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IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) AT STIT PALAPA NUSANTARA LOMBOK-NTB

Meningkatkan Kemampuan Menulis Siswa Melalui Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Mobile (MALL) di STIT Palapa Nusantara Lombok-NTB

Rijnan

STIT Palapa Nusantara Lombok - NTB

Email: rijnannanda@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research investigated the utilization of mobile-assisted language to enhance students' writing skills. Conducting of the research was to improve student achievement in writing skills. This research was a classroom action research. The subjects were eighth-grade students in the High School of STIT Palapa. The procedure of the study consisted of two phases, namely the preliminary study and the action. In the preliminary study, information obtained was on the student's problems, and in the action, the phases of action research presented in the classroom. Data collected were through observation, questionnaires, tests, and field notes. The data analyzed were quantitatively and qualitatively. The research result showed that using mobile support in language learning significantly improved students' writing skills. Before the implementation of the intervention, the mean score of students' writing achievement was 56; after the intervention, it was 78. The post-intervention score was higher than the pre-intervention score where the upper minimum completion criterion (KKM) for proficiency was 70 achieved by 25 students. The post-action success of MALL supported by several pieces of evidence were first, the use of Mall, students were motivated to learn English writing according to a lesson plan. Second, students focused on paying attention to the teacher's guide. Lastly, the material of the recount text designed was the juxtaposed pictures so that students found the idea of writing easily.

Keywords: *MALL, Improve, Writing, Skill.*

INTRODUCTION

For millions of people of all ages around the world, mobile technology is a daily routine in communication. The advance of mobile technology is becoming increasingly noticeable in various fields, including education (Kheryadi, 2018). In a survey of Advanced Placement (AP) and National Writing Project (NWP) teachers, digital tools are beneficial to students in learning writing as they encourage the majority of them to express personal thoughts or ideas in written work and have a wide user base to share and receive feedback.

Nowadays, the utilization of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is during the covid-19 pandemic has largely changed the way English taught in schools. Every school should at least be able to learn online by using mobile technology to help students receive and give feedback from teachers. The popularity of mobile-assisted language learning has rapidly changed learning, communication, and even our lifestyle. The utilization of MALL remarkably expands learning opportunities, needs, and goals, and has profound implications for many learning activities and learning styles. Despite this ubiquitous presence, no single definition of 'mobile learning' or 'm-learning' exists. Many researchers have focused on mobile-assisted language learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Mobility needs to be understood in terms of spatial movement and how this movement enables time-shifting and boundary-crossing. Jenkins et al., (2003) identify five unique pedagogical characteristics of mobile devices that accurately describe the mobility aspects of m-learning such as portability, social interactivity, context sensitivity, and connectivity.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) characterized by the fact that is learning can be spontaneous, informal, personalized, and ubiquitous. Such learning is enhanced by people face a lack of free time due to longer working hours. In such an environment, busy people tend to use portable devices to learn new material rather than take time for traditional classroom courses. Mobile learning is a proprietary, cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for smartphones or gadgets and select feature phones that use the Internet to communicate. Furthermore, mobile learning as instant messaging is very easy to use. The majority of the students use these mobile features for academic and other purposes. Students quickly notified of any update or message is that a member of a group posts.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) could be understood as the penetration of mobile technology into the language learning process. The mobility, accessibility, and practicality of mobile technology are the key components that can create this kind of situation in the classroom for learning purposes. (Duman et al., 2015)stated that the preference for mobile phones is due to their cheap

price, small size, user appeal, ease of use, and flexibility. Any language learning that takes place under the umbrella of these devices can be termed mobile-assisted language learning.

Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) describes an approach to language learning supported or enhanced by the use of a portable mobile device. MALL is a subset of both mobile learning (m-learning) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Hashim et al., 2017). MALL is language learning using mobile devices such as Mobile phones (cell phones) and smartphones phones (including iPhone or iPad), MP3 or MP4 players (e.g. iPods), and personal digital assistants (PDAs) (e.g., Palm Pilot, Blackberry, etc.).

The advantage of MALL is that students can access language-learning materials and communicate with their teachers and classmates anytime, anywhere. Several innovative projects involve the use of mobile devices, particularly mobile phones (Thornton & Houser, 2005). Their study found that the group using text messaging learned twice as much vocabulary as the group learning via the Internet. The group also improved their scores twice as much as the group that learned with paper. The learners' attitudes also improved in that they preferred to receive the text message instructions and found text message instruction to be a valuable method. The findings conducted were in a similar study with Italian learners. They sent vocabulary and idioms, definitions, and example sentences via text message. In addition, Kiernan & Aizawa (2004) investigated the use of mobile devices in task-based learning. They believed that task-based learning is the best way to promote language acquisition. Similar to Thornton and Houser, they divided students into three groups: PC email users, mobile users, and face-to-face users. Their study found that although mobile users used fewer words, they were still able to communicate effectively (Harwati & Widodo, 2017). In addition, there were also a number of attempts to use certain features of mobile devices in language teaching and learning environments. For example, Japanese learners use the video recording function of their mobile phones to produce short English monologues. He found that the learners could produce longer and longer videos over time. Another study, gave young Dutch learners mobile phones with the GPS function to help them learn English vocabulary. The learners found their way around a zoo and completed a series of games related to the different animals in the zoo. Japanese learners of English to scan quick-response codes (QR) posted around the university to complete various information-sharing tasks. QR codes are graphics that allow phones to automatically access online information.

Mobile learning has become more personal; with its features, students no longer have to be forced to enjoy learning. They can reread the text sent by the teacher. Group discussions can help

students understand the text. The real-time system of this application allows the students to get feedback from the teacher when they have made a typing mistake and how the mistake needs to be fixed. The application is related to Amry (2014) who claims that "learning is becoming ubiquitous and permanent, and increasingly at odds with formal education". Increasingly, various types of learning are taking place outside the classroom through social cooperation and collaboration between students to enhance construction and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, one must also reckon with the problems that arise in the process. (Justina, 2016: 48) stated that mobile learning leads to a change in school activities where students are busy chatting silently on their phones with people who are not around them rather than those who are available, unlike before when students started talking and making noise as soon as class time ended. Although the extensive use of mobile learning can be seen as an activity that can improve students' skills, the tendency of students to use mobile learning can also be used to improve their writing skills.

The ability of writing is considered by students to be one of the most difficult skills. They communicate daily not only on paper but also through WhatsApp and online media to express ideas, show emotions, and share information quickly. Communicating through mobile learning is a kind of problem-solving for students, in which they sometimes have problems starting writing. In observing the students at STIT Palapa middle school, it was found that the students have low skills in writing English. The main problems encountered by the students were the language barrier, confinement to English conversation in daily activities, writing short conversations, and constructing ideas in long sentences.

Writing is not easy. An experienced writer often works for more than an hour on a single paragraph - not counting the reflections and studies that precede the actual writing. Therefore, teachers and students face many problems. The first problem is the problem of "less proficient writers". Less proficient writers skip the process of writing by skipping the pre-writing strategies to develop ideas (Raymond C J ., 1980). Students may need a lot of time to write down their ideas. The suggestion to solve this problem is that teachers should teach the writing process to less proficient writers. Teachers also need to give them their full attention and show them how to plan a text through prewriting. The second problem is the "I could not write English" problem. Students usually give up and think that they could not write. The solution is for teachers to teach students about the writing process. Teachers can guide students in prewriting, drafting, and revising. In this way, students can realize that writing is actually a developmental process that takes time and effort. The final problem is the problem of "teacher response." Writing teachers often spend many hours

reading and evaluating their students' work. The suggestion for this problem is that teachers can work with students on developing their written work through student-to-student conferences.

The utilization of mobile-assisted language teaching to students to teach English skills, especially to improve writing, is the way to solve the students' problems. Mobile learning provides a lot of knowledge on how to help students learn English in the best way (Kheryadi, 2018).The use of this technology not only arouses students' interest in learning but also gives them the opportunity to practice the target language regularly in group chats without being tied to time and the classroom. Since mobile learning is one of the digital media that is closely related to students' time and interests, it can get students excited about writing and prevent them from obstacles that may affect their learning success, such as fear of making mistakes or being ashamed to practice the target language. The utilization of mobile-assisted language learning in the integrated English classroom offers many opportunities to help students learn English in the best possible way (Dewi, 2019). In general, the use of mobile devices not only arouses students' interest in learning but also creates a broad opportunity to practice English regularly without being constrained by time and course meetings.

On the other hand, the utilization of mobile-assisted language learning in writing can also have positive effects on students. Students believe that mobile learning can improve their writing skills. This is evident from the responses of most students in the writing course who rate this medium well. In addition, students admit that mobile learning improves their writing skills because they can make corrections in a group, make comments, and discuss with others about the topic. The use of mobile tools can also promote interaction among students because they can share knowledge and information. Besides, every student already knows how to use mobile learning well and is familiar with it. The popularity of mobile learning has been used by learners in all areas of language as a powerful educational medium. So it is not difficult to use it during the learning process. The findings of this study suggest that the use of mobile learning can improve students' writing skills. Moreover, it can also be a suitable platform for education in Indonesia. (La Hanisi et al., 2018) also found that mobile learning could help students develop their writing skills because the teacher can create a variety of writing activities. Mobile learning can enhance students' active participation in EFL classrooms. It offers students the opportunity to practice language for free, a more personal and comprehensive relationship between students and teachers, a chance for students to not only be more social but also to learn better, and a way for students to match their opinions with those of others. When teaching writing using mobile technology, the teacher can ask students to write comments on the discussion topic or on more complex writing assignments. Students could also be

asked to write responses that the teacher raises in the group discussion such as WhatsApp, cloud meeting, Instagram, and Telegram, which can help them improve their writing skills. The teacher can send a picture of a place and ask the students to answer the question "Where is it?" or ask them to describe the situation.

Moreover, utilizing mobile-assisted language learning in a challenging field plays an important role in advancing the education system. Nowadays, the use of mobile learning is compulsory for every school as it can help students to increase their confidence and independence in learning and improve their English writing skills. To improve the writing skills in English class with the help of mobile learning, the teacher needs to support the students by involving them in the tips of independent and dependent conversation and monitoring the process of online chats by giving proper feedback. Since the use of mobile learning can improve writing skills in English, teachers recommended are included it in English classes.

METHOD

The design used in this research is Classroom Action Research. Classroom action research is practical research that aims to address deficiencies in classroom learning practices through specific interventions. Improvement efforts are designed to answer questions related to problems teachers encounter in their daily teaching (Mills, 2003). Classroom Action Research is also a systemic inquiry conducted by teachers, researchers, principals, counselors, and other stakeholders in the teaching and learning environment to obtain information about how they teach and how students learn. Classroom Action Research aims to overcome problems in teaching and learning and to solve the real problems faced by teachers. The research design of Classroom Action Research is collaborative. This means that the researcher will collaborate with the English teacher of STIT Palapa. In conducting the study, the role of the researcher is that of an English teacher who teaches students how to write via WhatsApp and online learning. The role of the real English teacher, on the other hand, is that of an observer who observes the teaching and learning activities during the writing learning process. The real English teacher is not only an observer but also a collaborator who assists the researcher in creating a lesson plan and assessing and analyzing data.

The data of this research was obtained from the students at STIT Palapa. On the reason, the school is located in Selebung, Keruak District, East Lombok Regency, Nusa Tenggara Barat Province. This school was also selected as the study area because the researcher observed that this school can use mobile technology for students. Furthermore, the technique of data collection in this

study includes both qualitative data and quantitative data. The researcher uses qualitative data which consists of an interview, field notes, and questionnaires. And the technique of data analysis was the last phase of this study. There analyzed four written components. According to Weigle, there are five components listed in the analytical evaluation rubric for writing, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Weigle, 2002). To determine the mean and percentage of students' writing scores, use the formula (Meltzer, 2008). In the analysis of field notes and interviews, the last value represented by the description is while the questionnaire analyzed in terms of percentage and represented by the description of the results of the questionnaire.

RESULT

In this result, the researcher investigated the use of mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) to enhance students' writing skills. The text type used for the writing skill was a retelling text. The 8th-grade students selected were the subjects of the study. Both are qualitative and quantitative data collected. In qualitative data, the researcher conducted an interview, questionnaire, and field notes. In this stage, the teachers were interviewed before and after the intervention to the tenth type of questions asked in an unstructured interview. The pre-interview questionnaires used were to gather students' responses to writing problems and the post-interview questionnaire conducted was to know the result of the implementation of MALL. Moreover, field notes made were to take notes about the teacher and student sides in the first and second cycles. As far as quantitative data was concerned, the researcher got much more information from the results of the student tests. This done was in the form of a pretest, a posttest one, and a posttest two.

The explanations of each data intended were to describe the aims of this study, which is to determine whether mobile-assisted language learning significantly improves students' writing skills and whether MALL improves students' writing skills. The first result of the study demonstrated the results of the pre-survey and the interview after the implementation of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). The first interview showed that the minimum criterion for proficiency in English in Grade 8 in STIT Palapa was 70 (Seventy), with the greatest difficulty in English writing. It was found that 30% of the students achieved the criterion of minimum mastery (MSM) and 70% did not achieve the criterion of minimum mastery (MSM). The result of the pretest showed that 73.33% of the students had difficulty in content, vocabulary, organization of words, and grammatical problems and therefore did not reach the criterion of minimum mastery (PPM). The result of the pretest also showed that only 5 out of 30 students or 16.67% achieved the minimum completion criterion

(KKM) and scored the maximum score of 75. The result changed when the first cycle of posttest 1 was conducted, in which there was an improvement in the minimum completion criterion (KKM): 13 students achieved the target or 43.33%, but a second cycle still needed to be conducted to ensure that mobile-assisted language learning could help students. After conducting the second cycle, the result of posttest 2 showed that the average score was 78, the minimum score was 56, and the maximum score was 94. The percentage shows that 83.33% of the 25 students scored higher than the minimum completion criterion (KKM). The result was also confirmed by the post-interview interview and questionnaire results after the implementation of MALL. The post-survey showed that mobile-assisted language learning helped students to solve difficulties in writing, especially in finding a new idea or topic, structuring sentences, adding different vocabulary, and arranging good sentences. In the result of the post-survey, 83.33% of the students answered "yes" that using mobile-assisted assisted language learning significantly improved the students' writing skills.

DISCUSSION

From the overall result of the data, it could be inferred that student learning from the first results to the second cycle is significant in improving students' writing skills. This is in line with the aim of this study, which is to improve students' writing skills through the use of mobile-assisted language learning. The analysis of these results shows that the study was successful as the test scores improved continuously from the pre-study to the last test. The improvement was in the aspects of content, organization, vocabulary use, and mechanics of writing. In line with this newest study on aspects of students' writing being more active, interactive, and independent (Bakri) et al., 2021). The use of mobile-assisted learning in English classrooms has a positive effect.

As for the results obtained, it provides more benefits for teachers and students. It could be seen from the results of the pre-study to the post-test, the average score of the students' writing scores is 56. And the pre-test is conducted before the mobile language support is used in learning. With a percentage of 16.67, the data consists of 5 students who meet the minimum completion criteria (KKM). And 25 students are below the minimum completion criteria (KKM). The students are still poor in writing because they are less confident, and active, and lack vocabulary. The preliminary results need further testing to get better. In addition, the posttest one in the first cycle showed that the average score of 13 students who passed it was 69. So the increase in student scores from pretest to posttest one in the first cycle was 23.21%. The percentage is 43.33% with 7 students failing to meet the minimum completion criteria (KKM) target. However, at this stage, it needs to

be improved again as it did not reach the target of 75%. Therefore, the researcher continued the second cycle. And the result shows that the average score is 78, with an increasing score from pretest to posttest, which is 39.29%. Moreover, the percentage is 83.33% consisting of 25 students who met the minimum completion criteria (MCM) and 16.67% did not reach 75%. The total score can significantly improve writing skills through the use of mobile-assisted language learning as most of the students achieve 75% of the targeted minimum completeness criteria (KKM). It can be automatically said that the use of mobile-assisted language learning to improve students' writing skills is successful and the cycle cannot be continued.

Moreover, improving students' writing skills has also been recently supported that mobile-assisted language learning can be a facilitator rather than a constraint. This is because the use of MALL among teachers can improve students' writing skills (Hashim et al., 2017). Moreover, teachers can promote students' intention to use MALL by increasing the value of their traditional method of implementing MALL. The effectiveness of MALL appears to provide learner-centered and allow for a flexible personalized experience. Personality can be fostered through the development of lifelong learning habits where learning materials and tools can be easily accessed and acquired anytime, anywhere. MALL itself can increase motivation and independence in learning. On the other hand, the use of technology is necessary to design a social, process-based knowledge reconstruction.

Overall, the discussion in this study shows the great potential of English learning through the use of mobile phones and the significant improvement in students' writing skills. And with the rapid development of mobile technology which is ever-changing, the design of effective use of mobile phones for students needs to be further explored so that the direction of effective MALL learning for students can be meaningfully utilized.

CONCLUSION

Utilizing mobile-assisted language learning in the second year of Grade eight of STIT Palapa in the academic year 2024/2025 could be summarized as mobile-assisted language learning significantly improves students' writing. This is evident in the students' continued progress as expressed in the mean score of 56 or 16.67% of the class percentages. The score of the students in the preliminary examination was mostly below the target of the minimum completion criteria (KKM). Meanwhile, the score of the first cycle was higher than the pretest. The mean score of 69 of 21.23% shows that the students improved. The last phase was conducted in the second cycle where the researcher recorded the results of the field notes. The overall result showed that the use

of mobility aids in teaching and learning helps the lessons to flow well, create a positive atmosphere and students can find the idea easily. The result of the questionnaire shows that students respond positively to the use of mobile-assisted language learning. Therefore, mobile-assisted language learning can be an alternative to teaching writing. On the hand, MALL is as a model that gives focus on the learning process and motivated to follow English teaching, especially writing teaching. Many advantages could the teachers experience when they utilize MALL in the process of learning. They experience the technology and make the lesson easy. On the other hand, the teacher is encouraged to be more creative to find the strategy, model, and method in different ways.

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