

Mobile-assisted Language Learning in Islamic Higher Education: Integrating Mobile Phone use in Classroom Activities

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Abstract: Mobile phone has been studied in its connection with education-related activities by many researchers for more than a decade. In Indonesian Islamic higher education context, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has not been discussed extensively. This study is aimed at investigating mobile phone use for English Language Learning (ELL) activities. This study employed qualitative method using case study. It used observation to collect data concerning mobile phone integration in ELL activities. This study found that students were able to integrate mobile phone use to support ELL activities in the classroom. This is to say that there were many features that students seized from mobile phone to assist ELL activities. These activities could be done by their mobile phone assistance that served as learning tool. This effort serves as an introduction toward MALL implementation in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education (IHE). This study shows that mobile phone can be tailored for supporting ELL activities when the device is appropriately integrated. Mobile phone should be integrated in order to gain its benefit to support ELL activities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone has been investigated by English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and researchers in term of their benefit and advantages for English Language Learning (ELL) and English Language Teaching (ELT) activities. Its integration in ELT classes have been studied and published by many scholarly journals.

Several studies investigated mobile phone integration and its promising benefits in educational activities. Mobile phone can be used to access material for learning or education-related activities (Lee et al., 2013). Other studies reported that It is used to support reading skill and support students' learning process for foreign language classes (Plester et al., 2009).

To date, the studies concerning mobile phone use in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education (IHE) is rarely discussed among researcher in Indonesian scholarly journal especially. This study is intended to address this gap. It seeks to explore how students use mobile phone to support ELL activities in the classroom.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mobile Phone Integration

Mobile phone integration for education-related activities has been investigated in many studies. A study found that its integration promoted the so-called ubiquitous learning (Lee et al., 2013). Its integration offered advantages for reading skill and supported learning process in foreign language classes (Plester et al., 2009). It also provided students opportunities to regulate and maintain their progress in ELL activities (Sha et al. 2012).

2.2 Mobile Phone Features

Mobile phone with all its feature were investigated in many published scholarly articles. Camera feature in mobile phone assisted learning process. This feature was tailored to support learning process (Bull and Thompson 2004). Audio video feature helped students created podcast that were beneficial in learning process (Smythe and Neufeld 2010). Video recording has been proven to serve as digital

learning tools among students in learning language (Gromik, 2012).

A study reported that mobile phone features like messaging service existence assisted to maintain communication (Markett et al., 2006). Another study found that mobile phone features helped students to produce their portfolio and support students' improvisation and creation (Liu et al., 2015).

2.3 Previous Research

A study conducted by Al-Fahd (2009) found that student was ready to integrate their mobile phone for ELL activities. Mobile learning can be effective in supporting ELL. In a larger scale for mobile phone integration in schools, Pegrum et al. (2013) found that students were ready to join and accomplish task by using mobile phone for classroom related work. As digital native, students welcome mobile phone integration to support classroom-related work.

Kee and Samsudin (2014) reported that in Malaysian schools, participants viewed that mobile phone facilitated mobility for learning that enabled them to access material for learning anywhere and anytime. This condition supports the so-called ubiquitous learning. In Iran, Khabiri and Khatibi (2013) studied mobile phone use practices among EFL Learners in university level. The study reported that mobile phone offered many promising features which were open to explore by the EFL teachers for delivering ELL activities for university students. In Nigeria also revealed similar findings concerning mobile phone use. The study revealed that mobile phone integration promoted reading habit for EFL students (Oyewusi and Ayanlola 2014).

From the aforementioned previous studies, there is a little literature reporting MALL implementation particularly in mobile phone integration for ELL in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education (IHE). This study tries to fill in the gap by investigating mobile phone integration to support ELL activities in Indonesian IHE.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied case study to investigate students' engagement on mobile phone use to support ELL activities in classroom. The study involved 40 participants from Islamic Religion education department, Tarbiyah Faculty. They took English subject delivered in second semester of 2016-2017 academic year.

Observation was applied in this study to collect data concerning students' engagement in using mobile phone to assist ELL activities. The data collected in this study were described and categorized. Interpretation to data was applied in order to comprehend the findings and the literature review.

4 FINDING

This study was aimed at investigating students' use of mobile phone to support ELL in classroom activities. Participants in this study exhibited their ability to integrate mobile phone to support ELL activities in their classroom. Mobile phone integration took part in students' use of following features:

4.1 PDF Reader Application

This application can be run in students' mobile phone. Their mobile phone can be used to store pdf file that they received from lecturer. They operated their mobile phone to read English material that they were studying in the classroom.

Students in each meeting operated their mobile phone to read material in form of PDF. They found mobile phone helpful to assist ELL activities. Example of opinion expressed by student is as follows:

"It is easier to operate mobile phone in reading English material, no need to use computer".

4.2 Audio Video Player

This feature which was built in students' mobile phone helped student in ELL activities to play video file for listening. Students were given video and podcast which was supplementary material for English subject. They practiced listening skill from this feature by playing podcast operated in their mobile phone. A student commented as follows:

"My mobile phone allows me to play audio file, this gadget is beneficial for ELL activities especially for listening skill".

4.3 Camera Feature

Mobile phone camera feature was helpful to assist student ELL activities. This feature facilitated students to take a picture of their assignment that they were doing before reporting it to their lecturer. Many pictures and words that were relevant to ELL

activities were supported by this feature. A student commented as follows:

“Camera feature facilitates me to take picture of my assignment and project. I can store my file in form of picture by using this mobile phone”.

4.4 Video Recorder Feature

Feature of video recorder helped students to produce project that their lecturer asked them to accomplish. Students created short video that featured their speaking skill performance. a student commented as follows:

“I can use my mobile phone to record our group project for making short video, this is really helpful”.

5 DISCUSSION

English language learning in Indonesian IHE has been discussed in several scholarly articles for example writing skill (Ekawati et al., 2017); listening skill (Saehu, 2016); students' learning style preference (Muhtar, 2015); ELT development (Sajidin, 2013).

Concerning MALL implementation, this study found that students possessed gadget which they brought daily to classroom. students and gadget were inseparable to some extent because they belong to digital natives (Lenhart, 2012). In ELT context, this circumstance should be tailored by EFL teachers to support ELL activities (Yudhiantara and Nasir, 2017).

PDF Reader which was installed in students' mobile phone facilitated them for ELL activities. It assisted students to read English reading material. The study revealed that mobile phone helped students learn reading and vocabulary (Plester et al., 2009). This is to say that mobile phone served as a learning tool in the 21st century (Kee and Samsudin, 2014). Mobile phone in this study serves as educational technology that assists student's learning process. Educational technology assisted students' learning process in Islamic education institution (Wekke and Hamid, 2012).

Audio video feature helped students play files in their mobile phone. It was proven in this study that the feature was helpful. Mobile phone integration assisted students learning process in listening skill (Smythe and Neufeld, 2010).

Camera feature helped students take picture of their project and assignment. This finding supports previous research that revealed mobile phone

integration benefit. Feature of camera can be tailored to assist learning process (Bull and Thompson, 2004).

Video recorder which were available in students' mobile phone could be explored to create project of short video. This is in line with the previous study that reported video recorder was helpful to assist learning process (Gromik, 2012).

6 CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated mobile phone integration to support ELL activities in Indonesian IHE. To summarize, there were various activities which were assisted by mobile phone integration in ELL classroom. This was made possible by the existence of several features like: Reading pdf file, playing audio file, capturing picture of assignment and creating video project.

This study provides insight for teachers in ELT to integrate their mobile phone to support students ELL activities in classroom. This study is qualitative in nature. Future study may apply experimental to investigate the effectiveness of mobile phone integration to support ELL activities in IHE.

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