

AN INSIGHT OF ANITALES APPS PERCEIVED BY DIGITAL STORYTELLING STUDENTS

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Abstract. *MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) has been inextricably linked to education. Mobile learning is becoming increasingly common. As a result, a plethora of apps or smartphone applications has emerged to assist both teachers and students in improving the quality of learning. The introduction of Go Animate as a new method to facilitate mobile learning in the classroom was explored in the previous report. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, the current study looks at another program called Anitales. Anitales is a program that allows you to make animated stories. Three university students who used Anitales in their Digital Storytelling Class were interviewed. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis. The participants in the study had optimistic attitudes toward the use of Anitales. Anitales offered a variety of appealing features, which influenced students' emotions and motivation. Anitales worked with students to help them develop their imagination, writing, and speaking abilities.*

Keywords: Anitales; Digital Story Telling; MALL; Students' Perception.

A. INTRODUCTION

The use of technology in language learning in education is rapidly increasing. Mobile Learning has fascinated the curiosity of practitioners and researchers due to the rapid growth of telecommunication technology and its application to mobile devices (Hsu, 2013). Furthermore, technology is used in language learning to assist students in improving their language skills. According to Yuniarti (2014), technology has favored EFL Teachers and Learners by making resources reusable and immediately accessible, as well as reducing feedback time. MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) are two types of language learning by technology (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) – an evolving advanced technology that promotes personal and learner-centered learning experiences through ubiquitously open and dynamic practices – has emerged as a significant trend in EFL learning (Sun et al. 2017, p.305). Digital Story Telling (hereafter DST) is being created as a result of the use of technology in education. According to Hava (2019), digital storytelling is the process of creating a story by combining and editing multimedia elements relevant to a specific subject (p.3). Furthermore, DST refers to a method that enables students to be imaginative storytellers by guiding them through the two stages of subject selection, research on the topic, scriptwriting, and engaging storytelling (Robin, 2008). Anitales is one of the mobile apps used to create DST. It is a mobile phone application that makes it possible to create an animated story. Anitales was used by a group of students at one of Tasikmalaya's universities to complete their DST class assignment. Initially, they introduced the application

Anitales to the class. Then, at the end of the course, the lecturer assigned each student a project to develop a DST project on their own. Almost all of the students were intrigued by Anitales and wanted to use it for their project. The present study focuses on investigating students' perception of who used Anitales application in DST class using phenomenological research design by delivering the formulation of the problem "What are the Students' Perceptions on Anitales Application used in DST class?"

B. METHODS

The recent study used phenomenological research design to investigate the phenomenon which has been experienced and to develop a composite portrayal of the substance of the experience for every one of the people. As stated by Creswell (2013) to explain participants' experience of a phenomenon is the focus of phenomenological research design. The researcher aims to investigate the phenomenon that appeared since the students in the DST class used Anitales as mobile learning to create a DST project.

Furthermore, phenomenological research should be based on first-hand knowledge of a case, circumstance, or experience, and is typically conducted by interviewing several groups of people (Moustakas, 1994). In line with this, the present research is focused on Anitales, which is rarely explored by researchers, and the data was gathered through interviews. As a measure, the researcher endeavors to investigate students' impressions of Anitales application in DST class.

The participant of the study is three students who have conducted DST class in one of the Universities in Tasikmalaya. They used Anitales as a tool to create DST to fulfill the assignment from their lecturer. They were chosen because of three considerations:

- a) They used Anitales Application in creating the animated story in the DST class.
- b) The students are still familiar and remember the features and how to use Anitales Application.
- c) They are the only three out of six students in that group who are agreed to become the participants of this researcher. The majority of the students are either 20 or 21 years old.

The data were obtained by using a semi-structured interview (SSI) with the participants and they were asked several questions about their perceptions on Anitales Application used in DST class. Adams (2015) stated, "Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for various important undertakings, especially when in excess of a couple of open-finished inquiries require follow-up questions." Semi-structured interviews are directed with a genuinely open structure, which permits center, conversational, two-way correspondence in gathering the information. Therefore, this kind of interview is appropriate to the design of this research in which intended to present details into what the participants feel and think.

Thematic analysis used to analyze the data gathered, identifying the most common patterns in participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are six phases in thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as follows:

- a) Familiarizing with the data
The researcher created the data transcript and data translation into English in this section. The researcher then reads the data until he or she is acquainted with it so that the researcher can obtain an understanding of the data and begin selecting the right code for each data set.
- b) Generating initial codes
After becoming acquainted with the data, the researcher began categorizing it into several codes and then organizing all of the codes and relevant data extracts.
- c) Searching for themes
The researcher was zeroed in on the more extensive degree of topics and includes arranging the various codes into expected subjects.
- d) Reviewing themes
The proponents analyzed regardless of whether the topics recount to a persuading and convincing tale about the information, and started to characterize the intricacy of each topic just as the connection between the subjects.

- e) Defining and naming themes
The researcher began by writing down the topics to be examined next and analyzing the data contained within them.
- f) Producing the Report
The researcher provides a compelling story that is coherent, logical, and valid about the data based on the analysis.

C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

This present research is to gain to know the students' perception of Anitales application in DST Class. The data were obtained from the interview and were analyzed by using thematic analysis. The result showed that there are three emergent themes: (1) Providing Attractive Features, (2) Providing Easiness to Use Features, (3) Affecting Students Emotions, and (4) Assisting Students to Improve their Creativity, Writing, and Speaking Skills.

1. Providing Attractive Features

All of the participants were asked questions related to the features on Anitales, they all agreed that Anitales has a lot of attractive features. There are a lot of features in Anitales, such as a lot of characters, settings, weather, customize clothes, animation's movements, audio dubbing, inserting text in the story, Anitales community, share to any social media, Anishop, watch other's story and give a comment for them. In this section, it was only explained a few statements stating that they were helped and interested in the features in Anitales that could help them in creating a digital storytelling project. It is supported by the statements below:

Table 1. Attractive Features

| Participants | Statements |
|--------------|--|
| P1 | It is cute, appealing, colorfull, and the movement of the animations is good. |
| P2 | What I like from Anitales is the dubbing feature, and the character can be move as I want. |
| P3 | It has a lot of characters, features, background, overall it is good. |

From the data above, it is stated that all participants agreed that features in Anitales were attractive. Participant 1 stated that he liked the movement of the animation in Anitales and its appearance because it is cute, appealing, and colorful. The attractive appearance has affected his feeling and motivated him in creating a digital storytelling project. In fact, the appearance of Anitales interface is actually full of color and it provides a lot of movements in Anitales so that users have some options in choosing the movement of the character. Similar to participant 1, participant 2 liked the movement of the animation, yet she also mentioned that she was interested in the dubbing feature. She explained that she could use her voice to fill the audio of each character in Anitales, therefore, it can help her in creating digital storytelling especially when she wanted to filled voices for each character by using her voice without any additional software to edit the character's voice. Moreover, she felt that it has an impact on the development of her speaking skill. Meanwhile, participant 3 said that Anitales had a lot of characters, features, and backgrounds, which means, the features on anitales have assisted him in creating DST since it provides a lot of good features.

By saying positive perceptions toward the features in Anitales, it means, students are interested in using it and make the learning process become interesting to them. That finding is in line with Lin, Lee, Chang, and Fu (2020), who say Mobile learning application is interesting because of its benefits such as it encourages students' self-confidence and personal innovation. In addition, the appearance of Anitales has become the reason for them to use Anitales as their media learning which means that the interface or appearance of Anitales influences their motivation in using it. It is also supported by Ali et al (2014), who explain Mobile applications should design and developed by attractive and user-friendly to gain the acceptance of the end-user. Furthermore, one of the characteristics of mobile learning is to have some features to support students learning. In the same vein, Zaki and Yunus (2015) say that some useful features in mobile learning applications benefit

the students in many aspects such as mobility, ubiquity, wireless networking, interactivity, accessibility, and privacy.

2. Providing Attractive Features

The participants mentioned the easiness of using Anitales. The easiness here means the features in Anitales were easy to use. It was proved by participants' statements that revealed the features in Anitales were easy to use and it was affected their easiness in creating the digital storytelling. Below are their statements about the easiness of Anitales's features:

Table 2. Easy to use

| Participants | Statements |
|--------------|---|
| P1 | When I observed all the features and its function, it's quite easy. |
| P2 | Anitales is way more flexible and not really complex |
| P3 | Anitales is more practical and easier to use, and the features also easy to be implemented in the story |

As the participants mentioned above in regard to the easiness of using Anitales, they felt that with various features in Anitales, it was all easy and help them in creating the DST. Participant 1 said that before he created the DST, he observed all the features and its function, then he felt the features were easy to use. Similar to participant 1, participant 2 perceived that Anitales' features were flexible and not really complex. She revealed that she faced some difficulties in using the features in Anitales, but she learned the features quickly then change her mind that it was easy to use. Participant 3 felt that the features in Anitales were easy to be implemented in creating the DST.

Furthermore, all the participants' responses showed that features on Anitales were easy to use. It is in line with Ali et.al (2014), who states Mobile phone application in education must be designed and developed by pay attention to its ease of use, usefulness, attitude and intention to use so that it will become accepted as one of mobile learning application for students learning. The easiness of using Anitales' features helps them in creating DST. It is also supported by Hao, Dennen, Mei (2016), they believe that the students will use mobile learning application if it is easy to use. Therefore, Anitales as a mobile learning application that provides features that easy to use will be suitable for those who are intended to learn using mobile learning.

3. Affecting Students Emotions

The questions concerning feelings in using the application of Anitales were given to the participants. The result indicated that the majority of participants showed they felt curious and excited to use the application.

Table 3. Affecting Students' Emotions

| Participants | Statements |
|--------------|---|
| P1 | I feel excited because it's like there is an animation maker in phone! So excited and curious whether it is difficult or easy to use. |
| P2 | I feel challenging and also happy, because I have to think more about the creation of the story. |
| P3 | I feel curious in mixing the characters, background and the story I made. |

The data showed that the use of Anitales application in DST class affected the participants' emotion to become 'curious', 'challenged', 'excited'. As mentioned in Participant 1, he felt excited because he found an animation maker on phone, which means, it was something new for her to learn. That data is in line with Elfeky and Masadeh (2016), who states that mobile learning application can enhance students' experiences because of its mobility and supporting platform. The curiosity and excitement of the participants' can be interpreted as the student's motivation in learning. The data above showed participant 2 delineated that Anitales was challenging for him because it boosted his desire of making a good story before inserting it into Anitales. Moreover, participant 3 stated he felt motivated to explore deeply about Anitales in creating DST projects. It is

also supported by Elfeky and Masadeh study (2016), which states implementing mobile learning applications in their instruction can involve students' emotions and motivation which is resulting from the students willingly able to access the teaching materials.

4. Assisting Students to Improve Students' Creativity, Writing and Speaking Skills

The data shows that Anitales assisted students to improve the students' creativity. All of them agreed that there is an influence of Anitales on their creativity. It is found in the statements below:

Table 4. Assisting Students to Improve their Creativity

| Participants | Statements |
|--------------|---|
| P1 | A lot of characters and backgrounds in Anitales made me become more creative |
| P2 | There is the development of my creativity in creating the story, and the character is creative and unique |
| P3 | It can help me increase my creativity |

The participants were agreed that the use of Anitales in DST class, can help them in increasing their creativity. It is in line with Lai and Hwang (2014), who says the more students spend their time on mobile learning, there were significant differences between communication, complex problem-solving, and creativity. It means mobile learning application and creativity are two things that inseparable. It is also supported by Egan et.al (2017), who states, Creativity could be considered an important part of higher education. Even creativity is one of the 21st-century skills that need to be acquired by students, especially for higher students. In the 21st century, creativity has become the most important skill and noted skill for success (Henriksen, Mishra, and Fisher, 2016). Therefore, Anitales as a mobile learning application has become an important part of helping students in increasing students' creativity. Besides, the participants mentioned the correlation between the use of Anitales on their writing and speaking skills. They found that there are positive perceptions by the use of Anitales toward their writing and speaking skills. It is found from the data below:

Table 5. Assisting Students to Improve their Writing and Speaking Skills

| Participants | Statements |
|--------------|---|
| P1 | Using Anitales helps me achieve the target learning of digital story telling class |
| P2 | The benefits of using Anitales are to improve my writing, and speaking skill and my pronunciation |
| P3 | So, it is influencing my speaking and writing skills. |

The participants mentioned that there was an improvement in their writing and speaking skills after using Anitales. They stated that Anitales helped them a lot in learning digital storytelling. In line with target learning of DST class (i.e. writing and speaking skills), Anitales had improved students' language skills, particularly in their writing and speaking skills. Recent studies regarding mobile learning applications reported that it affects the development of students' English skills. That data is in line with Sun et.al (2017), who states, MALL has become a meaningful way to practice speaking English. Their study found that SNS as mobile learning led to improvement in speaking skills. Moreover, Gonen (2019) investigates the use of technology in the classroom, he found that students' speaking ability enhanced engagingly as the result of the implementation of technology in the classroom. It means mobile learning application has become an effective tool to use in the classroom since it influences students writing and speaking skills. Furthermore, Alzu'bi (2013) as cited in Yusuf and Hamidun (2015) revealed that mobile learning has given a high significant level to students writing proficiency. Therefore, Anitales as one of the mobile learning applications is also has a good impact on students' development of writing and speaking, proven by the previous data.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the research result, the researcher found that Anitales has some advantages regarding the use in the classroom. Anitales provides a lot of good features which make students become more interested in using it and enjoy the learning process in digital storytelling class. Because of its easiness, so that the participants had a better experience while creating digital storytelling using Anitales.

Moreover, Anitales affecting students' emotions, all the participants have similar feelings when using Anitales, they are curious, challenged, and excited. As a result, they were motivated by using Anitales in DST class since it creates more interesting learning environments. Then most of the participants agreed that Anitales assisted them in improving their creativity, writing, and speaking skills. It means, Anitales can be used in the classroom to support the students in enhancing their creativity and writing and speaking skills. In addition, the target learning of the DST class was achieved.

Regarding the research results, there are some potential suggestions for future researchers who are interested in conducting research on the use of Anitales in the classroom. To begin, it is suggested that the next researcher use a different approach, such as action research, to gain a better understanding of the impact of the use of Anitales. Second, it would be extremely beneficial to investigate the use of Anitales in specific language skills, such as speaking or writing. Third, the author recommends examining the teaching strategy to use Anitales as the learning media.

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