Students’ Perceptions of Using Digital Media in English Language Learning

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the perceptions of students learning English using various digital media at the Islamic university level. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, using observation and interviews. The research involved 10 respondents representing the Institute of Islamic Religion (IAI) Tulang Bawang, Lampung. Of the 10 respondents who answered the questionnaire, 87 percent stated why they prefer digital media over non-digital media. The reasons for these respondents are that digital media is more attractive, modern, and practical, in favor of students, and does not require a lot of paper. In addition, digital media can help students become autonomous and independent learners. This can also be used as a reference for developing independent curriculum implementation at KKNI level 6 in higher education.

Keywords: Digital Media, English Language Learning, Student’s Perception

A. Introduction

Technological developments have changed the educational paradigm through the utilization of digital media. In this context, learners and educators benefit significantly (Guan, Mou, & Jiang, 2020). Digital media, such as educational software, online learning platforms, interactive learning videos and educational apps, have enabled learners to gain wider and more flexible access to learning materials (Díaz Redondo, Caeiro Rodríguez, López Escobar, & Fernández Vilas, 2021). The interactivity offered by digital media also increases learners’ engagement in the learning process, while educators can present materials in a more engaging way that suits individual learning styles (El-Sabagh, 2021). In addition, collaboration between learners and educators is also facilitated through digital media, opening up opportunities for the exchange of ideas and knowledge across regions (Kamaruddin et al., 2023). In this digital age, educators can access updated and diverse educational resources more easily, making education more adaptive and responsive to learners’ needs (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

Digitalization today has a tremendous impact on the world of education and society at large (Rosak-Szyrocka, Zywiolek, Zaborski, Chowdhury, & Hu, 2022). Digital and
technological access is expected to be more equitable so that everyone can feel the positive impact of digitalization (Syahrani, 2021). Many people are helped by the existence of digitalization such as the sale of goods through e-commerce, a digital product that makes it easy for sellers to market their products at the regional, even national and international levels by simply registering their selling items on an online shopping platform (Taneja, 1 C.E.). The world is currently undergoing significant changes due to advances in digital technology. One of the reasons is the pandemic, the pandemic has turned everything into digital. Digitalization of education is one of the alternatives to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021). Online learning is the solution. The ability to operate various digital tools is increasingly crucial. Many educators, teachers or lecturers have difficulty adjusting to this condition, because they are used to teaching and learning activities using old or conventional patterns (Ricky Satria Wiranata, Fairuz Nurillah Khoirunnisa, 2022).

Digital media has significantly changed the educational landscape in recent decades (Darmirah, 2022). The utilization of technology in learning has significantly impacted how we approach teaching and learning (Hasanah et al., 2021). English, as an international language that dominates many aspects of life, including business, science and technology, requires effective and innovative approaches to learning (Sofyan, 2021). This paradigm shift presents new challenges and opportunities for educational institutions, such as Institut Agama Islam (IAI) Tulang Bawang. The development of digital media and information technology has enabled the adoption of interactive media in the English learning process. However, this change involves not only hardware and software, but also affects the mindset and perception of educational actors, especially students.

Education has also changed with the adoption of digital media as a learning tool. Likewise, Islamic Institute (IAI) Tulang Bawang students also face increasingly complex challenges in the digital world. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of digital media use on the English language skills of IAI Tulang Bawang students. This study aims to explore students’ perceptions of the use of digital media in English language learning at IAI Tulang Bawang. In this context, perceptions refer to students’ views, attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of technology in English language learning (Riswanto, 2023). In recent years, educational institutions have adopted various digital platforms, applications and online resources to complement conventional teaching.

Digital media plays a very important role in improving the effectiveness of English language learning (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). With the use of apps, online learning platforms and educational software, students can engage in interactive learning experiences (Darmirah, 2022). Students can actively participate in learning through various activities such as exercises, games, quizzes and simulations. In addition, digital media also provides ease of access and flexibility. Students can access learning
materials anytime and anywhere as long as they are connected to the internet, which is very beneficial for those with busy schedules or limited access to traditional learning resources (Alenezi, 2020). In addition, various multimedia formats such as text, images, audio, and video can be used to help students understand the material in more diverse ways according to their learning styles (Ni, Wang, & Liu, 2020). The autocorrection and instant feedback present in many digital platforms also help students correct their mistakes and improve the quality of learning. Overall, digital media encourages students to practice independently, increases motivation, and provides access to authentic learning resources, while still monitoring their progress in learning.

The importance of digital media in English language learning by outlining some key aspects (Shahbaznezhad, Dolan, & Rashidirad, 2021). First, it states that digital media provides an interactive learning experience through various activities. This gives an overview of how digital media allows students to be actively involved in the learning process. Next, an explanation is given of the ease of access and flexibility offered by digital media, which allows students to learn according to their schedules and needs. Diverse multimedia content is also described as a tool to facilitate understanding of the material. Autocorrect and instant feedback features are recognized as important components in helping students learn effectively (Zhang & Zou, 2021). Finally, the paragraph summarizes the overall benefits of using digital media in English language learning, including encouragement for self-practice, increased motivation, and access to authentic learning resources, while still monitoring students’ progress. Through an in-depth understanding of students’ perceptions, this study aims to provide a better insight into how the use of digital media in English learning at IAI Tulang Bawang has been received by students. Factors that influence their perceptions, such as ease of use, learning effectiveness, interactivity, and active engagement, will be explored in the research conducted.

Based on the results of previous studies, many of them state that there is a positive influence between the use of digital media and students’ learning achievement. Some research journals such as those conducted by (Rachmijati, 2018. Kusumaningrum et all, 2022. Rasman, 2021. Maknun, 2022. Santosa, 2022). state that there is a positive influence on the use of various digital media at various levels of education. Therefore, the researcher made a study at the Islamic university level to find out the perceptions of students learning English using various digital media. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the development of better English learning strategies at IAI Tulang Bawang. In addition, this research can also provide further insight into the implementation of technology in higher education in general. With a better understanding of students’ views and preferences regarding digital media in English learning, educational institutions can take more appropriate steps in delivering meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students.
B. Methods

This research will use a qualitative approach to explore students’ perceptions of the use of digital media in learning English at IAI Tulang Bawang. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the research subjects’ views, attitudes, and experiences. The following are details regarding the research design, participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis that will be used in the study (Libarkin C, Julie, 2017). This research will use a single case study approach (Sjoberg, G., Orum, A. M., & Feagin, 2020). This case study will focus on students’ perceptions of the use of digital media in English language learning at IAI Tulang Bawang. Participants in this study will be selected through purposeful sampling with inclusion criteria based on level of study, study program, and level of experience in using digital media. About 10 students from different levels of study and different study programs at IAI Tulang Bawang will be the participants. Data collection will be conducted through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. In-depth interviews will be conducted with each participant to get their in-depth views on the use of digital media in English learning. Participatory observation will be conducted when students are involved in the learning process using digital media, to understand their interaction with the technology and their responses to its use (Arifin, 2020).

The main instrument in this research is an in-depth interview guide that will be drafted in advance. This guide will include questions related to students’ perceptions of the use of digital media, advantages and disadvantages, positive and negative experiences, and suggestions for improvement. Data collected from interviews and observations will be analyzed using a content analysis approach. The analysis steps include coding the data, identifying the main themes, and creating a narrative that represents the findings from the data. In order to increase the validity and reliability of the research, triangulation techniques will be used. Data will be tested by comparing findings from different sources, such as interviews and observations. In addition, the analysis process will be peer-checked to ensure accuracy and precision of interpretation. By using a qualitative approach, this research is expected to provide in-depth insight into students’ perceptions of the use of digital media in English language learning at IAI Tulang Bawang. The results of this study can provide valuable input for the development of more effective and student-oriented learning strategies in the future.

C. Results and Discussion

Digital Media

Digital media is a form of content, information, and communication generated electronically and accessible through devices such as computers, smartphones, and
tablets connected to the internet (Marpuah et al., 2021). This includes websites that offer a variety of content such as text, images, and videos, as well as mobile applications that function in a variety of fields, from entertainment to education. Social media has also become an integral part of digital media, enabling interaction and content exchange across the globe. In addition, streaming platforms, podcasts and e-books give users the ability to access entertainment and information more flexibly (Yarchi, Baden, & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2020). Education has also been affected by digital media, with e-learning platforms providing online courses. With technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), digital media creates immersive experiences that change the way we interact with the digital world. With all its various forms and functions, digital media has changed the way we communicate, get information, learn, and socialize.

In digital media, there are several functions that need to be known. These functions cover a wide range of aspects, from communication and entertainment to education and business transformation. First, in the field of communication. Digital media allows people to interact and communicate quickly and globally. Text messages, video calls and social media allow people to connect without being limited by geographical distance. Next, in terms of information, digital media is a rich and constantly updated source of information. News sites, video sharing platforms and blogs provide quick and broad access to up-to-date information on a variety of topics, connecting people with the latest news and knowledge.

Furthermore, in the context of education, digital media plays an important role. Online learning platforms, digital courses and interactive learning resources allow access to education remotely, overcoming geographical and time constraints. In the field of entertainment, digital media offers various forms of entertainment that can be accessed flexibly. Video streaming services, online games, digital music, and podcasts provide a variety of entertainment options that can be customized to individual preferences, all of which make digital media a tool for business development. In the business world, digital media is changing the way companies operate. Online advertising, social media and e-commerce platforms allow businesses to reach a wider target audience and interact with customers directly. In addition, digital media provides a space for individual creativity, whether in the form of visual content, videos, digital art, and more. It allows everyone to share their creative works with a global audience.

Digital media also plays an important role in social interaction. Social media and communication platforms allow people to stay connected with friends, family and communities, especially on a global scope. In addition, digital media has an impact on community empowerment, giving individuals a voice in social and political issues. Governments and public service agencies can also utilize digital media to provide public information, online services, and gather input from the public. Finally, digital
media also contributes to accessibility, providing opportunities for individuals with special needs to access information and services more easily. These functions of digital media form an important foundation in the social, cultural and economic changes we have witnessed in the digital age.

One of the main forms of digital media is a website, where pages accessible through a web browser contain different types of content such as text, images, videos and links. It allows users to access information, news, entertainment and web-based services. Mobile applications are also an important component of digital media. These applications can be downloaded and installed on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and they can offer various services such as games, social networking, e-commerce, productivity, and more. Social media is also a part of digital media platforms where users can interact, share content, and communicate online. This includes platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others. Users can share their thoughts, pictures, videos and keep up to date with friends, celebrities or topics of interest. Then streaming services are also an important component of digital media. These include video streaming such as YouTube and Netflix, where users can watch visual content live over the internet. There are also podcast platforms, where users can listen to audio of various topics that are uploaded regularly. Most recently, technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have further enriched the digital media experience. AR combines digital elements with the real world, while VR creates a fully digital environment that users can explore. As such, digital media forms a vast and diverse landscape that enables faster and easier access to information, entertainment, and interaction, and continues to evolve with constantly innovating technologies.

As the current phenomenon, digital media is needed in learning support tools. The utilization of digital media in learning has changed the way education is delivered and accessed. By using technological tools such as computers, mobile devices, and the internet, learners and educators can engage in more interactive and flexible learning. The use of digital media in learning involves various elements such as online learning platforms, learning videos, interactive quizzes, and digital learning resources. For example, online learning platforms such as Google Classroom provide a virtual space where teachers can upload course materials, assignments, and students can submit their work electronically. Learning videos allow teachers to explain concepts visually, while online quizzes can assist in quickly assessing student understanding (Pokharel, Mahendra, Campus, & Nepal, 2021). In addition, additional learning resources accessible through the internet, such as articles and tutorials, enrich students’ learning experience. The use of digital media allows education to be more adaptive, preparing students for an increasingly digitally connected world. However, it is important to design the use of digital media wisely, ensuring that learning objectives are still achieved and inclusivity is maintained. The research shows that digital media is utilized for English language learning in Islamic higher education.
English Language Learning for University Students

English language learning is the process by which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and abilities in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English. English is one of the global languages that has an important role in international communication, business, science, and popular culture. English language learning involves several interrelated aspects. As in the aspect of Speaking skills. Students learn to pronounce words, phrases and sentences in English properly. They also learn how to communicate correctly in a variety of contexts, ranging from everyday conversations to formal presentations. In Listening Skills, students develop the ability to listen to and understand different accents, intonations and speaking rates in English. This involves listening to different types of audios, such as conversations, interviews and speeches. Reading Skills, English learning involves reading different types of texts such as articles, short stories, news, and books in English. Students expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of written language. Writing skills, students learn to express their thoughts in writing in English. This includes writing essays, letters, emails and more. They also learn correct grammar and sentence structure.

Then English learning can also include understanding the culture and traditions of English-speaking countries. This helps students to communicate more effectively and sensitively in cross-cultural situations. In the digital age, technologies such as online learning platforms, videos, and English language apps play an important role in facilitating English learning. Students can access digital learning resources and practice their skills online. English language learning can happen in a variety of contexts, including in schools, universities, language courses, or even independently through online learning resources. The ultimate goal of English language learning is to help individuals become more effective communicators in this international language, opening doors to wider personal and professional opportunities. However, when English language learning is done at the student level, there are also some difficulties encountered.

The difficulties often faced by university students in learning English include various aspects that affect their language comprehension and skills. Firstly, they often encounter difficulties in the pronunciation of English words and phrases due to the variety of accents and intonations that exist. In addition, it is necessary to remember a lot of new vocabulary, which can be challenging and take time to master. Grammar issues also arise, as English grammar rules, such as tense and prepositions, are different from their native language. Direct translations from the native language to English are often inappropriate or do not have the same meaning, resulting in errors in sentence structure. Difficulties in listening to English arise from varying accents, speaking speed, and words that may be unfamiliar. Lack of active practice speaking and interacting in English can also make students feel less confident. Cultural barriers
in English also need to be understood in order to understand the meaning of terms and expressions. Sometimes, these difficulties can reduce motivation to learn and hinder their English language development. With the recognition of these difficulties, students and educators can work together to overcome them through suitable learning methods and approaches that focus on consistent and contextualized practice. In practice, it is necessary to support the atmosphere and process of learning English to be cool, interesting, fun, practical, and not boring by utilizing digital media.

The use of digital media is highly relevant in overcoming the difficulties faced by students in learning English. Various technological tools and platforms can provide effective solutions to overcome these barriers. Digital media can provide interactive learning resources in the form of learning videos and audio. This helps to improve pronunciation and understand accent variations in English. Videos and audios also allow students to listen to different accents, intonations and speaking speeds, thus improving their listening skills. Online English learning apps and platforms can provide structured vocabulary and grammar exercises. This helps students expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of grammar.

Collaborative platforms in digital media allow students to interact and speak in English with fellow students or even native speakers. This gives them the opportunity for active practice, improving speaking skills and confidence. Digital learning resources such as articles, blogs and e-books help students read in English regularly, improving reading comprehension and vocabulary expansion. Fifth, multimedia content in English such as movies, music videos and podcasts not only help improve language comprehension, but also provide cultural insights that can help overcome cultural barriers. Digital media can provide diverse writing experiences, from personal blogs to online forums, thus strengthening writing skills in English. By integrating digital media in English learning, students can overcome many of the difficulties they face. This allows for more interactive, flexible and real-world connected learning, ultimately improving their English skills holistically.

Students’ Perception of Digital Media in English Learning

Based on students’ responses, they use many apps to learn English although there are several different apps such as English Learning Discourse Assistant (ELSA), Quizlet, Canva, Schoology, Google Study Hall, and Padlet, babble, beelinguapp, YouTube, wakelet but they have favorite apps which are Canva, YouTube and ELSA. Canva, for example, is a tool that is loaded with features and functionality that is quite easy to use so that anyone who plays on words can create a variety of interesting content that is shared”. So, Canva can be used to learn English in writing. For example, in writing there is material about advertising, students can use Canva to create brochures, flyers, and greeting cards by exploring student creativity (Dewaweb team. 2022). Then there is YouTube, which is a page that utilizes the web to run its features, with YouTube, a
client can post or display recordings or movements so that they can be seen and appreciated by many people.

Some students who have different intelligence are also greatly helped in learning by using YouTube. Because YouTube not only displays videos but also has audio or sound that can accommodate audio and visual needs. There is also an application called English Learning Discourse Assistant (ELSA) and was designed by Vu Van in 2015, and is based in San Francisco, United States. A new application was born to make it easier for us to speak English to the extent of perfecting pronunciation. The app utilizes man-made consciousness (simulated intelligence) and discourse acknowledgment to help improve and perfect English pronunciation. After one year of operation, ELSA has become a business model for the startup world in Vietnam when it was announced as the winner of SXSW Edu Send off 2016. This tool really helps IAI Tulang Bawang students to improve their pronunciation in English.

Based on the results obtained, researchers found that most students prefer to use digital media rather than non-digital media in learning English, because it is more diverse, interesting, real and easier to learn. Of the 10 respondents who had been interviewed in depth, stated the reasons they prefer digital media over non-digital media. The reasons they choose digital media are listed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Digital</th>
<th>Non-digital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Less practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>Not modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Student-centered learning</td>
<td>Teacher-centered learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engaging</td>
<td>Boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Doesn’t require a lot of paper</td>
<td>Requires paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this study also state that students can be motivated because digital learning has different levels or levels of difficulty so that students can adjust themselves according to their level of English language ability. So that they can grow into autonomous learners. Many studies have been conducted and shown that autonomous learning is an important learning condition. With appropriate direction and activities, student autonomy can help improve English language proficiency. Dafei (2007) in his research, showed that students’ English proficiency is significantly and positively related to their learning autonomy.

In addition, it mentions that to increase the chance of successful learning and language development, students need to be motivated to develop their learning strategies in order to become autonomous learners. Students’ communication needs to be supported, they need to self-organize and direct their learning in and out of school. This concept of independent learning is aligned as a manifestation of the Merdeka
Curriculum. Currently, education in Indonesia is in the era of 21st Century Education which is characterized by the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 which requires students to have learning skills in critical thinking and problem solving, communication, creativity and innovation, and collaboration. Technology and information that continues to develop rapidly as part of the teachers’ challenges is an important tool in implementing the learning process as Sivakumar, 2023. shows that digital learning resources can increase the effectiveness of learning effectiveness. The principles in the Merdeka Curriculum include contextual learning, student-centered learning, future-oriented learning, and learning based on students’ abilities and needs in the Pancasila student profile. These principles require students to take more control and responsibility for their learning process.

Some students explained that the problem that often arises is about web connection. Many applications require a good web connection, while many students have a poor one, so it becomes an obstacle in their learning compositions. In addition, some problems arise, such as some devices are not compatible with the application because the application requires always updated devices. So, the app will not work properly when the device is not updated with time. Another issue is about the account to log into the app. Almost all apps require a verified account to login, some students have problems with accounts such as forgetting email or customized password structure, so it is time-consuming.

So, based on the results we found, basically students have awareness in technology, so they think education needs technology because education needs development and technology can develop education. As long as the conditions support the learning process with digital media, such as internet connection and compatible devices, it can be a good combination for educational development. The researcher expects the use of digital media in English learning to be improved all the time. Lecturers and students must keep up with the current development of digital media so that the learning process can keep up with the digital era.

D. Conclusion

The world of education will not be separated from the development of digitalization. Based on this research, it can be stated that digital media can help students become autonomous learners who have an interest in learning especially English better from within themselves. Students’ perceptions of the use of digital media also facilitate the young spirit of students who feel facilitated by modern tools that are very close to their lives today. This can produce students who are creative and like to learn English without coercion, which in turn can develop themselves without being confined by the limitations of the classroom.
The results of the study are expected to provide an overview of the effectiveness of digital media in improving students’ understanding and mastery of English, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors for the implementation of digital media. Recommendations for the development of learning using digital media are also expected to emerge from the results of this study, so that educational institutions can better utilize technology in the learning process. Further implications of this research can also stimulate more in-depth future research, such as studies on the most effective types of digital media or their impact on student academic achievement, in order to continue to improve and optimize English language learning at IAI Tulang Bawang.

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