

The EFL Learners' Perceptions toward Mobile Device Usage and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) at English Department of Mulawarman University

Aminah Rhasa Wulan¹, Istanti Hermagustiana²

Universitas Mulawarman

¹aminahrhasa@gmail.com, ²istantihermagustiana@fkip.unmul.ac.id

Abstract

The purposes of this study were to find English department English as foreign language (EFL) learners' perceptions toward mobile device usage and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and also to find the significant correlation between English department EFL learners' perceptions towards MALL and EFL learners' grade point average (GPA). The survey research design was applied to get the data needed. The questionnaire was distributed to the 150 samples from the fourth and the sixth-semester students of English department of Mulawarman University. The result revealed that the mean score of EFL learners' perceptions toward mobile device usage was 44.83, which was equal with 81.50% of learners could be categorized as positive perception. Meanwhile, the result for EFL learners' perceptions toward MALL showed that the mean score was 54.93, which was equal with 78.55% of learners, and also could be categorized as positive perception. Therefore, the correlation between EFL learners' perception toward MALL and their grade point achievement (GPA) was tabulated by using Spearman's Rho formula. It was found that rvalue (0.315) higher than the rtable (0.1348), which indicated that the H₀ was rejected and H_a was accepted. Thus, it was taken that there was a significant correlation between EFL learners' perceptions toward MALL and learners' GPA.

Keywords: mobile device usage, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), perception, grade point achievement, English department EFL learners.

1. Introduction

The use of mobile devices technology in the education field is known as mobile learning (m-learning). Ozdamil and Cavus (2011) defined m-learning as a learning model that allowing learners to obtain their learning materials anywhere and anytime with the using of mobile devices technology and its internet feature. Furthermore, in the language learning context, the use of m-learning is recognized as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). According to Chinnery (2006), Mobile-assisted language learning is a language learning approach where the language learning or teaching process is supported or developed by the use of mobile devices. In addition, Miangah & Nezarat (2012) stated that the MALL approach is related to the use of mobile technology in language learning as wireless flexible technology. Actually, it is not something new that many EFL learners (English as foreign language learners) use their mobile device to learn skills or functions from the English language. Jovanovic (2017), Yang (2012), and Chen & Huang (2010) in their investigation in EFL context acknowledged that EFL learners are already ready to apply mobile devices to help them train their skills in language learning. In addition, the results of these studies are caused.

The researcher as an EFL learner at Mulawarman University herself before initiated this research investigation has experienced that mobile technology gave many bits of help in her language learning process. In her observation as a college student, she observed

that many of her fellow college students also have installed their mobile technology with some applications which have functions to learn English language. However, surely it can be understood that other learners might have their own different perceptions about how their mobile technology assists their English as a foreign language learning process. In summary, based on the background above, the researcher interested to conduct a study about English department EFL students' perceptions towards mobile device usage and MALL. Moreover, the researcher was also interested to know whether students' perceptions towards the MALL are related to their grade point average (GPA).

Based on the research background, three research questions were formulated as followed;

1. What are the English department EFL learners' perceptions toward mobile device usage in English language learning?
2. What are the English department EFL learners' perceptions toward Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approach?
3. Is there any significant correlation between English department EFL learners' perceptions toward MALL and their GPA?

There were two research hypothesis of the study, they were;

1. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha) : There is a significant correlation between English department EFL learners' perceptions toward MALL and learners' grade point average (GPA).
2. Null Hypothesis (H0) : There is no significant correlation between English department EFL learners' perceptions toward MALL and learners' grade point average (GPA)..

2. Literature Review

Perception

The awareness of something by the using of senses frequently is known as perception. Schacter (2011) stated that perception is a process of identification, organizing, and interpretation based on the sensory information. In addition, perception is the result of the ability in hearing, understanding, to interpret something. Perception includes all sensory information processes to represent the understanding of particular information or situation.

English as a Foreign Language Concept

According to Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas (2003) stated in their book that learning English as Foreign language means that learners learn English as one of ability to master English language as a foreign language. EFL learners are learners who learn English in non-English speaking countries. EFL learners do not use the English language as their native or first language to communicate. Moreover, they said that the learners of EFL are they who do not need English to communicate in their daily life or even in the social situation. In a foreign language situation, there are many other factors and reasons to learn the English language.

The mobile device usage and language learning

The mobile technology advancement and used cannot be denied any longer in society. The widespread ownership of mobile device technology, such as mobile phone (smartphone), influences and supports the education learning process. Furthermore, According to Kukulska-Hulme, Evans, and Traxler (2005), and also Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008), the use of mobile device gives the opportunity to align its feature to

support the many goals of learning and teaching process, and one of them is the use of the mobile technology for language learning process field. Pesaranghader's (2018) quantitative findings revealed that the learners' performance toward English language learning was positively better after using mobile device applications, in aspect of motivation and language ability. Moreover, Liu and He (2014) relate to his findings when they also discovered that the growth of the smartphone applications for English language learning improves the majority of college learners' interest and motivation in English language learning process.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

The widespread wireless technology causes the expansion of communication devices use increase, and the use of mobile to technology to support language learning around people to become more common. Based on Stockwell and Hubbard (2013) Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a teaching or learning approach where the process assisted by the user of mobile technology. Mobile-assisted language leaning is known well as one of the learning concepts which focus on mobile technology influence in the language learning process. The change in MALL occurs due to learners' way of language learning which advances modernly due to the expansion of the technology.

3. Methods

This study was conducted by applying a survey research design. Population and sample of this study were the English department EFL fourth semester and sixth-semester students at Mulawarman University University in the academic year 2018/2019. In particular, study had 150 EFL learners from both fourth and sixth-semester learners of English department major as the sample of the study population to provide the data investigation. In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive and inferential statistic formulas were used to find the measurement data based on the purposes of this study. Particularly, the percentage score and spearman's rho formula were used to tabulate the data. Moreover, to simplify the data measuring by using these two statistic formulas, the researcher used SPSS 23 version calculation tools to tabulate the data and concluded the data result.

4. Result

Instrument

In this study, to collect the data about the students' perceptions, the questionnaire was used as an instrument. The questionnaire was used because it was an appropriate instrument to collect the survey data research. The questionnaire in this study was divided into three sections. The first section of the questionnaire discussed students' background toward mobile device usage in learning process, the second section was about students' perception toward the usage of mobile phone technology on English as a foreign language learning process. In the second section the questionnaire was in the form of close-ended statements, Moreover, the close-ended questionnaire of this section was adapted from Jovanovic's (2017), and Hismanoglu, Ersan, & Colak's (2017) journal article questionnaire instrument that they used to collect the research data. The third section in the questionnaire mostly talked about the perceptions toward the using of mobile-assisted language learning approach by the EFL

students. The statements were adapted from Azli, Shah, and Mohamad's (2018) journal article instrument.

Findings

To find out the research question number one about the learners' perceptions toward mobile device usage, the total score of the statements was tabulated by the use of descriptive statistics to provide the summary data result, which showed in table 1 as followed;

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Q1

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	StdDeviation
Total	150	20,00	55,00	6725,00	44,8333	5,76313

As the result, the data from table 4.2 showed that the total score range was 22 – 55. Particularly, the data also showed that the mean of the total score was 44.83, and the score of the standard deviation of the total score was 5.76. Based on the interval percentage score, the mean score of the perception (M=44.83) was equal with 81.50% that could be categorized in the perception level as **a positive perception**.

After finding out research question number one, the total score of the statements was analyzed to have a summary result of research question number two about the EFL learners' perceptions of mobile-assisted language learning in English language learning (MALL). Particularly, the result was summarized by the use of descriptive statistics formula, which could be showed in table 2 as followed;

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Q2

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL2	150	27,00	70,00	8249,00	54,9933	6,78876

The result from table 2 showed that the total score of learner participants ranged from 27-70. Specifically, the data also showed that the mean of the total score was 54.99, and the score of the standard deviation of the total score was 6.788. Based on the interval percentage score, the mean score of learners' perception (Mean = 54.99) was equal with 78.55% that was categorized in the perception level as **a positive perception**.

To examine research question number three, which aimed to find a correlation between the EFL learners' perceptions and their academic achievement or grade point average score, the data was tabulated by using one of the non-parametric correlation formulas which were Spearman's Rho correlation formula. Particularly, the SPSS 23 version was used to help the researcher tabulating the data.

Table 3: The correlations between MALL and GPA

		GPA	mall perception
Spearman lpk 's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
	N	150	150
mall perception	Correlation Coefficient	,315**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
	N	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table above, the findings showed the correlation between grade point average and EFL learners' perceptions of MALL. The table indicated that $r_{\text{value}} = 0.315$, that was higher than $r_{\text{table}} = 0.1348$ ($df = 148$). In addition, it could be concluded that **H_0 was rejected so that H_a was accepted**. In summary, it could be shown that there was a **significant correlation** between the EFL learners' grade point average score (GPA) and the EFL learners' perception towards mobile assisted language learning.

5. Discussion

Based on the findings, the EFL learners' perceptions toward mobile usage in the English learning process were categorized as positive perception. According to Prensky (2001), it could be indicated that learners' positive perceptions toward mobile device usage were due to how digitally native the EFL learners were. Therefore, the findings of this study also showed that the learners mostly agreed that the use of the mobile device was able to help them improve their English listening, reading, writing, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and English grammar ability in their language learning process. The result of this study was supported by Yudhiantara and Nasir's (2017) study who also investigated that their respondents had positive views toward the using of mobile phone for their English learning activities. Jati (2018) stated that the rapid development of mobile technology gave educators and students a space to explore the pedagogy aspect of language learning by the new potential of the mobile or smartphone application software. In addition, the range of these applications was able to provide flexibility which guaranteed the fun and cheer aspect in English language learning process. Moreover, a related study by Liu and He (2014), they discovered that due to the growth of the smartphone applications about English language, the majority of college learners' interest and motivation in English language learning were boosted by the use of mobile device.

It could be found based on the data findings, the majority of EFL learners positively agreed toward the use of MALL in their English language learning process. In addition, the findings were supported by Azli, Shah, and Mohamad's (2018) study that discovered the

majority of their respondents also viewed positively toward the use of MALL. In addition, the participants of the study believed that the using of MALL enhances their English language learning and teaching process. In addition, Liu and He (2014) suggested that the new English language learning approach by using the mobile device was effective, helpful, and flexible for college learners. In line with Qudaimi (2013), she also explored that mobile-assisted language learning provided the most ideal solution for the raise of foreign language learning needs. Essentially, she also noted that the portable size of mobile device as one of the reasons to positively agree with the use of MALL. Hence, due to the MALL portability, the English language learners no longer needed to sit and stay in the classroom or their computer only to get the lesson and the material they need in English language learning process.

Finally, as for the last research question in this study, which was aimed to find the correlation between the EFL learners' perception toward mobile assisted language learning and their grade point average score (GPA). The result revealed that the correlation or the r-value of the study showed that there was a significant correlation. This result, also related to Yang's (2012) study, who found that the GPA score was able to be improved based students' perceptions toward MALL. Thus, he found that the GPA and MALL correlated to each other based on their respondents' positive perceptions.

Therefore, the better detail understanding also needed to underlie the correlation between the two variables. Essentially, despite there were entertainment and communication purposes of the mobile device usage, the learners should also understand how to harness the benefits of mobile device usage for educational purposes, like the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Thus, they were able to apply their mobile devices in English language learning appropriately and genuinely for English educational purposes only.

6. Conclusion

The result data for the research question number one found that the mean score of the data was 44.83 or equal with 81.50% in percentage score. The average score of the data showed that the English department EFL learners' perception toward the use of the mobile device in the English language learning process was positively agreed.

On the other hand, the result data for the second research question indicated that the learners' perceptions toward mobile-assisted language learning were positive. In which particular, the average score of their perceptions was 54.99. The mean score of the result was equal with 78.55% of learners. The result of the average percentage indicated that the learners positively agreed by the use of MALL for their English language learning process.

Therefore, the result for the research question number three or the last research question showed that the H₀ (null hypothesis) was rejected and H_a (alternative hypothesis) was accepted. Thus, based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between the English department EFL learners' perception toward MALL and their grade point average (GPA).

7. Suggestions

1. Suggestion for English educators.

The English teachers or lecturers may start to apply MALL in their English class. Moreover, they also can encourage their students to use their beneficial mobile device

technology features that were related to their English language learning lesson. The examples of mobile device features usage that could be applied by students were such as the using of mobile English dictionary, internet browser or websites, mobile PDF reader, voice recorder or camera, some mobile smartphone applications, and so on, which were believed could improve students' English skill ability.

2. Suggestion for the learners

The rapid growth of the mobile English learning applications proves that there is no longer reason for the English language learners to avoid the use of their mobile device. The flexibility of mobile-assisted language learning allows the English learners to freely use their mobile device to assist some aspects of their English language learning process. However, the learners also should be more genuine toward the use of their mobile devices. Hopefully, the learners accept to understand the appropriate use of mobile-assisted language learning. Hence, the purpose of the English language learning can be accomplished properly.

3. Suggestion for the future researchers.

The researcher hoped that there are many other researchers who interested in the mobile usage or MALL field. The researcher was aware that there were some lacks and weaknesses of this study based on the limitation and the topic of this study. Therefore, the researcher suggested to the future researchers who are interested in the same topic to investigate the further specific correlation or effect between one or two particular English skills and the mobile device usage or MALL as their research variables. The researcher also encouraged future researchers who are interested in a similar topic to conduct the study with a different target of the population, research design, and research variables

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