

EFL Students' Perception of Extensive Reading through MALL during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Risa Juliana¹, Rina Listia², Fahmi Hidayat³, Nasrullah⁴

¹1810117320008@mhs.ulm.ac.id,

²rina_listia@ulm.ac.id,

³fahmihidayat@ulm.ac.id

⁴nasrullah01@ulm.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32528/issn.v2i1.135>

*Correspondence:

Risa Juliana, Rina Listia, Fahmi Hidayat,

Nasrullah

Email:

1810117320008@mhs.ulm.ac.id,

rina_listia@ulm.ac.id,

fahmihidayat@ulm.ac.id,

nasrullah01@ulm.ac.id

Published: Agustus, 2022



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract: There has been growing interest in the study of extensive reading in this decade, especially in the area of students' responses by using mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). However, of those studies, only a few explored the effects of assisted learning from the students' internal lens. To fill the gap, this study investigates the students' perceptions of implementing extensive reading through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 pandemic viewed from an internal perspective. The subjects were students' batch 2019 at English Language Study Program at Lambung Mangkurat University. The researchers used purposive sampling to select 20 students based on specific criteria. The study used a qualitative approach that focused on a case study. The instruments were semi-structured interviews. The interview data were interpreted in narration. Based on the findings, students positively perceive implementing extensive reading through MALL during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was discovered four themes involve enhancement of self-students motivations, encouragement of students' feelings, fulfilling their language needs, and reflecting students' perspectives. This study calls for the inclusion of students to read extensively using mobile devices as a good learning strategy to improve their Language skills. However, they must find ways to overcome the challenges.

Keywords: Extensive reading, MALL, perception, the Covid-19 pandemic era

INTRODUCTION

Extensive reading was used as a teaching strategy that described situations during which students read significant amounts of material at their level in a foreign language (Day & Bamford [1]). To develop good reading habits, increase their understanding of language and structure, and encourage an interest in reading, the students must read extensively (Richards & Schmidt [2]). Irgananta [3] found that extensive reading had four benefits: students enjoyed, expanded their imagination, developed their English language abilities, and increased knowledge. Extensive reading also had four learning obstacles: the text's language style, a lack of motivation, a lack of language proficiency, and a lack of persistence in developing the habit of reading. Nurviyani [4] mentioned in her research that students were enthusiastic throughout the extensive reading process; using their smartphones made them feel accustomed to reading every day. As a result, individuals could better absorb the reading content and improve the text's general structure. However, students encountered difficulties during the extensive reading procedures, such as a lacked digital literacy and lacked motivation. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic of Covid-19 throughout the world [5]. Because of this situation, the implementation of extensive reading has been constrained due to limited activities during the pandemic. Consequently, the appropriate strategy for implementing extensive reading during the covid-19 pandemic is Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). It enabled students to do many activities online, including extensive reading activities outside the classroom. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) was used as a mobile device to learn target language acquisition (Miangah &

Nezarat [6]). This strategy was beneficial for students to improve their language skills. Ni'mah & Umamah [7], in their collaborative research, showed improvement in students in extensive reading with media digital; they showed a positive attitude toward digital reading. Because of the practicality, portability, flexibility, accessibility, and affordances of e-books, they could efficiently complete significant tasks. Extensive reading assisted students in developing a reading habit, finding interest in lessons, and developing other English skills. Therefore, the researchers want to know how students perceive extensive reading using mobile devices during the Covid-19 pandemic era. According to Hong et al. [8] they discussed that the perception was how someone acts according to what they learn towards using something, whether they approved of the method or about what they learned. Then, they had different perceptions (Zulfikar & Aulia [9]). Thus, from the backgrounds described above, the researchers found students' perceptions of the implementation of extensive reading through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study explored the benefits and challenges of implementing extensive reading through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 pandemic for ELSEP students.

METHOD

Research design

The researchers employed a qualitative approach. This approach aims to explore extensive reading and produce a comprehensive reading strategy using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Furthermore, the type of research was conducted the case study. This type aims to investigate the phenomenon of extensive reading during the Covid-19 pandemic and explore students' perceptions, especially the students' from batch 2019 at English Language Education at Lambung Mangkurat University.

Participants of the research

The subjects were the students' from batch 2019 at English Language Education at Lambung Mangkurat University. The researchers chose this subject because they have already finished the extensive reading course as the primary requirement for this research. Their learning process was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, they already have experience with extensive reading using mobile devices. It assumed they could inform the researchers about their perception of the implementation of extensive reading through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The researchers used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling requires researchers to be deliberately subjective in selecting respondents and how these responses can affect the study to check validity, Harding [10]. However, Arikunto [11] stated that if the subject is less than 100, it is better to take all subjects. Nevertheless, if the subject is more than 100, the writer can take between 10% – 15 % or 20% – 25 % or 50%. Based on the theory, the researchers took a sample of proportionally 20% from four classes of extensive reading courses. For every class of extensive reading courses such as A1, A2, A3, and A4, selected five students based on specific criteria: students who like reading or reading for pleasure using mobile devices (smartphones, laptops, PC, and tablets) during the covid-19 pandemic and have experience using reading applications. The total sample is 20 students.

Instrument

The instrument was an interview. It was used as a data collection technique to find problems to investigate and know the respondents' problems in depth (Sugiyono [12]). Moreover, the type of interview was the semi-structured interview. Ary et al. [13] mentioned that semi-structured interviews are a hybrid of unstructured and

structured interviews in which the researchers develop topics of interest and questions. It implies that the researchers can develop the essential questions to get information from respondents. In conducting the interview, the questions are open-ended. The researchers asked eight open-ended questions. Cresswell [14] mentioned that open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves freely.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

There are four themes in this research elaborated to correspond the research questions, involve: enhancement of self-students motivations, encouragement of students' feelings, fulfilling their language needs, and reflecting students' perspectives.

1. *Enhancement of Self-students' Motivations*

The results of this interview emphasized the substantial reading activities of students using mobile devices as a strategy to read extensively in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era. It provided students with ease, mobility and cost.

First, the use of mobile devices for extensive reading allowed students to easily accessible to reading material to increase extensive English reading activities, which motivated students to integrate digital literacy with the reading learning throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, the duration of reading activity increased. As stated by student 5:

“In my opinion, reading using a mobile device can increase the duration of reading, because every day we cannot be separated from a smartphone, especially learning activities during this pandemic that use mobile devices. So, reading using a smartphone can **make it easier for me to access reading material.**” (Student 5)

(“Menurut saya, membaca menggunakan hp dapat menambah durasi membaca, karena setiap hari kita tidak lepas dari hp, apalagi kegiatan belajar di masa pandemi ini yang menggunakan berbagai macam perangkat seluler. Jadi, membaca menggunakan hp dapat memudahkan saya mengakses bahan bacaan.”)

Second, the use of mobile devices for extensive reading provided mobility for student. It motivated students to spend their free time for reading. Consequently, the number of reading material increased.

“I make **reading as fun** to add new insight and heal from the fatigue of studying and campus assignments.” (Student 2)

(“Membaca itu saya jadikan sebagai kesenangan untuk dapat meanambah wawasan dan sebagai healing dari lelahnya belajar dan tugas-tugas kampus.”)

Other students indicated that they read to find helpful activities to engage in during the pandemic, as mentioned:

“...to find useful activities to fill my free time during the pandemic, namely by reading so that **I get a lot of new knowledge.**” (Student 3)

(“... untuk mencari kegiatan yang bermanfaat mengisi waktu luang saya di masa pandemi yaitu dengan membaca sehingga saya mendapatkan banyak ilmu baru.”)

Last, the use of mobile devices for extensive reading provided low cost to get the book they want. As expressed by students 6:

“I think yes because smartphones **provide various types of reading materials, topics, and exciting titles of the books** to choose the book I want.” (Student 6)

(“Saya rasa iya, karena hp menyediakan berbagai jenis bahan bacaan, topik dan judul buku yang menarik sehingga saya bisa memilih buku yang saya inginkan.”)

As a result of mobile devices that give convenience, mobility, and low cost, students boosted their motivation for extensive reading. It has demonstrated an increase in the time and amount of reading materials reading during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. *Encouragement of Students’ Feelings*

The findings of interviews with students reveal that they can easily find reading materials without having particular challenge, which increases their reading desire. Reducing the time required to search reading material benefits students' reading skills, particularly in extensive reading. As indicated by students:

“I think yes, with this pandemic conditions using a smartphone really **helps me in finding reading material easily.**” (Students 3)

(“Menurut saya iya, dengan kondisi pandemi ini menggunakan hp sangat membantu saya dalam mencari bahan bacaan dengan mudah.”)

The development of technology today are obsessed with doing everything quickly, learning included. The students have automatic to study online due to Covid-19 pandemic and more prefer use mobile device for flexible time and place restrictions. Self-study using mobile devices is obviously improvement in language learning.

“...Reading using a smartphone makes it easier for me **to be able to access reading materials anytime and anywhere,** because online library available 24 hour in a day.” (Students 1)

(“... Membaca menggunakan hp memudahkan saya untuk bisa mengakses bahan bacaan kapan saja dan dimana saja, karena tersedia perpustakaan online 24 jam perhari”.)

Self-study with a mobile device instead of carrying a printed book, which is less flexible in use, this media allows you to learn in a relaxed and stress-free environment. Using printed books instead of mobile devices is less popular nowadays since it is difficult to carry and takes up a lot of space.

“I feel when reading using this smartphone is **more fun and relaxing,** because it is more flexible to carry everywhere and efficient than printed books.” (Students 5)

(“Saya merasa selama membaca menggunakan hp ini lebih enjoy dan relax, karena lebih fleksible aja untuk dibawa kemana-mana dan effesien dibanding buku cetak”.)

In the usage of mobile devices, it may adapt to its users by modifying the font, size, style, and screen layout in reading activities to help fulfill the user's needs. By employing a mobile device that can adjust to needs, for example, if someone has difficulties reading small letters in a printed book, the letters may be enlarged in mobile device to make it easier for that individual to read.

“I find it more comfortable to read on a laptop because **it can change the font size, style, and background or mark unfamiliar vocabulary.**” (Student 6)

(“Saya merasa lebih nyaman membaca menggunakan laptop karena dapat mengubah ukuran huruf, gaya huruf, latar belakang dan dapat memberi tanda pada kosakata yang belum diketahui artinya.”)

Other statements a student said in the interview that they might share the reading material with their friends:

“The advantage that I feel when reading using a smartphone is that it can increase my interest in reading because it is more flexible and enjoyable. Besides that, it is **easy to share reading materials in links or pdfs with my friends**. So I constantly update new reading material.” (Student 2)

(“Keuntungan yang saya rasakan saat membaca menggunakan hp adalah saya dapat meningkatkan minat baca karena lebih fleksible dan enjoy saat membacanya, selain itu, saya jadi mudah berbagi bahan bacaan entah itu berupa link atau pdf kepada teman saya. Jadi saya selalu update bahan bacaan baru.”)

Secondly, students' eyes grow tired and lose concentration when reading large texts for an extended period of time since they are exposed to or look at the mobile device screen for an extended period of time. To avoid eye injury, it is preferable to just use a mobile device in moderation and only when necessary. As stated of students:

“The challenge that I feel when reading using my smartphone is not being able to look at the cellphone screen for too long because **it makes my eyes tired and sore which makes me bored and sleepy**.” (Student 3)

(“Tantangan yang saya rasakan saat membaca menggunakan hp, saya tidak dapat melihat ke layar hp terlalu lama karena membuat mata saya lelah dan perih yang menyebabkan saya menjadi bosan dan mengantuk.”)

Students are also distracted by social media on their mobile devices, which interferes with their reading activities. It's difficult to concentrate when reading on a mobile device if you don't disable social media to prevent distracting notifications.

“While reading on my smartphone, I get annoyed because there is **an incoming notification that makes me want to open another social media application**.” (Student 1)

(“Saya saat membaca menggunakan hp, saya merasa terganggu karena adanya notifikasi yang masuk yang menyebabkan saya ingin membuka aplikasi social media lain.”)

There will undoubtedly be technological concerns while utilizing technology, such as the necessity for a quota to connect to the internet so that you can go online and browse reading material online. Signal is also an important consideration while using a mobile device because it is essential to connect to the internet in order to obtain reading material.

“...I get really annoyed when I'm busy reading but **get interrupted by the network**.” (Student 4)

(“...saya sangat kesal saat sedang asik-asiknya membaca tetapi malah terkendala jaringan”)

As a result, it is possible to conclude that students benefit from reading on a mobile device, which has the potential to improve the reading comprehension experience. However, students were concerned about their eyes becoming weary while reading on mobile devices for an extended period, as well as a large number of distractions (notifications) and technical issues (quota, network, and mobile device).

3. *Fulfillment of Students' Language Needs*

Based on the findings of this interview, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of students believe that mobile devices make things easy for them to strengthen their language

skills throughout the pandemic. With looking up the definition of a word, which makes it easier to write a phrase or paragraph. As indicated by the students:

“I can easily interpret unfamiliar vocabulary by copying and pasting words in online dictionaries” (Student 4)

(“Saya dapat dengan mudah mengartikan kosa kata yang belum diketahui dengan cara mengcopy-paste kata pada kamus online”)

Using online dictionaries to search for words that are still not know, the meaning can enhance fluency in English and also speed up the time rather than using a printed dictionary, with the added benefit of being able to listen to audio that directly listens to how to pronounce correctly and precisely.

“I think yes that extensive reading improves fluency as I usually use online dictionaries to listen to audio to find out the correct spelling of a word, if there is a word I don't know.” (Student 7)

(“Saya pikir ya bahwa membaca ekstensif meningkatkan kefasihan karena saya biasanya menggunakan kamus online untuk mendengarkan audio untuk mengetahui ejaan kata yang benar, jika ada kata yang saya tidak tahu.”)

4. Reflection of Students' Perspectives

Based on the findings of this interview, it is reasonable to conclude that reading stories help teach students meaningful and valuable lessons they can implement in their daily lives. Reading also strengthens a person's capacity to empathize. Empathy is required for the development of social relationships and to understand the emotions of others. The reading activity influences many parts of human social life or relationship, where one may gain more knowledge about various cultures or perspectives of another community.

“My insight increases by reading for pleasure because when we can interpret each word or sentence well, we can take the message from the story.” (Students 8)

(“Wawasan saya bertambah dengan membaca untuk kesenangan karena ketika kita bisa memaknai setiap kata atau kalimat dengan baik, kita bisa mengambil pesan dari cerita tersebut.”)

Discussion

In this section, the researcher answered the research question based on the research findings on the students' perceptions of implementing extensive reading using mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 pandemic. To prove the findings could answer the research questions, the researchers discovered four themes: enhancement of self-student motivations, encouragement of students' feelings, fulfilling their language needs, and reflecting students' perspectives.

The first was the enhancement of self-students motivations. The data result was proven by extensive reading using mobile devices that made it easier to access reading material so that students could carry out reading activities during the pandemic. Then, extensive reading used mobile devices provided mobility to students where students could carry out reading activities anywhere and anytime. Students were motivated to fill their spare time with reading; students increased the number of reading materials. Also, extensive reading used mobile devices provides a low cost, so students get quickly the book they want. These findings are in line with Cote & Milliner [15], who mentioned that mobile devices had the potential to enhance the reading experience as a whole. It provided ease, mobility, and cost (Huang [16]). Students are encouraged to enjoy

reading more than in the previous through extensive reading, in which the reader chooses the reading text, the time to read, and the location to read without fear of assessment (Richards & Schmidt [3]) so that they were more proficient and more confident in reading several books of their own choice (Yildirim [17]).

The second was the encouragement of students' feelings. Students mentioned that extensive reading using mobile devices helped them find reading material due to this pandemic situation. It implies the existence of this mobile device in finding reading materials helpfully where this pandemic condition has limited activities such as being unable to go to the library or buy books at bookstores. Therefore, the student was still reading during this pandemic situation. Other students stated that they felt extensive reading using mobile devices could do anytime and anywhere because they could access the online library 24 hours. It implies that students could do reading activities whenever and where they want as long as they are comfortable in the reading activity. Then, students mentioned that extensive reading using mobile devices was more fun and stress-free because mobile devices were flexible and efficient for reading activities. It implies that students read the amount of material in a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere. Thus, extensive reading on mobile devices made it easier to find reading material, do it wherever and whenever, created a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere, and quickly changed the font, size, style, and screen layout. In line with Pino-silva [18], who discussed that extensive reading on a mobile device provided access to thousands of recently published and exciting articles. It can be completed outside the classroom, anywhere, and anytime, as long as students are comfortable with reading (Krashen [19]). Also, it allowed readers to customize their reading experience by, for example, altering the font size, style, and screen layout (Huang [16]). Besides that, it revealed that students' eyes become tired and lose focus when reading long texts for a longer time. When reading, they felt distractions (notifications) and technological issues (quota, signal, mobile devices). In line with Cote & Milliner [15], they stated that long-term work performed on electronic screens could be confusing and potentially distracting. The distraction of some notifications affected them to focus on digital books for a longer time (Mesureur [20]). The students also complained of "tired eyes" after reading long texts on their mobile devices (Huang [16]).

The third was the fulfillment of students' language needs. Most students stated that they could easily interpret unfamiliar vocabulary by copying and pasting words in online dictionaries and could enhance fluency in English with the added benefit of listening to audio that directly listens to how to pronounce correctly and precisely. Thus, extensive reading used by mobile devices increases enriches vocabulary and fluency. In line with Yildirim [17], he emphasized that extensive reading helped students to develop their foreign language skills.

Last was the reflection of students' perspectives. The findings indicated that reading stories helped teach students meaningful and valuable lessons they could implement in their daily lives. Reading also strengthens a person's capacity to empathize. Empathy was required for the development of social relationships and to understand the emotions of others. The reading activity influences many parts of human social life or relationship, where one may gain more knowledge about various cultures or perspectives of another community. However, to acquire the message from the reading material, students must be able to interpret the reading text well. In line with Bojanic & Topalov [21], they said that books were valuable instruments for being acquainted with the culture and way of life of people from other countries.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, students positively perceive implementing extensive reading through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Four themes were discovered:

enhancement of self-student motivations, encouragement of students' feelings, fulfilling their language needs and reflecting students' perspectives.

The first was the enhancement of self-students motivations. Mobile devices provide the student with ease, mobility, and cost. It motivated the students to still read extensively although the limited activities during this situation. It has been proven that most students increased their reading length and number of reading material using a mobile device during the pandemic.

The second was the encouragement of students' feelings. It has proven students easier to find reading material, do it wherever and whenever, create a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere, and easily change the font, size, style, and screen layout through mobile devices for extensive reading. Besides, students are concerned about reading long texts on mobile devices, such as eyestrain, loss of concentration when reading long texts for a longer time, distractions (notifications), and technological issues (quota, signal, mobile devices).

The third was the fulfillment of students' language needs. It has been proven that extensive reading improves students' language skills through mobile devices. Students may expand their vocabulary and become more fluent.

The last was the reflection of students' perspectives. It has been demonstrated that students must be able to interpret the reading text well. The reading activity influences many parts of human social life or relationship, where one may gain more knowledge about various cultures or perspectives of another community.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bamford, J., & Day, R. R., *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- [2] Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R., *Longman Dictionary of Language and Teaching Applied Linguistics*, 4th ed. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2010.
- [3] Irjananta, R. K., *Students' Perception on the Implementation of Extensive Reading at English Language Education Department*, S.H, thesis, ELED, UMY, Yogyakarta, 2018.
- [4] Nurviyani, V., Implementation of Extensive Reading through a Digital Instructional Media. *ELTIN Journal*, vol. 8, pp. 35-41, 2020.
- [5] World Health Organization (WHO). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Situation Report–53. Available online: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation>
- [6] Miangah, T. M., & Nezarat, A., “Mobile-Assisted Language Learning”, *International Journal of Distributed and Parallel Systems*, vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 1–11, 2012.
- [7] Ni'mah, D., & Umamah, A., Mobile-Assisted on Extensive Reading: Students'voices. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 41-48, 2020.
- [8] Hong, K. S., Ridzuan, A. A., & Kuek M. K., “Students' attitudes toward the use of the Internet for learning: A study at a university in Malaysia”, *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 45–49, 2010.
- [9] Zulfikar, & Aulia, C. T., “Exploring Acehese EFL College Students' Perceptions on Collaborative Writing”, *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*. 12(2), pp. 171-180, 2020.
- [10] Harding, J., *Qualitative Data Analysis: From Start to Finish*. SAGE, 2013.
- [11] Arikunto, S., *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Rineka Cipta, 2016.
- [12] Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: PT Alfabet, 2016.

-
- [13] Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C., *Introduction to Research in Education*, 8th ed. Wadsworth, 2010.
- [14] Creswell, J. W., *Penelitian Kualitatif & Desain Riset*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014.
- [15] Cote, T., & Milliner, B., “Extensive Reading on Mobile Devices: Is it a worthwhile strategy?”, *The 12th Asia TEFL and 23rd MELTA International Conference*, 2014.
- [16] Huang, H., “E-reading and E-discussion: EFL learners' perceptions of an E-book reading program” *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 258–281, 2013.
- [17] Yildirim, A., *The Benefits of Extensive Reading for Foreign Language Acquisition*. GRIN Verlag, 2014.
- [18] Pino-silva, J., Extensive reading through the internet: Is it the worth the While?. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 85-96, 2006.
- [19] Krashen, S. D., *The Power of reading: Insights from the Research*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.
- [20] Mesureur, G., An evaluation of ESL reading efficiency and motivation using E-book vs. printed book. *Extensive Reading World Congress Proceedings, 2013*, pp. 311-320, September 2013.
- [21] Bojanić, B. B. R., & Topalov, J. P., Textbooks in the EFL classroom: Defining, assessing and analyzing. *Zbornik Radov of the Faculty of Philosophy near Pristini*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2016.