

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
MOBILE LEARNING MODULE FOR  
SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TO  
ENHANCE ENGLISH FOR  
ACADEMIC SURVIVAL SKILLS**

**NURIZAH BINTI MD. NGADIRAN**

**PhD**

**July 2020**



**PTTA UTHM**  
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**PhD in Education**

**Faculty of Education**

**July 2020**



PTTA UTM  
PERPUSTAKAAN BUKU TUN AMINAH

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## ABSTRACT

This research design and development research (DDR) was done to develop mobile learning (mLearning) module for self-directed learning (SDL) to enhance English for academic survival skills (Tutor Me). 'Tutor Me' was developed to assist low-proficiency ESL learners who enrol in UHB 10302 course (English for Academic Survival) in UTHM to develop their English for academic survival skills, which include effective reading, effective listening, paragraph writing and presentation skills. It is crucial for the targeted students to be assisted with a comprehensive module to be used during tutorial sessions and Independent Study Hours (ISH) sessions. The research objectives for Phase One (Needs Analysis) are to identify relevant theories and empirical studies to construct the mLearning module design principles, and to examine the needs among the lecturers and the students for the mLearning module. 10 lecturers and 74 students were involved in this phase. As for Phase Two (Design and Development), the objectives are to construct the mLearning module design principles, and to develop 'Tutor Me' based on the feedback from the panel of experts that should be in-line with the students' and lecturers' feedback gathered in Phase One. Five of the experts were in the field of 'English for Academic Survival', and another five experts were in the field of 'Technology in Education'. The objectives of Phase Three (Evaluation) are to evaluate the users' viewpoints of 'Tutor Me' and to examine the students' pre- and post-tests scores. In this phase, 48 students were involved, whereby 24 students took the course during Semester 2, Session 2018/2019, while another 24 students were from Special Semester, Session 2019/2020. Amongst the primary findings of Phase One is learning management system (LMS) should be the operational platform for the mLearning module. The platform should be made accessible using smartphones and laptops for SDL to assist them in improving their English for academic survival skills. Based on the feedback given by the students, lecturers and panel of experts through survey questions, in Phase Two 'Tutor Me' was developed, incorporating elements such as content, learning strategies, learning activities, media and assessments. Following that, 'Tutor Me' underwent the process of content validity and reliability. For the findings of Phase Three, through the feedback gathered from the interview questions and post-test writing essays, the lecturer and students were satisfied with the ability of 'Tutor Me' to be accessed for SDL regardless of place and time, which can the students in improving their English for academic survival skills. Referring to the paired-samples t-test analysis of the pre- and post-tests scores, the p-value achieved for effective reading skills, effective listening skills, paragraph writing skills and presentation skills is less than  $\alpha=0.05$ . Hence, it can be summarised that 'Tutor Me' is successful in improving the students' English for academic survival skills. The implication of this study focuses on the development of the mLearning module for SDL to enhance the students' English for academic survival skills, the procedure to conduct a research on module design and development, and further suggestions for the Ministry of Higher Education, UTHM, the lecturers and students, and the field of English language teaching (ELT).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### Abbreviation

CALL	Computer Aided Language Learning
CD ROM	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
CG	Control Group
CI	Comprehensible Input
CLS	Centre for Language Studies
CGOL	Centre for Global Online Learning
CSR	Collaborative Strategic Reading
CSCL	Computer Supported Collaborative Learning
DBR	Design-Based Research
DDR	Design and Development Research
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EG	Experimental Group
EL	Effective listening
ELLMTAS	English Language Learning via Mobile Technologies Attitude Scale
ELT	English language teaching
ER	Effective reading
ERP	Extensive Reading Programmes

ESL	English as Second Language
GPA	Grade PoInt Average
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISD	Instructional System Design
ISH	Independent Study Hours
L2	Second language
LAN	Local Area Network
LMS	Learning management system
MALL	Mobile Assisted Language Learning
MKO	More Knowledgeable Others
MLPS	Mobile Learning Perception Skills
MTUN	Malaysian Technical Universities Network
PC	Personal Computer
PEoU	Perceived ease of use
PS	Presentation skills
PU	Perceived usefulness
PW	Paragraph writing
SCL	Student Centered Learning
SDL	Self-directed learning
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SLA	Second language acquisition
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UI	User Interface

UID	Universal Instructional Design
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
UTHM	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
WP LMS	WordPress Learning Management System
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly discusses the research background, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, conceptual framework of the research, and operational definitions.

### 1.2 Research Background

Since English is one of the most common languages used universally at present, the importance of mastering this language should be accepted and acknowledged (McKay, 2018; Ushioda; 2017). At the same time, English language mastery is also denoted as one of the important elements that a student should possess. By having English language mastery, the students are given more opportunities to grasp better education and employment prospects (Bury & Oka; 2017; Duong & Chua, 2016).

In the Malaysian context, in order to possess the capabilities to compete in the era of globalisation and Internationalisation, English language proficiency has become a crucial requirement (Singh, 2016, Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Ting et. al, 2017). Maszlee Malik, the former Minister of Education, has also emphasised the significance of English in the Malaysian education system. At the same time, as stated by Ibrahim (2018), the minister has also highlighted the needs to master multiple languages including the English language. As English is a global language, mastering it could enhance our strength as we are able to converse in our first and second languages fluently.

Since Malaysia gained its independence on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1957, this country has prioritised English educational development (Ameiruel Azwan, 2018), as this

language is highly regarded as important to be mastered by students. According to Darmi & Albion (2013), in the pre-independent era, when the British administered Malaya, they had established both English-medium primary and secondary schools. The implementation of the National Education Policy in 1970 witnessed the then government enforcing the 'phasing out' of English language as the medium of instruction in schools, and *Bahasa Melayu* was used as in the process of teaching and learning. English has since then become a compulsory second language (L2) taught in schools. At the same time, syllabi for English as L2 subjects for both the primary and secondary schools were enacted in Malaysia (Darmi & Albion, 2013).

On the other hand, issues concerning ESL education in Malaysia have always remained protuberant. Based on an observation by David et. al (2015), Malaysians' English language competence still require a lot of improvements, even though the students have undergone 11 to 13 years of learning English lessons formally in schools. In addition, according to Chin et. al (2016), there are several factors that lead to poor grasp of the English language among Malaysian university graduates. Due to the lack of English proficiency skills, this scenario, as stated by Ting et. al. (2017), had caused a high unemployment rate among Malaysian graduates, especially in the private sector. The apprehension towards the poor command of English language among Malaysian undergraduates has been widely highlighted (Kasuma & Wray, 2015; Thurairaj et. al, 2015; Palpanadan et. al, 2019). In addition, a national-level study, which is the Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017, has exposed that 54% of Malaysia undergraduate students possessed a limited command of English language proficiency. This situation may disrupt the realisation of Malaysia's Vision 2020 policy of becoming a fully developed nation, as the weak English language mastery among Malaysian undergraduates deters the fulfilment of the vision. Therefore, there is a need to develop students' English language proficiency, a crucial skill at present (August & Shanahan, 2017). The Ministry of Education, as highlighted in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), as well as English Language Education Reform in Malaysia; The Roadmap-2015-2025 has paved the way to ensure that higher learning institution students are proficient in the English language.

Embracing 'learner autonomy', as mentioned in English Language Education Reform in Malaysia; The Roadmap-2015-2025, to guarantee better success in language learning, is one of the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Higher Education. Learner autonomy is whereby the students are encouraged able to be 'in-charge' of their learning (Ramamurthy & Rao, 2015). Nevertheless, the students must be visibly guided by language instructors or more competent learners who might assist in constructing meaning (Schmidt & Wehmeyer, 2016). Therefore, higher learning institutions in Malaysia have made significant exertion to embolden learner autonomy in numerous language programmes through the introduction of self-directed learning (English Language Education Reform in Malaysia; The Roadmap-2015-2025).

As mentioned in Malaysia Education Blueprint (2015), the education system in Malaysia carries the aspiration to prepare the students holistically. This aspiration assists students to achieve success in the 21st century with all of the prospects and obstacles that this current era offers. The Malaysian education system has the aim of developing young Malaysians who carry these characteristics; (1) knowledgeable, (2) can think critically and creatively, (3) possess leadership skills and (4) good communication skills.

According to Ganapathy (2015), in this disposition, emphasis is given on improving the students' learning experience through leveraging on technology-enabled models. This is to permit more tailored learning in the higher-level learning classrooms. This is because teaching digital age 21st century students involve adaptive and technological induced methods by the educators. Hence, the educators in Malaysia are embracing a variety of technological learning environments and mechanisms.

Thus, a transformation is essential for Malaysian undergraduates, from being supplied with assistance and information that the students do not need to think on their own, to accepting the concept of self-direct learning. In line with the advancement of technology, self-directed learners are able to, regardless of place and time, get connected and learn through mobile devices and the Internet

(Ministry of Education, 2014). The influx of technology and the wave of globalisation have accentuated the requirement for improved English language proficiency among Malaysians to facilitate them to accomplish 21st century skills (Azman, 2016) competitively. In relation to this development, it is important for English as Second Language (ESL) language instructors to recognise and organise relevant technologically enhanced learning resources, which can assist the students to become self-directed learners.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

As previously mentioned, in Malaysia, English is taught as the second language among primary and secondary school students. In conjunction with the implementation of the second wave of the National Education Development Plan, the English language was proposed as a compulsory passing subject in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). SPM is equivalent to the O Levels in which, in Malaysia, the students will sit for SPM at the end of their secondary level. It is believed that it will be an advantage in assisting students to elevate their English language proficiency through this education policy.

However, despite the importance of mastering English, based on the students' achievement in SPM examination, particularly in English subject, the percentage of students who failed the English language in their public examination is a frightful figure. In 2017, the grade point average (GPA) for SPM English was 5.84, with the percentage of failures was 20.1%. 82,874 of the SPM candidates were unable to pass English subject from the total number of candidates, which was 412,308 students. Meanwhile, in 2018, with the failure rate of 20.6%, the GPA was 5.98. The total number of SPM candidates who were unable to pass English subject for SPM 2018 was 80,113 students from a total number of 388, 899 students (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2018).

Based on the findings made by a number of researchers, a large number of students do not possess a high level of motivation in learning English because of having to master its grammatical rules, vocabulary and pronunciation (Yaccob & Yunus,

2019). Another reason highlighted by these researchers is the scarcity of exposure to the English language itself. On top of that, according to Mtallo (2015), the majority of most ESL students find difficulties in learning the language in order to attain the four skills; namely reading, writing, listening and speaking.

With the intention of developing fundamental English language skills, particularly for academic purposes and lifelong learning skills, since 2017, it has been made compulsory for diploma students of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) to enrol and pass a number of newly developed English courses. One of the courses is English for Academic Survival course (UHB 10302), which is the first English course taken by first-year diploma students. In the course, the students are exposed to four vital English for academic survival skills; effective reading, effective listening, paragraph writing and presentation skills. By the end of the course, the students should be able to achieve three objectives. The objectives of the course are to apply the rules of language mechanics to produce clear, organised and coherent academic communication, compose effective academic paragraphs and essays, and demonstrate the ability to engage in lifelong learning activities (refer to Appendix 2).

Still, as underlined in Table 1.1, from 2017 to 2019, the number of first-year students who obtained C+, C, D and E for their English in *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) is more than 30% of first year UTHM diploma students overall. The data were collected from the *Academic Management Office*, UTHM that manages students' enrolments and registrations. According to Nasir et. al (2017), students who scored 'C+' grade in their English SPM are considered 'low intermediate', while students who attained 'D' and 'E' are counted as 'beginners'. Abdullah and Lina (2010) consider students who obtained A+ to B for their English SPM results as students who possess 'good English language proficiency'. Therefore, diploma students who are not considered as 'good' language learners must register and make the grade for UHB 10302 course have to be given ample assistance in order for them to comprehend the content of UHB 10302.



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Nurizah binti Md. Ngadiran obtained her Bachelor of Science in Education (Hons.) Teaching English as a Second Language in 2004 from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Skudai) and Masters in Education (Teaching English as a Second Language) from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. She is currently a PhD students from Faculty of Education (Puncak Alam Campus). Her PhD thesis involves designing and developing mobile learning (mLearning) module for English for Academic Survival (UHB 10302) course, namely 'Tutor Me' using WordPress Learning Management System.

### List of Awards:

1. 6th MIRCELE 2016 – Most Popular Award (PhD Category)
2. K-Novasi 2017 (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) – Bronze Medal
3. PIP 2017 (Universiti Utara Malaysia) – Bronze Medal
4. IUCEL 2017 (Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia) – Silver Medal
5. K-Novasi 2018 (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) – Bronze Medal
6. EICD 2018 (Universiti Teknologi MARA) – Gold Medal
7. IIDEX 2018 (Universiti Teknologi MARA) – Silver Medal
8. RISE 2018 (Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia) – Gold Medal

### Intellectual Property (IP):

1. English for Academic Survival mLearning Module: LY2017005057

List of publication (if any):

Ngadiran, N., & Alias, N. A. (2017). Unravelling tertiary students' ownership, usage, attitudes and preferences of mobile devices as tools for M-learning. *Man in India*, 97(13), 257-264.

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