

# Chapter 2

## Indonesian Teachers' and Families' Perspectives on Smartphones for Early Second Language Acquisition

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### ABSTRACT

*Incorporating English as a foreign language (EFL) courses in Indonesian schools and kindergartens has been encouraged by the government due to its benefits for the students' future careers. Indonesian teachers then utilize many methods to improve students' English skills, especially using digital technology. One of the most used digital devices nowadays in language education is the smartphone, as they have the potential to provide users with unique features such as interactive and portable learning, and even provide feedback for the users in real time. This exploratory qualitative study investigates Indonesian families' (n = 10) and teachers' (n = 10) perspectives on using smartphones for early second language acquisition (ESLA) in children aged 0-7. A semi-structured interview was used to explore the participants' perspectives and data were analyzed using the grounded theory and content analysis. The study found that families and teachers have more negative perceptions than positive ones, as they view that the drawbacks a smartphone brings to a child*

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*outweighs the benefits.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Incorporating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses in Indonesian schools and kindergartens has been encouraged by the government due to its benefits for the students' future careers (Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). Teachers then utilize many methods to improve students' English skills, especially using digital technology. One of the most used digital devices nowadays in education is the smartphone. In this context, it must be highlighted that Indonesia is the fourth country in the world in terms of smartphone users, hitting around 178,000,000 users (Newzoo, 2021). This figure shows that more than half of Indonesian population use smartphone, making it as one of the most accessible digital technologies for teachers and families to use as tools of learning language. Nowadays, even very young children can be found using phone not only to study but also to spend their time on playing games, communicating with friends and family, and even engaging in social medias.

However, as other digital devices, smartphones have benefits and drawbacks (Kacetyl & Klimova, 2019). Smartphones have the potential to provide its users with unique features such as interactive learning, portable learning media platforms, and some even provide feedbacks for the users in real time due to its continuous connectivity to the internet. The features are also attractive and dynamic, which can provide more motivation and interest for the students. Moreover, smartphones are also relatively cheap compared to other digital learning devices, making them more accessible to the public (Gafni et al., 2017).

On the other hand, smartphones also have their drawbacks. Smartphones' portability that comes from its small size also brings disadvantages, as small screen and limited size of keypads may affect learners in learning comfortably. In fact, learners must scroll numerous times to read a paragraph, making it less practical than reading a book where the learners can see the whole page instantly. The need of continuous connectivity to internet might also pose a problem, such as limited signal or internet access (Gafni et al., 2017). Learners might have to purchase expensive package of large gigabytes of internet just to learn or might have to find places with wi-fi before being able to start their lesson.

Focusing on young children, all these benefits and drawbacks must then be borne in mind and even thought carefully in early childhood settings by both families and teachers, especially because of the danger of its high usage and the different impacts (e.g., poorer sleep quality) it might have towards developing young children. Smartphones have been reported to support or improve the development of young

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