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Article

Exploring the Use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning in University Students Context

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KEYWORDS

Mobile Assisted Language Learning
 Students' Perception
 Smartphones

A B S T R A C T

One of the technological tools that has experienced significant developments in this era is the smartphone. The use of smartphones among millennials, especially students, is inevitable. Therefore, this study aims to see students' perceptions on using MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) in the English learning process at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The method used was a qualitative design by surveying 55 students majoring in English Education. Of the 55 students, only 50 responded to the questionnaire given. This questionnaire contained questions about students' demographic information as well as students' perceptions about the use of MALL by using five scales, namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The results showed that the respondents consisted of 40 women and ten men. The age of the respondents is between 20-24. All respondents have smartphones, 4 of them have tablets and 46 have laptops. From the results of the survey above, it can be said that students stated that smartphones are very helpful tools for their daily activities. The use of gadgets 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. Current students cannot be separated from smartphones. The result of this study shows how smartphones are tools that enable better language competency in students, but of course, with proper and wise supervision and use.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of learning resources and digital media in this millennial era is inevitable. The conventional learning tradition seems to have begun to be abandoned by the students and especially by the teachers themselves. This rapid change in information technology has also changed the learning paradigm. That learning in the industrial era 4.0 forces students to change their learning styles.

Learning styles that use old technology are replaced with new technologies that are seen as more suitable to the characteristics of today's learners (Golonka, et. al., 2014). Hashim (2018) argues that students in the digital age have unique characters such as understanding technology well, preferring to communicate using social media over direct contact with people, preferring to learn by doing rather than being dictated to do things, more interested in

images, graphics, videos and instantaneous and fast delivery of material.

Learning technology is currently associated with the use of online-based learning media (Van Bruggen, 2005). This means that the location of learning, which is usually in the classroom, can at times be replaced with virtual classes or in other words, students and teachers do not need to be present in class but can rely on the internet to carry out learning (Harasim, 2012; Meskill and Anthony, 2016; Rifiyanti, 2020)

There are at least two learning models that are loved today, namely Electronic Learning (E-Learning) and Learning using communication tools such as Mobile (M-Learning) (Gallego and Topaloglu, 2019; Popovici and Mironov, 2015). These two learning models also have a positive impact on language learning and teaching. Teaching language using these two models provides convenience and effectiveness for its users when compared to conventional learning models (Learning, 2011). However, this change also demands the competence of its users in the learning process. Because no matter how sophisticated the learning tool or resource, even the learning model offered, is not matched by the user's ability to demonstrate it, the learning process and objectives will also not be optimal and can even cause the learning process to fail.

Of the two models of learning, the use of mobile phone in the process of learning becomes a challenge itself, because the use of the tools is so massive and easily among millennial students in this age (Thomas, et. al., 2013). Mobile is one of the most important communication technologies and has become a very important requirement for humans because of the demands of the need. Kinshuk and Lin (2004) and Thomas, et. al. (2013) argue that mobile devices allow learning with "no fixed location or time" and "there is much evidence that mobile technology is going to provide a natural extension for e-learning in the long run (Kinshuk and Lin, 2004; Thomas, et. al., 2013). This technology allows humans to connect with each other from anywhere in the world without being limited by distance, space and time.

Mobile learning can be considered as the next generation of e-learning (Sharples and Pea, 2014). Mobile phones are growing and offering various conveniences and advantages for their users, more specifically for language learners. In its application, smartphones are very useful and help students to explore new knowledge and help the

learning process to be more effective (Gangaiamaran and Pasupathi, 2017). The rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), education is also progressing to have information very easy to get. Because all information in all parts of the world can be found via internet, there are many media that we can find on the internet, one of which is through smartphone devices. Sources of information about learning materials that are easily accessible from the internet can help students explore further and even provide new knowledge. Students' creativity to seek and to learn independently from various sources may facilitate the EFL process in the classroom.

The learning revolution in this modern era in the form of a learning process can be carried out without having to meet face to face in class. Facilities and sources of supporting material are abundant and easily accessible using only a device in the form of a smartphone. Books, research results are open and easily accessible, so that the material does not only stick to one or two references provided by the teacher. From these quotations we may know that the wireless technology (Wireless) is the development of teaching methods that is very helpful, letting users could access information via smartphone whenever and wherever. This can make studying easier, as you can make the most of your time.

Among students, communication technology and the internet have become multifunctional. It depends on what purposes to use it, either positively or negatively. The positive example can make it easier for students to find their study assignments. And the impact of one of the gadgets 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.

This study aims to explore the use of smartphone among students as a medium for learning English and to investigate the use of various applications and learning resources that can be accessed by students. This study is expected to give a clear description of smartphone using in the learning process, thus, the teachers of English have a basic knowledge of their students' capability in using

technology and the application used, thus English teachers also can easily determine the topics and learning method according to students' interest.

METHOD

The quantitative approach was adopted in this study. It aimed to examine students on the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English as a second language (ESL). There were 50 students in the English Education department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo.

In collecting the data, this study uses a survey method to investigate the research question. The researcher designed a questionnaire administered to 50 students. This instrument was aimed to get deep understanding about the use of mobile assisted language learning in various classes of English subject. The questionnaire consisted of several question items in line with the demographic information of respondents, ownership of the type of gadget and also in the form of statements about the use of smartphones in relation to their English learning process inside and outside the classroom.

Data collection technique was a method used by researcher to obtain data needed in this study. The data collection technique used was questionnaire. 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 55 students. From 55 students' questionnaire, only 50 returned.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Gender and Age

Of the 50 returned the results of the questionnaire, initial data is obtained regarding the gender and age of the respondents, namely 40 female students and ten male students. The average age ranges from 20-24 years. This illustrates that Smartphone device users are those of the millennial generation who are indeed engaged in daily use of technology in the form of smartphone. This frequency is illustrated in the following table and diagram:

Table 1. Gender Description

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Women	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Men	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

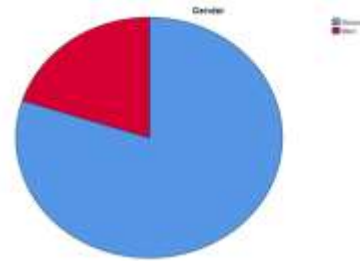
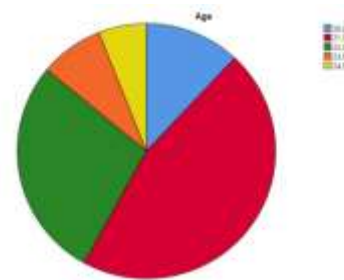


Table 2. Age of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20.0	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	21.0	23	46.0	46.0	58.0
	22.0	14	28.0	28.0	86.0
	23.0	4	8.0	8.0	94.0
	24.0	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total		50	100.0	100.0	



2. Smartphone Ownership

All respondents state that they have a Smartphone; some even stated that they have two Smartphones that are used daily. The number of Smartphone users is 27 respondents or 54% of users. The use of technology in the form of laptops in learning is also mostly done by students, namely 19 people or around 38% of users. There are also 4 tablet users or 8%.

Table 3. Type of Devices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Smartphone	27	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Tablet	4	8.0	8.0	62.0
	Laptop	19	38.0	92.0	92.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

3. Students' Use of Mobile Devices

The questionnaire data found that there were several types of mobile device usage by students. 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 4.

Table 4. Students' Use of Mobile Devices

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Smartphone helps me in my daily activities	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	I use the Smartphone more than 5 hours a day	75%	10%	0%	5%	10%
3	Smartphone helps me get information	80%	10%	5%	5%	0%
4	Smartphone helps me in the speaking process	65%	21%	5%	9%	0%
5	Smartphone helps me in the reading process	89%	8%	3%	0%	0%
6	Smartphone helps me in the listening learning process	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
7	Smartphone helps me in the writing learning process	52%	23%	10%	5%	5%
8	I was able to use a Smartphone for the needs of my college assignments	35%	20%	30%	5%	10%
9	I prefer to study independently using a Smartphone	45%	21%	19%	10%	5%
10	I use various Social Media platforms to improve my English skills	83%	10%	7%	0%	0%
11	Learning English in class is not permitted by	5%	5%	16%	10%	64%

some
lecturers

From the results of the survey above, it can be said that students state that smartphones are very helpful tools for their daily activities. This is confirmed by the duration of Smartphone use where 75% of the total respondents claim to use a Smartphone more than 5 hours a day. 80% of the information obtained via smartphone answered strongly agrees. The four language skills of students state that the use of smartphone helps them to improve these four skills, respectively as follows; speaking with 65%, reading 89%, listening 93% and writing 52%. The interesting thing that is found from the results of this survey is that 30% of students are neutral in terms of making assignments using smartphone and 5% of them disagree, even 10% of the total respondents strongly disagree if smartphone is used to complete college assignments. The use of smartphone among students is revealed that it is mostly used for social media. However, the use of social media is more likely to be used for language learning, for example Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Whatsapp. This is evidenced by the fact that 83% of the total respondents strongly agree with this. The last one is that students strongly disagree if there is a ban on the use of smartphone for the benefit of the learning process in the classroom.

The use of smartphone in this era is increasingly massive. Almost all circles today have a smartphone. The results of a recent research evident this by a social media platform from Canada, Hootsuite, in collaboration with We are Social from the UK regarding Smartphone users around the world including Indonesia. The study, entitled Digital 2020: A comprehensive look at the state of the Internet, mobile devices, social media, and e-commerce. "This shows that there are 271 million Smartphone users connected to the Internet. This is quite surprising because this number exceeds the number of users. Internet reaches 175.4 million inhabitants. This number means twice that of internet users which mean that almost every internet user has two or more Smartphones. It is not impossible that in the future this number will increase.

Based on the data on the number of internet and Smartphone users mentioned above, it can be assumed that there are some kind of dependence on the internet and smartphone. For millennial children who do not have a smartphone, they will be considered tacky and classified as poor. This skewed assumption is what usually forces parents to buy smartphone for their children so they are not isolated in their community.

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; Chuang, 2015; Topirceanu, 2017; Wilbert, et. al., 2016). These findings certainly illustrate that the use of smartphones should have started or should not be prohibited from using them in the learning process in the classroom (Taalas, et. al., 2018). It is not the time for teachers to use conventional media which might be that today's millennial children are unfamiliar and even considered boring.

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).

CONCLUSION

The description of smartphone use among English Education study program students at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo also certainly adds to the massive list of smartphone use among students. Of course, this data is only a small part of the picture that may be used as a basis for planning the learning process of English, especially in the future English education study program.

The use of gadgets 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. Current students cannot be separated from smart phones. The results of this

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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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