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Listening Learner's Needs: How Learners Utilize Technology to Learn English and Why?

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Abstract

The use of technology to aid in the learning of English as a second language has grown in popularity in recent years. These tools, such as online language learning platforms, mobile apps, online dictionaries and translation tools, audio and video resources, and social media and online communities, offer a number of benefits to learners, including the convenience of being able to learn from any location with an internet connection, the ability to engage with the language through various mediums, and the option for personalized learning. However, using technology for language learning also comes with its own set of challenges. These can include access to technology, technical issues, a lack of personal interaction, limited flexibility in learning, and the potential for distractions. This paper presents the results of a study that looked at the perceptions of English language learners who use technological tools for their learning. A qualitative approach was used in this research project to gather and analyze data on the effectiveness of using technologies to learn English as a second language. In-person and online semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 subjects, ranging in age from 20-26 and hailing from various regions in Indonesia. The research examined their experiences, the challenges they faced, and their preferences for using technology as a means of learning English.

Keywords: *Language learning; learners' motivation; learners' perception; technology in language learning*

INTRODUCTION

English language learners often face a variety of challenges and problems as they try to improve their language skills. These challenges can range from difficulties with grammar and vocabulary to problems with pronunciation and listening comprehension (Pawlak, 2021; Wilang, 2021). Additionally, English learners may also face cultural barriers and difficulties

in finding opportunities to practice their language skills. Despite these challenges, many English learners are able to overcome these difficulties and make significant progress in their language development through hard work and dedication.

In order to overcome those challenges, learners need to be dedicated and persistent in their studies. Learners would need to spend a lot of time reading, listening, and speaking in English, in order to become more familiar with the language and to improve their skills. Learners might also seek out additional resources, such as textbooks, online resources, or tutors, to help them learn more about the structure and usage of the language.

Fortunately, in line with the many challenges that students have to face, technology is also developing more rapidly. Technology has had a significant impact on the way students learn English (Chun et al., 2016). The use of technology has made learning more interactive, efficient, and accessible for students (Baytak et al., 2011).

One of the main ways technologies (Khoiroh, 2022) has helped students learn English is through the use of interactive language learning software and apps. These programs often use games and activities to engage students and help them practice their vocabulary and grammar skills. For example, Duolingo is a popular language learning app that uses a gamified approach to help students learn new words and phrases (Shortt et al., 2021). With the help of technology, students can practice their English skills in a fun and engaging way, making it more likely that they will retain the information.

In addition, technology has made it easier for students to access English language resources. With just a few clicks, students can find a wealth of information online, including dictionaries, grammar guides, and authentic English language materials. This is especially useful for students who may not have access to traditional language learning resources, such as textbooks or tutors.

Furthermore, technology has made it possible for students to connect with English speakers from around the world. Through video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, students can have conversations with native English speakers, which helps them improve their listening and speaking skills. This is a great opportunity for students to practice their English in a real-life setting and get feedback on their language skills (Guerrero, 2012; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022).

Previous literature states that technology plays an important role in increasing student learning motivation and supporting autonomous learning. technology can increase students' learning motivation is by providing

interactive and engaging learning experiences. Many language learning technologies, such as mobile apps and online platforms, offer a range of interactive exercises and games that can keep students engaged and motivated to learn (Ghafar & Mohamedamin, 2022; Jameel & Shukr, 2022). By providing learners with activities that are tailored to their interests and goals, and that offer a sense of challenge and achievement, technology can help sustain students' motivation to learn.

Another way in which technology can increase students' learning motivation is by providing them with opportunities to connect with other learners and native speakers of the language. Social media and online communities offer learners the opportunity to engage in discussions and conversations with others who are learning the language, providing them with a sense of community and support. By feeling connected to others who are also learning the language, students may be more motivated to continue their studies.

Technology can also increase students' learning motivation by providing them with access to authentic language materials (Hwang et al., 2016; Shadiev et al., 2017), such as news articles, podcasts, movies, and TV shows. By exposing themselves to these materials, students can improve their listening and comprehension skills, and become more familiar with the rhythms and sounds of the language. This can be particularly motivating for students who are interested in using their language skills in real-life situations, as it can help them see the relevance and value of their studies. Overall, the literature suggests that technology can be a powerful tool in increasing students' learning motivation in English language learning (Ghafar & Mohamedamin, 2022; Jameel & Shukr, 2022). By providing interactive, engaging, and authentic learning experiences, and by connecting learners with others who are also learning the language, technology can help sustain students' motivation to learn and achieve fluency in the language.

Moreover, the role of technology in autonomous language learning has become increasingly important in recent years, as technology has provided learners with a range of resources and opportunities to learn languages independently (Aminatun, 2019; Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Widiati et al., 2021). One key advantage of technology in autonomous language learning is its ability to provide learners with a wealth of learning materials and resources. Online dictionaries, grammar exercises, and interactive language games can all help learners to improve their language skills in a self-directed manner. Additionally, technology can provide learners with access to authentic language materials, such as news articles, films,

and podcasts, which can help to enrich their learning experience and provide them with real-world context for the language they are learning.

Another important aspect of technology in autonomous language learning is its ability to facilitate communication and collaboration among learners (Zhang & Zou, 2021). Tools such as forums, chatrooms, and social networking platforms can provide learners with opportunities to practice their language skills with native speakers or other learners, and can also help to foster a sense of community and support among learners. This can be especially beneficial for learners who may not have access to traditional face-to-face language classes or language exchange programs.

However, it is important to recognize that technology is not a replacement for other forms of language learning, and should be used in combination with other methods. Some research has suggested that technology can be less effective for learners who are less motivated or who may have difficulty using technology (Zboun & Farrah, 2021), and that technology-based language learning may be more suitable for certain language skills such as reading and writing than others such as speaking and listening.

Overall, the existence of technology has had a positive impact on the way students learn English. It has made learning more interactive, efficient, and accessible, providing students with a range of tools and resources to help them improve their language skills.

However, the use of technological tools does not necessarily remove all barriers to learning English as second language (Ahmadi, 2018). Even the most well developed and effective learning tools and method will inevitably have areas for improvement. By acknowledging and addressing the flaws and weaknesses in a learning method, we can improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the method, and ensure that it is meeting the needs and goals of the learners. Therefore, this research was conducted to find out what technological tools students use, how they use them, why they use them, and the problems they face when using technological tools to learn English.

METHOD

For this research project, the researcher employed a qualitative approach to gather and examine the data. This type of research methodology enables investigators to delve into the thoughts and perspectives of the study's participants regarding the effectiveness of using technologies to learn English. To gain insight into the participants' viewpoints, the researcher conducted both in-person and online semi-structured interviews. These

interviews, which typically lasted between 30 to 40 minutes per participant, allowed the researcher to probe more deeply into the participants' opinions and to ask follow-up questions based on their responses.

The participants of this study were 30 people who were currently studying and had studied at the Department of English Language and Literature and English Language Education; some of them are still at the undergraduate level, some have graduated, and the rest are at post-graduate level. The age of the participants ranged from 20-26 years and they came from different regions in Indonesia. The composition of the participants in this study based on gender was seventeen women and thirteen men.

Furthermore, for this descriptive qualitative research study, the researcher utilized interviews as the primary method of data collection. This process involved sorting and organizing the data in spreadsheet form, as well as performing thematic descriptive analysis to draw insights and conclusions from the data. The thematic data organizing and analysis allowed the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, and to present a detailed and nuanced portrayal of the research topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Technology Tools Used by Learners to Learn English

Based on interviews with the subjects as learners of English as a second language, it was found that there are several technology tools learners used to assist in their language learning; online language learning platforms, mobile apps, online dictionaries and translation tools, audio and video resources, and social media and online communities. The researcher also found various answers regarding how did they those tools to learn English.

This study found that learners utilize online language learning platforms, mobile apps, and social media to improve their language abilities. The researcher found that these technological tools often provide a variety of interactive exercises and games that can assist learners in practicing grammar, vocabulary, and other language skills. These exercises can be customized to meet the specific needs and objectives of each student, making them a highly effective and personalized learning tool. Additionally, the three technological tools are also used by learners to connect with other language learners. Through participating in conversations and receiving feedback from others who are also learning the language, learners can practice their skills in a more relaxed setting and establish a sense of community and support.

In addition to practicing language skills and connecting with other learners, learners also reported using authentic materials with the help of online language learning platforms, mobile apps, and social media. However, learners also utilized audio and video technology to access authentic materials. These students believed that exposing themselves to these materials can improve their listening and comprehension skills and increase their familiarity with the rhythms and sounds of the language. Some learners also felt that using a combination of audio and video technology and an electronic dictionary was more effective in improving their listening comprehension.

In addition to the other tools they use, learners also mentioned utilizing electronic dictionaries, both online and offline, to look up unfamiliar meanings of words, find synonyms and antonyms, and learn about the roots of words. They noted that online dictionaries often include lists of synonyms and antonyms for each word, which can be useful for students seeking to expand their language skills and knowledge of word relationships. Additionally, online dictionaries often provide explanations and examples of idioms and phrases, which can help students better understand their meanings and use them correctly. Some online dictionaries even offer information about the histories and origins of words, which can be interesting and enriching for students interested in learning more about the language.

Many online language learning platforms offered personalized learning plans that were tailored to the specific needs and goals of each student. These plans were based on the student's current level of proficiency, learning style, and other factors, and could be adjusted over time as the student progressed. By focusing on the areas where they needed the most help, students were able to make more efficient and effective use of their study time and achieve their language learning goals more quickly. Some online language learning platforms also offered adaptive learning, which meant that the platform adjusted the content and difficulty of the lessons in real-time based on the student's performance. This helped to keep the student engaged and motivated, as they were challenged at a level that was appropriate for them.

Finally, although not all learners used the same tools in the same way, the results of the analysis showed that English learners could take advantage of online language learning platforms, mobile apps, electronic dictionaries and translation tools, audio and video resources, and social media and online communities to improve their pronunciation skills and increase their knowledge of English idioms and phrases. By listening to recordings and repeating words, students were able to work on their accent

and intonation. These tools also provided explanations and examples of idioms and phrases, helping students better understand their meanings and use them correctly.

The Reasons Learners Choose Particular Learning Media

There were a few reasons why students preferred certain learning media over others when studying English as a second language. One was the convenience factor. Another was because the learning media was interactive and engaging. Additionally, certain learning media could provide personalized learning experiences, access to a variety of resources, and opportunities for learners to connect with others.

Many of the technological tools available today were highly convenient and could be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. This made it easy for students to fit language learning into their busy schedules, as they could practice and learn at their own pace and at a time that was convenient for them. This convenience factor was especially appealing to students who had other commitments, such as work or other responsibilities, that made it difficult for them to attend traditional in-person language classes. With the ability to access language learning materials online, students were able to fit their studies into their already busy schedules and complete them at their own pace. Additionally, the use of technology also allowed students to learn and practice their language skills in a variety of ways, such as through interactive games and exercises, virtual conversation practice with native speakers, and access to a wide range of language learning resources.

Furthermore, many of the respondents noted that the technological tools they used were highly convenient and could be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. This made it easy for them to fit language learning into their busy schedules, as they could practice and learn at their own pace and at a time that was convenient for them. The convenience factor was especially appealing to respondents who had other commitments, such as work or other responsibilities, that made it difficult for them to attend traditional in-person language classes. With the ability to access language learning materials online, respondents were able to fit their studies into their already busy schedules and complete them at their own pace.

Additionally, several respondents mentioned that the use of technology also allowed them to learn and practice their language skills in a variety of ways, such as through interactive games and exercises, virtual conversation practice with native speakers, and access to a wide range of

language learning resources. These interactive and engaging materials helped keep the respondents motivated and engaged in their studies, which was especially important for those learning a language online. The ability to customize learning plans and set personal goals also helped respondents stay motivated and engaged, as it allowed them to track their progress and see the progress they were making. Overall, the use of engaging and interactive technology in language learning was highly beneficial for the respondents, helping them to stay motivated and engaged in their studies.

Moreover, several of the respondents noted that some of the technological tools they used offered personalized learning plans, which could be tailored to their individual needs and goals. This was especially helpful for those with specific learning goals or challenges, as it allowed them to focus on the areas where they needed the most help. Personalized learning plans enabled respondents to progress at their own pace and receive customized support and guidance to help them achieve their language learning goals. The ability to customize their learning experience was seen as a major advantage by many of the respondents, as it allowed them to receive targeted support and focus on the areas of the language that they found most challenging. In addition, personalized learning plans also allowed respondents to set and track their own goals, which helped them stay motivated and engaged in their studies.

Also, many of the respondents mentioned that the technological tools they used provided access to a wide range of resources. This made it easier for them to find materials that were tailored to their interests and learning style, and helped keep their studies varied and engaging. The availability of a diverse range of resources allowed respondents to explore different language learning techniques and find the methods that worked best for them.

Finally, several of the respondents mentioned that some of the technological tools they used, such as social media and online communities, provided an opportunity for them to connect with other learners of English as a second language. This was seen as a great way to practice their skills in a more informal setting, and to get feedback and support from others who were learning the language. The ability to connect with other learners through online platforms enabled respondents to have virtual language exchange conversations, share resources and tips, and get support from their peers. This helped create a sense of community and connection among respondents, which was seen as a valuable aspect of their language learning experience.

Problems in Learning English with Technological Tools

For studying the challenges faced by learners in learning English with technology, the researcher has gathered a wealth of information on the various problems that students encountered when using technology devices to learn English. From issues with access to technology and the internet, to technical problems and the lack of personal interaction and support, we have identified a range of challenges that students faced in this learning environment. The researcher identified five problems faced by English learners who use technology, based on the findings from the interviews. These problems are: access to technology, technical issues, lack of personal interaction, limited flexibility, and distractions.

Access to technology: One potential issue is that not all learners have access to the necessary technology to use these tools. Some students as respondents of this study did not have access to a computer or internet connection at home, which could make it difficult for them to use online resources or participate in online classes.

Many schools and households do not have reliable internet access, and even if they do, the speeds are often too slow to effectively use online language learning resources. This means that learners often have to rely on outdated textbooks and other traditional learning materials, which can be less engaging and interactive than online resources.

In addition, many of the best English language learning resources and tools are only available online, and are not always accessible to students who do not have reliable internet access. This can make it difficult for some students to keep up with their peers who do have access to these resources, and can make it harder for them to make progress in their language learning journey.

Finally, the lack of access to technology also makes it more difficult for them to communicate and collaborate with other English language learners around the world. Many online language learning communities and forums require an internet connection and a device to participate, and without these things, they are unable to connect with other language learners and exchange ideas and experiences.

Overall, learners' limited access to technology is a major barrier to their success as English language learners. Therefore, some of the learners hoped that in the future, more would be done to ensure that all language learners have access to the resources and tools they need to succeed.

Technical issues: Another potential problem is that technology can sometimes be unreliable, and students may encounter technical issues that disrupt their learning. Some learners confessed that sometimes they

experienced connectivity problems, software glitches, or other issues that prevented them from accessing the resources they need.

Some learners stated that even if they had access to a computer or other device and the internet, they often encounter problems with their equipment or connection that made them difficult to complete their language learning activities. For example, learners might be in the middle of an online lesson or practice exercise when their internet connection suddenly dropped, forcing them to stop and wait for it to come back online. This could be frustrating and disrupted their learning process. In addition, sometimes they also encountered problems with their computer or device itself, such as slow loading times or glitches that made it difficult to use online resources.

These technical issues could be especially frustrating when learners were working on a deadline or trying to meet a specific learning goal. They could also make learners more difficult to keep up with their peers who did not have these issues, and could hinder their progress as English learners.

Lack of personal interaction: Some students preferred more personal interaction with their teachers and classmates, and found it difficult to learn effectively through online resources alone. They missed the opportunity to ask questions or get feedback in real-time. Some others felt isolated from the learning community. Many of the English language learning resources and tools that were available online were self-guided and did not provide the opportunity for students to ask questions or get feedback from a teacher or tutor.

While these resources could be helpful in providing additional practice and exposure to the language, they could not replace the personalized instruction and support that students can receive from a teacher or tutor, at least until recently. Without the opportunity to ask questions or get feedback on their progress, students should struggle to fully understand and learn the language. One of the learners stated that learning a language was often an interactive and social process, and without the opportunity to interact with other students or native speakers, it could be more difficult to practice skills and improve fluency. Overall, the lack of personal interaction and support is a major challenge for people trying to learn English as a second language using technology.

Limited flexibility: While technological tools can provide some flexibility in terms of when and where language learners can access resources, they may not offer as much flexibility as more traditional learning methods. For example, online classes may be scheduled at specific times, which may not be convenient for all students.

From the interview, some students stated that many of the English language learning resources and programs that were available had fixed schedules and rigid structures, which could make it difficult for them to fit their language learning into their busy schedule, as some of the respondents in this study were language learners who had to balance their time between studying and working.

According to some respondents, sometimes they might be unable to attend an online language class or tutoring session due to conflicts with other commitments such as work, offline class, or other responsibilities. This could make it difficult for them to make progress in their language learning journey. In addition, the limited flexibility of many language learning resources and programs could also make it difficult for them to tailor their learning to their needs and goals. Learners might not be able to focus on the areas of the language that were most relevant or challenging for them, and instead, had to follow a predetermined curriculum.

Overall, the limited flexibility of many English language learning resources and programs is a major challenge for students who are trying to learn English as a second language. They hoped that, in the future, more would be done to provide them with the opportunity to customize their learning to fit their own needs and schedules.

Distractions: Finally, students using technological tools may be more prone to distractions, as they may be tempted to check their social media or other online distractions while they are supposed to be learning. This can make it more difficult for them to focus and retain the information they are learning. With so many different distractions and sources of entertainment available online, it can be difficult for some learners to focus on their language learning activities and stay motivated.

For example, learners may be in the middle of an online lesson or practice exercise when they get a notification from a social media platform or receive an invitation to play a video game. These distractions can take their focus away from their language learning and make it harder for them to make progress.

In addition, even if they are able to resist the lure of online distractions, there may be other distractions in their environment that make it difficult for them to concentrate on their language learning. This can include noise from other people in their household or nearby, or interruptions from phone calls or text messages.

Overall, distractions are a major challenge for learners trying to learn English as a second language. Some of the students in this research hoped that, in the future, more would be done to provide them with the tools and

support they need to stay focused and motivated during their language learning journey.

CONCLUSION

The use of technology in English language learning has been extensively researched in recent years. The findings of these studies suggest that technology can be a valuable tool in facilitating language acquisition and improving student outcomes (Golonka et al., 2014). One of the main benefits of using technology in language learning is the ability to provide personalized and adaptive instruction. Many language learning software programs and apps offer customized lessons and exercises that are tailored to the individual learner's needs and goals. This can help students progress more quickly and efficiently, as they are able to focus on the specific areas that need improvement. Another advantage of using technology in language learning is the convenience and flexibility it offers. With online programs and apps, students can access lessons and practice materials from anywhere, at any time. This is especially useful for busy students or those who live in areas without easy access to traditional language classes. In addition to the benefits of using technology in English language learning mentioned, it is also important to note that technology tools should be developed to fit the needs of language learners. This means that they should be designed with language learning goals and outcomes in mind, and should be tested and evaluated to ensure that they are effective and user-friendly. One way to do this is by involving language learners in the design and development process, so that their needs and preferences are taken into account. By ensuring that technology tools are tailored to the specific needs of language learners, we can ensure that they are as effective and beneficial as possible. Another important aspect of developing technology tools for language learning is to consider how they can be used in a variety of contexts, such as in-class instruction, self-study, and group work. This will allow language learners to use the tools in the way that best fits their learning style and needs. Overall, it is clear that technology has the potential to greatly enhance English language learning, but it is important to carefully consider the needs of language learners and to develop technology tools that are tailored to those needs in order to maximize their effectiveness.

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