

# UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** Technology is nothing if people cannot utilize it properly. Since it is the digital era, the use of technology for instruction specifically language learning is a must. Educators no longer force their ways of conventional teaching. The teachers must adapt to their students' modern environment in which the students everytime and everywhere have their handphones at their hands. Therefore, they must be able to make use of the circumstances to utilize the technological devices for learning. This paper elaborates the benefits of the internet in learning English and the use of technology in the classrooms.

**Keywords:** *Technology, Social Media, Utilizing, Language Education*

Technology has become a part of every individual's life. The use of it has been very beneficial and successful for people who use it. The example of the use of technology can be seen every day, including in the education world. The technology used to be just a tool in teaching but now it has become a part of teaching and cannot be separated. Technology has always played an important role in education but the immense change in technology and the growing presence of the internet have changed our students more than ever for the last decade.

Today's students grow up with developing technology, access to internet anytime, anywhere available. They have become familiar with mobile phones, computers, digital cameras, console games etc. as soon as they were born (Inderawati, 2011). As a result of all these innovations, our students are no longer thinking and getting the information as they may have had in the past. Technology has influenced our students the way they learn, get the information, think and interact. They have become collaborative, autonomous, exploratory and connected learners.

Indonesian education system, curriculum and the approaches are not effective anymore because 21st-century students have already found new ways to learn and improve themselves. Certiport (2012) coined this term "Digital Natives". They are today's learners and our students at schools. They are the native speakers of the digital age and developing technology. They are fluent in using computers, internet, mobile phones, messaging and console gaming. Connectivity means a lot to them. They are the ones who are always on and connected. As a result of their interaction with technology every day, they are increasingly web-literate. The rest is the Digital Immigrants who are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with technology that digital natives use. Being a digital native doesn't necessarily mean that people will always be. All teachers need to be more familiar with the growing technology because this is the only way to become a digital native. First, teachers need to use and explore the technology personally; then they will find the best ways to integrate it into their teaching to communicate, to create and to collaborate (Inderawati, 2017).

Furthermore, English is international language that most of the countries use and teach in the school from the lowest to the highest level. Although there is no change in English material, the way how to teach it in the past and present are not really the same. Liward and Hirata (2011) state, "21<sup>st</sup>-century skills area blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies necessary to succeed in work and life". In the past, teacher delivered the material and students receive it, or it is called as teacher centre, contrary to the present, 21<sup>st</sup> century, the teacher only gives the direction to the students and then they will do what they have to do related to the material, or it is called as student centre. The tools which are used in teaching and learning process have also developed. The teacher usually uses ICT to teach their students, such as a projector, power point, etc.

In this 21st century where technologies are growing rapidly, developing English ability is an easy task. As most of the people in the world are internet users, they can use the internet to help them in learning English. By using the internet, the activities can be done anytime and anywhere.

The Internet itself gives many benefits for learning English. This article will discuss two benefits of the internet in learning English which is independent English learning and unlimited content and knowledge and the technology in classrooms which can be utilized both interactively and collaboratively.

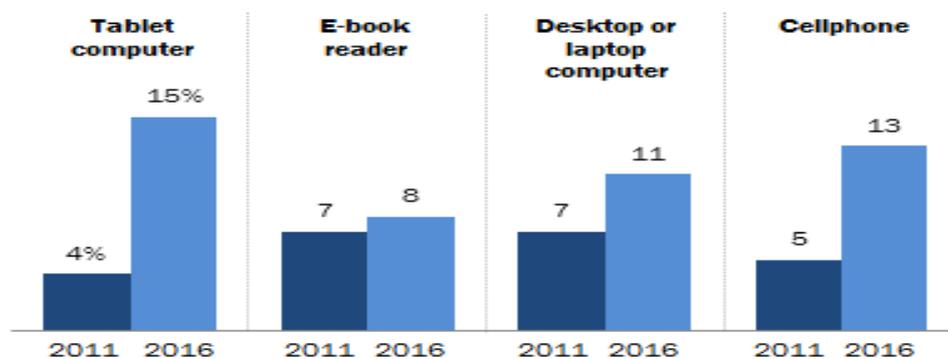
### **Making Use of Appropriate Websites in Internet**

There are two advantages of using ICT in teaching and learning English, to teach the material more attractive and effective and to make the students more creative while teaching and learning process. First of all, teachers can use e-books to teach. Since e-books popularity has arisen, many people close their regular books and move on to e-books. This diagram shows the percentage of comparison of Americans who use their gadgets to read from 2011 and 2016.

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### **More Americans are reading books on tablets and cellphones, even as dedicated e-reader use has remained stable**

*% of U.S. adults who have read an e-book in the last year using a/an ...*



Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.  
"Book Reading 2016"

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E-books are still considered as something new in the teaching and learning process. Many instructors are trying to use e-books in the classroom due to its simplicity. Learners will only have to bring smartphones to the class. It is very rare that a learner forgets to bring smartphones since technology is used in daily activities. Smartphones have a big capacity of memory and can download many things. Learners can download the many e-books. So, learners will not only have one book on one subject but they can have many books to learn which will hopefully open the new way of thinking since they have many sources.

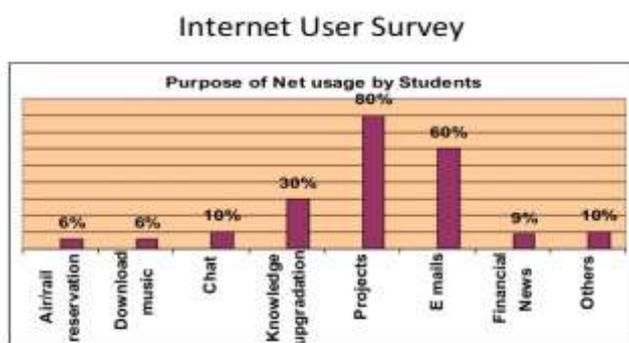
E-books are also preferred because they are not heavy. Eliminating the weights of many books that learners usually carry to schools are another positive impact of e-books. Anderson (2007) states that physically, the reduce weight enables the students to grow healthily without any damaging effects such as lower back pain, poor posture, spinal deformity over time and back problems in adulthood. E-books also very cheap, sometimes even free. The use of e-books will be economical from the parents' perspective. Hellman (2010) states that the subsidies will minimize education expenditure for parents with school-going children. E-books are also very easy to share. Often senior students give old books to junior students. With e-books, they can just copy or share it through social media, for example, Facebook and Line.

Another way to utilize technology in the teaching and learning process is by taking advantage of an online class. Like e-books, online class is still considered a novelty in the teaching and learning process. Especially in the developmental country. Online class or e-learning is something that needs to be introduced in schools. For example English class. There are four skills of language; listening, speaking, reading, writing. These skills can be learned via internet in many

ways. One of these ways is internet communication tools such as e-learning, email, blogs, chat, facebook. Instructors have to make sure that the platform for online classes is easy to use and well-designed. E-learning is especially popular in higher education. Many lecturers are giving a lecture via online. Anderson (2005) states that social software may be the "killer app" for distance education, given its ability to enhance social presence. It is very beneficial for not only the lecturers, since they sometimes have other appointments but have the responsibility to teach, and also for students with the same reason as well. Using e-learning also means both lecturers and learners are not in the same classroom and still doing the teaching and learning process. This means a face-to-face learning is not the only way to learn. Although it seems like a revolutionary thing, instructors cannot depend on e-learning all the time. Learners still need instructors presence because learners will not get the same input in online learning compares to face-to-face learning. Dawson (2006) states that the limitation of face-to-face interaction in distance education courses can be difficult to building a community of practice and fostering students' sense of social presence online challenging. Even though in online learning, there is still interaction between lecturers and learners but it is not the same with real-life interaction.

Technology provides many ways to teach and learn. For example, people used to read the actual books but now it can be read on smartphones and tablets. Not only are electronic books or e-books easier but also cheaper. Students in the 21st century also take the benefits of technology. It has shaped a new way to learn, to think, to get the information and to use it. If students want to know about a certain thing then just simply search to Google and do not have to wait for teachers to explain it to them. So, technology has changed the way teachers teach. The two ways of utilizing technology in the teaching and learning process are teachers do not have to use regular books and the space to teach is unlimited.

First, the internet provides independent English learning. Independent learning is a learning process where people do it without an instructor. Haidir, Salam, and Husin (2015) state, "An important motivating factor in independent learning is the encouragement of students' own interests and their desire to learn." As flexible is one of the characteristics of the internet, people can arrange their own learning schedule whether it is in the morning, afternoon or even at night. They also can choose any materials that they like and choose whatever English skill they want to improve. For example, if they want to learn 'comparison degree' which is part of grammar, they can search it on the internet by typing the keyword on searching feature. This activity will not be limited by time and place.



The data chart above shows that 30% of internet usage by students is to upgrade their own knowledge. Independent learning is one of the most important learning approaches since learning process in the classroom sometimes not really efficient for some people. In one class which consists of twenty to forty students, there are many kinds of different characteristics. Every person has a different personality, ability, prior knowledge, and learning style. It is hard for the teacher to choose one method that suits everyone' learning style. As a result, not every student can follow teaching and learning activities. Therefore, independent learning through the internet is really helpful for students to deepen their English skills.

Second, the internet provides unlimited content and knowledge. The word 'unlimited' means there is no any limit to access the knowledge through internet. Islam (2011) states, "The

content and knowledge in class are limited and are impractical. The application of Internet technology has greatly broken the limitations of space and time in class.” The Internet is one of the sources of information and knowledge besides book and newspaper. Khare, Thapa, and Sahoo (2007) state that the internet gives direct access to the work of colleagues. Besides, the internet’s ability is to incorporate a huge amount of knowledge since they provide a virtual library of millions of volumes and thousands of papers. There are millions information and knowledge served by the internet. The Internet can be said as a virtual library. What makes internet different from the real library is internet does not have a place like the real library. However, the virtual library provided by the internet has its own specialty while the real library has not such as speed of search, immediate information, practical, cheaper, and no limitation of space and time. By using the internet, people do not need to go anywhere to find book and information. Therefore, the internet is the right choice to help us improve our knowledge.

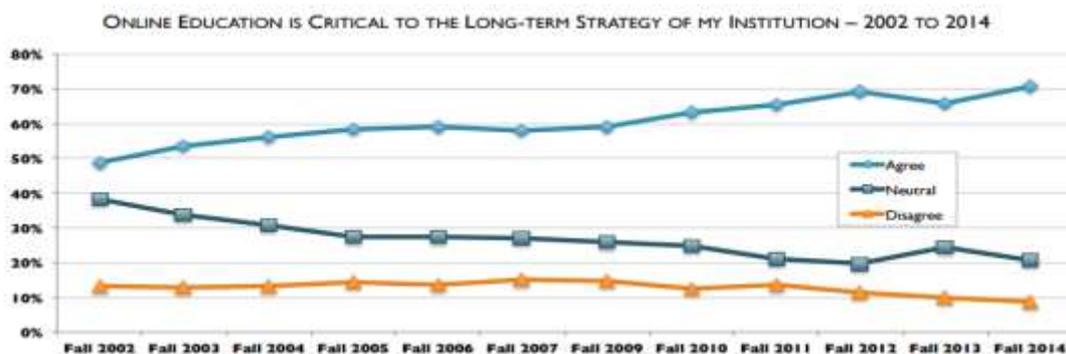
Accordingly, learning English in the classroom and just relying on the materials from a textbook is not enough. As technologies are growing day by day and the easiness of internet access, people should utilize the use of internet in learning English. Either provide independent English learning or unlimited content and knowledge are two benefits of using the internet in learning English.

### Using Interactive and Collaborative Technology in Classrooms

Teaching and learning process will be bored if the teacher just explains the material to the students based on the textbook, especially if she or he teaches monotonously. Therefore, the teacher should find the way to make the class more effective so that the student can focus on the subject. In this era, online class is one of the skills that are used by some teachers, especially at a high level. For example, when the students do their tasks, they can do it on their device and collect it to the teacher through email or other applications. No papers needed. They can also have a discussion online. They just have to make a group in the application chosen, and discuss the subject there. It will be more attractive for most of the students because they can join the discussion everywhere, not necessarily in the class if the teacher allows. Facebook is one of the digital application for online learning. It is in line with what Inderawati & Sofendi (2018) put forward:

Facebook also improve both teacher-student and student-student interaction in the form of web-based communication. Facebook helps instructors connect with their students about assignments, upcoming events, useful links, and examples of work outside the classroom.

Silva ( 2013) insists that these such modern skills and competencies are not new, they just newly important.



That data shows that the distance education is important to the student long-term strategies has jumped from 54.9 percent to 80.9 percent in one year.

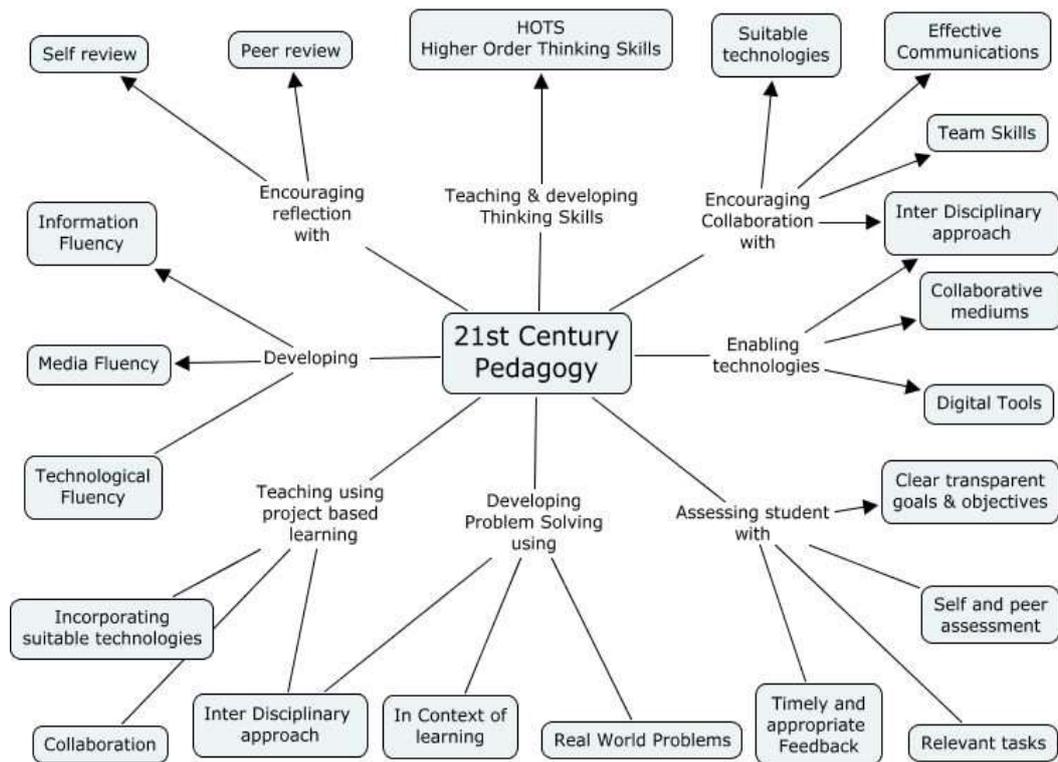
Second, to make students express their creativity, the teacher can ask them to collaborate with others while doing the project. For example, in teaching speaking, students are asked to work in a small group discussing the topic given, and then ask them to present the result in front of the class next meeting using power point as creative as they can. From that, their brain will continue to

be sharpened to be more creative. Apart from that, they will also learn how to work in a group about how to appreciate their friend's perspective and to share their own idea (Inderawati, 2017). Similarly, Carneiro (2007) states that the new approaches to learning must accommodate today's student characteristics. Furthermore, the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century is better to be applied and it is essential to support the students to develop their skills from the earliest from education instead.

As a result, technology is very useful for students at this decade. Either to teach the material more attractive and effective or to make the students more creative while teaching and learning process. Technologies in which students are already well taken up are an effective way to support based-inquiry and independent learning. There are four principles of Education which are reported by Delors: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. The Delors framework can be redefined and expanded for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leis (2010) states, "Fifteen years from now, schools will likely make greater use of technology, conduct formative assessment and grading to inform instruction, cooperate more closely with industry and universities and become more customized towards individual needs and interests." So, the students should be introduced to technology in order to develop their skills in the learning process.

Using technology in classes can help students become better problem solvers, constant explorers, more autonomous learners, interactive and collaborative (Inderawati & Sofendi; 2018). Technology helps to collaborate on global projects, it provides authentic material and is a good way to improve writing and listening skills as well as communication abilities. It updates students' knowledge. The students are always eager to use technology at schools because it reflects their lives. They are already using it. They mail each other every day, they send messages via mobile phones, they complete online information every day, they chat and they spend most of their lives online.

Curriculums and methodologies teachers use will always improve. New approaches will be popular and adopted, new goals will be added and the digital native students will always be evolving and changing rapidly as techies. Education, competition, and skills are changing. "We are no longer teaching if what we teach is more important than who we teach or how we teach" (Carol Tomlinson, Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom). The students have already surpassed the limits of education systems. Teachers should keep the traditional content that works and helps the learners in curriculums but they should also include the future, the future is digital and it enhances learning. This takes time of course. For teachers, not only using powerpoints as the only tool; and for the students learning to use technology in an effective way. Technology is a way of life and a necessity and we should be ready to handle this. It is a long journey and there is a lot to be done not to lose anything on the way.



According to Fisher (2015):

There is also the matter of utility. Evaluating information depends as much on context and circumstance as it does the nature of the data itself. The essay full of fluff may distill quite nicely down to a 140 character tweet. A trivial fact about governments may appear useless in a research paper on the three branches of government, but could find utility in a project-based learning artifact on the evolution of government systems worldwide.

Context matters and the diagram from origami below captures this, though not from the perspective of the student and content knowledge, but the teacher and various pedagogical components themselves, including Higher-Order Thinking Skills, Peer Collaboration, and Media Fluency.

To effectively engage and teach Millennial students, school systems must be outfitted with a prerequisite of ICT resources, and curricula must be designed to promote a collaborative learner-centered environment to which students will relate and respond. As ICT is integrated into classrooms, educators must have professional development and certification of computing skills. Students must also be taught ICT skills relevant to their entry into the workforce.

ICT resources and well-designed curricula will only achieve optimal results in the 21st-century classroom if educators have a foundation of basic computing skills. College and university-level teacher education programs should require educational technology courses for graduation. When new teachers enter school systems, they must come to prepare with computing skills to seamlessly integrate technology into their classrooms. For example, is based on a standard that certifies knowledge of the critical computing and Internet skills valued in today's academic and professional environments. Developed in partnership with the Global Digital Literacy Council and with input from hundreds of subject matter experts from business and academia worldwide, ICT is aligned with International Society for Technology in Education National Educational Technology Standards and has been given credit recommendations by the American Council on Education. The industry recognition, portability, and validity of ICT make it compelling proof of an individual's digital literacy.

Schools around the world have successfully included ICT in teacher development programs. For example, Freeman School District, which is located just south of Spokane, Washington, implemented a teacher training and certification program to establish a base level of

computing knowledge among teachers and to ensure teacher development was efficient and cost-effective.

Adapting from Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Maslow 2014), discuss basic strategies for integrating new students, especially younger children, into classroom. Two basic needs teachers will want to consider are (1) safety and security and (2) a sense of belonging. By paying close attention to these basic needs, teachers lay the foundation for meeting the students' self-esteem needs and for their growth in language and academic abilities.

## Conclusion

ICT is very useful for students at this decade. Either to teach the material more attractive and effective or to make the students more creative while teaching and learning process. Technologies in which students are already well taken up are an effective way to support based-inquiry and independent learning.

Using e-books and doing online classes will be cheaper and easier for both instructors and learners. Both instructors and learners should use the new technology wisely.

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