

## **STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF MOBILE ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) TO LEARN ENGLISH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Due of its impracticality in comparison to mobile assisted language learning, computer assisted language learning (CALL) is no longer widely used by language learners (MALL). MALL is a language learning tool that can assist students broaden their learning options and change the way they approach language learning. The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions about utilizing MALL to learn English. Mixed methods and closed-ended questionnaires with a Likert scale of 1 to 6 were used in this study to collect data on how students perceived the use of MALL in terms of its Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU). In order to obtain a more thorough conclusion, an interview was also undertaken. The respondent demonstrated a favorable opinion of using MALL to learn English. They concluded that MALL has the potential to be a useful strategy for learning English. While using MALL to learn English, the students had issues with networking, technical issues with the camera, and vocabulary challenges on specific websites, according to the interview session. The students may still make the most of it.*

**Keywords:** *MALL, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Students' Perception*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning English has become more accessible and available to more people as a result of advancements in technology. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is the most appropriate approach using mobile phones to learn languages, particularly for students learning English with various aspects such as learning grammar, vocabulary, and speaking in English. MALL is also the most appropriate approach associated with using mobile phones to learn languages. When it comes to MALL, there are several debates among students concerning the utilization of a wide variety of supplementary applications for learning English using mobile phones. The students need applications for language instruction in the classroom or even outside the class, because the outcome of using MALL was proven positive (Burston & Giannakou,

2022) that MALL provides accessibility, portability, and a cheaper cost than CALL (Gnawali, 2023; Kannan & Meenakshi, 2023).

The use of applications expanded during the COVID-19 epidemic when the offline class converted to the online course. The students appear to have a unique perspective on how to best utilize their mobile devices and the software they have installed. While attending an offline class, students have face-to-face interactions with lecturers and classmates. Meanwhile, during the online course, their interaction was interrupted. Before the pandemic, the instruction was initialized in person, and during the pandemic, it turned out to be internet or technology-based (Wieland & Kollias, 2020; Wijayati, Nuryana, Pranolo, & Ma'Arif, 2022). Since then, some applications in the students' devices have become very popular not only for college students across world (Pal, 2023), but also among the students of the English Education Study Program of UAD (Syamsiani & Munfangati, 2023).

Several studies on MALL have been conducted (Raj & Tomy, 2023; Yeşilel, 2023). An investigation revealed that even if the students have a positive impression of MALL, they still found challenges; limited screen sizes, mobile features, and internet connectivity (Nuraeni, Carolina, Supriyatna, Widiati, & Bahri, 2020; Zain & Bowles, 2021). Moreover, the student's gender differences affected the students' perception of MALL. Female students showed a higher perception of MALL (Zain & Bowles, 2021). The availability, accessibility, portability/mobility, and versatility of their devices and applications met their expected results. They also utilized the applications to learn English outside the class (Oz, 2015).

The influential factors of MALL in assisting the students in improving their English do not only need to be considered in the online class. The benefit of MALL supports students' self-directed learning or even students' autonomous learning. Considering the importance of MALL, further the exploration towards the student's perception of the use of MALL in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in the context of non-native speakers' users of English in which might enrich the review of MALL utilization from expanding circle country.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

MALL alludes to the process of learning a language through the use of mobile phone applications (Nuraeni et al., 2020; Rosell-Aguilar, 2017; Yeşilel, 2023). Moreover, the widespread availability and use of such devices have led to the acronym MALL, which differs from CALL in its use of personal, compact devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing constancy or spontaneity of access across different contexts of use (Hassan Taj, Sulan, Sipra, & Ahmad, 2016; Jarvis & Achilleos, 2013; Klimova & Zamborova, 2020). MALL was discovered to vary from computer-assisted language learning in personal usage, portable devices, novel learning modes, simple access, and interaction across many contexts. In comparison to traditional learning processes, MALL focuses more on learner-centered learning (Burston, 2014, 2017).

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) refers to the incorporation of mobile technology into the language learning process. Mobile technology's mobility, accessibility, and practicality are key components that can create this type of situation in the classroom for learning purposes. (Gnawali, 2023; Hadi, 2020). MALL is a language learning tool that can help learners extend learning options and reshape learning approaches (Cakmak, 2019; Hoi & Mu, 2021). The increased operation of smartphones has resulted in the creation of millions of mobile applications for English learners (Biviji, Vest, Dixon, Cullen, & Harle, 2020; Kocakoyun & Bicen, 2017; Shi, Luo, & He, 2017).

### **MALL to Learn English**

Smartphone apps are one of the new ways that can support extended learning. Applications have become a prominent feature in social life since the emergence of Apple's iTunes App Store in 2008. MALL in the role of learning English is ideal and effective for students who usually use mobile phones to learn English with learning support application features. Thus, applications have the potential to influence educational programs and merit more attention and deeper research, particularly in the field of language learning, which has become the most popular curriculum area supported by applications. (Beatty, 2015a, 2015b). The most popular areas of mobile-based language learning include vocabulary, listening, grammar, phonetics, and reading comprehension (Huang, Zou, Cheng, Chen, & Xie, 2023; Klimova et al., 2023).

MALL has several advantages (Jeanjaroonsri, 2023; Li, 2023; Yeşilel, 2023) (1) MALL allows students to access language learning resources more readily and quickly, as well as communicate with others at any time and from any location, (2) the nature of digital technology makes it easier for students to participate in synchronous and/or asynchronous collaborative and individual language learning activities, allowing them to improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities quickly, (3) mobile technology offers a wide range of language-learning materials and techniques that help learners to be more motivated, autonomous, localized (site-specific), and socially involved.

### **Challenges in Using MALL to Learn English**

Learners often meet challenges in using MALL covering the tiny screen size of the devices impacts reading difficulty, data storage, multimedia limits, restricted graphic display, and reliance on networks that may not always provide high transmission capacity and may be prone to various disruptions are learners' challenges (Bui, Bui, & Dinh, 2023; Mahmood, Saad, & Nur, 2023; J. G. Wu, 2023). The demerits of using MALL are that in online language programs, cooperative learning between professors and students and among students is fruitful to some level. However, it is not as successful as physical touch, lecturers can provide large amounts of material to students, forcing them to figure out the essential portions of the texts on their own, and each mobile application has its own set of limitations. If the applications are not adequately considered during usage, it might reduce the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process (Jegade et al., 2023).

### **Method**

This research was conducted under mixed methods because it combines quantitative and qualitative methods in one study (Creswell, 2014a; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Sleeter, 2014). Using both quantitative and qualitative research, the researchers can obtain a deep understanding about the research topic (Mackey and Gass, 2016).

A quantitative study primarily uses postpositive claims for elaborating knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, measurement and observation, and theory testing). It also collects data on predefined instruments, which

results in statistics data (Creswell, 2014b; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). On the other hand, The goal of qualitative research is to provide a comprehensive summary of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals in everyday terms (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The quantitative data were collected through closed-ended Questionnaires using 6 Likert scales for Section A and Section B. Both sections indicated 6 (strongly agree), 5 (agree), 4 (slightly agree), 3 (slightly disagree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). The questionnaire was adopted from Davis (2003) and contained 20 items divided into two sections. Section A contained ten items to determine perceived usefulness (PU). In comparison, section B contained ten items to extract students' perceived ease of use (PEoU) about mobile-assisted learning.

Moreover, the qualitative data were gathered through interviews using interview guidelines. The interview guideline contains questions to get more information about the usefulness and the ease of MALL. Thirty students of the English Education Department Universitas Ahmad Dahlan filled out the questionnaire, and three students were interviewed because they had experiences in learning English using MALL both in class and outside of class. Moreover, they are active students who have participated in seminars on the use of MALL at International undergraduate.

In analyzing the data, the researcher employed SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to evaluate the quantitative data received from the surveys (Afifah, 2020; Rosini & Nurningsih, 2018; Siregar, 2015). The information is provided in percentages and frequencies. Furthermore, the data from Parts A and B were examined and transformed into mean scores to determine how English Education students felt about using MALL in English language learning. Finally, using SPSS descriptive analysis, the responses in the questionnaire were evaluated and quantified. For qualitative data, the researcher reduced the data because only related responses were taken, then displayed the data showing all of the responses from the participants who were grouped on the same issue, then concluded from the responses to the question at the conclusion.

This study's objective is to determine the students' perception of the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The results were adopted from a questionnaire (Davis. 2003) and categorized into the usefulness and the ease of MALL.

### The Students' Perception on the Use of MALL

This study investigated the respondents' perceptions of the usefulness (PU) of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for ten items. Their perceptions on PU were gathered using a six-point Likert scale with 1 Strongly Disagree (STD), 2 Disagree (D), 3 Slightly Disagree (SD), 4 Slightly Agree (SA), 5 Agree (A), 6 Strongly Agree (STA).

Table 1. *Frequency distribution of perceived usefulness (PU) of MALL*

No	Statements	STD	D	SD	SA	A	STA
1	MALL improves the quality of my work.	0%	3,30%	0%	10,00%	53,30%	33,30%
2	Using MALL allows me to have more control over my task.	0%	3,30%	0%	13,30%	60,00%	23,30%
3	MALL allows me to complete tasks more quickly.	0%	3,30%	0%	10,00%	50,00%	36,70%
4	MALL helps me with critical aspects of my work.	0%	3,30%	0%	20,00%	56,70%	20,00%
5	Using MALL gains my productivity.	0%	3,30%	3,30%	26,70%	50,00%	16,70%
6	Using MALL improves my task performance.	0%	3,30%	0%	23,30%	53,30%	20,00%
7	MALL enables me to complete more tasks than would otherwise be possible.	0%	3,30%	0%	16,70%	53,30%	26,70%
8	Using MALL enhances effectiveness on the task completion.	0%	3,30%	0%	10,00%	56,70%	30,00%
9	Using MALL makes my task easier to complete.	0%	3,30%	0%	13,30%	50,00%	33,30%
10	Overall, I find MALL useful in my task.	0%	3,30%	0%	6,70%	43,30%	46,70%

Note: STD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; SD: Slightly Disagree; SA: Slightly Agree; A: Agree; STA: Strongly Agree.

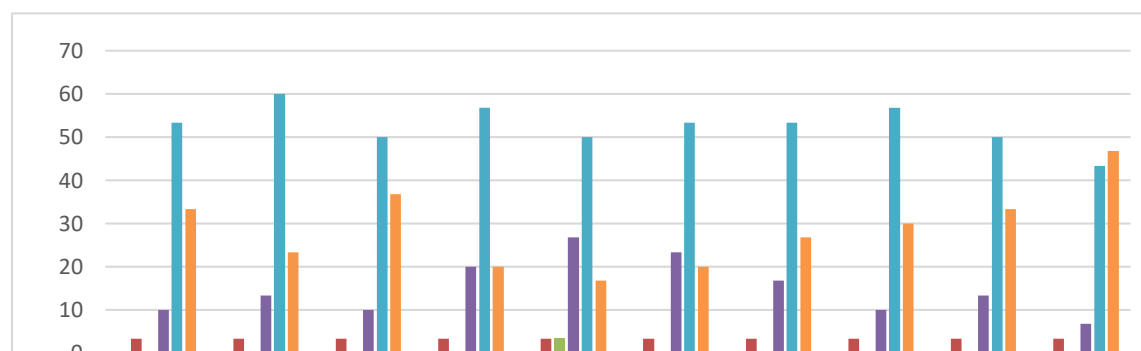


Figure 1. *Frequency distribution of perceived usefulness (PU) of MALL*

Table 1 shows that item 1 is related to using MALL to improve the quality of tasks that the students do. The majority of the students (53,30%) agreed with this statement. The students employed Grammarly and U-Dictionary to correct grammatical mistakes and improve pronunciation.

For item 2, as many as 60% of the students agreed that MALL gave them greater control over their tasks. They found some constraints on utilizing the mobile application, but they could deal with this by maximizing the use of applications on their smartphone and laptop.

Item 3 relates to the use of MALL, enabling the students to accomplish their tasks more quickly. Most students (50%) argued that they agreed with this statement. Like Jack (pseudonym), using Google and online dictionaries was effective in helping him finish their assignment and submit it. It affected the accomplishment of their tasks and assignments.

For item 4, 56,70% of The participants agreed that MALL helps them with the most important aspects of their works. Jack said that using an application such as zoom or google meet eased him in solving his difficulties in specific courses. He utilized those applications to discuss with his peer. Sometimes, he also used voice notes on her smartphone to get an explanation from his lecturer.

For item 5, related to using MALL to increase the students' productivity, 50,00% of the participant agreed with this statement. Rose supported it and explained that the application on

her smartphone helped her finish her essay by correcting her grammar and sentence structure. Another thing was when she needed to read articles in the journal, and she often found some difficulties understanding the content. An application like Google Translate eased her reading activity.

For item 6, most students (53,30%) agreed that MALL improved their performance. Rose revealed that she sometimes used her smartphone to chat in English with her friends. She argued that by doing this, her English is better. On the other hand, Jack said he preferred watching English news on CNN, BBC and Washington news rather than on the Indonesian channel. He also used Duolingo to test his English proficiency quite often to get to know his improvement in English.

For item 7, it shows that as many as 53,30% of students used MALL to accomplish more tasks than would otherwise be possible. The google chrome application was the favorite application made in use by the students because it contributed more to the students' productivity.

For item 8, MALL enhances students' effectiveness on task completion. Most of the students agreed with this statement. As many as 56,70% of students did not deny that MALL made task completion effective. The google chrome application and U-dictionary significantly saved their time in reading articles in journals and were helping to support their tasks.

For item 9, most students agreed that MALL made it easier to do their tasks. As many as 50,00% of the students said so. The students used particular applications than other applications to support them in finishing their tasks because those applications were helpful and gave more benefit to them.

For item 10, there is 46,70% argued that, in conclusion, MALL is helpful for their tasks. It means most students benefit more from the applications to complete their tasks. They also did not find difficulties operating the applications on their devices to support them in doing and finishing their tasks. In short, the applications used by the students were beneficial for them.

In addition, the following table shows the result of questionnaire distribution on the ease of use of MALL.

Table 2. *Frequency distribution of perceived ease of use (PEoU) of MALL*

No	Statements	STD	D	SD	SA	A	STA
1	The MALL is difficult for me to use.	23,30%	40,00%	20,00%	6,70%	6,70%	3,30%



2	It is simple for me to learn how to use MALL.	0%	6,70%	3,30%	33,30%	40,00%	16,70%
3	Interacting through MALL is frequently frustrating.	10,00%	40,00%	16,70%	23,30%	6,70%	3,30%
4	I find it simple to get MALL to do what I want.	0%	6,70%	3,30%	26,70%	56,70%	6,70%
5	MALL is difficult to interact with because it is rigid and inflexible.	6,70%	33%	20,00%	23,30%	16,70%	0%
6	MALL makes it simple for me to remember how to complete my task.	0%	3,30%	20,00%	23,30%	40,00%	13,30%
7	Interacting via MALL necessitates a significant amount of mental effort.	3,30%	30%	33%	13,30%	20,00%	0%
8	MALL interaction is clear and understandable.	3,30%	3,30%	3,30%	23,30%	63,30%	3,30%
9	It takes a lot of practice for me to become proficient with MALL.	0%	6,70%	3,30%	30,00%	56,70%	3,30%
10	Overall, I find MALL is easy to use.	0%	0%	3,30%	16,70%	50,00%	30%

Note: STD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; SD: Slightly Disagree; SA: Slightly Agree; A: Agree; STA: Strongly Agree

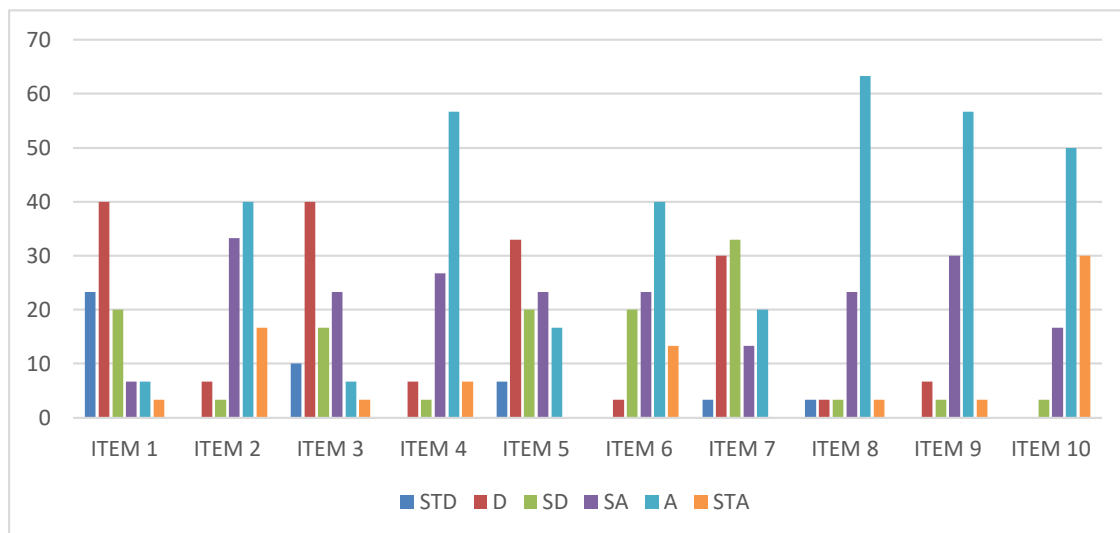


Figure 2: Frequency distribution of perceived ease of use (PEoU) of MALL

There are ten statements in the questionnaire about MALL's ease of use. For item 1, in the statement saying that MALL is cumbersome to use, 23,30% of students strongly disagreed with this statement. In addition, 40,00% of students disagreed with this statement also. It means most of the students were reversed with the statement. Notebooks and smartphones were practical and could be operated anywhere and anytime. The applications in the device were also simple, and it was not complicated to be operated for the students.

For item 2, "Learning to operate MALL is easy for me", 40,00% of students agreed with the statement, and as many as 33,30% strongly agreed. The students could download the application, and as long as they were connected to the internet, they could operate it when needed.

For item 3, as many as 40,00% of students disagreed with the statement "Interacting via MALL is often frustrating". Meanwhile, 23,30% of students strongly agreed with this statement. When the internet connection was not stable, using some applications like zoom and google meet was annoying. It bothered the learning process of the students. On the other hand, some students who were reversed with the statement believe that the problems appeared due to MALL were not a big problem for them.

For item 4, most of the students (56,70%) agreed that the students find that it was easy to get MALL to do what they wanted. Every time they were connected to the internet, they could access the application easily. They could operate their Grammarly and Google Translate when they needed grammatical correction. U-dictionary was utilized if the students wanted to get information on vocabulary. Google meet and zoom applications were for online meetings, and google chrome was used for self-directed learning.

For item 5, the statement said MALL is rigid and inflexible to interact. As many as 33% of the students disagreed with this. Meanwhile, as many as 23,30% of the students strongly agreed. MALL was rigid and inflexible for some reasons. The low connection during blackout bothered the use of MALL. Moreover, some applications had free advertisements; if students wanted to skip them, they needed to update the application to premium. Some students disagreed with the statement due to MALL's practical benefit.

For item 6, most students (40%) agreed that it was easy to remember how to perform their tasks using some applications on their devices. Rose, Jack and Karla argued that they often

used free Grammarly to check their grammar and sentence structure before they submitted their task. Grammarly was not difficult to use, but for a new user, it seemed complicated. Students who knew the ease of Grammarly tended to use it more than other applications.

For item 7, related to the statement “Interacting via MALL requires much mental effort”, as many as 30% of the students chose to disagree and 33% chose slightly disagree. Meanwhile, 20% of the student agreed with this statement. The students gave various responses to this statement. When technical problems appeared, the students must be patient and calm to avoid the worst situation.

For item 8, as many as 63,30% of students agreed that interaction via MALL was clear and understandable. The students showed it by using some similar applications several times. The applications were used in the class or to have reviewed and for directed learning.

For item 9, 56,70% of the students agreed with the statement, “I find it takes a lot of effort to become skilful at using MALL”. The students only employed familiar and popular applications to learn English. They needed to explore more applications and manage their schedule to use them.

For item 10, as many as 50,00% of students agree that MALL was easy to use. Even though the students felt they needed to learn more using applications and maximize their devices, they argued that all MALL was simple and not complicated.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The research results emphasize some points. To begin, students agreed that peer feedback helps them learn and develop their competencies, especially when working in groups. Furthermore, peer feedback helps students to get engaged with the learning process and to increase their self-regulation abilities. Peer feedback covering horizontal learning, motivation and implication make students more aware of their learning process and represent their arguments supporting the strong points of peer-feedback in order to make it positive and constructive (Tran & Pham, 2023; Y. Wu & Schunn, 2023; Zhang & Mao, 2023). In conclusion, the delivery of peer feedback must be taken into consideration as well. The comments or critics should be conveyed in a respectful, objective and constructive manner.

There are suggestions offered to implement this effective peer feedback; teachers have an important role to create a democratic classroom to enable this peer feedback or peer dialogue to happen more frequently in a group discussion/ presentation. Teachers are expected to be able to motivate students to be brave and confident to express their opinions. More chances for the students to improve their communication and collaboration skills should be encouraged. Modeling appropriate peer feedback examples for the students for their references also needs to be considered. The training in conveying good feedback consisting of objective, relevant, constructive and respectful peer feedback needs to be exposed intensively. Moreover, through this peer feedback, the students also can learn how to develop their skills in communicating and collaborating with their peers to achieve the learning goals since those two skills belong to the 4C elements of 21st-century skills side by side with critical thinking and creativity that help students keep up with today's modern markets.

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