

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss several points, including research background, question, objective, hypothesis, significance, scope, and limitation.

A. Research Background

In today's globalized world, learning English has undeniably gained greater importance (Hassan, 2021). The widespread use of English as a global language has led to its widespread adoption in various aspects of life, including education, business, science, and technology (Hassan, 2021). This trend is supported by research that highlights the benefits of English language proficiency, such as improved career prospects, enhanced communication, and increased access to global opportunities (Hassan, 2021). English is the most commonly spoken language globally, with almost 67 countries recognizing it as their official language. This widespread use of English makes it a vital tool for communication across borders, facilitating global connections and collaborations (Aziza, 2020). Knowing English significantly enhances job prospects, this is particularly true in multinational companies where English is frequently the main language used for business. It also opens up opportunities for international travel and work (Aziza, 2020). English serves as the main language for numerous universities and academic journals, making it crucial for students and researchers to learn English to access and participate in global educational resources (Aziza, 2020). Acquiring English proficiency can

enhance a person's confidence in both social and professional environments, as well as improve their cognitive abilities through the process of learning a new language (Aziza, 2020).

Students in the English Education Department have widely recognized and acknowledged the importance of learning English (Boulos et al., 2011). They understand that having a strong command of the English language is crucial for their future careers and personal growth (Boulos et al., 2011). Furthermore, technology has become widespread in language learning, with many students utilizing English learning apps as a tool to enhance their skills (Fan et al., 2023).

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the use of English learning apps among students studying English Education (Ameri, 2020). Based on the search findings, the utilization of different English learning applications has shown an upward trend, including BBC Learning English, WhatsApp, and Android-based learning materials, to improve students' vocabulary mastery and overall English skills (Hamdani & Puspitorini, 2021). These apps are seen as potential tools for English teaching and learning, particularly during the ongoing era of remote learning prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang & Hsu, 2020). Some of the most popular English learning apps among students include Duolingo, Babbel, FluentU, Rosetta Stone, Memrise, and HelloEnglish (Hamdani & Puspitorini, 2021). Students in colleges and universities extensively utilize these apps to support their English

learning and effectively enhance their language skills (Hamdani & Puspitorini, 2021).

Thus, it is necessary to measure the user perceptions with these apps among the English Education Department students to understand their effectiveness and address any improvements that may be needed (Sita Rukmi & Novianti, 2021). Understanding user perceptions with English learning apps is crucial for several reasons. Understanding user perceptions and satisfaction can help developers and educators improve the design and functionality of English learning apps, making them more effective and engaging for students (Wang & Hsu, 2020). Satisfied users are more likely to continue using the app, which can result in higher retention rates and a larger user base (Yu, 2022). Positive user experiences can lead to recommendations and referrals, helping to attract new users to the app (Yu, 2022). User feedback can be used to inform future developments and updates, ensuring that the app continues to fulfill the requirements and expectations of its users (Yu, 2022). By addressing user perceptions and satisfaction, educators can ensure that students are getting the most out of their learning experience, which can lead to better learning outcomes (Fan et al., 2023). Measuring user perceptions with English learning apps among English Education Department students involves understanding the factors that influence their perceived usefulness and ease of use (Wang & Hsu, 2020). The search results offer insights into how perceived usefulness and ease of use of mobile apps influence app-based learning and their effect on user satisfaction (Lu et al., 2022). Additionally, research on

students' views of using Duolingo apps for learning English revealed that students held favorable opinions regarding Duolingo's usability, context, control, connectivity, mobility, integration, content, technical support, and affordability (Susanti, 2020).

To measure students' perceptions, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1986) was utilized. The theory within TAM depicted individuals' behavior with the goal of system use determined by two main variables: firstly, perceived usefulness (PU), where individuals perceived that utilizing the system could improve their job performance. Secondly, perceived ease of use (PEU), where individuals believed that using the system would reduce effort (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Both factors were identified as separate influences on the user's attitude toward adopting the technology, with perceived ease of use additionally hypothesized to impact perceived usefulness and attitude toward technology usage (Masrom, 2007).

Seeing the importance of measuring the perception of using applications among students, this study focuses on knowing the perceptions of fourth-semester students at the Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung State Islamic University regarding the use of English language learning apps. This study focuses on the general perceptions of using English learning apps without specifying or referring to any particular application. The research does not explore which specific apps were used by the respondents. The selection of research subjects was based on several considerations. First, fourth-semester students are considered to have sufficient basic knowledge of English and

experience in using various learning methods. Second, the adoption of technology in learning is on the rise among university students, highlighting the importance of comprehending its reception and application in the realm of English language education.

The preliminary data for this research consisted of the responses gathered from 60 fourth-semester students in the English Education Department of Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah State Islamic University Tulungagung. These responses were collected via a structured-closed questionnaire, which included 23 items designed to gauge students' perceptions of English learning applications. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), focusing on aspects such as ease of use, usefulness, and overall satisfaction with the apps. The demographic data revealed that students were categorized into four classes (4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D), with varying frequencies of app usage.

The research gap identified in this study revolved around the specific investigation of student perceptions regarding the use of English learning apps in a university setting, particularly within the context of Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah State Islamic University Tulungagung. While numerous studies had explored the effectiveness of digital learning tools, there was a lack of focused research on how these tools were perceived by students in terms of ease of use, usefulness, and perception in this specific educational context. This gap highlighted the necessity for targeted studies that could inform educational strategies and improve the integration of technology in language learning.

This study aims to explore students' perceptions about the effectiveness and ease they encounter in using English learning apps. By understanding this perception, it is hoped that it can provide deeper insight into how these applications can be optimized in the context of English language learning in higher education. Furthermore, the findings of this research aimed to offer insights for application developers to enhance the quality and relevance of their products based on user needs and preferences.

This study was also significant for enhancing the quality of English language learning in Indonesia, particularly within universities. With the increasing demands of globalization, English language skills were among the most crucial skills for students to compete at the international level. Thus, comprehending and maximizing the utilization of English learning apps was a strategic initiative to enhance the quality of English education in Indonesia.

In general, this study was expected to make a substantial contribution to the field of education, particularly in exploring the role of technology in English language learning, as well as providing practical recommendations for educators, application developers, and students in utilizing technology effectively and efficiently.

B. Research Problem

How do students perceive the use of English learning apps regarding learning English?

C. Research Objectives

To know the students' point of view after they have experienced using English learning apps in learning English.

D. Research Significance

The results of this study are expected to be useful theoretically and practically. The benefits of this research are expected:

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research has significant theoretical benefits, including contributing to technology acceptance theory by deepening understanding of how students from the English Education Department of Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung State Islamic University adopt English language learning apps, as well as expanding concepts in the Technology Acceptance Model. Apart from that, this research also has the potential to develop user satisfaction theory by enriching an understanding of the factors that influence student satisfaction with English learning apps. By providing insight into user perceptions and satisfaction in a higher education context, this research will provide a better understanding of how English language learning apps are adopted and valued by English Language Education students. Finally, this research can also provide additional knowledge about English language learning practices in university settings, helping in understanding the challenges and opportunities in improving technology-based English learning.

2. Practical Benefits

a) For the Institution

This research benefits Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah State Islamic University Tulungagung by providing deeper insight into how English language learning apps are adopted and assessed by students of the English Education Department. This can help the institute in designing more effective curriculum development strategies, as well as integrating appropriate learning technology to improve the quality of English language education in the university environment.

b) For Students

Students majoring in English Education at the University will benefit by gaining a better understanding of the English language learning apps they use, including their perceptions and levels of satisfaction. This can help them select and utilize English learning apps that suit their needs and preferences, and improve their overall English learning experience.

c) For Further Research

This research will contribute to the academic literature by providing relevant empirical data on user perceptions and satisfaction with English language learning apps in higher education settings. This can be a reference for future researchers to continue further research in the field of technology acceptance and user satisfaction, as well as

developing more sophisticated theories and models in the context of English learning.

E. Research Scope and Limitation

Due to limitations in time, knowledge, energy, and finances. Thus, this research needs to be given limitations, both in terms of objects and the scope used in this study. The following are the limitations of this study:

1. Scopes

- a) The research focuses on exploring the perceptions of fourth-semester students at State Islamic University Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung regarding the use of English learning apps for learning English.
- b) The research was conducted within a specific timeframe and included data collection from a predetermined sample size of fourth-semester students.

2. Limitations

- a) The study was limited to fourth-semester students at State Islamic University Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other student populations or educational institutions.
- b) This study focuses on the general perceptions of using English learning apps without specifying or referring to any particular

application. Consequently, the research does not explore which specific apps were used by the respondents. This limitation means that the findings are generalized across all English learning apps and may not account for the unique features or user experiences of individual apps. Future research could benefit from examining specific applications to provide more detailed insights into the effectiveness and user preferences associated with particular English learning tools.

- c) Due to resource constraints, the research may not be able to explore all potential factors influencing students' perceptions toward English learning apps comprehensively.
- d) The research rely on self-reported data from students, which may be subject to response bias and may not fully capture the complexities of their perceptions and attitudes.
- e) External factors such as students' prior English proficiency levels, technological literacy, and access to devices may influence their perceptions and usage of English learning apps but will not be extensively examined in this study.
- f) The study does not delve into the effectiveness of specific English learning apps or compare different apps, as the focus is primarily on students' perceptions.

F. Definition of Key Term

The researcher would like to study “Students' Perceptions of the Use of English Learning Apps in Learning English”. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding the terms used in this study they need to be defined as follows:

1. Students' Perceptions

According to Bernstein et al. (1988), perception was described as the active process by which individuals organized and interpreted sensory information to make sense of their surroundings. Santrock (1991) defined perception as the process of organizing and interpreting sensory information to derive meaning. Slameto (2003), emphasizes that perception is a process involving the intake of messages or information into the human brain, and Shale & Wahab (2004) describe it as a process combining and organizing sensory data to be developed in such a way that we can understand the environment. The term “students' perception” refers to the process by which fourth-semester students at State Islamic University Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung form opinions and experiences in the use of English learning apps in their learning process.

2. English Learning Apps

English learning apps were software applications intended for mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, designed to help learners enhance their English language skills. These apps typically provide a

variety of interactive and engaging learning tools, including vocabulary building, grammar exercises, listening and speaking activities, and reading comprehension exercises. They often incorporate features like gamification, point systems, and leaderboards to encourage learners to engage with the content and track their progress.

3. Learning English

Learning English involved acquiring the skills to comprehend, speak, read, and write in the English language. This process can be formal or informal and involves several key components such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural understanding.