

## Learning English with Technology: A Study

**Andi Febriana Tamrin**  
([andifebriana90@unifa.ac.id](mailto:andifebriana90@unifa.ac.id))

**Basri**  
([basri@unifa.ac.id](mailto:basri@unifa.ac.id))

Fajar University

The growth and development of information and technology has greatly improve for learning language, especially English. The aim of this study is to explored the potentials and the challenges of implementing technologies for learning English. Qualitative descriptive design was applied. Observation and interview were implemented to collect the data. This study was conducted at Universitas Fajar, Architecture Department. There were ten students were involved in this research. They were selected based on the purposive sampling. The result of this study depicted that applying technologies (e-learning and online application) have two main potentials and one challenges in regards for the implementation of technologies in learning English.

**Keywords:** technology, English class, potentials and challenges, e-learning

*Pertumbuhan dan perkembangan informasi dan teknologi sangat meningkat untuk pembelajaran bahasa, khususnya bahasa Inggris. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggali potensi dan tantangan penerapan teknologi untuk pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Desain deskriptif kualitatif diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Observasi dan wawancara dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Universitas Fajar, Jurusan Arsitektur. Ada sepuluh mahasiswa yang dilibatkan dalam penelitian ini. Mereka dipilih berdasarkan purposive sampling. Hasil penelitian ini menggambarkan bahwa penerapan teknologi (e-learning dan aplikasi online) memiliki dua potensi utama dan satu tantangan dalam penerapan teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Internet has become a primary needs nowadays. It provides many helps for humanity. The application of internet can be found in several aspects of life, including education. The power of internet enable lecturers and students study together at the same time even though they are not at one classroom. Also, there is courses that can be taken from home just by using computer and good internet. It called distance education. This way of learning provided various choices such as degree in bachelor, diploma, and certificate of expertise.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have brought many benefit and changing in learning style. For lecturers, internet is a tool to help them in their class. It has become a necessary to involved internet, in this case, technology in the curriculum. Many kinds of subject could taught by applying technology, one of it is English. In learning English, the lecturers have to make the lesson interesting.

Davies (2005) stated that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in learning English is closely related to the use of computers. ICT tends to be preferred term replacing IT (Information Technology), because it shows the importance of electronic communication such as email, the web and videoconferencing as well as computer aspect. This statement informed that computer is a necessary part to develop the utilization of ICT.

In English class, the lecturers have an ability to utilize the use of technology; internet, computer, smartphone and web; to support them in the classroom. For the example, students who have difficulties in writing, they found it is hard to express their feeling and made it into written form. Consequently, the idea of writing become something boring and unnecessary spread among students. This statement is in line with Harmer (2007). He said that many students either think or say that they cannot, or do not want to write. This maybe because they lack of confidence, think it's boring or believe they have nothing to say." One of the solution is to use web (e-learning), such as Edmodo. In this e-learning, the appearance is eye-catching and easy to understand. It has Facebook style, it could give students more spirit to write down their feeling. The reason is similar to how they write their status in social media.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Based on the background, this study needed to be conducted through the following research question:

What are potentials and challenges of applying technologies in learning English?

## **METHOD**

This study was allocated to freshman students batch 2018 from Architecture department. The reason they were chosen because this class is the first taught using e-learning. The data were collected by observation and interview. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting the sample to interview, as the result ten students were involved.

The first step of this study was observation. It was done to observe the implementation of information and communication technology, particularly technology (e-learning, application, mailing list, video conference and many more) in learning English. Then, interview was to find out the information about the potentials and the challenges of implementing technologies for learn

English.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Potentials of Applying Technologies in Learning English**

#### **a. The Plentiful of Resource in Learning English**

Through technologies, the lecturers have abundant of teaching resources to use in English class. They easily could find media for learning such video, pictures and audios from internet. It also provides many topics to choose.

The good example of this case can be seen from using web (e-learning) in English class. Search engine such as Google or Yahoo could help the students to find out the material for their English lesson. These search engine provide most of free of charge materials. It is convenient and efficient for students to access. The respondent statement about the many sources could access in the search engine can be seen in the following excerpt I:

#### *Excerpt 1*

*“Google help me to find material for my lesson. I usually need to find out the books or pictures that my lecturer asked me to find. You just have to type what kind of picture you are looking, then it will give you many choices of picture. Oh, it is very helpful as long as you type the right words.*

From this statement it could be seen that internet has a potential point for resources. The students who were used to find their material for lesson has a chance to improve for their vocabulary. Before they search, they need to memorize and understand what they should find. Moreover, the visual of search engines are nice and it is easy to access.

Moreover, internet helps the student to access the sites which could help them to improve their skills in English. One of the student stated in interview as represented in the excerpt:

#### *Excerpt 2*

*“The lecturer for English provided us a good sites to access in case we want to do self-study at home. This sites has many materials I could access freely. In that site there a listening skill and reading skill. Because I like English and I want to improve m self, I always visit this site after the class. It is very useful for me to learn. The most important is the lesson become more convenient and interesting.”*

This may signify that the student has shown her interest in learning English by using the sites. They provide free materials and moreover it easy to find in the internet. In addition, this kind of sites helps the student to their self-study mode. Therefore, they could learn English more than what they have got in the class with limited time.

The example of web (e-learning) that provides good service for online class is Edmodo. In Edmodo, the lecturers could post the materials for their class. In return the students could download it freely. They could give comments about the materials or ask about the lesson they do not understand. Additionally, there is a facility that Edmodo provides for lecturers to make assignment. As the result, the students can submit their assignment directly through this facility. In other words,

Edmodo could be considered as one of the best e-learning tool teach English. It is because Edmodo provides space for them to communicate their learning activities and teaching.

As explain before, Edmodo has become the best social networking in EFL class for helping the lecturer. It is also become a very helpful tool to learn English for students. For students, they believed that Edmodo as a good learning media for their English lesson. It was stated by students “Gre” in the excerpt:

*Excerpt 3:*

*“Edmodo has become a necessary for me to learn English. In the classroom, it is more interactive to learn the Reading subject than by using traditional way. Also, I could comprehend more by using Edmodo. “*

From this excerpt, it could suggest that it is more beneficial for the students to learn Reading subject from Edmodo. They feel interested because the visualisation in Edmodo. It is also a good way to change the monotonous method of learning. Therefore, most of the students believe that they could learn better using Edmodo compared to whiteboard in the EFL class.

#### **b. The Communication and Interaction between Lecturer and Student**

Communication and interaction are needed in classroom to achieve a good result in learning activities. In EFL class, the lecturers and students have to maintain their good relationship to help in learning process. Also, students believe that guidance of lecturers needed even though they use Edmodo. They need their lecturer attendance to supervise their performance in class. This stated by student “Re” in excerpt 4:

*Excerpt 4:*

*“Lecturer presence was still needed, because students would be more understand if the lecturer explained the subjects. The lecturer would give the students a simple explanation which could be easier to understand for student. If student only studied it from mobile phone, sometimes there were few terms which students didn’t understand and they needed to search at google, but if there was a lecturer who explained it, student could be just asking directly. As great as Edmodo as learning media of EFL, the presence of lecturer is needed.”*

The guidance of lecturer is still important for students. From the excerpt, it describe that EFL class need their lecturer to guide, control and maintain their learning activities. As learning media, Edmodo could also guide the students in their lesson. By using Edmodo, they can ask their lecturer directly if they face difficulties. The, they can have more than one guidance, from the lecturer and Edmodo. Consequently, their enthusiasm in learning is increasing more and more.

Then, the lecturer could post topic or material in the wall of the class and create online group discussion. All of them, including students and lecturers, could participate together. The statement of most students said that they encourage in learning English after using Edmodo. Also, they said that their form of communication is better now that they have Edmodo in the class. It means that as learning platform, Edmodo has been very helpful to break the barrier of communication between

students and lecturers. This can be seen in this excerpt:

*Excerpt 5:*

*“Since my lecturer using Edmodo, the communication and interaction between students and lecturer is getting closer. We also feel that the lecturer feel more communicative. The students feel encourage to ask many questions should they face any difficulties.”*

This statement indicate that Edmodo is a great help for students and lecturer to have communicative learning activities. It also proved that Edmodo provides all the users, students and lecturers, access to interact one another with their own schedule. Their communication is a proof of how their learning activities such as reading, could improve along with the time. It happened because both parties could communicate and interact freely, in case the students face any problem, they can the lecturer how to solve the problem through Edmodo. Accordingly, in the implementation of e-learning, in this case Edmodo, it is required to make the lecturer become the part of it.

Also, the information for students are ease to access is additional benefit for using technology in ELT class. Nowadays, students have smartphone, laptop, and tablets. There are many data can be stored in them, such as texts, audios, videos, and images. They also could access many information from anywhere and anytime. There is no boundary for them to learn. By using virtual learning platform, there more opportunities for students to learn more. They could learn at the school or out of school.

## **2. The Challenges of Technology Implementation in Learning English**

Based on the perception of students who become the interviewee in this study, there is one challenge found. That is:

### **The Condition of Internet Access and the Ability of the Users**

Even though internet provided many easiness and goodness for lecturers and students in learning English, but it does not meaning there is no minus or problem. One of the big problem is the condition of internet to access. One of the students stated:

*Excerpt 6:*

*“There were some obstacles, especially internet connection, and the uploaded file size is low.”*

The statement before shows that the challenge of learning English by using technology is the access. Even though Edmodo provide free of charge, but there are no access of the internet it means nothing at all. Moreover, if Edmodo is using in University with free access for students then there is no problem. However, there is no guarantee when will the connection become slow.

In addition, the expertise of the users also become a main requirement. Some of the lecturers who are from the oldest generations are not expert in technology. They will find it hard to utilize the technology in learning environment. They will surely prefer the traditional method. Similarly, there are difference in economics of the students. Some of them might come from the upper and middle class society. They will not have any problem to have smartphone. Laptop, tablets and another things. Their expertise in technology is good enough. In contrast, the students who come

from rural area are not so expertise or they might not have enough money to provide themselves with up-to-date gadget. There is one students who has this statement:

*Excerpt 7:*

*“For me personally, there are obstacles. But in my opinion sometimes there are students who don't have a good cell phone that is adequate or even some who don't have a cell phone”*

Looking at this statement, this is also one of the challenge for applying technology in the learning English. These kinds of things are not simple to solve. It needs motivation and patience of the lecturers to fix it.

## **CONCLUSION**

This century is the era of technology. It uses and benefits have become a must for many field. As part of technologies, internet is a great support for education. As networking system that connect many people around the world, internet is very useful. By applying internet in learning English, there are two potentials which is the many resource of material and the communication and information for the user. Students comprehend of the learning material of English is more effective and efficient.

However, there is also one of the lack of applying internet in English class. A good internet connection is a must for the users. Also, the ability to understand of digital world for the users need to be considered.

## **REFERENCES**

- Davies, Graham. et. Al. (2005). Setting Up Effective Digital Language Laboratory and Multimedia ICT Suites for MFL. Access on 25 October 2019 from [www.language-ict.org.uk](http://www.language-ict.org.uk)
- Harmer, Jeremy. (2007). *How to Teach English*. England: Pearson Education Limited.