

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

The English language has expanded to every corner of the world over the last two decades. This spread is crucial for most sectors' growth, including education, the Internet, business, science and technology, communication, and transportation. Moreover, its extensive use has brought to the attention of many nations the crucial role it plays in meeting the demands of various facets of life.¹

Due to the significance of the English language among non-native English-speaking nations, it is crucial that learners use modern resources to assist in their language acquisition.² Additionally, many learners worldwide have begun learning and employing English as their mother tongue. In addition to recognizing the significance of English in education, most nations have prioritized English language acquisition in their plans and strategies to remedy shortcomings. Therefore, language learning is a significant consideration in their plans and strategies.³

Technology in various fields has proven effective and useful for teachers in achieving specific goals, particularly in education and for students studying a foreign language or literature.⁴ Thus, the English language and literature have developed into an ideal medium for expressing emotions and utilizing technology.

It is generally acknowledged that technological advances and discoveries in learning science permit the development of "well-

¹Mohamad Yahya Abdullah et al., "Exploring the Effects of Flipped Classroom Model Implementation on EFL Learners' Self-Confidence in English Speaking Performance," *Studies in Systems, Decision and Control* 295, no. June (2021): 223–41, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47411-9_13.

²Monther M. Elaish et al., "Mobile Learning for English Language Acquisition: Taxonomy, Challenges, and Recommendations," *IEEE Access* 5 (2017): 19033–47, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2017.2749541>.

³Ching Mei Cheng, "Reflections of College English Majors' Cultural Perceptions on Learning English in Taiwan," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. 1 (2013): 79–91, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n1p79>.

⁴Eisa Amiri and Lamerd Branch, "A Study of The Application of Digital Technologies In Teaching And Learning English Language And Literature," *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research* 1, no. 5 (2012): 103–7.

designed, Learner-centered, interactive, inexpensive, efficient, and flexible e-learning environments".⁵

Even though English plays a vital role globally, Indonesian students' English language abilities fall short of standards. Previous studies identified limited linguistic knowledge, anxiety, a lack of self-confidence, and communication hesitation as a vital contributors to English difficulty.⁶ Numerous factors influence students' English abilities. External factors such as ambiance and atmosphere, parental influences, instructional strategies employed by teachers, and the media influence their learning. In addition, internal factors such as enthusiasm for the subject, attitude, intellect, personality, learning style, and inspiration play a part.⁷ As a result, previous researchers recommend enhancing language learning by using more effective teaching methods.

The advancement of technology in the twenty-first century presents instructors with a crucial opportunity to implement innovative Learner-Centered pedagogical approaches in English classrooms.⁸ They give students the freedom to create additional learning models by utilizing digital technology. The use of technology now provides powerful capabilities such as voice, text, camera, video, paging, and geo-finding.⁹

Technology is crucial in facilitating teaching and learning processes in the twenty-first century and making topics more interesting for students.¹⁰ Because digital learning is not constrained by place or time, it could enhance the learning activity and provide

⁵Badrul Khan, *Managing E-Learning Strategies, Managing E-Learning Strategies*, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59140-634-1>.

⁶Abdullah et al., "Exploring the Effects of Flipped Classroom Model Implementation on EFL Learners' Self-Confidence in English Speaking Performance."

⁷Andi Hamzah Fansury et al., "Digital Content for Millennial Generations: Teaching the English Foreign Language Learner on COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University* 55, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.35741/issn.0258-2724.55.3.40>.

⁸Abdullah et al., "Exploring the Effects of Flipped Classroom Model Implementation on EFL Learners' Self-Confidence in English Speaking Performance."

⁹Yaacov J. Katz and Yaacov B. Yablon, "Affect and Digital Learning at the University Level," *Campus-Wide Information Systems* 28, no. 2 (2011): 114–23, <https://doi.org/10.1108/10650741111117815>.

¹⁰Shymaa Akram Alrubaie, "The Role of Activating Electronic Training In Increasing Efficiency Of Training Process," *Review Literature And Arts Of The Americas* 178, no. August (2020): 173–78.

students to choose their learning route with almost no restrictions.¹¹ The application of appropriate technology materials can be helpful for students.

Digital learning is one of the emerging learning strategies gaining significant attention from teachers and students, particularly concerning mobile phone technology. Indonesia has a population of 191 million people with access to the internet. According to data, approximately half of Indonesia's population is active users. According to a survey conducted by WeAreSocial, the average amount of time spent on the internet by the world's population was six hours per day, or more than one billion hours per year in 2021, whether via smartphones or computers, with 4.66 billion internet users.¹²

Mobile technology is widely regarded as the face of educational applications developed in recent years. Educators and policymakers now recognize smartphones as a powerful educational tool that students and teachers can utilize. Previously, many institutions discouraged students from using smartphones during class time, which was viewed as disrupting student learning.¹³

According to EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2021, English language rank skills in Indonesia are in 80th place out of 112 countries surveyed. The country scored 466 points, placing it in a "low proficiency" band. Based on data for the last five years, Indonesia was ranked 32nd out of 72 countries with scored 52.91 points, which places it in a "moderate" proficiency band. It can be said that the ability to speak in Indonesia has decreased.¹⁴

The Indonesian Ministry of Education has declared the COVID-19 pandemic to be spreading. To overcome the current situation, learning from home is applied to all subjects in educational institutions by using online learning media, which is more specialized

¹¹Katz and Yablon, "Affect and Digital Learning at the University Level."

¹² Kemp, S. (2021) Digital In 2021: World's Internet Users Pass The 4 Billion Mark. [Online] We Are Social. Available From: <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/globaldigital-report-2018> (Accessed 09/02/22)

¹³Ahmad Zahir Wali and Mohammad Ehsan Omaid, "The Use of Smartphones as an Educational Tool in the Classroom: Lecturers' Perceptions," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning* 15, no. 16 (2020): 238–47, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i16.14179>.

¹⁴ The World's Largest Ranking Of Countries And Regions By English Skills 2021, Available On <https://www.ef.com/wen/epi/> (Accessed 15/02/22)

in digital technology such as computers and smartphones.¹⁵ By raising the issue of digital learning, researchers want to see students' perceptions of application-based digital learning as a support for learning English which is often used during learning from home.

Numerous application features are simple, practical, and efficient, enabling students to interact with games, content, and other exciting things that can pique students' interest in English learning.¹⁶ Some language learning applications that can help students learn languages include Hello English, Cake, Duolingo, Mondly languages, WordsBooster, others.

Besides, based on the researcher's interview with Mrs. Rindha Julia, S.Pd as an English teacher at SMK Farming Pati, she uses various methods to enhance English language learning, one of them being the WordsBooster application. This application enables users to learn multiple languages, including English, expand their vocabulary and improve their accents. Three levels are available: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. In addition to getting new lessons from direct object recognition, because the learning activity is mostly done in outdoor classes, the students can develop their English through their mobile phones using English digital applications to help their learning process.¹⁷

Therefore, the researcher would like to analyze and describe how the student's perceptions of whether the use of WordsBooster applications can enhance students' learning abilities and language skills positively. Based on this description, this research was conducted with "The use of WordsBooster Application in Enhancing English Language Learning: Perceptions of Students in an Indonesian Vocational School."

B. Research Focus and Scopus

Based on the preceding of the research above, the research focuses on the application of the 'WordsBooster' application in enhancing English language learning, explaining the effectiveness of

¹⁵Azmil Abidah et al., "The Impact of Covid-19 to Indonesian Education and Its Relation to the Philosophy of 'Merdeka Belajar,'" *Studies in Philosophy of Science and Education* 1, no. 1 (2020): 38–49, <https://doi.org/10.46627/sipose.v1i1.9>.

¹⁶Howard Gardner and Katie Davis, *The App Generation: How Today's Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, Imagination in a Digital World*, *The App Generation*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300199185>.

¹⁷Julia, Rindha, Interview by researcher, July 25, 2022, interview about the use digital application in learning activity at SMK Farming Pati.

the application and which skills develop the most during the use of the 'WordsBooster' application in digital learning English.

C. Research Questions

Based on the background of the research above, the problem of this research is formulated as follows:

1. What are the students' perceptions toward the use of 'WordsBooster' as a language application in enhancing English language learning?
2. Which skills are most thriving while using the word booster application?

D. Research Objective

The purpose of the study was directly connected with the problem of the research. The objectives are divided into two objective of the research:

1. To describe the students' perceptions toward the use of WordsBooster application in enhancing English language learning
2. To find out which skills are most thriving while using the word booster application

E. Research Significances

This research really expects to provide substantial contributions both theoretically and practically advances.

1. Theoretical benefit
The research expands the English Education department's information base by providing innovative learning opportunities through the 'WordsBooster' application.
2. Pragmatic benefit
 - a. For students
The pragmatic outcome of this research for students is anticipated to be a greater interest in and enthusiasm for English learning after using and understanding the word booster application. In addition, learning English using the word booster application expected becomes more efficient and practical.
 - b. For teacher
The Teachers can use additional methods to teach language to students, which can be done anywhere and anytime, to improve student motivation to learn and use outside time to improve student achievement.

- c. For school
To give recommendations for enhancing the English-learning process and student achievement to increase school quality.

F. Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms of this research, some definitions are intended:

1. Student perception
Student perception is the capacity to perceive something or a way of seeing or understanding something. The student is a person going to college, university, secondary school, or anyone interested in a specific field.
2. Language learning
A language is a tool that every human uses to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and views to others. Language learning is the analysis and study of a language as a system, primarily in written form.
3. Application
The mobile learning application is a learning activity assisted by the application and its media, as well as a learning experience.

G. Organization of Thesis

The researcher organizes this research divided into five chapters, which are as follows:

- Chapter I:** Introduction. It contains the research background, Research Focus and Scope, Research Questions, Research Objectives, Research Significances, Definition of Key Terms, and Organization of Thesis.
- Chapter II:** Review of related literature. It contains Theoretical Description, Theoretical Framework, and Review of Previous Study
- Chapter III:** Research methodology. It contains Research Method, Research Setting, Research Participants, Instruments and Data Collection Technique, and Research Ethical Considerations
- Chapter IV:** Research findings and discussion. It Contains Research Result and Discussion
- Chapter V:** Contains Conclusion and Recommendation