

Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness on the Use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning during Online Classes



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ABSTRACT

This study discussed how the readiness of pre-service EFL teachers to use MALL in their teaching practice activities. In investigating pre-service teachers' readiness, there are two research questions related to the attitudes shown by pre-service teachers towards MALL and their experiences with MALL during their teaching practice. In this study, two types of data collection were used: interviews as the primary data collection and supported by questionnaire. There were four participants involved in this study using the phenomenological study method. This study found that pre-service EFL teachers showed a positive attitude towards the use of MALL. The participants felt that using MALL in their teaching practicum, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, was very useful. In addition, they also had quite a good experience during their teaching practice using MALL. They can choose the media or platform used according to their learning needs and their respective classroom situations. With the findings obtained, this can be a hope for their future class. The participants are aware of the benefits of MALL and are willing to use it during their teaching practice.

Keywords: *Pre-service teacher's Readiness, Mobile assisted.*

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INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in education has become commonplace and important to continue to be applied in learning. Especially when this research was conducted, the world was experiencing a global crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia instructed to hold online learning at home since 17 March 2020 (Mendikbud, 2020b). This learning model moves all learning activities in the classroom (face-to-face) into various online platforms (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). This change in the learning model aims to reduce the number of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia (Mendikbud, 2020a). With the existence of regulations from the local government to move all teaching and learning activities online, it is necessary to change the learning methods used. In this Covid-19 pandemic situation, the use of MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) is one of

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the right choices to be applied in online learning. Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2005) define MALL as a technique in language learning that uses a variety of mobile devices. According to Chang and Hwang (2019), smartphones, mobile phones, and tablets as mobile devices have great potential when used either in classroom or outside the classroom. Mobile devices will be easier to carry and use because they are usually smaller and lighter than traditional computers (Zhang, 2015). With this, language learning can be carried out anywhere and anytime, including at home.

The development of technology and the higher mobility of humans also impact the world of education. One form of technological development in education is the creation of mobile learning. Mobile learning provides freedom of student mobility by requiring students to carry out learning activities without any restrictions to do other things in their environment (Kukulska-Hulme, 2005). The use of platforms or devices that are compact, easy to carry, or even wireless is the hallmark of mobile learning. By prioritizing the mobility of students and teachers, one of the characteristics of mobile learning is that it can be done anywhere and everywhere (Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005; Nikolopoulou et al., 2020).

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a form of application of mobile devices in language learning. MALL can be defined as mobile technologies in remote language learning (Burston, 2013). MALL is synonymous with portable devices because usually, the size of the devices used is small and can be carried anywhere. MALL cannot be separated from the use of personal and portable devices, such as mobile phones, MP3 / MP4 players, PDAs, tablet PCs, etc. (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2005). In designing MALL in language learning, it must also have the ability to connect to learning websites wirelessly. Always connected is what requires MALL users to always be connected (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012).

The development of the use of MALL in Indonesia in the context of EFL has been widely carried out. This is also because Indonesia is increasingly following the technology development. Curriculum development that includes the application of technology in the classroom and some teaching materials that have turned digital. One of the studies in the use of MALL in Indonesia was conducted by Durriyah & Zuhdi (2018). They investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions of using digital technology to teach EFL classrooms. Based on the results of this study, it was found that pre-service EFL teachers in Indonesia responded well to the use of digital technology that was integrated with mobile phones.

With the development of times and technology humans must be ready and continue to develop themselves, including teachers. Therefore, the skills and knowledge of teachers in the 21st century need to be improved and equipped with the latest technological knowledge. To be able to see the readiness of pre-service teachers in using MALL, the theory of TPACK (Mishra and Koehler, 2006) can be used as a basis and frame of mind (Moonyoung & Son, 2020; Sun, Strobel & Newby, 2016). By using The TPACK framework, we can see the extent of teachers' knowledge of the use of technology in education. Apart from TPACK, Scherer, Tondeur, Siddiq, & Baran (2017), stated that the success in integrating technology by pre-service teachers can also be seen from the attitude of the teachers involved. Their attitudes towards the use of technology can predict how their behaviour is for future classroom practices (Scherer et al., 2017).

In practice, the use of technology in online learning raises several problems. One of the problems that arise in online learning, especially in Indonesia during Covid-19 pandemic is the lack of teacher preparation in teaching using technology (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). This shows that the training and preparation of teachers in integrating technology are still not optimal. To achieve success in integrating technology in education, future teachers (pre-service teachers) must be properly trained and prepared. As Liza & Andriyanti (2019) said, "Teachers' constraints to deal with digital literacy in English teaching process can be reduced if pre-service teachers or students of English Education study program are well-equipped with digital literacy skills." In line with this, several previous studies emphasize the readiness of pre-service EFL teachers at integrating technology (Moonyoung & Son, 2020;

Ranellucci, Rosenberg, & Poitras, 2020; Liza & Andriyanti, 2019; Sun, Strobel, & Newby, 2016). Until now, research related to the readiness of pre-service teachers to use MALL in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic has not been widely studied, almost non-existent. Several previous studies only focused on the perception of pre-service EFL teachers on the use of technology in learning (Faridah, Iriyanti & Fachriyani, 2020; Saragih & Jaelani, 2020; Nariyati, et al., 2020).

The main objective of this research is to investigate the readiness of pre-service EFL teachers to use Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in their classroom teaching practicum during Covid-19 pandemic. This research is expected to provide an in-depth contribution regarding the readiness of pre-service teachers in using MALL. To achieve the objectives of this research, there are two research questions as follows: (1) How are pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the use of MALL? and (2) How are the experiences of pre-service teachers in their teaching practicum program with MALL related to the pre-service teachers' readiness?

METHOD

A qualitative approach is used in this study to investigate the readiness of pre-service EFL teachers to use MALL in the classroom during their teaching practice. As Stake (2010) argues, qualitative studies emphasize personal experiences in the situations described. This study used phenomenological as a research design. In this case, the researcher investigated the pre-service teachers' experiences, attitudes and opinions regarding the use of MALL.

Respondent

Participants involved in this study were four pre-service ELF teachers in an undergraduate English Education Department at a public university in Indonesia. All participants involved were students from the English Education Department who had participated in the learning program in that department for 6 semesters. All participants also carried out their teaching practicum for 16 weeks before this research was held. Participants involved in this research are at the same level of education, undergraduate bachelor degree. All participants have the same language background and have done teaching practicum in the same province. Each participant also has a different level of ability to use technology.

Instruments

The primary data collection tool used in this study is an interview. Interviews were chosen as an instrument in this study to investigate the readiness of pre-service teachers to use MALL. Interviews considered as the most appropriate way of expressing feelings, actions, and attitudes (Best & Kahn, 1998) related to the readiness of pre-service teachers. The source of the questions for this interview was adapted based on previous research by Moonyoung & Son (2020) and Sun, Strobel, & Newby (2016).

To provide additional data needed in this study, the researcher used a questionnaire as an additional data collection. The readiness of pre-service teachers in using mobile-assisted language learning during their teaching practice was measured using 5-point Likert-style survey instruments. The five items resulted in a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The statements in this questionnaire were adopted from similar study (Sun et al., 2016).

Procedures

After selecting and obtaining participants for this study, the first step is to record their background information. After collecting the data, participants were then asked to fill out a questionnaire given by the researcher via Google Form. After the questionnaire has been filled in, the participants will conduct individual interview sessions with researchers through Zoom Meetings. When both data from interviews and questionnaires have been obtained, the researcher then analyzes the data.

Data analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzes the data. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses thematic analysis as a method. The use of thematic analysis as a method in analyzing data is because according to Braun & Clarke (2006) as a means of identifying and analyzing the themes of the data, thematic analysis is significantly useful. After the data for the questionnaire obtained, then the data is processed. Data from Google Form is then categorized and coded. The code given was following the instrument items (1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree). After the data was processed, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings obtained from interviews and questionnaires conducted to four pre-service EFL teachers are discussed in this section. The results of the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, and the results of the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS tools. The researcher used Zoom Meeting and WhatsApp applications for interviews and Google Forms for questionnaires to collect data. Online data collection is done due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Based on the analysis of the two data collections, two main themes have been identified. The two themes include are the attitude of pre-service EFL teachers towards MALL and the experience of pre-service EFL teachers about MALL.

Table 1 – Participants' background information

Participant (Pseudonym)	Code	Age	Gender	Year of Program	MALL-related courses taken	Teaching Experience until then
Perri	P1	22	Female	4	Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris	8 week of teaching practicum at senior high school
Freya	P2	21				
Anna	P3				Male	
Mike	P4					

Attitude of pre-service EFL teachers towards the use of MALL

Based on interviews and questionnaires that have been conducted to four pre-service EFL teachers, they found their attitudes towards the use of MALL in learning. Most of the participants showed a positive attitude towards the use of MALL. According to one participant who felt that using MALL in learning activities was easy to do:

"...jadi lebih praktis karna karna kan harus online ya jadi menggunakan hp itu jadi lebih praktis dan ee kenapa lebih praktis alesannya karna aku kan PLP di sekolah yang agak pedalaman dan kalo untuk menggunakan laptop dan semacamnya itu bakal menyulitkan siswa. Jadi aku rasa menggunakan hp aja udah ngebantu banget buat siswa."

-P2

According to P2, using MALL is more accessible because she taught at a rural school. P2 considered ownership of devices such as computers or laptops that will make it difficult for students at rural schools if she is forced to use them. Therefore, P2 felt that MALL, especially mobile phones, is enough to help student learning.

The ease of accessing the device is one of the most felt advantages of mobile devices. In Indonesia, especially in rural areas, there are still many obstacles to owning devices such

as computers or laptops. Therefore, the use of smartphones is an alternative that can be used and can reach more students.

Another positive attitude was shown by other participants. Similar to the opinion of previous participants who felt that using MALL was easy. He also added another opinion about using MALL:

"Kelebihannya of course convenient. Maksudnya fleksibel gitu loh. Siswa ngga harus buka laptop ribet-ribet walaupun dia lagi ngelakuin sesuatu. Let's say misalnya mereka lagi cuci baju, mereka bisa dengerin ee gurunya ngomong tuh kalo misalnya ada zoom call yaudah mereka tinggal dengerin aja."

-P4

Besides being easy to use, P4 also felt that MALL, especially smartphones, has become more flexible. Students can do other things when they are required to attend online meetings. Students no longer need to open a computer or laptop to attend online meetings. The opinion expressed by P4 is in line with one of the characteristics of MALL, which it can be done anywhere and anytime. Students can take classes anytime and anywhere, not limited to the activities they are doing.

Not only the results of participant interviews but also the positive attitude of pre-service EFL teachers can also be seen from the results of the questionnaire that has been carried out as follows.

Table 2 - Pre-service EFL teachers' attitude towards MALL

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid N	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
A	2	50.0	50.0	75.0
SA	1	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

The

Neither Agree/Disagree = N; Agree = A; Strongly Agree = SA

table above

shows the results obtained from one of the questionnaire statements indicating pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards MALL. The questionnaire was given the statement, "Working with mobile devices or mobile applications is fun." The responses from 4 participants showed that 2 participants agreed, 1 participant strongly agreed, and 1 participant answered neutrally regarding the statement. Based on these results, participants showed a positive attitude towards the use of MALL. They agree that using MALL, especially mobile devices or mobile applications, is fun.

In addition, another factor related to the attitude of pre-service EFL teachers in using MALL is that they feel calmer when teaching online and using mobile devices. Two of the participants in this study expressed how they felt when they used mobile devices during their teaching practice. Here is one of their opinions:

"Pas ini sih, ee keuntungan nya aku tidak terlalu grogi karna ngga bertatap muka secara langsung kan,"

-P1

P1 felt that one of the advantages of applying MALL to his teaching practice is not feeling too nervous. According to P1, during the pandemic, she thought that teaching using MALL would not be too nervous because she didn't have to meet face to face with students. Pre-service teachers often feel that kind of thing when they start their teaching practice. They will feel scared, nervous and overthink if they have to deal directly with students in the classroom.

As stated by one of the following participants. Apart from the positive attitude, based on the results of the interview, also found that the participants had other attitudes towards the use of MALL. One of the attitudes shown by Anna. Although he found the use of MALL quite helpful in his studies, he also revealed other things:

"Ini jujur pas aku.. apa ini sebelumnya plp aku ngerasa kayak gimana.. kayak pikiran-pikiran aku kayak, aduh bakal gagal ngga ya? Nah aku ada juga rasa ngga pedenya, pada saat mau online kelas itu kan. Kayak, Aku bisa ngga ya ngoperasiin Google Meet? Anak ini paham ngga ya apa yang aku aku iniin nanti kalo ngejelasinnya pakai Google Meet? gitu."

-P3

One of the participants showed her attitude before starting the teaching practice. She felt less confident before beginning her teaching practice. She felt less confident because she doubted her ability to operate mobile applications such as Zoom Meeting or Google Meet. It is quite natural for pre-service EFL teachers to feel when they start their teaching practice for the first time.

The positive attitude shown by the participants in this study can be a reasonable hope for their future class. As stated by Scherer et al. (2018); Zhang, Aikman, & Sun (2008), pre-service teachers' attitudes towards technology can predict how their behavior is for future classroom practices. The participants in this study also felt that they could easily teach by using MALL, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other research related to the use of MALL in Indonesia was conducted by Inggita, Ivone, & Saukah (2019). In their research, they focus on seeing the future picture of MALL through the application of English teachers. The findings of this study indicate that teachers are aware of the potential use of MALL in language learning. In addition, As stated by Buabeng-Andoh (2012), teachers will not try and incorporate technology into their teaching if the teacher feels that online tools do not meet their needs or the needs of students.

EFL Teachers' Pre-Service Experience Related to MALL

In this section, the experience of pre-service EFL teachers related to MALL is divided into several sub-themes. The sub-themes include their condition before starting teaching practice, their experience during teaching practice, and their challenges during teaching practice. The division of these sub-themes is made to clarify how the EFL teachers' pre-service journey with MALL is.

Pre-service EFL Teachers Before Commencing Teaching Practice

One of the participants gave their knowledge about technology before commencing teaching education program.

"Sebelumnya aku sudah cukup sering menggunakan alat-alat dan aplikasi yang digunakan sebelum menginjak jenjang kuliah."

-P4

P4 said that he had used mobile devices and applications quite often since before entering college. Knowledge of technology before entering the teaching education program is quite influential in the development of technological knowledge of a pre-service teacher. If a pre-service teacher already has sufficient knowledge related to technology before starting a teaching education program, then they will be easy to explore further in the future.

Three of the four participants involved in this study expressed their level of confidence regarding teaching using MALL. They feel they are quite proficient in using mobile devices or mobile applications. As stated by one of the research participants in the interview:

"Kepercayaan diri aku dalam menggunakan aplikasi mobile mobile atau tools yang bersifat mobile seperti handphone laptop proyektor dan lain-lain itu sekitar 100%. Terus aku dalam penggunaannya juga cukup mahir menurut aku sendiri terus karena aku pikir kalau masalah penggunaan handphone itu hampir setiap hari aku menggunakannya."

-P1

P1 stated that she is very confident in using mobile applications or mobile devices such as smartphones, laptops, or projectors. She felt that mobile devices, especially smartphones, are no problem because she uses them almost every day. In addition to factors from the pre-service teachers themselves, readiness in using MALL is also supported by campus institutions. One form of preparing pre-service teachers before teaching practice is to provide courses that can help them during their teaching practice. As one participant said about the courses that helped him in technological content knowledge:

"Yang aku ingat dulu pas aku di semester berapa ya semester 5 atau semester 3 aku lupa, itu ada mata kuliah pembelajaran media gitu media pembelajaran ya media pembelajaran. Untuk sejauh ini pelajaran itu berguna buat aku buat belajar sesuatu yang baru tentang media pembelajaran."-P3

P3 said that she got one of the courses on Instructional Media in Teaching English. She felt helped by the course because it provided information related to any media used in learning.

As Moonyoung & Son (2020) stated, the experience of using technology by pre-service teachers can also be one of the influences of their readiness. Therefore, in this study, the experience of pre-service teachers with MALL was also investigated. Before they practice teaching, the campus has an important role in preparing pre-service teachers. This preparation is important to be able to minimize the obstacles that prospective teachers will face. According to Liza & Andriyanti (2019), if teachers or students in the English Education study program have good digital literacy skills, teachers' constraints in digital literacy in teaching English can be reduced.

Pre-Service EFL Teachers During Their Teaching Practicum

During the teaching practicum, the participants in this study used a variety of media. Smartphones are one of the tools they use in their teaching practice. In addition, the use of Google Classroom and Zoom Meeting became the most widely used applications by the four participants. As stated by one participant:

"Pakainya Google classroom sama telegram sih lebih banyak. Kahoot pake, tapi hanya sekedar buat latihan soal, latihan soal untuk minggu pertama aja karena kaya masih nyantai gitu. Dan aku pakai Zoom Meeting Cuma 2 kali."

-P3

P3 revealed that she mostly used Google Classroom and Telegram as learning media. In addition, she also used Kahoot for evaluation and Zoom Meeting, which is used only twice. The selection of various media platforms or applications is based on several factors. One of the factors mentioned a lot during the interview was being directly selected by the civil servant teacher or the teacher who teaches where they practice teaching. Another factor in the selection of learning media was conveyed by one of the participants:

"Jadi faktor utamanya ada di guru pamong sama efisiensi nya aja. Jadi siswa ngga perlu install banyak aplikasi."

-P4

According to P4, the main factor in choosing learning media is the teacher's decision. Another factor he considers is efficiency. Therefore, students do not need to install many applications on their respective devices.

To support the data that has been obtained from the interviews, the experience of pre-service EFL teachers in using MALL in their teaching practicum can also be seen from the

results of the questionnaires that have been conducted. The following are the results of a questionnaire that has been conducted on four pre-service EFL teachers.

The four participants can adequately choose and apply mobile devices or applications into their classes in terms of pedagogical beliefs. In addition, the four participants also strongly agreed that mobile devices could make learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic more effective. At the consistent level of using mobile devices or mobile applications, it can be seen that two people feel that they are compatible, and the other two are not sure. In terms of perceived ease of use, two people answered neutrally, and one responded that they disagreed, and one responded that they agreed with the ease of using MALL. Two participants responded that they had good experiences during teaching practice using MALL, while two other people answered neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

As Miftakh & Samsi (2015) stated, in the teaching and learning process, the presence of media can simplify and clarify learning materials. Based on this opinion, the use of media, especially in the application of MALL, is essential. Various media and platforms were used during the experience of research participants using MALL in their teaching practice. Can adjust needs with personal desires in choosing time, tools, or learning media is one of the advantages of using MALL (Hwang & Wu, 2014). In addition, participants in this study also considered what media or tools were suitable for them to use.

In addition, in this study, the participants demonstrated their ability to choose the media or platform used. They also quite understand the character and condition of their students. Participants can adjust the use of media or platforms that are suitable and according to the needs of their respective students. Apart from selecting media for students, the participants also have a reasonably good ability in choosing learning content and data processing tools they need to process student attendance data or process student learning outcomes. With the achievement of this ability, it can be said that it is in accordance with the TPACK theory (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). TPACK can provide knowledge for pre-service teachers about skills in using technology and make decisions about what technology is suitable for use.

Challenges in Implementing MALL During Teaching Practicum

During the experience of applying MALL in teaching practicum, pre-service EFL teachers often encounter challenges or difficulties. As they said in the interview session. Most of their challenges are in the stability of the internet network. Especially for them or their students in settlements far from the city center, internet signal is one of the main obstacles.

"Kekurangan nya eee pertama jaringan koneksi internetnya kan. Jadi ada beberapa siswa ang saat aku ngajar nih mereka dengan alesan ngga ada jaringan. Trus ada juga yang mereka ga ada kouta internet karna kan yg tadi aku bilang. Mereka itu sekolah yang di pedalam dengan ekonomi yang eee sedikit dibawah gitu, jadi eee kadang untuk beli kouta aja mereka agak susah dan bantuan internet juga harus ada proses segala macam gitu."

-P2

As stated by P2, internet connection is one of the shortcomings in the application of MALL, which can hinder students from attending lessons. In addition, another problem is regarding the internet quota. For students with poor economic conditions, it is difficult for them to buy an internet quota. Moreover, assistance from the government regarding internet quotas requires a fairly long process.

Apart from the results of the interviews which showed some of the challenges that pre-service EFL teachers found, the results of the questionnaires also supported their statements. The questionnaire given to pre-service teachers regarding the challenges in implementing MALL in their teaching practice. The statement on the questionnaire was, "I often face some difficulties during my teaching practice on mobile devices at home like poor internet connection or time management, etc." Two participants gave an agree to response to the

statement. While the other two participants responded strongly agree that they often find difficulties during their teaching practice using MALL.

Applying a learning technique does not escape challenges or difficulties. In this study, participants also shared their experiences regarding the challenges they faced when using MALL in their teaching practice. One of the challenges is the problem of network stability. This problem is in line with the opinion of Alhassan (2016), Castro (2012), and McCombs (2010) regarding difficulty accessing signals. MALL is very identical to a wireless network. Another challenge that is often found is the cost of internet quota. The high cost of accessing cellular data and different tariffs for each cellular provider is one of the obstacles in implementing MALL (Metzgar 2017; Yousafzai et al. 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

All participants showed a positive attitude towards the use of MALL. Although they have different proficiency levels in the use of mobile devices or mobile applications, they find the use of MALL very helpful for them during their teaching practice. This positive attitude is expected to be a hope for their future class to integrate MALL, according to Scherer et al. (2018). In addition to the positive attitude shown by the participants, they were also quite reasonable in their experience during teaching practice using MALL. The participants can choose and decide what media or platform suits the students they are dealing with. During their teaching practice with MALL, they have adequately prepared their abilities and skills related to the content, technology, and pedagogy. This is also due to the role of the campus in helping to prepare their pre-service teachers before teaching practice. Even though they have prepared themselves well, the participants did not escape from difficulties or challenges during their teaching practice with MALL. One of the most frequently encountered difficulties is internet signal problems. Overall, the participants have shown that they are pretty well prepared to use MALL in their teaching practice program in this study.

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