

USING MyLinE IN READING LESSONS: PRE-UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
PERSPECTIVES'

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DEDICATION

Specially dedicated to my beloved parents, husband, children, siblings, and my loved ones.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the language skills apart from listening, speaking and writing in language learning. Reading plays a vital role in students' learning process as it is the main skill that needs to be acquired in order to gain access to various kinds of knowledge, information and ideas. However, it is always challenging for students to acquire the reading skills. Hence, the aim of this study is to gain the pre-university students' perspectives in using MyLinE in their reading lessons. The participants of this study were 10 pre-university students from a college in Southern Peninsular Malaysia, selected using purposive sampling method. The students used the reading practices in MyLinE during their reading lessons and shared their perceptions on the benefits, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges of using the technological tool in their lessons. This is a qualitative research and employed a case study design as the researcher discovered the real experiences and perceptions of the participants while using this technological tool in their reading lessons. This ensures the researcher to have an in-depth understanding on the strengths, weaknesses of using MyLinE in the real classroom plus looked into the ways to overcome the challenges which were shared by the participants. Semi-structured interview protocol and journal writing were the instruments used for data collection in the study. The findings of the study have successfully answered the research questions which are the benefits of using MyLinE in reading lessons, the challenges of using it and also suggested ways to overcome the problems. Since very limited studies have been conducted on MyLinE especially among Malaysian pre-university college students, this study has filled that gaps in the literature review.

ABSTRAK

Membaca merupakan salah satu kemahiran berbahasa selain daripada mendengar, bertutur dan menulis dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Membaca memainkan peranan yang penting dalam proses pembelajaran pelajar kerana ia merupakan kemahiran utama yang perlu dikuasai untuk mengakses pelbagai pengetahuan, maklumat dan idea. Walaubagaimanapun, ia sentiasa menjadi cabaran kepada pelajar untuk memperoleh kemahiran membaca. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh perspektif pelajar pra-universiti untuk menggunakan MyLinE dalam pembelajaran membaca mereka. Seramai 10 pelajar pra-universiti daripada sebuah kolej di bahagian selatan Semenanjung Malaysia telah dipilih sebagai sampel kajian dengan menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan. Para pelajar telah menggunakan latihan pemahaman di MyLinE semasa kelas dan berkongsi persepsi mengenai faedah, cabaran dan cara mengatasi cabaran menggunakan alat teknologi tersebut ketika kelas. Ini merupakan kajian kualitatif dan menggunakan rekabentuk kajian kes kerana pengkaji telah mengetahui pengalaman dan persepsi sebenar sampel ketika menggunakan alat teknologi ini dalam kelas mereka. Ini telah membolehkan pengkaji untuk memperolehi pengetahuan yang mendalam mengenai faedah, cabaran menggunakan MyLinE dalam kelas sebenar serta cara mengatasi cabaran yang telah dikongsikan oleh sampel. Temuramah dan penulisan jurnal telah digunakan sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data bagi kajian ini. Hasil kajian telah dapat menjawab persoalan kajian iaitu faedah penggunaan MyLinE, cabaran dan cara untuk mengatasi cabaran tersebut. Oleh kerana kajian yang sangat terhad telah dilaksanakan mengenai MyLinE terutamanya di kalangan pelajar kolej pra universiti di Malaysia, penyelidikan ini dapat mengisi jurang dalam tinjauan literatur.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MyLinE	-	Online Resources for Learning in English
ESL	-	English as a Second Language
ZPD	-	Zone of Proximal Development
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
ETT	-	Educational Technology Tools
SIP	-	Semi-structured Interview Protocol
SIPP1	-	Semi-structured Interview Protocol Participant (1,2,3...10)
JE	-	Journal Entry
JE1P1	-	Journal Entry (1,2,3,4) Participant (1,2,3...10)
Ext.	-	Extract

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Language is a special asset of human. Each of the word in a language has its own identity and meaning (Husain, 2015). Language is used as a mode of communication and it has pivotal role in our lives. Language serves various purposes such as, to get connected with others, rely information, share experiences, make a decision and so forth (Milivojevic, 2014). One of the widely used languages in the world is English whereby 1.75 billion people are using that for beneficial purposes. It is also a language that spread the fastest in human history (Neeley, 2012; Tridinanti, 2018). As for students, the language is essential for their intellectual, social and emotional development (Tridinanti, 2018). They also utilize all the four main English Language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) for proficiency and communication purposes (Grabe & Stroller, 2002). Husain (2015) further highlighted that English is used to give expression to thoughts and feelings of a social group as well.

Reading skill is one of the fundamental language skills apart from listening, speaking and writing as an individual would foster understanding via reading. It also influences the other skills' learning process (Nurhana, 2014). A student without the knowledge of reading skills is considered as an unsuccessful reader (Kaya, 2015). Reading skills are essential for students as they get to learn all the reading subskills which are useful not only in English language but also for other fields for them to comprehend certain content. They should be able to link meaning with words and grasp the entire meaning of a text in order to understand a content (Khan & Pandian, 2011). If the students are unable to achieve certain level of comprehension, it would be very challenging to perform in an exam (Kaya, 2015). Hence, reading lessons are vital for students to know and get familiar with all the reading strategies. They should have a

good interest during the lessons to master the reading skills successfully. In this case, interesting and beneficial ways of learning reading skills are significant for the students. If they are attracted to the ways of learning reading comprehension, this would be very helpful for them.

Meanwhile, technology plays a vital role in our daily lives too. It also becomes an essential part of the learning process for students. They not only using technology while learning in the classroom but also out of the classroom. It can be seen, almost every language class nowadays is using some kind of technologies for the students' learning. The use of technology benefits the students by helping and improving their language learning. As for the educators or the teachers, the use of technology in the classroom enables them to prepare suitable activities for their students, hence enhancing the process of language learning. Teachers are using technology as an essential tool in teaching in order to make the language learning process easy for the students (Ahmadi, 2018). Therefore, it is vital for the teachers to acquire the technological knowledge for them to apply in their language classroom (Gilakjani, 2017; Shyamlee & Phil, 2012). There are various educational technology tools used in the language learning classroom such as Edmodo, Socrative, Google Classroom, Kahoot and so forth. All these tools help students in their language learning, enhance their interest and motivation, and achieve good results in exam. As for this study, Online Resources for Learning in English (MyLinE) is used as an educational technology tool in reading lessons among pre- university students. The students shared their perspectives on the benefits, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons.

1.2 Background of the Research

Reading is categorised as a receptive skill. Receptive skills usually acquired by the learners through receiving the language from oral or written material. In this case, learners interpret the meaning to understand the receptive material. Reading is an essential language skill for an individual to foster comprehension that none could deny (Kaya, 2015). At the same time, reading involves a self-discovery process. This is

because the readers usually interact with the written materials by exploring both cognitive and metacognitive efforts to gain new information and deduce meaning. Hence, the final product from this view is the reading comprehension (Hellyer et.al., 2001; Kalayci, 2012). This is one of the vital language skills for us to gain information especially for educational purposes. It is also one of the most common used language proficiency skills all around the world. Furthermore, as for the students, reading deficiency might lead to a poor academic performance (Nezami, 2012) and eventually results in many problems outside the academic environment (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Mundhe, 2015).

However, students face various challenges in acquiring reading skills. Students could not enjoy reading when they are unable to comprehend the reading material. This is due to insufficient knowledge of vocabulary (Nor & Rashid, 2018). They need a high level of vocabulary to understand the technical words in any reading materials. They are having problems in reading comprehension due to text complexity as well (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Nurhana, 2014). In addition, students are unable to link their prior knowledge (schemata) which makes them face difficulties in comprehending a text and construct meaning (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Nozen et al., 2017). These problems were further highlighted by Nergis (2013), factors such as the deepness of vocabulary knowledge, syntactic consciousness and metacognitive recognition affect the reading comprehension. Apart from that, another problem is students taught using textbooks and printed materials led them to feel bored to study. Meanwhile, if technological tools were not used in learning, the students do not have the opportunity to get engaged in the class activity due to limited time, students' low motivation and passiveness in learning English language. This also contributed to the reading difficulty (Nurhana, 2014). Hence, it can be said that reading deficiency is one of the challenges in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts and the use of technology is essential to grab the students' attention.

As for this study, pre-university students also having the usual difficulties in their reading comprehension. They find it challenging to attempt reading questions as the practices in the classroom and also for assessment purposes. The questions are usually in the forms of open ended and multiple choices (Ong, 2015). They have to

either write their own answers or choose the correct answers based on their reading and understanding of the texts provided. This shows the importance of reading skills for the students and the need to score well in their reading assessments. Based on the researcher's past experience, students' performance in their reading tasks revealed that they have difficulties in reading skills. This was shown based on the lower score achieved in the tasks given in the classroom.

Apart from that, students need to attain the technological skills to gain the benefits from various learning environment (Amin, 2019). Hence, there should be a way to help them in their reading comprehension. An effective tool should be used in order to aid the students in their reading classes. Since today's generation prefer to use technology in learning, it is the best to use educational technology tools in the classroom. These tools help students in giving them the interest, motivation and enjoyment in learning (Nurhana, 2014). In addition, the tools assist students in their reading comprehension as well. One of the technological tools that can be used in reading lessons is MyLinE. Online Resources for Learning in English (MyLinE) refers to the service that offers resources for self-access language learning including study skills, academic reading, writing and listening, grammar and other resources for English learning (Barnard, 2020). MyLinE offers ample of tasks for all the four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). However, this study used MyLinE as an educational technology tool and gained the students' perspectives on its benefits, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in their reading lessons. The students practiced the reading tasks provided in MyLinE and shared their experiences of using the tool during the lessons.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Reading is a significant language skill that everyone should acquire. Reading skills are essential as they help in absorbing other existing knowledge. As for the students, the necessities of reading skills are to understand a content and at the same time answer questions in reading texts. However, there are many problems faced by students in English reading comprehension texts. The difficulties can be classified into

three themes which are problems from student self, problems from the teachers and external problems (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018).

First and foremost, students self-problems include their basic English ability such as lack of vocabulary and did not know the meaning (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Nor & Rashid, 2018; Qarqez & Rashid, 2017; Aziz, 2012), their less desirability on the subject (Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018), and they are not motivated in learning English (Medjahdi, 2015). As for the second problem which is problem from the teacher, it is found that the teachers are either not applying any method or using inappropriate method while teaching reading comprehension to the students. The external problem referred to the material and learning environment of the students. As for the material, it includes the reasons of books did not support the real condition of the students and there are none extra teaching tools given to apply some methods, while the environment reasons include the students are not from English daily region, they seldom practice English outside the school and avoid using the language due to the surrounding they are living (Ganie et al., 2019; Medjahdi, 2015). At the same time, students also having difficulty in reading comprehension when they are exposed to noisy environment (Davoudi & Yousefi, 2015). They unable to concentrate on reading the text, understand the content and answer the questions when they are in an uncomfortable environment. Hence, this shows reading is the problem pertaining to English as a Second Language (ESL) context and it can be proven by the students' score in a reading test given by the researcher. The score is shown in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 Students' Score in a Reading Test

No.	Student	Reading test score (50 marks)
1	S1	32
2	S2	28
3	S3	15
4	S4	33
5	S5	25
6	S6	27
7	S7	31
8	S8	22
9	S9	25
10	S10	18

Note: S: Student

Table 1.1 shows the researcher's previous students' scores in a reading test. The lower scores clearly indicated the difficulties faced by the students in attempting reading practices. Most of the students did not score more than 35 over 50 marks for the reading test. In addition, today's students prefer learning language using technology (Mofareh, 2019) and they grew with the technology (Ting & Puteh, 2012). Hence, it is essential to incorporate technology in the classroom, to see the impact in students' reading lesson. Therefore, this study adopted the use of MyLinE in reading lessons.

Apart from that, most of the researches were done on reading comprehension difficulties among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and limited number of studies conducted on the use of MyLinE related to reading skills among pre-university students especially Malaysian pre-university college students (gap of the study). In addition, quite a number of researches that focused on the use of ICT to teach reading and other language skills, mainly teachers' perspectives were gained but adequate concern was not given on the students' perspectives (Tridinanti, 2018). Hence, this current study aims to fill this gap by conducting a study among this group of students. These students did reading practices and assessments in their language class. MyLinE provides plenty of reading tasks and the students used that educational technology tool in their reading classroom to do reading practices. Therefore, the benefits, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons were obtained from the students.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The research objectives (ROs) of this research are as following:

- (a) to identify the benefits of using MyLinE in reading lessons
- (b) to analyse the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons
- (c) to explore the ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons

1.5 Research Questions

The current research sought to reveal and answer the following research questions (RQs):

- (a) To what extent the use of MyLinE benefits pre-university students in reading lessons?
- (b) What are the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons among pre-university students?
- (c) How do pre-university students overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Theory

Theory is meant as a set of statements, principles or ideas which are related to certain subject. Phenomena is usually described, explained, and / or predicted by a theory (Picciano, 2017). There are three language learning theories used to explain the theoretical framework of this study. The three theories involved are behaviourism, cognitivism and social constructivism. Celikoz et al. (2016) further highlighted that these three theories have overlapping ideas and principles in various fields. For instance, cognitive approach does not deny behaviourism, it claims that cognitive process is seen in behaviourist learning.

1.6.1.1 Behaviourism

Behaviourism refers to the act or how a person behaves. This theory can be linked to cause and effect or an action that produces a reaction. Bacanli (2016) further

highlighted behaviour as the composed of reaction and actions that an organism delivers and does in a certain condition. In education field, this theory can be used to observe students' behaviour while learning. For example, the reaction of students on certain stimuli could be examined using this theory. The theory promotes repetitive behaviour which leads to habit formation after some time (Bacanli, 2016; Picciano, 2017). Students will work for things that give positive feelings. This theory can be connected to practice and drilling activities in language learning classroom. The students' behaviour such as their attitude and feelings can be observed each time they are completing any task given in classroom.

1.6.1.2 Cognitivism

This theory explains the concept that the learner's mind plays a vital role in learning and it will concentrate on what happens in between the occurrence of environmental stimulus and student's response. It focuses on the cognitive processes of the student's mind, for instance motivation and imagination, as essential learning features that connect the environmental stimuli and student's response (Picciano, 2017). This theory can be connected to the practice of online software in language learning. It is usually an addition to the behaviourist theory (Celikoz et al., 2016).

1.6.1.3 Social constructivism

Social constructivism theory describes teaching and learning process as a complex interactive social phenomenon between teachers and students. Vygotsky defined learning as problem solving. This theory introduced the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which includes the teacher, student and problem that needs to be solved. In this case, teacher plays a role of a facilitator who provides a social environment for the students to assemble or construct the necessary knowledge needed to solve a problem. This was further supported by John Dewey that mentioned learning gives the social experiences to the students. They are able to do, collaborate and reflect with others (Picciano, 2017). This theory also revealed that technology can be used in

problem solving. ZPD highlighted that students should be able to choose the reading material which interest them (Taj et al., 2017). Hence, the choice can be done via the technological tools used in learning. As for this study, the technological tool can be used to develop the interaction and social skills among the students in which the teacher provides the social environment in this case. Figure 1.1 shows the theoretical framework of the study.

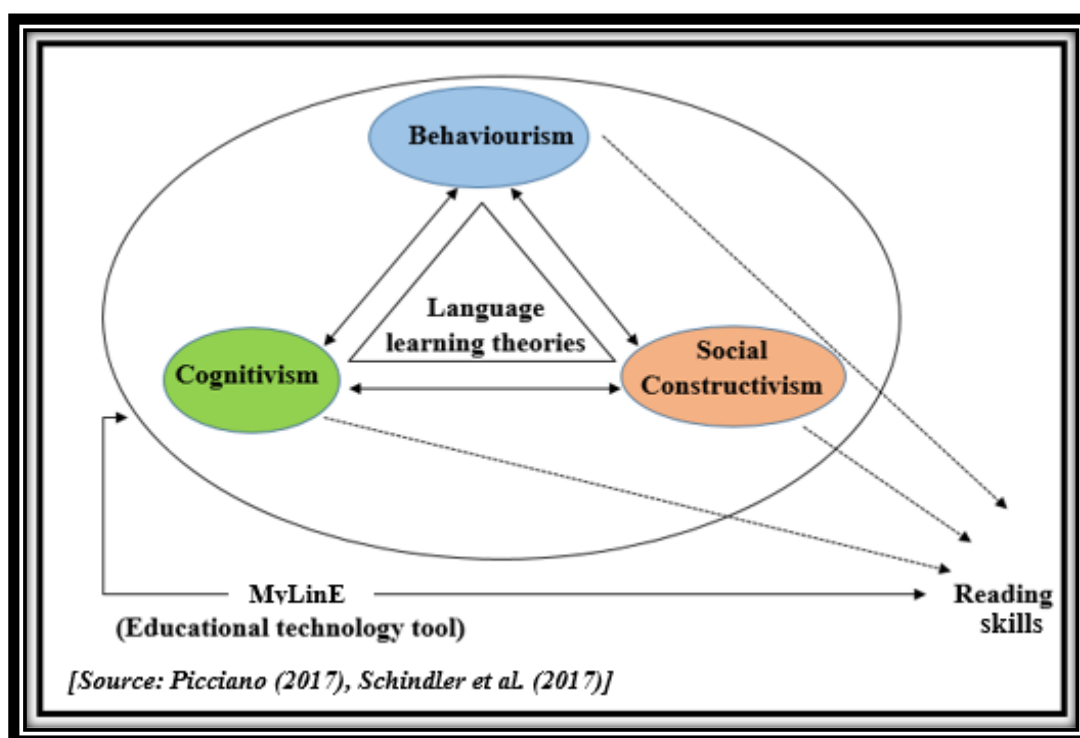


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework of MyLinE and Reading Skills

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Online Resources for Learning in English (MyLinE) is used as an educational technology tool in reading lessons for this study. MyLinE offers quite a number of reading comprehension questions for the students to practice. This is to familiarize them with different types of reading questions. The students could train themselves in answering questions and able to improve their reading techniques. As in reading practices, the students get to estimate the amount of time that they should spend for each question and also determine the additional practices needed such as vocabulary, inferencing questions and so on. The practice tests are set to enable auto calculation

of the results each time attempt is made. This ease faster communication and feedback displayed for the students. They would have the opportunity to attempt the practice tests repeatedly in order to improve their understanding on the texts and also test scores (Barnard, 2020).

In this case, continuous reading practices using MyLinE were given for the students in each lesson. This can be related to behaviourist theory which focuses on the behaviour of the students and also continuous drilling given to them in order to get familiar with the condition. This theory explained that learning involves stimulus and response. Plus, the resulting behaviour should be observable and also measurable (Celikoz et al., 2016). The students could use the art of repetition in order to have a concrete information while the learning process. At the same time, whenever they get a better understanding or score while using MyLinE, they may remain focused on the task. The students' participation in attempting the task can be observed as well such as their attitudes, feelings and interest. For example, the teacher able to observe the student's feeling (fear) towards the use of MyLinE. When the students are afraid of using technology, they may generalise it (Bacanli, 2016). In contrast, they might consider the stimulus as a helpful tool and this brings positive feelings to them. They are able to participate actively in the classroom as they learn reading using a technological tool which definitely attracts students since this promotes 21st century learning. It is a trend currently for colleges and schools to use technological tools compared to conventional techniques for helping students' learning in this 21st century (Qurat-ul-Ain et al., 2019).

Besides that, the resources in MyLinE are developed based on current issues. These issues comprise diverse topics that capture the interest of students (Barnard, 2020). They are able to connect the reading materials with their schemata. This is connected to the cognitivism theory. The students are able to stay focus on the reading materials provided as they could connect it to the real life situation. In addition, the form of learning using technology attracts the students' mind and they tend to show their interest and pay attention in reading lessons. This is due to the fact, studies shown reading comprehension is the most difficult task for students at any level. The students tend to process the information, constructing guesses, try to comprehend and sketching

out the information given (Alshehri, 2014; Celikoz et al., 2016). These reading skills can be acquired easily with the presence of technological tool in order to understand and answer reading comprehension questions better.

The use of MyLinE could promote interaction among students and teacher during the reading lessons. An interactive learning environment can be built through the delegation of tasks either in pair or groups. The students get engaged with the technological tool and discussion will be done while completing the reading practices. They may discuss on the reading difficulties that they may face while attempting the questions. Some of the challenges faced by students in reading comprehension are understanding technical words such as superordinate, synonyms, antonyms, or words that have multiple connotations (Nuttall, 2000), text complexity (Dennis, 2008), comprehending complex sentences which refer to sentences that consist of many clauses, and sometimes include conjunctions. In addition, one of the common problems for students in reading is lacking of motivation (Dara, 2019). Hence, students get motivated to learn and improve their understanding when they are offered help by those who have a better understanding than the learner. This is related to the social constructivism theory which highlights ZPD. Students who are facing challenges in understanding and answering reading comprehension can be assisted by their partner or the group members who have a better knowledge than the learner. The use of MyLinE in reading lessons creates a good learning opportunity for the students as they get the chance to possess excellent collaboration skills and able to work with other students who have unique way of learning and solve any problem that they face in reading lessons (Eady & Lockyer, 2013). The conceptual framework of the study (using MyLinE in reading lessons) is portrayed in Figure 1.2.

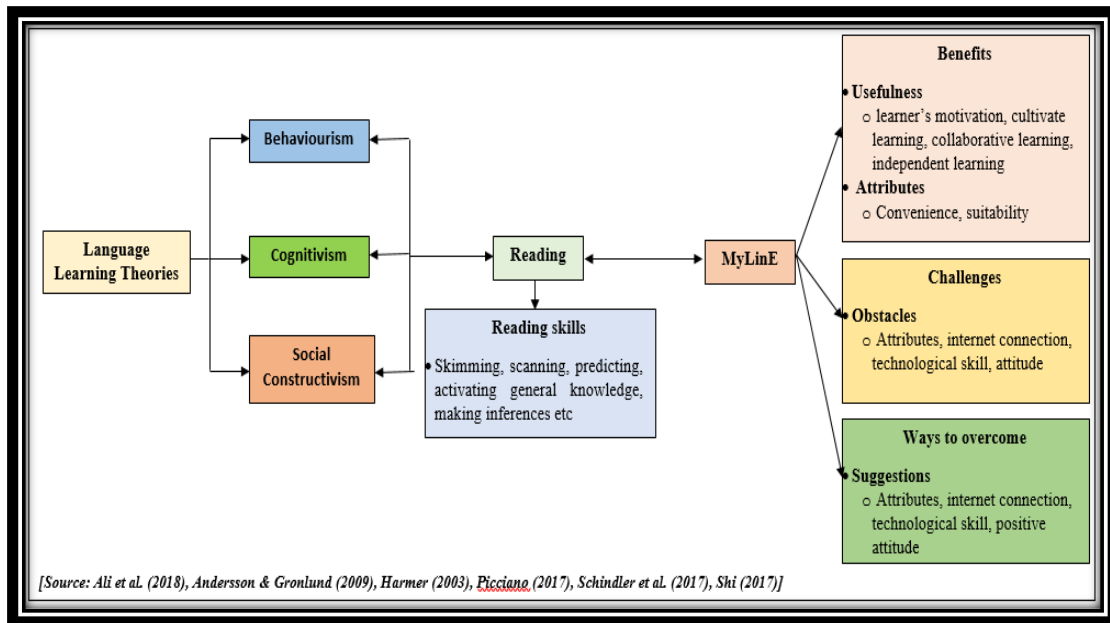


Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework of MyLinE and Reading Skills

To conclude, technology is essential in improving teaching and learning process. As for this study, the use of technological tool is beneficial for the students where it helps them to boost their interest in learning, enhance their communication skills, stay focused, provide effective practices in reading lessons, give a better preparation for reading skills and so on (Prensky, 2008). The technological tool also enhances learner's motivation, cultivates learning, promotes collaborative and independent learning, plus the attributes give convenience and suitable for the students. At the same time, the obstacles and ways to overcome the challenges of using the technological tool (attributes, internet connection, technological skill and impact to students) are considered as well.

1.8 Significance of the Research

Each and every student has to do reading practices and assessments in their language classroom as well as the pre-university students. Reading is seen as the most challenging skill for the students to understand and attempting the tasks in order to perform better in their assessments. Since students grow and always get engaged with technology (Ting & Puteh, 2012), this enhanced the researcher's interest to explore the

students' perspectives on the use of MyLinE in their reading lessons. MyLinE provides ample of reading practices and tests which would be a good drilling for the students to assist them in facing the challenges in reading comprehension texts. As most of the past researches focused on teachers' perspectives, it is interesting to know the students' view as well. Students get the opportunity to reveal their opinion and share experience of using this technological tool in reading lessons. Apart from that, this research does not only benefit the students but the teachers, curriculum designers and web designers too. As for the teachers, it is vital to know the students' views on the use of technological tools in the classroom. This helps them to know the effectiveness of using technology during their lessons. Curriculum designers would gain the benefits as this research provides more ideas on the syllabus content that integrates more technology in the lessons conducted for the students. Furthermore, the web designers get to upgrade the websites based on the students' interest.

1.9 Scope of the Research

This study employs a qualitative case study research design. The samples of the study were the pre-university students in a college from Southern Peninsular Malaysia. 10 students were selected to be the samples of the study. The study focused on students' perspectives on the use of MyLinE in reading lessons. Two instruments namely semi-structured interview protocol and reflective journal were used for data collection purposes. The samples gave their perspectives on the benefits, challenges and ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in their reading lessons.

1.10 Definition of Terminology

This section explains the significant terms used in the research entitled “**Using MyLinE in reading lessons: Pre-university students' perspectives**”. The purpose of these definitions is to enable the researcher to ensure the exactness and lucidity of the study. Thus, the definitions from conceptual definitions were provided.

1.10.1 MyLinE

Online Resources for Learning in English or MyLinE refers to a self-access learning resource covering study skills, academic reading, writing and listening, grammar and other resources for learning in English (Barnard, 2020). This online resource offers various activities for the learners but the researcher chose the reading tasks for this study. Mofareh (2019) defined technology as the methods, systems, and devices which are the result of scientific knowledge being used for the purposes of practical. As for the context of this study, this platform is used as an educational technology tool in reading lessons.

1.10.2 Reading Lessons

1.10.2.1 Reading

RAND Reading Study Group (2002) in Frankel et al. (2016) defined reading as “the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written text” (p.7), while, reading comprehension referred as the student’s ability to process a text (Sajid & Fraidan, 2019). Apart from that, Alshehri (2014) posited reading as a unique procedure which rounds through eyes, speech, and mind. Students are taught reading skill in order to train them, thus they are able to gain information to understand what has been delivered.

1.10.2.2 Reading Lessons

Reading lessons refer to a period of time allocated to teach reading. As for this study, the focus of reading is all about the texts and questions related to reading skills. The samples who are the pre-university students have done the reading comprehension practices in their classroom. Reading lessons are essential in order to assist the students

to gain the reading comprehension knowledge which refers to the ability to read and comprehend the ideas in the text (Alshehri, 2014).

1.10.3 Pre-university Students

1.10.3.1 Pre-university Students

As for the context of this study, pre-university students (samples) are the learners who have completed their secondary school (Form 5) and those who are furthering their studies in a college located in Southern Peninsular Malaysia. They are usually in the range of 18 to 20 years old.

1.10.4 Perception

‘Perception’ means an idea, a belief or an image that a person has as a result of how he or she sees or comprehend something. In this study, the students’ opinions were gained on the use of MyLinE. They shared their opinions on the benefits, challenges and also the ways to overcome the challenges of using MyLinE in reading lessons.

1.11 Summary of the Chapter

In short, this chapter covers the introduction of the research that focuses on the pre-university students’ perspectives about using MyLinE in their reading lessons. The chapter also has provided explanation on the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of the study, scope of the study and definition of terminology. The chapter is significant in order to give an overall idea about the importance of conducting this research.

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