



Perceptions of Students of English Education Program towards ICT in ELT Course

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2023-02-26 Revised: 2023-03-13 Published: 2023-04-02 Keywords: <i>Information and Communication Technology (ICT); English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Students' Perception.</i>	<p>There has been a considerable number of studies related to the use of ICT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. However, only a limited amount of research that examines the practice of ICT teaching and learning to EFL students has been conducted. Hence, this study intends to address this issue. Specifically, it aims to investigate the perception of students of English Education Program towards ICT in ELT course. This research applies qualitative approach with case study research design. The data were collected from observation in ICT in ELT course in Brawijaya University and there were three classes being observed. In addition, interviews with students were also conducted. The study employs purposive sampling, and from each class, three participants were selected based on recommendation from the instructors. A total of 9 students were then chosen as the participants in this study. The research findings show that all the research participants agree that it is important for English Education students to learn ICT. Furthermore, related to their preference in ICT teaching method, 44% of the respondents argued that online learning is better while the other 56% prefers offline face-to-face meeting. Finally, it is found that all of the respondents have positive perceptions about the ICT course. The ICT course was depicted as fun and necessary, important, exciting, helpful, and useful.</p>
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2023-02-26 Direvisi: 2023-03-13 Dipublikasi: 2023-04-02 Kata kunci: <i>Information and Communication Technology (ICT); English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Persepsi Mahasiswa.</i>	<p>Cukup banyak penelitian yang membahas penggunaan ICT dalam konteks English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Akan tetapi, hanya sedikit penelitian yang mengkaji praktik pengajaran dan pembelajaran ICT untuk siswa EFL. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bermaksud untuk menjawab permasalahan tersebut. Secara khusus, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris terhadap mata kuliah ICT in ELT. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain penelitian studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan dari observasi yang dilakukan pada mata kuliah ICT in ELT di Universitas Brawijaya, dengan total tiga kelas yang diobservasi. Dilakukan juga wawancara dengan mahasiswa yang mengambil mata kuliah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode purposive sampling, dan dari setiap kelas dipilih tiga responden berdasarkan rekomendasi dari dosen pengampu. Sebanyak 9 siswa kemudian dipilih sebagai responden dalam penelitian ini. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh responden setuju bahwa mempelajari ICT bagi mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris adalah hal yang penting. Selanjutnya, terkait dengan preferensi para responden dalam metode pengajaran mata kuliah ICT in ELT, 44% diantaranya berpendapat bahwa pembelajaran online lebih baik sedangkan 56% lainnya lebih memilih pertemuan tatap muka secara offline. Pada temuan akhir, diketahui bahwa semua responden memiliki persepsi positif tentang mata kuliah ICT in ELT. Mata kuliah ICT in ELT digambarkan sebagai mata kuliah yang menyenangkan dan perlu, penting, mengasyikkan, membantu, dan bermanfaat.</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

Every element of human life is significantly impacted by the fast-growing development of technology. The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) also has a considerable effect on education sector, including English Language education. The outbreak of Coronavirus in early 2020 played a significant part in the transformation of education. All of sudden, the global academic community has to

explore novel ways of teaching and learning of distant and online education (Timokhina et al., 2021). Despite engrained assumption that no pedagogical approach can substitute the ultimate position of formal education with the presence of teacher in the class, there has been a pedagogical shift from the traditional method to modern e-learning approach (Mishra et al., 2020). Nowadays, it is very common for people of all ages to meet via Zoom. An abundance of online learning

materials can be freely accessed on Youtube. A variety of mobile applications is readily accessible to support students' self-regulated learning.

Seeing the significant growth of information and communication technology (ICT) in education, its incorporation to teaching, learning, and research have had a huge importance in promoting technology-based education among university lecturers, students, and staff (Islam, 2015). In Indonesia, the integration of ICT in higher education has received serious attention from the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education. The Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) released the Higher Education Long Term Strategy (HELTS) 2003-2010, and it is stated there that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning is one of the strategies for Indonesian higher education institutions to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. Given the national concern, higher education institutions have a prominent role in implementing policies and programs to raise the digital skills. A university in Malang city, East Java offers a Study Program in English Education which aims to produce qualified English teachers. ICT in ELT course is taught to students of English Education program to provide them with knowledge about various apps and programs that can support English Language Teaching (ELT). Future teachers will enter classrooms that are both technology-rich and rapidly evolving. Thus, ICT in ELT course is provided to ensure that they will have understanding of the available technologies and know how to integrate them into teaching and learning.

A number of studies related to ICT in education institutions in Indonesia have been conducted (Al Arif, 2019; Mahdum, 2019; Mailizar & Fan, 2019; Rahayu, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2022). However, the main aspect examined in most studies is the use of ICT whether by teachers, students or staff members. The aspect of the teaching of ICT is generally left untouched. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by investigating the teaching and learning of ICT from students' point of view. It aims to investigate their perceptions towards ICT course offered by English Education Study Program.

II. METHOD

This study employs qualitative research approach. It is set in natural settings with researcher as the key instrument. It is exploratory in nature since it seeks to understand and explore a situation, and it also includes in-depth analysis. Thus, case study research design is used in this

study. Purposive sampling was used as the method to collect data. In purposive sampling, researchers choose people and locations in order to learn more about or comprehend the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Snowball sampling technique was chosen due to the Covid-19 pandemic which reduced the likelihood of direct interactions and made it difficult for the researcher to get to know the ideal people to examine. The sample was obtained from the recommendation from the research participants.

The target population of this study was students taking the ICT in ELT course in Undergraduate Study Program of English Education in a university in Malang. There were 3 classes for ICT in ELT course, and the total number of students taking this course were 119 students. The respondents in this study were students from these three classes. There were three respondents for each class, making a total of 9 students as the respondents. In terms of sample size, less amount of data can be gathered for qualitative research than for quantitative research. This is due to the fact that the objective of collecting qualitative data is to identify and learn information from a small sample while also getting a lot of information from it, as opposed to quantitative research, which necessitates a big N to conduct pertinent statistical tests (Creswell, 2014).

The data for this study was collected through observation and interview. The researcher observed and documented the phenomenon under study in the capacity of a non-participant observer. However, because the classes were delivered through online method due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the observation was done remotely via Zoom and Google Meet. As a result, there were some restrictions as compared to live observation, such as the inability to completely observe respondents' social interactions or the physical properties of the classroom. Meanwhile, one-on-one interview was carried out with students enrolled in the ICT and ELT course. The interview took place via Zoom. The interview result was then recorded and subsequently written down for analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of qualitative data analysis.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

The findings indicate that there are various reasons why students take the ICT in ELT course. The first is because it is a compulsory course required by the study program. This

was stated by R1, R3 and R7. A very positive reason was expressed by R4 who said that he takes ICT in ELT Course because he is interested in anything related to technology, and he is aware that education cannot be separated from the use of technology. Another respondent (R2) said that learning the use of certain technologies in supporting ELT is important and is a necessity. Other reasons stated by the respondents were to gain insight into how to create interesting and interactive learning media (R5), to learn more about the use of ICT in learning English and in teaching (R6), and to fulfil the required number of academic credits (R8). Meanwhile, R9 took this course because she thinks that the use of ICT in learning English will be very useful for her career as a teacher.

When asked whether it is important or not for students of English Education to learn ICT, all of the respondents agree that learning ICT is important. According to some respondents, in ICT course they can learn how to use various platform or online application to support ELT. Some respondents stated:

1. R2: In ICT course we can learn material and time management, and also how to select the right media and ensure the designed materials and activities can run smoothly.
2. R4: My friends and I learnt that there are many platforms that can be used according to our needs and the target we want to achieve, such as assessment with gamification or creating our own website which can then be customized to suit our desires and needs.
3. R7: Through this course we learn many methods related to technology for teaching. This is useful for making learning activities more educative and fun.

Since the ICT course was delivered through distance learning method, it is interesting to investigate students' perception whether they prefer the course to be delivered using offline method or online method. Based on the interview, four respondents are in agreement that online method is better for them in learning ICT.

1. R1: Online is better because we can have real time practice.
2. R6: Online, because ICT course is related with the use of technology, so we can have direct practice during the online class.
3. R8: Online, because the use of ICT is very intense during online learning. On the other

hand, the use of ICT in offline learning is not as intense as in online learning.

4. R9: Online, because ICT learning itself is related to online learning so that by implementing online methods, as a student I can directly apply this learning in class, and I can understand some of the difficulties that might be experienced in online learning because I am used to it.

The rest of the respondents (5 persons) has different opinions. They share the idea that offline method is better for them. One respondent (R3) chose offline method without stating his reason. Two participants (R2 and R5) agreed that face-to-face learning helped them get better understanding of the course. Another one (R4) stated that there are quite many students who are not experienced in using technology tools, software and programs, and through offline learning, it would be easier for the lecturer to assess their students' skills, provide guidance and assistance. In addition to this, one of the research participants (R7) mentioned that it is very difficult for them if they only learn from a screen using online method, as this is basically the same as independent learning. That is why he prefers offline method.

Related to students' perceptions, it is found that all of the respondents have positive perceptions about the course. The adjectives they use to give their point of view are: fun and necessary (R1), important (R2), exciting (R3), helpful (R4), and useful (R4, R5, R8, R9).

1. R1: I think it's a fun and necessary subject to be learned by educators, especially with today's technological advances
2. R2: ICT course is important, but there needs to be a change in its implementation.
3. R3: It think it's an exciting course because we can get new knowledge in terms of making learning media.
4. R4: This course is quite helpful for me and my friends to explore things related to technology. For ICT course, I think it will be more useful if it has more focus from the start, for example for the first two months it focuses on teaching how to use gamification, then the next two months on making LMS (learning management site) and so on according to the expected target and ICT capabilities.
5. R5: ICT in ELT course is useful for teaching and learning and can be an inspiration for

teachers or teaching staff to maximize the use of ICT media.

6. R6: The course provides us as prospective teachers some insight related to the use of ICT to support English learning and create learning innovations
7. R7: Through ICT course, I was taught to maximize teaching method using technology as a good teaching medium.
8. R8: ICT course provides opportunities for students to make learning applications where this skill can be useful in teaching using ICT.
9. R9: The course is very useful for the modern era like now where the use of technology has developed very rapidly. This also encourages the use of technology in education, so this ICT course is very relevant to current conditions and its future practice.

In the last questions students were asked to give input on aspects that need to be improved related to the ICT in ELT course. There were a variety of answers given by the respondents.

1. R1: I think it is important to expand knowledge and experiment with all existing platforms including the basic ones like google platforms
2. R2: The aspect of introducing media and the basic of ICT in ELT
3. R3: Lecturers should explain more clearly to students regarding the project given so that it can be understood well.
4. R4: I think I have given my input as well as my expectation toward this course in my previous answer related to perception. Maybe basic assistance can also be given regarding the use of technology, even though it does not directly touch it, I think it can be included in the ICT course. For example, MS Word training because there are students who don't fully understand how to operate MS word such as making custom numbering, table of contents and also multi-level lists.
5. R5: Aspect of time, I think it really needs to be improved in order that it is not wasted.
6. R6: In addition to the variety of technologies that can be studied, their effectiveness and things that we should be careful and prepare for can also be taught further.
7. R7: In my opinion, this ICT class is more suitable and efficient if it is done offline because it will make it easier for lecturers

to monitor student work, and students also feel cared for, so we can realize in which parts we are still lacking.

8. R8: When class is conducted offline, I hope the lecturer will continue to use applications that can support learning in class.
9. R9: Lecturers can give students more suggestions about online applications or websites for learning, or speakers from outside the campus can be invited in the learning activities so that we can further deepen our knowledge about ICT that can be applied in class.

B. Discussion

After reviewing the above findings, it is obvious that ICT course is important for students of English Education Study Program. Even though some respondents admit that they take the course because it is compulsory or because they need to fulfil the required number of academic credits, they recognize that learning ICT is essential. They are aware that through ICT course they can learn new methods related to the use of technology for teaching. The ICT in ELT course is intended to provide students with the knowledge about various platforms, software and online applications that can be used in language teaching. Students also learn to create online-based teaching media. This is in line with the Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) 2020-2024, one of which says "Realizing relevant and high-quality, equitable and sustainable education, supported by infrastructure and technology." One day these students will enter a classroom as a teacher, and they will face an ever-increasing digital world. The university as well as the study program has made an appropriate attempt by providing ICT course to the students and making it a compulsory course.

However, one point to be noted is that the course was delivered through online method due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. As it has been commonly known, there are many debates surrounding the advantages and the drawbacks of online learning. The convenience factor is the most obvious advantage of online classes. Many people feel the burden of commuting and being trapped in traffic to travel to work, school, or campus. With the advent of virtual learning, students may choose to take classes in the comfort of their own home or from everywhere. In addition, students can save their time by not having to

drive to a physical location to take a class, and they have more freedom to choose the optimal time to study with online courses.

On the other hand, the most common drawbacks of online learning are around technical issues. Audio, video, or connection problems are the biggest hindrance to an online course. This is specifically true for many Indonesians living far from the city center. Those who live in the suburban areas, countryside, and remote areas will be disadvantaged not only from the lack of good internet connection but also from the power shortage which frequently occurs. Furthermore, not all people have the financial capability to own a reliable smartphone and a laptop or personal computer. According to Kemp (2020), the data from Digital 2020 Global Overview Report shows that per January 2020 67% of the world population used mobile phones while 59% people had access to the internet. This means, at the early period of Covid-19 Pandemic 33% of the world population did not own a mobile phone and 41% did not use the internet that were very much needed for online learning.

It is fortunate that all the respondents in this study own both smartphone and laptop or personal computer, but internet connection problem still takes place occasionally. During the class via Zoom or Google Meet, it could be observed that some students had an issue with their internet connection. During the observation, there was a time when some students could not attend Zoom class because of power blackout, which subsequently caused the Wi-Fi in their house to stop working. From the result of interview, it is found that more respondents would rather have ICT course to be conducted using offline face-to-face meeting rather than online learning. The main reasons are because in face-to-face meeting they can get better understanding of the course, have direct interaction with lecturer, and get guidance and assistance when needed. This means that with all the comfort and the ease offered by virtual learning, the state of being physically present and being able to get in-person guidance from the instructor is still very important.

Lastly, even though the number of this study involves a small number of participants, the data and information gathered from this research are more specific and more in-depth. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) stated that a

small number of cases, i.e. less than 20 cases, will allow the researcher to maintain a close association with the respondents, enhancing the validity of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in naturalistic settings. Thus, in this research the small number of participants does not hinder its validity criteria. Moreover, methodological triangulation using multiple qualitative methods will ensure the validity and reliability of this research. Lincoln & Guba's (1985) assert that insights and knowledge about the sending context are obtained through observation, interview, documentary analysis, and other data collection techniques, and this allows the degree of transferability and application in another receiving context to be assessed.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study investigates students' perception toward ICT in ELT course provided by English Education study program in Brawijaya University, a public university in Malang city, Indonesia. The generated research findings of this study lead to a conclusion that the university, specifically the study program, pays attention and answers the demand of the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE). Students of English Education program are equipped with ICT course to prepare them as teachers in the digital era. From the research findings, it can be inferred that more students prefer to have the course conducted in person. Students feel that face-to-face meeting with the lecturer will help them in better comprehending the course material. Related to students' perception about the course, all of the students are well aware of the importance of ICT. In addition, the students have positive image of the ICT course. They see the course as fun, necessary, exciting, useful and helpful. This indicates that the ICT course is quite successful, and in the future this course will still be necessary. Nevertheless, input from the students for the betterment of ICT in ELT course is needed.

Regarding the limitation of this study, there is a weakness to be addressed. Since this is a time-limited, small-scale qualitative study, it will be remarkable to conduct a larger scale study using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods in the future. By doing so, it is hoped that it can generate more robust research results that are applicable for the

wider scope. ICT is a very wide topic, and it is possible for other education programs, for example: Mathematics, Physics, Economics and so on to replicate this study.

B. Suggestion

After reflecting on the research findings, some suggestions for the university, specifically for the English Education study program, are proposed below:

1. ICT in ELT course is a very important course and should be continuously provided to the students of English Education program. However, it is important that the English Education study program conducts systematic evaluation in order to measure the success of this course. The study program should examine whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved or not.
2. Based on the input from some respondents, they hope that they can be introduced to basic platforms and get assistance regarding the use of basic technology such as MS Word and Google platforms. This means students do not share the same level of knowledge in technology. It is common that students' digital fluency is different from one to another. Thus, when planning a program, the university should take this into consideration. The university should try to cater to students' learning needs and sincerely listen to students' feedback and input.
3. The University has Faculty of Computer Science with many lecturers and experts in ICT, and nowadays ICT is used in many disciplines. The lecturers in English Education program are the ones responsible for preparing future English teachers who will teach in schools that are becoming more digital. Hence, the lecturers should be equipped with the knowledge to use and teach education technology to their students accordingly. For this purpose, lecturers in English Education program can be given some training to increase their ICT skill and knowledge by the experts from the Faculty of Computer Science.

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