EXPLORING TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON ICT INTEGRATION FOR ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has grown significantly, yet in-service secondary teacher's qualitative, lived experiences regarding its impact on student motivation remain underviewed. This narrative inquiry study explores a senior secondary school EFL teacher's perspectives on integrating ICT to foster student learning motivation. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with an experienced EFL teacher at a laboratory high school in Malang, Indonesia, across past, present, and future temporal dimensions, followed by thematic analysis. The findings reveal four key themes: (1) ICT acts as a transformative pedagogical bridge, shifting instruction from paper-based, teacher-centered routines to dynamic, student-centered learning; (2) ICT enhances both intrinsic motivation (by fostering enjoyment, curiosity, and psychological comfort) and extrinsic motivation (through structured diagnostic feedback, post-tests, and reduced administrative burden); (3) ICT practices evolve from initial gamification as icebreakers to holistic, teacherdeveloped custom applications across diagnosis, scaffolding, and assessment; and (4) teachers navigate technical and pedagogical challenges through continuous professional development in teacher communities (MGMP), peer collaboration, and reflective, humble mindsets. The study underscores that technology itself does not inherently motivate learners; rather, its motivational efficacy relies on the teacher's Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), reflective adaptation, and strategic alignment with pedagogical goals.

Keywords: EFL students; ICT integration; students' motivation; teacher perspective; narrative inquiry; TPACK

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has profoundly impacted the educational landscape, creating interactive, flexible, and student-centered environments (Takamine, 2022). In developing nations, ICT provides pivotal opportunities to modernize educational practices, broaden access to rich authentic materials, and support innovative pedagogical approaches (Halimah et al., 2026). Integrating educational software, digital media, online quizzes, and language applications allows the learning process to become more accessible and engaging (Jamilah et al., 2024). Similarly, Pramuditya et al. (2025) emphasized that digital media integration supports authentic language exposure and student engagement, yet teachers frequently navigate infrastructural constraints through adaptive teaching strategies.

Motivation serves as a fundamental determinant of language learning success, influencing students' willingness, effort, and persistence. Broadly categorized into intrinsic motivation (driven by personal interest, curiosity, and self-fulfillment) and extrinsic motivation (driven by grades, rewards, and external recognition) (Bukhari et al., 2024), student motivation is heavily mediated by the instructional tools and strategies teachers employ. ICT can bolster intrinsic motivation by rendering learning enjoyable and autonomous, while simultaneously reinforcing extrinsic motivation through visible progress, badges, and immediate feedback (David & Weinstein, 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, effective technology integration is rooted in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). TPACK emphasizes the dynamic intersection of Technological Knowledge (TK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Content Knowledge (CK). In EFL contexts, teachers must strategically align ICT resources with language learning targets while addressing learners' affective and cognitive needs (Abedi, 2024; Jamilah et al., 2024). However, teachers face first-order (external) barriers such as infrastructure limitations, as well as second-order (internal) barriers such as pedagogical anxiety and traditional beliefs (Ertmer, 1999).

Although numerous empirical studies support the positive correlation between ICT usage and language learning outcomes, existing literature exhibits notable limitations. Most previous studies rely heavily on quantitative student survey data, concentrating on technical usage or pre-service teachers' perspectives (Dinçer, 2024; Takamine, 2022). Few qualitative studies explore the internal decision-making processes, lived experiences, and professional reflections of experienced, in-service secondary school EFL teachers as they navigate ICT implementation in daily practice.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a narrative inquiry design to explore how a senior secondary school EFL teacher perceives and experiences the integration of ICT to enhance student motivation. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do secondary school EFL teachers perceive the integration of ICT in enhancing students' learning motivation?
2. How do EFL teachers view the influence of ICT on students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning?
3. What types of ICT tools do EFL teachers commonly use to engage and motivate students in the classroom?
4. What challenges do EFL teachers encounter, and what strategies are utilized when integrating ICT to support student motivation?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a narrative inquiry approach to explore the lived experiences of a secondary school English teacher in integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance EFL students' motivation. Narrative inquiry was chosen because it enables researchers to understand individuals' experiences and professional practices through the stories they construct over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The study was conducted at SMA Laboratorium UM, a laboratory secondary school affiliated with Universitas Negeri Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The participant was a senior English teacher with 26 years of teaching experience. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English Education, a professional teaching certificate, and a Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) certification. His extensive teaching experience, academic publications, and involvement in developing digital learning applications provided valuable insights into ICT integration in English language teaching.

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in Indonesian to encourage open communication and detailed responses. The interview protocol was validated by an expert prior to data collection to ensure its relevance and clarity. Each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes and explored the participant's experiences, perceptions, and reflections on ICT integration across different stages of his teaching career. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized to protect the participant's identity.

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which involved familiarizing with the transcripts, generating initial codes, identifying potential themes, reviewing and refining the themes, defining and naming the final themes, and producing the narrative report. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, member checking was conducted by inviting the participant

to review the interview transcripts and confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. In addition, data triangulation was achieved through interviews conducted at different stages of the study. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and informing the participant of the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequences (Creswell, 2013).

FINDINGS

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in secondary EFL instruction reflects a significant shift from conventional paper-based teaching toward more dynamic and student-centered learning practices. Based on the teacher's narrative, teaching in the early years relied heavily on printed materials and manual classroom activities, with learning resources limited to imported textbooks. As a result, English was often perceived by students as a difficult academic subject rather than a language for authentic communication. A turning point occurred when the teacher participated in an international technology certification program, which expanded his understanding of how digital technology could be used to overcome persistent instructional challenges. Since then, ICT has been viewed not simply as an additional classroom resource but as a pedagogical bridge that connects learning objectives with students' diverse needs. This perspective is consistent with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes that technology becomes meaningful when it is integrated with appropriate pedagogical strategies and content knowledge (Abedi, 2024; Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The teacher further explained that conventional paper-based activities often reduced students' interest in learning, whereas technology-supported instruction encouraged greater participation and allowed learning activities to accommodate different levels of student motivation. Nevertheless, he also emphasized that technology should be implemented thoughtfully through careful lesson planning. Without proper preparation, ICT integration may become ineffective because technical issues, such as unstable internet connections or unexpected system updates, can disrupt classroom instruction and reduce valuable learning time (David & Weinstein, 2024).

ICT integration also played an important role in strengthening both intrinsic and extrinsic student motivation. To foster intrinsic motivation, the teacher utilized adaptive digital resources, such as Extensive Reading Central, which enabled students to access reading materials that matched their individual proficiency levels. This personalized learning environment reduced students' anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of their peers while allowing them to progress at their own pace. As a result, students gradually developed greater confidence, psychological comfort, and genuine interest in learning English. These findings support Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that technology can enhance intrinsic motivation by promoting learner autonomy, perceived competence, and opportunities for personal growth (Asnas et al., 2023; Heriyawati et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024). In terms of extrinsic motivation, digital assessment tools simplified classroom management by automating diagnostic tests, post-tests, and grading processes. The teacher explained that manual assessment had previously required considerable time and effort, limiting opportunities to focus on teaching itself. Through automated assessment platforms, students received clear and transparent feedback on their learning progress, while the teacher was able to monitor student achievement more efficiently and use lesson journals and reflective evaluations to improve subsequent instructional planning (Bukhari et al., 2024; Jamilah et al., 2024).

The teacher's selection and use of ICT tools also developed progressively over time through three distinct stages, beginning with simple gamified applications and eventually leading to the creation of customized educational software. Initially, digital applications were used mainly as icebreaking activities to reduce students' mental fatigue after intensive grammar lessons and to create a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. As the teacher's technological competence continued to grow, ICT became integrated into every stage of the instructional process, including diagnostic

assessment, lesson delivery, scaffolding, and evaluation. Over time, the teacher recognized that many commercially available applications did not fully address the specific characteristics and learning needs of his students. This realization encouraged him to develop a customized classroom application while continuing to use and update relevant external digital platforms. According to the teacher, an effective ICT application should be flexible, student-oriented, and capable of supporting the entire learning process, from identifying students' initial understanding to conducting final assessments. This progression from relying on existing applications to designing teacher-created digital tools illustrates an advanced level of TPACK as well as strong teacher agency, where technology is selected and developed based on the unique needs of the local classroom context rather than simply following technological trends (Pramuditya et al., 2025; Wangi et al., 2018; Winícius et al., 2023).

Despite these positive developments, the teacher acknowledged that integrating ICT into classroom practice requires continuous adaptation, professional collaboration, and reflective practice. Having started his teaching career during a period when traditional instructional approaches were still dominant, he initially experienced difficulties due to limited exposure to educational technology. At present, the greatest challenge lies in the rapid development of digital technologies, which requires teachers to continuously update their knowledge while simultaneously managing demanding teaching responsibilities. To overcome these challenges, the teacher actively participates in professional learning communities, including the English Teachers Association (MGMP), and regularly attends workshops on educational technology, such as serious game development using Roblox. He also maintains a reflective approach to his professional development by embracing the belief that educators should never become intellectually complacent. This perspective encourages him to balance the use of innovative digital technologies with fundamental educational values, including honesty, character development, and justice. Such findings indicate that successful ICT integration depends not only on technological competence but also on continuous professional learning, collaboration with colleagues, and the alignment of technology with meaningful pedagogical objectives (Ertmer, 1999; Halimah et al., 2026; Yunus et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This study explored how ICT integration influences EFL students' motivation from the perspective of an experienced secondary school teacher through a narrative inquiry approach. The findings indicate that ICT can support meaningful changes in English language teaching by moving classroom practices beyond conventional instruction that relies primarily on printed materials toward more interactive learning environments where students take an active role in the learning process. When implemented with clear pedagogical purposes, digital technologies encouraged students' intrinsic motivation by promoting learner autonomy, strengthening self efficacy, and creating a supportive learning environment through digital platforms that allowed students to progress at their own pace. ICT also contributed to students' extrinsic motivation by improving assessment practices, providing timely diagnostic feedback, and reducing the administrative workload associated with classroom evaluation.

The findings further suggest that the effectiveness of ICT integration depends not only on the availability of technology but also on teachers' ability to integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge within their classroom practice. Viewed through the TPACK framework, the challenges and strategies associated with integrating ICT to support student motivation in the EFL classroom illustrate how teachers integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge to enchance learning experiences. sAlthough the teacher encountered challenges, including rapid technological change and limited opportunities to develop digital competencies during the early stages of his career, these barriers were addressed through continuous professional learning, reflective practice, and collaboration with colleagues in professional learning communities such as MGMP.

The findings also provide several practical implications for educational stakeholders. EFL teachers should adopt ICT based on pedagogical objectives rather than the appeal of new technologies and integrate digital tools across different stages of instruction, including diagnosis, scaffolding, and assessment. School leaders and policymakers should strengthen technological infrastructure while providing continuous professional development that is closely connected to teachers' classroom practices. Future research is encouraged to involve participants from a wider range of educational contexts or employ mixed methods approaches to develop a more comprehensive understanding of digital tools created by teachers and their long term contribution to students' language learning outcomes.

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