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Empowering Digital Literacy among English Literature Students through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this qualitative narrative inquiry study is to thoroughly investigate the experiences and perspectives of undergraduate English literature students regarding the use of mobile devices to enhance their language learning efforts and develop digital literacy skills. Through the utilization of a narrative inquiry framework, the study seeks to gather detailed, descriptive data on the real-life experiences of the participants. The research will involve individual interviews with a specific group of five undergraduate English literature students who have actively engaged with mobile applications or websites for language learning purposes. Following the interviews, an analysis of the transcripts will be carried out using narrative analysis techniques to identify common themes, personal stories, and insightful revelations from the firsthand accounts of the participants. Special attention will be given to understanding how students express the effects of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) on their engagement levels, self-confidence, and proficiency in digital skills. It is expected that participants will provide substantial narratives detailing how MALL initiatives have empowered them to take control of their language learning journey and enhance their skills with educational technologies. Additionally, potential challenges are also expected to be highlighted to provide a comprehensive view. The significance of the students' voices and narratives is emphasized as crucial in understanding the practical implications of educational innovations. The outcomes of this study are intended to guide the development of effective strategies for implementing MALL approaches to cultivate 21st-century digital literacy skills within English literature educational settings.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of mobile technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of language acquisition in the modern digital era. The widespread use of smartphones and tablets has led to the emergence of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), offering new opportunities to make instruction more accessible, immersive, and seamlessly integrated into daily life (Karakaya & Bozkurt, 2022). While previous research has explored the benefits of MALL in improving overall English language skills, its effectiveness and relevance in specialized academic fields, such as English literature, remain to be fully understood (Dewi et al., 2026; Zhao et al., 2024). In academic circles, there is a growing interest in examining the intricate implications of MALL in specific disciplinary contexts, particularly within the realm of English literature. This investigation requires a thorough analysis of how mobile technologies intersect with teaching methods to enhance language proficiency, literary analysis, and critical engagement in the study of English literature. Such scholarly pursuits involve synthesizing existing research, incorporating empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and teaching strategies to uncover the various aspects of integrating MALL into the specialized field of English literary education (Amalia, 2026; Holbah et al., 2025; Musurmanov et al., 2025). Furthermore, the discussion surrounding MALL in the context of English literature demands careful consideration of socio-cultural, cognitive, and technological factors that influence the effectiveness and implementation of mobile-assisted language learning approaches (Ahmad et al., 2026).

The integration of innovative educational technologies in the field of English literature pedagogy has the potential to significantly advance the discipline. These technologies enable complex textual analysis and foster higher-order thinking skills (Karakaya & Bozkurt, 2022), thereby accommodating the diverse interests and learning paces of students. However, the successful implementation of these educational innovations relies heavily on gaining insights from the primary stakeholders. The student's experiential knowledge and perspectives play a

pivotal role in informing the design and execution of technology-enhanced initiatives in a meaningful and effective manner (Kirkwood & Price, 2005). To effectively integrate educational technology in English literature pedagogy, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and perceptions. By incorporating their insights, educators can ensure that technology-enhanced initiatives are tailored to their specific needs and preferences. This customization enhances student engagement and ultimately improves learning outcomes (Ghelichli et al., 2023).

Numerous prior research endeavors have explored the utilization of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to improve digital literacy competencies. According to Ghelichli et al. (2023) conducted research about an investigation to analyze the effects of technology-based teaching on the digital literacy proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The results of their study indicated that technology-based instruction can act as a versatile method, promoting language acquisition while also improving students' digital literacy abilities. By incorporating technology into the teaching process, the study noted a noticeable enhancement in the digital literacy skills of the participants. As a result, the integration of technology in educational environments was recognized as a dual-purpose instrument, playing a significant role in enhancing both language acquisition and digital literacy skills among EFL students, especially within the educational system of Iran. Furthermore, the research conducted by Pratiwi et al. (2023) delved into the realm of MALL within the framework of English language education for Indonesian students. The results of their study highlight the considerable benefits of MALL in improving the English language skills of Indonesian EFL learners, suggesting its promising role in shaping upcoming educational programs and learning resources. This claim is supported by MALL's promotion of independent learning, expansion of vocabulary knowledge, improvement of teaching methods, and development of cognitive skills in students. Then, in the investigation conducted by Zhang and Yang (2025) on digital literacy development, the research delves into the progress of technology-integrated language teaching. This progress serves as a basis for future exploration on how students can be empowered, specifically through the utilization of MALL. The study identifies a favorable inclination among educators towards embracing a new pedagogical approach that incorporates technology. This observation provides significant understanding on the effectiveness of integrating technological methods in educational environments. In contrast, the research conducted by Alzieni (2024) takes a different approach by focusing on MALL. Specifically, the study explores the Perceptions of Phonics Literacy Strategies among non-literate learners. The findings of the study reveal that non-literate adult learners have the ability to acquire literacy skills through customized educational interventions that utilize MALL

Various studies have been conducted on the use of MALL to improve digital literacy skills, yielding different results. However, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on its implementation among English literature students. As a result, there is a need for a more extensive and comprehensive investigation into the use of MALL within this particular group of students. This research aims to thoroughly explore the utilization of MALL among English literature students, with the objective of addressing the unexplored areas and gaps in the current body of research. This study involves research inquiries formulated to tackle the objectives of the investigation. These inquiries are comprised of:

1. How do English literature students view the utilization of applied MALL in improving their digital literacy skills, and in what ways can their feedback influence the development and execution of MALL activities?
2. How can the utilization of MALL enhance the digital literacy skills of English literature students?

2. METHODS

The investigation of MALL and its role in improving university students' digital literacy skills employed a qualitative research approach. A qualitative methodology was selected to examine participants' experiences and the information obtained during the data collection process Creswell and Poth (2018). The study adopted a narrative inquiry design to explore participants' experiences in a personal and in-depth manner. Narrative inquiry is appropriate for examining personal narratives and subjective experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This design was consistent with the aim of understanding how students experienced MALL in relation to the development of their digital literacy skills.

The research was conducted at a public university in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The study involved undergraduate students majoring in English literature and was conducted over two months, from March to April 2024. The research focused on students' viewpoints, experiences, and understanding of using MALL in their English literature coursework. Five participants were selected through purposive sampling. The participants were selected based on their ability to use MALL as part of their English literature coursework. This criterion ensured that the participants had direct experience with the learning approach examined in the study.

Tabel 1. Participants' Demography

Name (Code)	Gender	Semester	MALL Application Experiences
M1	Male	2	Grammarly, Google Translate, ChatGPT, and Duolingo
M2	Male	2	Canva, Google Translate, and ChatGPT
M3	Male	2	Duolingo, Grammarly, Youtube, Discord, and ChatGPT
M4	Male	2	Grammarly, ChatGPT, and Google Translate
M5	Male	2	Lipgen.s, and Google Translate

This study examines the complexities of English literature education within a specific group of learners. The investigation focuses on how students' viewpoints develop within the discipline. A longitudinal perspective is used to trace changes in their perspectives over an extended period. This approach provides a basis for examining how students interpret and respond to English literature education as their learning experiences develop. The findings are expected to contribute to scholarly discussions and inform teaching practices in English literature instruction.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary qualitative data collection method. This approach combines the consistency of structured interviews with the flexibility of unstructured interviews (Adams, 2015). The interview format provides a common framework for all participants while allowing researchers to pursue issues that emerge during the conversations. Participants can describe their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives using their own words. Such responses can provide detailed accounts of individual experiences and reveal meanings that may not emerge through more rigid forms of questioning. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews also allows researchers to respond to participants' answers during the interview.

The interview process can also facilitate interaction between researchers and participants. A supportive interview environment may encourage participants to discuss complex experiences and perspectives more openly (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The resulting accounts can provide contextual information that strengthens the interpretation of qualitative data. The format also accommodates differences among participants, allowing researchers to examine varied experiences and viewpoints within the study population. These variations are important for understanding the research topic as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than as a single, uniform experience.

Tabel 2. Interview's guideline

	Interview Questions
1.	What is your experience of using technology in the study of English literature? And how do you typically use technology to support language learning and literary analysis?
2.	In your opinion, what skills to use technology are important for English literature students?
3.	Have you ever used mobile applications or digital resources for the study of English literature? What is your experience with these tools?
4.	How can the use of technology or MALL increase your engagement and understanding of literary texts?
5.	What obstacles have you faced when using technology for literary studies?
6.	Have you ever been involved in online discussions or collaborative activities using mobile technology?
7.	What are the benefits and limitations of using MALL in English literature education? How to overcome these limitations?
8.	How does MALL help in the development of critical thinking and literary analysis skills? Can you provide a concrete example?
9.	What advice do you have for educators regarding the use of technology or MALL in literature courses? How can technology be used effectively to support learning?
10.	Can students participate in using technology more in learning?

In this study, the researchers collected data through direct engagement with the selected participants. Face-to-face interviews were used as the primary data collection method. The process consisted of five stages adapted from Wells et al. (2011). The first stage involved preparation for the interviews. The researchers explained the purpose and objectives of the interview to the participants. They also provided an overview of the interview procedures before the sessions began. The second stage involved individual interviews with each participant. Each interview lasted between 10 and 30 minutes. The interviews focused on obtaining information relevant to the research objectives and allowing participants to describe their experiences and perspectives. The third stage involved reviewing the interview transcripts. The researchers examined the transcripts carefully to check the accuracy and completeness of the recorded information. This review also allowed them to identify responses that required further clarification. The fourth stage consisted of follow-up interviews with the participants. These interviews were conducted to verify the consistency of the responses obtained during the first interviews. The fifth stage involved processing the interview data for subsequent analysis.



Figure 1. Data collection process.

Following the collection of data, it is crucial to engage in data processing to improve understanding and interpretation for researchers and readers during the data analysis phase. The use of an appropriate analytical design method aids in reading and interpreting the collected data effectively. This study employs thematic analysis to read the data gathered during the data collection process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Data processing after collection is a vital step in research, enabling a deeper comprehension of the phenomena being studied. It assists researchers in organizing, structuring, and analyzing raw data to extract meaningful insights and patterns. Through systematic data processing, researchers can identify underlying themes, trends, and relationships within the dataset, leading to a more comprehensive interpretation of findings. The selection of thematic analysis as the analytical approach is in line with the qualitative nature of the study, focusing on identifying and exploring patterns, themes, and meanings within the data. This methodological choice allows researchers to delve into the data, uncovering nuanced insights and perspectives. Moreover, thematic analysis offers a flexible framework that accommodates various research objectives, enabling a thorough exploration of complex phenomena while maintaining rigor and coherence in data interpretation.

The data analysis process in narrative inquiry commences with the collection of detailed narrative data from participants, often obtained through in-depth interviews, focus groups, written questionnaires, or documents (Legard et al., 2003). Subsequently, the researchers identify individual stories and narrated experiences within the extensive data set, transcribing each narrative verbatim. Preliminary analysis of individual narratives is then conducted by thoroughly reading through each transcript multiple times to obtain an overall understanding and make initial notes. Following this, the researchers engage in coding, systematically assigning codes line-by-line to categorize and describe phenomena within each narrative.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The findings indicate that students' engagement with Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English literature learning was characterized by flexible technology use, perceived accessibility, personalized learning, and increasing awareness of digital competence and critical evaluation. Rather than relying on a single application or device, participants reported combining smartphones, personal computers, online learning platforms, translation tools, video-sharing platforms, and educational applications according to their immediate learning needs. The findings are organized into two major dimensions: (1) students' implementation and perceived benefits of MALL in English literature learning, and (2) the development of digital skills and critical thinking through MALL.

The first finding concerns the ways students integrated mobile and digital technologies into their English learning and literature-related academic activities. The participants did not use MALL in a uniform manner. Instead, their practices reflected different preferences concerning devices, applications, learning purposes, and the degree of dependence on digital resources.

M2 reported using both ChatGPT and Canva to support academic activities, particularly for generating ideas, clarifying difficult concepts, preparing presentations, and completing assignments:

> *I use tools such as ChatGPT and Canva to support my academic activities, especially when I need to find ideas, understand difficult topics, or prepare presentations and assignments. … I also find these tools convenient because I can access them from both my phone and computer. Overall, using these technologies makes my academic work easier, more efficient, and more engaging. However, I still need to use them wisely and check the information they provide to make sure my work remains accurate and reliable. (M2)*

This excerpt demonstrates that students' technology use extended beyond conventional language-learning applications. Digital tools were used not only to practice language but also to support academic production, information seeking, idea development, and presentation preparation. Importantly, M2 also demonstrated an awareness that technological convenience does not automatically guarantee the accuracy of the information produced. Thus, technology use was accompanied by an emerging need for verification and judgment.

M3 similarly reported using several mobile-based resources, particularly YouTube and Duolingo:

> *I use several digital resources on my mobile phone. One of the resources I use most often is YouTube because there are many English-learning videos that help me learn new vocabulary, grammar, and everyday conversations. I also use Duolingo to practice English regularly and review what I have learned in class. … These digital resources make it easier for me to practice English anytime and anywhere. (M3)*

M3's experience highlights the flexibility of MALL. YouTube provided access to authentic and instructional language input, whereas Duolingo was used for regular practice and reinforcement. The combination suggests that students were not necessarily dependent on applications designed specifically for literature learning. Instead, they appropriated general-purpose digital resources to address particular language-learning needs.

M1 also reported using digital applications to facilitate students' learning, particularly Google Translate and TestEnglish.com:

> *... Google Translate is useful when students find difficult words, phrases, or expressions that they do not understand, while TestEnglish.com helps them practice and evaluate their English skills. By using these two applications, my students can learn more easily both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, digital technology can support English literature learning by making the learning process more practical, interactive, and accessible for students. (M1)*

M1's statement should not be interpreted as a dissenting view toward MALL. Rather, it provides further evidence of the perceived usefulness of digital tools for overcoming linguistic difficulties and extending learning beyond the classroom. The use of Google Translate, for example, indicates that students can employ mobile technology as immediate linguistic support when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, expressions, or sentences. At the same time, the use of TestEnglish.com illustrates the role of digital resources in providing opportunities for additional practice and self-evaluation.

Another pattern emerged from M4, who expressed a preference for paid educational applications. M4 explained:

> *I prefer using paid educational apps such as Ruang Guru to learn English because they usually offer more complete and interesting features… Compared with free apps, paid platforms often give me more opportunities to practice and improve my English skills. Therefore, I am willing to invest in a paid app if it can help me learn English more effectively and keep me motivated to study. (M4)*

M4's account suggests that students' perceptions of technological value are influenced not only by accessibility but also by the perceived quality and completeness of application features. The preference for a paid platform indicates that some students associate additional functionality, structured learning materials, and interactive features with more effective learning. However, this finding also introduces an important issue of equity, since access to premium applications may depend on students' financial resources. M5 reported an even stronger dependence on MALL for academic information and language support:

> *...I consider MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) to be essential in my learning journey, frequently depending on it over my lecture notes. This inclination arises from its ability to assist in thorough information retrieval. I commonly use tools such as lipgen.s for literary sources and Google Translate for understanding intricate vocabulary or sentences. (M5)*

M5's account indicates that MALL had become an important component of academic information seeking. The participant used digital resources to locate literary materials and to overcome linguistic barriers in interpreting complex texts. This finding suggests that MALL can function as an extension of formal learning resources rather than merely as an additional classroom technology.

Across the participants, therefore, MALL was implemented through multiple devices and applications according to specific learning purposes. Smartphones offered portability and immediate access, while computers were also used for academic tasks requiring broader functionality. Applications such as YouTube, Duolingo, Google Translate, TestEnglish.com, Canva, ChatGPT, Ruang Guru, and other online resources served different purposes rather than functioning as interchangeable tools. The findings consequently suggest that students' MALL practices were characterized by tool diversification and functional adaptation.

The second finding concerns students' perceptions of digital competence as an increasingly important component of contemporary learning. Participants did not view technological proficiency merely as the ability to operate particular applications. Rather, they associated digital competence with adaptability, independent learning, access to information, and the capacity to respond to changing technological environments. M2 emphasized the importance of technology in facilitating language learning:

> *In my opinion, modern technology plays an important role in making language learning easier and more effective. Technology gives students more access to learning materials and allows them to practice the language in more engaging ways. This is especially relevant for millennials and post-millennials, who are already familiar with digital technology in their daily lives. By using tools such*

as language-learning applications, online videos, digital platforms, and interactive media, students can learn more flexibly and practice their language skills beyond the classroom. … (M2)

M2's statement positions technology as an extension of the classroom. Access to digital materials enables students to continue practicing and learning beyond scheduled instructional activities. More importantly, the participant's emphasis on multiple technological resources suggests that digital competence involves the ability to move between platforms according to learning requirements. M1 associated technological competence more directly with independent learning:

… having good technology skills is important, especially for students in higher education. For literature students, technology can make it easier to learn independently by providing access to various online resources, … Students can also improve their technology skills by learning from online tutorials or asking for guidance from lecturers and other experts. In this way, technology not only supports their academic work but also helps them become more independent learners. (M1)

This finding indicates that digital competence is closely connected with learner autonomy. Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of technological resources, M1 viewed technology as a means of enabling students to identify resources, seek assistance, and regulate their own learning activities.

M3 emphasized adaptability to technological change:

… I believe this is of utmost significance. Students must not limit themselves to mastering just one technology for educational purposes. Rather, they should be ready to adapt to the ever-evolving technological landscape. Personally, I rely on my smartphone and computer to stay updated on the latest trends, seeking tutorials on platforms like YouTube. This approach has proven to be highly beneficial in tackling my academic assignments. (M3)

M3's response is particularly significant because it shifts the emphasis from mastering individual applications toward technological adaptability. In a rapidly changing digital environment, knowledge of one platform may have limited long-term value. Students therefore need transferable skills that allow them to learn new tools, evaluate their usefulness, and integrate them into existing learning practices. M5 similarly emphasized the need to remain responsive to technological developments:

As students, it is crucial for us to fully embrace technology as an integral part of our lives. The rapid pace at which information and technology are advancing necessitates our ability to stay updated. Acquiring proficiency in technology skills is of utmost significance as it equips us to tackle any obstacles that lie ahead. (M5)

Taken together, the findings show that participants conceptualized digital competence as more than technical operation. It encompassed accessing information, learning independently, adapting to new platforms, and using technology strategically for academic purposes.

Moreover, it is evident that a range of opinions exist among individuals regarding the benefits and drawbacks linked to the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to enhance their literary interpretations. This diversity of perspectives is highlighted by the statement made by Participant M1.

I think, the utilization of MALL significantly enhances my learning experience, particularly in addressing curriculum aspects that have not been adequately covered by instructors. I have discovered that the advantages of MALL, such as high accessibility, diverse explanations, and depth of information, substantially improve the quality of my learning… (M1)

M3 agrees with M1's perspective on the benefits of MALL in providing easy access to information. Moreover, M4 highlights the numerous advantages that arise from using MALL in the field of literary education, emphasizing its convenience in accessing comprehensive information and promoting innovative learning opportunities in literature.

A further finding concerns the relationship between MALL use and critical thinking. Although participants generally perceived digital technology as beneficial, they did not consider technological access sufficient for effective learning. Instead, they repeatedly emphasized the need to evaluate, compare, and verify information obtained through digital platforms. M2 explicitly connected the effectiveness of MALL with students' willingness to engage with information at a deeper level:

> *... The effectiveness of MALL tools in promoting critical thinking depends on students' inclination to delve deeper into their inquiries rather than simply acquiring surface-level knowledge… Therefore, when examining the impact of MALL on critical thinking, ..., understanding and addressing these individual inclinations are essential for optimizing the pedagogical effectiveness of MALL initiatives. (M2)*

M2's response suggests that technology does not automatically produce critical thinking. Digital resources provide opportunities for exploration, but the cognitive benefits depend partly on how students engage with those resources. Students who use applications merely to obtain immediate answers may experience different learning outcomes from students who compare sources, ask follow-up questions, and investigate information more deeply. M1 similarly emphasized the role of technology in supporting students' analytical development:

> *... skillful use of technology has the potential to greatly enhance students' critical thinking abilities. The strategic incorporation of technological tools can help students progress smoothly in their cognitive development. ... Therefore, the interdependent connection between technology and individual actions is fundamental in the educational effort to foster strong critical thinking skills in students... (M1)*

M4 highlighted the value of consulting multiple digital references:

> *... accessing a variety of references on digital platforms, students can improve their analytical abilities by combining different perspectives and information. This comprehensive method encourages learners to analyze, evaluate, and create complex understandings, ultimately enhancing their critical thinking skills. ... creating an environment that supports the growth of critical thinking through exploration and analysis of digital resources. (M4)*

M5 provided the strongest emphasis on information reliability:

> *... errors and inaccuracies are common in the digital world, making it necessary to apply critical thinking skills when retrieving information. ... but necessary to ensure the effectiveness and suitability of the information being accessed. Therefore, developing and utilizing critical thinking skills is a vital practice for individuals using MALL environments. ..., users can reduce the risks associated with misinformation and incorrect data, ultimately improving the integrity and success of their language learning efforts. (M5)*

These accounts collectively demonstrate that participants recognized a central tension in technology-mediated learning, digital resources increase access to information, but greater access also increases the need for evaluation. Thus, the findings do not support a simplistic conclusion that MALL directly develops critical thinking. Instead, they indicate that MALL creates conditions in which critical thinking can be practiced, provided that students actively evaluate and interrogate the information they encounter.

DISCUSION

MALL as a Flexible and Personalized Learning Resource

Furthermore, the integration of MALL in English literature education faced several challenges, particularly limited internet access, inadequate technical support, data privacy concerns, and difficulty selecting appropriate applications. Despite these constraints, participants perceived MALL as beneficial because its convenience, flexibility, and personalized learning opportunities enhanced their motivation and engagement (Barjestesh et al., 2024). Thus, effective MALL integration requires improved technical infrastructure, support, and guidance for application selection (Karakaya & Bozkurt, 2022).

However, expanding upon this argument, the integration of laptop and cellphone applications provides a multifaceted approach to learning. By combining resources from different digital platforms, students can have a more comprehensive and immersive educational experience (Heriyawati & Romadhon, 2025; Ikrawansyah & Romadhon, 2024; Muthia et al., 2026; Yuniar et al., 2026). This integrated method goes beyond the limitations of depending on a single device, creating a more flexible and dynamic learning environment. Additionally, the use of various digital tools allows for personalized learning experiences that cater to individual preferences and learning styles. Moreover, the incorporation of diverse digital tools in educational practices shows potential for increasing engagement and nurturing critical thinking skills among students. Through the utilization of a range of technological resources, educators can design interactive learning activities that spark curiosity and encourage active involvement (Agustina, 2024; Amanda & Hasanah, 2026; Cahyono et al., 2023; Widyastuti et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, M4 students primarily use paid educational applications because of their enhanced features and perceived learning effectiveness. Although premium platforms offer more comprehensive tools, their cost may limit access for economically disadvantaged students. Therefore, educators need to balance premium and free resources to ensure both functionality and equitable access (Al Shloul et al., 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2023).

To address this urgent need, educators are entrusted with the deliberate selection of educational tools, combining complimentary and subscription-based resources to cater to the varying needs and financial limitations prevalent among their student population (Huda et al., 2025; Socratous et al., 2025). This requires a nuanced decision-making process, based on a thorough evaluation of the advantages and limitations of different educational platforms. By skillfully orchestrating this synthesis, educators can foster an inclusive learning environment that ensures equal opportunities for all students.

Digital Competence as Adaptability and Learner Autonomy

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of critical thinking in MALL. M2 viewed critical thinking as essential for navigating digital language learning, while M1, M4, and M5 emphasized its role in evaluating online information. Specifically, they highlighted learners' ability to distinguish credible sources, examine information from multiple perspectives, and assess the reliability of digital content. This finding is consistent with Ruiz-Rojas et al. (2024), who emphasizes the role of critical thinking in evaluating information credibility. Thus, critical thinking in MALL supports learners in making informed judgments when engaging with digital language resources.

Then, M2 cautioned that the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in developing critical thinking depends on learners' cognitive tendencies. Students inclined toward intellectual depth may benefit more substantially, whereas those favoring superficial understanding may show limited development. Thus, learner characteristics should be considered when integrating MALL into language learning (Hatmanto & Sari, 2023).

Critical Thinking as a Necessary Condition for Effective MALL Use

The most significant finding in relation to students' higher-order learning concerns critical thinking. Participants did not portray digital technology as inherently reliable. Instead, M2, M1, M4, and M5 emphasized the need to investigate information, compare perspectives, and evaluate credibility.

This finding is consistent with Ruiz-Rojas et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of critical thinking in evaluating information credibility in digital environments. The finding is particularly relevant to MALL because mobile devices make information immediately available. Although such accessibility can support learning, it can also encourage students to accept information without sufficient examination.

M5's concern about errors and inaccuracies illustrates this tension clearly. Students can use digital tools to overcome linguistic difficulties, but the information provided by those tools still requires evaluation. This issue becomes especially important when learners use AI-supported tools such as ChatGPT, where fluent and plausible responses may not necessarily be accurate. M2's explicit recognition of the need to verify information therefore represents an important dimension of responsible technology use.

At the same time, the findings suggest that critical thinking should be understood as a practice facilitated by technology rather than an automatic outcome of technology use. M2's observation that students differ in their inclination to pursue deeper inquiry is particularly important. Access to multiple sources does not necessarily mean that students compare those sources or question their reliability. Some may use technology primarily for quick answers, whereas others may use it to explore competing interpretations and develop more complex understandings.

This interpretation is consistent with Hatmanto and Sari (2023), who emphasize the relevance of learner characteristics in technology-mediated learning. Accordingly, the effectiveness of MALL depends not only on the technological affordances of applications but also on students' cognitive engagement and learning dispositions.

M4's emphasis on comparing different references provides a particularly useful pedagogical implication. When students encounter multiple interpretations of a literary text, they can be encouraged to compare claims, identify differences in interpretation, examine supporting evidence, and construct their own conclusions. In this sense, MALL can become a space for critical literary inquiry, rather than merely a mechanism for accessing answers.

4. CONCLUSION

English literature students commonly view the integration of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a favorable method to enhance their digital literacy skills. MALL is praised by participants for its ability to provide convenient access to a wide range of online resources, expanding their learning beyond traditional classroom settings. Additionally, MALL allows for personalized learning paths to accommodate various learning preferences and styles. However, participants also acknowledge challenges such as inconsistent internet connectivity due to institutional regulations and infrastructure limitations. Furthermore, differences in individual

learning tendencies and technical abilities contribute to variations in the effectiveness of MALL. The feedback from students sheds light on both the opportunities and obstacles associated with MALL integration, emphasizing the importance of conducting comprehensive assessments to identify contextual barriers. It is also emphasized that customized MALL frameworks, tailored to address disparities in digital proficiency, cognitive modalities, and technological access, should be adopted. Involving students in the co-creation, implementation, and evaluation of MALL initiatives is advocated to ensure relevance and optimize outcomes. The qualitative feedback provided by students should be systematically analyzed to continuously improve MALL strategies. MALL, as a tool for enhancing digital literacy, provides immersive digital environments that facilitate language practice, accompanied by structured activities aimed at developing essential competencies such as information literacy, communication skills, and critical thinking. The inclusion of online collaborative projects and communities encourages active participation, while graded assignments promote the cultivation of self-directed learning tendencies. With appropriate guidance and support tailored to individual needs, MALL shows promise in strengthening independent digital skills.

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research or publication of this article.

6. USE OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

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