

Learners' Attitude towards Using Apps in ELT

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Nowadays, there is a scaling up propensity in the transition from the use of classic computer technologies such as personal computers (PC) to mobile technologies such as mobile phones and tablet devices. Now, many of learners have already such devices especially during pandemic. Thus, learners are exactly equipped for mobile learning applications today. A number of apps have been and used for English Language Teaching (ELT). In this study, it is aimed to inspect the use of mobile applications improved for smart mobile phones and / or tablet devices to learn foreign languages (English). To this end, a classroom practice consisting of two groups of 100 students will be applied as experimental and control groups. Apps will be combined into English teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom. Lastly, pre-training and post-training questionnaires will be conducted to find learners' perceptions and attitudes about practice. Thence, the advantages and boundaries of mobile apps for their use in teaching English and learners' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety towards learning English via Apps will be explored.

Keywords: Mobile Applications (Mobile Apps), English Language Teaching (ELT), Learner's Attitude.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has been an indispensable part of our lives especially for the last decade. Today, people use the technology in almost all means of life. Studies show that technology has an improving effect on not only our daily lives but also education. Plenty of evidence for the last ten years proposes that knowledge and skills of students can be enhanced by particular technologies (ARCC, 2013). Using technology in the field of education has a deep rooted history. Garg (2011) claims that gramophone records with the recordings of native speakers were being used as technological tools by language teachers with the aim of facilitating learning. Buckenmeyer (2008) indicates that educational technologies ranging from phonographs and audio cassettes to educational TV and distance learning have influenced the act of instructors and success level of students.

During the past decades, technology has developed at an impressive rate, making portable devices equipped with WIFI access, and enabling the third/fourth generation (3G/4G) service to pave the way for the technology-oriented teaching model as well.

Mobile devices, like mobile phones and tablet PCs, have been an integral part of English learning nowadays. Mobile learning has been a key issue in the investigation of e-learning (Jeng *et al.*, 2010). It can be seen that enhancement in the mobility and connectivity of mobile devices helps to create a new way for students across different cultures to learn English (Kim, Rueckert, Kim, & Seo, 2013).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It can be seen that the biggest advantage of using mobile phones is their portability. A mobile phone is more portable and accessible; therefore, it allows for individuals to have this resource with them at all times (Karch, 2014). Chen and Chung (2007) indicated in their article, the advancements in the technologies in the field of education has lately turned out to be "mobilized, portable, and personalized" (Lin, 2010: 625). Lin (2010) also states that one of the most distinct benefits of mobile phones is their portability that enables them to provide the users with timely assistance when desired. Obviously, it is a very practical way for teachers to include mobile phones in their lessons because they are portable and can be used

anytime and anywhere. The findings of this study are also in parallel with Begum's study (2011) which revealed that mobile phones are pervasive and easily portable, and that means the learners can begin to use their mobile phones in the classroom and as they need no space management as they can even keep it in their pocket.

Agca and Özdemir (2013) state that students perceive the use of mobile device applications in vocabulary learning as innovative and fun. They also added that mobile learning environment created curiosity for students and made the vocabulary learning activity more attractive by motivating them in a positive way.

Wang and Smith (2013) point out that generally, mobile phone-assisted learning is comprehended positively by learners as an efficient tool in order to improve their capabilities on reading and grammar. The researchers go on by saying that in terms of young university students, reading topics focusing on cultural differences and life of students are the most relevant. Moreover, mobile applications can be used for speaking skills. In Ruan and Wang (2008)'s study a mobile technology based on English learning system was used. In the study it is claimed that when the learners use it, they can increase their vocabulary and speaking skills as they have the chance to talk with other learners wherever and whenever they would like to. According to the results of this study, learners embraced the 'new age' technology and both teachers and learners stated that they enjoyed when they used technology for the purpose of teaching and learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

Currently, mobile phones are so important for learners, they can use also in classroom. Therefore, this study targets to explore learners' perspectives on the use of mobile applications as an educational tool. It is thought that this study, which will be done, has important place in terms of determining the perspectives of learners' in using applications. Moreover, the study will act as a guide to ELT education for English teachers and researchers.

Research questions

This study is designed to investigate the following research questions below:

- 1) What are the learners' attitude towards using mobile apps for language learning?
- 2) Does the learners' class level affect their attitudes of using apps?
- 3) Does the learners' gender affect their attitudes of using apps?
- 4) Does the mobile device type that the learner's use affect their attitudes of using apps?

Setting and Participants

This study will be applied as a classroom exercise on the experimental and control group consisting of 100 secondary school learners each, who voluntarily accepted to participate in the research. Duolingo mobile application will be combined with English teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom.

4. PROCEDURES

In this study firstly, the learners will be instructed and then the target, scope and method of the study will be clarified. Later, a class will be separated with two learner groups and one group will be taught English using mobile apps and the other will be taught English without using apps. Lastly, pre-and post-training questionnaires will be conducted to examine learners' perceptions and attitudes about running. Participants will be randomly selected on a voluntary basis. After this step, the researchers firstly clarify the content and target of the study as well as brief information regarding the data collection items. The data collected will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The data will be analyzed with the SPSS v.25 statistical program. The relationship between sociodemographic features of the learners and their attitude towards using apps in language learning strategies will be crosschecked through regression and correlation statistics as well as ANOVA. Also, the relationship among the results from the subscales of Attitude Scale Survey towards App Use (ASS) will be analyzed.

5. RESULTS

Firstly, the findings revealed that the belief levels of the learners about using mobile apps in ELT did not be similar statistically according to gender ($p=0.953$; $p>0.05$).The gender of the learners does not have a determinative effect on the belief levels of the learners about using mobile apps in ELT.

Secondly, the findings revealed that the learners' belief levels towards using mobile applications did not be similar statistically according to the class level variable ($p=0.978$; $p>0.05$).

Lastly, it was found out that the learners belief level about using mobile apps in ELT did not be similar statistically important according to apps usage type variable ($p=0.898$; $p>0.05$).

6. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that using technology especially using Apps is important for learners' educational levels. Accordingly, some studies support this result. Harris (2002) stated in his article that 84% of U.S. teachers agree that students having Internet access can improve the quality of education. Also, the results of the study shows that learners' class

level affected using Apps in education. In addition, the results of the study shows that learners' mobile usage type does not affect their education.

However, the findings of the study with the finding that learners' gender does not affect their using Apps usage into their in class. In terms of gender, there is no almost findings in the literature. So, my findings will be light on this aspect of researchers in this field. Lastly, the findings show that using Apps in education is important for learners and teachers.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to examine students' attitudes towards using Apps in ELT within the context of Turkey. According to the results, using mobile applications are important for ELT field. The results of the study show that students' positive ideas increased. From the other results show that it can be said that the class level of the students has not decisive effect on the competency levels of the students about using mobile apps in ELT. Final results shows that it can be said that the gender of the students does not have a decisive effect on the competency levels of the students about using mobile apps in ELT.

When these results are evaluated, we can observe students' class level are affected in this issue. In addition, from the other aspect of these results especially in terms of gender, we can observe no significant effect. However, this aspect will not change the truth. To sum up, using Apps in ELT will be useful and correct guide for both students and teachers.

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