

THE USE OF MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING TO PROMOTE LEARNER AUTONOMY IN THE EFL SPEAKING CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in promoting learner autonomy and to reveal the perception of EFL students on the use of MALL in an EFL speaking context. This research was conducted with a descriptive-qualitative approach with a case study as the research design. The researcher collected the data by conducting interviews with open-ended questions via a google form with 15 students of the English Education Department at one of the universities in Bogor. The results show that the students give a positive response to the use of MALL which can help students to become autonomous learners. The use of MALL can also help students to develop their English speaking skills. To promote their ability to speak English, almost all students choose Youtube as their medium to improve their English speaking skills. Based on the results of the research above, it can be concluded that the use of MALL plays an important role in the development of students in learning to speak their English language, therefore it is necessary for students to make efforts to maintain the use of MALL as a medium for learning English, especially their speaking skills.

Keywords: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, promote, learner autonomy, and EFL speaking context

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the era has become more modern due to the support of sophisticated and advanced technology from time to time. Over the last decade, technological advancements have changed the face of language training through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (Zain, 2022). "Mobile-Assisted Language

Learning is described as the use of portable technology in language learning, particularly in a context when the device gives a specific advantage" (Saragih and Jaelani, 2020: 26). Using MALL is easier, more helpful and practical for students, especially in the online learning process.

Mobile phones are now used by students as a means to develop their English skills. The use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, in addition, can promote students to become autonomous learners because they can learn on their own way anywhere and anytime outside the classroom. "One of the platforms used to foster learners' autonomy and motivation is Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)" (Adara, 2020: 614).

The term autonomous learning or learner autonomy has existed since time immemorial, even in the 2013 Curriculum. Students are required to become learning centers. Students must be active, independent, and responsible for their learning success. Benson (2007), states that learner autonomy is a learner's willingness and ability to take responsibility for suggesting, executing, monitoring, and assessing his or her own learning with the teacher's help. Benson (2013) argues that learner autonomy is the ability to direct their own learning in the context of language teaching. Learner autonomy has also become a popular approach in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Based on the statement of Rajendran & Yunus (2021), in the 21st

century, students are required to master 4 English skills which have become a top priority throughout the world.

In learning English, along with the four skills of speaking, reading, listening and writing, speaking is considered the most important skill and remains the most challenging skill for students. Most students feel insecure when they have to speak English in front of many people. There are many worries that students feel when speaking English, such as lack of vocabulary, wrong pronunciation, wrong grammar, less accuracy, and fluency. However, speaking skill must be mastered because it can have a lot of impact on its daily use, one of which is socializing or interacting, especially with foreigners.

In the speaking learning activities, Hwang, et al (2014) states that by using mobile learning devices, students have positive impressions and intentions in utilizing mobile learning devices as motivating tools to practice foreign language abilities. MALL has also been found in previous research to significantly increase pupils' speaking skills (Darmi & Albion, 2017; Kusmaryani et al., 2019).

Currently, there are many learning speaking applications available on mobile devices such as Elsa Speak, Google

translate, U-dictionary, and common applications such as Youtube. Based on the rationale described, this study tries to find out the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in promoting learner autonomy and

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1. Learner Autonomy

The term Learner Autonomy is familiar in education circles. Experts and educators have discussed many terms about learner autonomy in one of their writings. According to Pichugova, et al. (2016) the term (learner autonomy) was first introduced in 1981 by Henri Holec, the father of learner autonomy. According to Holec as cited in Teng (2018) learner autonomy is the ability to control one's own learning. He also identified choosing the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and procedures, monitoring the acquisition procedure, and evaluating what has been learnt as parts of learner autonomy.

Learner autonomy is similar to student-centered learning, where students are required to play an active role in their learning process both inside and outside the classroom. Learner autonomy is then defined by Teng & He (2015) as "a learning environment in which students learn how to set priorities, decide when

to reveal the EFL students' perception on using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in the EFL speaking context.

and where to study, and pace their learning". In the other words, learner autonomy is the ability of students to organize, predict, manage, and to achieve something in the learning process independently.

2.1.1 The Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Learner autonomy is the students who are responsible for their learning. Benson (2001) proposes the following characteristics of autonomous learners:

1. They can see the relationship between what is to be learned, how they will learn, and the resources available as one in which they are in charge or control;
2. They have a real desire to learn the language they are studying; they have an authentic relationship with the language they are learning;
3. They have a robust sense of self that is unlikely to be undermined by any actual translated negative

assessments of themselves or their work;

4. They can step back from what they are doing and reflect upon it to make decisions about what they next need to do and experience;
5. They are aware of change so they have the desire to change it easily adaptable, broad-minded and opportunistic;
6. They can learn that is independent of the educational processes in which they are engaged;
7. They can make sense of the environment they find themselves in strategically;
8. They can negotiate between the strategic meeting of their own needs and responding to the needs and desires of other group members.

2.2 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

MALL is defined by Kukulska Hulme (2013), as the use of mobile technology such as cellphones, tablets, or laptops to support spontaneous and personal modes of language learning due to their portability. Almost everyone uses a mobile device which they have and uses a mobile phone for all their activities, especially to get sources of knowledge

independently. Miangah & Nezarat (2012: 309) assume that "Mobile learning is characterized by its potential for learning to be spontaneous, informal, personalized, and ubiquitous. Such learning is reinforced when people encounter a shortage of free time as a result of working longer hours". By using MALL as a language learning medium, students can learn with unlimited space and time.

In the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, of course, there are positive and negative effects for students, as explained by Moura et al, (2020) the literature shows that MALL has both positive and negative impacts. To begin with, the majority of studies show that mobile applications improve language learning. Improved language learning performance, particularly in the area of vocabulary, greater desire and fun for studying language, acquisition of learning autonomy, enhanced allocation of time for practicing the language, and personalized language learning are the key beneficial outcomes of MALL. Lack of human contact and engagement, pedagogical explanations, external distraction, expensive device expenses, and technology-related constraints are all disadvantages of using and implementing

MALL (i.e. small screen size, short battery life, internet connection problems).

2.3 MALL on Learner Autonomy

The use of MALL can promote students to become autonomous learners. Students can take advantage of MALL to learn languages more independently. The use of MALL gives students unlimited study time because students can study wherever and whenever they want other than during school hours. Benson (2001), argues that the use of mobile devices will increase access to authentic language learning resources and allow learners to actively seek resources for their own learning, which can be considered as an important quality of autonomous learners in charge of their own learning content.

The use of MALL has many benefits. The benefit of using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is to promote learner autonomy and student collaboration (Cho, 2009; Lee, 2010). Applying mobile phones is therefore considered a useful strategy to help EFL learners become critical and aware of their developing interlanguage system and enhance their autonomy (Moayeri & Khodareza, 2020).

2.4 Speaking

Speaking is a daily human activity that interacts and communicates to convey or exchange information conveyed. Harmer (2007: 284) states that speaking is described as the generation of auditory signals that cause a listener to respond with distinct verbal answers. It is defined as the process of deliberately mixing sounds to make meaningful utterances using language-specific concepts. Torky (2006) describes speaking as the generation of auditory signals that cause a listener to respond verbally in a different way. It is defined as the process of deliberately mixing sounds to make meaningful utterances using language-specific concepts.

When someone speaks English, they cannot just pronounce it because there are certain rules for speaking in English, as stated by Drakhshan (2016) speaking does not only include knowing the characteristics of language; the linguistic features of messages extending oral communication require more than rote vocabulary and grammatical understanding. In general, there are two types of speaking, namely monologue and dialogue. Accordingly, Carlson (2022) stated that:

Monologue involves a single character, whereas a dialogue involves more than one character. A monologue speaks to the people, whereas a dialogue speaks with the people. In a monologue, the character speaks aloud or expresses his thoughts in front of the audience, but the dialogue is a normal conversation between two people.

It can be concluded that there is no interaction without speaking.

2.5 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in EFL Speaking Context

The use of MALL is very important and useful for student learning media. Using MALL can promote students' English speaking skills both inside and outside the classroom. In

METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative research method and used a case study as research design. Qualitative research focuses on individual or group problems that are relevant to the problem. The emphasis of this study is to explore whether the use of MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) can encourage learner autonomy and students'

Mobile devices, there are already many applications or websites, especially to develop students' speaking English in the EFL context. Harmer (2007) stated that students must pronounce phonemes correctly, with the appropriate stress and intonation, and discuss connecting topics in order to become good and fluent English speakers. Speaking encompasses various qualities, including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and accuracy, in addition to communicating meaning verbally (Brown, 2001).

Students can use MALL as their learning medium according to their needs and interests in using it such as an application or website that is suitable to encourage their English speaking skills.

perceptions on the use of MALL in the context of EFL speaking are.

3.2 Research Participants

The participants are 15 students who are active as students of the Department of English Education at one of the universities in Bogor. In this qualitative study, the choice of informants or participants is entirely made by the researcher; Patton (2002) refers to this as

purposeful sampling. To do this, the researcher chooses informative (information-rich) cases based on strategies and objectives that have been established; the number of these cases depends on the goals and resources of the study.

3.3 Research Instrument

Researchers conducted interviews to strengthen data about the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning to promote learner autonomy and to find out EFL students' perception of using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in the EFL speaking context. The interview was semi-structured. In this semi-structured interview, the researcher has prepared five questions to be answered by the respondent.

3.4 Data Collection

The interview was conducted through a google form by giving several questions to the participants who had been made by the researcher at the same time. The participants conducted individual interviews. The language used by researchers in conducting interviews is using Indonesian language. The data from the interviews were then collected and analyzed. The questions posed to the respondents were as follows:

- 1. Why is Learner Autonomy important in the learning process?*
- 2. What is the perception of EFL students towards MALL in learning English?*
- 3. Is the use of MALL able to encourage EFL students to become independent learners? (Yes/No) and give reasons!*
- 4. Is the use of MALL able to encourage and facilitate students to learn to speak English independently?*
- 5. Of the many applications available on mobile devices, which application do you often use to develop your English speaking skills? Give a reason why you chose the application!*

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of collecting data and simplifying data systematically to facilitate researchers in obtaining conclusions. By the research objectives, the data analysis technique used to analyze the data in this study is a qualitative analysis of the interactive model as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992) as follows:

- a) Data Reduction

Data reduction is a process of selection, focusing, simplification and abstraction.

b) Data Display

The presentation of data is a set of structured information to provide the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action.

c) Conclusions/Verifying

Drawing conclusions is an attempt to find or understand the meaning, regularity of explanation patterns, causal paths, or propositions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In the results of this study, the explanations from the interviews were divided into three themes, including The importance of encouraging students to become autonomous learners in the learning process, EFL students' perceptions of MALL in learning English, using MALL to facilitate and encourage students' learning to speak English independently. To make it easier for readers, the writer provides the code for the following interviews, P1 as participant 1, P2 as participant 2, P3 as participant 3, P4 as participant 4, P5 as participant 5, P6 as participant 6, P7 as participant 7, P8 as participant 8, P9 as participant 9, P10 as participant 10, P11 as participant 11, P12 as participant 12, P13 as their participant3, P14 as participant 14, P15 as participant 15. Some words are abbreviated such as MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language

Learning), and EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

4.1 The Importance of MALL to Promote Learner Autonomy in Learning Process

Overall, all participants in this study agreed that student autonomy is very important to develop especially during this Covid-19 pandemic. Students must be able to take responsibility for the success of their learning process. Even though the Covid-19 condition cannot be used as an excuse for students not to develop their knowledge and abilities in learning. Students are also free to explore their abilities.

P8: *“With the understanding and implementation of learning autonomy, we will be able to learn independently without*

reducing participation in the learning process.”

In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, students are required to be responsible, consistent, active, innovative, and independent. Students should keep developing their language skills as much as possible. The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be used as an excuse for students not to study and be lazy. Because now technology is sophisticated, they can take advantage of technological sophistication, one of which is MALL as a learning medium.

P2: *“Promoting student autonomy makes students more independent and not only focuses on the teacher, students are also required to be more active.”*

Participants stated that with the autonomy of students, students could express themselves more in the learning process. Following Curriculum 13, the learning system places students more as learning subjects, which is called (Student-centered Learning). Therefore, students are required to be more active, responsible, and highly motivated in the learning process.

P3: *“Students can be more comfortable with their learning methods.”*

Participants admitted that they enjoyed their learning process more according to their way of learning. Students can freely choose what method is suitable for their learning process so that they can express and it becomes an effective thing for student learning success.

4.2 EFL Student Perceptions on using MALL in EFL Context

In general, all participants in this study stated that the use of MALL can make it easier to develop their English skills. Currently, MALL devices have become a very important requirement and have a positive effect on students. In the context of EFL, MALL helps students learn languages by utilizing the existing facilities on the MALL device itself, one of which is the most widely used smartphone. The sources and the applications they use are various. Some participants use applications to learn English, such as U dictionary, Elsa Speak, Cake, Duolingo, Grammarly, Kamusku, and British Council, then others use public platforms, such as YouTube. Participants felt that using a mobile was very easy to use. This can be seen from the freedom and flexibility in accessing mobile applications to learn English.

P8: *“MALL is a learning facility that utilizes technological developments to provide convenience and innovation in language learning.”*

MALL is a sophisticated tool that has many functions, one of which is to help students learn English practically. During this Covid-19 pandemic, the use of technology media is very welcome among students. They can study further for learning. Participants stated that the sophistication of technology, namely MALL, had many benefits for learning for EFL students. When using MALL, they can plan how far their success in developing English is without a set time limit.

P6: *“MALL in learning English has become a new face as a learning medium, making teachers and students alike explore themselves in its use, and making learning much more quality because students use adequate media.”*

Participants emphasized that using MALL was adequate to explore their ability to learn English. With the sophistication found on mobile devices, it can form quality students and make new

places for students as their English learning media.

P4: *“By using MALL, I can learn while playing to improve my English language skill”.*

Participants admitted that learning English by using MALL as a learning medium was very fun. Students can learn while playing. With MALL, they can easily catch the knowledge of the English language they want to learn. Moreover, currently on mobile devices, there are many applications for learning English that are varied and fun to learn as much as you want, such as youtube, my dictionary, the British council, and so on.

P14: *“My perception of MALL is good, it's just that there are limitations of mobile devices that make it less than perfect. And internet connection is also often a problem for students when they learn to use MALL”.*

Participants admitted that in the application of mobile devices there are limitations in accessing or using them, so sometimes students are not satisfied and they are considered less than perfect and lacking in detail for those who want to learn their English in depth. The internet connection problems also often hinder students in the learning process.

4.3 The Use of MALL to Encourage Students' Speaking Skills Independently

All participants agreed that the use of MALL can make EFL students become independent learners. There are many interesting features on mobile devices, so students are motivated to learn English independently. However, it all depends on the student personally. The more students use MALL as a medium for learning English, the more their abilities will increase. With MALL students can take advantage of existing features, especially applications that provide practice or learn to speak English independently. Of the many applications found on mobile devices, almost all students choose Youtube as a learning medium to encourage their English speaking skills independently.

P8: *“Yes, because with the knowledge and skills of using MALL, students will be able to find learning resources and find ways to develop their abilities with the help of technology. The applications that I use to help me learn to speak English are YouTube, Kamusku, and British Council. By using YouTube, I can learn English from videos, both*

native speakers who give exposure to English material or content creators who speak English daily. That way you will get used to listening like the use of English by native speakers, they should speak in their home country without slowing down or clarifying pronunciation and intonation specifically for English learners. Meanwhile, Kamusku is very helpful in finding the meaning of words. And British council podcast and daily Test / Quiz for listening practice and grammar review from basic level to ability limit which is measured through quizzes which are available.”

Participants stated that learning using mobile devices helps students develop their ability to learn English independently. Students can take advantage of features or applications available on mobile devices. From this, students can measure and target the extent to which they can develop their abilities with the help of these English applications independently, both in class and outside of class. To encourage English speaking skills, students use Youtube, Kamusku, and British Council applications. In the

Youtube application, students can watch interesting and educational learning videos. By watching videos, students can learn how to speak English correctly, starting with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, gesture, etc.

P13: *“Youtube, because I like watching movies, I watch English films to improve my English, especially learning to develop speaking English.”*

P12: *“The application that I use to develop my English skills is YouTube. YouTube provides interesting video content and we can search for learning materials directly from English speakers.”*

P15: *“Yes, because at this time there are many platforms that provide learning media for English and other languages, as well as easy access for free. This certainly allows each individual or student to be able to study independently. The application that I often use encourages the ability to learn to speak English, namely Youtube, because, with this application, I can learn while having fun.”*

Participants claim that YouTube is a very fun application to use in learning to

speak English on mobile devices. Students can learn while being entertained with interesting English videos to watch. This is because students prefer fun things, including learning. All participants stated that by watching videos on Youtube they could learn with focus while getting entertainment from the videos.

Discussion

In the results of this study, MALL is considered to encourage student learning autonomy because of its ease. Students can study wherever and whenever they want. Learner autonomy is synonymous with self-control and being able to make effective study plans. "One of the platforms used to foster learners' autonomy and motivation is MALL." (Adara, 2020, p. 614). By using Mobile-assisted Language Learning as a language student learning medium, the results show that student learning autonomy can be promoted through MALL in EFL context. And it is relevant with the opinion of Benson (2001) that the use of mobile devices will increase access to authentic language learning resources and allow learners to actively seek resources for their own learning, which can be considered as an important quality of autonomous learners in charge of their own learning

content. The use of MALL has many benefits. The benefit of using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is to promote learner autonomy and student collaboration (Cho, 2009; Lee, 2010).

The findings show that students' perceptions of the use of MALL in the context of EFL are very positive and have many benefits, this is relevant to the opinion Hwang et al, which states that language students have positive impressions and intentions of learning activities utilizing mobile learning devices; thus, students are more motivated to practice foreign language skills when using mobile learning devices (Hwang, et al., 2014). Using MALL can promote students' English speaking skills both inside and outside the classroom. In Mobile devices, there are already many applications or websites, especially to develop students' speaking English in the EFL context. Harmer (2007) stated that students must pronounce phonemes correctly, with the appropriate stress and intonation, and discuss connecting topics in order to become good and fluent English speakers. But according to one participant in this study, the employment of MALL in the learning process is highly effective; nevertheless, due to technological gadget constraints, it falls

short of perfection. Additionally, issues with internet connections frequently prevent pupils from learning. It is also supported by Moura et al, (2020) argues that there are negative impacts in using MALL as a learning medium, namely the lack of direct human interaction, external interference, expensive device costs, and technological constraints such as small screen size, easy battery drain, and Internet connection is often problematic.

From the results of the study, most of the participants chose the Youtube application as a learning medium to encourage their English speaking skills independently. Because by using Youtube they can watch a collection of interesting videos by listening to English conversations with good and correct pronunciation. Watching videos on Youtube can also increase students' English vocabulary. From the research findings, P12 stated that YouTube provides interesting video content and we can look for learning materials directly from English speakers. P8 also stated that, with YouTube, students can learn English from videos, both native speakers who present English material and content creators who speak English for daily use. That way they will get used to listening like the use of English by native speakers,

they should speak in their home country without slowing down or clarifying

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research, firstly it can be concluded that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning can make students become autonomous learners. Students think that using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning as a medium for learning English can help them learn anywhere and anytime independently, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 21st century, students are required to be more independent and responsible in their learning process. Students who are responsible for their learning process are called autonomous learners.

The second conclusion, from the results of the study, showed that EFL

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pronunciation and special intonation for English language learners..

students have positive perceptions about the use of MALL in promoting learner autonomy in the EFL speaking context. The implementation of MALL is very important to improve student speaking skills. There are many applications available to develop students' English speaking skills, one of which is by watching videos from Youtube. And it can be concluded that there is also one weakness for students in using MALL as a learning medium, namely the lack of or still limited technological devices that cause it to be less than perfect. To access the MALL also requires a good network and the cost is quite expensive.

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