AN INVESTIGATION OF MEDIA *RUANGGURU* AS EDUCTAIONAL ONLINE PLATFORM IN STUDYING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Ruangguru is one of the educational online platforms that has existed in Indonesia since 2014. The application which focused on education-based services became the new phenomenon of online learning that attracted students' attention, especially in this 4.0 era. Thus, the main objective of this research was to investigate the use of the medium *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform and the student's perspective on the use of *Ruangguru* in learning English. The sample of the study was 10 students in the ninth grade at SMP IT Nurul Ishlah Banda Aceh. The data were collected and analyzed by using a descriptive qualitative design. The results showed that the students felt convenient in using *Ruangguru*, for the reason that it could be accessed through mobile phone anytime and anywhere. Based on the students' perspective, *Ruangguru* was quite interesting and it could attract students' attention in learning English for the reason that it provided visual animation which made the learning atmosphere became fun. The results of the study were expected to become a reference for school practitioners, parents, students, and general readers to find the learning aids that are compatible with the sophistication of technology and information update in learning English.

Keywords: *educational online platform, English learning, Ruangguru*

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of the Internet for daily usage provides many opportunities to people around the world in many different ways. The utilization of the Internet has gone further in which it is not only used to ease the means of daily communication but the Internet is also used at work, schools, and universities (Howard et al., 2002)

Moreover, the study in Internet learning anchors on the theory of Connectivism (Siemens, 2005). It is an emerging theory in educational technology which explains how the Internet progresses and offers people the opportunities to share through the World Wide Web. The increasing numbers of users of emerging technologies for teaching, specifically in social networking and online platform, contribute to the birth of Connectivism. It offers ways of constructing and assessing learning in social networks where information is distributed through networks of connection nodes (Kizito, 2016). Thus, the improvement of technology brings a transformation to the teaching and learning process (Dunwill, 2016).

The increasing usage of technology may be advantageous to English learning in Indonesia where the language source is still scarce in society. According to Hetrakul (1995), the environment where English is the foreign language makes most students unfamiliar with the English language. Hetrakul (1995) also said that the use of English is more frequent only inside the class and less frequently outside the class. Thus, technology can bridge the students to easily get proper input and learning materials for the achievement of English acquisition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile Learning

Mobile learning is a technology that requires media to show materials and also requires communication facilities to exchange information between students and teachers. The term mobile learning can be interpreted as the use of technology devices like mobile phones, iPad, tablets, and laptops which are then used in learning (Tamimuddin, 2007). Another opinion related to the definition of mobile learning comes from Clark (2007) who defines e-learning as one of the effective ways of learning because it can be accessed independently without limitation of time and space, learners, and mobility of learning.

According to (O'Malley et al., 2003) mobile learning can be defined as a learning process in which the learners do not have to stay in a particular place or attend certain activities, but the learning activities can occur when learners utilize mobile technology. Moreover, Aripurnamayana (2012) defines mobile learning as a facility or service that provides general electronic information to learners and also provides educational content that helps learners to attain knowledge. Based on those definitions, it can be interpreted that mobile learning is a tool that can be used as a source for accessing information that can be done anywhere and it may provide full support in achieving effective learning and an assessment-based initial appearance.

Furthermore, mobile learning in the 4.0 era has many functions and advantages for learners. The functions or benefits of mobile learning are stated by Miftah (2010) who provides three main functions of using mobile learning. Firstly, mobile learning is a supplement or additional learning resource which means that students have the freedom to choose and utilize mobile in accessing learning materials. The second function of mobile learning is as a compliment since it can be used as a tool for evaluation, enrichment, and reinforcement and can be used to recalling learning that has been done even without the assistance of teachers or tutors. The third function is a substitution that provides students the possibility to choose the desired learning model whether it is of conventional learning model, the combination of conventional learning models with technology, or learning models that fully utilize technology.

Online Tutoring

Tutoring is guidance given to individuals to be able to overcome the problems they face in learning so that after carrying out teaching and learning activities they can achieve better learning outcomes in accordance with their abilities, talents, and interests. According to Prayitno and Amti (1994, p., 279), tutoring is one of the important forms of service held at school. Experience shows that failure experienced by students in learning is not always caused by low intelligence. Very often, these failures occur because they lack adequate guidance services.

Tutoring is one step in helping students improve grades in school. Therefore, tutoring has long been accepted by the wider community to enrich students' educational experiences. According to Fontaine and Todd (2011), an online tutoring program that discusses the

development of healthy children has been increasing in the area of Taiwan and spread throughout the world. The "Online Teaching for After-School Learning" project in Taiwan aims to bridge the digital sharing and learning for children in the displaced area, supported by the government and community (ChanLin, Lin, & Lu, 2012). Children in abandoned or displaced areas, who often have limited support and resources for learning, are particularly receptive to the potential benefits of mentoring (Hughes, Boyd, & Dykstra, 2010). Online learning offers opportunities and expenses for individuals who are transferred with diverse socioeconomic statuses (Johnson, & Bratt, 2009). This can also be seen in online learning tutoring which is cheaper than conventional tutoring.

Ruangguru

Ruangguru is one of the online tutorings that exist in Indonesia provides a learning governance system that students and teachers can use in managing virtual classroom learning activities. *Ruangguru* is equipped with a question bank with the content adjusted to the curriculum in Indonesia, as well as analysis tools for test results. Specifically, *Ruangguru* in the world of education is a place or forum where all people seek and provide information, discuss and share thoughts between one or more people just by using mobile devices or technology connected to the Internet (Sarah, Aditya, & Admaja 2019).

The existence of a merger between the *Ruangguru* with the world of education makes it easy for students to learn and add insight into various sciences. Since all learning at this time is very easy to obtain, students do not need to go to the school library or public library. The students only need to use a smartphone to study and search for information. Moreover, *Ruangguru* application can provide education to members in the chatting group platform; members can also communicate with other members or with the teacher to discuss a problem. In the application of *Ruangguru,* there are various practice questions arranged based on subject topics. The most up-to-date concept available in this online question exercise is deliberately presented to add to the nuances of learning to make it more fun (Syamsulrijal, 2019).

Educational Online Platform

The Internet brings unlimited opportunities to learn. It also allows us to develop online learning platforms which enable us to teach and

learn comprehensively wherever we are in the world. The online learning platform has had a hugely positive impact on the way we experience education. In the 4.0 era, the online learning platform is one of the best tools for tutoring. Online learning platforms encourage connectivity through the Internet as a place of communication and interaction while before the appearance of the online learning platform, much of the learning that took place online was done by self-study (Rahmadani & Setiawati, 2019). The online education platform invites and encourages tutors and learners to engage with each other through virtual classrooms, text chat, voice chat, and video chat. Online learning platforms truly allow flexibility for the users (Liu, 2017).

English Learning through Media Online

English learning has always been very challenging especially for low proficiency students since most of them are less motivated to learn the language. This is aggravated by the lack of an interesting and interactive learning environment (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Hence, the development of technology has enabled the setting up of a special environment which may influence the language learning environment. It is hoped that the interaction between students and the technology may minimize feelings of anxiety and insecurity towards learning the language supported Barbara (2001). Therefore, it is believed that with the usage of technology in language learning, it can help students to acquire English as their second language better than depending on the teachers' capability to engage them in the traditional language classroom.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Participants

The subject of this research was ten students in the ninth grade of SMP IT Nurul Ishlah Banda Aceh. The condition of eligible participants was the students who had been using *Ruangguru* in English learning for 1 year. The object of the research was the data on how the students use *Ruangguru* as a learning platform and their perspectives about their insights in using the platform.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study were observation and interview. The observation was to present a realistic picture of behavior

or events through direct observation also known as an observational study, is a method of collecting evaluative information in which the evaluator watches the subject in his or her usual environment without altering that environment. Furthermore, the writer used a semi-structured interview to answer the second question about the students' perspective on the use of *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform in studying English. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a fairly open framework, which allowed for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They could be used both to give and receive information. By using this type of data collection, the writer had worked out a set of questions beforehand but intended the interview to be conversational.

Technique of Data Collection

The study was divided into two steps of research. The first phase was observation. In this phase, the writer observed how the students learned English through *Ruangguru* by recording the video when the students learned English through the application then transcribed it into sentences.

The second phase was the interview conducted with ten students aiming to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of online learning platforms in learning English. In this phase, the writer asked eight questions to the ten students in the ninth grade who had used *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform in learning English. The writer conducted face to face interview with each student and asked the question based on the guideline, then recorded the students' answers and transcribed them into written sentences.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively in presenting the results of the study. The writer recorded the situation of the students when they were using Ruangguru in learning English and added some notes as well. In analyzing the data, the writer transcribed the observation into written sentences. In the interview, the writer gave eight questions for ten students in ninth grade who had used *Ruangguru* application to answer the second research question about their perspective on the use of *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform in learning English. The writer then transcribed the students' answers and analyzed their answers to get the answer to the research question.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study was divided into two steps of research. The first phase was the observation, and the second phase was the interview which was conducted on ten students. In the phase of observation, the writer observed how the students learned English through *Ruangguru* by recording a video while the students were learning and then transcribed it into written sentences. The second phase was an interview where the writer conducted eight questions to the ten students in the ninth grade that had used *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform in learning English.

The Result of Observation

In the observation phase, the writer tried to see the differences between learning English through an online platform and the traditional way. These were the situations of the students in learning English through the Traditional Method.

1. The teacher entered the classroom. In this step, the teacher said some greetings to the students and tell them the material that would be discussed during the lesson.
2. The teacher explained the material and wrote some important points on the whiteboard without animations.
3. The teacher asked some questions to the students about the materials.
4. The teacher gave the quiz after explaining the English materials.
5. The teacher leads the students to discuss the materials together to make sure that the students understood the material.

On the other hand, after the writer observed how the students learned English in the traditional way, then the writer observed how students learned English through an online learning platform. In addition, the writer put the initial of students during the process of investigation as follows.

1. The students opened the mobile phone and clicked the application of *Ruangguru* then they clicked the menu called *Ruangbelajar* "Study room". After clicking the menu, the layout showed the material based on the curriculum 2013. Furthermore, the students clicked and chose *Bahasa Inggris* material provided by *Ruangguru.* See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Ruangbelajar

2. After clicking the menu of *Bahasa Inggris* or English, the writer found out that the students were free to choose the topic of material that had been discussed on the last section. In this observation conducted with ten students, the writer found that eight out of ten students chose passive form material and the rest of two students chose. See Figure 2 below.
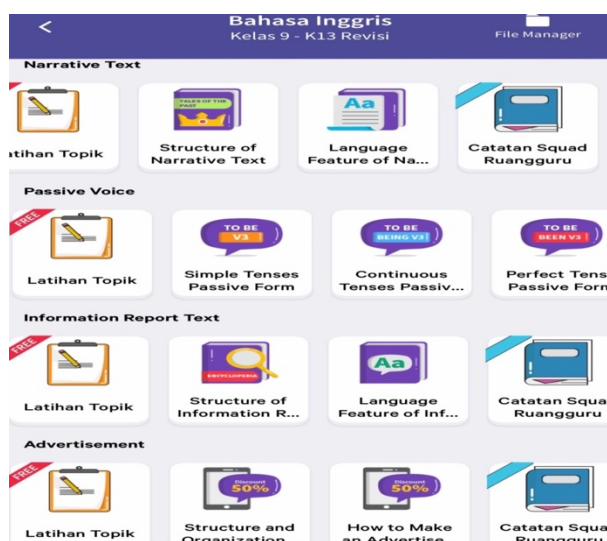

Figure 2. Material for English topic

NF: *"eh yang passive voice tu aku masih kurang paham, coba liat lagi lah" (I still do not understand about the passive voice, let us check it again)*

DP: *"yang passive tu kan? Aku juga masih belum paham, ni aku mau belajar itu aja" (is that about the passive? I do not understand either, I want to learn more about it)*

NR: *"kalo aku pilih belajar tentang narrative itu ee.."(I would rather choose to learn about narrative)*

3. On this step, the writer found that student NL faced the obstacle in operating the *Ruangguru* application, it was due to the signal of the internet.

4. Then, the student NL could handle the obstacle and she continued to watching the prologue video as the first step of learning the material. From the result of the observation above, it can be concluded that students felt free to choose the material that they needed to improve and the students could choose the material based on the topic that has been discussed on the last section at school. In addition, the writer found that the students looked they enjoyed the learning and they were attracted and got interested in the use of *Ruangguru* based on the way of their response while watching the explanation of video until the last section of English material provided by *Ruangguru*.

The Result of Interview

The writer asked them personally one by one with the same question guideline containing eight questions. Moreover, in this step of research, the writer used semi-structured interview where additional questions could be developed according to the students' answers during the process of the interview.

The writer : How often do you study English through Ruangguru?

In this question, the writer found the difference between each student in the use of application *Ruangguru* for learning English. Student FL used *Ruangguru* only at certain times such as examination at the end of the school semester. Similarly, student FN also learned by using *Ruangguru* at certain time: *"gak terlalu sering sih, kadang kalo mood belajar lagi bagus baru pakai hehe.. abistu kalo lagi ujian*

gitu"(I use this application no very often, I operate it when I have good mood to learn and when I have examination only). Then, the writer redevelops the question to ask their reason why they used the application of *Ruangguru* in examination for student FN. She answered that learning English through watching the video was easier than learning with book because she felt that learning by using book made her got easily bored than watching video. It was due to the attraction in learning which was showed by the virtual teacher in material video and the teacher's teaching style which seems like talking to a friend, so it could make the learning process enjoyable and easier to understand.

Finally, from the interview result that contained 8 questions, it can be concluded that 90% of the students showed their positive result after using *Ruangguru* in learning English. According to the students' perspective, *Ruangguru* was successfully created to offer the difference atmosphere of learning style that was suitable for millennials in 4.0 era. Moreover, *Ruangguru* can help them to be attracted and enthusiastic toward learning through the animation video. In addition, the writer found that the students believed the video provided by *Ruangguru* was easier to understand rather than learning by book. On the other hand, 10 % of the students believed that traditional method in learning style was still the best alternative in the process of discussion for the teaching and learning material.

Discussion

There were two research questions that were concerned respectively with the use of *Ruangguru* as educational online platform in learning English. The first question is about how students learned English by using *Ruangguru* as educational online platform.

The writer conducted the direct observation to find the answer and the way students learning English by using their smartphone when *Ruangguru* can be accessed anytime and anywhere through their personal handphone. In addition, mobile learning can also be defined as learning in which learners do not have to be and stay in a place or class or attend certain activities, but the learning activities can occur when learners utilize mobile technology both in the private room and public space without being limited by a certain time (O'Malley et al., 2003).

Students felt free to easily access the material that they wanted to study. Furthermore, the writer found that passive voice and narrative text became the material that students wanted to learn in *Ruangguru* because these materials are included in the curriculum for the ninth-

grade junior high school. In addition, the writer found that students were enjoying the process of learning, they were seen enthusiastic in listening to the English material explained in *Ruangguru*. Furthermore, the finding in this observation has similarities with a previous study about the educational online platform. Gideon (2018) found that *Ruangguru* can easily be accessed by the user in the process of learning.

The second research question was students' perspectives about the use of *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform. The writer interviewed 10 students that have used *Ruangguru* for more than 6 months. The writer found many students were satisfied after using *Ruangguru* as an educational online platform because of the animation presented by *Ruangguru* which attracted students' interest in learning English. In addition, students felt better in understanding the English material after using *Ruangguru*. The result of this research was quite similar to the previous study by Indra (2019) who found out that the application of *Ruangguru* made students got information easily.

The writer observed the students and found that the students could access the material freely and most of them (80%) chose the passive voice materials on the *Ruangguru* application. They chose this material since they had just learned it at the last meeting in the class. Another 20% chose to learn the narrative text material because they wanted to learn it deeply. Then, the writer also found that the students were very enthusiastic and happy to learn English by using *Ruangguru*. They responded that they could absorb the material very quickly from the virtual teacher on the application. This fun environment happened because the material consisted and developed in animation material. So, the vibe of learning was fun and easy. Somehow, the material was easy to understand, but the application must have a good connection to the internet connection. Without any good connection, it could give trouble to the process of students' learning. Furthermore, from the interview result, the writer found that 70% of students knew *Ruangguru* from the television advertisement, and another 30% got the information about *Ruangguru* from social media, such as Instagram, Youtube, and Facebook, and their parents. Then, the writer found, 20% of them were the longest customers which was about 2 years. While another 80% was the new customer of *Ruangguru*. They used the *Ruangguru* application about six months before. The other fact is that 30% of the students could access and learn from *Ruangguru* when they faced the final exam. They learned by using this application because it was easy

to operate and easy to be understood. The other 40% accessed the application regularly as the learning platform and another 30% accessed it only while they had any difficulty understanding the materials from their teacher.

On the other hand, from the interview result, the writer found that 90% of students felt interested and enthusiastic with the English learning style provided by the application of *Ruangguru,* and only 10% of students felt they did not get interested in learning English through *Ruangguru.*

Moreover, the writer found that 100% of students believed that the presence of *Ruangguru* application provided positive changes to a student in the learning outcomes, such as in understanding the material or improving their pronunciation. Moreover, from the interview, the writer found that 60% of students felt difficulty in using the platform when the internet slowed down. It became the biggest obstacle in operating or accessing *Ruangguru*. While 40% of students had no obstacle in using *Ruangguru.*

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that the students believed that *Ruangguru* as an online learning environment facilitates, supports, and encourages their English language learning. In addition, they believe that *Ruangguru* generally improves their learning skills. Moreover, the findings indicate that students have a positive attitude towards this learning model, and the majority of the students agree that *Ruangguru* could be an online environment for enhancing students' motivation and confidence in general

Finally, the investigation of the use of *Ruangguru* as educational online platform in learning English has helped students in understanding the material quickly, it is proven by *Ruangguru* which visualized the concept of material well and groundly. Besides, the use of the *Ruangguru* application is also considered practical to use because it is not limited by space and time.

Suggestions

There are several suggestions which can be offer based on the findings of this research toward the students, teachers and readers. First, the students have to take the benefit while they study from the

Ruangguru platform. They can increase their ability in learning, not only English, and reach their goal or dream in the future.

Second, this research is expected to be a useful recommendation for the teachers. They have to follow the modern era in teaching and learning. In addition, they have to adjust the way how they teach with technology influence and learn more by using technological tools in the teaching-learning process. It will help them and their student in creating a good environment in the class specifically. Not only *Ruangguru* application, but they can also use other tools to improve their teaching skill. In the end, the learning outcomes can be more effective and bring a positive impact for students.

Third, the recommendation for the readers or researchers, the objective of this research is limited only to find out the way of students in using *Ruangguru* as the learning platform and their perspective in using the platforms. Therefore, it is expected that the limitation of this research will encourage the readers or other researchers to learn more about the other aspect in teaching-learning English by using *Ruangguru*. It is also suggested to enlarge the study by investigating the way of students in using other technological tools to increase their ability in learning English.

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