Investigating the Use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in University Students Context

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the students' perceptions in using the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in university context. To collect the data, this survey research used online questionnaire adapted from Habiebie (2021), then analyzed descriptively. The participants of this study are 36 students from English Study Department of Islamic university of Indragiri. They are in second and fourth semester and selected using simple random sampling. The questionnaires were distributed using Google form. The result shows that 35.06% strongly agree, 47.88 agree, 13.01 neutral, only 1.88 disagree and 2.23 strongly disagree about the statements. It means most of the students have positive perception in using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning.

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa dalam menggunakan Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Seluler dalam konteks universitas. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penelitian survei ini menggunakan kuesioner online yang diadaptasi dari Habiebie (2021), kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 36 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Indragiri. Mereka berada pada semester kedua dan keempat dan dipilih menggunakan simple random sampling. Kuesioner disebarkan menggunakan Google form. Hasilnya menunjukkan 35,06% sangat setuju, 47,88 setuju, 13,01 netral, hanya 1,88 tidak setuju, dan 2,23 sangat tidak setuju terhadap pernyataan tersebut. Artinya sebagian besar siswa memiliki persepsi positif dalam menggunakan Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Seluler.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The way individuals communicate, work and study in the 21st century has greatly changed due to mobile devices. Smart phones and tablets will be an effective learning tool both inside and outside classrooms as they become more easy-to-use and powerful (Lin, Chen, & Liu, 2017). Hu & McGrath (2011) mentioned that nowadays mobile devices are taking on a greater prominence in educational institutions. The proliferation of mobile devices is constantly changing the way we interact and learn. People simply can learn anywhere, anytime through mobile devices.

According to Crompton Olszewski, & Bielefeldt, (2016) with regard to implementation, the effective use of mobile devices necessarily requires understanding the scope of the contextual features of educational institutions. Mobile learning tools will undoubtedly become more integrated with mainstream education in the next fifteen years. Conejar & Kim (2014) stated that most students around the world will be

able to bring and utilize their own smart devices since the necessary technology is expected to be more accessible, affordable and connected than it is today. The strength of mobile devices lies in the fact that they can be used for learning purposes. Integrating powerful mobile devices into instruction must also be accompanied by a pedagogical shift in order for students to benefit maximally from their use in the classroom.

Mobile assisted language learning has featured in the evolution foreign language learning. Some studies have demonstrated that mobile learning technologies can be effectively used in increasing and improving students' vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills (Chen & Li, 2010; Hsu, Hwang & Chang, 2013; Ivić & Jakopec, 2016). Other studies have mentioned that mobile assisted learning can offer learners the chance to listen and record their own voice, which is associated with improvement of pronunciation and communication skills (Hwang et al 2014). Moreover, Hwang et al., (2014) argued that mobile assisted language learning provides multimedia interaction opportunities and a collaborative environment where learners can develop and enhance their speaking skills. Multimedia content can be beneficial to students learning as long as the methods of delivery, storage and presentation are adjusted to the capabilities of mobile learning tools and the cognitive capacity of students (Milutinović, et al., 2015). Hence mobile applications for language learning should be designed to support mobile learning methodologies and to cover learning content.

Among students, communication technology and the internet have become multifunctional including mobile phone. It depends on the purposes of the user, either positive or negative. The positive impact for students they can use it for finding learning resources easily including learning language. On the other hand, And the negative impact is addiction. Essau (2008) states that addiction is compulsive behavior about something, dependence on continued use, and lack of control overuse. Smartphone has been providing an access to all-student -related activities of the learning process, increasing interest in learning for learning space is not just one place that launched them to stay connected to the network anytime and anywhere. Also, facilitating students to interact and to communicate with others via smartphone allows them to rise up friends and to get the source-the source of the lesson.

The aim of this study is to investigate students' perception in using smartphone as a medium for learning English and to explore the use of various applications and learning resources that can be accessed by students. This study is expected to give a clear description of how students perceived smartphone or mobile phone in the learning process. By knowing this, the lecturers of English study program have a basic knowledge of their students' attitude in using technology and the application used. English lecturers are also able to determine the topics and learning method according to students' attitude and interest.

2. METHOD

The quantitative approach was adopted in this study. It aimed to examine students' perception on the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English class. There were 36 students in the English Education department of Islamic University of Indragiri Tembilahan as the participants of this study.

In collecting the data, this study used survey method to investigate the research question. Questionnaire were administered to 36 students in the first year and second year. The questionnaire was aimed to get deep understanding about the use of mobile assisted language learning in various classes of English subject. The questionnaire used 5 Likert scales and it was adopted from Habiebie (2021) consisted 9 statements in the form of statements about the use of smartphones in relation to their English learning process inside and outside the classroom.

The data collection procedure was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents with a period of five days. Information about the Google form link was shared through an online group in the form of whatsApp. Researcher did the cross-check and then tabulated the data in tables and diagrams. The questionnaire was made by using Google form then spread out to 36 students.

3. DISCUSSION
a. Students' year of study

From 36 answered questionnaire, initial data is obtained regarding the year of the respondents, namely 56.8% is first year students and the rest 43.2% is in the second year. This frequency is illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Students' year

No	Year	Percentage
1	First	56.8%
2	Second	43.2%

b. Students' Use of Mobile Devices

The questionnaire data found that there were several types of mobile device usage by students in term of increasing their language skill. This usage activity is generally used for social media, entertainment, playing learning games, and other activities such as taking photos, taking notes, and creating group chats in their respective social media, smartphone use in learning English. The findings of this item can be illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. Students' Use of Mobile Devices

No	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Smartphone helps me in my daily activities	43.3%	50%	3.3%	0%	3.3%
2	Smartphone helps me get information	66.7%	27.8%	2.8%	0%	2.8%
3	Smartphone helps me in the speaking process	30.6%	58.3%	8.3%	0%	2.8%
4	Smartphone helps me in the reading process	19.4%	61.1%	11.1%	5.6%	2.8%
5	Smartphone helps me in the listening learning process	27.8%	61.1%	8.3%	0%	2.8%
6	Smartphone helps me in the writing learning process	16.7%	55.6%	25%	0%	2.8%
7	I was able to use a Smartphone for the needs of my college assignments	41.7%	33.3%	22.2%	2.8%	0%
8	I prefer to study independently using a Smartphone	19.4%	44.4%	27.8%	8.3%	0%
9	I use various Social Media platforms to improve my English skills	50%	38.9%	8.3%	0%	2.8%
	Total	**35.06**	**47.88**	**13.01**	**1.88**	**2.23**

From the results of the survey above, it shows that students perceived that smartphones are very helpful tools for their daily activities. 43.3 % strongly agree, 50% agree, 3.3 % neutral, 3.3% strongly% neutral, 3.3% strongly disagree, while no students disagree. 66.7% of students strongly agree that they obtained information via smartphone, 27.8% agree, 3.3% neutral, while 2.8% strongly disagree and 0% disagree. Moreover, in learning four language skills students claimed that the use of smartphone helps them to improve these four skills, respectively as follows; speaking with 30.6% strongly agree, 58.3% agree, 8.3% neutral, 0% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree. Reading with 19.4% strongly agree, 61% agree, 11.1% neutral, 5.6% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree. Listening with 27.8% strongly agree, 61.1% agree, 8.3% neutral 0% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree. The last is writing with 16.7% strongly agree, 55.6% agree, 25% neutral, 0% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree. Mobile phone also helps students doing their assignment. 41.7 strongly agree, 33.35 agree, 22.2% neutral, 2.8% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. Students prefer to study independently using mobile-phone as well. 19.4% strongly agree, 44.4% agree, 27.8% neutral, 8.3% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. The last is the use of social media in improving students' English skills. 50% strongly agree, 38.9% agree, 8.3% neutral, 0% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree.

The use of smartphone among students revealed that it is mostly used for getting information with 66.7% strongly agree with this statement. Moreover, the use of social media to improve English skills is likely to be the second most answered statement. This is evidenced by the fact that 50% of the total respondents strongly agree with this.

In conclusion, most of the students at Islamic University of Indragiri have positive perception in using Mobile Assisted Language Learning. In total, 35.06% of the students claimed strongly agree with the questionnaires. 47.88 % stated agree, 13.01 answered neutral, 1.88 % disagree with the statement and 2.23 chose strongly disagree.

Beatty (2015) mentioned that Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the role of learning English is ideal and effective for students who usually use mobile phones to learn English with learning support application features. Thus, applications have the potential to influence educational programs and merit more attention and deeper research, particularly in the field of language learning, which has become the most popular curriculum area supported by applications.

Jeanjaroonsri (2023) claimed that MALL has several advantages. First, it allows students to access language learning resources more readily and quickly, as well as communicate with others at any time and from any location. Second, the nature of digital technology makes it easier for students to participate in synchronous and/or asynchronous collaborative and individual language learning activities, allowing them to improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities quickly. Third, mobile technology offers a wide range of language-learning materials and techniques that help learners to be more motivated, autonomous, localized (site-specific), and socially involved.

Addiction to this gadget should be responded positively by using it in the learning process (Lin, et al., 2014). Teacher's creativity in integrating the use of mobile phones in the language learning process is considered to increase learning motivation (Buckley and Doyle, 2016)

However, it should be emphasized that the use of smartphones in the classroom is limited to seeking academic information and interactions (Gikas and Grant, 2013). This is, of course, a challenge for the teacher in itself, so there needs to be a mutual agreement and or a separate regulation for it. Information that is so abundant and can be accessed easily using a Smartphone will produce maximum results and increase interest. If the teacher can direct and facilitate properly, it is hoped that the improvement of students' language skills will also be directed and fun.

One of the important things that need to be built from the beginning of the learning process is comfort or a conducive atmosphere. This comfortable atmosphere is formed by a strong mutual desire between teachers and students in creating the environment and conditions for their respective classrooms. Smartphones, which are previously only considered as means of communication, in this era, smartphones have drastically changed their function and use. The massive use of smartphones that is so familiar to students today is inevitable. The positive impact can be seen from various studies that try to implement it or to integrate it in the learning process inside and outside the classroom (Singh and Samah, 2018).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research above, students' perception toward the use of Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is positive. That means the students perceived mobile phone really useful in finding information related to English and increasing their language skills. However, the use of mobile phone in the learning process, especially language learning, deserves to be elaborated with other learning methods or media.

In the era of technological sophistication, the presence of smartphones requires teachers to be more creative in using various applications and content attached to this gadget. The results of this study show how smart phones are tools that enable better language competency in students, but of course with proper and wise supervision and use. This study's results can also be an important illustration for teachers in carrying out the language learning process either face to face or online. Combining various methods and media and integrating with smartphones is unlikely to give students the impression and self-interest in motivating themselves to further improve their English language skills.

This study certainly still has many limitations and the results may differ with different contexts and subjects. However, at least this simple study provides a significant contribution to the subject of this study. Further research is suggested to combine students' and lecturers' perspectives on the use of smartphones in the classroom as well as applications or social media that can be used in the learning process.

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