Teachers' Beliefs and Practices on the Use of ICT in English Language Teaching in Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to provide an in-depth examination of how English teachers incorporated Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into their English Language Teaching (ELT). This study uncovered the teachers' beliefs and practices in integrating ICT, explored how their beliefs influence ICT use, and found the obstacles they face when integrating ICT into English language teaching. This study employed a qualitative approach. Four English teachers in the Sidareja district from three state junior high schools and one private junior high school participated in this research. The reason of the researcher in choosing those teachers because of the researcher's familiarity of the locality, the accessibility of the area that made easy for the researcher to develop quick relationship with the participants. Interviews and classroom observation were used to gain the data. It was done once for each participant. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that the teachers believed about the potential benefits of incorporating technology in the classroom, such as increased student involvement, personalized learning and improved academic outcomes. The classroom observations illustrate the integration of information and communication technology in teaching, emphasizing both the benefits and drawbacks. However, teachers still struggle to implement instructional technology due to some factors namely insufficient facilities and lack of professional development opportunities.
Key words: ELT; Beliefs; ICT

INTRODUCTION

Technology has changed rapidly in this 21st century. As many publications show, information and communication technology (ICT) is the most significant advancement in every human life element. Online shopping platforms are the best example of our daily life platform that is used by millions of people (Sharma, 2021). In fact, in education, it is seen as a reason for the shift in how students learn. The ICT has changed the new teaching paradigm. It was introduced to assist instructors and students in teaching and learning. It gives opportunities for teachers and students to enhance collaboration, interaction, and participation in the classroom, as well as facilitates the creation of

constructive learning environments (Chen, 2011). The implementation of ICT in the learning process can be done through every day digital media and resources, such as video, audio, PowerPoint presentations, and others. Moreover, teachers may use the internet to find various teaching resources to meet the requirements of their pupils, as the internet allows them to obtain whatever information they need.

Beliefs are the guiding principles that provide direction and meaning in life (Chekhov, 2009). A belief is a set of extensive narrations that humans hold that influence how they behave. In teaching and learning activities teacher belief is an influential factor in successfully operating teaching and learning activities. Beliefs are crucial to understanding how teachers shape their work and vital to understanding their teaching approaches and classroom decisions.

Despite evidence of a link between attitudes about the use of technology and its implementation, believing in technology does not guarantee its usage in classrooms. Research has highlighted a mismatch between teachers stated pedagogical ideas and their actual instructional use of technology (Judson, 2006; Levin & Wadmany, 2005). This discrepancy appears to stem from external constraints, such as limited access to online resources, pre-determined curricula, or insufficient professional training (Liu, H., Lin, C. H., & Zhang, D., 2017). Based on this explanation, this study investigates teachers' beliefs about the use of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT), how these beliefs impact the use of ICT in the classroom, and the gap between teachers' beliefs and their practices in schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has become an important area of research, particularly in secondary education. Teachers' beliefs and practices significantly influence how ICT is utilized in classrooms. Numerous studies have explored this relationship, emphasizing the complexity of aligning beliefs with instructional practices.

According to Tondeur et al. (2016), teachers' beliefs about ICT play a critical role in shaping their decisions to adopt technology in teaching. These beliefs are often influenced by their previous experiences, training, and perceptions of the usefulness of ICT. However, a gap frequently exists between what teachers believe about the benefits of ICT and how they implement it in practice. This discrepancy is often attributed to external barriers, such as limited access to technological resources and inadequate professional development opportunities.

Similarly, Liu, Lin, and Zhang (2017) found that while many teachers recognize the potential of ICT to enhance language learning, their classroom practices are constrained by institutional factors, including curriculum requirements and a lack of technical support. Their study, conducted in secondary schools, revealed that

even teachers with positive attitudes toward ICT faced challenges in integrating technology effectively into their lesson plans.

In the context of ELT, ICT tools have been shown to improve student engagement and learning outcomes when implemented effectively. For example, a study by Rahimi and Pourshahbaz (2019) demonstrated that English teachers who incorporated digital platforms, such as interactive learning apps, reported increased student participation and motivation. However, the study also highlighted that not all teachers were confident in using these tools, pointing to a need for more comprehensive training programs.

Additionally, research by Al-Ghamdi and Al-Hattami (2021) emphasized the importance of teacher readiness in ICT integration. Their study in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia revealed that teachers with a strong belief in their technological competence were more likely to use ICT tools regularly. Conversely, those who lacked confidence were hesitant to adopt new technologies, even when they acknowledged their potential benefits.

Despite these positive findings, the practical integration of ICT in ELT is still limited in many contexts. Hennessy et al. (2022) identified time constraints, lack of infrastructure, and insufficient technical support as major barriers preventing teachers from fully utilizing ICT in their teaching. These challenges are particularly pronounced in developing countries, where access to resources remains a significant issue.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research applied a qualitative research method. Cresswell (2012) defines qualitative research as a method used to investigate and comprehend the significance that individuals or groups assign to a social human problem. Johnson and Christensen (2007) describe qualitative research as being based on collecting qualitative data. A qualitative method was chosen to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and classroom practices regarding the use of ICT in English language teaching. The study was conducted in three state junior high schools and one private school in the Sidareja district, Cilacap. The participants consisted of four non-native English teachers with Bachelor of English Education degrees who integrate ICT tools such as smartphones, computer devices, and web applications into their teaching. These teachers also have a minimum of five years of teaching experience in the Sidareja district. The schools were chosen due to the researcher's familiarity with the locality and the accessibility of the area, which made it easier to establish relationships with the participants and facilitated the data collection process. According to Singleton (1993), the ideal research environment is one that is connected to the researcher's interest, is easily accessible, and allows for the development of rapport with respondents.

Instrument and Procedures

To gather qualitative data, this research employed interviews and classroom observations, supported by field notes and video recordings. The interview was conducted once with each of the four participants before classroom observations. Each interview session lasted approximately 15 minutes, and the interviews were recorded using the researcher's smartphone. Classroom observations were carried out to collect data on how ICT was used in English classrooms. These observations focused on identifying the ICT tools used, their modes of application, student activities, and the challenges encountered in implementing ICT. Each observation session lasted between 40 and 60 minutes, depending on the teacher's schedule and convenience. The researcher used an observation checklist to systematically gather data.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involves examining qualitative data to identify patterns of meaning and uncover themes. Meanwhile, the classroom observation data were analyzed to understand how teachers integrated and utilized technology in their teaching practices. The researcher followed Creswell's (2009) procedures for analyzing observation data, which involved collecting and reviewing the observation checklists, reading and analyzing the completed observation sheets to identify relevant data on teachers' ICT integration practices, and drawing conclusions and making recommendations based on the analysis. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher employed methodological triangulation by combining the results of the interviews and classroom observations. The findings from both methods were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of ICT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class.

RESULT AND DISUSSION

Teachers' Beliefs on the Use of ICT in ELT

Teachers' beliefs about ICT in ELT significantly influence their classroom practices and the successful integration of technology. Positive beliefs lead to effective use of digital tools, enhancing student engagement and learning. Conversely, negative beliefs can result in resistance and underutilization of technology, often due to perceived barriers like inadequate training and resources. Effective professional development and continuous support are crucial to align teachers' beliefs with best practices, improving the quality of language education and preparing students for a digital world.

Data was collected through interviews to reveal teachers' beliefs about the use of ICT in English Language Teaching. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes and was conducted with four teachers following classroom observations.

Based on the interview results, two factors encourage teachers to integrate ICT into their teaching and learning activities:

1. The Importance of Technology

The researcher interviewed four teachers about using technology in the classroom, and each emphasizes its importance. T1 mentioned that:
> *"In my opinion, it is very important. In this era, technology is highly needed in our activity. It is very close to the students, especially smartphones."*
> (T1)

T2 also shared the same view:
> *"I think it is very important to use technology because we need to keep pace with the development of times. Our students are very close with technology like smartphones. They also have the ability to use Canva and video editing, so we need to use this as an opportunity to follow their era and use it in the classroom."*
> (T2)

T3 and T4 had the same ideas mentioned previously by T1 and T2. T3 said:
> *"For me, it is important and helpful. It makes study easier. They bring smartphones to find new vocabulary online rather than using dictionaries. Using PPT makes the students focus on the screen, not only the teacher."*
> (T3)

T4 explained:
> *"Yes, it is much needed. It helps me a lot. It also makes the students focus on the screen. Moreover, the students are more interested in the lesson. It attracts their attention."*
> (T4)

The study reveals a strong belief in the significance of technology in learning activities. The use of ICT in the classroom was a demand in this twenty-first era. T2 said that "I think it is very important to use technology because we need to keep pace with the development of times". Research supports these views emphasized that technology is essential and its presence is crucial in the era of 5.0 (Gill et all, 2020). Technology is undeniably captivating and enjoyable to use, making it an essential and inseparable aspect for human lives. Furthermore, the existence of technology is supported various human activities in social economic, cultural and in terms of education (Liu et al., 2020). T1 said that "technology is highly needed in our activity. It is very close to the students, especially smartphone." The application of ICT in education has the potential to significantly enhance the quality of educational opportunities for all. When linked with education, technology in education involves using tools, software, hardware and methods to enhance

learning and teaching (Scherer et al, 2019). Utilizing different types of technology in the classroom, T1 and T2 used television, LCD projector; PPT can make the students more interesting in learning. The use of media applications like Canva, and video editing like what T2 and T3 did had created students who were actively engaged with learning objectives. Those reasons showed how important technology integration is in the classroom in enhancing the students' learning.

2. The Benefits of Using ICT

Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education offers numerous advantages, significantly enhancing the teaching and learning process. This subsection explores the various benefits of using ICT, highlighting how it can improve student engagement, facilitate personalized learning, and foster a more interactive and dynamic classroom environment.

The teachers acknowledged the benefit of technology integration in enhancing classroom engagement. Technology increased students' focus, interest and participation in classroom activities. T1, T2 and T4 shared the same idea about the benefit of technology. It can be seen from their statements. T1 explained that:

"My students and I feel something is missing because if we just use worksheets, it isn't interesting anymore. Technology attracts the students' attention and curiosity rather than only using worksheets. Bring the laptop to the classroom and play videos makes them focus on the screen and pay attention to the material given."
(T1)

T2 and T4 said that:
"For the students, it makes them focus to the PPT, pictures or video because it is interesting for them rather than to listen to the teacher's voice."
(T2)

"It makes the students focus on the screen. Moreover, the students are more interested in the lesson. It attracts their attention."
(T4)

T2 observed, "For the students, it makes them focus on the PPT, pictures, or video because it is interesting for them rather than to listen to the teacher's voice." This suggests that visual aids capture students' attention more effectively than traditional lecture methods. A research has found that the students have changed radically and the methods of teaching also need to be changed. The best way is to combine the traditional methods with the alternative one (Prenskey, 2001). Integrating technology can be one of the alternatives in teaching and learning process. Similarly, T4 noted, "It makes the students focus on the screen. Moreover, the students are more interested in the lesson. It attracts their attention." Both statements emphasize the role of visual stimuli in maintaining student interest and directing their focus toward the lesson content. In line with the finding of the

research that well prepared slides could increase students' motivation, get their attention and brought clarification of the situation presented (Patesan, et al, 2018). T1, T2, and T4 collectively highlighted that using screens and multimedia in the classroom successfully draws students' attention. They agreed that incorporating videos and pictures into lessons makes the material more engaging, thereby improving students' focus, interest and understanding in the subject matter. Technology can display learning videos that will make it easier for students to understand concepts that are difficult to understand because they can be watched until the students really understand (Bao, et al, 2019). This underscores the potential of ICT to transform traditional teaching methods and create a more interactive and captivating learning environment. Meanwhile, T3 showed her thought:

"In my opinion, under the teacher's guidance, technology will be very useful and helpful for students."

(T3)

The statements from T3 underscore the essential role of teacher guidance in maximizing the educational benefits of technology. Research supports this perspective, highlighting that effective integration of ICT in education requires more than just access to technology; it necessitates strategic implementation under the guidance of knowledgeable educators (OECD, 2015). According to the OECD (2015), when teachers actively guide the use of ICT, they can adapt technological resources to meet students' individual learning needs. This personalized approach not only enhances student engagement but also promotes deeper understanding and retention of educational content (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). Moreover, studies emphasize that teacher guidance ensures technology is used purposefully, minimizing potential distractions and maintaining focus on learning objectives (Bebell & Kay, 2010). This structured approach fosters an environment where students can effectively explore and interact with digital tools while receiving the necessary instructional support (Voogt et al., 2013). In conclusion, T3's statements align with current educational research, emphasizing that the effective integration of ICT relies heavily on teachers' ability to guide and orchestrate its use to enhance learning outcomes.

The teachers also agreed that the technology connected with the students. Technology is essential in students' daily lives, influencing what they do outside the classroom. Bringing technology like hand phones changed the way we teach and connect with the students in the school. T1 said that:

"I asked them to bring hand phones today. I usually do that to help the students to find new vocabulary. They saw their happy faces when they knew they would study using hand phones. It really helps them to find new vocabulary using an online dictionary."

(T1)

The statement by T1 highlights the positive impact of integrating smartphones into the classroom environment for educational purposes. By encouraging students to use their smartphones to access online dictionaries for vocabulary acquisition, T1 observed their enthusiastic response. This approach enhances student engagement and leverages technology to facilitate active learning. Research supports the idea that mobile devices can enhance students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning when used purposefully under teacher guidance. Technology has been hailed as a useful tool to aid in improving students' learning outcomes, engagement and critical thinking skills (Davis, 2019). Moreover, utilizing smartphones for educational activities such as vocabulary acquisition aligns with current academic trends, emphasizing the integration of digital tools to personalize and enrich learning experiences. Utilizing technology integration in education has become essential in today's digital world to create a dynamic learning environment that meets the different needs of students (Abulibdeh et al., 2024).

The Impacts of Teachers' Beliefs in the Classroom

Integrating information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching is demonstrated in the classroom observations of T1, T2, T3, and T4, highlighting both advantages and disadvantages. Each teacher used various tools, including laptops, LCD projectors, PPT presentations, videos, and smartphones. The cognitive theory of multimedia learning was used to support using visuals, videos, and interactive activities to engage students. Digital literacy and personalized learning were made more accessible by using smartphones for educational purposes. However, application anxiety and technical issues brought attention to the need for increased technological readiness and proficiency. Early problems with student participation indicated the need for engagement and confidence-building techniques. Excessive dependence on technology suggests that teaching strategies should be varied, and backup plans should be in place. Although ICT was commendable, there is room for improvement in planning, initial engagement, balanced teaching methods, and instructional design.

The Gap between the Beliefs and the Practices

Teachers believe about the potential benefits of using technology in the classroom, such as enhanced student engagement, personalized learning, and improved academic outcomes. However, these beliefs do not always translate into consistent and effective technology use in teaching practices. The teacher participants acknowledged the significance of integrating technology into their language classrooms. However, they encountered numerous challenges when translating these beliefs into practice due to some factors. The interviews and classroom observations revealed several barriers hindering effective implementation, notably insufficient facilities and a lack of professional development opportunities. These external factors contribute to a noticeable gap between the teachers' aspirations to leverage technology for enhanced learning experiences and their practical limitations in achieving these goals within their educational contexts. Addressing

these barriers is essential to narrowing this gap and fostering more effective technology integration in language teaching practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and discussions, several conclusions can be drawn. First, teachers believe that integrating ICT into their classrooms is essential. Their perspectives reveal a strong consensus that incorporating technology significantly enhances student engagement and concentration. The use of various digital resources meets students at their current level of technological proficiency and equips them with critical skills to operate in an increasingly digital world. This highlights the growing importance of technology proficiency in modern education. Second, classroom observations highlight the integration of ICT in teaching, showcasing both its advantages and challenges. Teachers employed various tools, such as laptops, LCD projectors, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and smartphones, to facilitate learning. The use of smartphones for educational purposes, in particular, supported the development of digital literacy and personalized learning experiences for students. Third, while teachers hold optimistic views about the potential benefits of incorporating technology into classrooms, these beliefs do not always translate into consistent and effective instructional practices. Several factors, such as insufficient facilities and limited professional development opportunities, hinder the effective implementation of ICT in teaching.

These challenges create a gap between teachers' intentions to use technology to enhance learning and the practical limitations they face. To address these issues, educational institutions must prioritize the integration of technology into the curriculum to enhance language learning. Developing technology-assisted learning modules can provide students with diverse language learning experiences. Additionally, teacher training programs should focus on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. Ensuring equitable access to technology, stable internet connectivity, and adequate facilities is also crucial. These challenges can be addressed through collaborative efforts among local governments, schools, and the community to support and sustain the implementation of technology-based learning.

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