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THE USE OF MOBILE LEARNING IN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: CHALLENGES, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES, APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

KHALID MUKTAR OTHMAN TAWIR
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA JB
OTHTMAN1977@GRADUATE.UTM.MY

HARMI IZZUAN BIN BAHARUM
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA KL
HARMI.KL@UTM.MY

Abstract

The world has witnessed the rapid development of technology, which is now an integral part of daily life. The sharing of knowledge has become accessible and more convenient because of technological innovation, which has transformed everything from laptop computers to smartphones. The method of teaching and learning English with the adoption of mobile technology creates a different learning environment for both teachers and students. This review highlights the concept of mobile learning and the importance of mobile technology in EFL classrooms. Using mobile technology in EFL classes for teaching and learning and practising the English language has many advantages, particularly in giving teachers and students opportunities to interact and use mobile platforms at any place for a facilitated learning process. On the other hand, it could have some disadvantages as well. Thus, using m-learning in the foreign language classroom could be quite challenging at times; however, it also enhances creating new opportunities for students to make the learning process comprehensive and motivates learners to pursue lifelong learning.

Keywords: English Learning, Mobile technology, teaching and learning, EFL Learners, Challenges, Advantages and disadvantages ,Implications

Introduction

People have a variety of communication options today because of technological advancements. There was a time when applying a fax machine or landline telephone was considered advanced communication. However, nowadays, mobile phones are one of the best inventions ever. The first portable PC, the Dynabook, created by Alan Kay and his firm Xerox PARC in the 1970s, became the inspiration for mobile learning (M-Learning); however, Alan Kay presented the Dynabook as a teaching device: a personal computer for children of all ages a few years before production of the first portable PC began. M-learning was adopted in Europe in the 1970s. M-learning developed in the mid-1990s, employing gadgets such as PDAs or laptops in an educational environment for training (Gholami & Azarmi, 2012). Despite that, m-learning has only recently evolved into a significant set of projects in schools, workplaces, museums, cities, and rural areas around the world. The 21st century testifies to the significant development of technologies and ICT that contribute to the change of many sectors and industries, including education (Jamal et al., 2021). There is more widespread attention being paid to gadgets such as smartphones, which are capable of providing flexibility and mobility for learners, enabling them to seek information and knowledge anywhere at any time (Crompton, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). In this way, mobile devices and communication technology have contributed to the advancement of education (Kassim & Said, 2020). Mobile learning is being used to enhance e-learning by encouraging independent and active learning as well as by converting educational

institutions into 24-hour, barrier-free learning centers as part of mobile learning (Kuimova et al., 2018). This article attempts to highlight and describe the current state of m-learning, its challenges, advantages and disadvantages, and its application to support teaching and learning English foreign language (EFL) in the classroom.

Concept of Mobile Learning

M-learning is defined as "any type of learning that takes place wirelessly via devices such as smartphones, PDAs, and tablet PCs". These gadgets may go with the learners, allowing them to learn whenever and anywhere (Qashou, 2021). Mobile learning is used to obtain an elastic, usable, and superior learning environment (Alsswey et al., 2020). Likewise, m-learning could be defined as any form of learning that uses handheld or palmtop devices as the primary or dominant technology. According to this definition, m-learning is the process of learning via mobile devices such as mobile phones, smartphones, personal digital assistants (PDA) and their peripheral tablet computers, and it is possible to use laptop computers. But not desktops in carts and other similar solutions. A definition may also need to incorporate dedicated mobile devices such as games consoles, iPods, and mainstream industrial technologies as well as one-off experiments (Traxler, 2005). M-learning, is often referred to as the process of learning through wireless technology, such as cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), such as iPhones, iPads, smartphones, tablet PCs, laptops, etc.(Baruah & Angelov, 2012). Due to recent developments in computer science, wireless communication, including Wi-Fi, and global wireless technologies like GPS, GSM, GPRS, 3G, and most recently 4G, a wide range of new possibilities have been opened up for today's mobile generation. The use of these technologies for educational purposes has given rise to a new approach to learning known as mobile learning, or m-learning (O'Malley, et al,2003).

Importance of M-Learning in Teaching and Learning

In today's world, using technology is a vital factor in learning English as a foreign language for student (Moreno & Vermeulen, 2015). Mobile technology can be effectively implemented in the classroom to produce a new style of teaching that includes developing a communicative environment in the classroom through an engaging and effective teaching approach, for instance, using a mobile phone to search for information or access websites, which can make learning more communicative (Hakim, 2019). The latest generation of mobile phones may enhance formal and informal learning opportunities by providing educational services and media tailored to the context and interests of the learners (Sharples et al., 2007; Matzavela & Alepis, 2021). Additionally, m-learning is a distinctive teaching style that enables students to learn anytime and wherever they choose. As a result, the vast majority of the younger generation is familiar with social networking sites like Facebook, What's App, and Telegram. According Rasheed et al, (2019) state that these applications can help with project-based learning and problem-based learning, as well as with connections, learning motivation, individualized course material, and collaboration abilities (Karch, 2014). Wang (2017) claims that learners may employ technology in more creative ways, such as using technology to send messages, share opinions, and communicate with each other at any time and from any place when learning English. By using online and mobile technology apps, mobile devices allow students to participate both inside and outside the classroom (Rikala et al., 2014). There are many reasons to make m-learning more useful for teaching and learning; the first is that learners prefer to use their mobile phones frequently. The second reason is that they are aware of mobile phones (apps and gadgets). The third reason is that mobile phones employ a wireless connection, which allows them to access internet information at any time and from any place, as well as provide accurate language use information (Jebur, 2020). According to developing a history of learning, Sharples (2007) argues m-learning is classified into three elements (El-Hussein et al., 2010)

1. The Study of Technological Mobility: The Study of technological mobility concentrates on the potential of employing mobile gadgets for educational purposes, such as cell phones, laptops, and tablets.

2. The mobility of learning concentrates on the extensive mobile phone use for learning inside and outside the classroom.
3. The third element of the mobility of the learner focuses on "learning space design or appropriation, informal learning, and lifelong learning" (Cook et al., 2011).

Characteristics of Mobile Learning.

M-learning involves various features that involve technological elements such as portability and accessibility, as well as pedagogical elements like interactivity and collaboration (Seppälä & Alamäki, 2003). These characteristics allow learners to learn anytime and anywhere. Figure 1 depicts elements of characteristics that influence m-learning.

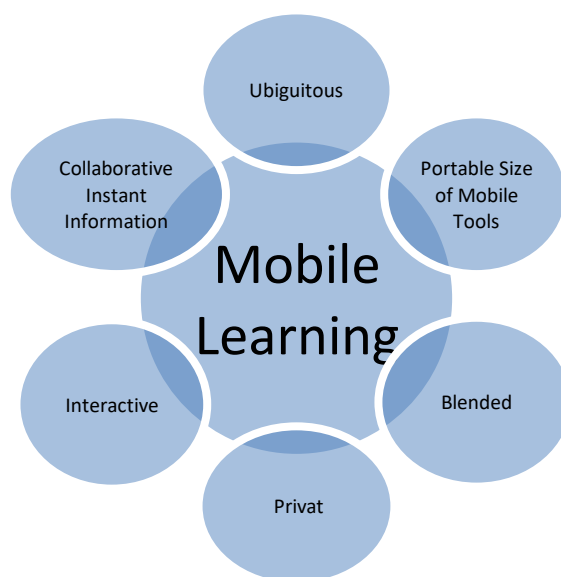


Figure 1: Elements of characteristics of M-learning

Ubiquitous/Spontaneous: M-learning is more spontaneous. The most distinguishing feature of mobile learning is its spontaneity. Learners can access information through mobile learning at any time and from any location. **Portable size of mobile tools.** Because m-learning is small and portable, learners can use it to learn their activities whenever and wherever they want.

Blend: A teacher can employ the blended learning method. Learners can use mobile devices for assignments, projects, and other educational purposes. Blended learning, which mixes classroom instruction with m-learning, may support learners to get the benefits of online learning opportunities.

Provide: Students can access the mobile phone simultaneously, and learners individually connect and download information (Benmoussa, 2003; Zhang, 2003; Virvou & Alepis, 2005). **Interactive:** M-learning environments can be used in combination with the latest technology for learning and teaching. Learners are active; technology and their environment provide numerous opportunities for them to communicate with each other (Cavus & Uzunboylu, 2009). According to Sharples et al, (2005), the technology layer is a learning process that uses technological tools like computers and mobile phones to operate as interactive systems.

Collaborative: Use of mobile technology allows teachers to communicate with students and peers to each other. As a result, mobile technology in education can be used for collaborative learning activities (Cavus & Uzunboylu, 2009; Virvou & Alepis, 2005).

Instant information: Learners use m-learning directly and easily. Students can get immediate information, such as definitions, learning content by using a mobile phone (Eteokleous & Ktoridou, 2009; Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009).

Mobile Learning, Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages of Mobile Learning.

Most previous studies mention m-learning have advantages. Several users encourage English teachers to use mobile technology in English classrooms. A mobile device is small, smart, portable, and comfortable to use. Most students and teachers have access to mobile phones. Learning takes place during the day, whether working or on weekends. Hence, learning is "mobile" in terms of place, time, and topic, and tools for supporting learning are mobile as well. People prefer to use mobile phones as a vehicle to communicate or as a recreational tool, and there is little acknowledgement of utilising mobile phones for learning and studying (El Hariry, 2015).

The opportunities of students can select the materials and the method of learning. Further, utilizing mobile applications enhances independent learning as well, since the Internet is a valuable source of information; one can find almost anything online. Learners can use the Internet to download applications that will enhance their learning and develop their skills, which can serve as an educational resource. According to Rao (2019) viewed that mobile phones, teachers and students can gain immediate access to information about any topic by using the internet. Teachers and students can share information, provide feedback, receive feedback from each other, send mail, etc. When students use mobile phones for learning, teachers must keep an eye on them and provide guidance. It is beneficial for learners who have these mobile phones, since they help develop language skills. The devices they use can perform a variety of tasks, including taking pictures, making videos, reading news, conducting tests, taking notes, playing games, listening to music, watching cartoons and movies, listening to news, and music.

Disadvantages of Mobile Learning

Without doubt mobile technology has drawback for learning a foreign language such as a small screen, difficulties reading on such a device, data storage and multimedia limits, and mobiles may steal lost, corrupted, or disconnected because of a weak network (El Hariry, 2015). Despite the small screens of many devices, reading is difficult on them, especially for the visually impaired. Even though those devices are actually quite appropriate for the learning task, they are often simply too costly for most learners to afford (M. Ali & Miraz, 2018). Due to the limited size of mobile devices' input tools, learners may have difficulty writing on them. And also Some educational apps charge a fee to use them, resulting in costs for students (Alzarga et al, 2021).

Challenges of Mobile Learning

According to Alhajri (2016), there are many challenges to implementing mobile learning: Management and institutional challenges: The implementation of m-learning requires clear policies, technical support, and pedagogical support, among other challenges related to management and institutional change. Al-Hunaiyyan et al, (2018) argue that "managing such changes impacts processes and activities within the institution, including managers, decision-makers, content designers, developers, instructors, and students." Cultural and social challenges: integrating mobile devices requires accepting specific cultural norms and societal issues. M-learning has some social drawbacks, including price, accessibility for end users, frequent upgrades to portable devices, and learner distractions (Alhajri, 2016, as cited in Park, 2011). They claim that there is a lot of unwillingness to change, and mobile technology may make instructors' jobs more difficult by demanding more preparation.

Evaluation challenges: when implementing a new learning system, evaluation is essential. Alhajri (2016) mentions that mobile learning contributes to the difficulties of evaluating both the technology and the learning results.

Integrating Mobile Learning Applications in Education

Gangaianmaran & Pasupathi (2017) assert that mobile applications can generally be downloaded from "app stores", such as Google Play, Windows Phone Store, and BlackBerry App World. Apps for mobile devices include iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. Some are free to download, while others require a fee. Mobile apps are software applications that should run on iPhones, tablets, and other mobile devices. Some apps are free to download, and some others must be paid for. Some genres of mobile applications include gaming, entertainment, and education (Gangaianmaran & Pasupathi, 2017). Mobile apps are an emerging and fast-evolving technology. Mobile applications are easy, intuitive, sensible, downloadable, and most run on every phone, even those with limited data. Most mobile apps must be downloaded and installed in order to be used for teaching and learning (Kumar & Vasimalairaja, 2020). Despite the rapid development of technology and mobile applications, teachers may select them as teaching strategies (Wang, 2017).

There are several mobile apps, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, incorporated into language skills and procedures. Such mobile applications support learners in improving their English language abilities, both receptive and productive (Jegade, 2021). Studies show that mobile technologies can assist learning in both formal and informal settings by facilitating collaborative activities (e.g., M. Sharples et al., 2016; Lai & Hwang, 2014) and supporting both "opportunistic informal learning" and "collaborative informal learning" (Clough et al., 2008, p. 359). To successfully integrate mobile applications into classrooms, approaches and models are required to confirm active involvement, engagement, interaction, and collaboration among learners and instructors. Mobile applications give teachers the opportunity to create a novel approach to teaching learners. By incorporating technology into teaching, teachers can now deliver lessons using such things as images, videos, and other graphics besides books and blackboards. In addition, teachers can use special websites, apps, and programs to change the way they teach (Alzarga et al., 2021). According to Rao (2019) stated that the use of m-learning has had a great influence on EFL/ESL learning due to their more convenient use and their effectiveness as an alternative to traditional teaching.

Related Studies

Alsaif and Deris, (2019) carried out so many existing mobile applications for language learning and investigated the students' acceptance features of mobile apps helpful for interviews and surveys as instruments for vocabulary learning. Teachers in the research showed a positive attitude toward using vocabulary learning applications in their classrooms as well as for their students.

In another study, Kim and Lee, (2016) attempted to examine the acceptance of m-learning by Korean learners to examine the factors that potentially influence m-learning use. The population of the study included 244 applicants. The findings revealed that TAM was an effective theoretical tool for understanding students' adoption of MALL. Furthermore, except for self-efficacy and interactivity, all characteristics had a substantial effect on students' adoption of MALL.

Fagan (2019) conducted a study on students' acceptability of m-learning in an educational environment. The population involved 437 students at a Texas public campus. This study used an iPod mobile device. The conclusions confirmed that the students perceived iPads as beneficial and pleasant instruments for achieving learning tasks and improving learning outcomes.

M-Learning in Libyan Context

According to some studies conducted on using m-learning in Libyan education, Alzarga et al. (2021) examined if learners are aware of using mobile applications while learning English. In addition, the purpose of this study is to assess how often students use mobile apps to learn English. This study involved 20 participants from the English department at Sirte University. The data collection method adopted by Mospan (2015) was a semi-structured questionnaire. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed; the quantitative data was examined manually, while the qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The results of the study show that the use of mobile phones by Libyan EFL students has a positive and significant impact on learning English. As a matter of fact, all Libyan learners agreed that mobile applications are vital tools that should be incorporated into educational environments to promote faster, easier, and more engaging learning. This study requires further research which uses a larger sample of students to generalise its findings. In addition, there is a lack of studies on the use of mobile applications in the Libyan context. Future research should examine the influence of gender as a key variable on the use of mobile technology in EFL classrooms, which would be worth exploring. The results from future research will be comprehensive and inclusive.

Almahdi (2021) examines the effects of using smartphone applications on learning English as a foreign language. Results indicate that mobile applications have a positive effect on learning English as a foreign language as well. Most students use the applications to translate and improve their language skills. Researchers suggest that teachers adopt new methods of teaching along with digital tools to make their learners more likely to use learning apps in regular classrooms or at home. In contrast Shalbag (2014) scrutinizes the worth of using mobile phones (MP) in language. The findings revealed that approaches like these assist learners in overcoming their concerns about writing.

In similarity, Alsied (2019) examined the efficiency of utilising cell phones by Libyan EFL students in language learning. The study population consists of 151 Libyan EFL students studying in different semesters at the Faculty of English at Sebha University, Libya. This study employs quantitative research. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of mobile learning on students. The research focused on group discussions (FGDs). Results show that the use of cell phones for learning English is very successful. A high percentage of respondents (96.7%) ultimately agreed that mobile phones are an essential tool for learning English, as seen in the results, followed by (96.7%) who claimed that mobile phones enhance English education and training standards. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (96%) believed that smartphones provide opportunities for English practise both inside and outside the classroom. According to the findings, Libyan students fully accepted that mobile phones are necessary tools that should be integrated into the educational system to make learning faster, easier, and more exciting.

Some studies have reported mentioned above that using mobile phones has a positive and effective impact on teaching English among Libyan EFL students. It also has many benefits for teachers and students: first, by using mobile technology as part of the education process, students can feel more motivated, and more independent. In addition to integrating technology into their classes. Teachers will be supported in developing their teaching techniques. As a consequence, learners' language skills will be improved. Additionally, teachers' strategies and approaches will be useful, intriguing, and more progressive.

Challenges of Using M-Learning in Libyan Education.

Mobile devices are technologies that can be carried and used everywhere to enable learners accessing knowledge anytime and anywhere. The main target of the next generation of the learning systems is to use current and modern technologies to provide new techniques of learning, training and education that will be easy access and available to all who wish to be

part of it. However, the incorporation of m-learning may create certain obstacles for both students and teachers to hinder the implementation platform for academic purposes (Ghawail et al., 2019).

No attention has been paid by the government to improve the use of technology devices for learning and teaching in the Libyan Higher Education System (LHES). The implementation of m-learning and the use of ICTs in Libya are still in an early stage similar to in most developing countries. Although Libyan Universities still use the old method of education that depends on face-to-face communications between students and teachers in, and outside of, classroom, in campus. Some Libyan universities, such as Tripoli University, Benghazi University, and Academy of Postgraduate Studies and Economic Research, have the basic ICT infrastructure (such as computers, Internet access, and a local area network) (Al Ghawail et al., 2021). Therefore, research into implementing m-learning in the higher education context in developed countries is crucial. There are many obstacles and difficulties to hinder the use of m-learning in Libyan schools because this technology is not yet implemented in Libyan education (Alsied, 2019; Alzarga et al., 2021). Because of technological challenges, mismanagement support, financial challenges, cultural challenges (Almansuri & Elmansuri, 2015). A lack of language skills, and poor communication networks: smartphone apps rely heavily on efficient communication networks, which are frequently unavailable, expensive, and out of reach for students; a lack of clear strategic plans and policies to implement m-learning (Alssaid et al., 2016; Al Ghawail et al., 2021; Ali, 2016). lack of knowledge and skills for using platforms for academic purposes (Saleh, 2017). Consequently, there is an urgent need to carry out many studies about using m-learning in Libyan institutions to extend knowledge and fill the gap in the literature review.

Implication of Mobile Learning

Cyberculture and wireless connectivity are integral parts of teenagers' daily lives (Bora & Dhumane, 2012). In recent years, teachers have been trying to ban mobile phones from the classroom, claiming that they distract and interfere with students' studies. Nevertheless, in recent years, it has been observed that mobile devices, such as smartphones, have evolved into integrated educational aids for both teachers and students, and they are now rapidly invading many classrooms. Bora and Dhumane (2012) stressed that mobile devices are highly effective educational tools due to their ability for two-way interaction, which is the essence of learning. PDAs with wireless capabilities are becoming increasingly popular in classrooms. Persson and Nouri, (2018) assert that m-learning influences students' skills in positive ways. With the introduction of mobile technology as a learning tool in English class, teachers and students can interact by using mobile platforms at any time and any place for a facilitated learning process. In other words, Lizamuddin et al. (2019) argue that mobile applications may help students to evolve positive attitudes toward studying English as a second language and that m-learning conditions will be more effective for teachers and students. Mobile apps are helpful for creating more learning activities. Also, it helps students understand English materials better, after that it attracts their attention more easily. Moreover, a variety of applications are to facilitate independent learning by students (Lizamuddin et al., 2019)

In fact, all the Libyan learners agreed that mobile applications are indispensable tools that should be integrated into educational settings to make learning faster, easier, and more interesting. Students want to learn English by using mobile apps as a new tool for learning and also using them to engage in a variety of academic activities in and outside the classroom context. Nevertheless, nearly all the Libyan EFL learners employed their mobile phones to achieve three common purposes: checking the meaning of English words via an online dictionary; listening to English songs; and developing reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills; but not to be used as a tool for teaching and learning in the classroom.

Conclusion

This article includes recommendations on how to achieve the objective of this study, which is to implement m-learning in Libyan education. We should also use mobile phones in education, in particular among EFL/ESL teachers and students. The researcher explained previous studies conducted on mobile phones in the English language learning environment. Moreover, the benefits of using mobile phones in EFL/ESL classrooms have been discussed in this paper. Using mobile technology in EFL classes for teaching and learning and practicing the English language has many advantages, particularly for ESL/EFL learners who get opportunities to learn while using mobile technology in Libyan education. According to the researcher, the integration of mobile technologies into Libyan education is necessary, particularly now that students are better suited to using mobile devices anywhere. Finally, using mobile applications to teach and learn English among Libyan students is needed and highly recommended. Due to the lack of communication experience, further studies to investigate using m-learning for EFL learners in Libyan education are still required.

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