

Elaborating the role of Smart phones for Foreign Language Learners in Learning English Language

Shamim Akhter^{*1}, Pradyumansinh Raj², Rushi B. Joshi³, Moamar Elyazgi⁴

^{*1}School of languages, civilization and philosophy, Universiti Utara Malaysia,

misschudry96@gmail.com

²Director, Linguistics Center, Parul University

pradyumanraj29@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Teacher Education, Gujarat

rushij@iite.ac.in

⁴Assistant Professor, Al Azhar University - Gaza

moamar@alazhar.edu.ps

Abstract

The usage of cell phones for language learning has grown exponentially over the last few years, moving away from traditional desktop computers. People from all walks of life have referred to this century as the century of technology. A number of people, including researchers, educators, and teachers, are contributing to this rapid growth in the technology business in some way. Additionally, the speed at which the internet connects is increasing, and the technology that makes it easy for mobile devices to access the internet is becoming unnoticeable. Smartphones, in particular, are playing a larger role in our daily lives than they ever have before. Many people use it at work, school, home, in coffee shops, and everywhere else. With a device like this, you can access the internet from anywhere and use it for a variety of things, including learning a new language. As a result, this study sets out to address a number of key issues regarding the use of smartphones in language instruction in secondary schools. The undertaken research utilizes quantitative approach and data have been collected from 130 respondents. Research data is collected using questionnaire containing 19 questions. The collected data is analysed through SPSS, version, 23.00. The findings of the study may add to the body of knowledge already available on the topic of using cell phones for EFL language learning by shedding light on mobile language learning as a potential research area.

Keywords: desktop computers, internet, Smartphone, learning English, language instruction

Introduction

A growing number of people are turning to mobile technologies to help them learn a language (Metruk, 2021). For the most part, language learners are accepting of mobile learning because of its usefulness, efficiency, interactivity, and ease of use. Most people's attention has shifted to smartphones, and these devices have become popular for m-learning (mobile learning) for several reasons. Mobile phones offer many of the same features as desktop computers do, such as internet access (D. Kim, Chun, & Lee, 2014). Second, smartphones have shown to be far superior to traditional cell phones; for example, smartphone owners can download a wide range of programmes (applications) from the app markets and install them on their devices (e.g., the Android Market). Lastly, the number of smartphone users is on the rise, and these devices are getting popularity and accessibility (Horvath et al., 2020). "Today, there are over three billion smartphone users around the world, and that number is expected to rise by several hundred million more over the next several years" (O'dea, 2020). Because of this, it's conceivable that smartphones will play a larger part in foreign language education in the future.

Language learning devices help a lot in learning process and learners belonging to any nationality, culture and location are taking benefits from these devices. In Pakistani context, students use mobile phone apps for learning. They use it for English-to-Urdu translations and vice versa to improve their pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. However, teachers and students using smartphones in language learning environments must have a high level of ability in order to make successful use of the technology. National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) encourage students and teachers to reach goals for high school students and teachers using Smartphones and other similar technologies, allowing them to use these technologies for educational purposes such as communication, innovation, information research and collaborative problem solving (ISTE, 2007). TESOL has developed several standards which guide the teachers and students how to use technologies for teaching and learning (Healey et al., 2008). In 2008, almost 27% students at high level in the USA had used such technologies, and this rate has now grown to 52%.

This is another reason why students adore smartphones and tablets, says (West 2012), and why they use them on a regular basis. Smartphones and tablets allow 24/7 access to digital content. Additionally, mobile learning technologies like these allow students to connect, cooperate, produce, and share useful digital materials with each other in addition to provide access to digital content from multiple locations.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the views of EFL learners about the role of smart phones in learning English language
- To examine the use of Smartphones by EFL learners
- To elaborate the places where EFL Learners use Smartphones

Research questions

1. How do EFL learners think over the role of smart phones in learning English language?
2. For what purpose, EFL learners use Smartphone?
3. Where do EFL learners mostly use their Smartphones?

Literature Review

There are numerous apps available for EFL students. These facilitate the learners and teachers in learning and teaching process. It is argued that using technology to learn language skills (hearing, speaking, reading and writing) should be the primary focus. Using apps to improve listening skill is more beneficial than using other methods. H. Kim and Kwon (2012) suggest that ELLA are effective because they use widely flexible and accessible approaches to provide a customised and learner-centred learning opportunity. Mobility as a more located, field-dependent, and collaborative learning form has to be realised as a more enhanced, nevertheless. Students can benefit from language study apps. According to the studies, 56% of users said that their apps helped them to learn, and 23% said that their apps were among their top three technologies. With applications, learners may practise L2 whenever and anywhere they want. These apps were also found to be adaptable, convenient, and simple to grasp.

Klimova (2018) opines that smartphones and apps have a good impact on EFL learning, particularly in terms of vocabulary development and encouraging a student's drive to succeed. Muhammed (2014) argues that using mobile devices are good to learn. Research participants engaged in conversation on their usage of smartphone apps related to language systems and abilities, as well as international tests, according to findings from a focus group discussion led by the author. For students, smartphones were valuable mobile resources that could be put to good use while learning English. Researchers have looked at motivation, which is frequently cited as a key aspect in L2 learning. Researchers have discovered that students who use their smartphones or cell phones with apps are more motivated to learn both in and outside of class.

Ekinci and Ekinci (2017) discovered the benefits and drawbacks of using specific mobile applications to help learners to learn the language. Apps, according to the participants, helped them build up their vocabulary more gradually while also improving their writing and reading abilities. Furthermore, students were encouraged to learn English utilizing the mobile apps and even recommended them to their friends. Nevertheless, frequent shortcomings were raised by the students, predominantly in relation to the technological characteristics of the apps. There were numerous complaints about the software's slowness, micropayment requirements for supplemental information, and internet usage. Mindog (2016) looked into how Japanese university students use smartphone apps to help with their EFL studies. As far as language skills (hearing, reading, writing, and speaking) and grammar are concerned, the students felt that using apps helped them improve in these areas. Location, frequency, and length of apps appear to be established by individual partialities, requirements, and chances to make use of the applications in question.

Using an electronic dictionary to study English was an experiment undertaken by Ishaq (2018). The majority of students preferred to use their smartphones' electronic dictionaries, which enhanced their vocabulary. An additional study conducted by Kanchana and Saha (2015) that looked at how Indians use cell phones to learn languages supports the idea that students can be more self-sufficient in managing their own language learning. To find out the effectiveness of mobile apps for learnings, Kacetl and Klímová (2019) carried out a review study, evaluating original, peer-reviewed studies from 2015 to April 2019. According to the findings, app use has promise. It also helps learners' cognitive ability, motivation to study in formal and informal settings, autonomy and confidence and facilitates personalised learning when they use these apps. Although these apps can be useful, they must be carefully planned and implemented in accordance with students' needs, and they must teach numerous language skills in authentic learning situations if they are to be effective.

Abdullah, Tajuddin, and Soon (2019) argue that smartphone applications have the potential to help students learn languages, but supervision is needed to help students make the most of mobile learning tools. In a study by Heil, Wu, Lee, and Schmidt (2016), researchers looked at 50 of the most popular language-learning applications available for purchase. According to the authors' findings, there were three major patterns. Vocabulary is typically taught in isolation rather than within relevant situations via apps, which is a problem. Second, apps only make rudimentary adjustments based on the skill sets of the users. Finally, they rarely give students feedback that explains or corrects their errors. They should. Language learning applications appear to be flawed

when used for learning, as all three of these contravene communicative language learning principles. This is something that scholars and teachers should pay close attention to.

Abugohar, Yunus, and Rashid (2019) have conducted a study to examine the role of smartphones in enhancing the communicative skills of Saudi learners. They are of the opinion that most participants have a favourable opinion using smartphone apps to improve their speaking skills, although classroom exercises revealed flaws and insufficient experiences in this regard. Teachers and students should be trained on how to use smartphone applications efficiently, according to the recommendation of the study for innovation, implementation, and integration in the teaching of oral skills.

In order to learn linguistic skills and systems, English Language Learning and Acquisition (ELLA) appears to be a popular tool. It is argued that although, mobile apps play a core role in learning for EFL learners, the use of apps has some disadvantages to which researchers and instructors should pay attention. In order to implement apps effectively, care must be taken in adapting them to meet the needs of learners and offering advice. There must also be some training and competence acquired by language teachers so that they can make use of ELLA in the teaching process.

Using Mobile Learning Technologies to Enhance the Education, these appear to be highly promising in tackling a lot of problems, as learners occasionally face different educational problems. West (2012) claims that mobile learning technologies have the potential to alter education in favour of students since students' capacity to access the internet via their smart phones, tablets, or laptops creates significant learning opportunities for them in various ways. These technologies make it simple to get important information, engage students and teachers, and promote learning. They also change how learning occurs. Kurtz (2012) is of the opinion that Smartphone and other mobile learning technologies not only offer chances for learners to learn interactively through different platforms, but they also deliver a number of ways and tools for learners to acquire knowledge self-sufficiently and teach themselves in their way as well.

Jacobs (2013) illustrates that mobile learning technologies allow students and teachers to access digital content and online communities at all hours of the day and night, making learning more flexible than in a traditional classroom. It is argued when students have access to digital content, they benefit from it because they may learn at their own pace, according to their preferred technique, and in their preferred style. Whereas, teachers, who have access to digital dashboards can keep track of their students' development in real time and make the most of their limited classroom resources. When it comes of using smartphones to learn English, Zilber (2013) says that while they won't replace committed teachers, frequent usage by second language learners gives them enough English language practise to back up their learning efforts, no matter where they are in the world. Smartphones, on the other hand, are portable devices that are simple to use and ideal for honing communication and listening abilities, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and other aspects of language proficiency.

In order to learn a new Language, Smartphones and other mobile learning technology can be utilised for a variety of teaching objectives both within and outside of the classroom. It has long been the belief of educators that mobile learning devices are excellent teaching aids that can be used anywhere by the students and teachers (Kukulka-Hulme, & Shield, 2008). Hashemi & Ghasemi (2011) believe that MALL does not only provide students with opportunities to learn a language but also supports them with adequate possibilities for activities that include the four basic languages skills. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) are playing an important role to learn English language (Hsu, Hwang et. al 2013). Mobile learning technologies, as academics have highlighted, have a lot to offer language learners.

Numerous research projects around the world have shown this to be true. In a study done by Kennedy and Levy (2008), learners were given the option of receiving SMS messages containing known terms in various relationships on their mobile phones. Every week, they received about ten new texts. The findings of the study showed that getting text messages in English was an effective technique to increase one's vocabulary in the language. Another study by Chen, Hsu, Li, and Peng (2006) indicated that learners with poorer verbal and greater visual abilities benefitted from vocabulary acquisition when words and pictures were shown via annotation utilising mobile learning technologies. Student comprehension improves significantly when using mobile learning devices like iPods for reading and listening abilities, according to Bllaca (2016). This means that students are more prepared for conversation when using these tools.

The study was conducted in which learners got study materials from grammar and reading successively in order to evaluate the achievement of the subject when delivered bit by bit by means of mobile learning technology. According to the findings of the study, it was found that using iPods to provide material in an ordered manner increased material acquisition (Chiu, 2015). Even if Smartphones have some advantages in language learning and teaching, they also have some drawbacks.

Smartphones aren't ideal for language acquisition, according to Chinnery (2006), because of the short amount of time they can be used before they need to be recharged, data entry with only one finger, and their small screens. Smartphone use in education also has a negative impact on students' achievement. According to Kumar (2020),

students can be addicted to play games, chat, or converse with their friends, which is more of a waste of time. Mobile learning tools, such as Smartphones, can make students worried, disturbed, frightened, or even angry if they can't use them for an extended period of time. According to Kane (2013), excessive usage of smartphones can also have a harmful impact on adolescent relationships and education. Using a Smartphone, on the other hand, may have negative consequences. Use of Smartphones at a close distance might potentially lead to eye strain or weariness after prolonged use (Britt, 2013). Wilson (2012) argues that students' health is also effected by th use of Smartphone. Over use of mobile creates eyesight problems. Apart from over use of mobile phones, bad sitting posture of learners while using smartphones cause pain in the neck and spine.

Research Methodology

The undertaken research utilizes quantitative design. Research data is collected from 130 participants by using research tool, questionnaire. The research took place in three public schools at the secondary level in the province Punjab, Pakistan. 130 EFL learners have participated in the undertaken research as a sample. 73 are all male and 57 students are female. Before conducting this research, consent of the principals of the appointed schools has been obtained in written form. A questionnaire has been delivered among the students. This questionnaire contains 19 questions which highlight the significance of smartphones in learning English language. The EFL learners filled in the questionnaire and handed over to the researcher. The data gathered from the questionnaires have been analyzed using the SPSS software.

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	73	56.2
Female	57	43.8
Total	130	100.0

Serial No	Questions	No (percent age)	Yes (percent age)
1	Do you know how to use smartphones	2.3	97.7
2	Do you use smartphones for playing	72.3	27.7
3	Do you use your smartphones for learning?	17.7	82.3
4	Do you agree that smartphones are useful for learning	35.4	64.6
5	Do you use smartphones to learn English	44.6	55.4
6	Do you use your smartphones for translation	35.4	64.6
7	Do you use your smartphones mostly at homes	35.4	63.8
8	Do you use your smartphones mostly while travelling	80.0	20.0
9	Do you use your smartphones mostly in café	74.6	25.4
10	Do you use your smartphones mostly in classrooms	70.8	29.2
11	Do you agree that smartphones cause health problems	37.7	62.3
12	Do you agree that smartphones cause eye problems	46.2	53.8
13	Do you agree that smartphones are only a means of entertainment	60.8	39.2
14	Do you use your smartphones to improve vocabulary	29.2	70.8
15	Do you use your smartphones to find meanings	44.6	55.4
16	Do you think that smartphones are substitute of teachers	75.4	24.6
17	Do you agree that the usage of smartphone is the wastage of time	41.5	58.5
18	Do you afford the smartphones for learning	37.7	62.3
19	Do you agree that smartphones are helpful in improving communication skills	28.5	71.5

Findings

The findings of this research shows that almost all students know how to use Smartphone. Findings of the questionnaire suggest that majority of the students use smartphone for learning. Almost 56 percent participants use Smartphone for learning English language. 64.6 % students use smartphones for translation. 63.8% students use smartphones at homes, 20% use while travelling, 25.4% use in café and 29.2 % use in classrooms. The

findings of the questionnaire show that use of smartphone has positive and negative effect. It causes health problems. The findings show that 62.3% participants do agree that smartphones create problems regarding health of the students. 53.8% students are of the opinion that smartphones put bad impact on the eyesight. But apart from negative side, participants use smartphones for learning process. 70.8% participants use smartphones to improve vocabulary and 55.4% use it to find meanings. 71.5% opine that smartphones are a means of improving communication skills.

Discussion and Result

According to the results of the survey, using a smartphone at school can have a good impact on student learning. They can, however, have a harmful impact on education and health if not used properly and in a controlled manner. There are 55.4% participants in the study who believe that using a smartphone appropriately can help them learn English, according to the results of the questionnaire. Researchers like Chi-Yen Chiu (2015) have found that using a smartphone in language learning can have significant advantages, especially in the areas of vocabulary acquisition, spelling and pronunciation, and grammar, as well as in the areas of listening and reading comprehension. The study also found that 64.6% participants use their smartphones to translate words or text, 70.8% use their smartphones to learn vocabulary, and 54.4% use their smartphones to find meanings. According to Kennedy and Levy (2008)'s findings, pupils were able to receive SMS messages containing known words in various relationships on their mobile phones. Every week, they received about ten new texts. Study results showed that getting text messages in English was an effective technique to increase one's vocabulary in the language. As a result of the research, 63.8% participants use Smartphone at home.

According to Town (2013), utilising smartphones in education has a detrimental impact on students' achievement since they become addicted to gaming, chatting, or conversing with their classmates, which can be seen as a waste of time rather than learning. Finally, the study's findings imply that using a smartphone can have a negative impact on health, with 53.8% participants believing that using a smartphone improperly or for an extended period of time can impair one's eyes. According to Britt (2013), similar studies imply that using a smartphone for an extended amount of time and at close range can create eye strain or fatigue symptoms.

Recommendations

For smartphone use in education generally, and language acquisition in particular, the data demonstrate that the following considerations must be made: It should be used sparingly and solely for educational purposes Practice language skills on your smartphone by downloading apps. For the best results, use it only in moderation, not spending excessive time conversing or playing games that could have an adverse influence on your performance.

Limitations

Like other studies in the world, this research is followed by certain limitations:

This study has a small sample size. It includes questionnaire following the quantitative research approach. It lacks the qualitative approach of the research which would lead to have better understanding over the Smartphone use in education. Only one research tool is used. Teachers are missing in the sample. Interviews can be used in further studies.

Discussion and Results

Smartphone and other mobile learning technologies can be quite beneficial, according to the conclusion of the research. This is because they provide language learning possibilities everywhere, thanks to their portal and connectivity capabilities. They can, however, do more harm than good to our educational goal if utilised carelessly or without regard for standards or learning objectives.

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