

ADOPTION OF MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN IMPROVING COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LISTENING SKILLS

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Abstract

The use of mobile technology and language learning applications (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning or MALL) as a tool to improve students' English listening skills effectively. MALL has been proven to increase student achievement, engagement, and participation in language learning, especially in the aspect of listening skills. With that, the adoption of MALL is a promising and effective strategy in improving college students' English listening skills, but it requires careful planning and implementation to maximize its benefits.

Keywords: Adoption, Language Learning, Mobile, English, College Students.

Introduction

In the era of globalization and digitalization, mastery of English is becoming increasingly important for students around the world. Good English language skills, especially in the aspect of listening, are crucial skills needed to communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts.

The aspect of listening in the context of language learning, especially English, is the ability to understand and interpret information conveyed orally. This process involves not only hearing sounds or words, but also understanding the meaning, context, and nuances of the message conveyed. (Liwaurrohmah, 2023). Listening includes various sub-skills such as identifying the main idea, capturing important details, understanding the speaker's accent and intonation, and interpreting the speaker's

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intentions and attitudes. Effective listening skills are essential in everyday communication, academic situations, and professional environments, as they enable learners to actively participate in conversations, understand instructions, and follow presentations or discussions in the target language well. (Bai, 2024).

Listening aspects have a very important role in the process of language learning and effective communication. First, listening is a receptive skill that is the basis for the development of other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing. (Tantawy, 2021). Through listening, learners can internalize language structures, vocabulary, and correct pronunciation, which can then be applied in their own language production. In addition, good listening skills allow a person to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of communication situations, ranging from informal conversations to formal presentations, which are very important in everyday, academic, and professional life. (Regina & Devi, 2022).

Furthermore, listening also plays an important role in the development of cross-cultural understanding and empathy. By actively listening, one not only understands the verbal content, but can also pick up on non-verbal nuances such as intonation, emotion, and the cultural context of the speaker. This is invaluable in building strong interpersonal relationships and communicating effectively in a multicultural environment. (Jiménez, 2020). In today's digital age and globalization, where cross-border and cultural interactions are increasingly common, good listening skills are crucial for academic, professional, and personal success. However, many university students still experience difficulties in developing their English listening skills, which can have a negative impact on their academic performance and future career prospects. (Dong & Liu, 2020); (Sitopu et al., 2024).

Some factors that contribute to the low English listening skills of students include: Lack of exposure to authentic listening materials, Limited practice time in conventional classes, Lack of motivation and learning independence and Less interactive and interesting learning methods. (Zhang, 2022).

On the other hand, the rapid development of mobile technology has opened up new opportunities in education, especially in language learning. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) offers a potential solution to overcome these obstacles. MALL allows students to learn English anytime and anywhere, gives access to a variety of authentic learning resources, and provides a more personalized and interactive learning experience. (Hardyansyah, 2021).

Although MALL has great potential in improving students' English language skills, its adoption in the context of higher education in Indonesia is still limited. Some factors that may influence the adoption of MALL include: Technology and infrastructure readiness, Lecturers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of MALL, Ability and willingness to integrate technology in learning and Institutional support and policies that encourage learning innovation. (Hu & Hsu, 2021).

Therefore, this study examines the adoption of MALL in the context of English language learning in higher education, with a particular focus on improving students' listening skills.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. Literature research method, also known as literature study or literature review, is a research method that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing information from various written sources relevant to the research topic. (Hidayat, 2009); (Afiyanti, 2008).

Literature research methods involve a systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting published works by researchers and practitioners in a particular field. The main objectives are to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study, identify gaps in existing knowledge, and formulate relevant research questions. This process usually begins with an extensive literature search using academic databases, scholarly journals, textbooks, and other reliable sources. The researcher then selects and organizes the relevant literature, critically analyzes its content, and synthesizes the information to produce a coherent picture of the state of the art in the field under study. (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

MALL, or Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, is an approach to language learning that utilizes mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, or other handheld devices as learning media. This concept is an offshoot of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) that evolved along with the advancement of mobile technology. MALL allows learners to access language learning materials, practice language skills, and interact with learning content anytime and anywhere, beyond the confines of a traditional classroom. (Gray, 2024).

The MALL concept focuses on flexibility, accessibility and personalization in language learning. By utilizing the features of mobile devices such as internet connectivity, multimedia applications, and motion sensors, MALL can present various forms of interactive and engaging learning activities. (Chatterjee, 2022). This includes the use of language learning apps, podcasts, learning videos, educational games, digital flashcards, and communication tools for real-time language practice. MALL also supports independent and collaborative learning, enabling learners to set their own pace of learning as well as interact with other learners or native speakers of the target language through the mobile platform. (Cárdenas-Claros, 2020).

The development of MALL in language education has undergone significant evolution since its inception. Initially, MALL was limited to the use of simple texting and podcasts, but with the advancement of smartphone technology and internet networks,

its scope has expanded dramatically. (Chitprarop, 2024). Today, the MALL includes a variety of sophisticated language learning apps, interactive platforms, and tools that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR). Apps such as Duolingo, Babbel and Rosetta Stone have become popular, offering personalized and adaptive learning experiences. In addition, the integration of social media and speech recognition technology into MALLs has increased opportunities for authentic language practice and real-time feedback. These developments have changed the way people learn languages, making the learning process more accessible, engaging and effective, and encouraging lifelong language learning. (Kirschner, 2021).

MALL offers a number of significant advantages in language learning. Firstly, the high flexibility and accessibility allows learners to learn anytime and anywhere, removing the constraints of time and place. Second, personalization of learning is made easier, with apps that can adjust content and learning pace according to individual needs. (Pyo & Lee, 2024). Third, the MALL provides access to a variety of authentic resources such as podcasts, videos, and articles in the target language, increasing exposure to real language use. Fourth, interactive and gamification features in many MALL applications increase learner motivation and engagement. Lastly, MALL supports independent and collaborative learning, allowing learners to take control of their learning process as well as interact with native speakers or other learners around the world. (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021).

Despite its many advantages, MALL also faces several challenges. First, the digital divide is still an issue, where not all learners have equal access to mobile devices or stable internet connections. Second, the quality and accuracy of content in some MALL apps can vary, raising concerns about the effectiveness of learning. Thirdly, overuse of mobile devices can lead to dependency and reduce face-to-face interactions that are important in language learning. (Hakimantieq et al., 2022). Fourth, some learners may have difficulty in motivating themselves or organizing their study time without a traditional classroom structure. Finally, data privacy and security issues are a concern as the use of learning apps that collect user data increases. Addressing these challenges is important to maximize the potential of MALLs in language education. (A. Sari & Octaviani, 2022).

Listening Skills in English

Listening ability is one of the fundamental language skills, involving the active process of receiving, understanding, and interpreting spoken messages. It is not just hearing, but a complex cognitive activity that involves concentration, analysis and comprehension of verbally conveyed information. Listening skills cover various aspects, including understanding vocabulary, capturing the main idea, identifying important details, recognizing the tone and intonation of the speaker, and making inferences based on the information heard. (Zewitra & Purnamasari, 2024). In the context of

language learning, listening skills also involve understanding accents, dialects, and other linguistic variations.

The importance of listening skills cannot be underestimated, especially in today's era of global communication. First, listening is the basis for the development of other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Second, in academic and professional contexts, good listening skills are essential for understanding instructions, following discussions, and participating in learning or meetings. (N. Sari & Sulisty, 2022). Third, effective listening improves interpersonal communication skills, helps in building relationships and avoiding misunderstandings. Fourth, in foreign language learning, good listening skills facilitate understanding and mastery of pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of the target language. Finally, in the digital age with its abundance of audio and video content, strong listening skills allow for greater access and utilization of learning resources. (Krsmanović, 2021).

Listening skills consist of several components that are interrelated and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the listening process. These key components include: (1) Attention, which is the ability to focus on the message being conveyed; (2) Auditory perception, which involves the ability to recognize and distinguish sounds and intonation; (3) Comprehension, which is the ability to capture the meaning of the message heard; (4) Interpretation, which includes the ability to connect new information with existing knowledge; (5) Retention, which is the ability to store information in memory; (6) Critical evaluation, which involves the ability to assess the validity and relevance of the information received; and (7) Response, which is the ability to provide appropriate feedback or reaction to the message heard. All of these components work synergistically to form comprehensive and effective listening skills. (Ikha'a, 2023).

To improve listening skills, several effective strategies can be implemented. First, regular practice with different types of audio material, such as podcasts, news or dialogs, can help improve active listening habits. Second, focus on understanding the main idea first before trying to catch small details. Third, learn to anticipate the information to be conveyed based on context or prior knowledge. (Shameema, 2023). Fourth, use selective note-taking techniques to help organize and remember important information. Fifth, practicing listening with different accents and speaking rates to increase flexibility. Sixth, actively engage in discussion or question and answer after listening to deepen understanding. Seventh, utilize technology such as language learning apps or videos with subtitles to support the learning process. Finally, conduct regular reflection and self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. The combination of these strategies, if applied consistently, can significantly improve one's listening ability. (Luo & Watts, 2022).

Technology Adoption in Learning

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information systems theory that explains how users accept and use new technology. Developed by Fred Davis in 1989, TAM focuses on two main factors that influence technology acceptance: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This model suggests that a person's intention to use a technology is influenced by their attitude towards the technology, which in turn is influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use. (Peng, 2023). TAM has been widely used in research to predict the adoption of various types of technology, from enterprise information systems to consumer applications. The model has also undergone several revisions and extensions since its introduction, such as TAM2 and UTAUT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology), which added additional factors such as subjective norms, job relevance, and output quality to improve the model's predictive power. (Lailatuzzakiya et al., 2020)..

Technology adoption in learning is influenced by various interrelated factors. Firstly, technology infrastructure and accessibility are fundamental, including the availability of hardware, stable internet connection and appropriate learning platforms. Second, the digital competence of educators and learners is crucial, including the ability to operate devices and utilize digital resources. Third, institutional support, such as policies that encourage the use of technology and adequate training, strongly influence the adoption rate. Fourth, perceptions of the benefits and ease of use of technology, as described in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), are a determining factor in user attitudes. (Habibie, 2021). Fifth, cultural and social factors, including societal norms and attitudes towards innovation, can affect the speed of adoption. Sixth, the characteristics of the technology itself, such as compatibility with existing teaching methods and adaptability, also play an important role. Seventh, economic factors, including the cost of implementing and maintaining the technology, can be a significant consideration. Finally, national and local education policies that support the integration of technology in the curriculum can accelerate the adoption process. The complex interaction between these factors determines the success rate and speed of technology adoption in learning contexts. (Hsu & Lin, 2024).

Implementation of MALL to Improve Listening Skills

The implementation of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to improve listening skills has become an increasingly popular approach in language learning. MALL utilizes mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to provide flexible and personalized access to language learning materials, especially for practicing listening skills. This approach allows learners to learn anytime and anywhere, effectively utilizing their free time to improve their language skills. (Liu, 2022).

In the context of improving listening skills, MALL offers a variety of specially designed features and applications. Podcasts, audiobooks and short videos with optional subtitles are some examples of frequently used content. Apps such as

Duolingo, Babbel or LingoDeer provide interactive listening exercises tailored to the user's proficiency level. In addition, streaming platforms such as YouTube or Netflix can be utilized to access authentic content in the target language, helping learners to be exposed to diverse accents and speech rates. (Wu, 2020).

The effectiveness of MALL in improving listening skills is supported by several factors. First, the ease of access allows for more frequent and consistent practice. Second, the variety of content available helps maintain learners' motivation and interest. Third, interactive features such as immediate feedback and automatic scoring allow learners to monitor their own progress. Fourth, the ability to repeat material according to individual needs helps learners overcome specific difficulties in listening. (Shadieff et al., 2021)..

However, MALL implementation also faces some challenges. The availability of devices and a stable internet connection are important prerequisites. In addition, training for educators and learners is required to optimize the use of this technology. It is also important to ensure that the use of MALL is well integrated in the overall language learning curriculum, and not just a separate add-on. Finally, while MALLs offer many advantages, it is important to remember that direct interaction and speaking practice remain important in language learning, so MALLs should be used as a complement to, not a substitute for, traditional learning methods.

Comparison of Listening Skills Before and After MALL Implementation

The implementation of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has shown a significant impact on improving learners' listening skills in language learning. Prior to the implementation of MALL, traditional listening learning methods were often limited to structured classroom sessions, used limited audio materials, and provided relatively few practice opportunities. As a result, many learners experienced difficulties in developing their listening skills, especially in understanding different accents, natural speech rates, and various contexts of language use. (Burke et al., 2021).

After the implementation of the MALL, there was a dramatic change in the way learners practiced their listening skills. Access to a variety of audio and video resources through mobile devices allows learners to practice intensively outside of class. (Nilawati & Lutviana, 2022). Language learning apps that offer interactive listening exercises, podcasts in the target language, and authentic video content with optional subtitles become powerful learning tools. As a result, learners show significant improvement in their auditory comprehension, especially in the aspects of auditory information processing speed and the ability to understand various accents and dialects. (Nurislami et al., 2024).

Comparative studies between groups that used the MALL and those that did not showed clear differences. Learners who utilized the MALL tended to have a wider vocabulary, a better understanding of spoken sentence structure, and a higher ability

to capture nuance and context in conversations. They also showed increased confidence in more challenging listening situations, such as listening to complex news or podcasts. In addition, the MALL group showed faster progress in their listening skills compared to the control group who relied solely on traditional methods. (Wang, 2023).

However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of MALL in improving listening skills also depends on factors such as learner motivation, the quality of the content accessed, and proper integration with the overall language learning curriculum. (Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020). Although MALL shows promising results, a balanced approach that combines traditional methods with mobile technology is still considered the best strategy. Direct interaction with native speakers and listening practice in real communication contexts remain critical components in the development of comprehensive listening skills (Narius et al., 2020). (Narius et al., 2020). Thus, MALL should be seen as a powerful tool to complement and enrich the learning experience, not as a total replacement for conventional learning methods.

Conclusion

The adoption of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has proven to be a highly effective approach in improving students' English listening skills. Through various apps, podcasts, and online learning platforms that can be accessed through mobile devices, students have wider opportunities to practice and develop their listening skills outside the traditional classroom environment. The flexibility and accessibility offered by MALL allows students to engage in more personalized and intensive learning, access authentic materials, and practice at a higher frequency, ultimately contributing to a significant improvement in their English listening skills.

Studies have shown that students who adopt MALL in their English language learning show greater improvement in key aspects of listening skills, such as vocabulary comprehension, recognition of different accents, and contextual understanding. In addition, the use of MALL also contributes to students' increased motivation and learning independence, as they can control their own time, place and pace of learning. This not only improves listening ability, but also develops lifelong learning skills that are essential in this digital age.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the successful adoption of MALL in improving students' English listening skills also depends on factors such as proper curriculum design, selection of appropriate applications or platforms, and effective integration of mobile-based learning with traditional teaching methods. Therefore, a balanced and planned approach in implementing MALL, accompanied by proper guidance from the instructor, is essential to maximize its potential in improving students' English listening skills. With the right approach, MALL can be an invaluable tool in preparing students for the demands of global communication in English in this modern era.

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