Mobile Learning for Malay Language among Foreign Workers: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the learning process and language acquisition of Communicative Malay Language (CML) among foreign workers in Malaysia. A total of 10 foreign workers who were randomly selected in Kuala Lumpur and volunteered to participate were interviewed individually. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, translated and interpreted to enable the researcher to conduct content analysis. The analysis revealed that most of the respondents were not adequately supplied with general knowledge about the country, and especially the language, when they arrived in Malaysia for the first time. Although only half of them specifically reported the utilization of mobile applications in learning CML, all of the respondents were aware of mobile applications in general and agreed that this would be a good instrument to help them learn the language, especially the listening aspect.

Keywords: adult learning, andragogy, Malay as foreign language, mobile assisted language learning, self-directed learning

The population of foreign workers in Malaysia is estimated to increase to approximately 1.9 million by 2022 (Ng, 2018). This is not a surprising situation, since Malaysia is progressing well towards a better infrastructure and economic status, which requires the recruitment of more foreign workers (Karim, Mohamad Diah, Mustari, Sarker, & Islam, 2015). However, many foreign workers lack appropriate preparation with general knowledge about the new country and language prior to arriving to start work in the country (Al Gammal, 2020). According to Malaysia's Ministry of Human Resources, one of the most prominent aspects required from these workers is to be equipped with the ability to communicate with the locals (International Labour Organisation, 2015). Generally, one of the most crucial elements in communication is the comprehension of language (Sirbu, 2015).

The context of this study is that language is an important aspect that helps foreign workers to convey and express their thoughts and needs and to comprehend information, thus producing more efficient and effective communication. Failing to master this aspect will cause miscommunication with the local residents as well as constraints on the efficiency of one's business organization. Nonetheless, for these foreign workers, learning without any proper settings might have been the result of a hurried relocation given that they are not offered any formal comprehensive induction before coming to Malaysia, and they possess irregular and long working hours (Putul & Mia, 2020). Thus, acquiring the language goes beyond a standard pedagogy that is taught in schools. The workers under consideration are all adults, whose learning style differs from that of children.

Furthermore, there is still a lack of empirical evidence to understand the process of Malay language acquisition among foreign workers in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to understand the learning process of Communicative Malay Language (CML) among foreign workers in Malaysia as well as to explore the emergence of a mobile-assisted language learning application among foreign workers.

Language Proficiency Skills

According to Sadiku (2015), there are four language skills that build language proficiency, namely reading, speaking, listening and writing. These skills can be categorized into two main groups of proficiencies: oral proficiency and written proficiency. Oral proficiency involves high interactivity and spontaneous feedback between people, whereas written proficiency is more recursive, thus allowing a person to review and amend utterances. Generally all of the abovementioned language skills are important to achieve high quality proficiency. Söderqvist (2018), on the other hand, argued that there are two main types of proficiency, which are production and reception. Productive proficiency encompasses speaking and writing skills, while receptive proficiency encompasses reading and listening skills. For the scope of this study, it is important to note that it is impossible for a person to function well by merely depending on a single language proficiency skill. The language learner must combine at least two types of proficiency skills in order to interact with the immediate surroundings, whether it is a verbal or a non-verbal interaction. Based on the explanations given by Sadiku and Söderqvist, the main goal of this study is to determine which of the language proficiency skills are most needed among foreign workers in Malaysia in order for them to function well as part of the working community.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

According to Sagar (2013), there are nearly six billion subscriptions to mobile phone services worldwide, and the rate of mobile devices accessing the Internet is three times higher than that of computers. Sagar added that the advancement of mobile devices today has offered new ways of learning that are well adapted to learning languages due to their flexibility and cost-effectiveness. This phenomenon is relevant to the large-scale development of mobile applications for adults' foreign language learning, as this method of learning allows this category of the working generation to develop a skill that can complement their formal education, thus improving their lives (Sagar, 2013). Furthermore, Deng and Shao (2011), who also advocate the employment of technology in learning, have suggested that mobile applications are among the most effective tools for self-directed language learning. This is because smartphones have gradually become a necessity for people to own, regardless of their age and demographic background (Deng & Shao, 2011). To date, there are numbers of studies that have proved the effectiveness of MALL globally (Zhang, & Zou, 2021).

On the other hand, a systematic review that was conducted by Hawamdeh and Soykan (2021) revealed that most studies pertaining to the effectiveness of mobile language learning were conducted in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The analysis also showed that English is the most examined foreign language among mobile learners. Hawamdeh and Soykan's analysis concluded that the trend of mobile learning for the past five years has surged significantly. Their analysis also indicated that there are increasing numbers of empirical findings to prove that mobile phones are more effective than other methods of learning, especially for learning English. Nonetheless, it is still an arguable statement, since most of the research involved higher education students from developing countries. If adults and/or foreign workers were being included, the result may be varied. In order to compare English and Malay Language, it is significant that there are obviously numerous mobile resources that could be found for English since English is the current lingua franca of the world (Rao, 2019).

Therefore, the effectiveness of mobile learning as an all-inclusive process is still yet to be established. In the scope of this study, there are two main concerns that need to be addressed. The first concern involves the adoption of mobile technology among foreign workers, particularly in Malaysia. According to Al Masud, Hamzah, and Ahmad (2020), most foreign workers in Malaysia are low-educated and low-skilled. This may impact the way they utilize mobile technology in their daily lives. Although technology is meant to ease the complexity of certain tasks, for lower-educated people, it seems to be the other way around. This situation is better known as the digital divide. In general, the digital divide is regarded as social inequality in which learners of lower socioeconomic status exhibit lower levels of internet literacy which is impacted by the lack of device ownership and internet-based skills (Puspitasari & Ishii, 2016). The second issue to address is the acceptance of mobile learning among adults.

Theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1978) and Self-Directed Learning

The acquisition of foreign language proficiency is viewed differently among adults. This is because adults learn differently from children (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). Citing Knowles (1978), Brockett and Hiemstra mentioned that adults tend to have self-directed learning styles. These learning styles refer to adults' predominant characteristics in deciding and diagnosing their learning needs as well as formulating and utilizing resources in order to achieve their learning goals (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). This means that what may seem important to learn for some people may not be important for others. This would result in different learning

outcomes among adult learners. In the scope of this study, some foreign language learners may possess good oral proficiency rather than written proficiency and vice versa. Brockett and Hiemstra added that adults are autonomous in finding any available materials that would assist in their personal learning, including signing up for courses, buying extra books or even employing technological assistance. According to Wehmeyer, Shogren, and Thompson (2018), adult education in general emphasizes self-directed or self-regulated learning. This means that adults hold greater autonomy, which allows them to design their learning process to suit their professional needs (Wehmeyer, Shogren, & Thompson, 2018). This takes into account the individual's ability, interests, preferences and opportunities that can be accessed in the effort to achieve their learning goal. Combining the commentaries and description of the term "self-directed learning" from both Brockett and Hiemstra as well as Wehmeyer, Shogren, and Thompson, this study investigates the way foreign workers learn CML to suit the needs of their professions.

However, as mentioned in the previous section, adults' acceptance to MALL may differ from an individual to another. In other words, they have full authority to reject or accept mobile learning. This decision is made based on their cognitive maturity level. Therefore for this study, it is imperative to know that stages of adulthood affect the acceptance of mobile language learning. This is because a self-directed learning style is closely related to adults' cognitive maturity, and this would determine their perceptions on the best method of learning for themselves. In Malaysia, the legal age range for foreign workers is between 18 years to 45 years old (The Malaysian Employer Federation, 2014). This age range covers from young to middle aged adulthood. For this range of adults, the acceptance of mobile learning occurs only if the platform is able to support their communication needs and would enable them to fulfil personal achievement without facing complicated features that would slow the learning process and eventually demotivated them (Hashim, Tan, & Rashid, 2015). Thus, for the context of this current study, foreign workers' maturity might also have affected the way they employ mobile learning, apart from having lower socioeconomic status.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain a deeper understanding of adults' learning process in acquiring CML, including their perceptions towards the utilization of mobile applications. It is important to understand how these learners view and experience the self-directed language acquisition process, especially given that the emergence of mobile applications would affect the way they learn. This preliminary study involves a total of ten respondents who are foreign workers from various sectors in Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, based on the literature discussed above, this study is intended to explore the following research questions:

1) Which language skills are most needed among foreign workers in acquiring CML?
2) How do foreign workers learn and acquire CML?
3) What are the potential utilizations of mobile applications in assisting CML learning among foreign workers?

In order to answer all the aforementioned research questions, a set of interview questions was prepared. The questions were validated by two academic qualitative researchers. Since this is a preliminary study, no pilot studies was conducted prior to the interview.

The population involved in this study are foreign workers based in the main city, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They worked in various blue collar sectors. A simple random method has been utilized for this study. Note that for the interviews, Indonesian workers were excluded from the sample for this study due to the same basis of Malay language. All the potential respondents were approached individually, they were informed about the purpose of the research as well as the confidentiality of their information. Initially, there were more than 20 foreign workers who were personally approached by the first author of this research. Nonetheless, only 10 workers agreed to participate. The set of the interview questions were prepared in both Malay Language and English. However, since most of the workers had low proficiency in reading for both languages, the researchers decided to make the tone of the interviews less formal by conducting the interviews casually in which all the questions were asked in a conversational way using mixed languages between English and Malay Language. During each interview session, most of the respondents were accompanied by their colleagues as they were not comfortable to have a direct conversation with the researcher in private. The researcher agreed and all the interviews were completed at their workplaces during break time or after working hours. The average time for each interview was around 20 to 30 minutes. In hindsight, their colleagues were mostly senior workers and would help to interpret and break down any situation that the respondents were trying to convey during the interviews.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for content analysis. Content analysis is considered as one of the most important qualitative analysis techniques in the social sciences (Krippendorff, 2018). According to Krippendorff (2018), content analysis is used to analyse data within a specific context of meaning imposed by a person. These meanings are typically inferred by text, which is conventionally collected from verbal discourse or written documents. Krippendorff added that this form of analysis allows the researcher to construct inferences of a phenomenon based on the rich repertoire of the data collection through coding. The frequency of these references would then indicate the contextual meaning and interpretation. For the scope of this study, this type of analysis technique is employed as the means to interpret interview data using a dialectic process in which interview data was first understood, then explained and finally comprehended. The process of analysis and interpretation started by transcribing the verbal face-to-face interview data. The transcriptions were then read several times before proceeding with the coding process. This repetitive reading was conducted in order to gain a preliminary understanding of the whole phenomenon and its context. The statements given by the respondents were then identified and classified into meaningful items that were coded into themes (Severinsson, 2003). The themes were interpreted within the context of this study. The final phase involved interpretation of the transcribed text as a whole and re-contextualizing it into a new, clearer and more concrete understanding.

Findings and Interpretation

The main finding of this study focuses on the CML learning process among foreign workers who are self-directed adult learners based on the fact that they possess a degree of maturity to access their own personal needs for learning and its development. This study also explores the potential of mobile-assisted language learning applications among foreign workers. Based on the qualitative content analysis conducted, the findings are distributed into six main themes: The need to learn CML; The ability to master all four language proficiencies; Awareness of CML courses available; Self-directed learning style; Awareness of mobile applications; Awareness and use of mobile applications in learning CML.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondent	Nationality	Age Range	Career Background	Duration of Staying
Respondent 1	Nepalese	25-34	Resident Guard	Less than a year
Respondent 2	Bangladeshi	25-34	Shop Assistant	More than 3 years
Respondent 3	Bangladeshi	35-44	Shop Manager	More than a year
Respondent 4	Bangladeshi	25-34	Shop Assistant	More than a year
Respondent 5	Bangladeshi	35-44	Car Wash Worker	More than 3 years
Respondent 6	Nepalese	25-34	Resident Guard	More than a year
Respondent 7	Bangladeshi	35-44	Construction Worker	More than 3 years
Respondent 8	Nepalese	25-34	Resident Guard	More than 3 years
Respondent 9	Nepalese	25-34	Resident Guard	More than 5 years
Respondent 10	Nepalese	35-44	Resident Guard	More than a year

Based on the demographic profile in Table 1, it is found that five respondents are from Bangladesh (N=5), with the national native tongue of Bengali, while the other five are from Nepal (N=5), with the national native tongue of Nepali. It is also found that all the Nepalese respondents involved in this study are working as residential guards. The Bangladeshis, on the other hand, are working in various blue-collar sectors, such as construction workers, shop assistants and car-wash workers. The table also shows that at the time of the interviews, only one respondent had been in Malaysia for less than a year.

Theme I: The Need to Learn Communicative Malay Language

Table 2
Respondents' Previous Working Experience before Migrating to Malaysia

Respondent	Previous Countries	Language Spoken Previously
Respondent 1	-	English
Respondent 2	-	English
Respondent 3	Saudi Arabia	English, Arabic
Respondent 4	-	-
Respondent 5	Saudi Arabia, Dubai	Urdu, Arabic
Respondent 6	-	English
Respondent 7	-	-
Respondent 8	India	English, Urdu
Respondent 9	Saudi Arabia	English, Arabic
Respondent 10	India	English, Hindi

Table 2 shows the other countries where the respondents had lived and the languages they spoke other than their native tongue. When they were asked to describe their previous working experiences, respondents 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 reported that they had worked in other countries in the past, while the remainder had migrated for the first time to work in Malaysia. Respondents 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 also stated that they were able to speak the native languages of the countries they had previously migrated to at the communicative level. Respondents 4 and 7, who had never migrated to any other countries before coming to Malaysia, reported that they were not able to speak in English – only Malay. The respondents were then asked about their perceptions of CML. All of the respondents mentioned that Malay was easy to learn and some of them suggested that it was much easier compared to other languages, including their own native languages:

> *Malay language is so easy…because Malay grammar is easier compared to Bangladeshi and Arabic grammar….* (Respondent 3, Extract 1)

> *Malay is easier than Bangladeshi…here, I only learn from listening repetitively to what other people are saying and I can catch them (words) already.* (Respondent 7, Extract 1)

All of the respondents agreed that it is important for them to be able to speak Malay at the basic level. However, all of them perceived that the need to learn CML is more for the sake of survival rather than for mixing with the locals. Most of the respondents reported that they needed to learn CML solely for work. In other words, they can speak and comprehend the language only in the context and the perimeter of their workplace and they are not able to converse if it is not work-related:

> *…I can speak and understand if it's in this shop… such as "rice", "fish", "chicken" and "vegetables" ….* (Respondent 4, Extract 1)

> *They say things like "wash", "vacuum this car", "how much for this?"… I can understand…but when I go outside, I only speak Malay to buy things, such as asking the price. I always go to Klang, but there I speak Urdu because there are a lot of Malaysian Indians and they speak Urdu… not so much Malay.* (Respondent 5, Extract 1)

Theme II: The Acquisition of All Four Language Skills

Table 3
Respondents' Perception of Language Proficiency Skills

Respondent	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Listening
Respondent 1	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Respondent 2	Yes	No	No	Yes
Respondent 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respondent 4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Respondent 5	Yes	No	No	Yes
Respondent 6	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Respondent 7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Respondent 8	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Respondent 9	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Respondent 10	Yes	No	No	Yes

Table 3 shows that all of the respondents are able to speak and listen well. As explained in the previous section, these two skills are prominently correlated to oral communication skills (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). The interview data also discovered that respondents 3 and 8 are able to read and pronounce Malay words according to the spelling given, although they are not able to understand the meanings of all the words. This is because Malay is a phonetically-based language. Table 3 also reveals that respondent 3 is the only respondent who has mastered all the basic language skills. From the hermeneutic point of view, his ability to master all four skills is closely related to the nature of his job as a shop manager. The respondent reported that he had to deal with local suppliers and needed to read and write invoices and other memos. He admitted that he still had a hard time understanding the conjugated versions of words, but he is nonetheless able to capture the meaning of the text as a whole.

Table 4
Respondents' Self-rankings of the Importance of Language Skills

Respondent	The Importance of Language Skills (from the most important to the least important)
Respondent 1	Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Respondent 2	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Respondent 3	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Respondent 4	Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Respondent 5	Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Respondent 6	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Respondent 7	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Respondent 8	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Respondent 9	Listening, Speaking, Writing, Reading
Respondent 10	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

All of the respondents were asked to rank their perceptions of language skills from the most important to the least important. Table 4 shows that all of the respondents focused on the importance of oral communication skills, namely speaking and listening. The table also shows that most of the respondents (N=7) perceived that listening is the most essential skill in communication. The table also clearly shows that these foreign workers do not put much concern on writing (N=9). This could be due to their working contexts, which typically do not require much writing.

Theme III: Awareness of the CML Courses Available

The interview data revealed that all of the respondents involved in this study reported that they were not aware of any CML courses available in the city where they worked. Nonetheless, with

the exception of respondent 10, all of the Nepalese respondents working as residential guards mentioned that they were given inductions and training before starting their jobs, and that one of the contents of these inductions was CML. However, respondent 8 reported that the training only taught them basic words and how to use them in simple sentences. They were not even given any books. His response is also parallel with respondent 9, who works for a different security company:

> *They did not give us any books... We were not aware about any Malay language books available and where to buy them… we were still new to Malaysia at that time... .* (Respondent 8, Extract 1)

> *Yes, we went for training and learned a bit about the language, but no books or anything... in the end, I had to learn by myself.* (Respondent 9, Extract 1)

Theme IV: Self-Directed Learning Style

Overall, the interpretation of the interview texts revealed that all of the respondents rely on daily communication with the locals to improve their language acquisition, which only focuses on oral language skills, namely speaking and listening. As reported in the previous section, none of the respondents were aware of any CML courses available in Malaysia. When they were asked if they would hypothetically be interested in signing up to any formal settings to learn CML, surprisingly only respondent 3 was interested. The data from the interview conducted also shows that respondent 3 is a proactive learner, as he has bought his own learning books. Interestingly, respondent 3 also added that it is better to learn Malay from native speakers. Nevertheless, the respondent mentioned that he does not have any local friends, and that this hinders his personal learning process, as he has to rely on his other Bangladeshi friends to learn the language.

The remaining respondents, on the other hand, prefer to learn CML by themselves:

> *I want to learn by myself...because I have a job and I have no time to go to any classes....* (Respondent 2, Extract 1)

> *...because I don't live here, I just want to work here, so language class is not important….* (Respondent 4, Extract 2)

> *...because I need to save money, plus I don't have time, because I'm working until night.* (Respondent 5, Extract 2)

The respondents were then asked about their method of learning and acquiring the language by themselves. They were first asked if they used any conventional material such as books to learn Malay. However, only respondents 3 and 4 reported that they used books. Their responses correspond to their reading ability, as mentioned in Theme II.

Most of the respondents mentioned that they learned with the help of their friends and colleagues:

> *...I have local and Bangladeshi friends and other foreign friends like Indonesians to teach me Malay....* (Respondent 4, Extract 3)

> *I'm learning Malay with friends who have already been here before I came.* (Respondent 5, Extract 3)

> *…I learn from friends, from locals and Indonesian workers. I also learn from listening repetitively to other people's sentences….* (Respondent 7, Extract 2)

Furthermore, the respondents also reported that they acquired vocabulary through repeated listening to words spoken among the locals. The interpreted data also indicate that some respondents have utilized technology in assisting their personal learning:

> *I do watch a few Malay YouTube channels….* (Respondent 4, Extract 4)

> *At this car wash, there is a TV and it only shows Malay programs, so I usually watch when there is no car… I don't understand what they are saying, but the pictures (visual) help me to understand.* (Respondent 5, Extract 4)

> *I don't use books to learn, but I learn from TV shows….* (Respondent 7, Extract 3)

The interview texts were further perused to determine whether other respondents also used television or radio shows as the medium for their self-directed learning. Notwithstanding the use of television or radio shows by respondents 4, 5, and 7, the remaining respondents are rather negative:

> *I don't do that… I have my local friends who can teach me… they are good people.* (Respondent 1, Extract 1)

> *I can read books, but I simply have no time to learn Malay from TV or any media because I don't have all that at this shop….* (Respondent 3, Extract 1)

> *I don't have any interest in watching Malay channels….* (Respondent 6, Extract 1)

> *I work 18 hours a day with over-time: I don't have time to watch TV and learn properly….* (Respondent 10, Extract 1)

Lastly, as stated in Table 2, most of the respondents (except for respondents 4 and 7) possessed second or other foreign languages apart from their own native languages and CML. Respondents 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 specifically informed the interviewer that they had previously worked in other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and India before coming to Malaysia. During the interview sessions, all of these respondents reported that they had not signed up for any language classes to learn languages such as Arabic, Hindi and Urdu. In the same way that they had learned Malay, the respondents also acquired the basics of these languages through friends and colleagues as well as listening to the locals speaking. As for English, the respondents explained that it was a subject taught in school, but some also claimed that they had not completed school due to financial constraints, thus resulting in poor English.

Theme V: Awareness of Mobile Applications

This theme explains respondents' awareness and utilization of mobile applications in their daily lives. The findings gained from all the interview sessions provide a new understanding of how some of these foreign workers incorporated technology into their daily lives. This part of the

interview started with a screening question to determine the type of phone that the respondents were currently using. All of the respondents proved that they owned smartphones by showing their phones during the interview sessions. However, respondent 4 mentioned that he had only started using a mobile phone since moving to Malaysia. He also mentioned that he did not own any phones, including old-style keypad phones, when he was in Bangladesh. Similarly, respondent 7 was also first introduced to smartphone use after arriving in Malaysia. Both of these respondents were asked to clarify why this was the case, and both reported that they had faced financial constraints back in Bangladesh. Furthermore, all of the respondents reported that they were aware of mobile applications and had downloaded several applications through Android Playstore, except for respondent 5, who had never downloaded anything and only used the built-in applications on his mobile smartphone.

Theme VI: Awareness and Use of Mobile Applications in Learning CML

This theme is the most crucial part of the study, as it revolves around the utilization of mobile applications in assisting CML self-directed learning among foreign workers. The interview sessions revealed the emergence of the mobile-assisted language learning phenomenon. The interview data revealed that five respondents had already downloaded Malay language learning applications, while the other five respondents were asked to clarify why they had not done so:

> *I know what a mobile application is… but I didn't know such applications (to learn CML) exist ….* (Respondent 1, Extract 2)

> *I came here four years ago: I don't think this kind of application was available at that time….* (Respondent 2, Extract 2)

> *I didn't know there were (CML) applications… I have never used or downloaded any Malay language learning applications… I think it's too hard for me and I never want to try….*" (Respondent 3, Extract 2)

> *I think we have, but I'm not interested.* (Respondent 9, Extract 2)

> *Yes I know, but I never try it….* (Respondent 10, Extract 3)

A list of CML learning mobile applications available on the Play store was shown to the respondents who reported that they were not aware of these mobile applications. Respondent 3 immediately downloaded one of the applications and tried it during the interview session. He then mentioned that the use of mobile applications is a good idea to help in learning CML during the hectic working day. Furthermore, all of the respondents agreed that the use of mobile applications is a good and relevant idea to be implemented as learning tools for those who do not go to any formal classes.

As for the scope of mobile applications' feasibility, respondent 9 indicated that a CML mobile application would help in strengthening his listening comprehension. His opinion is in line with respondents 6, 8 and 10, who all stressed that the use of mobile applications would help them to practice oral communication, especially on the listening aspect.

Discussion and Recommendation

Theme I: The Need to Learn Communicative Malay Language

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that most participants agreed that Malay Language was fairly easy to be used at the communicative level (Basir, 2018; Mohd Ali, Redzuan, Abu Samah, & Mohd Rashid, 2001) and the need to learn the language in a formal setting such as going to any available CML courses may not be their priority. In addition, respondents perceived that they only needed to learn more segmented phrases since they only utilize the language within a transactional scope. This sparks the idea to provide a sort of on-the-go lesson which could introduce them to daily phrases in Malay Language. Therefore, government entities, especially those who are closely related to foreign workers' recruitment, are highly-encouraged to produce phrase bank materials which could be given to the foreign workers on the first week of their arrival in Malaysia. This also would boost the positive image of Malaysia as a host country in providing better social preparation to foreign workers before starting to work among the locals.

Theme II: The Acquisition of All Four Language Skills

The interviews revealed that listening is the most essential skill in communication among participants, followed by speaking skills. This is parallel to Polat and Erişti (2019) who stated that listening skill is a central skill which affects language acquisition the most. Although the findings is too small to be generalized to the whole population of foreign workers in Malaysia, it is still noteworthy to say that this type of communication skills could be the contributing factor to much better understanding between the workers and the locals in Malaysia since they possess different cultural beliefs and world views. However, as mentioned previously, the participants reported that their main idea to learn the language was not to mix around with the locals. This could be due to their intimidation towards the locals. This intimidation may be caused by two reasons. Firstly, it is known that they are intimidated and uncomfortable to be around the locals due to long history of discrimination, exploitation and harassment by irresponsible authorities and employers (Putul & Mia, 2020). Another reason of intimidation could be due to language anxiety. According to Polat and Erişti, language anxiety can be referred as a feeling of tension, fear, uneasiness, apprehension or restlessness that is caused by the action that is required by a communicator before and during listening activity. In order to overcome these learning blocks, a simulated and interactive drillings of small conversations could be executed (Polat & Erişti, 2019). This technique of learning could function as a cognitive cushion to prepare them to the real-world experience. Nonetheless, in order to do so, a strong collaboration between educators and instructional technology developers is needed.

Theme III: Awareness of the CML Courses Available

Overall, 9 out of 10 respondents reported the lack of information on any CML courses available in the main city, and even if the foreign workers who worked as residential guards were given induction, they reported that the content of CML a lesson was barely helpful to them. This is an alarming situation especially to policy makers in Malaysia who had emphasized the compulsory need of having basic knowledge of the language in the country. As imposed by the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, foreign workers are supposed to be equipped with the basic knowledge, yet little effort are made to expose the newcomers to the available courses which could assist them much earlier as well as to develop positive perception on local employers. Therefore, it is recommended that policy makers should include CML courses

being offered prior to their arrival. This type of course may be arranged through certain agreements between participating countries which send their citizens to work in Malaysia. Though it may sound easy to be executed, the cooperation of all parties especially from the employers is crucial. This is said based on the different level of privilege received by the foreign workers from their employer.

In Malaysia, there is a disparity between the terms "expatriates" and "foreign workers". This disparity affects the level of given privilege to the foreigners. Definition-wise, "expatriates" is generally referred to non-nationals who are sent to host country by their organizations or companies which was based in either their home country or others, to accomplish a given task at the host country within a stipulated time of typically more than six months to five years in a term (MycNulty & Brewster, 2017). As for the foreign workers, they are known to be non-nationals who are engaged in remunerated activity in a country where they are recruited (The Employment Act, 1955). Based on the segregated definitions, it can be inferred that expatriates are mostly professionals who usually experienced a much better living environment. In the context of language learning, unlike foreign workers, expatriates in Malaysia are not obliged to acquire basic Malay Language since most of them are able to speak in English and English happens to be Malaysia's second language. Nonetheless, that does not mean they are not entitled to any Malay Language lessons. In fact, they have better financial and time privilege to learn Malay Language in a proper and formal setting as compared to the foreign workers. However, to date, there is still inadequate empirical evidence on how the expatriates acquire Malay Language as compared to the foreign workers, given that most of them come from developed first-world countries and are able to afford formal CML courses as well as to have more organized time. Therefore, it is highly recommended that additional future studies be conducted in order to gain a better understanding and comparison between these two categories of CML learners in Malaysia.

Theme IV: Self-Directed Learning Style

The findings highlighted the fact that a self-directed learning style is obviously exhibited by the respondents since most of them acquired CML through various independent methods. The findings also intersect with another research study which was conducted by Khan, Hashim, and Yousuf, (2021). According to Khan, Hashim, and Yousuf, most of the foreign workers in Malaysia are not given any language training and more than 90% of the workers took at least three to six months to acquire basic Malay Language by the help of their colleagues or family members. The intersection of these findings proved that foreign workers in Malaysia are still able to learn Malay Language at their own pace and time availability despite having to work tirelessly. Learning also happened based on their own personal motivation which is not to fully utilize the language within social context. The fact that they believe learning the language is a crucial element to their survival at work, shows that there is a need to develop a flexible CML learning platform that would cater to this niche population of workers whose contribution of services could significantly be improved by having more CML drillings.

Theme V: Awareness of Mobile Applications

The interviews revealed the fact that owning a smartphone does not necessarily lead to a tech-savvy life among the foreign workers. Although all of the respondents proved that they owned mobile phones when the interview took place, not all of them reported to have actively used a mobile application since moving to Malaysia. Since 2020, Malaysia has been striving to become a digital nation and more than 80% of Malaysians have access to the internet (Said,

2020) and the use of mobile applications is booming with an extremely high rates of mobile phone penetration (Yusof, 2020). Since the majority of the workers in Malaysia concentrated on low-skilled occupations (World Bank, 2020), chances for them to be at par with other professionals on the aspect of technological advancement is low. Here, it is highly encouraged for the employers to provide an in-depth induction to increase awareness on the use of mobile application among foreign workers in Malaysia. By doing so, the foreign workers are able to progress well in their respective sectors and employers will be able to reduce cost on trainings and development, given that mobile learning is way more cost-effective. Nonetheless, there are still inadequate information on how foreign use mobile to support their language learning and communication (Epp, 2017). In the context of language, most foreigner adult language learners did not take full advantage of mobile tools that have been presented to them (Epp, 2017). Thus, a support system is much needed to close this gap as learning goes beyond mobile translation services and dictionaries.

Theme VI: Awareness and Use of Mobile Applications in Learning CML

The findings consist of mixed reactions on the utilization of any available CML mobile applications. However in general, it can be said that the existence of CML-specific mobile application in Malaysia is still at the infant stage in which the popularity of its use to function as a learning assistance tool is still low among the foreign workers. Nonetheless, most of the respondents did not deny the fact that the use of the application may be able to help them to learn target language in much cheaper and flexible way.

Another notable finding is that most respondents agreed that the application should focus on more listening drills as they believe this skill is the most important skill that would shape their entire ability to communicate well with the locals. Thus, educators and instructional developers shall consider to produce mobile applications that focus on listening practice. This is not only recommended in the context of CML but rather globally since it has been empirically proven that listening skill is a crucial skill in any languages. Not only that, half of the respondents admitted that they had worked in other foreign countries before coming to Malaysia and likewise, they also learned the languages of the respective countries independently since they were not given any specific lessons nor being exposed to structured language learning. This shows, that the problem they faced in learning a foreign language is not limited to Malaysia's scope.

This brought up the idea of having a mobile learning platform that could be used at any given moment globally. This is in line with Kukulska-Hulme's (2019) views on the use of mobile technology on foreign' language learning. Kukulska-Hulme believes that there is a productive synergy between foreign' mass mobility and the language of their host society. In 2013, UNESCO established the relevance of mobile learning towards equality in education across the globe through its slogan "Education for All" (Kukulska-Hulme, 2019). Through this slogan, UNESCO has recognized the unique benefits of mobile learning to global foreign such as bridging the gap between formal and informal learning. Thus every policy makers, developers, and government entities of developing countries should consider of creating their own official language learning mobile applications and these applications can be introduced and commercialized across nations with the help of internet advancement. This could be a game-changer in globalization and would be able to close the gap between nations, minimizing miscommunication among citizens of the world as well as to reduce discrimination and racism that might have been caused by low language proficiency among newcomers.

Limitation of Study

This study is limited to small numbers of participants. This is due to respondents' lack of voluntarily participation. Initially more than 10 potential respondents were approach, but only 10 respondents were comfortable to spend their time and opinion. The rest of them declined due to extreme concern on their privacy despite being informed of the whole confidentiality of personal information. Thus, the findings of this study may not be able to generalize the CML acquisition process to the whole foreign workers population.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the transcribed interviews, it was found that listening skill is the most needed skill in CML acquisition. It can also be concluded that none of the respondents involved in this study had attended any formal lessons to acquire CML when they first arrived in Malaysia, except for those who are working as residential guards, since they were given basic CML lessons during the training and induction provided by the security companies for which they worked. The respondents also claimed that time constraints and the need to survive in a foreign country had forced them to be self-taught rather than signing up for CML courses. This demonstrates that these workers adopt a self-directed learning style, as they learn from various sources to which they have access to enable them to work and live in the local community. The findings also concluded that all of the respondents agreed that mobile applications are a good idea to help them to learn the language on the go, although half of them mentioned that they were not aware of the existence of such applications. For the other half, after they were being introduced of such applications during the interviews, three of the respondents downloaded one of the apps and soon after agreed to its usefulness. They also considered the Malay language easy to learn, without any complex structure at the conversational level, and saw the use of mobile applications as a good alternative to physical lessons, since most of the respondents reported long workings hours. While these findings assist in constructing a comprehensive understanding of the CML learning process among foreign workers, this preliminary study is limited to a small-scale sample within the perimeter of the main city of Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, future research should review this preliminary study from different aspects, such as job categories that require different levels of professionalism and formal language, as well as from the perspective of foreign workers who have signed up for formal language classes.

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