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## IMPLEMENTING MOBIL-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) TOWARD AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS IN WRITING CLASS

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### Abstract

The widespread in accessing mobile phone changed the way people learning. Dealing with the rapid growth of technology, Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) becoming popular because of the portability. MALL is characterized by its potential for learning to be spontaneous, informal, personalized, and ubiquitous. Two main discussions were analyzed in the research; to investigate the implementation of MALL and to know students perspective on Using MALL in writing class. Classroom action research applied in the research, in which observation and interview were used as instruments in collecting the data. The research result shown that MALL were able to be implemented in writing class, it facilitated the students to express their idea and feeling in writing with online board platform such as Padlet.

**Keywords:** *Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Autonomous Learning, Writing Skill*

### Abstrak

Maraknya pengaksesan ponsel mengubah cara belajar masyarakat. Menghadapi pesatnya pertumbuhan teknologi, pembelajaran bahasa dengan bantuan seluler (MALL) menjadi populer karena portabilitasnya. MALL dicirikan oleh potensinya untuk belajar menjadi spontan, informal, dipersonalisasi, dan ada di mana-mana. Dua diskusi utama dianalisis dalam penelitian ini; untuk menyelidiki penerapan MALL dan untuk mengetahui perspektif siswa tentang Menggunakan



MALL di kelas menulis. Penelitian tindakan kelas diterapkan dalam penelitian ini, di mana observasi dan wawancara digunakan sebagai instrumen dalam mengumpulkan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa MALL dapat diimplementasikan di kelas menulis, hal ini memudahkan siswa untuk mengekspresikan ide dan perasaannya secara tertulis dengan platform papan online seperti Padlet.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Seluler, Pembelajaran Otonom, Keterampilan Menulis

## Introduction

The growing rapidly of technology has brought many changes to the way of people learning in Indonesia. It is now becoming important to insert a kind of technology in the learning process. Traditionally, learning was only done at school, but now surprisingly it can be done anywhere and anytime by using a wireless device. Through the device, learners can share any information with the peer by *Share-it*, to ask questions to the teacher using a short message, to send assignments through email, and so on. Whenever students need more information, they can get it spontaneously by just clicking their mobile phones. This is in line with (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012), they said that Mobile learning is identified by its potential for learning to be personalized, spontaneous, and ubiquitous.

Mobile-assisted language learners (MALL) defines as the use of mobile technologies in language learning, particularly in the area of portability offers a specific advantage. The benefit of MALL can be a solution for language learning barriers particularly in terms of time and spacious. The main advantages of MALL are also considered as the easiness in accessing relevant information, adaptation to personal habit, flexible in time and space, and having greater opportunity to practice the language in daily basis activities such as walking, commuting, or even waiting (Kukulkska-Hulme, 2009). Through MALL, learners lead to becoming autonomous learner who learn independently and free depend on their needs and preferences in learning.

In the present time, learners tend to learn independently than spend the whole time sitting in the classroom to get the lecturing from the lecture. The presence of mobile technologies, which provides many applications ease students to

access language learning. In line with (Dickinson, 1995) said that he had seen autonomy very much as an attitude to language learning which not necessarily have many external observable features.

Due to the spread of the Corona Virus issue, the government has the policy to require all educational institutions to carry out the students through online learning rather than offline learning. Online learning, it might be difficult for some students because generally most of them depend on their teacher. Online learning forces the students to learn independently, and this is in line with the discussion of “autonomous learning” in this research. Through this learning model, students are allowed to create their strategies to learn. They could learn certain topics by reading the module or accessing the topic posted on the internet.

The research is designed to investigate the implementation of mobile-assisted language learning to promote autonomous learners in the writing classroom.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Autonomous Learning***

Learning autonomy is becoming popular at present time. Many researchers have focused on investigating the autonomy learning model. (Macaskill & Denovan, 2013) they had investigated the developing autonomous learning in first-year university students. The result shows that they identified some of the psychological strengths associated with confidence as measured by self-efficacy and self-esteem, and the relatively brief psycho-educational intervention is associated with significant increases. Autonomous learning leads the students to learn independently. This kind of learning is perceived to become a solution for language learning barriers in terms of time and space.

(Richards & Nunan, 2015) stated that learner autonomy is learners who have an amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it. Holec, who first used the term ‘autonomous learner’ concerning the development of second-language learning, defining it as the learner’s ability to take charge of their learning (Macaskill & Denovan, 2013) Besides, autonomous learning is said to make learning more personal and focus to achieve better learning outcomes based on learner needs and preferences.

The characteristics of the autonomous learner class; first, the teacher becomes a facilitator and not become an instructor anymore. Second, teachers are not the only main source of knowledge. Third, students manage by themselves in the learning activity. Fourth, student's awareness of their learning style is encouraged, and fifth, they are motivated to create their learning strategies.

Autonomous learning is aimed to solve the weaknesses of the traditional teaching method, to personalize students learning mode depending on their needs and preferences so they can achieve better learning. Through this learning model, students are allowed to create their strategies to learn. They could learn certain topics by reading the module or accessing the topic posted on the internet.

(Betts et al., 2016) wrote that there are four domains included in the autonomous learning model. The four domains are emotional (dealing with intrapersonal), social (Interpersonal; interact with others), cognitive (dealing with the ability for seeking knowledge), and physical (dealing with physiology and psychological).

### ***MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning)***

Language learning that is assisted through mobile technologies is called by Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). MALL defines as the use of portable technologies in language learning, particularly in a situation where the device offers a specific advantage. It has gained popularity in the last few years due to the widespread of using a mobile phone in any aspect of life. The devices which are commonly used in Mobile-assisted language learning are Cellphone, Smartphone, PDA, iPhone, I Pad, MP3, MP4, Tablet (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012); (Kukulka-Hulme, 2009), (Saidouni & Bahloul, 2018); (Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013). The presence of those wireless devices made the language learning process becomes more flexible. Otherwise, notwithstanding its benefits, MALL also poses related challenges, for instance, inherent in the portability of mobile media are reduced screen sizes, limited audiovisual quality, virtual keyboarding, and one-finger data entry, and limited power (Chinnery, 2006).

(Saidouni & Bahloul, 2018) wrote that there are four purposes learners use their mobile phones; first, it used for social purposes such as making calls, sending messages, chatting, making a video call, sending emails. Second, it used for entertainment purposes, such as playing games, watching, listening to music, browsing, posting photos. Third, it is used for education purposes, such as Dictionary, reading an e-book, learning APP, Google translation,

uploading/sharing, learning materials. Fourth, it is used for other activities such as cheating, setting alarm, calendar. From the study, it was found that the majority of the student used their mobile phone for entertaining, but they were also using it as a device for learning.

In this research, the researchers are going to implementing MALL in the writing classroom, particularly in writing essays. They need to personalize their learning environment to gather the ideas then draw the outlining then start to write. The implementation of MALL (esp. Padlet) in the writing classroom is supposed to ease students to arrange their writing essays through learning autonomously.

### **Research Methods**

This study investigated the implementation of MALL to promote Autonomous learners in writing class. The research design was classroom action research (CAR), a combination of quantitative and qualitative, or often called as mixed method. ("Reseña: Ernest T. Stringer (2007). Action Research," 2008) Observation and interviews will be used as instruments in collecting the data. The participants of the research were second-semester students conducted in a private University in Bogor. The participants enrolled Essay Writing as one of their courses in this semester.

### **Data Collection**

Due to the spread of the Corona Virus, most of the research activities were conducted through online activities. Observation was used to collect the information related to the implementation of MALL toward autonomous learners in writing activities. It has been conducted through the cycle activities. The online learning platforms such as Google classroom (to post lessons) and Padlet (to post writing assignments) were used. The researchers took note on student's behavior during the online learning whether they face difficulties or not.

There are two cycles in this research, but before doing the research, researcher had had data dealing with students writing problems in writing essay paragraph. After getting the problem, researcher tried to fix it in each cycle. The data came from students writing result that was taken at the first meeting of Essay Writing Course.

#### 1. First cycle

*Planning*, researcher provided lessons about three parts of the Essay, particularly introductory paragraph (first part) and some instructions followed the discussion

such as to watch video and do exercises. *Implementing*, the researchers explained what to do and asks students to access the lesson at Google classroom using their mobile phone. *Observing*, student's behavior observed when they were learning the lesson through their gadget. *Evaluating*, it had been analyzed from student's writing which was posted in Padlet.

## 2. Second Cycle

*Planning*, researcher provided lessons about conjunctions. *Implementing*, students were asked to access the Google room, the room provided with some exercise. *Observing*, check the students whether they were able to do the exercises or not. *Evaluating*, analyzed students work and gave them feedback.

The interview delivered after getting the data from observation. The form of the interview was a semi-structured interview. It aimed to facilitate the participants to express their perspective toward the implementation of MALL which was used in learning writing classrooms by autonomous learner.

## Results and Discussion

### Observation Result, Cycle I and Cycle 2

Before carrying out activities through the cycles, the researcher did pre-observations and had data related to the students problems in writing essays. It was found that some students still had problem in writing, *first problem* is writing introductory paragraphs, particularly in writing thesis statement. As it is known that thesis statement is part of paragraph that states the specific topic of the essay, may list subtopics or subdivisions of the main topic or subtopics, may indicate the pattern of organization of the essay, is normally the last sentence in the introductory paragraph (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). *Second*, the researchers also found that most of students still find difficulties to use the right conjunction to combine two clauses while writing sentences on paragraph. As it is known that create coherence paragraph writer needs to use appropriate conjunctions to make the sentence flow smoothly (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). Therefore, the two cycles bellow discussed different focus depend on different problems found.

*Cycle 1*, researchers focused on discussing Introductory Paragraph particularly thesis statements to help student's covering the difficulties in writing Essay. The cycle used Padlet to ease students post the exercises. Students had been given

warm-up examples about the thesis statement in a paragraph, examples were presented in video or PDF format that they could access through their Google classroom using their mobile phone. Along the discussion, many questions had been asked, some students helped to answer but for questions that they cannot to answer; they asked the researcher to answer. Then, the researcher asked students to write a paragraph and post the paragraph in Padlet. The paragraphs had been analyzed and discussed together.

From the analysis, it was found that 10 out of 16 students had started reporting their thesis statements in the introductory paragraph. They are able to state the specific topic, list the sub topic, but still confuse to decide the pattern of organization whether it is argumentative, contrary etc. Some factors affects student's achievement, it turns out that internal factor (motivation) and external factors (internet access, media and learning environment) affect students writing's achievement. (Plant & Devine, 1998)

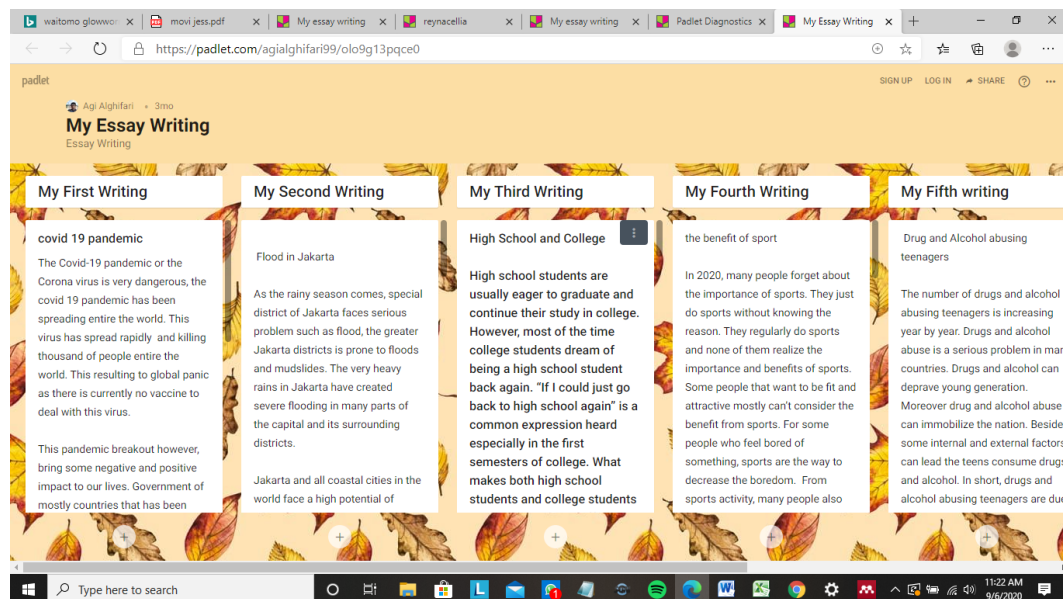


FIGURE 1: Student's writing through Padlet

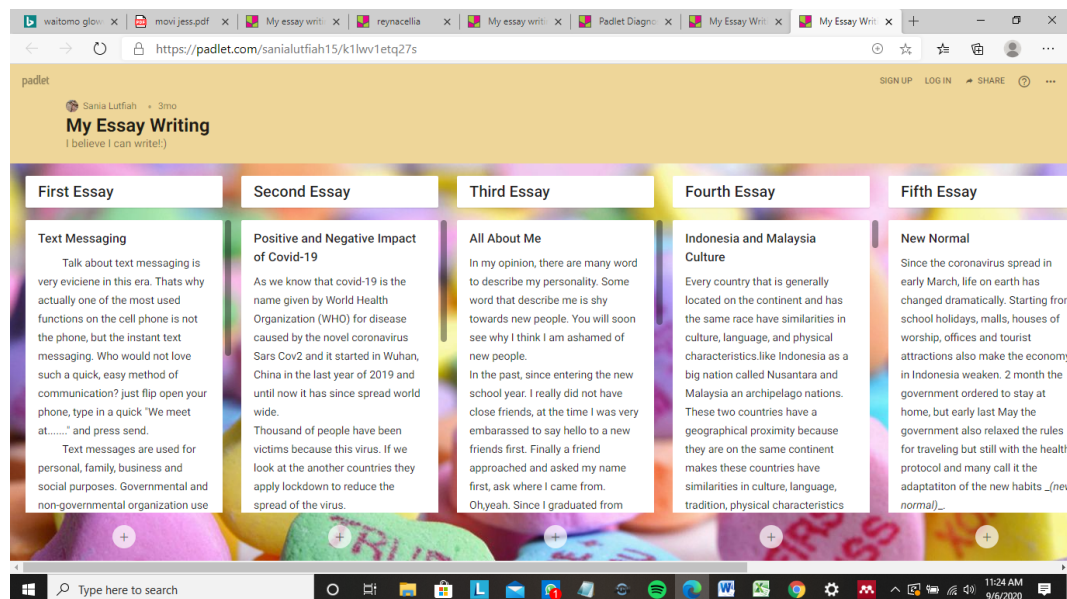


FIGURE II: Students writing through Padlet

Cycle 2, in this cycle the researchers focused on the second problem, namely; student's difficulty in using the right connecting words in combining two clauses whether they are equal or unequal. The main connecting words in writing paragraph (conjunction) are subordinator and coordinator. As it is known that Subordinator is connecting words that are used for joining two unequal clauses (independent and dependent) while coordinator is connecting words that are used to connect equal clauses (independent and independent). This difficulty came from the inability of students to distinguish between dependent and independent clauses. Therefore, at the beginning of this cycle, the researcher presented an explanation of the difference between a dependent and independent clause then continued with some brief example. Furthermore, several exercises were attached into this discussion. Along the discussion, the materials and exercises can be accessed through their cellphones all the time. The exercise then uploaded to Google Classroom for having feedback from the teacher. As a result 12 out of 16 students were able to identify the appropriate conjunctions in sentences. Based on the observation, it was found that the use of appropriate video and accessible sources influenced their writing achievement. As stated by Sahasrabudhe and Kanungo that there is correlation between learning and appropriate media used in teaching-learning process. (Sahasrabudhe & Kanungo, 2014)



From the both cycles, it can be assumed that the use of appropriate media in learning allows them to understand the lesson; even though they have to learn autonomously. It's just that, autonomous learning habits are something unusual for them, so at some moments they find complaints about the difficulty of having discussions with friends or teachers about learning independently. However, sometimes they have their own solution to fix the difficulties by more searching, more reading, watching as many sources as they can to solve the problems. If they did not get the answer, they used to ask their friends or teachers.

In summary, these two cycles can be seen in the table below;

Steps	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging materials and tasks base on previous problem (difficulties in writing thesis statement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging materials and tasks base on students problem (confusing in using appropriate connecting word)</li> </ul>
<b>Implementing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post attractive materials video, PDF, etc.</li> <li>• Use Padlet to post the exercise</li> <li>• Online Q and A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post attractive materials video, PDF, etc.</li> <li>• Post the exercise on Google Classroom</li> <li>• Online Q and A</li> </ul>
<b>observing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe whether they had questions or not</li> <li>• Observing whether they were able to post on Padlet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe whether they had questions or not</li> <li>• Observing whether they were able to do the test or not</li> </ul>
<b>evaluating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paragraph had been analyzed and it would be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task had been analyzed, and students got the</li> </ul>

	discussed together to get the feedback	feedback
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### Interview Result

This interview was conducted to find out students' perspectives on implementing MALL toward autonomous learning in writing class. This interview was based on four domains namely; *emotional* (dealing with intrapersonal), *social* (Interpersonal; interacting with others), *cognitive* (dealing with the ability for seeking knowledge), and *physical* (dealing with physiology and psychological) (Betts et al., 2016).

The interview was in semi-structure interview. They could express the answer freely, depends on what they think, believe and feel. The first domain is the *emotional domain*. Students were presented with a question, whether the MALL affects their emotions (motivated, excited) or not. Most of them said that they sometimes excited but sometimes not. It was because the learning environment they had did not support them to focus on learning activity such as noisy from relatives. It was also because of the limitation to connect the internet while they have to access online material to do some exercises.

*"I sometimes feel so bad when the network is unstable and the deadline is imminent"*. Students 6

Otherwise, for some students MALL has positive thing the portability, they can learn whenever and where ever they want through mobile phone, as conveyed by student 13

*"On the positive side, lessons can be done at any time, moreover; at this corona issue we can also prevent or break the chain of spreading Covid-19."*

The second domain is the *social domain*. When they were asked whether the use of MALL had impact on their social interactions, most of them answered "yes it had". Even though they were apart, they still interacted with other using the social media to discuss about problems that arise during the learning process.

*"Although we constrained by distance, social communication can still run well. And in some situations, we help each other, to solve problems dealing with the application and learning materials." Student 6*

However, some students said that it brought them into introvert person; it was because they used to interact with others but now they tend to learn their own lessons alone without friends besides.

*"So far, I am becoming individual, maybe because we can access the materials via our own cellphones." Student 5*

The third is the *cognitive domain*. When they were asked whether the MALL had an impact on the knowledge they had, all students agreed that MALL had a positive impact on their knowledge. As stated by student 3.

*"Of course the use of technology (MALL) plays a big role in increasing our knowledge in terms of lessons and general knowledge. Because when we are browsing something, Google will give us many websites or sites to choose from. Likewise with YouTube and other applications, every article or video on Google, YouTube and other applications of course contains various explanations and complement each other. That is why technology has a great influence on adding to the knowledge of students."*

They also said that MALL made the learning activities easier particularly in accessing many references they need. Moreover; by using MALL they had to be familiar with the technological developments.

*"So far, it helps increasing our knowledge, especially in IT. Because during online learning we are required to send files through email, share it and also almost every day we open browsing." Students 5*

The fourth is the *physical domain*. When we asked them whether MALL affected their physic and psychology, majority of the students said "yes". One respondent said that using MALL required them to stare at the cellphone screen longer, and sit longer, and it cause eyes problems and sore at their backs. Meanwhile, psychologically; the internet access was often unstable; it causes excessive anxiety for them of being late in submitting the assignments, worried that the lecturer will refuse the assignments.

*"I am becoming more emotional because sometimes the device which I use is not run well." Students 9*

From the four domains mentioned above, it can be assumed that autonomous learning using MALL has an impact on students learning activity. Emotional domain; students tend to assume that MALL can sometimes be positive or negative, it depends on the internal factor (student themselves) or external factors (learning environment, internet network). Social domain; The majority of students assumed that while using the MALL, their social life did not change much, they could still interact as usual even though virtually. Cognitive domain; All students said that the MALL influenced their knowledge, it was because the easiness to access any sources by only using their Mobile Phone, when they want to know something, they open the cellphone and search it instantly on the internet. Fourth domain; that MALL affects their physical and psychological, staring at the cellphone screen for long time and sitting too long causes health problem for the students, they also has excessive anxiety when they unable to submit the assignment in time because of the internet problems.

## **Conclusion**

After describing the result above, there are two main points highlighted in the research based on the questions problems. *First*, from the two cycles, it can be assumed that the use of appropriate media in learning and the easiness in access the sources allows them to understand the lesson well; even though they have to learn autonomously. It's just that, autonomous learning habits are something unusual for them, so at some moments they find complaints about the difficulty of having discussions with friends or teachers about learning independently like this way. However, they have their own solution to solve the difficulties by searching deeply in the internet, reading more PDF or e-book as many sources as they want. If they couldn't find the answer, they used to ask their friends or teachers.

*Second*, based on four domains mentioned above, it was assumed that student's perspective on implementing MALL has an impact on students learning activity. Emotional domain; students tend to assume that MALL can sometimes be positive or negative it depends on the internal factor (students themselves) or external factors (learning environment, internet network). Social domain; the

majority of students assumed that using MALL did not much change their social life. They could still interact with others as usual but online / virtual. Cognitive domain; All students said that the MALL influenced their knowledge, it was because MALL easy to access and more practical. Learning using mobile phone allowed them to access lots of learning sources and references. Fourth domain; that MALL affects their physical and psychological, staring at the cellphone screen for long time and sitting too long causes health problem for the students, they also has excessive anxiety when they unable to submit the assignment in time because of the internet problems.

During the Covid 19 issue, online learning is becoming ideal way to teach students. Many ways were done to support student's online learning activity. The use of MALL mobile-assisted language learning eases the students to access the materials from anywhere, at any time they want. There are many applications can be downloaded to improve learning activity, one of them is Padlet. It is online board, a platform where students can post their writing as much as they want. Soon her/his friends are able to comment on her/his writing. Through Padlet, Students became motivated to express and expose their writing freely. Besides, the use of Google classroom as a free learning platform is now widely used by teacher to post their subjects, submit the task, etc. while In discussing the material, Zoom mostly used to provide the free online meeting video. Teachers and students are able interact each other, to ask response or answering questions also can be done through the application. There are many more application can be afforded to improve students learning activity and all those facilities are able accessed easily through student's mobile phones.

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