AL-Esraa

University College Journal

A Periodical Comprehensive Refereed Scientific Journal

Issue by AL-Esraa University College
Baghdad Iraq

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تأثير الهواتف المحمولة على الدراسات الأدبية الإنجليزية

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The Impact of Mobile Phones on English Literary Studies

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ABSTRACT

Mobile phones have been used widely in different EFLT communities around the world. The learning method in which mobile phones are used is called mobile learning, or M-learning, and the research in this area has been conducted in order to investigate the validity of M-learning in the field of university TEFL. The impact of mobile phones on English literary studies of Iraqi university EFLs, in this regard, is to be investigated with the presented research. It is hypothesized that mobile phones may have a great impact on the Iraqi university EFLs, as they study English literature, because EFLs rely on mobile phones for quick information access, vocabulary, and literary resources.

To prove the hypothesis validity, a qualitative questionnaire was carried out on (36) students who study literature in the Department of English Language and Literature in Al- Esra'a University College. After analyzing the data, the majority of the answers show that university EFLs rely greatly on mobile phones in their English literary studies, which proves the great impact mobile phones on university EFLs as they study literature in English language.

The research is divided into sections. Section One illustrates the research introduction, problem, aim, hypothesis, limitation, scope, and methodology. The theoretical part tackles a literary review regarding M-learning at university level, the advantages and disadvantages of M-learning. The practical part includes data analysis and research findings. Finally, conclusion and future studies are presented at last.

الخلاصة

تستخدم الهواتف المحمولة على نطاق واسع في المجتمعات التي تدرس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية المختلفة حول العالم. وتسمى طريقة التعلم التي تستخدم فيها الهواتف النقالة «التعلم باستخدام الاجهزة النقالة»، وقد تم إجراء البحث في هذا المجال من أجل التحقق من صحة التعلم الإلكتروني في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على المستوى الجامعي. وفي هذا الصدد، سيتحقق البحث المقدم في تأثير الهواتف النقالة على الدراسات الأدبية الإنجليزية من الجامعات العراقية. حيث فرض البحث التأثير الكبير للهواتف النقالة على طلبة الجامعات العراقية الذين يدرسون اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، كونهم يدرسون الأدب الإنجليزي ،كونهم يعتمدون على الهواتف النقالة للولوج للمعلومات، والمفردات، والموارد الأدبية.

ولإثبات صحة الفرضية ، تم إجراء استبانة نوعية على (36) طالباً يدرسون الأدب في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها في كلية الإسراء الجامعة. و بعد تحليل البيانات، اظهرت غالبية الإجابات أن طلبة الجامعة الذين يدرسون اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية يعتمدون إلى حد كبير على الهواتف النقالة في دراساتهم للأدب الإنجليزي، مما يثبت صحة النظرية المذكورة اعلاه.

ينقسم البحث إلى عدة أقسام. حيث يوضح القسم الأول مقدمة البحث، والمشكلة، والهدف، والفرضية، والقيود، والنطاق، والمنهجية. و يتناول الجزء النظري من البحث مراجعة أدبية تتعلق باستخدام الاجهزة النقالة في التعليم الجامعي، بالإضافة الى مزايا وعيوب التعلم باستخدام الاجهزة النقالة. و اما الجزء العملي فيشمل تصميم الاستبانة و تحليل البيانات ونتائج البحوث. وأخر جزء من البحث فيشمل تقديم الاستنتاجات والدراسات المستقبلية في هذا المجال.

1 - INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many methods were invented by those interested in TEFL to increase the income of students' learning experience. One of the newly- emerged methods in the late decade is known as mobile phone learning, or shortened as M-learning. This method has proved itself helpful in many learning communities especially at university level. When it comes to studying English literature, mobile phones come as handy for university EFLs as they study the vocabulary-rich literary texts and literary imagery.

1. **Problem**: What is the impact of mobile phones on English language literary studies of Iraqi university EFLs?

2. **Hypothesis**: Mobile phones have great impact on English literary studies of Iraqi university EFLs, as mobile phones present an aid for full information access, vocabulary check, and full access to worldwide literary libraries.

3. **Aim**: Investigating the impact of using mobile phones in university EFLs studying English literary studies.

4. **Limitations**: The research is limited in the following ways:

   a. It focuses on the impact of mobile phones on English literary studies.

   b. It focuses on university EFLs who study English literature in the Department of English language and Literature at Al- Esra'a University College in Iraq.

   c. The findings were based solely on the participants responses to qualitative questionnaire designed for this research.

5. **Scope**: Mobile learning (M-learning); English literature studying; English language learning; English beyond classroom.

6. **Methodology**: A qualitative questionnaire was carried out on (36) university EFLs who study English language at Department of English

Language and Literature at Al- Esra'a University College in Iraq. The majority of the questions used in the questionnaire were "designed to obtain qualitative data" (Punch, 2006:47). This is because such an approach can give a great insight into the usability of mobile phones. It is fulfilled after participants expressing consent and taking the availability and presence of ethical values (Flick 2009).

2 - A LITERARY REVIEW

2 - 1 - M- Learning: Definition and History

There are currently 1.7 billion mobile phones in use around the world, while the total world population is 6 billion (Keegan, 2004). In the last decades, the development of the mobile phone technology has been in a rapid pace as mobile phones can serve as a mini-computer, a telephone, and a camera, in one single device (Attewell, 2004). The statistical data mentioned above indicate that the use of mobile phones in learning has a solid foundation that resulted in the establishment of M-learning pedagogical theory (Ogata & Yano, 2004). In Europe, for example, a review of mobile learning projects funded by the European Union since 2001[1] proves the usability of mobile phones in learning, and adding on, European open universities have successfully introduced M-learning into the distance education programs which resulted in positive results. Therefore, it is accepted that M-learning can, and definitely will, play a more important role in the future process of learning. Yet, with many limitations ahead, plus those who prefer traditional methodology of teaching, M-learning is still limited as an assistant in the process of learning.

According to Dudeney and Hockly (2007), M-learning refers to "a set of technological devices, including mobile phones, MP3 players and hand-held

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1-   Pecherzewska and Knot, 2007:5

computers that might have an impact on language learning." Trifonova and Ronchetti (2003) define M- learning as "e-learning through mobile computational devices." Generally speaking, mobile technology refers to all mobile devices that include Personal Digital Assistance (PDA), digital cell phones and IPOD. These devices are "small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment in our every-day life, and that can be used for some form of learning" (Trifonova and Ronchetti (2003)). The authors further stated that "They (mobile phones) can be very helpful and useful for us in many different ways. For example, mobile phones allow interaction with people, via voice, written messages, still images and videos. Further to this, they are good tools for assessing content, which can be stored locally on the device or can be reached through interconnection". (Trifonova and Ronchetti (2003)).

M-learning has some fascinating pioneering work in the early 1970's by Xerox, the photocopier company, who set up a new group to develop what they called the Dynabook, a personal dynamic medium that was about the size and shape of a book. Its solid claim was that anyone could use it and it had high definition simulations and material from around the world, which forty years ago was an amazing concept. Unfortunately the technology couldn't keep up with it then. Later around the early 2000's was emergence of practical mobile learning starting up with the introduction of tablet computers.

2 - 2 -Using M-Learning in English Literary Studies: Advantages and Disadvantages

M-learning, as a new method of language teaching-learning at university level, has many advantages and disadvantages for university EFLs who study English literature. The following sections tackle both sides.

2 - 2 - 1 - Advantages of M-Learning

A group of those interested in university M-learning sees that "using real world resources for teaching and learning in the classroom can make education more meaningful and relevant to our students" (Mcneal and Hooft, 2006:p.1). Mobile phones, according to supporters, have positively contributed to the field of learning in many different ways:

1- M-learning helps EFLs to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to recognize their existing abilities.

2- M-learning can be used to encourage both independent and collaborative learning experience.

3- It helps learners to identify areas where assistance and support are needed.

4- It helps to remove some of the formality from the learning experience and engages reluctant learners.

5- It helps learners to remain more focused for longer periods.

6- It helps to raise self-esteem and self- confidence (Attewell, 2004).

7- It allows for low-cost implementation of real time, text-based interaction and finish the ongoing statement of "turn UR mobile off" (Markett et al, 2006:283).

2 - 2 - 2 - Disadvantages of M-Learning

Despite evident usability of mobile phones in university learning, there are some rejecters of this method. Some college lecturers may not encourage their students to use mobile phones in the classroom. Many educational institutions across the world may impose a ban on using them during lectures. The reason: Depending on mobile phones may hinder university students from working their cognitive skills like brainstorming, information recalling or creativity. Furthermore, health issues related to the use of mobile phones have arisen among university

EFLs due to the long hours spent on using mobile phones. Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2013) add another opinion that "the potential distraction caused by students using their mobile phones to play games, text messages, check Facebook or engage in other activities has become a concern to many classroom instructors."

3 - A PRACTICAL REVIEW

3 - 1 - Aims

The present research examines the impact of mobile phones on English language literary studies for university EFLs. Further, a research in this new field may help to lead the way into further investigation of the usability of mobile phones in learning English language.

3 - 2 - Methodology

A qualitative questionnaire was carried out on a selected group of university EFLs who study at Al- Esra'a University College in Iraq. The majority of the questions used in the questionnaire were designed to obtain qualitative data (Punch, 2006). This is because such approach can give a great insight into the usability of mobile phones. Random sampling is used for the research in order to get unbiased data of the targeted participants. It is fulfilled after participants expressing consent and taking the availability and presence of ethical values (Flick 2009).

3 - 3 - Participants:

(36) university EFLs studying English Literature in the Department of English Language and Literature have participated in this research. All of the participants speak Arabic as their mother tongue. The researcher took the permission of the concerned officials in the university administration before conducting the

questionnaire. The students were informed that their responses are meant for academic research purposes only.

4 - DATA ANALYSIS and FINDINGS

4 - 1 - Data Analysis

The qualitative questionnaire has two scales: yes and no. The number of responses for each item is given in percentages. Scales added up for clarity. Thus, the data analysis is based on two major factors; those students who ticked "yes" are considered supporters of the given statements while those who ticked "no" are considered non-supporters of the given statements. Below are statistical analyses of the given answers:

4-1-1- **Medium of Communication**: The data mentioned in Table (1) show that (20) use English on their mobile phones, while only (12) use English as a medium of communication. On the other hand, (9) of them use Arabic on their mobile phones, and (17) use Arabic only as a medium of communication. The data also show that (7) of the students use both Arabic and English on their mobile phones. Finally, (8) of them mix between Arabic and English when communicating using mobile phones.

Q.	Statement	English	Arabic	Both
1	Which language do you use on your mobile phone?	20	9	7
2	Which language do you use more often for chatting on the mobile phone?	12	17	8

TABLE (1): MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

4-1-2- **English on Mobile Phones**: An analysis of the data presented in the table below indicates that (29) of the students have purchased mobile phones that have applications like an English dictionary. In addition, (30) of them have

purchased a mobile phone to learn English. These statistics overcome other reasons for purchasing a mobile phone represented by (7) students only, while (6) students show that they don't have a mobile that help them learn English.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
3	I purchased a mobile phone with applications like an English-Arabic dictionary, a multi- translator and internet access.	29	7
4	I have a mobile phone that helps me to learn English	30	6

TABLE (2): ENGLISH ON MOBILE PHONE

4-1-3- **Duration of Time Spent on Mobile Phones**: The data presented in the Table (3) indicate that (31) of students spend most of their time in non-academic activities like chatting with friends, while (26) of students spend most of their time in studying and reviewing academic material.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
5	I spend a lot of time chatting with my friends on my mobile phone.	31	5
6	I spend a lot of time, studying and reviewing English related material on my mobile phone.	26	10

TABLE 3: DURATION OF TIME SPENT ON MOBILE PHONE

4-1-4- **Using a Mobile Phone for Communication in English and Arabic**: The data presented in Table (4) show that (32) of the students need mobile phones to understand English words. The data also reveal that (14) students use English while chatting on WhatsApp messenger, and (26) of them do so on Facebook. As for Arabic language, the data reveal that (24) use Arabic for WhatsApp messenger chatting, and (21) of them do so on Facebook.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
7	I need a mobile phone to understand English words and sentences	32	4
8	I use English as a medium of communication while chatting on WhatsApp Messenger.	14	19
9	I use Arabic as a medium of communication while chatting on WhatsApp messenger.	24	12
10	I use English as a medium of communication while chatting on Facebook.	26	10
11	I use Arabic as a medium of communication while chatting on Facebook.	21	15

TABLE 4: USING A MOBILE PHONE FOR COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

4-1-5- **Using Mobile Phones for Improving English Language Skills**: The data presented in the Table (5) indicate that (30) students watch English videos on mobile phones, and (23) of them watch Arabic videos on mobile phones. (32) students believe that mobile phones can help them enhance their English speaking skills, and (28) of the students believe that mobile phones can improve their English writing skills. All in all, (36) of the students state that mobile phones can help them to learn new English vocabulary.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
14	During free time, I watch English videos on my mobile phones.	30	6
15	During free time, I watch Arabic videos on my mobile phones.	23	13
16	Mobile phones can help me to improve my English speaking skills.	32	4
17	Mobile phones can help me to improve my English writing skills.	28	8
18	Mobile phones help me to learn new words of English.	36	0

TABLE 5: USING MOBILE PHONES FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

4-1-6- **Dependence on Mobile Phones for Translation**: The data presented in the Table (6) reveal that (30) students find mobile phones useful for translating English words while (32) of the students use mobile phones to translate Arabic words into English. The statistics show that (32) of the students believe that the applications used on the mobile phones can translate English words into Arabic accurately, while (21) of the students are confident that the applications used in their mobile phones can translate Arabic words into English accurately.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
19	Mobile phones are necessary for me to translate English words into Arabic.	30	6
20	I use mobile phones to translate Arabic words into English.	32	4
21	I can understand English words without using a mobile phone.	21	15
22	The applications I use on my mobile phone can translate English words correctly into Arabic.	24	12
23	The applications I use on my mobile phone can translate Arabic words correctly into English	20	16

TABLE 6: DEPENDENCE ON MOBILE PHONES FOR TRANSLATION

4-1-7- **Mobile Phones for Academic Purposes**: The data shown in Table (7) indicate that (23) of the students scan their academic material on their mobile phones while (34) of them believe that mobile phones support their English language learning. (19) of the students indicate that some of their English teachers allow them to use mobile phones in the classroom to translate new English words.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
24	I scan and save the study-related reading materials to my mobile phone.	23	13
25	My English learning is supported by a mobile phone.	34	2
26	My teachers of English allow me to use a mobile phone to translate English words in the classroom.	19	17

TABLE 7: MOBILE PHONES FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

4-1-8- **Studying on Mobile Phones**: The data presented in Table (8) indicate that (26) of the students use their mobile phones during exams. (26) of the students are of the opinion that they can remember everything that they read on their mobile phone.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
28	During the exams, I read notes on my mobile phone.	26	10
29	I can remember everything if I read on my smart phones.	26	10

TABLE 8: STUDYING ON MOBILE PHONES

4-1-9- **Influence of Mobile Phones on Teaching-Learning Process in English Language Classroom**: Table (9) show that (20) of students state that their English teachers allow them to take notes on their mobile phones, and also, (12) of them have stopped using pens and papers to take notes as their mobile phones can do so. As for Auto check feature on mobile phones, (31) students stated that the feature has improved their spelling skills. In the case of which one to use, (10) students declared that mobile phones are easier than dictionaries to look up words. Finally, (11) students chose that mobile phones would be a good replacement for learning English classroom.

Q.	Statement	Yes	No
28	My English teacher allows me to take notes on my mobile phone.	20	16
29	Because of the mobile phones, I stopped writing notes on paper.	12	24
30	Auto spelling check on mobile phone has improved my English language.	31	5
31	Mobile phones are easier tools to check vocabulary than dictionaries.	10	26
32	I don't need to enroll in English learning classes as I can do so with applications on mobile phones	11	25

TABLE 9: INFLUENCE OF MOBILE PHONES ON TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

4 - 2 - Research Findings

Based on the data analysis presented in the previous section, all those participated in the questionnaire have mobile phones. Plus, they rely on mobile phones to review literary study material in particular. This is for two reasons. The first is, mobile phones with Internet connectivity can provide university EFLs with full access to international literal libraries and information. And the second is, mobile phones are both portable and compatible which can maximize the usability for university EFLs. Some of the research findings are read as follows:

1- The impact of mobile phones in university EFLs is found in their everyday activities, as well as in their academic activities, which proves its dominance.

2- It is observed that university EFLs scan study-related material on their mobile phones and read notes from their mobile phones during exams.

3- It is noted that university EFLs spend most of their time on their mobile phones in academic activities in addition to social networking activities.

4- It is suggested that university EFLs use mobile phones that come with English applications like English dictionaries so as to look up unfamiliar words.

5- Data analysis suggests that university EFLs prefer using Arabic, rather than English, in common communication activities.

6- The findings also reveal that students use translating applications available on the mobile phones, to understand English words and sentences. Even when doing the questionnaire, they used mobile phones to look up some words they did not understand.

7- In EFL classrooms, students are often frustrated with the traditional teaching methodologies, and it is time for English teachers to try and test mobile technology integrated activities to help students develop a positive attitude towards language learning. English teachers should encourage students to work productively and cooperatively on language learning activities by using mobile phone technology in the classroom.

5. CONCLUSIONS and FUTURE STUDIES

5.1. Conclusions

Mobiles phones are used by Iraqi university EFLs because mobile phones are time and effort savers, easy to carry, and has the same functionality of many devices like computers, manual dictionaries, and libraries. Academic applications can be downloaded to mobile phones to help university EFLs in their English literary studies. That is to say, mobile phones can enhance vocabulary building, reading, speaking, writing, and grasping the vivid imagery provided by different pieces of literature. As a result, mobile phones are effective, not only during the classroom, but also outside it. Based on the data analysis taken from the questionnaire, university EFLs rely on mobile phones mostly when studying literature in English language. Therefore, as it had been hypothesized, it leads to the conclusion that mobiles phones have a great impact on English literary studies by university EFLs of the Department of English Language and Literature at Al- Esra'a University College in Iraq.

5.2. Future Studies

As the emergence of the M-learning in Iraqi university TEFL, a few topics of interest are presented for future research:

- Investigating the difference between a traditional EFL classroom and a technology enhanced classroom depending on the income of improvement shown by a selection of participants.
- Investigating the use of some English language learning applications to improve the English linguistic skills of university EFLs.
- Investigating the advantages and disadvantages of using M-learning in EFL classroom.
- E-learning and M-learning: a comparison.

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