



## Smartphone Usage on Students Learning English: The Impact of School Policy

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the reactions from students and teachers about the potential of using Smartphone on students learning in school. Today's Smartphone is an important device of a user's daily life because it has many applications. It can facilitates the users. In learning process, Smartphone can help the teachers and the students. Using Smartphone offers benefits when in learning process particularly in English. It facilitates the students to deliver their works and share information to their classmates through Whatsapp (WA). It can also help students to learn independently in listening and speaking through English Listening & Speaking Application. Then the students can translate several words by using Dictionary Appilcation. Moreover, it can be stressed that internet in Smartphone can provide them with many resources to find diverse materials that they learned in English. However, using Smartphone has disadvantages and challenges in learning English. It makes students do things instantly. They do not focus to learn more. Furthermore, the students are spending long time for chatting in facebook, twitter, instagram, and other social media, browsing non-academic websites, playing games in the middle of the lesson, and cheating along the tests. In addition, the students can be addicted to use it.*

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### 1. Introduction

Smartphone is a great innovation in the part of communication because of its convenience and accessibility which is used in general areas and at general time. Smartphone usage has actively influence human's daily life. Approximately people in Indonesia have smartphone, even for children, adolescents and adult. It can be seen from the data of *Statista Portal* which is showed the number of Indonesian users of Smartphone has increased from 11.7 million in 2011 has reached until 62.69 million in 2017. This number shows that the penetration of Smartphone usage is continued to develop mainly in Indonesia (statista.com, 2017)

The use of smartphone has penetrated all aspects of life including education. In education activities, Smartphone is a device to help teachers and students. There are some activities through smartphone that can be used by teachers and students in the school learning. They are learning through the internet search, learning English vocabulary using Whatsapp (WA) and Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging, learning

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through sound, learning through camera and video clips, and learning through incorporating other technologies such as YouTube and Voice Thread (Kim, Rueckert, Kim, & Seo, 2013; Sevari, 2012; Suleiman & Aamri, 2011; Başoğlu & Akdemir, 2010; Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009).

The teachers and students have positive point of views towards the applied of Smartphone at school. It can motivate and facilitate the students to learn independently in study English (Mahmud, 2018; Weng & Chen, 2015). Besides, the teachers are encouraged to integrate the use of technology in teaching learning process because they are teaching digital natives who have their own preference for material learning (Prensky, 2001). This is in line with Lekawael's (2017) comment that there is an urgent need for teachers to implement smartphone-based language learning in order to engage students to be critics with material and its content. Furthermore, it is expected that students are able to build and enhance a technology awareness of smartphone and internet usage on English language learning in classroom.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that most schools apply the school's policy that is ban smartphone usage in teaching learning process. There are several arguments of the potential ban of Smartphone usage in school learning. According to Lekawael (2017), most students spend much time to access the social network, some students utilize internet for dictionary and games, and only a few students use internet for education purposes. In addition Mahmud (2018) said that the students can access internet greedily that give them a freedom to browse all kind of information they need, including porn and violent contents. Therefore, this paper is conducted to answer the research question, namely what are the students' and the teachers' perceptions about Smartphone usage on learning English?

## **2. Method**

This research applied descriptive qualitative design. It described about the students' and the teachers' thoughts about Smartphone usage on learning English. This research was using an interview that has been targeting several senior high schools in Soppeng, and the English teachers from those schools. There are seven English teachers and 25 students from five different schools in Soppeng as participants of this research.

To collecting the data, it was collected by observation and interview. The observations used non-participants observation. The researcher attended in the class then surveyed and recorded, but the observer did not participate in the teaching learning process. From that activity, the data were collected by semi-structured interview for each participant. In the interview guides, the questions were used to explore the participants' opinion about Smartphone usage on students learning English.

After that, the data were analyzed by three steps that consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Miles and Huberman, 1994:10-13). In reduction step, the result of the data reduced and organized by coding, and discarding irrelevant data. The data were coded and categorized based on the research question addressed. Next step, the data was displayed into narrative text. And the last step was conclusion which is contents of the completion of the participants' statement.

## **3. Findings**

The result of this research is presented based on the research question; what the students' and the teachers' perceptions about Smartphone usage on learning English are.

## **Students' perception about Smartphone usage on learning English**

### **Duration of Time Spent on Smartphone**

Participants was interviewed for the time devoted in using smartphone indicated that participants have spent many hours a day when using their Smartphone. This is improved by participants' answers on the questions "How many hours per day have you spent for using Smartphone?":

*"Biasa klo tidak ada kukerja, lama sekali pegang hp"* [when I have nothing to do, it takes long time for me to use my phone]

(Student A, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*"Mungkin 8 sampai 10 jam, paling lama 2 jam baru istirahat lanjut lagi. Selain untuk buka sosmed biasanya saya gunakan untuk kerja tugas"* [it takes around 8 until 10 hours a day. I did not touch my phone for 2 hours. It's not only for chatting or do something in my social media accounts, but I also use my phone to finish my assignments,]

(Student B, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*"Skitar 15 jam kapang, tapi kalau banyak dikerja kadang di sekolah saja"* [possibly, it takes around 15 hours. Unless I have so many works to do, sometimes I prefer to finish it at school.]

(Student C, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

### **The Place Preferences to Use the Smartphone**

Participants was interviewed for the place preferences to use the smartphones indicated that the program software on the smartphone was mostly used in their activities. Participants' answer the questions "Do you always carry your Smartphone everywhere and everytime?"

*"Ya, saya selalu membawa Hp kemanapun supaya lebih mudah dalam berkomunikasi, terutama komunikasi dengan orang tua. Bahkan Hp menjadi suatu prioritas bagi saya karena orang tua bisa saja menelpon untuk memberitahu sesuatu yang penting dan menanyakan keberadaan saya ketika saya terlambat pulang dari sekolah"* [yes, I do, in this case it helps me to communicate with people that I know, mainly with my parents. I even cannot deny that mobile phone is one of my priorities because I always get a call from my parents to tell something important and ask the location where I belong at the time, I'm late from school.]

(Student A, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Ya, Harus bawa hp kemanapun karena dengan Hp saya bisa menghubungi orang tua atau teman-teman untuk memberitahu posisi saya kepada mereka. Selain itu, ada yang lain kalau tidak bawa hp”*[yes, I do. It such a necessary to bring the mobile phone wherever I go. I can give information to my parents and my friends about my recent location. besides, I feel something strange when I didn't bring the phone around me.]

(Student D, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Ya, sering menggunakan hp karena saya sering melakukan chat di social media, browsing, mendownload dan kegiatan lainnya.*[yes I do. I often use my phone anytime because I like to browse many kinds of websites, chat in my social media accounts, download and other activities.]

(Student E, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Sering sekali, tidak bisa saya bayangkan kalau tidak bawa hp”* [ I always use it. I cannot imagine without phone]

(Student J, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Tergantung, kalau lagi focus belajar tidak pegang hp, sama kalau sedang dicas”* [it depends on the circumstance. If I want to concentrate with my study, cell phone can disturb me. Therefore, I don't carry it. The same time I do it when the phone need to be charged.]

(Student Q, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

### ***The Policy of Smartphone Usage***

Participants was interviewed for the policy of Smartphone usage at school indicated that most schools in Soppeng allow the smartphone usage in certain learning process. It helps the students to find unfamiliar words in English. This is evidenced by students' opinion below:

*“Iyye diizinkan ji.”* [yes, it has been allowed for us to use it.]

(Student A, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Ya diizinkan. Biasa digunakan untuk mencari materi biologi sama kimia. Biasa juga PKn. Sering-sering pakai google translate .*[yes, it is allowed. I usually use it to search Biology and Chemistry materials. It also for citizen education material too. The most usable one is google translate.]

(Student B, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Diizinkan, tetapi hanya bisa digunakan jika ada pemberitahuan dari guru.”* [yes, it is allowed, unless we have to ask our teacher’s permission to use it.]

(Student G, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

### ***Kinds of Smartphone Applications in Learning English***

The data shows that the participants use a Smartphone for share the information through Whatsapp, Line, and Instagram. Mostly, they translate English words to Indonesia words through dictionary applications. This is informed by the following interviews:

*“Banyak aplikasi yang biasa saya gunakan. Misalnya Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, dan Line. Biasa ka juga pakai kamus sama cambly.”* [I use many applications. For example: Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, and Line. I’m not only access my social media accounts, but also translate several words in dictionary and cambly.]

(Student A, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Saya menggunakan media social, seperti WA, FB, dan Line untuk berbagi informasi kepada teman saya. Kadang bu guru memberikan tugas melalui WA. Paling sering pakai google translate kalau ada tugas bahasa Inggris yang tidak artinya”* [I use social media to share information to my friends, such as WA, FB, and Line. Sometimes, my teacher gives homework through WA. I usually use google translate if I have assignment in English that I don’t understand the meaning]

(Student F, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Saya menggunakan Hp yang mempunyai aplikasi kamus dan akses internet. itu memudahkan dalam belajar daripada saya haru buka buku”* [I use Smartphone that has dictionary application and internet access. It makes learning easier than I have to open textbook].

(Student H, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Saya pakai google translation untuk mengetahui kata –kata baru, biasa juga menonton di youtube, kalau tidak belajar biasa juga buka facebook atau instagram”* [I use google translation to find a new word. Another side, I used it to watch many kinds of videos on youtube. If I don’t have any assignment, I access facebook or instagram.]

(Student J, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

### ***The Students’ Statement about Using Smartphone in Learning English***

The result of interview indicated that smartphone can help them in learning English. There are many students who rely on their mobile phones for the purpose of translation. It is supported by participant’s opinion below:

*“HP membantu dalam belajar. Terutama google translation”* [Smartphone is helpful in studying, especially to translate some words using google translate]  
(Student B, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Smartphone penting karena ada bisa untuk translate.”* [Smartphone is a necessary for me to translate English words]

(Student D, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Biasanya kalau lupa bawa buku saya belajar menggunakan ebook di hp. Karena lebih ringan dibawa trus kalau ada mau dicari lebih gampang dibandingkan buku.”* [when I forgot my book (hard copy), I use e-book in my smartphone because it is easy to carry. Besides, if I need to search something from a book, it is accessible to find it by using smartphone than book (hard copy).]

(Student K, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Saya pikir menggunakan smartphone sangat bagus karena banyak aplikasi yang bisa meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa inggris, seperti Kamus untuk menerjemahkan, kalau mau mau menerjemahkan kalimat bisa pakai google translate tapi harus diperhatikan lagi susunannya karena biasa hancur. Selain itu, ada aplikasi Listening and Speaking yang dikasi sama ibu guru. Itu bagus kalau mau belajar speaking karena ada kalimat didengar baru diulang pengucapannya. Ada juga koreksinya.”* [I think using a smartphone in the classroom is very good to enhance my English, like dictionary application to translate. If I want to translate sentences, google translate can help me. However, it needs to fix the grammar of the sentence owing to it has bad structures. Besides, my teacher gave applications namely Listening and Speaking. It is good to learn them because we listen and repeat what we have heard. It also has the right correction”]

(Student M, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

However, there are also a few students who think that using the smartphones in the classroom is not appropriate. It distracts them in learning process. An overview of the students' perceptions is presented below:

*“Sebenarnya Smartphone itu bagus untuk komunikasi saja tapi kalau untuk belajar kayaknya tidak karena biasanya ada yang hanya main game”* [literally, Smartphone is good for communication, but it is not suitable for learning because a few students just use it to play games.]

(Student L, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Menurutku menggunakan smarphone di kelas membuat ketergantungan dan malas membaca lebih banyak karena sisa ditulis apa yang mau dicari kemudian klik, selesai, dapat hasilnya.”* [ I think that using smartphone in class make the students being



dependence. It also makes us lazy to read more because we just write what we want and click, then finish, we got the result.]

(Student N, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Smartphone tidak cocok untuk orang yang tidak peduli dengan pelajarannya. Banyak yang menggunakan hp mahalnya hanya untuk main game”* [Smartphone is bad for people who do not care about their studies. A few students use their expensive phone for playing game]

(Student O, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Sebenarnya saya liat catatan di hp kalau ulangan karena temanku juga pakai”* [actually, I read notes in my phone during exam because my friends also do like that]

(Student P, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

*“Banyak temanku yang buka hp kalau ujian”* [lot of my friends open their phone during exam]

(Student Q, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017)

### ***Teachers' Perception about Smartphone Usage on Learning English***

The statements presented below are an overview of the English teachers' opinion on the policy of smartphone usage and the impact of smartphone usage on learning English.

#### ***The Policy of Smartphone Usage***

The data indicated that English teachers allow students to use smartphones during learning in school. It is useful for teacher to get material and share information fast to their students. It is showed by teachers' opinion below:

*“Sometimes, I ask my students to use their smartphone in certain material. They need more references that they can't find in book”*

(Teacher A, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

*“ I use smartphone to motivate students in teaching –learning process and to make knowledge transferring easier”*

(Teacher B, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

*“Yes, I allow my students because smartphone is very helpful. It helps the students to find difficult words and materials. They are students Jaman Now”*

(Teacher C, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

"I allow my students to bring and used smartphome in the classroom. As we know that in K13, the students have to learn independently. The teacher just facilitate them in learning. Using smartphome is one device to facilitate them."

(Teacher G, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

### ***The Impact of Smartphone Usage on Learning English***

Participants interviewed showed that English teachers are aware of the effectiveness of smartphone usage in the teaching-learning process. It also helps the teacher to share information and materials easily and fast. It is evidenced by teachers' arguments:

"Smartphones help students to study independently. Besides, I usually use WA to share information and give homework"

(Teacher A, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

"One of smartphone application that I give to my students is English Listening and Speaking application. It is helpful for checking pronunciation. Therefore they can enlarge their listening and speaking skills. It can be used in online Streaming and offline to learn English"

(Teacher C, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

"Smartphone can store useful information, such as dictionaries, and can access websites on the internet"

(Teacher D, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

"Smartphone provides easy, fast and efficient access to thousands of useful sources by internet access"

(Teacher E, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

However, a few English teachers also indicated that smartphone has negative impacts in learning process.

"Everything has positive and negative impacts, including its usage in learning. Sometimes, they are using phone for another activity, like chatting or browse non-academic web during teaching – learning process. When they do like that, I will warn them"

(Teacher B, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)



“They stopped writing notes on paper. They just took the pictures. I think that it is fine because it doesn’t take too long time. However, sometimes they cannot read the picture due to it has unclear picture to recognize.”

(Teacher E , interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

“Some students use phone during exam. I will take their phone if I look them using it during exam”

(Teacher F, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2017)

#### **4. Discussion**

In students’ life, smartphone become an important thing. Based on the interviews above, there are many programs software on the smartphone which is mostly used in students’ activities. They use Whatsapp application to send their works for their teachers and share information to their friends. Not only the students utilize Whatsapp to share information, but also the teachers usually give assignment to their students through Whatsapp. Instead of making communication easier and faster there by, it also enhance effective flow of information and idea sharing among students (Yeboah & Ewur: 2014).

The students also use dictionary application and google translation to translate unfamiliar words. It becomes habitual among students to use their smartphones to change the meaning of English words into Indonesian. Using dictionaries in smartphone as a vocabulary learning tool is more effective than the one which still apply traditional vocabulary learning tools (Başoğlu & Akdemir: 2010). However, the inability of the various available language translating application to give accurate meaning of different English sentences can hinder students' understanding of the exact meaning.

Another application that the students use in their smartphone is English Listening and Speaking application. This application is helpful the students listening to English and speaking English more fluently. Lutfiansyah (2016) stated that Listen and Speak application is an application that helps students to improve their English skill by listening and understanding how the word should be spoken.

Based on the data, the Smartphone usage on students learning English is allowed by using teachers’ approval. It was supported by Mahmud (2018) who stated that some schools were only allowed with teachers’ agreement to use it in instructional process. English teachers encourage students to work actively on their teaching-learning process. In addition, Smartphone is a helpful media for the students to find out material that they are disable to search in the book. The teachers are aware of the effectiveness of mobile phones for developing the English language skills. Furthermore, they suggest that mobile phones are like a blessing in disguise, only if they can use it wisely. (Suleiman: 2011).

Despites, several students and teachers consider that using smartphones in the classroom are not appropriate. It causes negative impacts in learning process. The findings of this research suggested that the students spend many hours a day to communicate with their friends. They use their smartphone for chatting in facebook, twitter, instagram, and other social media. It is supported by Nalliveetil and Alenazi (2016) who stated that the impact of mobile phones in students’ everyday lives is more dominant than other gadgets. These students spend between four hours and 18 hours per day on their mobile phones for chatting with their friends.

They are addicted to use it. They are not able to go anywhere without their smartphone. They are not only browsing non – academic websites but also playing games in their smartphones in the middle of the lesson. This is in line with Kibona and Mgaya's (2015) statement that smartphone becomes problematic nowadays because most students are more addicted to applications found on smartphones like WhatsApp, twitter, Facebook and the like. They use it without considering that those times spent on social media could have been used on academic related works and hence yield good results at the end of semester examinations (Kim, Rueckert, Kim, & Seo, 2013). In addition, they cheat by their smartphone during exams. Mahmud (2018) revealed that smartphone can be the tool for test cheating, because they can exchange information related to the answers of the test.

Dealing with negative impact of smartphone usage, the result's interview of teachers showed that they will use "warning" their students. Warning is the first way to deal with the students. They applied "warning" automatically because the students would stop immediately. This is supported by Walters and Frei (2007:130-133) who suggested that to deal with problem quickly for handling students was by using a few words.

## 5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that students and teacher as participants in this research show positive perceptions. Smartphone is an important device of teachers and students in learning process because it has many applications (or software). The English teachers in Soppeng allow their students to use Smartphone in certain learning process. By using smartphone, it is expected that either teacher or students become more active to explore their knowledge.

The students use Whatsapp to deliver their works to teacher and share information to their classmates. The students also learn listening and speaking independently through English listening and speaking applications. The most application that students used in English learning are dictionary and internet access for dictionary (google translate).

Not only the advantages of using smartphone, but it also has disadvantages and challenges in learning English. Most students spend much time to access the social media. The students can be addicted to use it. They cannot go anywhere without their Smartphone. The students do things instantly. They do not focus to learn more during the lesson. If the students use Smartphone for another activity in learning, the teacher will warn them.

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