programs which are established by the government provide evidence that they have put the policy about the use of ICTs into practice in the educational sector.

The application of ICTs in EFL education in Indonesia does not merely mean using technology to support learning and instruction, but most importantly it reflects new notions about learning and instruction. This review of the literature shows that ICTs provides a good way to enhance students' motivation and interests, to promote the development of the English four skills and English for young learners in Indonesia. Many studies indicate that ICTs has an important influence on changing the teaching and learning practice in Indonesia.

However, ICTs have not been fully implemented. The government programs of ICTs have not reached many places in Indonesia, especially in isolated areas. The ICTs related programs are only available in the big cities, such as; Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Malang, Bogor, and many others. While in the smaller cities or isolated ones, the programs are not established or have not been implemented effectively. The infrastructure development is quite imbalanced among cities in Indonesia, which makes the establishment of technology based learning very

difficult. Therefore, the potential of technology using and its practice is not fully realized.

The absence of ICTs' facilities and programs affects Indonesian teachers' skill and competence in using the technology. Some teachers still are not aware of the positive effects of technologies. The provision of facilities is needed to be taken into account in order to be widely available and more accessible. Furthermore, to upgrade the teachers' competency in integrating technologies into their teaching, particular training programs are needed to be implemented as well. As stated by Siregar (2008) that the provision of the structure and infrastructure of ICTs within schools should be top priority in order to attain the goal of providing quality education to all learners.

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