

An Investigation of EFL Teachers' Adoption and Acceptance of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning during Distance Education Program

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi pengadopsian serta penerimaan Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) dengan guru EFL dari salah sekolah menengah pertama di Indonesia sebagai partisipannya. Selain itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi guru EFL dalam memutuskan pengadopsian MALL serta mengetahui bagaimana cara mereka mengakomodasi faktor-faktor tersebut. Data penelitian didapatkan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur, lalu data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan teknik tematik analisis. Dari hasil analisis tersebut, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa factor sekolah, seperti kolega, siswa, dan pelatihan guru merupakan faktor yang paling berpengaruh dalam pengadopsian MALL. Selain itu, faktor internal seperti effort expectancy juga turut andil dalam pemilihan aplikasi mobile yang digunakan dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh, Penerimaan Teknologi

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the adoption and acceptance of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) with EFL teachers from one of the junior high schools in Indonesia as the participants. In addition, the purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence EFL teachers in deciding the adoption of MALL and finding out how they accommodate these factors. The research data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and then the data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis shows that school factors, such as colleagues, students, and teacher training, are the most influential factors in adopting MALL. In addition, internal factors such as effort expectancy also contribute to the selection of mobile applications used in teaching English.

Keywords: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning; Distance Learning; Technology Acceptance

PENDAHULUAN

In distance learning programs, smartphones are widely used to facilitate teachers and students in assisting or supporting learning activities, including in the area of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Besides making language teaching and learning more accessible, smartphones are also preferred because of their ability to help improve students' learning outcomes, both inside and outside the classroom (Simonova, 2016). The advantages of MALL has been proven by several studies, which state that MALL is able to improve student's language skills (Loewen et al., 2019), also support language learners' autonomy (Foomani&Hedayati, 2016), as well as to improve student's motivation and engagement (Troussas et al., 2017). However, in reality, not all teachers could effectively adopt MALL in teaching activities due to various factors, including internal and external factors.

In integrating technology, such as MALL, internal and external factors influence the willingness of teachers to adopt and accept technology in their classrooms. At first, the theory about individual intention to use technology was introduced by Davis, Bagozzi, &Warshaw (1989) as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM only focused on psychological factors in predicting the relationships between perceived usefulness, perceived

ease of use, and behavioral intention to use technology. Then, this theory has been developed from time to time by adding and testing several factors that might affect individual intention to use technology, such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh et al. (2003). The UTAUT includes internal and external factors, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating condition.

Based on existing theories, many studies have been conducted to determine how influential these factors are on teachers' acceptance of mobile technology, including MALL, in various situations. Quantitatively, technology acceptance has been widely researched, both in in-service teachers and pre-service teachers. For example, Hsu (2016) stated that for in-service EFL teachers in Taiwan, TPACK is the most influential factor that impacts teachers' intention to adopt MALL. Perceived Usefulness (PU) is essential for teachers' attitudes in determining to use it continuously. Meanwhile, for qualitative research, teachers' attitudes and external factors such as facilitating conditions are important factors determining whether teachers accept or reject the use of m-learning in the classroom (Khlaif, 2018).

With several previous types of research, we know that the study about technology acceptance has been applied and tested at various levels of education throughout the world. In Indonesia, studies about this topic are mostly implemented quantitatively to measure how influential the factors faced on users' intention to use technology. For example, Lee et al. (2014) have researched technology acceptance in various fields, while Sukendro et al. (2020) among sports science education students. Therefore, to fill this gap, this study will be conducted in a qualitative method to get a deeper understanding and discover new information about user technology acceptance in Indonesia, especially to EFL teachers.

METODE PENELITIAN

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research approach, specifically a case study, to investigate Indonesia EFL teachers' experience when adopting Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in their teaching practice during online learning and teaching. Strauss and Corbin (2009) also stated that qualitative research is a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation. Other than that, qualitative methods can provide intricate details about phenomena that are difficult to reveal by quantitative methods. With the following research question: How do EFL teachers accommodate their self-belief and social influence when adopting Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in their teaching practice during distance education programs?

Site and Participant

In this study, three EFL teachers from one junior high school in Indonesia were recruited to become the study participants. This recruitment was carried out using a simple purposive sampling procedure to recruit the participants who have adopted Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in their EFL teaching practice during the distance teaching and learning process. The participants are colleagues who teach English at the same junior high in Indonesia but at different grades ranging from grade 7 through 9. Other than that, the participants have diverse backgrounds in terms of age and teaching experience, so this study obtained results from a different perspective.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In collecting data, this study will use semi-structured interviews individually in a face-to-face setting. The following questions are limited in question about the intention to use technology or known as Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) made by Venkatesh et al. (2003), including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating condition which will be used as research dimensions in this study. Other than that, the participant will be asked about basic information such as name, age, teaching experience, etc. will also be asked in this study. After collecting the data, the

researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used because it is significantly helpful to identify and explore the themes of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

The Result of Observation

The findings discussed in this chapter are obtained from interviews with the participants regarding the acceptance, adoption and experience of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) namely smartphones by EFL teachers in junior high school. The themes listed in the findings and discussion are based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh et al (2003) which consists of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, with the following demographic information of the participants:

Table 1. List of participating teachers.

Teacher	Gender	Age	English Teaching Experience	MALL Experience
A	Female	48	19	Google Meet, Google Form, Power Point, WhatsApp, YouTube, Zoom
B	Female	55	24	Google Form, WhatsApp, YouTube
C	Male	40	2	CBT, Google Meet, Google Form, WhatsApp, YouTube

1. Performance Expectancy

The most benefit that the participants felt from the distance education program is to facilitate their teaching by providing access to additional resources, namely technology, to enrich the curriculum. When asked about their experience using technology in teaching, they said that even though they rarely use smartphones, they believe that the use of technology could improve their works.

"The first is that teachers become smarter, smarter in digital. With distance learning, we who were previously clueless about MALL at least know how to apply the use of smartphones and learning apps right now. I can understand about learning apps because I practice it because I usually imagine about it. I think there are many benefits." [Mrs A]

From this example, the distance learning activity makes the participants use technology more often in teaching. Also, the types used becomes more diverse. Other than that, the participants also become technology literate.

2. Effort Expectancy

From the results of the interviews, all participants chose to use applications that they considered easy to use during distance learning. They thought this application is easy to operate because they often used it in daily life, so they felt familiar with it.

"Because that learning app is easy to use, it is simple. The important thing is that the material can be delivered to students, their grades are also good, and they are also not burdened." [Mrs B]

"Because the learning apps I used are familiar. I've often used the app daily, so I already know how to use it in teaching. It's easy to use too." [Mr C]

However, one of the participants also stated that using smartphones in teaching is quite difficult for her. Therefore, she said that she only used WhatsApp when teaching because some applications were considered challenging to operate.

"I can only use WhatsApp. I have tried using other applications, such as Google Forms, but it isn't easy because many steps are to follow. In the end, I stopped using Google Forms." [Mrs B]

It can be seen that the participants choose to use learning application that are easy and effortless, then they tend to avoid to use the applications that are complicated for them.

3. Social Influence

a. The Positive influence of the colleagues

Other than relying on personal abilities, the participants also asked for help and suggestion from their colleagues when experiencing difficulties in operating the learning applications they used in the distance education program. When asked about with whom the participants learned how to operate the various types of learning applications they used, the participants mentioned that their colleagues had a positive influence in helping them to understand how to use these applications. It can be seen from the results of the interview, for example:

"If not with an English subject teacher, I can ask the teachers from other subjects who are more familiar with using learning apps." [Mr C]

In addition, the use of the application is also influenced by what their colleagues use. They are motivated and imitated to use the same application as their colleagues when teaching English in distance classes.

b. The regulations from government

The distance education activity, which almost all schools in Indonesia are carrying out, is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) number 15 of 2020 regarding guidelines for implementing learning from home in the emergency period of the spread of COVID-19. When they asked about the pressures in this regulation regarding the use of technology, they all said that no rule mentions the types of technology that must be used. Even though, with the distance education activity, teachers inevitably have to use technology.

"The benefits of this distance learning activity for teachers are that teachers become technology literate, because like it or not, teachers have to use ICT to teach." [Mr C]

c. Students' concerns

Besides the teacher's role in teaching and learning activities, students also have a crucial role in learning. However, in the distance education program, there are many concerns and worries that the teachers felt related to the students, especially the problem of grades and attendance.

"There are so many concerns that teachers feel, especially the problem of student grades. Even though the final exam period has ended, some students still haven't completed the exam questions. They have been reminded about it many times, but they are still indifferent. The attendance problem is even worse." [Mrs B]

For these reasons, some teachers complained that the challenges faced in distance learning put more burden on them. Even so, the participants still try to accommodate the existing obstacles to make the teaching and learning work. They did include adapting to the students' abilities, communicating with them, facilitating their learning, etc.

4. Facilitating Condition

a. Technical Infrastructure

The participants stated that the school was quite supportive of this distance education activity by providing technical support such as WiFi and laptops that teachers could use at school. So that, when the teachers do not have personal internet data, they can go to school to use the facilities in the school.

"So far, schools only provide WiFi for the teachers. Usually, if there is a teaching schedule, the teacher must be in the school. So they can use the WiFi." [Mrs A]

Unfortunately, for personal internet data, schools do not provide them for teachers because this has been supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which offers monthly internet data plans for teaching and learning during distance education programs.

b. Technical Support

When using smartphones in teaching, technical support is also important to increase the use of technology by teachers. The participants were asked if the school provided socialization regarding the use of smartphones in distance education activities. All of them stated that the school held socialization and training from the school's staff before the distance education program. However, Mr. C did not feel that it was helpful due to the lack of socialization and training.

"I feel that the use of these learning apps has not been socialized. Although the education service has held training, the training is limited, even short. And in my opinion, the socialization and training about learning apps cannot be done only once or twice." [Mr C]

To overcome this problem, the participants learned to use smartphone education apps to teach, both personally and with their colleagues.

Discussion

The most dominant factor in influencing the acceptance and adoption of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning by EFL teachers is other people or social influence. At the micro-scale, the most influential others for the participants are colleagues and students. At the same time, at the macro level, it consists of the rules given by the government regarding the distance education program issued by the regulation of the minister of education and culture (Mendikbud) number 15 of 2020. For the micro level, the participants felt that support and input from colleagues were beneficial in successfully implementing MALL in EFL teaching and learning. When the EFL teachers experience problems in implementing MALL, their colleagues help them solve their problems. This finding is congruent with research by Khlaif (2018), which found that social influence can positively impact the acceptance of mobile technology and its adoption in education. In addition, EFL teachers are also affected by the type of mobile apps used by the others. The imitating is indicated by the adjustment of the use of mobile apps with their colleagues.

In addition, for the micro-level, the role of students is also very influential for successful learning. However, during this distance learning program, students became an obstacle for the EFL teachers. There are many concerns and worries that teachers feel regarding students during distance learning activities. For example, the attendance list is not fulfilled, assignments are late or not collected, and the difficulty contacting students because of the limited distance. These are the reasons why some EFL teachers prefer to do face-to-face classes rather than online classes. Therefore, some teachers refuse to use technology in learning because of these student-related problems. Even so, the EFL teacher still tries to accommodate the obstacles that exist to make learning successful. The solution including adjusting the use of affordable mobile apps according to student needs, maintaining communication with students, providing leniency to students, and facilitating student learning.

From the macro level, teachers are not too pressured by the regulations that require what type of technology to use. However, with the Ministry of Education and Culture (kemendikbud) regulation regarding school closures and the implementation of online learning, teachers inevitably have to use technology in teaching. Because teachers and students are separated by space and time, media must become a bridge between them, in this case, MALL, such as smartphones. So that, the teacher decision-making adjusted to what is stated in the government curriculum, guidelines, and procedures of the existing school system (Ho, 2006).

In choosing the type of mobile apps to be used, the three EFL teachers agreed that they use mobile apps that are easy to operate and make their work effortless, or called effort expectancy. That statement was approved by Venkatesh et al. (2003), which stated that

users are more likely to adopt new technology when they know and believe that they have the skills to operate it. Therefore, the EFL teachers prefer to use WhatsApp as the primary medium they use to share information and learning materials with students. They are accustomed to using WhatsApp in their daily lives. So that, when using the application in teaching, they do not experience significant obstacles. The finding is in line with the statement from Teo (2008), which states that people tend to rarely or even avoid using technology when they consider technology to be complex.

The third factor is facilitating conditions. The facilitating condition consists of two sub-themes, namely infrastructure and support. For infrastructure, so far, schools and the government have provided good support for online teaching activities. The statement evidenced by the provision of personal internet data from the government for both teachers and students, as well as the WiFi and several other technological devices from the school. However, assistance in terms of technical support is not sufficient. Although the staff had previously provided training on using several learning applications, this was deemed insufficient. The reason is, 2 out of 3 teachers stated that the training provided was too short and not very detailed, so the teachers felt that the training did not help them. Lack of training on ICT use has been cited in the literature (Balanskat et al., 2007) as a barrier in classroom practice. Inadequate preparation for using technology is one of the reasons teachers do not systematically use technology in teaching and learning activities. Several studies have revealed that ICT-related training programs develop teacher competence in computer use (Franklin, 2007) and influence teacher attitudes toward computers (Hew & Brush, 2007). That's why social influence, such as colleagues, is very influential in helping the EFL teachers. Despite the lack of existing training, they can still ask their colleagues for help.

For factors that are rarely discussed is performance expectancy or the belief that the use of technology can improve their performance. However, 2 out of 3 EFL teachers feel that the advantage of using smartphones in their teaching activities is that smartphones are able to increase additional access to learning. However, on the other hand, 1 in 3 the EFL teachers also feel that technology in distance learning activities adds to their workload. One of them prefers to apply traditional learning without technology. Actually, this can also be influenced by the age factor. The older they are, the less they are able to operate technology and vice versa. This finding is supported by the features of digital natives (Prensky, 2001), who found that experienced and senior teachers believe that content knowledge and pedagogical skills can compensate for the lack of technology use, so they feel they can teach effectively even without technology.

Social influence (100%) is the most dominant factor they feel from the four existing factors. The EFL teachers believe that their colleagues positively impact distance learning activities, especially with the lack of available support or facilitating conditions (66.6%). In addition, they also mentioned that the role of students was an obstacle, but they were able to accommodate it. One of them is by choosing to use mobile apps that are easy and familiar, both for teachers and students. The effort expectancy (100%) factor influences this in them. Meanwhile, for perceived benefits or performance expectancy (66.6%), not all teachers feel that technology makes their work easier.

SIMPULAN

Distance learning activities that are being implemented in Indonesia can run smoothly with the support of various parties, including teachers and students, and technology as a bridge between them. In teaching and learning English, the term for mobile devices is known as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) which requires the ability and acceptance of technology from its users, in this case, EFL teachers. The acceptance of this technology is influenced by several factors, including internal and external factors, namely performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitation conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). From these four factors, after the research, it can be concluded that social influence is a factor that is considered very influential for the EFL teachers. Meanwhile, the student factor is the main obstacle in teaching during distance education programs. In addition, in selecting

mobile apps, convenience and familiarity are the main factors that determine the selection of these mobile apps. Because to avoid difficulties in operating the mobile apps used.

With the factors that influence and hinder it, EFL teachers need to accommodate them to continue, even though it is hindered by space and time. Accommodating existing obstacles, especially those related to students, has been done as well as possible. Starting from the observation, communication, adjustment, and provision of learning facilities for students, EFL teachers, and the school have done it. Although, until now, the training carried out for teachers is still not optimal, it is hoped that in the future a more organized training will be held so that teachers can be fluent in using various types of learning technology.

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