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**STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING POST-COVID-19**

**Aulia Mulyani1, Fauziah 2, Novita Diana 3**

**Abstract**.

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perspectives on the integration of digital technology in language learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. The study used a qualitative research method and collected data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted on April 29, 2024, at Ulumul Quran Senior High School. Twenty students participated in the study. The closed-ended questionnaire was analyzed using a Likert scale, while the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. The findings indicated that students had positive perspectives on the integration of digital technology in English learning. They found digital technology to be enjoyable, engaging, interesting, easy to use, and helpful in their learning process.

***Keywords:*** *Digital technology integration, English learning, Covid-19*

Jabal Ghafur University, Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia1,2,3,4

Email:

auliawater55@gmail.com1

Fziah05@yahoo.com2

novitadiana111@gmail.com3

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# INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 has massively impacted many sectors. The tourism economy, transportation, manufacturing, social, and food industries are not only significantly impacted; the education sector was among them. As a result, the education system had to change the continuity of the learning process, which is distance learning that is carried out online through digital technology such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and others.

The English language is increasingly becoming the main lingua franca around the world. English is the most widely used language worldwide, particularly in trade, commerce, science, and academia. English is one of the learning subjects in education worldwide; this also applies in Indonesia, which uses English lessons as a subject that students must study. In Indonesia, English is studied as a foreign language, and English is becoming more relevant in the employment and education sectors, particularly in EFL. Technology has been employed as a learning medium at all levels of education.

Meanwhile, to enhance digital learning, it is not far from utilizing multimodal resources, such as computers, laptops, mobile phones, the global communication system, the Internet, and other technologies, namely video and audio conferencing, video telephony, webcasts, and chat rooms. It makes the learning process more practical for teachers and students. However, digital technology has become an integral part of language instruction, aiding the learning process and offering new possibilities and challenges. The use of digital technology is growing in popularity in the enacted teaching and learning process (Wallace, Scanlon, & Calderón, 2022).

Based on the previous statement about integrating technology, digital literacy is one of the skills required in the twenty-first century, in addition to learning and life skills. Both teachers and students should master digital technology. Alkalai (2004) defined digital literacy as using software and digital technologies to give what people desire, including cognitive, social, motoric, and emotional skills.

While integrating digitally during the implementation of digital technology, there are various issues that teachers and students face at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the lack of mastery of technology, especially for old teachers. The primary reason for lagging during COVID-19 is a deficiency of digital literacy among teachers and students. Teachers and students who are not digitally literate may soon find it challenging to access internet resources, and they will have trouble providing a fulfilling educational experience and assigning assignments. It can be challenging for teachers to prepare learning materials from textbooks in digital format in a relatively short time. Digital literacy, or computerized literacy, is strongly linked to technology use. However, without digital literacy competence, teachers and students will encounter challenges in daily life and the teaching and learning process.

Based on the previous research about digital technology integration by Alqahtani Mufareh et al. (2019) titled “The use of technology in English language teaching”. This research investigated the effectiveness of the traditional teaching method and the modern use of technology in teaching English in the Saudi context. The study shows more than 90% of students prefer learning with modern technology rather than traditional methods.

Based on the previous research, the researcher is interested in exploring “The Students' Perspectives on the Integration of Digital Technology in Language Learning Pasca the Covid-19”. This study aimed to uncover the students' perspectives on integrating digital technology in language learning after Covid-19 at Ulumul Quran Senior High School.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

**Student’s Perspectives**

This study explored the students’ thoughts on integrating digital technology in the classroom for language learning, especially English language learning at SMAN-Ulumul Qur’an. Students' perspectives have an essential role in the teaching and learning process. Teachers must be aware of their preferences regarding learning style, interests, and other factors that may impact students' learning outcomes. By knowing students' needs and preferences, teachers can accelerate more appropriate learning.

**Digital Technology**

Technology in language learning refers to the widespread use of mobile technologies and easy access to internet resources, necessitating effective learning methodologies (Zhou, Y., & Wei, M., 2018). Zhang, R., & Zou, D. (2020) also stated that Digital technologies in language learning include mobile learning, multimedia learning, speech-to-text recognition, and digital-game-based learning, with four primary purposes and benefits. In addition, Murray, D. (2005) Notes that ICT in language learning is the use of interactive and communicative applications such as email, chat, and web-based programs, which requires learners to develop computer literacy.

**The Integration of Digital Technology in Classroom**

The employment of digital technology in language learning classes creates a new atmosphere. According to Evseeva and Solozhenko (2015), studies on using digital technology in the classroom were previously mainly focused on blended learning. In this case, digital technologies act as supportive tools to assist educators in achieving their innovative language teaching goals. However, as a result, the role of digital technology may shift, necessitating new research. The role of teachers who are competent in the use of digital technology is inextricably linked to the usage of digital technology. In this context, digital literacy can be defined as a set of ICT abilities such as coding, computational thinking, and social media proficiency. "digital skills" refers to the ability to use digital tools effectively.

**Types of digital technology**

Today, teachers use modern technology in teaching, which refers to the innovative use of applicable methods, tools, materials, gadgets, systems, and strategies to achieve desired outcomes (Subramani, 2024). As a result of the Covid-19, the learning process/methods were changed among the students. According to Subramani (2024), in her paper, some modern digital tools are primarily used in the 21st century: Google Classroom, Google Form, Google Meet, Zoom, Think Link, Udemy, and YouTube. Some of the most common digital technologies may include digital devices such as computers, tablets, and mobile phones (Vuorikari et al., 2016).

# METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to uncover the students’ perspectives on integrating digital technology into language learning after COVID-19. This study was adapted to Qualitative research. Qualitative research examines how individuals or groups interpret social or human problems (One, 2008).

In this study, the researcher wants to know the perspectives of teachers and students on the integration of digital technology that numbers cannot explain. Twenty students of Ulumul Quran Senior High School participated in this study. The data was collected with closed-ended questionnaires and interviews. The Likert scale uses rating scales with 5 points. Those five points: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The researcher designed 24 student questions for the questionnaire. The student questionnaire was developed and validated by Lai (2015). The indicators are Capacity support, behavior support, technology use, perceived usefulness, and computer self-efficacy.

This study conducted interviews by selecting three students from second grade at Ulumul Quran Senior High School. The researcher formulated five questions related to the topic under study: the student’s perspective on integrating digital technology in language learning classrooms.

# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result can be seen in the following table, which shows the research instrument, the questionnaire result, and the interviews.

# 1. Students’ Perspectives on Integrating Digital Technology in English Learning Classroom after the Covid-19.

# a. questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 24 statements**;** after the data reduction process, there were 17 statements related to the students’ perspectives, and 7 of them were filled with the usefulness of digital technology for students’ lives. The data are from the statement number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18.

**Table 1 Questionnaire Result of Students’ Perspective on the Integration of Digital Technology in English Learning Classroom**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Statements** | **Alternative Answer** | **Total** |
| **SA** | **A** | **N** | **D** | **SD** |
| 1 | I like learning using digital technology because it's fun. | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 70% | 30% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 2 | Digital technologies such as social media platforms can help me learn English. | 11 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 55% | 45% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 3 | Learning English by using digital technology (Kahoot, Cake, etc) makes me more challenged. | 5 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 25% | 75% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 4 | Learning through digital media makes me learn English quickly. | 9 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 40% | 50% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 5 | Using digital media increases my enthusiasm for learning English.  | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 6 | Learning English through digital apps is more interesting and easier to understand. | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 7 | Learning English with this app makes me speak English faster. | 7 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 35% | 50% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 8 | I like it when teachers integrate digital technology to teach, such as Power Point presentations, YouTube videos, and so on. | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 70% | 30% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 9 | Learning English through the integration of digital technologies (such as social media platforms and websites) makes it easier for me to speak English. | 8 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20  |
| 40% | 50% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 10 | Learning English while integrating digital technology (social media platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp) makes it easier for me to speak English. | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 11 | I think that learning English while using technology will help me improve my speaking abilities. | 9 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 45% | 50% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 12 | I believe that the skill of operating digital technology can provide me with a good job in the future. | 7 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 35% | 45% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 13 | Learning English through digital technology such as social media platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram can make me more creative. | 13 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 65% | 30% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 14 | Using social media platforms such as YouTube has helped me enhance my listening skill. | 11 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 55% | 40% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 15 | I feel more flexible when using English learning apps. | 10 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 40% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| 16 | I feel more motivated to learn English through English learning apps such as Duolingo, cake, Kahoot and others. | 10 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 40% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| 17 | Learning English using digital apps has increased my enthusiasm in learning. | 9  | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 45% | 50% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 18 | I feel motivated to learn English through the pictures and videos shown through the projector by the teacher. | 16 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 80% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 19 | I am confident with my abilities to operate technology. | 9 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 45% | 40% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 20 | My teacher plays an important role with the ability to operate digital technology. | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 21 | My English teacher introduced a digital app for learning English. | 8 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 40% | 60% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| 22 | My English teacher often shares useful resources, apps, websites for learning English. | 11 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 55% | 45% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| 23 | I know I can use the Kahoot app to improve my English in a fun way. | 11 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 55% | 35% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| 24 | I can create attractive presentation materials using websites, social media platforms, applications (e.g. Canva, slide shows, etc.). | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 70% | 30% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |

Based on the results of the questionnaire distribution, students have a favorable view of integrating digital technology into English learning in the classroom. Based on the results of the questionnaire above, there are several statements whose percentage reaches 100% (strongly agree). Those statements were found in the numbers 1, 8, 13, and 18. The statement number 1, “I like learning using digital technology because it's fun”, 70% of the students strongly agreed. Based on the data above shows that integrating digital technology in the classroom dramatically affects the classroom atmosphere, which is a fun learning atmosphere. This will also make learning more effective because students learn with internal motivation. In line with this statement, Bull & Ma (2001), Harmer (2007), Gençlter (2015), and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) said one of the advantages of technology is that providing fun learning resources.

Next is statement number 8: “I like it when teachers integrate digital technology to teach, such as PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, and so on.” The table shows that 70% of students strongly agreed with that statement. Meanwhile, only 30% of students agreed with the teacher's use of digital technology in English learning classrooms. This means teachers integrate digital technology to present material in class by using technology such as projectors. In addition, teachers utilize YouTube as a digital resource to support language learning. According to Ding et al. (2019), Li et al. (2019), Andrei (2017), and other studies, digital technologies are primarily utilized for teacher-centered goals, namely to accomplish the instructional aim of presentation.

Statement Number 13, “Learning English through digital technology such as social media platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram can make me more creative.” Table 1 shows that more than half of the students (65%) strongly agreed that learning English by using digital resources such as social media (like YouTube, Instagram, etc.) can increase their creativity. However, nearly half of the students (30%) agreed with the statement above. Meanwhile, only (5%) of students felt unsure about the statement above.

And the last, statement number 18, “I feel motivated to learn English through the pictures and videos shown through the projector by the teacher.” More than half of the students agreed (80%) with the statement. It can be concluded that students prefer learning that uses multimedia in the learning process, such as images or videos that display interesting visuals, so that students will be more interested in what the teacher conveys.Huang et al. (2016) investigated the effects of digital technologies on the motivation and performance of 80 Taiwanese EFL students; those who used the mobile learning tool felt more motivated than those who utilized traditional tools when learning vocabulary in English. In this case, there is a correlation with research conducted by Huang; students feel more motivated to learn by using digital resources because of exciting images or animations. Integrating digital tools will be very appropriate for students with a visual learner type. In line with that, Li (2014) stated that teachers might use pictures or animations to help students gain a better understanding of difficult terminology or concepts and vocabulary

Based on the data above shows that both teachers and students had positive perspectives on digital technology integration in the English classroom because of the same reason as the questionnaire statements. The students thought that digital technology was a tool that could provide English learning in a fun, attractive, exciting, and helpful way to improve students’ English skills, such as speaking skills. Further, they strongly agreed that digital resources such as YouTube can help them better understand the material.

# b. Interview

Based on the analysis of interviews by using thematic analysis, students have a positive view of the integration of digital technology in English language learning. Almost all interviewees found digital technology fun, attractive, interesting, easy to use, and helpful in learning.

# As stated by one student (JH):

“I like it, because it might be easier and more fun.” (Student 2)

The statement above is related to a study by Mukhtar (2017) that investigated student motivation in English language learning. The questionnaire results show that students' motivation to learn English is moderate, with 68.07% falling into the "good" category. Several factors contribute to students' motivation to learn English, including using engaging teaching strategies by the teachers, a fun learning environment that facilitates language acquisition, and enthusiastic students. This also refers to the theory of Environmental support by Sepora et al. (2012). Students are more motivated to learn because they are affected by the fun atmosphere around them and teachers who can integrate digital resources with fun methods to support language learning.

Another student, S.N also said:

“I like it because there are power points, there are animations, it's not boring because the teacher explains as usual, but in the animations there are pictures so it's more exciting.” (Student 3)

Besides being fun, using digital technology in learning can help students understand the subject matter better. As a student said:

*“*I like it because with digital technology, it makes it easier for us (students) to understand the lessons better. Especially when we learn digital through YouTube, for example, it will be easier to understand with fun videos.*”*

*(Student 3)*

Since the teachers integrated digital technology, the students have felt a good impact on their English skills. As students said:

*“*This has improved so far, because if there is something on YouTube that is in English, then if someone does not understand, ask the teacher.” (Student 3)

**CONCLUSION**

The study investigated the teachers' and students' perspectives on integrating digital technology in language learning Classrooms after COVID-19. Besides the perspectives, the study displayed the utilization and challenges of digital technology integration. Based on the questionnaire and interview results gathered on 29 April 2024 at Ulumul Quran Senior High School. The findings show that students positively perceive digital technology integration in English learning. The students stated that digital technology could provide English learning in a fun, attractive, engaging, and helpful way to improve students’ English skills, such as speaking skills. Further, they strongly agreed that digital resources such as YouTube can help them better understand the material.

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