A STUDY ON ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN USING WHATSAPP APPLICATION AS A MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) TOOL

Rhena Fahreni[1], Rumiri Aruan[2], Masyhur[3]
Email: rhena.fahreni@student.unri.ac.id, rumiri.aruan@lecturer.unri.ac.id,
masyhur@lecturer.unri.ac.id
Telp: +6281804122273

English Study Program
Language and Art Department
Teachers Training and Education Faculty
University of Riau

Abstract: *The goal of this study is to identify the students' perceptions in using the WhatsApp application as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning. To collect the data, this survey research used an online survey, then analyzed descriptively. The questionnaire in the survey used Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with three indicators to measure the students' perceptions. The survey was distributed to students from class C of batch 2019 of the English Study Program of Universitas Riau by using cluster random sampling. 41 respondents answered the survey using Google Forms. The results were Perceived usefulness (70,97%) is in the very good category, Perceived Ease of Use (87,85%) is in the excellent category, and Behavioral Intention (78,28%) is in the very good. The result shows that the level of the students' perceptions in using WhatsApp as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, in general, is Very Good (79,03%). Perceived Ease of Use was the indicator with the highest percentage (87,85%) which explains that students use WhatsApp easily. This research suggests the lecturer use WhatsApp as an application in the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool.*

Key Words: *Perception, WhatsApp, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).*

PENELITIAN PADA PERSEPSI MAHASISWA PROGRAM STUDI BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM MENGGUNAKAN APLIKASI WHATSAPP SEBAGAI ALAT BANTUAN SELULER PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA (MALL)

Rhena Fahreni[1], Rumiri Aruan[2], Masyhur[3]
Email: rhena.fahreni@student.unri.ac.id, rumiri.aruan@lecturer.unri.ac.id,
masyhur@lecturer.unri.ac.id
Telp: +6281804122273

Program Studi Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
Fakultas Ilmu Keguruan dan Pendidikan
Universitas Riau

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi mahasiswa tentang penggunaan aplikasi *WhatsApp* sebagai sebuah pembelajaran bahasa melalui ponsel. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penelitian survei ini menggunakan survei online, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif. Kuesioner dalam survei menggunakan *Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)* dengan tiga indikator untuk mengukur persepsi mahasiswa. Survei ini didistribusikan kepada mahasiswa kelas C angkatan 2019 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau menggunakan cluster random sampling. 41 responden menjawab survei menggunakan *Google-forms*. Hasilnya adalah Persepsi kegunaan (70,97%) dalam kategori sangat baik, Persepsi Penggunaan yang Mudah (87,85%) dalam kategori baik sekali, Keinginan menggunakan (78,28%) dalam kategori sangat baik. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa tingkat persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan *Whatsapp* sebagai pembelajaran bahasa melalui ponsel secara umum Sangat Baik (79,03%). Persepsi penggunaan yang mudah adalah indikator dengan persentase tertinggi (87,85%) yang menjelaskan bahwa mahasiswa mudah menggunakan *WhatsApp*. Penelitian ini menyarankan dosen untuk menggunakan aplikasi *WhatsApp* sebagai alat pembelajaran bahasa melalui ponsel.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi, *Whatsapp*, Pembelajaran Bahasa Melalui Ponsel.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 Pandemic or CoronaVirus Pandemic has changed all of the aspects of our life, including the education sector. This pandemic forced many schools and universities to be closed temporarily. By utilizing technology the educational process has been changed from face-to-face to virtual learning.

Today, students study by using modern technology we call Electronic Learning (E-Learning). The learning process has stepped into the digital world in which teachers and students are virtually connected. During Pandemic, E-learning is simple to comprehend and practice by teachers and students (Radha et al, 2020). According to the Regulation of Minister of Education and Culture, Number 109 subsection 1 (4) of 2013 which defines that E-learning is a learning which utilizes information based technology, and communication for the concerns of learning that can be accessed by students anytime and anywhere.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) relates with the use of mobile technology or smartphone in language learning (Valarmathi, 2011). According to the e-marketer report, the number of active smartphone users in Indonesia increased from 55 million in 2015 to 100 million in 2018. Behind China, India, and America, Indonesia has turned out to be the fourth largest smartphone country in the world. Today, in Indonesia the smartphone users are dominated by the production age of so-called millennials (15-35 years) (kompas.id). The next generation of e-learning will be considered as mobile learning Miangah & Nezarat, 2012).

Whatsapp is one of the most popular messaging apps with 2 billion users worldwide (WhatsApp, 2020). WhatsApp is a must-have application installed for every phone across the world. According to surveys conducted by Wahsun from Educational Quality Institution of East Java, it's concluded that the most used platform that is used by teachers in learning and teaching online is WhatsApp Group. Furthermore, the use of WhatsApp as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is really useful. It is easy to use and simple to share various files such as texts, photos, videos, and audio (So, 2016; Mistar & Embi, 2016, Hamad, 2017; Kushwaha & Jhawar, 2018; Dehghan, et al, 2018; Ghee, Terng, & Chui, 2019).).

Most teachers and/or lecturers using WhatsApp for learning, because WhatsApp is: 1) Simple to use; 2) Easy to send photos, videos, voice messages, and documents instantly; 3) Easy to access and download; 4) Easy to create multiple groups with unlimited messages; 5) Easy to discuss and share information with others in the group through texting, comment, and messaging (Abdul Fatah, 2015; Mistar & Embi, 2016; Hamad, 2017; Kushwaha & Jhawar, 2018; Dehghan, et. Al, 2018).

Based on the idea, the writer is interested to conduct a study to know the 2019th batch of English Study Program students' perceptions in using the Whatsapp application as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool. In this research, the writer measures Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Behavioral Intention to Use. The writer found that almost all the variables are in the category very good, which means WhatsApp is applicable and useable as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning.

Perception is formed by belief and experience (Schat, 2014). Referring to the reason mentioned, if we want to understand the behavior of the students in learning English or we want to be a part of their learning process, we need to know their perceptions. We need to know the student's opinions and interpretations on the use of WhatsApp during learning online and how it can impact the students' learning process

during Pandemic. In this study, the writer is going to see the 2019th batch of English Study Program students' perceptions in their online classes by using the WhatsApp application.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the writer used a descriptive quantitative research method to analyze the data using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) Version 25 and Microsoft Excel 2019. The population of this study is the class C of batch 2019 students of the English Study Program of Universitas Riau with a total of 41 students. The research was conducted from September 2020 until April 2021.

The data were gathered using an online questionnaire. Each statement uses the assessment criteria in the form of a Likert scale. The online questionnaire was shared with all of the participants via social media such as WhatsApp and learning media like Google Classroom. All of the responses were retrieved from the google forms website automatically in the Microsoft Excel form.

The instrument of this research is a set of questionnaires adopted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) design by Davis (1989) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh, et al (2003). The researcher adopted the questionnaire from Davis (1989) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh, et al (2003) because the questionnaire was adopted by many other researchers. The online questionnaire contains indicators to measure Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and Behavioral Intention to Use.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The Result of the Questionnaire

Indicator	Sample	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Index Percentage
Perceived Usefulness	41	1	5	3.55	70.97%
Perceived Ease of Use	41	1	5	4.39	87.85%
Behavioural Intention	41	1	5	3.92	78.28%

The descriptive analysis of the data that has been obtained is as follows:
1. Analysis of Perceived Usefulness

Table 2. Perceived Usefulness

No.	Perceived Usefulness	Mean	Std. Deviation	Index Percentage
1	WhatsApp is useful in my language learning	3.76	0.943	75.12%

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Index Percentage
2	WhatsApp enhances my language learning productively	3.46	0.925	69.26%
3	WhatsApp is effectively improving my language learning	3.39	0.972	67.80%
4	WhatsApp improves my performance in language learning	3.49	0.925	69.75%
5	Whatsapp improve my performance in English writing	3.73	0.837	74.63%
6	Whatsapp improve my performance in English speaking	3.22	0.988	64.39%
7	Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to become active in language activities	3.76	0.916	75.12%
8	Interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my confidence level in language activity	3.59	0.974	71.70%

The result shows on average the students' perception in the level of very good (70.97%). The respondents agree that WhatsApp is useful in their language learning (75.12%) and they neither agree nor disagree that WhatsApp enhances their language learning productively (69.26%). The respondents neither agree nor disagree that WhatsApp is effectively improving their language learning (67.8%). The respondents neither agree nor disagree that WhatsApp improves their performance in language learning (69.75%). The respondents agreed that WhatsApp is effectively improving their performance in English writing (74.63%). The respondents also neither disagree nor disagree that WhatsApp effectively improves their performance in English speaking (64.39%). The respondents agree that interaction via WhatsApp helped me to become active in language activity (75.12%) and the respondents agree that interaction via WhatsApp helped me to increase my confidence level in language activity (71.7%).

2. Analysis of Perceived Ease of Use

Table 3. Perceived Ease of Use

No.	Perceived Ease of Use	Mean	Std. Deviation	Index Percentage
1	WhatsApp is easy to use	4.76	0.699	95.12%
2	WhatsApp requires no training	4.46	0.778	89.26%
3	WhatsApp is convenient and user-friendly	4.49	0.711	89.75%
4	Interaction using WhatsApp messaging is clear	4.29	0.873	85.85%
5	Interaction using WhatsApp messaging is understandable	4.22	0.962	84.39%
6	WhatsApp is faster in sharing	4.46	0.897	89.26%

No.		Mean	Std. Deviation	Index Percentage
	information			
7	WhatsApp helps me to pass any information discussed easily	4.54	0.778	90.73%
8	WhatsApp enables me to access the course material	4.05	0.893	80.97%
9	WhatsApp allows me to academically engage with peers and lecturers at any time and any place	4.27	0.895	85.36%

Almost all of the index percentage results in the level of excellence (87.85%). The respondents strongly agree that WhatsApp is easy to use (95.12%). The respondents strongly agree that WhatsApp requires no training (89.26%). The respondents strongly agree that WhatsApp is convenient and user-friendly (89.75%). The respondents strongly agree that interaction using WhatsApp messaging is clear (85.85%). The respondents strongly agree that interaction using WhatsApp messaging is understandable (84.39%). The respondents strongly agree that WhatsApp is faster in sharing information (89.26%) and WhatsApp helps them to pass any information discussed easily (90.73%). The respondents strongly agree that WhatsApp enables me to access the course material (80.97%) and WhatsApp allows them to academically engage with peers and lecturers at any time and any place (85.36%).

3. Analysis of Behavioral Intention to Use

Table 4. Behavioral Intention to Use

No.	Behavioral Intention to Use	Mean	Std. Deviation	Index Percentage
1	I think I will increase my use of WhatsApp in learning the English language	3.78	0.725	75.60%
2	I'm interested to use WhatsApp more frequently in the future	4.05	0.835	80.97%

The result shows that the students' acceptance rate is very good (78.28%) and almost all of the respondents strongly agree. The respondents agree that they think they will increase their use of WhatsApp in learning the English Language (75.6%) which is contrary to the recent situation. The respondents strongly agree that they are interested in using WhatsApp more frequently in the future (80.97%).

DISCUSSION

The result of this research answered the research questions about the level of students' perception in the use of WhatsApp as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tool especially in the English Study Program, Universitas Riau. The result

shows each of the index percentages of the level of students' perception from using WhatsApp as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). On average, the results show that the students' perception of the level is very good, and respondents agree.

The results from this research are related to the results of the related studies on the same topic. As Ali and Bin-Hady (2019) stated that for learning foreign languages, WhatsApp applications have a positive impact on learning English. Same with the other studies, Mistar & Embi (2016), Gon & Rawekar (2017), Hamad (2017), Kushwaha & Jhawar (2018), Dehghan, et. al (2018), Ghee, Terng, & Chui (2019), Nurazizah et al. (2019), and Ahmed (2019) stated that using WhatsApp as a platform for language learning is easy to use and also effective in improving language skills. Moreover, other studies show the results that students had positive attitudes because of its user-friendly and comfortable use of the application which doesn't mentioned in this study. They also feel motivated, relaxed, and have a positive attitude in learning with WhatsApp as the results from Ali and Bin-Hady (2019).

However, there are some obstacles that other researchers mentioned. Gon and Rawekar (2017) mentioned that using WhatsApp in learning can cause message flooding, time-consuming, and eye strain. Mariadi et al (2019) suggested that both lecturers and students should be more active in using the application.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The goal of this study is to identify the students' perceptions of the use of WhatsApp as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the English Study Program of Universitas Riau. This study found that the respondents agree that WhatsApp gives many benefits for the students as explained in the first indicators, perceived of usefulness (70.97%).
On the second indicator, it can be concluded that WhatsApp has many benefits as a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to help the learning process in the class (87.85%).
The third indicators identify the students' perceptions about the respondent's behavioral intention to use. Two of the sub-indicators show the results are in the level of very good (78.28%).

Recommendation

With regards to the findings, the researcher would like to propose recommendations as follows:

1. The lecturers are recommended to use WhatsApp in their learning and teaching process as it helps them to manage and control the class, the course material, and the students. The students will hopefully use WhatsApp more in the class as many lecturers want to use it in their learning and teaching process.

2.   The lecturers are suggested to use WhatsApp more actively in their learning process as it helps them to make the learning process more effective.

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