

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY USE IN PKPBI AT UIN MALANG

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore international students' perceptions of the use of digital technology in English language learning in the Special English Language Program (PKPBI) at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through structured interviews with international students. The analysis was guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), focusing on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The findings indicate that the use of digital technology in PKPBI learning has both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, technology facilitates access to learning materials, helps students understand the content more easily, and makes learning more engaging. However, negative impacts were also identified, including a lack of concentration during online learning sessions, environmental distractions, differences in students' technological abilities, and unclear instructions from lecturers when using digital platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. These findings suggest that while digital technology plays a supportive role in PKPBI learning, its effectiveness depends on students' technological readiness and the clarity of instructional guidance provided by lecturers.

Keywords: International students' perceptions, Digital technology, English language learning, PKPBI, Technology Acceptance Model

INTRODUCTION

In this era of 4.0 technology, technology has become widespread in various fields such as economics, health, politics, and education. In addition, this technology greatly assists various human tasks, one example being in the field of education. Education is greatly assisted by current technology because it helps provide various media for learning, such as e-learning and various learning applications. According to Lestari (2019) the use of digital technology in education includes learning media, administrative tools, and learning resources aimed at making learning more effective, efficient, and engaging. In this context, the availability of technology in education has also brought about changes in the teaching model of lecturers. From this, lecturers and students have gained new experiences and are required to continue learning about the increasing sophistication of technology. Therefore, technological developments in the field of education have made the learning process easier.

In line with this, one example of a learning process that utilizes technology is the PKBPI program at UIN Malang. Special English Language Program (PKBPI) is a compulsory learning program for almost all students studying at UIN Malang, including international students. According to Zainiyati (2017) this program aims to strengthen the English language skills of UIN Malang students, which can later be used to deepen their knowledge in their respective fields. In addition, PKBPI also helps international students from countries that do not generally use English, such as Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan. PKBPI learning is certainly inseparable from technology, for example, when students use their Android devices to take exams. This proves the relationship between the PKBPI learning program and technological developments.

Previous studies have confirmed that the use of technology in English language learning can simplify the learning process while making it more enjoyable ('Amala et al., 2023). The use of AI technology in English language learning can significantly improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Technology in English language learning can save time and improve communication skills (Abimanto & Mahendro, 2023; Nawaila et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Paramita (2023) conducted research on the use of e-learning in English language learning as a technological medium that can make it easier for students to access learning resources anytime and anywhere. These findings show that technology plays an important role in education because, through technology, teachers can apply various learning methods that are more varied and not monotonous, so that students get varied learning outcomes.

Most previous studies have focused only on the application of technology in English language learning in general and in the context of local students or university students. However, few studies have specifically addressed the perceptions of international students in PKBPI classes. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by specifically examining the use of technology in English language learning in the PKBPI program at UIN Malang, with international students as the main subjects of the study.

Based on the above background, this study aims to determine international students' perceptions of the use of digital technology in PKBPI learning at UIN Malang. To achieve this objective, this study is supported by several research questions: (1) What technologies are frequently used by international students in PKBPI classes? (2) How do international students perceive the usefulness of technology in PKBPI classes? (3) How do international students perceive the ease and instructions provided by lecturers in the use of technology in PKBPI classes?

Although technology has become increasingly widespread in education, especially in English language teaching, not all English language learning is suitable for integration with technology. Furthermore, in this PKBPI program, not all students are from Indonesia; international students are also required to participate in this program. Additionally, considering the previous research conducted on digital technology that can support English language learning among Indonesian university students (Hidayat et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for us to know how international students perceive the use of digital technology, especially in English language learning (PKBPI), specifically at UIN Malang. Therefore, based on the existing background, this study focuses on answering questions related to international students' perceptions of the use of digital



technology in PKPBI learning at UIN Malang. The purpose of this research is to find out and study how international students perceive the use of digital technology in PKPBI learning at UIN Malang. So that later this research can be useful and can be utilized by anyone and in any case, such as lecturers, higher education institutions, and other English learning programs.

METHOD

Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach. The use of qualitative methods is considered to provide a better explanation of the research problem. The conceptual objective of the qualitative approach is to explain why and how digital technology affects international students' learning in PKPBI courses at UIN Malang. This study uses one method in mapping the results and discussion, namely through interviews conducted with international students, and also reinforced by a literature review of several journals, articles, and books.

Participant

This research was conducted by interviews and reinforced by literature reviews from several journals, articles, and books related to the research title. To determine the participants, the researcher used purposeful sampling, whereby respondents were selected according to the research subject and limited resources. Therefore, the researcher involved 5 international students who participated in the PKPBI program.

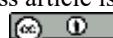
Instrument

The main tool in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. Prior to data collection, the interview guide was verified through expert assessment and AI technology. Experts in English language education and AI technology reviewed the interview questions to ensure their relevance, clarity, and suitability for the research objectives.

A pilot interview was conducted with one participant who was not included in the main study to refine the interview questions. During data collection, a participant verification method was applied by verifying the interview summary with the participant to ensure data accuracy. The semi-structured interview guide consisted of seven main questions focusing on students' experiences in using technology in the PKPBI classroom. The questions explored the types of technology used during the learning process, students' perceptions of the role of technology in improving their English language skills, and the effectiveness of technology in making learning more engaging and easier to understand. In addition, the interview addressed the ease of use of the technology and the clarity of instructions provided by the lecturers regarding its use.

Data Analysis

This study began with validating the questions adapted from the theory used in this study. The theory used is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Barhoumi (2016), which has two main indicators, namely Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use. Data collection for this study was conducted by interviews. Respondents who participated in the interviews were international students at UIN



Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang who were participating in the PKPBI program. After that, the data obtained was processed and analyzed directly in the questionnaire.

Next, the researcher processed the interview data by grouping each question according to the indicators of the theory used. Then, the researcher simplified the interview results so that they could be easily understood. After that, the researcher also reinforced the research results with a literature review through several journals, articles, and books relevant to the research, so that the results obtained were more accurate. Finally, the researcher revealed and explained the quantitative findings of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Technology is developing rapidly from year to year, and its presence is beginning to enter several areas of life, one of which is education. Education today is highly dependent on technology, which has changed the way humans work and resulted in dependence on technology. However, the presence of technology that influences the field of education has both positive and negative impacts, especially when technology is incorporated into the learning process. This is because everyone has different perspectives and comfort levels when it comes to the learning process, and not all subjects can be easily combined with technology. Meanwhile, in other studies, students are encouraged to have meaningful educational experiences through the use of technology (Çelik & Baturay, 2024).

English language learning is one of the subjects that can be combined with technology, one example of which is PKPBI. PKPBI is a program participated in by all students at UIN Malang, including international students. However, most international students studying at UIN Malang are not all proficient in English, which poses a problem for international students in participating in the PKPBI program. Therefore, the use of technology such as Google Meet, Google Translate, Chat GPT, and E-learning in the PKPBI program for international students will certainly influence the way they learn.

Perceived Usefulness

Based on the results of the study, international students feel the benefits of technology in PKPBI, because the majority of sources do not have English language skills. In addition, technology also helps them have flexible learning times, so they can repeat and replay previous lessons. However, the benefits of technology that are often used in PKPBI classes, such as Google Meet and E-learning, do not directly help improve their language skills. This is because technologies such as Google Meet and E-learning only help with online learning. This condition is reinforced by research stating that the use of technology in the form of Google Meet can facilitate the learning process. The research also states that the use of Google Meet is effective for learning English (Sari et al., 2023).

“In my opinion, there are positives and negatives. I think that classes are better when they are held in person or offline, but if exams are conducted using e-learning, it can be more convenient and save time.”
(AL)



According to source AL, technology in PKPBI learning does not always provide positive benefits for international students, because each technology has different functions, so not all international students are comfortable using it. Google Meet is one of the technologies that is often used in the learning process, but a minority of people prefer learning in the classroom. This is because they find it easier to understand the lessons without distractions from their surroundings, and they can ask questions directly to the lecturer when they have difficulty understanding the lesson. However, the existence of E-learning in the learning evaluation process, or commonly known as exams, is very helpful for international students, because E-learning makes learning evaluation more efficient in terms of time and does not cause difficulties for international students. This fact aligns with research stating that technology has both positive and negative impacts. One of the positive impacts is improving efficiency in data processing, but technology also has negative impacts, such as addiction, cybercrime, and declining ethics (Budiyono & Haerullah, 2024).

Technology in education can not only assist and simplify the teaching and learning process, but also make learning more interesting and effective. This is because the majority of international students have difficulty learning English, so technology such as Google Translate or Chat GPT makes their learning more effective. Many international students still find it difficult to learn English in class, but with technology, international students can follow the lessons without getting bored. A boring teaching and learning process indicate that the lesson is not attractive to students, so the involvement of technology in English language learning in class for international students makes learning more interesting. In line with research on OMT, it has been shown that OMT (Online Machine Translation) has benefits in language classroom learning, namely providing convenience for users, time efficiency, and adequate features (Rizky & Rohmana, 2025).

“Yes, it is very interesting for me, because sometimes in E-learning we have to do something like Circle Box.” (AN)

A statement about the use of technology in PKPBI learning that makes it more interesting and effective was expressed by one of the international students, AN. International students' interest in learning using technology is influenced by the use of gamification in learning. Gamification is a learning approach through games or videos that aims to make the learning process more enjoyable and motivate students. In addition, gamification also makes learning more interesting (Jusuf, 2016). Therefore, the use of gamification in PKPBI learning can increase students' motivation to continue learning English without feeling bored.

“Yes, it helps, because if there are questions from the lecturer that I don't understand, I can immediately ask the technology.” (EL)

According to EL sources, technology is very helpful in the process of international students receiving lessons. The technological tools commonly used are ChatGPT and Google Translate, which have different functions. International students tend to use Chat GPT when they feel they do not understand the questions given by their lecturers, because today's sophisticated technology can answer any question. However, this can lead to negative consequences, such as instant results



without any process involved and inaccurate information without a reliable source. Therefore, students today must use technology wisely to ensure that its positive aspects do not lead to negative outcomes. One wise step for students in using technology is to consider every aspect of digital literacy ('Amala et al., 2023).

Perceived Ease of Use

Technology continues to evolve over time, updating existing features and making it easier to use, making technology an integral part of human life. The ease of use of technology is also felt in the teaching and learning process on campus, such as in English language learning, which uses Google Translate as a supplement in English classes. Additionally, other technologies like Google Meet or Zoom, which are easy to use, are frequently utilized as teaching tools. Therefore, technology that is easy to use in learning is often employed in the world of education, as education involves a diverse range of people, from the young to the old, which can influence the continuity of the teaching and learning process.

“In the PKBPI class, we have not experienced any difficulties so far, such as logging in, signing in, and logging out, because we already had a tutorial beforehand.” (AL)

According to international students, the technology used in PKBPI learning, such as Google Meet, Zoom, or E-learning, does not pose any difficulties for international students, as they only need to log in, sign in, or log out. This is because they have already been informed on how to use these digital tools beforehand, and they are accustomed to these activities in their daily lives. In addition, the technology chosen to support learning is technology that is easy to use by various groups, because the purpose of technology in relation to education itself is to facilitate the learning process. Therefore, the technology used in PKBPI learning at UIN Malang is technology that makes it easier, and to make it even easier, the campus will also provide instructions on how to use digital tools in the form of socialization to every member of the campus community. Supporting the above statement, research on using learning platforms to assist learning in junior high schools states that Google Meet is a digital tool that is often used by students and teachers as a learning tool, due to its ease of access and low data usage(Berutu & Hanana, 2023).

“Actually, there is no difficulty in accessing it, but sometimes what causes problems in the use of technology is the internet network.” (AN)

This statement from AN contradicts the idea of easy technology use, because there are still obstacles to using technology in the form of internet connectivity. The internet is key to using technology, because most technology uses the internet to activate(Al-Fuqaha et al., 2015). Therefore, these internet obstacles must be given more attention by educational institutions that involve technology in their teaching and learning processes, as this can hinder the teaching and learning process.

“Most Indonesians have grown up with technology, unlike me, who is from Cambodia, where technology is only just being used now.” (AN)



According to AN's statement, there are still international students, especially those from Cambodia, who find it difficult to use technology. This is because their regions are still far from the presence of technology in their daily lives, making international students from Cambodia find it difficult to use technology. In addition, each international student has a different background, not only in terms of their region but also their educational background. A few of the informants have or have ever studied English before; most of them are just learning English during their college years. This proves that their backgrounds, coming from remote areas that are difficult to reach by technology, coupled with their educational backgrounds of never having studied English, will add to their difficulties in technology-based PKBPI learning. This aligns with other research explaining that one of the barriers to the use of technology in the learning process is inadequate access and infrastructure, such as digital inequality between regions or schools(Akram et al., 2022).

Easy-to-use technology provides users with convenience, such as the technology used in PKBPI classes in the form of Zoom or Google Meet, which offers easily accessible and highly useful features. Google Meet and Zoom greatly facilitate lecturers today, as Indonesia's unpredictable weather conditions mean that lecturers can continue to teach via Google Meet or Zoom. In addition to providing convenience for lecturers, international students also benefit from this, as they can use the screen recording feature on the application, allowing them to review lessons anytime and anywhere. Therefore, the convenience provided by technology to lecturers and international students makes it easier for international students to understand the lessons in PKBPI.

The use of technology is indeed something new for some people, especially in the world of education. Although many students are already accustomed to using technology, there are still quite a few who are confused about how to use it. Therefore, clear instructions are needed for students on the use of technology, especially for international students in PKBPI learning, because in addition to having to learn a new language, they also have to learn how to use technology properly.

“Yes, it depends on the lecturer, because each lecturer has a different approach. Some just demonstrate, some use explanations or just talk, some show it in the form of a PPT, and some practice it directly.” (AL)

Based on the results of the study, according to AL, several lecturers who teach PKBPI classes to international students have provided instructions on the use of technology. Each lecturer has a different way of giving instructions to their students. Some only explain verbally, some explain through PowerPoint presentations, and some demonstrate directly. In addition to each lecturer having a different way of giving instructions, international students also differ in their ability to understand these instructions, because each international student has different abilities.

“It seems that I have never received instructions from lecturers on the use of technology in PKBPI learning, so I learned everything myself.” (EL)

This statement shows that some international students have the ability to operate technology, so they can learn it themselves without the help of lecturers. However, there are also many international students who are slow in operating social media, because not all international students are familiar with the use of technology. This is supported by other studies, which state that students who have higher technological skills tend to be more receptive to and utilize learning technology (Sayaf et al., 2022; Agustyas et al, 2024).

In response to the problem statement, technology is used in PKBPI learning at UIN Malang. For some international students, this technology is very beneficial to the learning process, such as Google Meet and Zoom, which are flexible learning tools in terms of time and place. Additionally, technologies like Google Translate and Chat GPT can assist students in completing practice exercises during PKBPI, while e-learning-based technologies support the evaluation process of learning, commonly referred to as exams. However, some other international students prefer face-to-face learning in the classroom because they feel that when studying in class, they can focus better without distractions from their surroundings. Therefore, the problem statement regarding the usefulness of technology in PKBPI learning has been answered: technology is indeed useful in the PKBPI learning process, even though some students prefer to study directly in the classroom.

The second problem statement, regarding the ease of using technology in PKBPI learning, has been answered. The ease experienced by international students is in the form of PKBPI learning technology that is not too difficult to access, so that various age groups on campus can use it easily. This is in line with the theory used in the research, which has two main aspects, namely Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use, although some research results are not in line with this theory, such as the negative impact and difficulties in using technology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and analysis, it can be concluded that the use of technology in PKBPI learning for international students can have both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact of technology in education is that it facilitates access to learning and helps students understand the material. This positive impact answers the question of whether technology can improve skills, make learning more interesting, and help international students in their PKBPI classes. However, the use of technology such as Google Meet or Zoom can have a negative impact in the form of a lack of concentration during learning, due to distractions in the surrounding environment. Therefore, in order to feel the benefits of technology in learning, each person has their own perspective, and not everyone can accept technology in their learning.

Technology in education can not only help and provide benefits, but it can also provide convenience. For example, it can make it easier for international students to gain a deeper and clearer understanding through technologies such as ChatGPT or Google Meet. This convenience can be achieved when supported by an adequate environment and capabilities, such as lecturers who can provide clear instructions and students who are quick to respond to operating technology. However, international students have not fully experienced this convenience, because lecturers have different ways of explaining or giving instructions when



using technology, making it quite difficult when lecturers do not give clear instructions.

In addition, many of them are slow in operating technology due to their different backgrounds. This obstacle answers the question of how easy it is to use technology, such as whether the technology is easy to use so that it is also easy to follow PKBPI classes, and whether lecturers in class provide easy instructions to students. Therefore, through this research, we can find out how international students perceive the use of technology in PKBPI learning at UIN Malang, so that it can be used as a reference by readers to better understand how technology should be used in English language learning, especially in PKBPI learning at UIN Malang.

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