

EFL Students’ Attitudes Towards the Ease of Use Mobile Technology to Learn English at a University in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Learning through mobile devices (Mobile learning) appears as the significant breakthrough of technology 4.0. Among the sharp progress of up-to-date technology, it has been seen that mobile devices’ smart functions are able to support learners’ learning wherever and whenever. Hence, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has been believed to serve learners’ English skills and knowledge well. Although mobile learning is expected to apply appropriately in English teaching and learning, students’ attitudes towards the use of mobile devices for their learning under wireless networks need to be assessed seriously. This writing is to report EFL learners’ behaviors and awareness on using mobile technology in their English learning at a University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, through a survey on 100 university EFL students by a questionnaire including 13 English-Vietnamese statements within 15 minutes. The survey lasted two weeks in the second semester of the school year 2018-2019. Quantitative data were analyzed with SPSS version 20. On the one hand, the findings indicated that students have positive constructive and acceptable towards using mobile technology in English learning. On the other hand, mobile learning applications in the future at the current University were able to be accepted firmly.

Keywords: *attitudes, mobile learning, mobile devices, MALL, EFL students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Fluency in English, the worldwide communicative instrument of humans, has become essential in today's world. However, it is not easy for harried students of all ages, levels, and occupations. Learning English by books and practicing it in class or at home with tutors is insufficient. Thus, English fluency cannot be one of these learning methods in the current frantic-paced environment of Vietnamese education and social context, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, for students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL students)

at current university. EFL learners require a flexible and active approach of learning English that allows them to learn whenever and wherever they are. As a result, a proactive and convenient learning technique should be investigated to let students practice English whenever and wherever they want.

Material data sources are now attached to support human contact, information, and learning demands in both offline and online contexts, thanks to the advancement of both mobile devices' forms and functionalities [11]. Through the internet network,

portable devices can provide a huge richness of knowledge as well as learning

possibilities for learners at all levels [9]. Learning English through mobile devices is predicted to be used at educational institutes in Vietnam as a result of the benefits of mobile devices for students' learning. Students' engagement and psychological preparation in English learning via mobile technology, on the other hand, should be assessed. As a result, the purpose of this study was to evaluate EFL learners' opinions toward the ease with which mobile devices can be used, as well as to recommend some other topics for future research on mobile technology in English learning. The present research's primary aim was to address the research question: "What are EFL teachers' attitudes toward the ease with which mobile devices can be used to learn English?"

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW ON USING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LEARNING

For mobile learning, O'Malley et al. [6] demonstrate its viability in a technologically-advanced society: "Any learning that occurs when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that occurs when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies" [2].

Many aspects must be completed in order to implement the ideal M-learning application. This paper aims to study instructors' mobile learning behaviors and examine how their approval of learning English through mobile devices might be used as a theoretical background for future mobile learning application development. Vo and Vo [12], Ngo and Gwangyong [5], Pollara [7], Abu-Al-Aish and Love [1], Kuciapski [3], and others have used this research issue in past works in Vietnam and around the world. However, these studies largely exclusively focus on the views, attitudes, and acceptance of English majoring students in higher education, with little focus on EFL students' attitudes on the ease of use of mobile

learning in higher education in Vietnam's south. As a result, this survey was designed to fill this vacuum, acquire fresh data on EFL learners' opinions toward English mobile learning, and provide a unique reference for future research.

Some thoughts were given in the following sections to debate the relationship between mobile learning and students learning English.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

To create the questionnaire contents, the researcher used the model of willingness to adopt mobile technology in EFL learning, which was incorporated from Venkatesh and Davis's [10] Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This concept explains how a variety of factors influence instructors' and students' attitudes toward the use of technology and then examines their perceptions to see if they accept utilizing technology in their teaching and learning. As a result, users' intentions will be revealed after a thorough examination of their actions and attitudes. Theoretically, Venkatesh and Davis (1996) assess technology handlers' ease of use (PEOU). Later, according to Napitupulu et al. (2017), the TAM was identified as a critical study form for analyzing variables of information technology acceptability among users, and it was the most widely used model. TAM, according to Raaij and Schepers [8], is a comprehensive hypothesis among several theories in the information system literature for explaining people's acceptance of technology. The researcher will utilize this theory to survey EFL students' opinions toward the ease of using mobile technology in their English learning because of its persuasiveness and evidence connected to users' perceptions, including attitudes and behaviors; the TAM is displayed in Figure 1.

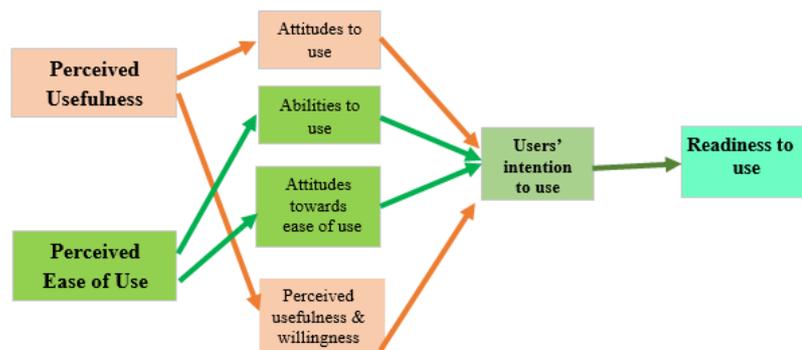


Figure 1. Model of readiness to use mobile technology in EFL teaching and learning

Following the current research's contents, the TAM was clarified as follows: The degree to which an individual perceives utilizing mobile technology for learning is easy, and low-effort is defined as perceived ease of use (PEOU). PEOU represents EFL students' perceptions of how easy it is to study English via mobile devices. EFL learners' views on the ease with which they can use mobile technology in English learning; then, Intention to Use technology (IU) represents EFL learners' behaviors and proclivity for using handy-portable devices to aid their learning English. Data from the survey was also gathered and evaluated to find out the answer for the research question, "What are EFL learners' attitudes toward the ease of using mobile technology to learn English?" which was the major goal of the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Instruments

The participants were given 15 minutes to complete an English-Vietnamese questionnaire with 13 statements and a Likert 5-point scale answer. Quantitative metrics were also thought to effectively supplement and extend learners' perceptions toward the convenience of using mobile devices for English learning support. Furthermore, qualitative data from the responses of three semi-structured Vietnamese questions was compiled to obtain profound information regarding users' attitudes towards mobile technology in their English learning via in-depth interviews.

3.2. Participants

A total of 100 EFL sophomores participated in the study by filling out a questionnaire. The poll was done at the main campus of a university in Ho Chi Minh City within two weeks of the start of the second semester of the 2018-2019 school year. Of them, seven students would be conveniently chosen to participate in in-depth interviews.

3.3. Collecting data process

This study's instrument is a questionnaire meant to assess EFL students' attitudes toward the ease with which they can use mobile devices to learn

English, as well as their behavior when doing so. The questionnaire consists of thirteen statements that are placed in a logical order. A five-point Likert scale accompanied each sentence for participants to choose their ideas by ticking only one cell in the concept columns (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) no plans, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The following is a summary of the data collection process:

Step 1: Building a research framework,

Step 2: Designing questionnaire,

Step 3: Delivering and guiding participants to complete the questionnaire,

Step 4: Collecting completed questionnaire,

Step 5: Recording information from In-depth interviews,

Step 6: Analyzing data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Quantitative analysis

The questionnaire's outcomes are revealed using data obtained using a quantitative approach. The findings are intended to answer the question, "What are EFL learners' perceptions toward the ease with which they can learn English through mobile devices?" The mean scores from the participants' ideas for each statement were analyzed to assess their behavior and consideration of using mobile technology in their English learning.

The software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to assess statistics for Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of each statement using quantitative data from the questionnaire. The questionnaire had a Cronbach Alpha rating of 0.69 before the survey. When the mean scores were compared to number 3, participants agreed with assertions if the mean value was higher than 3; however, when the mean was lower than 3, they were less likely to support the beliefs. Table 1 shows several examples of quantitative data.

Table 1. Students' attitudes towards ease of use mobile devices to learn English

Statement (N=100)	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mean 3.69	Std. Deviation
1. It does not require a lot of effort from me to learn how to use mobile devices in learning English.	1.00	5.00	3.54	1.04
2. Learning English on a multi-function mobile device is not difficult for me.	1.00	5.00	3.77	.87
3. It is easy for me to engage in discussions using a mobile application or website in a mobile format.	1.00	5.00	3.83	.86
4. It is easy for me to approach my English lessons through mobile devices everywhere and every time.	1.00	5.00	3.96	.78
5. It is easy for me to complete all the tasks of an English course through mobile devices.	1.00	5.00	3.86	.80
6. It is easy for me to manipulate on mobile devices in my English lessons.	1.00	5.00	3.92	.75
7. I am able to use mobile devices to access English courses' contents.	1.00	5.00	3.88	.78
8. I am confident in using mobile devices to practice English skills and knowledge.	1.00	5.00	3.91	.81
9. I would like to learn more about mobile applications so that I can incorporate them into my English lessons.	1.00	5.00	3.98	.81
10. Expense of mobile devices for learning English is expensive.	1.00	5.00	3.19	1.29
11. Expense of internet access for learning English through mobile devices is expensive.	1.00	5.00	3.45	1.22
12. Expense of online materials for learning English through mobile devices is expensive.	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.22
13. Mobile devices make students unable to manage their learning.	1.00	5.00	3.303	1.37

The figure shows EFL students' perceptions of how easy it was to study English using mobile devices (average mean= 3.69). Students clearly recognized the ease with which mobile devices may be used via a wireless network (mean=3.54). Learning how to use smart roaming devices for English study (mean=3.92), as well as talks (mean=3.83), approach learning (mean=3.96), complete tasks (mean=3.86), and evaluate English courses (mean=3.88), were all

mentioned by the participants. As a result, EFL students found it easy to exercise their English abilities and knowledge (mean=3.91), and they were also more inclined to combine applications for English learning. Nonetheless, the insensitivity of a few students was highlighted when the means were 2.41, 2.64, 2.62, 2.64, showing that the majority of participants did not believe the expense of a mobile learning surgery was excessively expensive. They did not seem to think that

using mobile devices to handle their English studies was a problem.

4.2. Qualitative analysis

Table 2. EFL teachers' responses for an in-depth interview

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequencies	EFL students' responses
<i>What are your ideas if learning English through mobile devices is applied at your school?</i>			
Opinions	Possible	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, That is good. I am not shocked; you see, learning through mobile devices is reasonable in the technological era. - That is great! It is a really modern learning style for education. I want to enjoy it soon. - I love and expect mobile learning. It is useful for me because I learn so many subjects in class at the same time.
<i>Do you support mobile learning?</i>			
Support	Possible	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convenient for me who have part-time job duplicating with English class hours can learn English on mobile devices - I see mobile devices and Wi-Fi are rather convenient for all students learning English. - I completely support mobile learning in students' learning English.
<i>Do you accept learning English via your mobile devices?</i>			
Acceptance	Possible	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of course. I support and accept learning English through mobile technology. It is cool. - I support and accept applying M-learning at school. It should be applied soon. - I accept M-learning at school because I feel free and comfortable when learning everywhere and every time on my mobile devices.
	Impossible	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think learning in class with teachers is better to acquire. I see that learning English mobile devices is harmful to users' health.

Of the seven respondents, most shared that they shared their similar opinions that it is convenient to use mobile devices to support their learning of English. Users support learning English through portables under wireless networks because they have positive awareness that mobile devices' functions are helpful to

serve English teaching and learning in Vietnam. Most students considered it a modern learning style among the technology 4.0, offering users convenient learning whenever and wherever. Nevertheless, one in seven interviewees complained that mobile learning is not

better than offline learning, more, she thought learning English mobile devices can affect.

Users' health. Thus, the majority of participants supported and agreed to use mobile devices in English learning. In in-depth interviews, up to six out of seven participants were shocked with up-to-date technology and seemed eager and expected to enjoy that.

Compared to previous researches of Vo and Nguyen. [11], Ngo and Gwangyong [5], Kuciapski [3], Vo and Vo [12], there are some similarities to the current investigation that Venkatesh and Davis' [10] TAM was applied in mobile education research. However, those concentrated on teachers' and students' behaviors and perceptions regarding using technology in teaching and learning only without debate about users' attitudes toward the use of mobile devices to learn English.

Generally, EFL students made little attempts to employ portable devices to serve their daily needs and learning English. They also work together to study English using mobile devices connected to a Wi-Fi network. Because the participants have a strong belief in M-ability learning is to help them learn English efficiently. The participants indicate that using mobile technology in their English learning is not an issue, encouraging them to practice English using smart handheld gadgets. The research question "What are EFL learners' attitudes toward the ease of utilizing mobile devices to learn English?" was satisfactorily answered by the questionnaire's answers.

Furthermore, the findings show that practically all students do not believe the cost of learning English through mobile technology is out of their financial reach and that it is particularly worthwhile to use. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that EFL students are enthusiastic about and intend to employ technology (IU) in their English studies. EFL students appreciate the simplicity of the use of mobile devices and are enthusiastic about learning English using mobile technologies over a wireless network.

This report examined EFL students' perspectives about the ease of utilizing handy-portable devices in English learning without focusing on English majoring students and teachers or examining other areas of

mobile technology under WiFi network in higher English education as part of the research scope. Furthermore, the current mobile learning experiment is limited to learners' behavior when learning English via mobile devices; no mobile learning programs for teaching and learning other subjects have been tested. Ngo and Gwangyong [5], Vo and Vo [12], Abu-Al-Aish and Love [1], Pollara [7], and Kuciapski [3] all contributed to the current study. They investigated the opinions and attitudes of teachers and learners concerning the use of portable technology in language teaching and learning generally and in English education in particular. Similarly, it is thought that learning English through mobile devices might motivate people to study English whenever and wherever they are.

5. CONCLUSION

It appears that EFL students have a positive attitude about the ease of use of mobile devices connected to a wireless network in English classes. Users can learn English in all aspects of the language, including hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and English knowledge, such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, using modern portable devices. Furthermore, EFL students accept mobile technology in English learning in their current university, and participants intend to use mobile technology in their English education beyond TAM [10]. Mobile learning applications were not used in this study due to several restrictions. They are intended to be used in future research to support English instruction at the current university and education in Vietnam and the rest of the world. According to the study's conclusions, teachers should incorporate mobile devices into English learning over a wifi network because of their convenience and use.

Furthermore, learners must develop an innovative approach for effectively learning English skills and knowledge using mobile learning. The next step is for pupils to use mobile devices to aid their learning English. For more relevant mobile learning study, money and policies for mobile learning apps are recommended; creating and trying mobile learning should be researched for learners to approach convenient learning at their current university and other location.

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