

Online learning platform as MALL application due to covid-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic forces the change of education system in Indonesia from conventional to online because of the face-to-face learning prohibition from the Indonesian government. In such situation, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is needed, and some online learning platforms are provided by higher education institutions, one of which is MyBest. This research aimed to determine students' perception towards MyBest as online learning platform. Mixed Method using quantitative and qualitative data was applied in this research. Data were collected by giving questionnaire and doing interview with the students of Bina Sarana Informatika University as respondents. The research results showed that most of the students gave positive opinion about this platform because it could help them learn the lesson better. Yet, they also faced some problems in using it such as low internet connection and uncomfortable eyes when reading long text on screen.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing worldwide pandemic due to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 spreads easily from human to human through their droplet. That is why people infected by this disease are keep growing every day.

The pandemic has spread throughout Indonesia, and the victims are still rising until the end of 2021. The big number of people suffered COVID-19 forced some evolution in many aspects of life includes education. In order to prevent the virus transmission, people are encouraged to keep the distance. Indonesian government applied large-scale social restriction which was later modified into the community activities restriction enforcement to minimize the rate of increase in the number of victims confirmed positive for COVID-19. Besides, in education field the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture released a regulation in *Surat Edaran Nomor 4 Tahun 2020 tentang Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Pendidikan Dalam Masa Darurat Penyebaran CoronaVirus Disease (COVID-19)*. The learning system also changes into online-based learning so that lecturers and students do not meet each other. Consequently, they automatically need to use internet in learning process.

In this situation, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has important role in making learning process keep going. Mobile-based learning refers to the aspect of mobility of the learner and the mobile nature of the devices. MALL is derived from the concept of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) with an enhanced support of learning in context and provides the EFL students a valuable learning tool (Shanmugapriya & Tamilarasi, 2013). MALL is not limited to using mobile phones, but also includes laptops, tablets, MP3/MP4 player, video recorder, etc (Sam & Shalini, 2021). The use of mobile devices to support language learning has increased since MALL was first coined by Chinnery in 2006 (Amalia, 2020). Furthermore, Puga in (Al-hadithy, 2021) also said that the widespread ownership of mobile devices makes an increasing interest to use them in educational context.

Nowadays, lecturers and students prefer to use mobile device in teaching and learning process since it can be used anytime and anywhere. This advantage allows students to access learning materials and communicate with lecturers and classmates with no time and space constraints (Nuraeni, Carolina, Supriyatna, Widiati, & Bahri, 2020). Consequently, mobile devices have vital role in the emergence of pedagogical enhancement of teaching and learning process during COVID-19 pandemic since face-to-face learning is not allowed by Indonesian Ministry of Education.

In online-based learning system, lecturers can use any kind of media and application to transfer the knowledge and interact with the students such as Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Skype, Whatsapp, etc. Moreover, the assessment and evaluation can be done by using google classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, etc. Even, some higher education institutions have provided their own platforms to support all students and lecturers' activities in teaching and learning process, one of which is Bina Sarana Informatika University.

Bina Sarana Informatika University has provided a platform called MyBest which can be accessed at elearning.bsi.ac.id which enable lecturers to share the learning materials and assignments in the form of text or video file. This platform also allows students to download the materials shared by lecturers and upload their homework. Even, this platform also allows students to fill the attendance list in each meeting and allows the lecturers to check the list. In teaching and learning process, besides using MyBest platform lecturers may combine some techniques and media to deliver the materials such as Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Whatsapp, etc.

MyBest are hoped can be the main teaching and learning media as the real application of MALL and give benefits for both students and lecturers. However, as the new online learning platform supported by the university, MyBest may have some disadvantages. Therefore, the researcher needs to explore the features of this platform and the students' perception of it as well.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used mixed method using quantitative and qualitative data. According to (Creswell, 2003), mix method is collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study for some reasons such as to expand an understanding different method and to converge or confirm findings from different data sources. Interview was conducted in this study as triangulation to compare the data from questionnaire to figure out if there is convergence, differences, or some combination.

The study involved 80 students of Bina Sarana Informatika University majoring Management who was taking English Course. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data from the students. The content of questionnaire was adapted and simplified from similar previous study conducted by (Cakrawati, 2017). The questionnaire consists of 10 closed-ended questions using a four-Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered to figure out students' perception on the use of MyBest platform which can be accessed at elearning.bsi.ac.id as online learning platform provided by Bina Sarana Informatika University. Meanwhile, interview was conducted to 15 students. The interview which consists of six questions aimed to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of online learning platform in the classroom.

The data from questionnaire was statistically computed to find out the percentage of each statement and then was interpreted descriptively. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed for repeating key features which were related to the use of MyBest as online learning platform in the classroom. The data from the questionnaire and interview were used to provide description of students' perception on the use of MyBest.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Features of MyBest Platform

As one of the platform in online learning, MyBest has some features which can be used in order to support the process of online teaching and learning. Below are some features and their appearance in students' page:

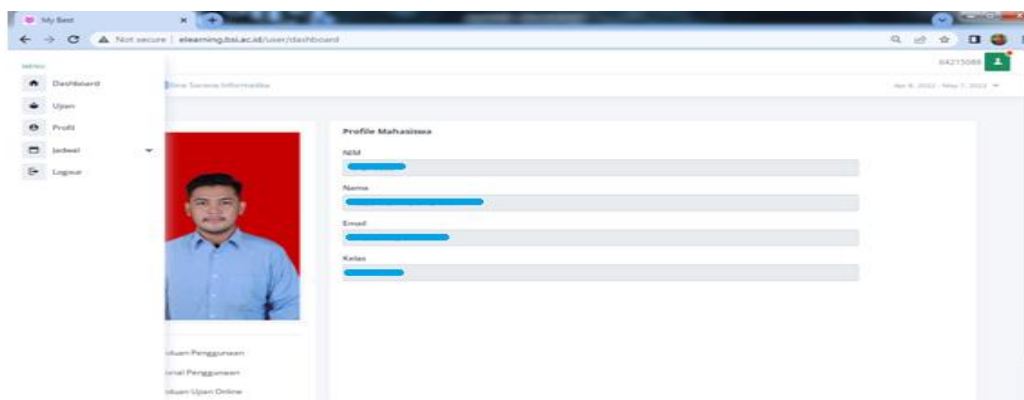


Figure 1. First page which appears when students log into MyBest (example)

By visiting elearning.bsi.ac.id with their usernames and passwords, students can use MyBest platform. First page that appears is the dashboard which shows the profile of the students. On the left side, there are some other options like 'ujian', 'profil', 'jadwal', and 'logout'.

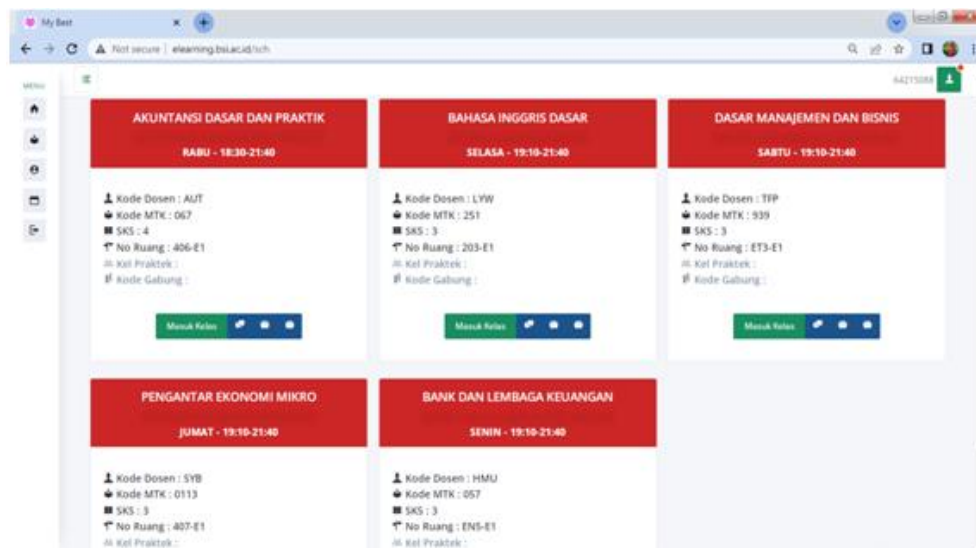


Figure 2. Page display when students click 'jadwal' (example)

When students click 'jadwal', they will find the courses they take in the currently semester based on their schedule. The information includes the course name, time, lecturer, etc. The students can choose the course according to the schedule and fill in the attendance list by clicking 'Masuk Kelas', and they will be automatically detected present at that class, and vice versa.

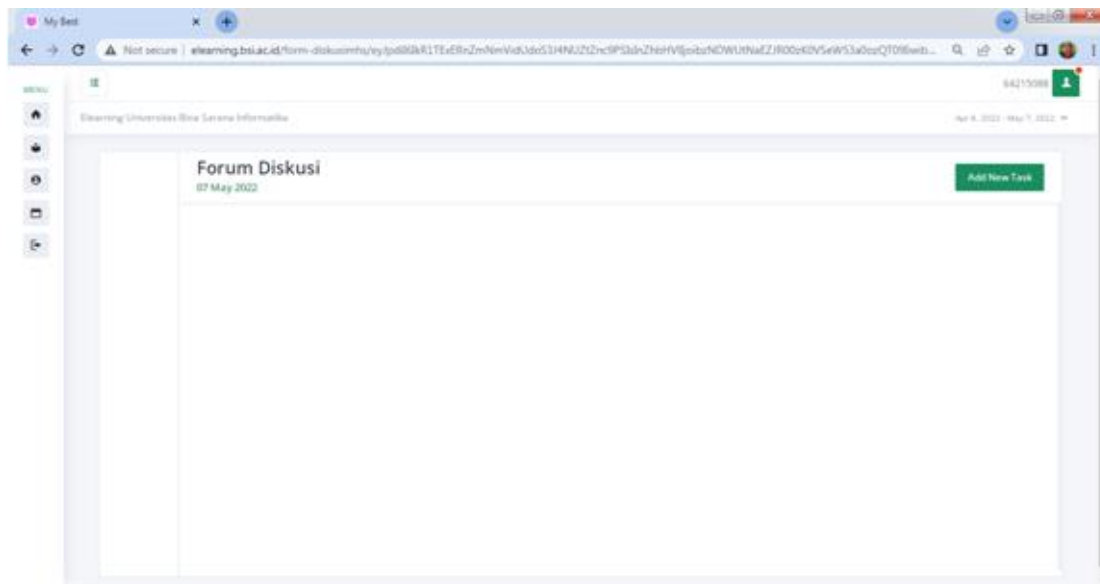


Figure 3. Page display of forum

During the class, students may discuss the learning materials with lecturer. They can ask some questions or give their opinion, and then the lecturer and other students in the class can answer or respond to them in page 'Forum Diskusi'. All the discussions in this forum are only in text format. Therefore, either the students or the lecturer have to type their expressions.

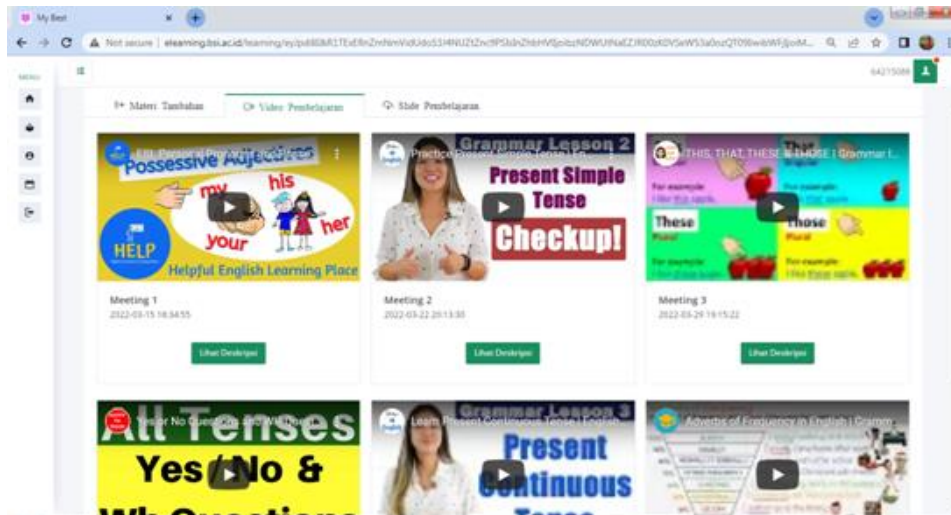


Figure 4. Page display of learning materials uploaded by lecturer on MyBest (example)

Lecturer can share teaching materials through MyBest that will be appeared on students' site. The materials may be in the form of text, video, or presentation slides.

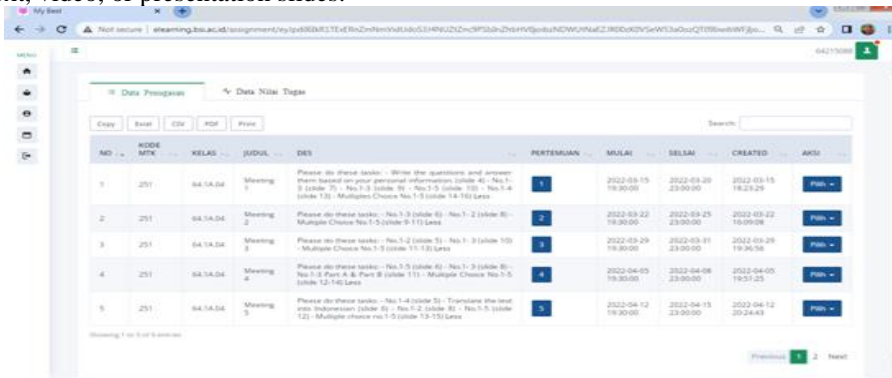


Figure 5. Page display of assignments given by the lecturer on MyBest (example)

Students will get notification every time the lecturer gives assignment through MyBest. They can check the details about it such as the tasks instructions and deadline by clicking the option 'Data Penugasan', submit their works by inputting the link of it that has been saved in their Google drive.

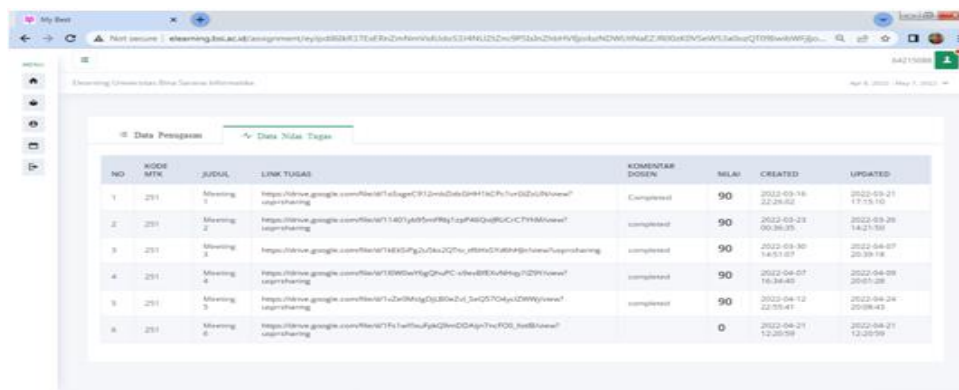


Figure 6. Page display of students' assignment scores on MyBest (example)

Students can also check their scores by clicking the option 'Data Nilai Tugas'. Besides their scores, on this page they can see lecturer's comment on their work as well. There are also some details such as the date when students upload their work and when the lecturers input the scores.

3.2 Students' Perceptions on MyBest Platform

After collecting data from questionnaire and interview, the researcher summarized and analyzed the data as follows:

Table 1. Students' perception towards MyBest as online learning platform

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I think the reference materials (videos, power point files, articles) and assignments posted by my lecturer on MyBest help me improve my English learning and understand the contents/ topics of the lesson better.	31,25%	62,5%	5%	1,25%
2.	I think the use of MyBest helps me practicing my English skills.	23,75%	60%	13,75%	2,5%
3.	I think online activities and discussions in MyBest can motivate me to learn more about the English lesson.	11,25%	56,25%	28,75%	3,75%
4.	I think MyBest is convenient to use especially in submitting assignments.	12,5%	77,5%	6,25%	3,75%
5.	I think the use of MyBest saves effort and time.	25%	37,5%	21,25%	16,25%

From the above table we can see that mostly students gave their positive opinions about statement number 1. Almost all of them agreed (Strongly Agree: 31,25% and Agree: 62,5%) that the materials given by the lecturer on MyBest platform helped them improve their English Learning and understand the contents/ topics of the lesson better. As much as 83,75% of the students (Strongly Agree: 23,75% and Agree: 60%) also agreed that the use of MyBest platform helped them practicing their English skills. Those positive perspectives were reflected on the third statement that as much as 67,5% of the students (Strongly Agree: 11,25% and Agree: 56,25%) were motivated to learn more about the English lesson by using online activities and discussions on MyBest platform. Moreover, there were 90% of the students (Strongly Agree: 12,5% and Agree: 77,5%) who thought that MyBest platform was convenient to use especially in submitting assignments. As much as 62,5% of them (Strongly Agree: 25% and Agree: 37,5%) also thought that MyBest platform saved effort and time.

Those results were confirmed to 15 students by doing interview as data triangulation. From the interview, it could be concluded that lecturers gave various materials to the students in the form of articles/texts, powerpoints, and interesting videos through MyBest platform in each meeting. As a result, students did not feel bored, and they were more motivated to learn and practice the English lesson.

Besides, the discussion forum also helped students to discuss the lesson contents with the lecturer as well as the other students in the same class during or after the class because it could be accessed anytime they want. This benefit was really needed by the students who were frequently forced to study anywhere and anytime especially during COVID-19 pandemic (Evans, 2008). Unfortunately, some students said that MyBest could not give them enough opportunity in practicing their speaking skill because the discussion was only in text format.

In the interview, many students said that they could submit their assignments more easily through MyBest platform because they only needed to copy and paste the link of the file that had been saved in their Google Drive. They felt it was a more practical way to submit assignments than having had to write it down on book and gave it directly to the lecturer because they did not meet each other in a classroom.

Table 2. Students' perception towards MyBest as online learning platform (continue)

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6.	I think MyBest can facilitate interaction and communication between lecturer and students.	23,75%	47,5%	18,75%	10%
7.	I think the use of MyBest makes my reading experience more interesting.	16,25%	23,75%	41,25%	18,75%
8.	I prefer reading my courses in paper form to reading them through MyBest.	26,25%	41,25	21,25%	11,25%
9.	I think it is difficult to use features on MyBest as mobile learning application.	6,25%	10%	66,25%	17,5%
10.	I think it is difficult to use MyBest because of the slow-speed internet on my mobile device.	12,5%	23,75%	47,5%	16,25%

Table 2 shows that as much as 71,25% of the students (Strongly Agree: 23,75% and 47,5%) agreed that MyBest platform could facilitate interaction and communication between lecturer and students. It was one of MyBest platform benefits when students and lecturers could not meet each other due to Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this platform might not be a good platform that could make students' reading experience more interesting. It could be seen from the table above that 60% of the students (Disagree: 41,25% and Strongly Disagree: 18,75%) disagreed with statement number 7. Similar answer was also given in statement number 8 that as much as 67,5% of the students (Strongly Agree: 26,25% and Agree: 41,25%) preferred reading their courses in paper form to reading them through MyBest platform. Online learning system was quite new for most of students in Indonesia. Therefore, the skill to use or operate the online platform was one of the important things to consider instead of the students' competencies and cognitive skills. There were 83,75% of the students (Disagree: 66,25% and Strongly Disagree: 17,5%) who thought that features on MyBest platform was not difficult to use. Whereas, as much as 63,75% of them (Disagree: 47,5% and Strongly Disagree: 16,25%) felt difficulties to use it because of the slow-speed internet on their mobile devices.

According to conducted interview, the students felt that discussion forum was very helpful for them to interact with the lecturer and other students because they could discuss about the lesson and course through this feature. It was in line with (Al-hadithy, 2021) who stated that MALL engaged learners in collaborative environments to interact with peers and educators via written text messages on different social applications.

Yet, many students were not comfortable reading the materials given by the lecturer on MyBest platform because reading on screen made the eyes work much harder than reading a print book. They felt tired and sleepy more quickly when reading on screen than on paper. Some of them also complained of sore eyes when reading on screen for a long time. A study result conducted by (Mangen, Walgermo, & Brønneick, 2013) showed that students who read texts in print scored significantly better on the reading comprehension test than students who read the texts digitally. Meanwhile, some students who preferred reading on screen or MyBest platform said that it was more practical and easy because they could access MyBest platform and read various lesson or materials given by lecturer on their laptop or smart phone without having had to bring heavy books wherever they went.

Then, there were only a few students who felt difficulties in using MyBest platform because the features and icons at that application were quite simple and easy to understand. The lecturers and IT team of the university also gave explanation about how to use it in the early semester and gave help when there was a student who had problem of it. On the other hand, some students had ever had a problem with the internet connection which made them difficult to access MyBest platform. Usually, this kind of problem happened when it rained heavily or when the students were in remote areas. The same findings from (Asio, Gadia, Abarintos, Paguio, & Balce, 2021; Clarin & Baluyos, 2022) also indicated internet connection was one of the great challenges of learning among students. Internet signal problem might become a barrier among students or even lecturers in online learning.

4. CONCLUSION

From the result and discussion, it can be concluded that Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has important role in teaching and learning process during the pandemic of Covid-19 when students and lecturer are not be able to meet each other in a classroom. Online learning platform such as MyBest becomes one of the solutions to enable interaction between students and lecturers. There are some advantages and disadvantages in using this platform. The advantages are among others the materials sent by lecturer through MyBest may help students understand the lesson better and practice their English skills. MyBest also facilitates interaction between lecturer and students through activities and discussions which motivate students to learn more about the English lesson. Moreover, MyBest is convenient to use in submitting assignments and saves effort and time because the features on MyBest are quite easy and simple to use. The disadvantages are among others many students felt difficulties in using MyBest due to the low internet connection. Besides, they also felt uncomfortable when reading a very long text on screen. As a result, many of them prefer to read the materials on paper. This research was only focused on the use and perception of students towards MyBest platform. It is recommended that other researchers explore similar research on teachers' side.

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