

INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOLERS' PERCEPTIONS OF RUANGGURU IN ENGLISH ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract.

English language instruction in Indonesia has been impacted by the shift to online learning. One of the popular online learning platforms in the country is Ruangguru. Students can access its English learning resources anytime and anyplace. The purpose of this study is to investigate how Indonesian high school students view Ruangguru as an online resource for studying English. Data from the students who utilize Ruangguru was gathered via a questionnaire and facilitated interviews. A mixed-methods approach was used to analyze the data, combining qualitative analysis with descriptive statistics. The findings show that Ruangguru is well-liked by online English learners, particularly because its videos provide straightforward instructions that can inspire the students to become independent learners. However, some students continue to have issues with the limitations imposed by online learning and digital gap. Regardless, the majority of students consider Ruangguru to be a valuable English learning source in the age of online education.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Technology has become such a crucial part of life that it has continued to influence the field of education. The switch to distance education has been increasingly implemented since the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Kamal et al., 2021). The practice of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is now commonplace (Hampel & Stickler, 2015). Students and teachers worldwide, including in Indonesia, must rapidly adapt to the virtual learning style where everything must be done online. This ubiquitous trend is supported by several online platforms (Amin & Sundari, 2020) that claim

they can support and supplement student's learning of various subjects that they learn at schools.

The English language, which is considered to be a foreign language in Indonesia, is one of the compulsory subjects to be learned in the national curriculum. However, the English competence of high school graduates in Indonesia is still generally low (Poedjiastutie et al., 2018). This has led high-school students into seeking supplementary education tools in the form of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Ruangguru is one of the mobile-assisted learning platforms in Indonesia and, while the application has

proven to be very popular among Indonesians (Munawwir & Nerizka, 2021), the high-schoolers' perceptions of it as an online English learning tool is still being questioned.

Regardless of users' location, distance learning is characterized by excellent training effectiveness, data availability, and constant information transfer speed (Romanov, 2019). The implementation of distance learning in Indonesia has resulted in the utilization of information communication technology (ICT) by both students and teachers. English language learning is no exception, where its teaching and learning process inevitably involves the use of various virtual platforms, such as WhatsApp, Edmodo, and Google Classroom (Lestari et al., 2020, (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019). Ruangguru is another online platform that leverages these online learning needs as the core of its business (Innovation Factory and Ravenry, 2020). The company's flagship product is a mobile application that enables students to access online videos to learn various subjects, including the English language. Thus, Ruangguru offers English language learning opportunities for high school students who want to complement their education from the virtual classrooms. With Ruangguru's mobile-assisted language learning application, language learning limitations in terms of time and location can be overcome thanks to its mobility, accessibility, and practicality (Mooneeb Ali et al., 2021).

Teachers should remember that decisions about learning design should take precedence over decisions concerning

technologies (Boettcher & Conrad, 2021). In other words, technology should serve the practice of teaching, not the other way around. Educational technology is the use of tools, technologies, processes, procedures, resources, and strategies to enhance learning experiences in a range of educational settings (Huang et al., 2019). Approaches to educational technology have developed from the early usage of instructional instruments up to development of novel gadgets like mobile devices.

The goal of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is to promote learning on the go. Tablets and smartphones are only two examples of the easily portable devices that are utilized for this purpose. For informal learning possibilities, mobile learning is especially helpful (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2012). As a result, it supports in-class instruction and offers opportunities for language acquisition to those who lack access to institutional settings. Nevertheless, the strategy is also expected to pose difficulties, such as the potential of external disturbances when learning occurs on a mobile device. When using mobile learning, teachers must engage in efficient task design and wise tool selection (Hampel & Stickler, 2015). Since mobile learning typically occurs outside of a traditional classroom as an individual activity, teachers must come up with ways to provide necessary support and incorporate interaction into the activities.

As Indonesian educational institutions make the transition into online learning, it is crucial to be mindful of the expectations and reactions of language learners.. This is further

supported by König & Pflanzl (2016) who stated that effective classroom teaching methods can be evaluated using the perceptions of the students. Robbins (2013) defines perception as a process by which people organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their surroundings. To further understand how to improve the mobile-assisted English language learning approach used by Ruangguru, perceptions of its students must be investigated.

Ruangguru is a digital-based education platform that provides students with opportunities to learn using videos and question exercises (Chinmi et al., 2020). In Indonesia, online learning was first just considered as a supplement. The primary source of education for students to maintain their teaching and learning activities has, however, shifted into online learning since the Covid-19 pandemic (Simpson et al., 2020).

Thus, Ruangguru does not solely act as a supplement for students now, but it has become a core pedagogical tool (Zulfa Shoumi, 2019). Ruangguru has had considerable impacts in Indonesian online learning (Rahman et al., 2020; Rahmawati & Sujono, 2021). Furthermore, others have studied the use of its application in the era of Covid-19 as an online teaching communication medium (Gunawan et al., 2022), a tool to improve children's creativity (Munawwir & Nerizka, 2021), and a reflection of future learning (Chinmi et al., 2021). As reported by these studies, Ruangguru is considered as a

beneficial and suitable mobile-assisted tool in conducting online teaching and learning in Indonesia.

Previous research has examined students' perceptions of online English learning and its platforms (Cakrawati, 2017; Rakhmanina et al., 2020; Septinawati et al., 2020; Suadi, 2021). Only a few studies, however, have examined Indonesian students' views on Ruangguru, specifically as an online English-learning resource (Adijaya et al., 2021; Fatimannisa et al., 2020), specifically as an English learning tool in the online education era. Therefore, based on the aforementioned issues, this study attempts to gain insights into the perceptions of high school students towards the use of Ruangguru to learn English by asking the following research question: How do Indonesian high-schoolers perceive the use of Ruangguru as an online tool to learn the English language?

B. RESEARCH METHOD

A mixed-methods approach is employed in this study to combine, contrast, and analyze quantitative and qualitative forms of data. In order to better comprehend and respond to the research question, this strategy entails the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (Hamied, 2017). Quantitative methods, in conjunction with qualitative methods, can add depth to statistical generalizations, provide a triangulation of analysis, and elaborate the participants'

feelings, beliefs, and attitudes (Creswell & Plano Clark, n.d.; Winchester & Rofe, 2010).

The two distinct interactive phases of the study's data collection steps are in accordance with the the explanatory sequential design of the mixed-methods methodology. The gathering and analysis of quantitative data precedes those of the qualitative data in the design process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017.). The quantitative data analysis can provide a general knowledge of the research subject, while qualitative data are utilized to refine and explain the statistical results by analyzing the participants' viewpoints in greater detail (Ivankova et al., 2006).

This study uses a questionnaire to collect the quantitative data, while guided interviews are used to capture the qualitative data. By offering a numerical depiction of the ideas or attitudes of the population, the questionnaire is utilized to survey and give information about the sample population (Creswell, 2014), while guided interviews are undertaken to look at the connections between people and their surroundings, as well as explain why people act or feel the way they do (McDowell, 2010).

The participants in this study are 100 high-school students in Indonesia who use the Ruangguru application to study English as a foreign language. These high-schoolers have voluntarily participated in the survey. It was done using a questionnaire that was adapted and simplified from previous studies conducted by Manowong (2016) and Fedynich et al., (2015). The questionnaire consists of 12 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question that inquires about the possible difficulties that students may experience while using Ruangguru to learn English. It was administered to figure out the students' perceptions towards the use of Ruangguru in English online learning. The survey questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 1. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the degree of agreement in each close-ended question. Moreover, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia so as not to cause confusion and misunderstandings among the participants and distributed online through Google Form. The characteristics of the respondents are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey respondents' characteristics

Respondents' Characteristics	Total
Gender	
● Male	31%
● Female	69%
Age	
● 14 y.o.	2%
● 15 y.o.	27%
● 16 y.o.	22%
● 17 y.o.	31%
● 18 y.o.	12%
● >18 y.o	6%
Grade level	

● Grade X	43%
● Grade XI	16%
● Grade XII	41%
Duration of Ruangguru subscription	
● <1 year	64%
● 1-2 years	29%
● >2 years	7%
Mobile device daily usage time	
● <1 hour	
● 1 to 3 hours	4%
● 4 to 6 hours	8%
● 7 to 8 hours	32%
● >8 hours	26%
Ruangguru daily usage time	
● <1 hour	30%
● 1 to 2 hours	31%
● 3 to 4 hours	36%
● >4 hours	16%
	17%

As shown by the table above, the majority of the respondents is female, more than doubling the number of the male respondents. Most of them are around 15 to 17 years old and the highest number of respondents come from the grade X and XII. Moreover, most of the respondents have only subscribed to Ruangguru for less than a year. While most of their daily mobile usage time is for 4 to 6 hours, the majority of their daily use of Ruangguru is only for 1 to 2 hours.

The qualitative data collection was done using guided interviews. Six of the questionnaire respondents were chosen to become the interviewees. They were chosen based on their grade level at schools because high school students' learning methods may vary depending on their grades (Delić, 2020). Another criterion for the selection of the interviewees is their willingness to be

interviewed. Two willing participants were chosen from the 10th grade, two from the 11th grade, and another two from the 12th grade. The interview comprises 8 open-ended questions aimed to gain in-depth insights on the high-schoolers' perceptions of Ruangguru as an English online learning tool. The guided interview questions can be seen in Appendix 2. In comparison to the questionnaire, the guided interview's content is more flexible and conducive to the conversation because it is focused on the problems that are crucial to the study themes (Walton, 2016). The interviews were conducted online through the chat feature in WhatsApp. Six of the survey questionnaire respondents were purposely selected to be interviewed. Two willing interviewees were chosen from each grade level in Indonesian high schools. Their characteristics are described as follows in Table 2.

Table 2. Interviewees' characteristics

Grade Level	Gender	Age	Duration of Ruangguru subscription	Mobile device daily usage time	Ruangguru daily usage time
X	Male	15 y.o.	1-2 years	>8 hours	<1 hour
X	Male	15 y.o.	1-2 years	>8 hours	3 to 4 hours
XI	Female	17 y.o.	1-2 years	>8 hours	>4 hours
XI	Male	17 y.o.	1-2 years	>8 hours	>4 hours
XII	Male	17 y.o.	<1 year	4 to 6 hours	1 to 2 hours
XII	Female	17 y.o.	1-2 years	7 to 8 hours	>4 hours

Based on the data above, the interviewees have an age range from 15 to 17 years old, with most of them having subscribed to Ruangguru for 1 to 2 years. There are four male interviewees and two female interviewees. Most of them use their mobile device for more than 8 hours per day, while their daily use of Ruangguru ranges from less than 1 hour up to more than 4 hours.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were statistically computed to find out the percentage from each questionnaire item and then interpreted descriptively. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed to seek repeating key opinions that can be assumed as the participants' concern towards the issue of the research. The researcher interprets how the qualitative results from the guided interviews help to explain the quantitative results of the questionnaire.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and then discusses the findings related to the research question on the Indonesian high-schoolers' perceptions on the use of Ruangguru as an online learning tool for the English language. The discussion is shown through the interpretation of the questionnaire results shown in the tables elaborated with the findings from the interviews. The results of the questionnaire were obtained from 100 respondents that consist of high-schoolers in Indonesia who use Ruangguru as an English online learning platform. . In order to answer the research question, the findings from the students' questionnaire are shown in Table 3, 4, 5, and 6, each followed by interpretations that are supported by findings from the students' interviews.

Table 3. First part of the questionnaire results

	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The materials on Ruangguru help me to improve my English learning.	-	-	24%	42%	34%
2	Ruangguru provides clear instructions to promote my comprehension of the English materials.	-	1%	18%	35%	46%
3	I can practice my English language skills by using Ruangguru.	-	5%	24%	37%	34%

Table 3 shows that most respondents (42%) in the study concurred that the materials

given by Ruangguru help them in improving their English learning. Moreover, the majority

(46%) of the high-schoolers strongly agreed with the notion that Ruangguru provides them with clear instructions that can promote their comprehension of English learning materials. Although there are few students (5%) who disagreed with the third question item which stated whether or not the students can practice their English language skills using Ruangguru, most of them still can be seen to have agreed (37%) or strongly agreed (34%) with the statement. It can be concluded that the high gaps between statements of agreement or strong agreement and ones of neutrality or disagreement in item 1, 2 and 3 can indicate that students give a positive response towards

Ruangguru regarding its material relevancy, understandable instructions, and usability in practicing English skills. The results of the interviews further support these findings, where the interviewees stated that the materials in Ruangguru can be easily understood, especially since they are designed to be in line with the school curriculum. In addition, the interviewees also mentioned that they can use Ruangguru to practice their English reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills.

Table 4. Second part of the questionnaire results

	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4	Ruangguru helps me to acquire new English vocabulary.	-	6%	14%	33%	47%
5	Learning English on Ruangguru can motivate me to learn more about the materials.	3%	3%	21%	32%	41%
6	Using Ruangguru saves my effort and time in learning English.	1%	1%	34%	23%	41%

Table 4 shows the high-schoolers' response towards Ruangguru in question item 4, 5, and 6. Most of the respondents (47%) strongly agreed that Ruangguru helps them to acquire new English vocabulary. Furthermore, the majority (41%) of students strongly agreed with the statement that learning English on Ruangguru can motivate them to learn more about the materials. While some students (34%) chose to neither agree nor disagree on

the notion that using Ruangguru saves their effort and time in learning English, most of them (41%) strongly agreed with the statement. In item 4 and 5, the high gaps between statements of agreement and ones of neutrality or disagreement indicate that students give positive responses towards Ruangguru in terms of its usefulness in enriching the students' vocabulary and as a catalyst for inspiring them to learn more about English-language

resources. However, the narrow gap between statements of agreement and neutrality in item 6 can indicate that some high-schoolers perceive that Ruangguru is not helpful in lowering their amount of effort and time while

learning English. This finding is backed up by statements from the interviewees that, at times, the videos in Ruangguru take a long time to load or play due to unreliable internet signal problems in the areas where they live.

Table 5. Third part of the questionnaire results

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7 It is easy to use Ruangguru as a mobile English learning application.	-	2%	19%	43%	36%
8 Ruangguru gives me access to a wide range of English course content.	-	4%	20%	31%	45%
9 I can confidently use the Ruangguru application to learn English.	1%	2%	25%	40%	32%

Table 5 shows that most students (43%) agreed that Ruangguru is easy to use as a mobile English learning application. Moreover, the majority of respondents (45%) strongly agreed that Ruangguru gives them access to a wide range of English course content. Most of them (40%) also agreed that they can confidently use Ruangguru to learn English. The high gaps between statements of agreement or strong agreement and ones of neutrality or disagreement in item 7, 8, and 9 can indicate that the high-schoolers positively perceive Ruangguru regarding its ease of use as a mobile-assisted English language learning application. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the students give a favorable response towards Ruangguru in terms of its helpfulness in giving them a wide range of English content

and encouragement of their confidence while using the platform to learn English. These findings are supported by statements from the interviewees who stated that Ruangguru is easy to use due to its uncomplicated interface and features. Some of the interviewees said that, at first, they were worried that they could not use the application because they were new subscribers, but they have gradually gotten used to it as they continue to use the platform. This ease of use, in turn, boosts their confidence in learning English using Ruangguru. While some interviewees mentioned that they have encountered difficult English vocabulary in Ruangguru, the videos in the application are able to give them an understanding of those words and their meanings.

Table 6. Fourth part of the questionnaire results

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10 The English teachers' delivery on Ruangguru is interesting and engaging.	1%	2%	16%	35%	46%
11 Ruangguru promotes me to become an autonomous English learner.	1%	2%	20%	36%	41%
12 I prefer getting my English lessons online on Ruangguru instead of through face-to-face meetings.	13%	15%	27%	21%	24%

Table 6 shows the high-schoolers' perceptions towards Ruangguru in question item 10, 11, and 12. These are the last close-ended questions of the questionnaire. The majority (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the delivery given by the English teachers in Ruangguru is interesting and engaging. Moreover, most of them (41%) strongly agreed that Ruangguru promotes them into becoming autonomous English learners. These findings are corroborated by the interviewees who stated that Ruangguru has taught them how to become an independent English learner who must manage their own time in learning using the application. Furthermore, they mentioned that the English teachers in Ruangguru seem to project a fun personality, which makes their teaching delivery interesting and engaging to the students. However, in item 12, most of the respondents (27%) cannot decide to agree or disagree when it comes to their preference in getting English lessons online on Ruangguru or through face-to-face meetings. Although a percentage of the students agreed (21%) or strongly agreed (24%) that they prefer to get

online English lessons on Ruangguru, the narrow gap between those statements of agreement and neutrality or disagreement suggests that most high-schoolers still prefer to get face-to-face English lessons. This finding is supported by statements from the interviewees who stated that, although Ruangguru helped them to learn during the Covid-19 pandemic, they still preferred to have face-to-face meetings with their English teachers. They said so because they cannot directly interact with the teachers in the videos from Ruangguru and they prefer to have a two-way communication with their English teachers who can immediately answer their questions and help them if they have any difficulties while learning.

The data from the questionnaire and the interviews showed that the high-schoolers gave various responses towards the use of Ruangguru in their English online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, most of the respondents of the study perceived this use of Ruangguru in a positive way. The majority of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the notions mentioned in the

questionnaire items, which are further supported by statements given by the interviewees. The students that participated in this study agreed that the materials on Ruangguru can help them study English during the distance education era of the pandemic due to the material relevance to their school curriculum. The usage of Ruangguru as a mobile-assisted language learning platform allows the students to learn anytime and anywhere (Nuraeni, 2021), especially due to its accessibility and understandable instructions.

Additionally, the respondents believe that using Ruangguru has given them the opportunity to practice their English, which is consistent with the findings of a study done by Jati (2018) who mentioned that English communicative skills are still essential to be taught, even in the context of virtual classrooms. Ruangguru's perceived enrichment of the high-schoolers' English vocabulary is supported by Chapelle (2023) who stated that one of the advantages of using technology in teaching and learning is to improve students' linguistic input. Likewise, the students perceived that, by using Ruangguru, they are given stimulus to increase their confidence and motivation in learning. This is in line with a study by Gustiani (2020) who mentioned that confidence and motivation can give a positive influence in students' online learning.

The Indonesian high-schoolers also give a positive perception towards Ruangguru's ease of use since it can influence the students' attitude towards technology and

their decision to use it (Galy et al., 2011). In addition, the students' positively perceive the wide range of English content on Ruangguru that can foster their macro language skills (Thach, 2018) and the engaging delivery as well as the fun personality presented by teachers on Ruangguru that is considered an important determinant of students' English proficiency (Nik Hashim et al., 2014). Using Ruangguru has allowed the high-schoolers to become autonomous English learners too as it gives them the opportunity to create and complete individualized English learning plans (Lyddon, 2016). Moreover, the students positively perceive the notion that Ruangguru can save their effort and time in learning English as it allows them to accomplish educational objectives in the shortest time with the least amount of effort (Raba.M, 2005). The Indonesian high-schoolers' overall positive perceptions towards Ruangguru is supported by their status as digital natives (Kurniawati et al., 2018) who are driven to use technology in the classroom settings.

Although the majority of students stated that they have no difficulty in using Ruangguru, some of them mentioned a number of challenges that they encountered in the answers to the open-ended question. Corroborated by statements from interviewees and the data analysis from the close-ended questions, the challenges include technical problems on the application, internet signal trouble, the lack of student-teacher interactivity, and financial difficulties in subscribing to the platform. These are in line

with previous studies which mentioned that mobile learning poses an array of challenges for students (Dhawan, 2020; Mohammadi & Shirkamar, 2018).

Even though most of the students positively perceive Ruangguru as an online platform that can save their effort and time in learning English, some other students still face many technical difficulties while using the application that hinder and eventually slow down the teaching and learning process. This finding is further confirmed by the interviewees who stated that the audio and video on Ruangguru can take a long time to load due to the unreliable internet signals in their area. This resonates with a study by Efriana (2021) where a number of students live in areas that lack access to internet, which can further increase their effort in getting access to online learning media. Despite Ruangguru's innovation in providing access to education, some students are still left behind in terms of connectivity.

Furthermore, most students are still indecisive when it comes to choosing between face-to-face meetings and learning English online on Ruangguru. The answers from the open-ended question tend to lean more into face-to-face meetings because the students feel that online learning lacks the personal interactions between the students and the teachers. The interviewees corroborated this by stating that, although they enjoyed learning English through the videos in Ruangguru, they wished that they had a teacher with whom they

can communicate on the platform. This is in line with a study by Zboun & Farrah (2021) where students preferred face-to-face meetings because they want to directly interact with their classmates and teachers. Furthermore, since Ruangguru is a paid learning platform, some students said that they had financial difficulties due to the lack of funding to subscribe to the platform or to buy internet data. This creates a digital gap that Hengstler (2016) described as a divide between socio-economic groups in terms of their access to online learning platforms.

D. CONCLUSION

Ruangguru has demonstrated to be a highly useful tool in aiding English online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic as a mobile-assisted language learning platform. With the help of its instructional videos, the application enables students to learn whenever and wherever they want. According to the study's findings, Indonesian high school students have positive perceptions about Ruangguru when it comes to online English instruction. The high-schoolers found that Ruangguru's English videos helped them improve their English skills and become autonomous learners. Although some students face some challenges while using Ruangguru, they still think of it as a beneficial tool to supplement their English education. Future researchers may consider conducting studies on how to further improve Ruangguru as an online learning platform, especially in terms of

connectivity and student outreach to help students who have difficulties in using or accessing the application.

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