EXPLORING THE ROLE OF GADGET IN IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDENTS AT STKIP PGRI PACITAN

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the role of using gadgets on their ability to master English skills and identify the problems students face in mastering English. Data was collected from questionnaires and interviews through quantitative approaches. The sample was 25 students majoring in English language education. The questionnaire was conducted, including forty-five close-ended questions through Google Forms. To analyze the data that has been collected, the first is to describe the results of a questionnaire about the role of gadgets. For data derived from interviews, the recordings are scripted by researchers, after which the answers are categorized and interpreted. The result of the research shows as much as 82% of respondents were classified as a very high category, and this proves that the use of gadgets has a positive impact on the ability to understand English, primarily through access to learning applications, social media and a variety of English content. In addition, factors such as lack of motivation, ineffective methods, and difficulty in understanding the material are the main challenges to mastering the English language.

Keywords: English Comprehension, English Skills, Gadget, Students

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology in recent decades has fundamentally transformed various sectors, from healthcare to education, finance to manufacturing. According to Hennessy (2023), the people are beginning a technological renaissance that will dwarf what we have seen over the past 50 years. Integrating AI, quantum computing, and biotechnology will create opportunities and challenges we are just starting to comprehend. The technological developments have not only improved efficiency and productivity but also redefined the way humans interact with their environment and each other. A World Economic Forum (WEF) report highlights that technological development is a double-edged sword, bringing opportunities and risks. The WEF's 2023 Global Risks Report warns of the increasing digital divide and the ethical dilemmas posed by AI and other emerging technologies (World Economic Forum, 2023). The pace of innovation is unprecedented, leading to profound implications for society, the economy, and even the nature of work.

Technology integration in education has revolutionized how learning is delivered, accessed, and experienced. According to Bates (2015), when effectively implemented, technology can support active learning and foster deeper understanding through simulations, gamification, and instant feedback mechanisms". With the advent of digital tools, online platforms, and interactive software, education is no longer confined to traditional classrooms. Still, it has expanded into virtual spaces, making learning more accessible and personalized. Technology empowers learners to collaborate across geographical boundaries, enabling diverse perspectives and collaborative problem-solving (Harasim, 2012).

In the modern era, gadgets have become integral to daily life, influencing how people communicate, work, and entertain themselves. Mary Meeker (2022) notes that mobile devices are increasingly the primary access point for the internet, emphasizing the significance of these gadgets in everyday life. These devices, from smartphones and tablets to wearable technology, are increasingly shaping our interactions and lifestyles. The rapid evolution of gadget technology has revolutionized personal and professional spheres and raised important questions about their impact on society. The implications of these technological advancements are

multifaceted. While gadgets have brought convenience and connectivity, they have also sparked debates about privacy, security, and the digital divide. Sherry Turkle (2023) points out that people are at a crossroads, and our relationship with technology needs to be critically examined.

Integrating technology and gadgets in educational settings has revolutionized how students learn and interact with information. With the advent of digital tools such as tablets, smartphones, and interactive software, educators can offer more dynamic and personalized learning experiences. These gadgets facilitate access to a wealth of resources and enable innovative teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles. According to West (2012), when effectively integrated into the curriculum, technology can enhance student learning by fostering greater engagement, providing instant feedback, and supporting collaborative learning environments. This shift towards technology-enhanced education transforms traditional classrooms, making learning more accessible, engaging, and effective for students across all levels.

In today's digital age, gadgets such as tablets, smartphones, and laptops have become essential tools in the educational landscape, especially for young learners. According to Radesky (2023), when used thoughtfully, interactive media can foster learning and creativity in children. This suggests gadgets can be crucial in nurturing essential skills from a young age, provided they are integrated thoughtfully into the learning environment. Gadgets have transformed how children access information, interact with content, and develop critical skills. While gadgets offer numerous educational benefits, including access to a vast array of learning resources and interactive educational apps, their role in young learners' cognitive and social development is a subject of ongoing research and debate. However, the increasing presence of gadgets in the lives of young learners also raises concerns about potential adverse effects, such as reduced attention spans and over-reliance on screen-based activities. Dr Christakis warns that excessive screen time can hinder social interactions and physical activity, which are critical for healthy development. He states that gadgets can be valuable educational tools, and it's essential to balance their use with other activities that promote physical and social development (Christakis, 2021).

The impact of gadgets on improving English language skills has been significant, providing learners with innovative tools to enhance their proficiency. Gadgets such as tablets, smartphones, and e-readers offer access to many language-learning apps, interactive dictionaries, and online resources that support vocabulary building, pronunciation practice, and reading comprehension. These devices enable immersive and flexible learning experiences tailored to individual needs and preferences. According to Stockwell (2013), mobile technologies present unique opportunities for language learning by offering authentic, contextually relevant resources and enabling practice in real-time situations. This integration of gadgets into language education makes learning more engaging and allows for continuous training and immediate feedback, which is crucial for effective language learning.

Method

This research is descriptive quantitative, with the data sources consisting of quantitative questionnaires and interviews conducted with English language education Students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The data was collected from July 26, 2024, until August 1, 2024. The questionnaire included forty-five close-ended questions through Google Forms to collect data. Interviews were conducted by asking questions directly to the research subjects. The Interviews in this research were conducted to find out in more depth about the role of gadgets in learning English, and it is hoped that we can find out in detail what students do with gadgets during the process of learning English as well as Students' responses to gadget as a media for Improving English comprehension skill. To analyze the data that has been collected, the first is to describe the results of a questionnaire about the role of gadgets. The instrument that was used to analyze

the data is Microsoft Excel. For data derived from interviews, qualitative data in the form of recordings is scripted by researchers, after which the answers are categorized and interpreted.
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Finding and Discussions

The research was conducted using questionnaires as instruments for 25 students and interviews with 11 students of English language education. The questionnaires used a Likert scale. Data percentages are calculated to find the average rate, and the results are categorized according to the criteria. The result can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of Score for Each Respondent

Respondent	Total Score	Score Max	Percentage (%)	Percentage average (%)	Categories
1	130	180	72.2		High
2	175	180	97.2		Very High
3	167	180	92.8		Very High
4	130	180	72.2	82.02	High
5	153	180	85.0		Very High
6	127	180	70.6		High
7	150	180	83.3		Very High
8	153	180	85.0		Very High
9	153	180	85.0		Very High
10	172	180	95.6		Very High
11	147	180	81.7		Very High
12	132	180	73.3		High
13	163	180	90.6		Very High
14	134	180	74.4		High
15	138	180	76.7		Very High
16	166	180	92.2		Very High
17	168	180	93.3		Very High
18	142	180	78.9		Very High
19	135	180	75.0		High
20	161	180	89.4		Very High
21	132	180	73.3		High
22	127	180	70.6		High
23	142	180	78.9		Very High
24	151	180	83.9		Very High
25	143	180	79.4		Very High

The data above shows that all respondents' average percentage of answers was 82%. According to Budiyono (2013), this is a very high category. The above data show that 8

respondents were in the high category, and 17 were in the very high category. This proves that gadgets play a vital role in improving the English language performance of English language education students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan.

The role and influence of gadgets in improving students' English language performance. Regarding the role of gadgets in the student learning process, items 1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 39, and 40 received approval from students. The data proves that gadgets are vital to students' English learning process. This is also supported by a relatively significant level of agreement on items that are the opposite of these items, namely on reverse items 9, 24, 26, and 27. This quick and easy communication has accelerated the demand for the latest electronic gadgets for multiple purposes like voice calls, messaging, chatting, web browsing, multimedia, and translation (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016).

Regarding the role of smartphones in developing English language skills, most agreed with students, with items 13 being related to reading and 14 being related to listening. Meanwhile, item 15, which was related to writing, and item 16, which was related to speaking, also received approval from students. Item 17 related to vocabulary skills. The data shows that students can use gadgets to develop receptive and productive skills. Integrated teaching must emphasize the involvement of all four language skills associated with the supported skills, including vocabulary, syntax, meaning, structure, and usage (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014).

In the learning process, some students choose to use gadgets, while others prefer to use their books to learn English. The data indicate that 48% of students use their books, while 52% use their gadgets to learn English. Mobile phones with internet connectivity can search thousands of web pages and provide details with a high degree of accuracy to the reader. They almost replace reference books and avoid the physical labor of visiting the university library (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016).

The role of the facilities on the gadget also affects the process of learning English in items 3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 32, 33, 35, 36, and 38 which have high approval rates. Most students have English learning support applications in their grades, as shown in item 25. As many as 92% of students have English learning support applications such as Duolingo, Grammarly, English dictionaries, etc. Another application that students use to learn English is WhatsApp. In addition to being a medium for sending and receiving messages, the WhatsApp application is also used by fellow students to practice and learn English, as evidenced by items 28 and 37, which received student approval of 72% and 60%. English teachers must find creative ways to integrate mobile technology with the course materials to enhance their students' English language learning skills (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016).

To understand how gadgets affect the English comprehension abilities of English Education students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with four questions. One of the questions asked was about the frequency of gadget use (smartphones, tablets, laptops) for learning English. Qualitative analysis revealed that nearly all students use their gadgets to learn English, with durations ranging from 30 minutes to 3 hours. For instance, one student reported using gadgets daily for 2-3 hours for various learning activities such as reading articles, watching video lessons, and practicing through apps. Another student mentioned frequently using gadgets to make learning easier. One more student indicated using smartphones and laptops almost daily, spending about 30 minutes to 1 hour each morning watching learning videos. Another student stated they use gadgets in nearly every lesson, while another indicated using gadgets often for learning English.

The second question asked students if they use any specific apps or websites to improve their understanding of English and to mention some of the ones they use. Most students reported using the Duolingo app to learn and practice English skills. Duolingo employs an audiovisual method, enabling practical and comfortable English practice. Additionally, students mentioned using Grammarly and translation tools like DeepL, Google Translate, and online dictionaries.

These translator apps are commonly used to find word meanings and translations. Grammarly helps students learn grammar, correct spelling, and improve their writing style and text accuracy. One student mentioned using apps like DeepL, Grammarly, and online dictionaries to improve their understanding of English. Another highlight is using Duolingo and Grammarly to enhance grammar, vocabulary, and listening and speaking skills. Others noted using Duolingo frequently and following content creators who discuss English.

The third question asked students how social media affects their English comprehension skills. Most students believe that using social media significantly influences their English learning. Social media content provides educational benefits, offering new knowledge, vocabulary, idioms, and opportunities to interact with native speakers. This exposure helps improve writing, reading, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary skills. One student mentioned learning vocabulary and grammar from English content on Instagram. Another highlighted the significant influence of social media by following English content accounts, such as news, podcasts, and short videos, which allowed them to learn while enjoying the content. Other students noted that the English content on their social media platforms has a substantial impact. Another student mentioned that social media has considerably influenced their English comprehension, as following educational content, memes, and videos in English helped them get accustomed to colloquial language and slang used by native speakers, and interacting with friends from abroad through social media improved their speaking and writing skills.

The fourth question asked students whether gadgets make communicating in English easier or more challenging and why. Most students believe that gadgets facilitate more accessible communication in English. Gadgets are seen as practical tools for practicing English communication and providing access to various learning resources, making the process more straightforward and valuable. They offer a seamless learning experience, enabling communication with anyone, anywhere, and anytime. One student mentioned that gadgets are beneficial and facilitate English communication by providing access to various tools and learning resources, allowing for more frequent and varied practice. Another student noted that gadgets make it easier to access English learning without restrictions. Another highlighted the convenience of looking up the meanings of unknown words and searching for English pronunciation using translator applications.

In addition to making communication more accessible, some students mentioned that gadgets can complicate communicating in English. One student noted that while gadgets sometimes make it easier to look up the meanings of words or grammar rules, distractions from social media notifications and other apps can reduce focus during study or communication. Another student observed that gadgets can both facilitate and hinder communication in English. They make learning resources more accessible and practical, but excessive reliance on gadgets can reduce direct interaction with others, which is essential for effective communication. Therefore, finding a balance in gadget use for learning English is crucial.

Challenges English language education students face in mastering English language performance.

To explain the challenges experienced by students in mastering English comprehension skills. From data processing, there are main challenges faced by English language education students. The first problem is the lack of interest and motivation in learning English for students. In item 41, the students answered that they had low motivation to learn English. This is due to a lack of self-confidence in using English and a lack of difficulty in the material taught in class with real-world needs. The four dimensions of motivational strategies can be robust in increasing students' motivation as they provide steps for teachers to take. The steps include creating motivational conditions as a pre-stage in motivating students, generating initial

motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and evaluating whether the strategies work (Riyanti, 2019).

The second problem that emerged was difficulty in understanding English vocabulary and grammar. In items 42 and 43, many students said they had trouble understanding English vocabulary and grammar. So thus hampering their ability to read and listen to English texts effectively. This is also shown in item 44; many students still have difficulty understanding English reading texts, and only 24% answered counter to this item. The difficulty of students in understanding English material is triggered by several things, especially in the less than optimal ability of teachers to present learning by not mastering learning materials, not using appropriate methods and media, and less able to manage class and the unavailability of handbook or textbooks for students (Sintadewi et al., 2020).

The third problem is learning less effective methods. In item 45, all students answered that the learning methods they received were less effective. Students feel that the teaching methods in class are less exciting and ineffective. Students prefer group discussion methods rather than listening to lectures, but they rarely get this opportunity in class. English teachers should encourage students to work productively and cooperatively on language learning activities using mobile phone technology in the classroom. Introducing classroom activities that guide students to have control over their learning while using a mobile phone can increase the amount of students' participation and create a positive language learning environment in the classroom (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016).

In a follow-up interview, the researcher asked a question to learn more about the challenges experienced by English Education STKIP PGRI Pacitan students in learning English. Most students (6 out of 11) had a similar problem: difficulties in understanding and learning grammar in English. Many broad and complex rules make grammar difficult for most students. According to Indah Puspitasari (2023), the teaching method used by lecturers in English teaching-learning is an essential factor in which students enjoy or are not interested in learning grammar. Plus, many disorders are experienced when learning English. Student 7 says that the most significant challenge in learning English grammar is that English has a lot of rules and exceptions that can be confusing. Similarly, student number 4 said that his biggest challenge is understanding grammar and vocabulary, which are broad and complex.

Distractions when learning English, as experienced by student 1, who said that the biggest challenge in learning English is overcoming shyness and fear of speaking. At first, the student was worried about making mistakes and being judged by others. Strategies to overcome public speaking fear: We should prepare better and understand the topic to eliminate worrying about making public speaking mistakes (Rahayu, 2023). Student 3 stated that he must apply English in my daily life to master it. In addition to his busyness, which is irrelevant to English, finding a communication partner with the same frequency is also a challenge that I need to work on seriously.

Conclusion

This study shows that using gadgets in the learning process can significantly improve the English language performance of English language education students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The results showed that gadgets affected the English learning process of students in improving their English comprehension skills. Gadgets facilitate access to diverse learning resources, improve interaction, and increase learning motivation. Teachers should integrate the systematic use of gadgets in the English learning curriculum to maximize the potential of gadgets as learning aids. Further research is suggested to explore the impact of gadget use in different educational contexts and for other subjects and evaluate the challenges that may be faced.

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