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TECHNOLOGY'S CRITICAL ROLE IN THE ELT CLASSROOM FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LEARNING ENTHUSIASM AND ITS OUTCOME

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Abstract
In the post-COVID-19 pandemic, the technology was currently inseparable in educational sector including in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field. Teachers in the secondary school context were encouraged to adapt technology for designing material. The technology could be like computer, tab, smartphone, etc. Through these tools, the teachers could make power points, share the material to the students' smartphone, and conduct the e-learning activity by connecting it to internet. Therefore, this article attempted to investigate 1) the critical role of technology that could help learner to follow the teaching material and 2) the challenges of online application used by students in the e-learning class. To observe the above issue, the researcher used quantitative methodology with a case study approach. To generate the quantitative data of students' learning interest, the researcher utilized Likert Scale model from 1 to 5 scale. The result demonstrates that 1) Technology has significant role in assisting learners to follow the subject and they have varied positive perspectives toward its use in e-learning activity, 2) even though students perceived many OAs were challenging, but through WAG application, it was effective in improving their writing skill.

Keywords: ELT, language skills, linguistic intelligence, technology

Introduction
The substantial point of English Curriculum and Material development in Indonesian context, is aimed at developing the learners' English language ability through the communicative competence approach rather than traditional grammar approach (Rochmawati, 2017). It is because delivering the English Language Teaching (ELT) model for the EFL students requires practical way that can easily be understood by the EFL learners (Talebi & Teimoury, 2013).

Teachers are encouraged to apply Need Analysis (NA) approach to collect some information related to the students' learning level, issues, and learning goal after receiving the teaching content (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019; Widodo, 2017). One of the targeted goals for educating students through English material in the senior high school level is to develop students' linguistic intelligences (LI).

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Through this goal, students are not only expected to have English vocabularies and how they are pronounced, nevertheless students are having an understanding of structuring the vocabularies into sentences, conceiving the meaning of the sentences (both the semantical meaning and pragmatic meaning) and understanding how to communicate in English in real life interaction. Apart from the goal of mastering English skills, students at moment should also be familiar and competent for the e-learning condition.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the education system of Indonesia takes challenging steps in conducting the teaching model from the Traditional Learning Environments (TLEs) model to the Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) model (Finlay et al., 2021). This condition forces both educators and learners to have the technological knowledge (TK) in operating technology and particular online applications. With TK, the teachers can surely design the material where the students can follow the material. With equal understanding of TK for both teachers and students, it surely supports the learning class activities (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Nevertheless, not all students are living in the megapolitan cities of Indonesia. There are still numerous students who live in the suburb and rural area, especially those who live in the villages (Ruecker, 2022).

Therefore, Mishra and Koehler (2006) state that teachers have to ensure that students have to have TK for conducting the e-learning. However, if the students still lack of TK, then teachers must firstly give pre-service class and providing a brief explanation on how to use of technology for assisting their e-learning process. This pre-service class approach is valuable to eliminate the lacks of students TK understanding in operating the technology (e.g., teaching tools) and transferring the teaching material (Arafah et al., 2020; Cerit, 2011; Pazaer & Assaiqeli, 2023). Besides, by providing the pre-service class to learners, teachers can measure the students learning level and knowledge of technology, thus it can help teachers to determine what kind of apps used by both teachers and students based on their TK level (Anas, 2019).

The teaching/learning material can be studied through varied digital apps such as Zoom, google meet, google class et cetera. Moreover, both teachers and students can make a deal to apply the easiest operated apps namely WhatsApp Group (WAG). According to Susilo and Sofiarini (2021), the WAG application can support the e-learning especially when it is used in the university context. The WA application provides remarkable feature e.g. emoticons, voice notes, and file attachment that enable both educators and students to share their material on WAG. Apart from that, Susilo and Sofiarini's (2021) work focus on the integration of WAG in higher education level. Definitely, the learning condition of students in university level is different to students in secondary school learners. Because the university students might already have TK where on other hand some secondary school learners are not (Baharuddin, Genisa, & Suhartini, 2022). Thus, this situation is seen as the challenges for the teachers in the middle school context for the delivery content and develop students' learning enthusiasm in the e-learning condition. This is the research gap (conducting the e-learning using technology and digital apps in the senior higher school context) that the researcher focuses on.

From this case, the researcher presents two issues i.e., technology use in language teaching that impact students' linguistic intelligence as learning outputs.

Hence, to investigate these problems, two research questions (RQs) presented as follow:

1. Can the technology help learner to follow the teaching material and increase their LI?
2. What kinds of application used in the e-learning class that students like?

In order to study the LI thoughts, the researcher presents it the explanation of LI from several scholars in literature review point.

Literature Review

Critical role of technology for developing students' linguistic intelligence

In the English Language Education (ELE) program, teachers should design the teaching concept that can improve students' LI. There are numerous teaching models that can be inserted in teaching process, two of them are motivation and the teaching technique. Lamb (2007) States that motivation plays a key role to encourage students' learning achievement. It can be from teachers' motivation (external motivation) or from the learner itself (internal motivation).

However, transferring English is not only motivating students to achieve their language proficiency. Technique of teaching is also required to be had for the English educators. Teaching technique depends on teachers' skills (Lengkanawati, 2015). If they have varied experiences in teaching the EFL content to their students with different levels of knowledge, then teachers automatically possess many teaching strategies delivering in their material persuasively. These two models are important ingredients placed as teaching process. By owning these models, teachers can help their students' LI and language capabilities both productively and receptively.

Integrating the LI literacy in ELE curriculum design is expected to enrich students' vocabularies and how those words are structured grammatically into sentences. Possessing numerous words are indispensable in producing and receiving ideas (Giovanelli, 2015). The more words language learners have, the better they express their ideas. That is why, if this intelligence is possessed by learners particular in university level, they have already had potential to be good readers, where at the same time, good writers. Furthermore, being good readers will automatically broaden their knowledge and acquire varied global perspective when doing extensive reading.

Therefore, the researcher perceives that designing and integrating the teaching material with the LI are recommended to be applied by educators. Integrating the LI in teaching material has several benefits that can be gained by learners. It aims to improve students' language capabilities and cognitive linguistics as well.

However, before constructing and integrating LI in the curriculum design either in formal education or informal education, educators should consider and apply the NA approach to know the learners and class condition. NA concern on students' lacks, necessities, and wants. Lacks discuss about what the students understand and does not. Furthermore, the necessities discuss about students' compulsory in acquiring language learning content. The last part of NA discusses about what the students desire to know (Mecalister & Nation, 2009).

For instances, when educators would like to deliver the concept and the goal of LI to their learners, educators should observe the learners understanding related to LI literacy itself. If they do not know it or only have minimum understanding of LI, then this is objectified as the learners lacks (Baharuddin et al., 2022). From this situation, teachers have a chance to give a concise explanation related to LI and benefits of understanding and acquiring the LI literacy for their further study.

In addition, teachers also should incorporate and choose the appropriate technological devices (TDs) that can be applied for supporting the VLEs class and suit with the students learning level. In nowadays, optimizing the TDs oriented to develop students' LI in English curriculum, is extremely helpful for the e-learning during the covid-19 pandemic (Zhao et al., 2021). Because in the current situation most people (including language learners in the secondary school context) can reach any information through technology and mostly can communicate virtually (Li & Che, 2022).

From this situation, the English teaching at the moment should be recommended to utilizes technological instrument to practice students' technological skills and knowledge as well. By having skills and knowledge of operating technology in language teaching, it surely improves students digital literacy skills (Davy Tsz Kit et al., 2022). To be known, digital literacy is understood as an ability of using technology that enable readers to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). By having this digital literacy, students are able to find information that they need, able to evaluate any information (to avoid hate speech and hoax news/information), able to create appropriate information which (based on the actual, factual, and contextual evidence) and able to communicate/share the information on digital devices. Therefore, the role of teacher to improve students' TK and digital literacy is crucial. The teacher must ensure that the learning outcome of using technology in EFL classroom is beneficial and effective in VLEs and e-learning condition.

However, this it is still difficult to measure the effectiveness of using TDs in teaching process. It is because several problems students might face when the TDs are used in EFL classroom. The problems are 1) can the TDs help learners to obtain the teaching material? 2) what kinds of TDs used in the e-learning class do students like? 3) what are the students' perceptions toward the TDs used in the e-learning class.

Method

In conducting this research, the researcher applied quantitative method. By using this type of method, it enabled the researcher to generate and study the numerical data. The research setting was at SMK Reformasi Makassar. In total, 15 students voluntarily took part in the study and they were anonymized. In order to collect the data, the researcher utilized instrument called a close-ended questionnaire with Likert scale model from 1 (strongly -) to 5 (strongly +) of the students' satisfaction toward the use of technology in studying English material and its impact to students' LI. To select the participants, the researcher employed accidental sampling method that enabled to select the participants in practical and convenient way.

In order to design the questionnaire instrument, the researcher applied google form application and sent the questionnaire to the WAG where all these 15 students were joined on the WAG. Besides, if the researcher perceives that the students' responded was vague or unclear, then the researcher confirmed it by calling the on WhatsApp. After gaining the data, the researcher then analysed the data using Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis that consisted of 6 procedures i.e., 1) familiarize with the data, 2) generate initial code, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) naming themes, and finally, 6) producing report.

Findings and Discussion

As has been mentioned in the previous points that this research concerns about some problems occurred in VLE model during the covid-19. The problems are 1) can the TDs help learners to follow the teaching material? 2) what kinds of TDs used in the e-learning class do students like? From these research problems, the researcher observes that the e-learning phenomena have varied and dynamic findings based on the students' perceptions.

Can technology help learners to follow the teaching materials?

Before discussing in further about this problem, the researcher desire to show some e-learning phenomena transformed into the collected data related to the students' perception towards TDs integration in class activities in the earlier covid-19 pandemic. As has been known that in the earlier of covid-19 pandemic, the class activity is conducted virtually.

This situation could be seen in the bellow data where students are asked to share about their readiness when start learning English in the earlier covid-19. The students' readiness is ranged from 1 (very unprepared) to 5 (very prepared);



Figure 1. The students' readiness in joining online learning and using of TDs

From the above data, it can be seen that most learners are not ready to follow the subject taught by their teachers through TDs. There are 20% or three students of 15 stand to choose very unprepared to join the e-learning class and 40% or 6 of 15 students choose unprepared. If we calculate those students who choose very unprepared (3 students) and unprepared (6 students), the numbers will be 9 students. In contrast, only one student is very prepared to follow the subject in the e-learning

class. This indicate that teachers must motivate students to be active and adaptive to this era – where technology should be a friend of human being. This is what Skinner (2018) term digital human. Hence, the more teacher prepared their students to utilize technology in English learning, the more they become digital human who will be familiar with the e-learning.

From the above situation, it triggers a big question: why these 9 students tend to be unprepared to join the e-learning class? It is because some diver problems faced by them e.g. 1) Lacks of Technological Knowledge (TK) to operate TDs in e-learning class, 2) Lacks of internet data 3) Do not have TDs facilities such as computer or smartphone. These reasons can be demonstrated in the data below;

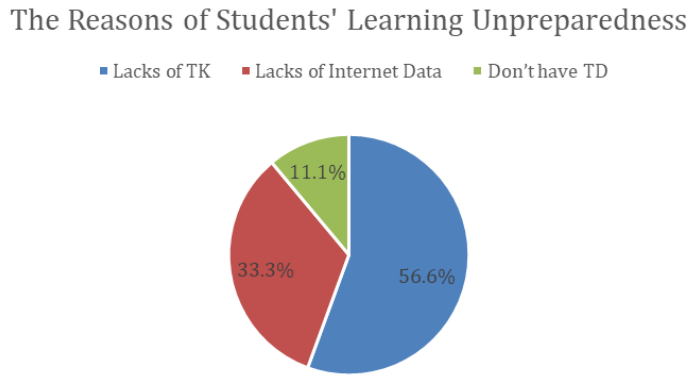


Figure 2. Reasons for students' unpreparedness in virtual learning class (VLC)

The pie chart shows that the largest reason why students are unprepared to join the VLC due to Lacks of TK to operate the TDs with 55.6%. Furthermore, 33.3% students state that they are Lacks of Internet Data, followed with the lowest reason i.e. 11.1%. In order to overcome this situation and minimize the students' unpreparedness, Pazaer and Assaiqeli (2023) suggest that teachers must carry out the pre-service class for giving explanations about the use of TDs and some online application used to conduct the VLC which is organized in a week. Through this pre-service class approach, it equips students with TK so that students become familiar in operating TDs.

The result of carrying the pre-service class shows that students are adept and being skilful in operating the TDs as teaching/learning tools such computer and smartphone. Therefore, during the covid-19 pandemic, students perceive that TDs currently become the effective learning instrument in entering the VLC.

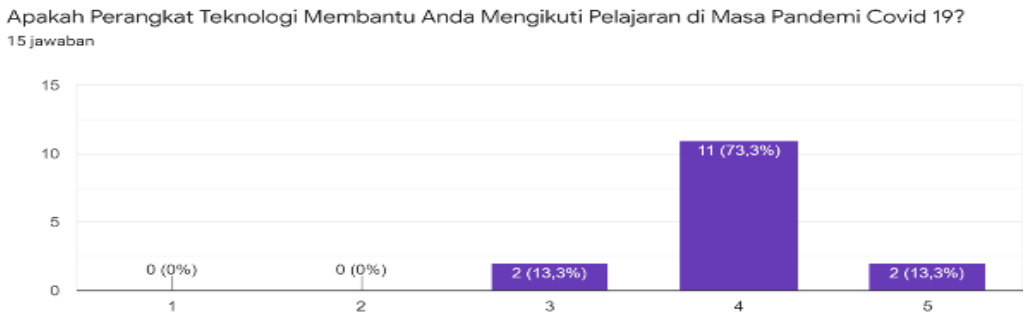


Figure 3. Students' perception towards the use of TD during Covid-19 pandemic

From the above data, it can be seen that after having the material of pre-service class, 73.3% or 11 of 15 students perceive that the use of TDs is helpful to conduct the e-learning class. This data, furthermore, explains that teachers have to be aware in analysing and observing the lacks of students learning process because without diagnosing students' lacks, the teachers will not have views to overcome or at least to minimize their learners' problems.

What kinds of technological devices used in the e-learning class do students like?

According to Li and Che (2022) conducting e-learning does not only use TDs, yet teachers and students should have a deal which online applications (OAs) that can be used to attach the teaching material. Many OAs have been used to support the VLC such as Zoom, Google Meet, WAG, or Google Class Room (Agustin & Lina, 2022; Irfan et al., 2020). Integrating these apps are surely expected to support the VLC, although each of these apps has both advantageous and disadvantageous things.

For instance, in making forum group discussion teachers and students may use Zoom or Google Classroom apps to let students present their presentation to their classmates. Besides, according to Irfan et al. (2020) clarified that using these apps are more interactive rather than any OAs because the OAs are strategical for teachers to measure their learners speaking skills. These can be objectified as the advantageous things. Nevertheless, Zoom and Google Meet app also have some disadvantageous things one of them is wasting more internet data that can affect to their connection.

On the other hand, WAG application can also be considered as a good learning tool to deliver the material (Chandra et al., 2021). Yet, WAG is like previous OAs that it also has both advantageous and disadvantageous things in doing VLC. Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi (2024) had proven that conducting e-learning of English through WAG application trained students language proficiencies especially writing skills. It also can save their internet data when starting the e-learning class.

However, the disadvantageous thing is, using this app does not make the class become interactive as the previous apps (Ciftci et al., 2023). Furthermore, Piaralal et al. (2023) enhanced that another popular app that mostly used to support the e-learning class during covid-19 pandemic is Google Classroom. This app help teachers to share the assignment for learners and can set the day, date and time

based on teachers and students' deal. From these OAs above, the researcher shows, in the pie chart below, the percentages of students' preference in studying English through application;

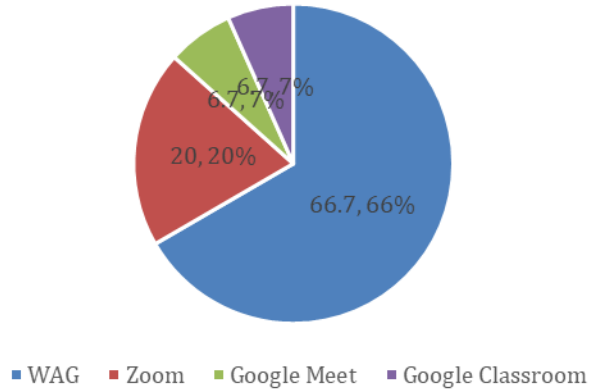


Figure 4. Online application preferences

The pie chart demonstrates that the most OAs that students like goes to the WAG with 66.7%, followed to the Zoom app 20% and Google Meet and Google Classroom apps with the same percentages 6.7%. Even though WAG has some lacks when it is used in delivering the material, yet students perceive that WAG is effective in keeping the material (they can reread the material whenever they want) and saving their internet data.

Another reason why students prefer to use WAG app to begin the VLC because they can improve their writing skills which require lots of vocabularies and grammatical understanding. This is in line with Benlaghrissi and Ouahidi (2024) explanation that utilizing WAG practice students' writing skill. Through WAG students who wanted to express their notion or asking a question to their teacher related to material make them prepare to write their sentence before express it. Therefore, these benefits can have a positive impact to their Linguistic Intelligence.

This means if the e-learning class apply WAG for supporting the learning process, then students can reflect their self-learning to investigate their lacks and strength especially for the writing skills which require linguistic understanding in conducting an academic writing. Therefore, the data, in the bar graph below, proof that most students are trained to improve their LI and Language proficiency particularly for the writing skills when using WAG application.

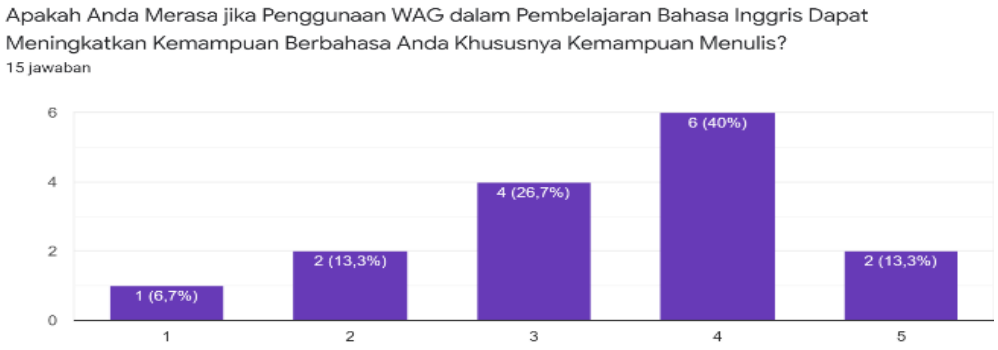


Figure 5. Students' perception on the use of WAG in writing skills

This above bar graph shows that there are various students' perception related to their language abilities especially for the writing skill. 40% students perceive that their writing skills are improved since using digital application namely WAG for joining the e-learning class. These 40% students are the highest where the lowest is 6.7% who perceive that their writing skill does not really improve at all. This indicates that WAG is advisable to be used for training students' writing skill.

Conclusion

To sum up, the researcher reiterates that TDs, in nowadays, is a part of human needs. It can be used in every sector of people's activities. In the globalization, educators integrate TDs to support the educational system. Moreover, after the post covid-19 pandemic, every school transforms their learning model from the conventional model to the virtual model. This means teachers and students should be familiar and adaptive to TDs (Computer, Laptop and Smartphone) and should be selective in choosing OAs that is practical for the e-learning activity especially in the rural area. Each of these OAs have strength and lacks when it is used in the e-learning class. However, most students at SMK Reformasi Makassar tend to prefer WAG application as their favourite app in doing e-learning class due to improving their writing skill, saving their internet data or their smartphone battery's energy, easy to reread whenever students want it, and can train their writing abilities. Thus, the researcher claims that the more students have TK, the better they can operate TD and OA, the better learning impact students achieve. Nevertheless, to develop the discourse of technology's critical role in ELT, the researcher suggests the readers to investigate advantage and disadvantage of technological use in ELT class and how to handle the disadvantage situation for both teachers and students.

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