



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION: THE USE OF CELL PHONES TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

EFL teachers might face challenges in teaching English language skills to students from different proficiency, and employ the new strategies to learn English effectively. Using technological tools, such as cell phones in the classroom, can enhance student engagement and provide access to rich information during the learning process. This study aims to investigate the students' perception in eighth grade at one of the junior high schools in Surabaya about the use of cell phones in the English classroom to enhance their understanding. For this study, the researcher used a quantitative descriptive, using a close-ended questionnaire. The result from the questionnaire showed that most of the students agreed that cell phones had a positive impact on enhancing their understanding. They felt fun because they could play while learning and provide many applications that can be used to practice English.

Keywords: *Cell Phones, Students' Understanding, Technology*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has played an essential part in international communication execution. English is considered a global language, essential for effective communication across diverse nationalities, given its widespread use worldwide. Moreover, mastery of English can unlock opportunities like studying abroad, accessing international job markets, and establishing global business relationships (Padmawati & Dewi, 2021). Additionally, proficiency in English can open up opportunities for international collaboration and networking within the global academic community (Rohayati, 2018).

The necessity to learn and understand foreign languages, particularly English, encourages significant improvements in Indonesia's education system. The role of English in Indonesia's learning curriculum becomes important in addition to responding to global challenges; English is an international language that Indonesians must master and learn, particularly in the field of education, and also access to digital technology, which is now inextricable. As a society, and particularly as educators, we realize and hope that if English plays a significant role in learning in Indonesia, it will continue in the Indonesian learning curriculum (Dzulkipli Isadaud et al., 2022). Students' reactions to learning a foreign language vary considerably due to its differences from their mother language. International languages often differ in structure, laws, and systems. Some students find it easy to learn the language, while others require practice and struggle from the start. Learning a foreign language can be challenging for both learners with and without difficulties (Sultra & Baharudin, 2020).

Teaching English in Asia, especially Indonesia, faces various challenges for students. One of the problems in language teaching is the lack of practice. Students spend much time studying language theory, but they are afraid to practice it. It raised a concern because learning English is one of the most important skills students must develop to build a better future for themselves (Winzky & Aswir, 2022). Therefore, teachers need various teaching techniques and strategies for students to practice and improve their skills.



In today's educational systems, the main strategy teachers can use in the classroom is implementing technology into the teaching and learning process. This is primarily due to the universal nature of the human-machine interaction, which created a rapid innovation revolution and is essential to educate students for their future lives and careers (Hadi, 2019). As a result, technology has become fundamental to education. The evolution to technology-based teaching methods is in reaction to the demands of the modern age. The new vision of learning aims to improve digital technology competence at all levels, encourage the use of technology in education, and promote active learning (Amalia Solikhah, 2023).

Cell phones are one of the latest technology devices that can enhance students' learning (Kessler, G., 2007; Machmud, K & Abdulah, R, 2017). Cell phones have gained popularity as a tool that can be used in education because most students operate it every day. The usage of cell phones for studying and providing ideas over the World Wide Web is a new trend in the twenty-first century (Alhafeez Ali Ta'amneh, 2021). This tendency enables educators to learn and achieve what they want in new approaches. It is in line with the research from Pratama and Roza (2024) who investigated the students' perception of using smartphones in English learning at vocational high school. The result showed that most of the students agreed that smartphones had a positive impact on their learning process. However, several students stated that using smartphones might disturb concentration during learning. For example, while using a smartphone, it has a notification of incoming calls, incoming SMS, messages from social networks, and so on while learning.

Despite the arguments on the use of cell phones in English classrooms, it is shown from the preliminary study that the teacher in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Kota Surabaya allowed the students to operate cell phones during the learning process for educational purposes only, such as research or language practice activities, search information in google, play games in quizizz, translate some vocabularies, explain material in PPT, etc. The teacher also stated that the use of cell phones has the most potential for learning compared to other technological devices. Furthermore, the researcher has conducted observations when the cell phones are implemented in the classroom and their non-use during the Teaching Assistance Program preceding the current study, the researcher found that the students have a better understanding than when they are not using cell phones. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a more comprehensive study on the use of cell phones in English classrooms on the potential to enhance students' understanding.

There is a growing body of literature on using cell phones to enhance students' understanding. The study conducted by Winzky and Aswir (2022) showed students' perceptions of junior high school in learning pronunciation. Students stated that using the mobile application was enjoyable, such as playing games while studying, and it was simple to use; there were movies and audio that they could play multiple times, which helped them learn more effectively. This study has shown that online platforms can facilitate learning effectively. However, this approach is limited in using browsers. On the other hand, cell phones offer greater flexibility through apps such as WhatsApp, Dictionary, and Google Classroom, which are easily accessible. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the students' perception of how these apps on cell phones can enhance their understanding in the English classroom, and several studies haven't conducted research in Islamic Junior High Schools.

The other studies conducted by Riski & Ain (2022) discussed the perception from the teachers and parents about mobile phone usage, which focuses on the impact on the character development of elementary school students, and the result showed it has a



negative impact; one example is the inability of children to socialize, not be responsible, undisciplined, and various other characters. Besides having a negative impact, cell phones also have a positive impact, namely, making it easier for children to find sources of information and communicate remotely easily. However, the perceptions of junior high school students regarding mobile phone utilization within the context of English language instruction remain largely unexplored. This knowledge gap is significant as it may influence their learning engagement and academic outcomes in English.

EFL teachers might face challenges in teaching English language skills to students of different abilities, using the new strategies to learn English effectively. Using technological tools, such as cell phones can enhance student engagement and provide access to a wealth of information during the learning process. However, teachers must establish clear guidelines and boundaries to ensure technology is used effectively for learning purposes. Teachers also monitor and guide students to ensure that cell phones are not a distraction during lessons. This research investigates using cell phones to enhance understanding in the English classroom. Therefore, this research will address the following question

1. What are the students' perceptions of using mobile phone technology and its impact on their learning and classroom performance?

2. METHOD

For this study, the researcher used quantitative methods, specifically survey research and the questionnaire as the instrument. According to Creswell (2014) defines survey research as research conducted by studying population samples to describe population trends, attitudes, and opinions quantitatively. This study focuses on students in the eighth grade of junior high school in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Kota Surabaya who learn English in the classroom using cell phones; the choice of this school based on the convenience and accessibility because the researcher conducted the Teaching Assistance Program in this school. The researcher discovered that the research issue is relevant and appropriate for this method, which is why they used it additionally to all of the previously mentioned explanations. Subsequently, the researchers discovered that this approach would increase the exposure of the study findings. The method's next goal is to investigate the researchers' demands for this study, which are students' perceptions of using cell phones to enhance their understanding in English classrooms.

In this research, the writer used a questionnaire, based on theory by Venkatesh et al. (2003), to collect data from 1 class which included 30 students who use cell phones in the classroom for learning English and are actively involved in English classes either directly in the classroom or through assignments that utilize technology. The questionnaire is a data collection technique that gives the respondents a set of questions or statements to answer. According to Creswell (2014) There are three types of questions: closed-ended, open-ended, and semi-closed-ended. The questionnaire used in this research is close-ended, and it was distributed using Indonesian so that students would understand the questions well, making it easier and also reducing misinterpretation from students. The data were collected by distributing the questionnaire and using *Google Forms* as the medium. Questionnaires were carried out to measure students' perceptions about using cell phones to enhance their understanding in English classrooms. The data were collected from 23 May to 25 May 2024.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study used a questionnaire to collect data from an eighth-grade class. Based on the theory by Venkatesh et al. (2003), there are four constructs of students' understanding: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social expectancy, and facilitating expectancy.

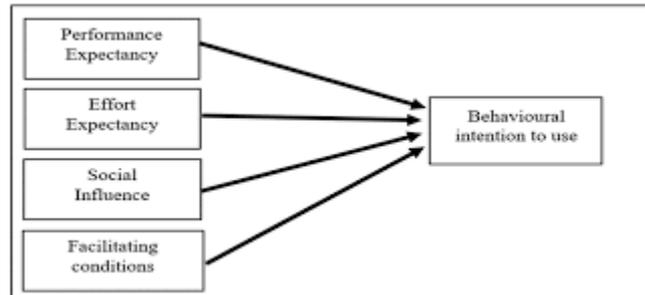


Figure 1 Four Constructs of Students' Understanding

Those four measured as the dimensions in this study:

1. Performance expectancy is the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help them attain gains, especially in job performance.
2. Effort expectancy is the degree of ease associated with using the system.
3. Social influence is the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe they should use the new system.
4. The facilitating condition is the degree to which an individual believes that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support the system's use.

There are 10 statements in the questionnaire using a 5-point Likert Scale rating system as follows: Very Agree (VA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Very Disagree (VD) = 1. Then, the data results are interpreted through an explanatory description of the following table percentages:

Table 1. Performance Expectancy

No	Statements	Responses/Scales					Mean
		VA/5	A/4	N/3	D/2	VD/1	
1	Using cell phones helps me to enhance my understanding in the English classroom	7	15	8	0	0	3.9
		23,3%	50%	26,7%	0%	0%	
2	I use my cell phone to practice pronunciation and spelling correctly in English	4	10	9	4	3	3.2
		13,3%	33,3%	30%	13,3 %	10%	
3	Using cell phones in English classrooms has the benefit of learning tools	12	10	8	0	0	4.1
		40%	33,3%	26,7%	0%	0%	
4	I often practice English with quizzes or other applications using my cell phone in an English classroom	18	10	2	0	0	4.5
		60%	33,3%	6,7%	0%	0%	

The questionnaire was given to 30 students eight grade in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Kota Surabaya who learn English in the classroom using mobile phone, as presented in table 1, the researcher asked the students to convey their choices about the use of cell phone help to enhance their understanding in the English classroom, and it shows 73,3% students agreed the use of cell phone can enhance students' understanding in English classroom and the mean is 3.9.



Afterwards, on the statements 2 indicated that the students use cell phone to practice pronunciation and spelling correctly in English around 76,6% usually use some applications to practice the pronunciation and the spelling such as, google translate, dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, etc.

The following item, it discusses about using cell phones at in English classroom has the benefit of learning tools, the result shows that 73,3% students gave the opinion that cell phone is beneficial and it can be used as their learning tools for doing some exercises and also other applications or surf the web.

As represented in the item 4, the students stated that they often practice English with quizzes or other applications using their cell phone in English classroom, and the result showed 60% very agree, 33,3% agree, 6,7% neutral, and none of the respondents choose disagree or very disagree. Based on the result it could be concluded that most of the students frequently practice English using quizzz or other applications that is shared by the teacher.

Furthermore, The result of the study is supported with the study that has been conducted by Putra et al., (2022) which found that technology advancement has positive impacts in education especially for speaking which focus on learning pronunciation from application that is provided from cell phones. It shows that the technology tools provide new learning experiences and are more flexible, especially for students who need flexible learning applications that can be used anywhere and everywhere.

Table 2. Effort Expectancy

No	Statements	Responses/Scales					Mean
		VA/5	A/4	N/3	D/2	VD/1	
1	Using cell phones in class make a distraction when learning in English class	4	3	8	13	2	2.8
		13,3%	10%	26,7%	43,3%	6,7%	

This statement was asked to state whether using cell phones is a distraction when they learn English in the classroom, and the respondents showed that they are very agree 13,3%, agree 10%, neutral 26,7%, disagree 43,3%, and very disagree 6,7%. It means the result showed the students feel using cell phones make distraction when learning because notifications from some applications are less. However, the other students don't feel it is a distraction because they still can be focused on learning more than the previous one. It is contradictive to the finding from Riski & Ain (2022) who conducted a study on fifth-grade students in elementary school, stated that using cell phones has a negative impact on students, which causes students distractions, especially for character development. The difference between the findings is, in all likelihood, caused by students' character development; Elementary students are still developing self-control and focus, which causes them to be easily distracted by mobile phones, as Riski & Ain (2022) found. In contrast, junior high students tend to have better self-regulation and can manage distractions more effectively, so junior high school students do not find mobile phones disruptive.

Table 3. Social Expectancy

No	Statements	Responses/Scales					Mean
		VA/5	A/4	N/3	D/2	VD/1	
1	I was motivated to learn English using cell phones	5	10	13	2	0	3.6
		16,7%	33,3%	43,3%	6,7%	0%	
2	I use my cell phone to discuss and help friends learn English	10	15	4	0	1	4.1
		33,3%	50%	13,3%	0%	3,3%	



Item 1, the students were asked to indicate whether they motivated to learn English using cell phone, the result shows 50% of the students were motivated but the result for other students shows around 43,3% choose neutral, and 6,7% choose disagree. The mean is 3.6, that means most of the students motivated to learn English using cell phones in the classroom.

On the following statement, it shows the students use cell phone to discuss and help friends learn English and around 33,3% very agree, 50% agree, 13,3% neutral, none of the students choose disagree, and 3,3% very disagree. The mean is 4.1. Thus, according to the respondent, most of the students answer 83,3% use cell phone and make it to discuss materials and also get new information. The results of this study are in line with the finding from Chaka & Govender, (2017) which showed significant agreement that students were influenced to use m-learning because their friends used it, the students who used mobile phone in learning process found it useful and they saw others using it without any obstacles. This shows that social influences, such as friends and significant others, play a big role in influencing students' attitudes towards using m-learning. Thus, students' motivation to learn English using mobile phones and their use to discuss and help friends is largely influenced by their perceptions of the benefits seen by those around them.

Table 4. Facilitating Expectancy

No	Statements	Responses/Scales					Mean
		VA/5	A/4	N/3	D/2	VD/1	
1	I often use my cell phone to submit assignments to teacher	12	12	4	2	0	4.1
		40%	40%	13,3%	6,7%	0%	
2	I often use my cell phone to ask teacher about the assignments	7	12	8	2	1	3.7
		23,3%	40%	26,7%	6,7%	3,3%	
3	Teachers often use cell phone to provide comments or assessments on the assignments given	7	14	7	1	1	3.7
		23,3%	46,7%	23,3%	3,3%	3,3%	

As represented in table 1, the researcher asked the students to convey whether they often use cell phone to submit assignments to the teacher, 40% very agree, 40% agree, 13,3% neutral, 6,7% disagree, and none of the respondents choose very disagree. It means that 80% use it to submit assignments to the teacher.

Item 2, students were asked whether they often use their cell phones to ask teacher about the assignments. Based on the result, most of the students around 63,3% agreed that they usually communicate with the teacher and ask about assignment using cell phones and it is sent through WA group.

On the last statement, item 3 shown that teacher also often use cell phone to provide comments or assessments on the assignments given, the result shows 70% of the students agreed that the teacher also utilize cell phone in learning process and also monitor the students using cell phone.

This current result was in line with the result which has done by Abbad (2021) as conducted a research to undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia. It showed that most of the students believe that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social expectancy and facilitating conditions had a positive impact influence on behavior intention to use cell phones and operate it in learning process. This research also shows that performance expectancy has more influence impact in learning process than others, it was in line with the finding of Alowayr & Al-Azawei (2021) that showed the students perceived the usefulness of particular technology and they were willing to use it.



Based on the data, it concluded that using cell phones in English classroom especially to enhance understanding of the students resulted the positive response. It was provided the data in table 1, which showed the result and most of the answers from the respondents above 50%-90%. Using smartphones to learn English opened up new opportunities and strategies, enhancing the interaction between educators, learners, and got the beneficial of the learning sources (Babiker, M., 2015). Moreover, cell phones provide the students with substantial information and also applications which related with their needs, as the findings of Alhafeez Ali Ta'amneh (2021), who stated that using smartphone in the classroom had the positive impact which can motivate students and facilitate students' learning in the class.

In conclusion, most of the students agreed that cell phones had the positive impact to enhance their understanding. It is obvious from the result obtained from close-ended questionnaire completed by students from eight grade in MTsN 1 Kota Surabaya who served as the respondents. The use of cell phones provides many benefits, students can get information from google, can practice more in Duolingo, Elsa, British Council, etc. Besides that, the teacher also can monitor them by giving the materials through WA group then practicing some questions in quizizz, Kahoot, Live worksheet, etc.

Furthermore, EFL teacher also rarely cannot cover all the topics in the classroom, all of the students stated that the use of cell phone is very helpful to the teacher for giving some materials through WA group and students can have extra time to study and understand the topic in available technological tools. Apart from that, most of the students find the advantage of using cell phone is quick access to information and additional learning resources such as: language learning apps, dictionaries, and video tutorials.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the questionnaire results, it was found in the eighth-grade students of Junior high school perceived the use of cell phones in the classroom is positive. The students thought and felt if the application, such as google translate, Duolingo, Elsa, Quizizz, Live worksheet, Kahoot was useful and it helps them easier to understand the materials in English classroom. They felt fun because they could play while learning. From here we can conclude that teachers can consider cell phones for English class. Based on the student's perception, using cell phones was beneficial, make them easy to get information, then fun learning like playing games while studying.

The future research may conduct more comprehensive studies about the use of cell phone to enhance understanding in English classroom. A similar study with a larger sample of students could produce slightly different results. Teachers should encourage students to use smartphones and educational technology in the classroom to enhance learning and make the EFL environment attractive to learners. Cell phones and educational apps can enhance teaching and learning experiences.

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