

Challenges and Opportunities faced by ESL Learners during using Interactive Teaching Tools (ITTs)



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Abstract: *This study investigates the challenges and opportunities encountered by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in acquiring oral proficiency, focusing on the integration of Interactive Teaching Tools (ITTs) in Pakistani higher education. The research implements a descriptive methodology, involving a sample of 240 participants comprising 200 undergraduate learners (100 males and 100 females) selected randomly from private and government universities in Multan and Bahawalpur, alongside 40 teachers (20 males and 20 females) chosen through convenient sampling. Data collection employed two primary tools: a structured questionnaire and a consultative workshop. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, included both Likert-scale items and open-ended questions to capture comprehensive insights from learners and educators regarding ITTs' effectiveness. The consultative workshop, conducted via Zoom, equipped teachers with practical knowledge about ITTs like Kahoot, Google Classroom, and Nearpod, assessing their adoption and impact on spoken English instruction. The findings highlight substantial challenges, including limited digital literacy, insufficient access to technology in rural areas, and socio-cultural attitudes toward English learning. Equally, the study highlights opportunities such as enhanced learner engagement, improved fluency, and innovative pedagogical practices. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the potential of ITTs, educators can foster more effective, interactive, and inclusive language learning environments. This research contributes to the discourse on technology-enhanced language education, offering actionable recommendations for stakeholders to optimize ITTs for advancing oral proficiency in ESL learners.*

Keywords: Interactive Teaching Tools, English as Second Language, Zoom, Kahoot, Google Classroom, Nearpod, Oral Proficiency

Introduction

The incorporation of technology tools into Spoken English instruction represents a dynamic and transformative approach that significantly enriches language learning experiences. In the contemporary digital landscape, a myriad of tools, including advanced speech recognition software, interactive language learning applications, and online platforms, have

emerged as innovative solutions to elevate oral communication skills. This paradigm shift not only accommodates a wide array of learning styles but also delivers instantaneous feedback, fostering an environment that is both interactive and captivating.

The integration of these cutting-edge technological resources is in perfect harmony with the continuously evolving field of language

education. It empowers educators to customize lessons according to the unique needs of individual learners, thus amplifying the efficacy of spoken English instruction. This approach is substantiated by a wealth of scholarly works on language acquisition, technology-enhanced language learning, and specific studies showcasing the efficacy of tools designed for spoken English improvement (Smith, 2020; Jones et al., 2018; Brown & Lee, 2019). Innovation has drastically changed the era of technology where use of internet and interactive tools plays a crucial role in learning a language.

1.1 Background of the Study

In Pakistan, teachers and learners face various challenges including access to technology in rural areas, digital illiteracy. Socio culture towards learning English. Despite these obstacles there are different leverages that can help ESL learners to fluently speak English, with the widespread use of mobile phones and a number of different internet offers can help the smooth access of the internet. (Rehman et al., 2020). By understanding the challenges and leveraging the opportunities associated with interactive digital tools, educators in Pakistan can excel the ESL learners in proficiency of English, ultimately fostering more effective and independent English speakers.

Aydin (2007) highlights the benefits of using the Internet as a platform for language learning, emphasizing its ability to create real communication settings, increase student participation, and encourage higher-order thinking. Moreover, research by Szpara and Ahmad (2007) suggests that the Internet can reduce cognitive load for ELLs, making learning more accessible and interactive. This finding underscores the importance of leveraging technology to support language acquisition, especially for young learners who may struggle with traditional classroom instruction methods. In Pakistan integration of the digital tools is a bit challenging because of the socio-cultural diversity where the areas differ in terms of rural and urban background; despite that the educational landscape of Pakistan suffers in terms of many resources (Farooq et al., 2012).

The successful implementation of the digital tools is mandatory, the teachers must be digitally literate (Shamim, 2008) in order to implement the digital tools in the classroom to maximize the literacy of the practitioners. It's important to introduce professional development programs to be second to none in the field of technology. In Pakistan ongoing teachers training sessions are essential to maximize the use of digital tools in the classroom as digitally illiterate can cause lack of motivation among them to use ITTs in classroom. (Ali, 2011).

1.2 Research Questions

1. What was the impact of interactive teaching tools used by ESL learners to learn Spoken English?
2. What were the difficulties faced by ESL learners during learning language through ITTs?
3. What were the challenges faced by ESL teachers in order to teach Spoken English through the ITTs?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Teaching English by using ITTs can be crucial for the teachers if they are illiterate about the technology. This study was significant for them to come out of the traditional teaching methods and implementing the strategies based on the technologies. This study helped understand the challenges and opportunities faced by ESL learners using interactive digital tools for developing speaking proficiency. Insights of the study informed the development of innovative learning tools and interactive teaching methodologies that catered to the needs of ESL learners. Furthermore, by addressing the challenges and opportunities, educators supported better learners achieving proficiency in speaking that led to an improved educational and professional outcome. The study highlighted the need for equitable access to technology resources, ensuring all learners get the benefit of the digital interactive tools. The findings inspired innovations in language and teaching methodologies, learners can engage themselves in more interesting activities and maximize their learning. Overall, this study was crucial for advancing the field of ESL education,

helping to overcome barriers and unlock the full potential of interactive teaching tools in

1.4 Methodological Framework

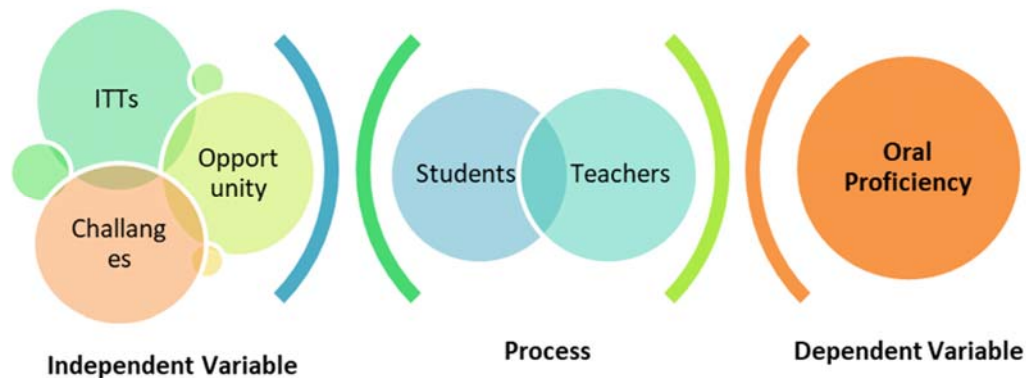


Figure 1. Methodological Framework

2. Literature Review

1.2 Use of Internet for Language Learning

Using internet for learning any language has become a part of life be it an educational sector, office or any business however, challenges and opportunities to use internet in this regard is very crucial to get desired results. As the world is changing drastically, the technology is also changed the perception of everything moreover, in corporation with technology and internet access everything has taken a new step regardless the challenges that we face for ESL learners concerning their English proficiency. On the other hand learning a second language cannot only improve your social cultural issues. Best practices for students who speak English as second language can also benefit all students in the mainstream classroom, including those who may have lower reading abilities, learning disabilities, attention-deficit disorders, or other challenges, which may affect their comprehension and/or production capabilities in the classroom Szpara and Ahmad (2007). Use of internet has changed the world and brought it into a world of technology where every individual uses internet.

2.1.1 Online teaching in Pakistan

Online education has become more popular in Pakistan in recent years, especially since the COVID-19 outbreak. Through programs like the

developing speaking proficiency.

National Curriculum Review and the creation of digital learning tools, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has been instrumental in advancing online education (HEC, 2020). Despite the expansion of online instruction, certain problems continue in the Pakistani setting. These include difficulties linked to infrastructure, digital literacy, and access to reliable internet services. Khan et al. (2021) state that although online education in Pakistan has a lot of potential, removing these obstacles is crucial to maximizing its influence. However, the significance of online education is being acknowledged by Pakistani educational institutions and the government more and more.

2.1.2 Challenges in Implementing Interactive Approaches in Pakistan

Even though interactive teaching resources have many advantages, incorporating them within Pakistan's educational system presents a number of difficulties. The use of digital resources for teaching spoken English is hampered by the lack of dependable internet and technology in many Pakistani rural areas (Jabeen, 2020). Many ESL teachers in Pakistan stick to traditional, lecture-based teaching methods because they lack the necessary training to use interactive resources or communicative approaches (Shamim, 2008). The educational system in Pakistan is still mostly exam-focused, emphasizing written and reading comprehension above spoken proficiency. This reduces the room for creative

pedagogies that put speaking first.

2.2.3 Interactive Teaching Tools in ESL Instruction

The use of interactive teaching tools to increase spoken English proficiency is growing. These resources include language applications, digital platforms, and AI-based solutions. In the world of ESL, apps such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Kahoot! are extensively utilized. These resources use spaced repetition and gamification to keep students interested and boost language acquisition. According to Godwin-Jones (2015), language apps help learners become more motivated and give them the freedom to practice at their own speed, both of which are

advantageous for developing speaking abilities.

Spoken English instruction becomes more dynamic and engaging when teachers include text, audio, and video into their classes with the help of interactive whiteboards and multimedia resources. By offering visual and auditory cues, interactive whiteboards and multimedia resources have been demonstrated to dramatically improve speaking and listening skills in ESL learners (McKnight et al., 2016). Although these resources are only available to well-funded colleges in Pakistan, they have been effectively applied to encourage interactive speaking among students (Shamim & Qureshi, 2019).

Table 1: Previous Studies and Their Review

Study	Focus	Findings
Aydin (2007)	Internet in ESL learning	Promotes real communication, increases participation, and reduces cognitive load
Ali (2011)	Digital literacy in ESL teaching	Teachers need digital training to maximize ITT usage
Farooq et al. (2012)	Digital learning in Pakistan	Highlights lack of resources and rural-urban divide in access to ITTs
Godwin-Jones (2015)	Language learning apps	Apps like Duolingo and Babbel improve engagement and self-paced learning
Jabeen (2020)	ITT impact in rural Pakistan	Limited access to technology hinders ESL learning
Jones et al. (2018)	Online platforms for ESL	Compares effectiveness of Kahoot, Google Classroom, and Nearpod

3. Research Methodology

This study was descriptive in nature. The descriptive research was conducted to examine the phenomenon under study and describe the knowledge or information in perspectives to the participants' observations or experiences. The purpose of the study was to look into the challenges and opportunities faced by ESL learners for oral proficiency of English. In order to conduct this study the researcher focused on conducting a workshop and then preparing questionnaires. An online workshop was conducted for the convenient group of teachers to teach them how the use ITTs to enhance spoken skills of ESL learners furthermore;

questionnaires were prepared for the proportionate number of learners to collect the data. The research design consisted of three main components: a workshop to explain the use of ITTs and to digitally literate them how to use ITTs in their class to enhance oral proficiency skills and how to overcome the challenges. Questionnaires were given to teachers and learners.. The questionnaire will include Liker-scale items and open-ended questions to solicit detailed feedback of students and teachers by using ITTs for spoken English.

Table 2. Population Framework

Respondents	Male	Female	Total
Students	100	100	200
Teachers	20	20	40

3.2 Instrumentation

Questionnaires and consultative workshop was used as data collection instruments. Through Google forms 200 random ESL students were sent link from different private and government universities. Secondly, a convenient group of 40

ESL teachers was first given a workshop on Zoom to gather their knowledge of the Interactive Teaching Tools. Lastly, a separate questionnaire was sent through link in Google Form to the teachers. The observation of the survey was to gather structured information from the participants.

Table 3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

No	Categories	Statements/ Items	Response Scale
1	Perceived Effectiveness	9	5 point Likert Scale
2	Challenges and Limitations	7	5 point Likert Scale
3	Perceived Opportunities	5	5 point Likert Scale

Table 4. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

No	Categories	Statements/ Items	Response Scale
1	Perceived Challenges	10	5 point Likert Scale
2	Challenges and Limitations	5	5 point Likert Scale
3	Perceived Opportunities	7	5 point Likert Scale

3.3 Framework Analysis

Questionnaires were developed on Google Form were distributed through links to teachers and students. A consultative workshop among convenient group of teachers via Zoom was

conducted and after the workshop, teachers were shared with the link of the questionnaire on Google Form.

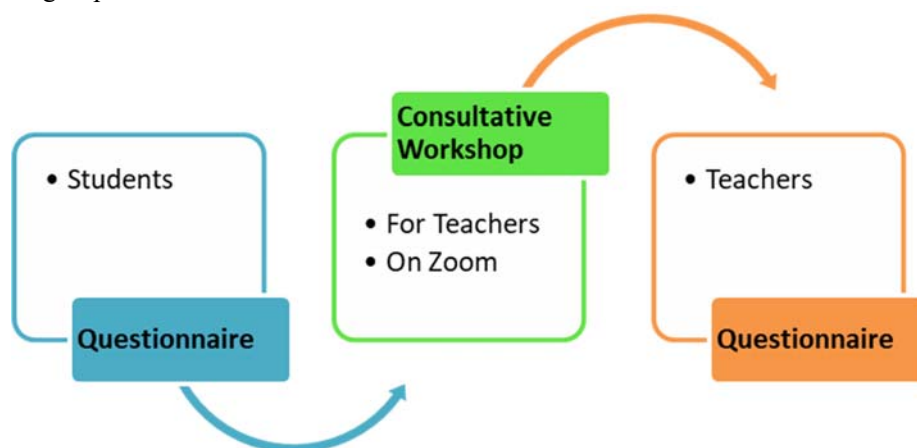


Figure 2. Data Processing Tools

4. Data Analysis

The questionnaires data was displayed in frequency tables to offer a systematic summary of the responses. The study examined the challenges and opportunities faced by ESL learners using ITTs. Data was analyzed

quantitatively through using SPSS software as the questionnaire that were provided to the learners and teachers will be analyzed. Descriptive statistic technique was used to analyze the quantitative data by calculating frequency, percentage, and mean scores.

Table 5: Coding Criteria

Response	Mean Score	Range
Strongly Agree	05	Positive
Agree	04	Positive
Neutral	03	Positive
Disagree	02	Negative
Strongly Agree	01	Negative

Table6: Impact of the ITTs for oral proficiency

Impact of these tools for improving oral proficiency							
Learners		SA 5	A 4	N 3	DA 2	SDA 1	Mean Score
Male	F	19	38	19	13	11	3.41
	%	19	38	19	13	11	
Female	F	22	33	20	14	11	3.41
	%	22	33	20	14	11	
Total	F	41	69	41	27	22	3.4
	%	41	69	41	27	22	

The empirical data mentioned in the above table provides an overview of the key findings regarding the statement. Upon enquiry regarding afore mentioned statement, both male and female learners showed somewhat of the same rating regarding the impact of the ITTs for oral proficiency. The data shows 19% of the male were strongly agree,38% were agree, 19% were neutral,13% were disagree and 11% were

strongly disagree. On the contrary 22% of the female learners were strongly agree,33% were agree,20% were neutral about the rating,14% were strongly disagree and 11% were disagree. The overall mean score 3.4 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “neutral” that these tools have an impact on the ESL learners.

Table 7: Difficulties faced by ESL learners using ITTs

Faced technical difficulties(eg: connectivity issues)							
Learners		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
		5	4	3	2	1	Score
Male	F	35	45	10	10	10	4.15
	%	35	45	10	10	10	
Female	F	35	50	5	5	5	4.05
	%	35	50	5	5	5	
Total	F	70	95	15	15	15	4.1
	%	70	95	15	15	15	

The empirical data mentioned in the above table provides an overview of the key findings regarding the statement. Upon enquiry regarding afore mentioned statement, both male and female learners showed different response of the challenges and limitations using ITTs for oral proficiency. The data shows 35% of the male were strongly agree,45% were agree, 10% were neutral,10% were disagree and 10% were strongly disagree. On the other hand 35% of the

female learners were strongly agree,50% were agree,5% were neutral about the rating,5% were strongly disagree and 5% were disagree. The overall mean score 4.1 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “agreed” that “the learners faced technical issues that can be connectivity issues by using ITTs smoothly in their English classes.

Table 8: Lack of proper guidance

Lack of proper guidance on using ITTs							
Learners		SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
		5	4	3	2	1	Score
Male	F	40	45	5	5	5	4.1
	%	40	45	5	5	5	
Female	F	60	20	10	5	5	3.85
	%	60	20	10	5	5	
Total	F	100	65	15	10	10	4.17
	%	100	65	15	10	10	

The empirical data mentioned in the above table provides an overview of the key findings regarding the statement. Upon enquiry regarding afore mentioned statement, both male and female learners showed different responses for the lack of proper guidance using ITTs. The data shows 40% of the male were strongly agree,45% were agree, 5% were neutral,5% were disagree and 5% were strongly disagree. On the other

hand 60% of the female learners were strongly agree,20% were agree,10% were neutral about the rating,5% were strongly disagree and 5% were disagree. The overall mean score 4.17 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “agreed” that the learners faced lack of proper guidance on using ITTs for oral proficiency.

Table 9: Challenges and Limitations faced by ESL teachers using ITTs

Challenges and limitations					
Statements	SA	A	SW	SDA	D
Connectivity issues disrupt class activities.	10	18	6	3	3
Managing students' participation is challenging.	11	5	14	6	4
I feel unprepared for technical issues during classes.	8	10	11	8	3
Some students lack access to devices, affecting class engagement.	4	13	12	4	7
It is hard to maintain discipline using these tools.	2	14	10	3	11
I face challenges in adapting lesson plans to these tools.	2	14	13	4	7
Do you feel that using these tools increases your workload?	2	6	5	14	13
Do you feel that teaching with these tools adds complexity to lesson planning?	2	4	3	15	16
Language barriers make it difficult to understand tool interfaces.	9	6	13	3	9

The above mentioned data provides insights into teachers' experiences and challenges with integrating ITTs into their classroom practices, highlighting areas of concern related to connectivity, student engagement, workload, and tool usability. A significant majority (28 out of 40 responses, with 10 strongly agreeing and 18 agreeing) perceive connectivity issues as a disruptive factor in class activities, indicating the need for reliable infrastructure to support ITT usage. Managing students' participation is also a notable challenge, with 16 respondents (11 strongly agreeing and 5 agreeing) affirming this difficulty, while 20 (14 somewhat agreeing or disagreeing and 6 strongly disagreeing) show mixed responses, suggesting that the challenge might vary based on class dynamics or specific tools used. Preparedness for technical issues reveals a divide: 18 respondents (8 strongly agreeing and 10 agreeing) admit feeling unprepared, while the remaining responses (22) suggest varying degrees of confidence or disagreement, pointing to inconsistent access to training or resources. Similarly, access to devices for students is a significant barrier, with 17 respondents (4 strongly agreeing and 13

agreeing) identifying it as a factor affecting engagement, whereas 23 respondents somewhat agree or disagree, reflecting diverse contexts among schools.

Discipline challenges are apparent, with 16 respondents (2 strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing) finding it hard to maintain order using ITTs. However, 24 respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, showing that discipline management success might depend on the teacher's familiarity with the tools or class type. Similarly, adapting lesson plans is a moderate concern, with 16 respondents (2 strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing) facing challenges, but a substantial number (24) report fewer difficulties, hinting at the potential for tailored training to alleviate this issue. Interestingly, most teachers (27, with 14 strongly disagreeing and 13 disagreeing) reject the notion that ITTs increase their workload, and 31 (15 strongly disagreeing and 16 disagreeing) do not find them adding significant complexity to lesson planning. This indicates a generally positive attitude toward ITT integration when challenges like connectivity and training are mitigated. Language barriers affect tool usability for 15

respondents, but 25 somewhat disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting that language challenges may not be universal but remain a concern for some teachers.

5. Justification of the Research Questions

5.1 What was the impact of interactive teaching tools used by ESL learners to learn Spoken English?

The findings reveal both male and female learners showed somewhat of the same rating regarding the impact of the ITTs for oral proficiency. The data shows 19% of the male were strongly agree, 38% were agree, 19% were neutral, 13% were disagree and 11% were strongly disagree. On the contrary 22% of the female learners were strongly agree, 33% were agree, 20% were neutral about the rating, 14% were strongly disagree and 11% were disagree. The overall mean score 3.4 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “neutral” that these tools have an impact on the ESL learners.

5.2 What were the difficulties faced by ESL learners during learning language through ITTs?

The key findings regarding the difficulties faced by learners. Upon enquiry both male and female learners showed different response of the challenges and limitations using ITTs for oral proficiency. The data showed 35% of the male were strongly agree, 45% were agree, 10% were neutral, 10% were disagree and 10% were strongly disagree. On the other hand 35% of the female learners were strongly agree, 50% were agree, 5% were neutral about the rating, 5% were strongly disagree and 5% were disagree. The overall mean score 4.1 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “agreed” that “the learners faced technical issues that can be connectivity issues by using ITTs smoothly in their English classes. Furthermore, different responses for the lack of proper guidance using ITTs were analyzed. The data shows 40% of the male were strongly agree, 45% were agree, 5% were neutral, 5% were disagree and 5% were strongly disagree. On the other

hand 60% of the female learners were strongly agree, 20% were agree, 10% were neutral about the rating, 5% were strongly disagree and 5% were disagree. The overall mean score 4.17 demonstrates a clear pattern of the cumulative responses by indicating the majority of the participants were “agreed” that the learners faced lack of proper guidance on using ITTs for oral proficiency.

5.3 What were the challenges faced by ESL teachers in order to teach Spoken English through the ITTs?

The data showed insights into teachers' experiences and challenges with integrating ITTs into their classroom practices, highlighting areas of concern related to connectivity, student engagement, workload, and tool usability. A significant majority (28 out of 40 responses, with 10 strongly agreeing and 18 agreeing) perceive connectivity issues as a disruptive factor in class activities, indicating the need for reliable infrastructure to support ITT usage. Managing students' participation is also a notable challenge, with 16 respondents (11 strongly agreeing and 5 agreeing) affirming this difficulty, while 20 (14 somewhat agreeing or disagreeing and 6 strongly disagreeing) show mixed responses, suggesting that the challenge might vary based on class dynamics or specific tools used. Preparedness for technical issues reveals a divide: 18 respondents (8 strongly agreeing and 10 agreeing) admit feeling unprepared, while the remaining responses (22) suggest varying degrees of confidence or disagreement, pointing to inconsistent access to training or resources. Similarly, access to devices for students is a significant barrier, with 17 respondents (4 strongly agreeing and 13 agreeing) identifying it as a factor affecting engagement, whereas 23 respondents somewhat agree or disagree, reflecting diverse contexts among schools.

Data shows that discipline challenges are apparent, with 16 respondents (2 strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing) finding it hard to maintain order using ITTs. However, 24 respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, showing that discipline management success might depend on the teacher's familiarity with

the tools or class type. Similarly, adapting lesson plans is a moderate concern, with 16 respondents (2 strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing) facing challenges, but a substantial number (24) report fewer difficulties, hinting at the potential for tailored training to alleviate this issue. Interestingly, most teachers (27, with 14 strongly disagreeing and 13 disagreeing) reject the notion that ITTs increase their workload, and 31 (15 strongly disagreeing and 16 disagreeing) do not find them adding significant complexity to lesson planning. This indicates a generally positive attitude toward ITT integration when challenges like connectivity and training are mitigated. Language barriers affect tool usability for 15 respondents, but 25 somewhat disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting that language challenges may not be universal but remain a concern for some teachers.

6. Conclusion

Speaking English for ESL learners is always a difficult task, learning a language and being fluent in it takes time. ITTs helps learners learn the language with different methods. The current study was conducted to examine the challenges and opportunities faced by ESL learners and teachers using ITTs for oral proficiency. The use of ITTs has benefits along with the challenges however, the use of ITTs has always helped the learners and teachers learn a new language easy, with help of different methods, convenience of a variety of strategies has made it simpler to be fluent in second language for ESL learners. The study further revealed that most of the teachers and learners agreed upon the effective use of ITTs and were aware of these tools and their effectiveness. Additionally, trainings play a crucial role in inculcating these tools in classroom. The study also highlighted that a proper training session will not only increase the use of ITTs in classroom but also will make the teachers and the learners digitally literate.

7. Recommendations

1. The research highlighted that integrating ITTs with traditional teaching methods to maximize effectiveness and engagement. There should be Incorporation of AI-

powered feedback and multilingual tool interfaces to accommodate diverse learner needs. At the same time establishing mechanisms for regular feedback from users to refine and optimize ITT functionalities.

2. This study underscores the need for a balanced approach that combines technological innovation with user-centered design and adequate support to ensure the effective use of ITTs in ESL classrooms. Future research may explore longitudinal impacts of ITTs and the scalability of recommended strategies in diverse educational settings.

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