Teacher Understanding of Mall Implementation in Teaching Pronunciation for College Students

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Abstract

MALL offers excellent potential for university students' language learning. As confirmed by numerous studies conducted on utilizing mobile technology in language learning classrooms. However, amid modernization and the advancement of technology, not all educators can fully comprehend MALL-based learning and its implementation inside the classroom. The present study employed a case study research design to investigate the teachers' understanding of MALL implementation in teaching pronunciation for college students. The participants in this study are MALL-user lecturers. The data were collected from an open-ended interview and analyzed using inductive stages. The findings indicated that the teacher's understanding of implementing MALL in teaching pronunciation is sufficient and competent enough to implement the correct way of MALL in the teaching-learning process. The results also reveal that MALL has its own vital merits and disadvantages to be employed in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the results suggest that educators must set a learning media perimeter prior to the MALL process in teaching pronunciation. The results of this study are expected to enrich the pronunciation learning process and assist teachers and students in properly employing MALL inside the classroom to reach the maximum learning output.

Keywords: *Implementation; Mall; Mobile; Pronunciation; Understanding*

INTRODUCTION

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is assumed interesting to be employed in EFL teaching (Koole, 2009). In contrast to classroom learning, MALL students do not need to sit in class or in front of a computer to get learning materials. MALL, a teaching and learning methodology that uses mobile phones or other handheld devices with wireless connectivity, such as phones, PDAs, and tablets, is vital since it can help learners study language on its own merits. (Kukulska, 2008). Moreover, (O'Malley, Vavoula, Taylor, & Sharples, 2005) defined it as an ideal solution for language learning barriers in time and place. Mobile learning technology is more helpful in carrying out activities outside the classroom. In addition, studying through mobile phones outside of the school has a better advantage in utilizing students' free time and improving their learning abilities (Kukulska-Hulme & J, 2009). Although learning on a mobile phone may take longer than on a computer, students feel greater freedom of time and place to use their free time to learn a second

language whenever and wherever they are. However, amid modernization and the advancement of technology, not all educators can fully comprehend MALL-based learning and its implementation inside the classroom. First, the physical characteristics of a mobile phone, including its size, weight, input and output capabilities such as keypad vs. touchpad, screen size, and audio functions, should be assessed. (Miangah & Nezarat, 2015) Secondly, the limited and minimum amount of knowledge and skill of the teachers and learners, prior knowledge and experience with mobile devices for learning, and the learner's attitude towards learning through mobile phones have a crucial role in the output quality of such mobile-based tasks (Miangah & Nezarat, 2015). According to (Al-Shehab, 2020) , despite extensive research on the effectiveness of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) in learning, there is not enough evidence to conclude that complementing conventional teaching methods with MALL will significantly increase the learning output.

A lot of relevant studies have been carried out. Some of them were conducted to examine the quality and limitations of some available mobile applications by assessing their features from a pedagogical and technical point of view with the help of a quality rubric (Rodríguez-Arancón, Arús, & Calle, 2013). The result reveals that technological innovation contributes to the quality of education despite its limitations. Hence, many researchers were interested in great benefits, effectiveness, and limitations. There is an intriguing area explaining MALL. First, some studies clarify the benefits of MALL (Klimova, 2020; Rahimia & Miri, 2014); (Shiha, Lee, & Cheng, 2015; Sung, 2016). Second, some studies focused on the perceptions of MALL (Neil Davie, 2015); (Nuraeni, 2021; Nuraeni, Carolina, Supriyatna, Widiati, & Bahri, 2020); (Alhadiah, 2020) Third, some describe about MALL implementation on learning-teaching process (Rodríguez-Arancón, Arús, & Calle, 2013); (Soleimania, Ismail, & Mustaffa, 2014); (Bachore, 2015); (Wardak, 2021); (Nolan, 2015); (Lai & Saab, 2021); (Amalia, 2020). Fourth, some review the effectiveness of MALL in the learning process (Klimova, 2021); (Morale, Igler, Bohm, & Chitchaipoka, 2015); (Akbaria, 2015); (Viberg, 2012); (Arvanitis & Krystalli, 2020)

Based on the summary of the previous study above, many have researched this subject. However, little research has been done on teacher understanding of MALL implementation. Therefore, this study investigates teachers' understanding of MALL implementation in teaching pronunciation for college students. Areas of mobile-based language learning discussed in this paper are pronunciation learning.

METHODS

This study investigates the teachers' understanding of MALL implementation in teaching pronunciation for college students. Therefore, a case study design was employed to reach this study's goal. This design was considered the most suitable design for several reasons. First, the research goal highly focused on the perception area, specifically, understanding of the subject toward MALL. Second, this study is undertaken in the natural setting (see Creswell, 2010; Biklen & Bogdan, 2005; Nunan, 1999) since this study involves the natural condition in a class where the teaching and learning process begins. Third, this design and analysis can significantly help determine and measure teachers' understanding of MALL for future evaluation and implementation in teaching. This research was conducted in one of the colleges in Garut based on some considerations. First, some lecturer applies MALL-based pronunciation learning using the live transcribe and google text-to-speech application to aid the pronunciation learning process. Second, all the students on this campus are adept at using mobile technology such as smartphones or other MALL devices to carry out MALL-based pronunciation learning. Third, several courses on this campus apply MALL in their learning process. In short, the reasons described above support the assumption that this campus is appropriate and purposeful to be selected for this study.

The participants in this study are two MALL-user lecturers. Purposive sampling was used to determine the participants based on their academic background and reasoning. First, the selected lecturer applies MALL in his learning method. Second, the lecturer makes the best use of mobile technology in teaching pronunciation. Third, the lecturers are experts in knowledge and experience in the pronunciation domain. To the ethics code, all participants will fill out the informed consent form as the evidence that they are voluntarily ready to follow the procedure of this study and well-informed about their rights protection as well as the purpose of the study (see Biklen & Bogdan, 2005; Creswell, 2010). The instrument employed to obtain the data in this study is an interview. The open-ended interview was used to gather data to explain, better understand, and explore the research subjects' opinions, behavior, experiences, and phenomenon. Open-ended questions are given to the participants to collect in-depth information. Field data from the interview will be analyzed using inductive stages. First, reducing and specifying the participant responses to help categorize and mark the answers. Second, concluding to measure the teachers' understanding of MALL implementation, and third, verifying the data to ensure the reliability of this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This phase presents the data findings, including the teachers' understanding of MALL in the aspect of characteristics, stages, advantages, and disadvantages, as well as assessment and evaluation. In the element of characteristics, each teacher has a similar understanding. One respondent said that *"it is practical and appliable to use in teaching."* MALL has a practical and easy-to-use element to be applied in teaching. This statement is supported by another respondent's argument, which said that *"MALL is an instrument in the form of software and hardware to aid in teaching and learning process"* this means that MALL is considered a tool to help in the various teaching-learning process. To conclude, both teachers believe that MALL has excellent potential in terms of characteristics to aid the teaching-learning process.

Moving to another aspect, which is the stages of implementing MALL in teaching pronunciation, one respondent said, *"MALL stages are generally divided into three stages which are pre-activities, whilst activities, and post-activities. In the pre-activities, students are given warm-up activities through the teacher stimulating their pronunciation. Then, in the whilst activities, the learning process uses a mobile device to utilize the software such as 'Google speech recognition' and 'speech to text' application to test the student pronunciation through recording their speech of several provided words and sentences. Lastly, in the post-activities, the students reflect on what had been learned and studied and are given the assignment to practice further and test their pronunciation aided by the software."* These stages provided by the first respondent mean that MALL can be applied in the learning process stages and help improve the students' pronunciation. Another respondent had a similar answer regarding the stages of MALL with a few noticeable differences, such as *"Applying MALL in teaching pronunciation cannot be taught separately, but it must be in a whole connected string. In the post-activities, MALL cannot be solely utilized to reflect or evaluate the student's pronunciation since MALL is based on technology, and technology does not considered to be always absolutely correct; sometimes, it can experience error. Therefore, the teacher must be thorough and careful in implementing MALL in teaching pronunciation."* In conclusion, each teacher has a slightly different and additional view on the MALL stages in teaching pronunciation.

Regarding advantages and disadvantages, each respondent has a different view on this aspect. One respondent said that *"MALL has two main advantages, which are authentic, meaning that the assessment is done through the mobile device itself, in other words, if the students did it right, it means it right as well as if they did wrong, it means it wrong. And MALL is easily accessible wherever and whenever; it does not time and place constrained. Meanwhile, for the disadvantages itself MALL is that the features are not complete, each software complete and cover each other disadvantages."* This statement means that MALL, with all its advantages, still has its drawback, such as there is no absolute perfect software to be utilized in teaching pronunciation. Meanwhile, another respondent said, "MALL is practical to use when teaching pronunciation through phone recording. *In terms of assessment, MALL offers an asynchronous assessment process that helps minimize students' anxiety. However, since MALL relies on mobile gadgets and devices, these devices are likely to experience error and get damaged, which often cannot be fixed as soon as possible in real-time, resulting in a disrupted learning process or even postponed teaching."* To conclude, both respondents have a different understanding of the aspect of advantages and disadvantages of MALL.

The last aspect is assessment and evaluation; one respondent said that *"In giving feedback using MALL, a teacher must be able to adjust the amount and the way on how to appropriately giving feedback, not too harsh/negative but still in an acceptable amount of feedback to improve the student's ability. But there is even a better way in giving feedback such as through personal communication with the help of the mobile device, so the teacher could directly give feedback without worrying that the student might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed in front of their peer."* This statement means that MALL can be applied in assessing and evaluating the student's performance but requires the teacher's appropriate implementation. Another respondent has a different understanding of this aspect and said that *"MALL is only appropriate to be used in teaching pronunciation which acts only as a filter stage which means that assessing and evaluating student cannot be done thoroughly by MALL, it still majorly depends on the teacher to give the appropriate assessment and evaluation."* In conclusion, MALL cannot be solely relied upon in the assessment and evaluation process.

Discussion

In the aspect of characteristics, both participants have similar levels of understanding. One of the characteristics that both respondents answered is practical and easily accessible whenever and wherever. It is relevant to Mosavi Miangah & Nezarat (2012) that mobile learning is characterized by its potential for learning to be spontaneous, informal, personalized, and ubiquitous. It is also relevant to Kim, Heyoung & Kwon, and Yeonhee (2012), that have the same voice about the mobile application teaching English. Their study reveals that mobile applications seem helpful in providing a unique and learner-centered learning opportunity with ubiquitously accessible and flexible practices. Another noticeable point from the respondent's answer was that MALL is better for filter and not completely accurate for assessment stages. The other respondent said MALL is more appropriately used as a helping media for learning and assessment to help in teaching and learning. This statement is also relevant to Saran et al. (2009) that believes in utilizing mobile phones in educational settings might help students become more motivated and overcome teachers' and parents' challenges in getting students to start studying.

Regarding the stages of implementing MALL, both respondents also have a similar view which stated that the teaching and learning process using MALL in teaching pronunciation starts with pre-activities that mainly involve warming up to prepare the students to learn, whilst-activities that employ Mobile devices to create an interactive learning process and post-activities which mainly about assessing and evaluating the student's performance with the help of MALL. This statement is

relevant to Al Khayat (2019), which explores using MALL in teaching English to enhance students' behaviors. Moreover, it can increase students' learning behaviors. Furthermore, it can also improve students' speaking confidence and support their listening ability in a foreign language. Saran et al. (2009) point out that using mobile phones in educational settings may help learners be more motivated and might make it possible to overcome the difficulties teachers or parents experience to make learners start studying.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages, each respondent has a slightly different understanding of it. One point of the benefits is the practical and ease of access of MALL itself are the same answer from both of the research participants. MALL is considered authentic, meaning that the material and assessment process comes from mobile devices. This argument is relevant to Shield K.-H. a. (2008) said integrating these technologies into teaching and learning has been more gradual. Educators need to understand how they can be used effectively to support different types of education and develop effective methods and materials for mobile-assisted languages. But in terms of disadvantages, each respondent has their point of view. One respondent said that the features of MALL are not complete and are still limited to a certain amount. In contrast, the other respondent said MALL is vulnerable to error and damage that could disrupt or postpone the teaching and learning process.

Regarding the assessment and evaluation, both respondents have a different points of understanding toward it. One respondent answered that assessing and evaluating through giving feedback to the students can be done through MALL but in personal context to help minimize the anxiety from a peer's perspective. Another respondent said that MALL still mainly relies on the teacher to appropriately give assessments and evaluations to the students since MALL cannot be solely relied upon to be used in providing evaluation due to there is no absolute correct technology in giving assessments which are also influenced by the vulnerability of the technology itself toward error. This argument is relevant to Ogata & Yano (2005), which stated that innovative mobile learning activities rely more on precise and adaptive course designs, various support, and self-directed, collaborative activity work methods.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, the findings indicated that both participants' understanding of implementing MALL, whether in general or in teaching pronunciation, is sufficient and competent enough to implement the correct way of MALL in the teaching-learning process. However, as enough as it is on their level of understanding, both participants still lack several instrument points and ideas on what and how the MALL should be applied. Regardless, they are already at the proper understanding of MALL in teaching pronunciation.

Some suggestions that could be proposed to help in future research are research that can cover further and, more specifically, how MALL is used in learning given the ease of access to MALL, which is ideally used for exploring teaching media. Besides that, further research is expected to validate that learning with MALL is effectively used in the future; it is assessed from all aspects such as assessment. Further research is expected to be a study that discusses MALL more clearly how MALL is used not only as a medium for teacher instruction to students but also as a medium that does help children's learning processes. The role of smartphones as a medium becomes more than just entertainment but become a learning medium with easier internet access that is healthier. This research is far from perfect; many aspects are left out in the process of conducting this study, such as the number of participants, which is only two participants. While for a study or

research, there were supposed to be at least more than two participants for more precise and more accurate data, then we do not have data from students who Indeed, using the MALL instrument in our research is still lacking in presenting data about learning to use MALL because of the limited time and space in our research process. Constructive criticism and suggestion are very much expected and appreciated.

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