

## Optimizing EFL Learning: Digital Native Leverage Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

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### ABSTRACTS

This study intends to explore the leverage of technology devices and their impact on the digital natives' experiences in enhancing EFL learning using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Pointedly, (1) how digital natives' attitudes toward technology influence their use of smartphones for EFL learning, and (2) the effectiveness of MALL activities in boosting English skills. Then, this research uses a narrative inquiry research design with in-depth interviews of six English teachers in various grades. By using thematic analysis revealed that digital natives enjoy the interactive nature of MALL activities and concern arose regarding their potential dependence on personal devices. The findings have been obtained to answer the questions that have been desired. (1) digital natives look to enjoy with MALL procedures; it narrates with digital natives' interest. And, (2) Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) offers digital natives particularly to access web-based learning and online learning courses. These provide audio-visual presentations that helpful for digital natives to supercharge their English competencies with various activities. These findings ensure that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a valuable potential tool in EFL classrooms, but careful attention to consideration for fostering responsible technology use in addressing potential distractions.

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### INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) is increasingly taken into account in pedagogical practice. MALL usually applies using a 'gadget' as a personal device to maintain spontaneous access to the various contexts used (Krasulia, 2018). She also mentions that MALL offers a mobile learning experience for both teachers and students in sharing knowledge and appropriate methods of pedagogical strategies to enhance EFL more effectively and excitedly. Besides that, turning into the twenty-first century, MALL provides self-directed learning for learners. Today, it reduces some limitations for learning and in unlimited time and place (Al-Kadi, 2018). MALL tends student-centered in learning which gives a wider chance to explore and seek information. MALL is divided into three modalities (Sam & Shalini, 2021), that are; Asynchronous mobile phone-assisted language learning (AMPALL), Synchronous

mobile phone-assisted language learning (SMPALL), and Teacher-moderated synchronous mobile phone-assisted language learning (TMSMPLL).

Furthermore, in approximately 22 journals that all researchers have found in language learning that MALL gives some advantages such as (1) increasing enthusiasm among parents, teachers, and students doing class activities, (2) building up excited and interest on the task, and (3) offers positive outcomes in language proficiency (Nur et al., 2022). Nowadays, the new generation stays with technology development and the digital era. ICT development emphasizes skills and knowledge growth (Jangjarat et al., 2023). The term digital native was recognized after the super-smart society or Society 5.0 in Japan to create human-centered with technology-based (Moh Abdul Fattah, 2023). Then, he mentioned that this new society is an anticipation of fluctuation because of disruption and VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) in Society 4.0. The aim of Society 5.0 is to overcome any challenges using innovative products in 4.0 era such as the internet, big data, and artificial intelligence (Asih et al., 2022). In detail, the scholars give some categories of digital native with some characteristics, as follows; age, this generation grew up in developing technology and information and not in another context, experience, the people recognize the internet since the younger period while others are not know about it, and breadth of use, means the internet able integrating all aspect of public facilities with individual experiences and independent every day (Helsper & Eynon, 2010).

Technology devices used stimulate new terms to address the users. According to Marck Prensky in (Kivunja, 2014) argued that digital natives are students who were born in 1980 and spent several times with the internet, video games, and any other digital technologies. After that, this generation with other terms, the 'net generation', the Google generation', and the 'millennials (Držić et al., 2010). Otherwise, the term of digital immigrants is addressed to the generation who were born before 1980. The immigrants need much more time to fit in with digital natives. To grasp how the digital native learns who has likened that this generation just grew up in existing digital development, they like shifting sands which means need any irons to stand up (Kivunja, 2014). He delivered that pedagogical practice supports the digital native students on how to get a good understanding of what they have learned. It convinces that digital native is a part of educational elements that need treatment to construct self-development. Digital native has a right to get 'learning experiences' in the class. Of course, the teacher should provide good treatment by technology-based. As professional teachers, they are addressed by showing technology proficiency and applying it in the learning process (Sitompul, 2022). Digital knowledge that must be understood by the teacher includes web courses, web-centric courses, and web-enhanced courses. The advantage of digital learning invites the students to engage in collaborative work, interactive building and etc.

In the digital era, G-generation has been indicated by a 'multitasking' people. Kirschner & De Bruyckere (2017) claimed that multitasking means a person who skillfully does something simultaneously over a certain period. For example, someone is carrying out cognitive activities along with the process of receiving information, such as typing someone out while participating in listening to a seminar. This case encourages doing multiple procedures that are allowed to be processed. but actually, humans are not able to precisely do several things simultaneously. Hereinafter, the author mentions a more appropriate term to refer to digital natives themselves with the term 'task-switching' which means the tendency to pay attention to several tasks so that they can switch quickly from one task to the next procedurally. This term is more representative to describe the real phenomenon today.

In ELT practice, technology-based learning is necessary to be used because appropriate for the generation characteristic. In detail, using web-based material is preferred over book-based material from the result of the study that has been carried out (Isnawati, 2017). The sample of students claims that web-based material in ELT classrooms is useful and enjoyable

67%, and enhances students' motivation 37%. So, this need analysis result represents the students as digital natives who must be supported by digital resources.

However, the researcher needs to explore digital native users towards Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) based on the real experiences of English teachers. The diversity of digital native characteristics causes the teachers to have a difficult decision about how does impactful MALL practices in their EFL classes. Moreover, each educator may have unique procedural practices to supercharge the efficiency of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for their digital natives. The researcher expected that the findings contribute theoretically and practically to other educators so that they can able to create fit designs for their EFL classes. It can reduce ineffective EFL classes using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This paper uses qualitative research with a narrative inquiry research design. Narrative inquiry expects to reach the participants' real experiences with personal stories and a lot of human experiences (Bastola, 2023). Afterward, it serves the deeper comprehension of individual impressions (Aksenchuk, 2013). It relates to the researcher's objective to report the teachers' experiences and the valid findings when the informants can speak up based on true life events. In this case, the EFL teachers were invited to explore their experiences using MALL whether it is effective or ineffective, and how some ways that could be done by the teachers while it tends to uncontrol ignoring successful outcomes or failure.

### **Population and Subject**

The researcher used purposive sampling in this research. According to (Subedi, 2021) that the advantage of this sampling gives rich information based on purpose-oriented. So, the data is closely related to the information which is desired. For additional information, the participants are average 25 years old to 40 years old. This generation includes digital natives who live in spreading technology development that was born between 1984 to now (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017). So, the digital devices used to be operated by them. After that, 6 teachers are allowed to apply the MALL method in the class. They are 1 teacher at Islamic junior school, 1 teacher at public junior high school, 1 teacher at Islamic senior high school, and 3 teachers at senior high school. To identify the participants, the research gives a code for each sample for example teacher 1 namely (T-1), (T-2), and so on.

### **Instruments**

To get the data, the researcher uses interviews with unstructured interviews. The unstructured interview technique has been selected to know the in-depth information (Madill, 2012). The participants are the researcher's friends, and work partners so it reduces dishonesty while answering the question. Furthermore, the researcher leaves the bias and ambiguities data because of any pressures. The researcher uses interviewing by the reason is to know the deeper answers (Mathiyazhagan, T., 2010). Besides that, the researcher invites the participants from some English teachers to know the information based on their real experiences in teaching practice.

### **Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the researcher used thematic analysis. It took at least six steps such as transcript creation, data identification, code selection, theme development, keyword interpretations, and reconceptualization model development (Naeem et al., 2023). In detail, transcript creation defines the process of selecting the most significant information for the research. Then, data identification is a process to decide the keyword or code used. After that,

determine the suitable keyword for the data. Furthermore, organize the data based on the theme. Afterward, giving interpretation for each code to get the information needed. Finally, the step to classify the code development to fulfill research questions. These guidelines make the data more representative, valid, and relevant.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

Technically, the interview was conducted in different ways. The participants are the control sample type. So, the researcher has carried out by chatting via WhatsApp actively. Some questions have been asked naturally relating to the target. Interviewing practice aims to know the misuse of MALL that has been applied by students in ELT classrooms.

### **Digital Native's Attitudes Towards Technological Influences in Applying MALL**

Based on the interview outcome, the researcher elaborated that it depends on individual considerations. The teachers will give some procedures using mobile and it would be different from others. It refers to optimized and unoptimized holding Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in ELT classrooms. The excerpt shows how MALL be carried out in ELT class.

“I couldn't execute MALL well because the private school with boarding school. The students were not permitted to use smartphones freely for students who stayed in boarding school. And I just maximized the students' smartphones outside boarding school. They could adapt with the method used in the class in limited devices.” (T-1)

The teacher realized uncompleted performance MALL in ELT class. The students with uncertain smartphones used in the class influence the effectiveness of MALL. The situation would not be conducive because the learning design was out of setting. The lesson plan didn't work in this situation. However, digital natives can follow the rules even if it is on limited devices. It shows that MALL rules relate to their interest. Another participant also informed his experiences conducting MALL in his class, as follows:

“My class contains a large number of members of junior high school class. They can access their smartphone for free. I can apply for MALL because smartphones are available. However, the students looked crowded with the various activities. In a group, just 1 or 2 members followed my instruction and others couldn't. Uncontrolled students accessed the unrelated suggestion with low attention for learning, it was the problem.” (T-2)

In this illustration, the researcher found that MALL is available to be carried out well. The digital natives looked participatory in their task. However, some others feel out of attention so and feel autonomous to do unrelated activities. Several participants also contribute negative impact on MALL performance. Digital native characteristics show in this illustration who has a high sensitivity to open access using technology. Even though they don't look wise enough to select their considering to select positive activities. Moreover, the participants show the interview report, such as:

“Sometimes, I used to MALL in my classes. In senior high school, the students could be invited for negotiation or make a learning contract before the learning process starts. I usually informed them of the procedural instruction which one are permitted and unpermitted. When someone breaks the rules, he/she would get punished by deducting the score or giving an additional task. It worked for my class. They can participate well and the learning flowed conducive.” (T-4)

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) should pay attention highly to supporting elements in classroom management. It proves that the teacher qualification has a significant role in leading the classroom well. Piaget's concept claims that the learner is an active person

(Cameron, 2010). The teachers should provide the digital natives' interest to enrich learning achievement.

### **Boosting English Language Skills through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

In this part, the participants contributed by giving their responses about kind activities that can be accessed using the MALL method. The various answers are based on their practice in the class. It turns out there is no distinction between the teacher in junior high and senior high school. However, both of them have different focus relating to the topic that is being taught.

“Sometimes for the beginning of material, the class was divided into some groups. Each group should look for the example and I permitted them to browse using the internet. The delegation member must present the findings. This way also helps them to translate the passage using Google Translate because so hard to ask them to bring a printed dictionary. Honestly, I could not recommend the exam using smartphones. It has a large option for cheating.” (T-3)

In detail, during the learning, the learners may access the search engine that is suggested like Google translate to find out the meaning in analyzing the text. Besides that, the learners may also hear the voice for certain words that they are looking for. Almost no students are bringing the printed dictionary, so it is the alternative selection. The priority activities to help the reading and writing skills.

“I usually encourage the learners to access the smartphone to watch the video relating the material from bar-code on English resource books. When I want to discover the students' pronunciation level. I asked them if I use ELSA. Through this application, the students could say the words-recommendation, and then ELSA would access the score immediately. I did the exam or test using a smartphone via Gform or Quizziz. But we have to pick up the HOTS questions that require them for analysis. As a teacher we were able to identify which one capable person and cheating person.” (T-5)

The other, also allows the digital natives to watch the video and hear the recording conversation on YouTube dealing with the material that has been being learned at that time. They may also imitate or repeat the dialogue or conversation. And mobile can help them to scan the bar code in the listening section. The skills that desire to expect are listening and speaking. Besides that, in the study process of interacting with technology, each personality of students has learner autonomy in enhancing creative thinking and positive views (Villamizar & Mejía, 2019). To grasp language acquisition, digital natives need more and more practice. It supercharges the language aptitudes. Some advantages of technological devices used for learning can enrich students in their communication, collaboration, creation, and critical thinking abilities (Kennedy Yamil, 2022). To acquire language skills several potential stimulations to be developed.

## **Discussion**

### **Digital Native's Attitudes Towards Technological Influences in Applying MALL**

The aim of integrating technology in language learning must fit with the language learning environment (Hafner, 2019). The researcher found this from the participants' responses to the digital native's attitudes on MALL. Some findings can be elaborated that digital native learners in this generation have a high capability to operate and it includes personal users for today. According to (Solihin, 2021) that MALL tends to have characteristics such as availability, convenience, portability, and accessibility devices. This personal digital assistant (PDAs) like smartphones contains some mobile applications, such as; WhatsApp, Facebook, and Microblogging. Digital natives who can interact with technology devices intensively can be separated to interact just for a while. Nowadays, WhatsApp is a private chatting system in which

the majority of society communicates with others. Social interaction is more responsive, direct, and easy. And Facebook also contributes a larger spreading interaction with a number of friends, recommendation accounts that may be added, and for the digital native who deals with online information microblogging is a tool to reflect their context. In this case, understanding the functionally oriented as a target.

Furthermore, the relationship between mobile devices and users is mainly for teenagers or adolescents to communicate with peers and sentimental partners (Calderón-Garrido et al., 2022). So, this case determines that there is no supporting reason for enhancing motivation for learning. Even though social media provides any kind of information and is powerful, it is significant for non-formal education. Indonesia has a social-cultural tradition that embeds the manner and attitude of each individual. This perspective automatically filters for new things that spreading out. Some considerations appear to decide whether it should be accepted or declined. Similar to MALL which has been indicated to have several negative impacts on learners. Besides that, (Metruk, 2020) mentioned that some reasons why mobile is the learner's distraction. The distractions mean; (1) the learners are digital natives who can spend a long time accessing or browsing, online chatting, and interrupting the activities of learning. This situation hurts the students' lack of concentration for learning when they use mobile devices. Because of the inability to control using mobile, makes the teachers seek other alternatives to avoid the ineffective impact of MALL implementation; (2) mobile can enhance the students' motivation and the other side can be a cheating gate. When the exam is running on, the students may ask and give answers to their friends by sending a message or short-chat by WhatsApp or email; (3) teachers' readiness to conduct the MALL method. The teachers' perspective regards smartphones as a distraction for learning. This mindset blocks the positive impact of using mobile in pedagogical practice. When the teacher judges, it means that the teachers are still less understanding of digital native characteristics. Using one of the technology devices must have a flexible perspective and make any device a good alternative for promoting learning quality.

The participants encourage the learners to access some applications which relate to the purpose. It seems monotonous and gives a large space for the students to have no activity. There is no variety of learning activities so the learners initiate to do another activity. In previous study has shown this factor is a significant factor. The result is that 52,4% of teachers realize that they have trouble designing language learning which is full of creative activities and innovation (Dashtestani, 2013). It is because of a lack of understanding of MALL itself. The scholar also has investigated this weakness. In practicing MALL, several teachers applied task-based learning (Shadiev et al., 2020). They intended to find out the meaningful-based task and communicate to the language target in completing the task. Through this learning, the teachers expected that the students would get some meaningful learning, but the fact the result was not like that. Each person has individual differences in social interaction, attitude, and participation. Some students can follow the rules and some others aren't. For example, students focus on the task until the deadline, some are too fast because of exhaustion or stress, and others are faster because they are capable. The various activities appear bias situation and uncontrolled.

Although MALL is a method that is relevant to current conditions. It turns out so many factors that can make it ineffective. The experts have reported some research relating to MALL implementation, some factors can encourage the students' misuse of their mobile. They are pedagogical and psychological limitations (Hoi & Mu, 2021). Even though the data is in the Vietnamese context in higher education. However, the researcher has a similar case here. In the pedagogical aspect, mobile refers to distraction and interruption in English teaching-learning. From a psychological context, the students as digital natives tend hedonic users such as for communication and entertainment.

### **Boosting English Language Skills through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

Following the participants' responses, so much supported activities for English mastery through MALL execution. Mobile devices offer to maximize digital natives' ability in language mastery. Surfing via the search engine for looking for related learning videos such as YouTube, and has advantages for them (Villamizar & Mejía, 2019). A video recording allows the learners to get feedback and it can evaluate their listening progress (Dewi Rakhmawati et al., 2023). When digital natives access video, they enhance their critical thinking to accept and to organize the information clearer. Using a video provides integrated language competencies. It serves audio-visual presentation. The voice recording makes it possible for the learners to hear to comprehend the utterances and imitate words with correct pronunciation. These processes promote the learner's listening-speaking-reading skills. The teacher can explore other activities such as writing the spoken, which can enhance writing ability. Moreover, using a video helps digital natives comprehend the material better (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

In other words, English language courses also have been developed through a web-based online containing teachers' modules, learners' modules, and administration modules to convenient the education requirements (Huang, 2021). Further, every international learning center offers a learning service for the learners, it is namely "Education Support Service" (Pu, 2022). It provides digital native learning courses such as in China. Afterward, MALL open access for the teachers to use the numerous offline/online platforms/applications. The participants mentioned that some platforms or applications such as Google Form, Quizziz, ELSA, Google Translate, etc. Those have unique functions that can be applied in English Language Teaching (ELT).

### **CONCLUSION**

In English Teaching Learning (ELT). Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has positive impacts on digital natives. Now, MALL is regarded as mostly fit to the characteristics of digital natives. Technological devices are used to fulfill daily needs so that digital natives are more proficient in operating them. Digital natives enjoy and focus on following the English language activities because it is suitable for their interests.

Besides that, technological devices provide audio-visual presentation. It is helpful for language to enhance and support digital natives' competencies. The various language activities using web-based learning in online learning. Online learning gives unlimited time for digital natives to access every time and everywhere.

Aimed at future research, some gaps will arise in applying methods. Even though, digital natives need procedural learning reducing technological distractions. As a researcher, one needs to explore more preventive learning settings to maintain students' focus and interest following learning activities.

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This process gives more confidence for the author especially to remain in writing continuously. Writing is a process of enhancing vocabulary, and structure and using grammar correctly. It can be evidence of the educated people participating to fulfil and advance their qualifications.

Finishing this writing gives much more insight and knowledge relating to the case that has been observed. Discussing with the participants who know well about this context gives the author a rethink to apply following their efforts. The research must contain the current issues which relate to the era today. The result of the investigation can be picked up by readers who have similar problems to be an alternative problem solver for them. If every educator is dept-respectful about this field by spreading out this writing or contributing with another writing with a different theme, the complicated problem in education will get reduced time by time.

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