

USING SMARTPHONES AS LEARNING MEDIA TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY: A FOCUS ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Article Info

Article history:

Received June 29, 2024

Revised September 07, 2024

Accepted September 14, 2024

Keywords:

Learning Media;

Senior High School;

Smartphones;

Vocabulary;

ABSTRACT

Students at public senior high school 1 Long Bagun consider vocabulary learning difficult. In fact, vocabulary is an important element in communication. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using smartphones as a learning medium on improving students' vocabulary. This type of research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, incorporating a phenomenological perspective. The subjects of this study were students of public senior high school 1 Long Bagun, East Kalimantan. We collected data through interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique employed qualitative methods such as data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification drawing. The results of this study indicate that there is an increase in students' vocabulary mastery after using smartphones as a learning medium. The overall exercise results clearly demonstrate this. Up to 90% of students can enhance their practice, indicating that the use of smartphones aids in vocabulary enrichment. Furthermore, observations and interviews reveal that students find motivation in the teaching and learning process when using smartphones as a learning medium. In conclusion, the use of smartphones as a learning medium has a significant impact on improving students' vocabulary mastery.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, smartphones have emerged as a cutting-edge and potent technology, leading to an addiction to the internet and mobile phones among users (Varriale et al., 2023). Smartphones serve various purposes, including facilitating communication and providing mobile entertainment. Nowadays, people can reach information easier, faster, and cheaper through mobile applications (Haleem et al., 2022). In addition to the mobility of smartphones, they have revolutionized the way people live, communicate, and access information as a learning medium.

In the last decade, the development of sophisticated smartphones has led to the rise of social media, particularly among the younger generation (Sharmin et al., 2021). Students spend more time on social media. Every restriction on social networks

facilitates access to information and broadens the global network (Raza et al., 2020; Casale et al., 2024).

Smartphones are currently the most popular social media among teenagers in Indonesia (Pratama & Scarlatos, 2020; Subu et al., 2022). Teenagers in Indonesia make up the majority of people who consume social media. Indonesian teenagers use smartphones, positioning them as the second most popular social platform (Pratama & Scarlatos, 2020; Larson, 2023). Everyone in the world uses smartphones, and many of them use English for their captions. Unknowingly, we frequently translate foreign words into our native language, aiding students in acquiring new vocabulary (Caldwell-Harris & Hoffmeister, 2022).

Teachers serve as subjects who can provide perceptions about the classroom situation when they teach based on phenomena (Jarodzka et al., 2021; Wolff et al., 2021). The phenomenological approach uses interviews and in-depth observations without personal perspectives or judgments from researchers.

Creative individuality Teachers play a crucial role in the future of education, transmitting knowledge to students through their creativity and fostering a love for the learning process (Le, 2023; Angraini et al., 2024). As part of their role as facilitators, teachers must be creative and individualistic in their approach to teaching, constantly updating their teaching materials (Malik, 2018; Ilomäki et al., 2023).

Students can use social media, such as smartphones, as an innovative learning resource to support their independent learning (Azer et al., 2023). Smartphones serve as an intriguing mobile learning medium that enhances students' vocabulary through four key factors: simplicity, accessibility, happiness, and the achievement of vocabulary mastery (Sadikin, 2023; Syafi'i et al., 2024). The four factors that become new pedagogical strategies for teaching indeed make teenagers or students more addicted to smartphones.

This study aims to investigate the use of smartphones to enhance students' vocabulary and explore the advantages of using them for mobile learning. The author's interest in this topic stems from the use of social media as a learning method, which fosters close relationships with students. Most students struggle to understand word meanings due to a lack of vocabulary mastery (Siregar et al., 2021; Munawir et al., 2022; Rosyada-AS & Apoko, 2023). Students need to improve their vocabulary. It's fascinating to integrate the needs of students with the flowers I receive. Using smartphones for mobile learning is one of the most engaging ways for students to enjoy their learning process. Therefore, this research is worth doing.

2. METHOD

This type of research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing a phenomenological perspective. According to Ormston et al. (2014), descriptive qualitative research adopts a view of natural phenomena, allowing research subjects to explore behavior, perception, motivation, action, and to holistically utilize various

natural methods. We conducted this research at Public Senior High School 1 in Long Bagun.

The author must describe, analyze, and interpret the perspectives of interviewees who use smartphones for mobile learning to improve their vocabulary. Life experiences form the basis of phenomenological research. In this study, the author interviewed students at public senior high school 1 Long Bagun. This study focuses on student perceptions by analyzing interview scripts based on data using the hermeneutic phenomenology method.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using smartphones as a learning medium on improving students' vocabulary.

Smartphones serve as social media platforms, serving as a source of new vocabulary

Smartphones are social media platforms that serve as a source of new vocabulary (Yadav, 2021). Teenagers in Indonesia favor smartphones as their preferred social media platform, and in the past decade, smartphones have evolved into a technology that facilitates people's activities more effortlessly. Simultaneously, smartphones facilitate the utilization of these devices. English serves as the primary language of instruction for smartphone users worldwide, typically appearing in the form of stories, descriptions, or posts (Wang & Han, 2021). The use of English in content, which not all users understand very well, makes other users curious about the meaning of words. Therefore, they resort to searching for word meanings through smartphone apps or dictionaries. Through the translation of the words, users know the meaning of words in the language and can apply them in everyday life. We continuously implement this application on smartphones to enhance users' English vocabulary. An interview with one of the students revealed the following findings:

"After learning the meaning of new vocabulary, I usually save it on my smartphone, capture it, copy it, and then move it to my notes to avoid forgetting it." Typically, for learning purposes, such as joking or deepening conversations with friends in groups, I utilize English and the results from my previously installed smartphone."

The researcher discovered, based on the aforementioned statement, that students acquire new vocabulary from their smartphones, which they can use repeatedly to expand their vocabulary. Additionally, an interview with one of the students uncovered the following findings:

"Typically, we engage in normal jokes or chats on WhatsApp; however, if the discussion is similar or related to the same topic, we directly use the smartphone for learning. For instance, someone once reported that many words, especially those

associated with artists, appeared as "unsafe" on a smartphone, especially in posts or Instagram stories. As close friends typically provide advice, they often include the word "insecure" in their remarks. For instance, there is typically a strong emphasis on privacy. Stories from friends, and this is about body shaming, usually use words that match that friend: "Especially not safe alone; don't listen to what people say."

The students who participated in the interviews said they use words from smartphones, which teenagers frequently use as slang, as a teaching tool in WhatsApp chats, and as a language in daily life.

"This is quite effective, especially when we learn through celebrities speaking English on IGTV. We want to learn, and when we do, we automatically create captions in English, confirming our understanding."

The interviewed students said that they increased their vocabulary through smartphones because of curiosity about other smartphone users' content. Therefore, their curiosity prompts them to seek out the meaning of various words. They also apply this knowledge by incorporating new words from their vocabulary into their writing.

"The advantage is that, as indicated in the caption, we indirectly learn vocabulary, acquire new vocabulary, and, similar to curses, frequently add vocabulary."

The aforementioned statement suggests that users indirectly learn new vocabulary through the captions on their smartphones created by other users.

It enables students to learn anywhere and anytime

Learning without the limitations of space and time is a highly enjoyable aspect of modern education. Social media, which is familiar with students' lives, serves as an intriguing learning medium (Susanty et al., 2021). Students have a strong interest in learning outside of the classroom due to the boredom they often experience when studying in class. Innovative learning using smartphones installed on students' smartphones will make it easier for students to learn and improve their vocabulary by reading content on their smartphones (Metruk, 2022).

"Positivity can help us who are lazy to leave the house easily find learning or find materials or find new vocabulary."

Through smartphones, for example. If we lack the ability to manage our time effectively, we might find ourselves engrossed in our smartphones, neglecting numerous other activities. Interviewee students stated that smartphones enable them to study remotely, search for educational resources, and acquire new vocabulary from any location.

"I rarely write in this book because it can be cumbersome to carry it everywhere we go. By saving information in my notes, we can easily learn anywhere."

Interviewee students stated that smartphones benefit their users by simplifying the process of learning and improving new vocabulary, eliminating the need for cumbersome books. Users store new vocabulary they acquire through smartphones in notes on their cellphones.

"It can be anywhere and anytime; users are free to choose the time, and for the problem of learning to repeat it, this is a matter of time, so users can learn anywhere."

Interviewee students expressed their flexibility in choosing when to use their smartphones. They can learn to improve vocabulary through smartphones anywhere and anytime according to their needs. Therefore, individuals can utilize smartphones to enhance their learning experience.

"This is highly effective due to its accessibility from any location and its ability to facilitate continuous learning for users." Furthermore, in the current millennial era, it can be challenging to cultivate student motivation for learning. Therefore, as a smartphone user, I believe that phones can significantly improve exam performance and public speaking skills."

The statement above suggests that individuals can easily access smartphones and enjoy continuous learning according to their preferences.

Smartphones Have Accessible Connections And Are Affordable

Connecting a smartphone to the internet network simplifies the learning process for students, allowing them to easily access smartphones at no cost. Free services give students more interest.

"There is a positive side that leads to vocabulary. Even though it doesn't cost much, we can save more money, especially if we have Wi-Fi at home, which makes learning less complicated."

Students who were interviewed said that using smartphones can drive their costs. This is particularly true when there is a WiFi connection available, which can reduce the amount of internet credit required to access smartphones or free WiFi networks.

"The benefits obtained can help you acquire vocabulary without difficulty, without having to spend a lot of money."

Interviewee students stated that smartphones facilitate vocabulary improvement without requiring significant effort or financial investment.

"I agree with the existence of smartphones for learning,"

Students who were interviewed stated that having free access to smartphones is highly advanced and helps users expand their vocabulary.

First, it's free, so it's good for vocabulary practice."The statement above supports the idea that free access attracts students' interest in using smartphones to learn new vocabulary.

Discussion

Smartphones serve as social media platforms, serving as a source of new vocabulary

Students view learning through smartphones as a form of play, where they enjoy their activities and gain new knowledge, particularly in vocabulary. Schema theory, which states that the effectiveness of applying schema theory in reading English through experiments can affect students, supports this finding (Shadiev et al., 2022). In this study, through reading content, smartphone users can improve their vocabulary.

According to the data, students improve their vocabulary mastery by acquiring new vocabulary through smartphones. Students use repetition to memorize words and keep simple notes on their smartphones. Therefore, we can say that students use smartphones as social media platforms to acquire new vocabulary.

It enables students to learn anywhere and anytime

This finding is like the theory of cognitive flexibility, which states that the adaptive context of flexible learning can affect the comfort of learners in learning (Niemi, 2021; Valtonen et al., 2021). This theory also emphasizes that effective learning is context-dependent, depending on the learning situation. Learners have the flexibility to select their preferred learning environment based on flexible time and place, which allows them to enjoy the learning process (Valtonen et al., 2021; Müller & Mildemberger, 2021).

According to the data, smartphones make learning fun because students can access them anywhere without time limits and also study at home.

Smartphones Have Accessible Connections And Are Affordable

This result is like the accessibility theory; in some situations, the use of smartphones to open educational experiences becomes more accessible than traditional styles (Meirbekov et al., 2024). Students become more interested due to the flexible connections available through smartphones. By using smartphones, they don't need to spend a lot of money.

According to the data, students are more interested in learning via smartphones because they can access them anywhere, and they also get free mobile data access if

there is a wifi connection. They can flexibly access smartphone accommodation according to their needs. It also simplifies their lives as they can utilize the save feature on their smartphones to store new vocabulary or add it to their notes.

Learning through smartphones is very enjoyable for students. Using smartphones as a source of new vocabulary offers students numerous benefits (Ta'amneh, 2021). First, they can learn anywhere and anytime. Second, smartphones have unlimited reach and are cheap, so students can use them for active and enjoyable learning. These advantages make vocabulary-building easier for students. They can learn without joining a class, and also free access is a great offer for students because they can get something easily without having to pay bills. Students can learn without having to bring their books; they just need to open their cellphones, which are more handed over to them (Schmidt, 2020). Accessible learning is engaging for students, as they often become disinterested with traditional teaching methods. Using a smartphone to learn creates a fresh and innovative learning experience (Patra et al., 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students' vocabulary mastery improves following the utilization of smartphone as a learning tool. Comprehensive practice outcomes unequivocally demonstrate this. As many as 90% of students can enhance their skills, indicating that smartphone usage improves vocabulary enrichment. Moreover, observations and interviews indicated that students derived motivation from the teaching and learning process while utilizing smartphones as a learning tool. In conclusion, the utilization of cellphones as an educational tool substantially enhances students' language proficiency.

As a suggestion, the results of this study can be a reference for teachers in improving students' knowledge mastery through smartphone technology. Future research can also expand on these results.

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