

Students' Perception on the Use of Mobile Devices in Language Learning

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Abstract – *This study, using descriptive survey design, determined the students' perception of the use of mobile devices in learning the English language along the five macro skills – listening, reading, writing, speaking, and viewing. A modified survey questionnaire served as the primary data gathering instrument. The respondents involved were 71 grade 11 senior high school students of one public school in the Division of Camarines Sur, Philippines. Findings showed that text messaging and calling are the two common features of students' mobile devices. Students perceived English dictionary and English vocabulary games as the top two mobile device apps contributing to their English language learning. Among the five macro skills in English, the students perceived mobile devices as having the most significant impact on viewing. The overall weighted mean scores indicated that students positively perceived some features and apps in their mobile devices to be contributing to their learning of the English language. These findings were made as the basis to develop appropriate instructional materials in the form of lesson plans that incorporated the features and apps in the mobile devices.*

Keywords – *English language, macro skills, mobile application, mobile device, session plan.*

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INTRODUCTION

Technology integration in teaching and learning has received much attention among researchers and educators these past years. The role of technology in instruction was highlighted recently because of the pandemic that required all teachers and students to shift

from the usual face-to-face and traditional mode of teaching and learning to a more technology-driven instruction. Furthermore, among these technologies that continuously changed the landscape of instruction is mobile technology.

A constant upgrade of the different mobile devices and the mobility of learners in a dynamic learning environment ushered the new way of learning known as mobile learning (m-learning). Although m-learning is a concept with no definitive agreement on its definition [1]; however, it is generally characterized as any formal or informal learning mediated via handheld devices that are potentially available for use anytime and anywhere [2]. Indeed, mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets are becoming ubiquitous [3]. Moreover, using these different mobile devices such as smartphones or cellular phones, MP3 or MP4 players, video or sound recorder, among others, are examples of a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), a predominant approach and a subset of m-learning [2].

The innumerable uses of mobile devices have enormously evolved—from their basic use, which is for communication, to using them for educational purposes, too. Ehnle [4] acknowledged that today's mobile devices such as smartphones offer endless possibilities for higher engagement, enhancement of student understanding, and extension of learning beyond the classroom. Portability, connectivity, and affordability have made these mobile devices more popular and are more advantageous over other technologies such as PCs or laptops [3]. Several studies have shown that the use of mobile devices has a positive impact on improving English language teaching and learning [2]. These were also considered the best vehicle in English language teaching and learning that positively affected students' achievement as far as vocabulary teaching and learning are concerned [5], [6].

In addition, the results in the study of De Souza et al. [7] revealed that the language teachers from selected

higher educational institutions in the Philippines, as the respondents, hold positive pedagogical beliefs and orientations using technology-based teaching in their language classroom. It generally provided optimistic implications for enhancing language teacher's digital literacy to promote motivating, fruitful, and engaging language lessons for 21st century learning.

With the universal call and growing importance of globalization, technology integration and revolutionizing the teaching and learning process in the classroom is necessary. Furthermore, considering the wide range of usage and functionality these mobile devices are providing, the use of mobile devices is indispensable. As a common mobile device, smartphones have become an almost essential part of daily life [8], [9]. Based on the recent survey by Statista Research Department, approximately 74 million Filipinos possess smartphones and 70.7 million have accessed the internet [10]. Given this number, teachers can take advantage of this situation and incorporate mobile devices in the teaching and learning process.

Many researchers have investigated the use of technology-supported learning in promoting and improving English language learning. Studies revealed that the use of mobile devices, such as smartphones, has a positive impact on learning [11] – [13]. Specifically, using mobile devices through different apps for English language practice can bring significant benefits in vocabulary acquisitions, spelling and pronunciation, grammar, listening, and reading skills [12], [14]. These devices also enable students to access digital content and online communities, making it more attractive to young learners as they provide different learning environments [15], [16].

With the launching of a revitalized curriculum in 2013 through Republic Act (RA) 10533, known as the K to 12 Basic Education Program by the Philippine government through the Department of Education (DepEd), teachers are challenged to implement the program that covers 12 years of basic education. In general, this revitalized curriculum provides sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills to develop lifelong learners and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship.

Communication Arts in English has primarily introduced four macro skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. However, with the advancement of technology in these recent years, the fifth macro skill, viewing, emerged [18]. Macro skills refer to the primary, key, main, and largest skills set relative to a particular

context. As reiterated in the DepEd's K to 12 English Curriculum Guide (2013), successful language learning involves viewing, listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities [19].

And with the rapid adaptation of mobile devices to education, it is essential to highlight the use of mobile technologies in transforming learning into a seamless part of daily activities and suggest a blended learning approach in learning settings. Thus, the researchers deemed it necessary to conduct this study since very few research works in the Philippines are available focusing on the use of mobile devices concerning English language learning and involving senior high school (SHS) students. Also, this study, which aims to determine the students' perception of the impact or influences of mobile devices on English language learning, will serve as a basis for designing or developing appropriate instructional materials to teach the English language effectively.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the students' perception of the use of mobile devices in learning the English language along the five macro skills – listening, reading, writing, speaking, and viewing. Specifically, it aims to determine: (1) the features and applications in the mobile devices that contribute to students' learning of the English language; (2) the students' perception of mobile device usage in learning the English language along its five macro skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing; and (3) the instructional materials that may be developed to enhance English language learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

For this study, the descriptive survey design was used. Descriptive design is appropriate when the research objective is to identify the characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories of a particular phenomenon [20]. A descriptive survey is considered conclusive due to its quantitative nature [21]. This method is a popular data gathering technique and can provide quick information directly from the primary source.

Respondents

The respondents are 71 grade 11 senior high school students of one national high school in the Division of Camarines Sur, Bicol, Philippines. These student-respondents are from seven different sections in the SHS department of the school: General Academic Strand (GAS) 1, General Academic Strand (GAS) 2,

Accountancy and Business Management (ABM), Information and Communications Technology Strand (ICT), Agri-Fishery Arts (AFA), Industrial Arts – Carpentry (IA), and Bread and Pastry Production (BPP). First, all these grade 11 SHS students were ranked from highest to lowest based on their previous school year's general average for fair representation. Then, five strata were made to determine the uppermost 20%, the middle 20%, and the lowest 20%. From each identified stratum, 33.33% of the sample size was randomly selected.

Instrument

The main instrument for this study is a survey questionnaire adapted from the study of Kim [22] on the "Effects of Using Mobile Devices in Blended Learning for English Reading Comprehension." This new and modified survey questionnaire is composed of three parts: (1) Student's Profile; (2) Mobile Device Usage; and (3) Student's Perception of the Use of Mobile Devices in Language Learning. The Student's Perception of the Use of Mobile Devices in Language learning is subdivided into five subparts representing the five macro skills with 10 statements/items per skill, totalling 50 statements/items. Also, this part of the survey questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale in which respondents should agree or disagree, with 5 being the highest and indicates "strongly agree" and 1 as the lowest, which indicates otherwise (strongly disagree).

Most of the statements included were rephrased versions of the original survey, and some statements/items were added upon the jurors' recommendation. In addition, and to establish its validity, this modified survey questionnaire was subjected to further evaluation and validation by 3 experts. These validators are composed of 2 language experts and a psychologist. Furthermore, a pilot testing of the survey was done among 50 Grade 11 SHS students of the nearby school located in the same district. Results of the pilot testing were analysed and subjected to reliability testing. And based on the computed Cronbach alpha, $\alpha=.92$, an excellent internal consistency reliability was obtained.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the actual conduct of the study, the researchers formally requested permission from the school principal of the school. Upon approval, the researchers coordinated with the School Registrar to get the total number of Grade 11 SHS students who are officially enrolled for the school year 2017-2018, which comprised the respondents of this study. After identifying the target respondents, the researchers

coordinated with the student's class advisers regarding the date and time of the survey. During the actual survey, thorough explanations and careful instructions were done to generate honest and accurate answers from the respondents. Finally, the data collected were subjected to tabulation, analysis, and interpretation.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting the present study, the rationale and objectives were explained to the school officials. The same activity was conducted among the target respondents on a different date. During this activity, it was made clear that the entire processes and results will be used solely by the researchers in the conduct of the present study. It was also made clear to all concerned respondents that the results of the survey will, in no way, affect their academic performance and ratings in their English subjects.

Data Analysis

The statistical treatment used in this study is descriptive statistics, which includes the computation of mean, frequency, rank, and percentage to determine the features and applications in the mobile devices that the students are using and the mobile applications they believe help enhance their language learning. Also, the same statistics were used to determine their perception of the use of mobile devices in English language learning along the five macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Features and Applications in the Mobile Device

Table 1. Features in the Mobile Devices of Students

Specific Features	f	%
Text Messaging	71	100
Calling	71	100
Wi-Fi	48	67.6
Mobile Data	63	88.7
Bluetooth Device	65	91.6
FM Radio	53	74.7
MP3 Player	64	90.1
Video Player	66	93.0
Camera	69	97.2
Video Recorder	59	83.1
Voice/Sound Recorder	55	83.1
Others	6	8.5

Mobile phone usage has turned into an everyday scenario among teenagers nowadays. It is considered the most necessary and most convenient medium of

communication for students and is believed to facilitate and enhance the language learning process [9].

Table 1 shows the distribution of the specific features of the mobile devices being used by the respondents. It can be seen that 100% of the 71 respondents indicated that their mobile devices contain two basic features, which are text messaging and calling. This result indicates that the majority of the students are using cell phones as their primary mobile device. On the other hand, ranking last at 11th or 67.6% (48 out of 71 respondents) is the Wi-Fi feature. Therefore, it can be inferred that students are not utilizing this feature that often can be attributed to the absence of Wi-Fi connection in the school or at home or that the students' mobile phones are non-smartphones that lack this feature.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of the different applications in the students' mobile devices, which they considered can help them in enhancing their English language learning. Among these apps in mobile devices, the English Dictionary app and English Vocabulary Games topped the list with 88.7% (63 out of 71 respondents) and 81.7% (58 out of 71 respondents), respectively. The result is similar to the study of Kalaiarasan and Somasundaram [22], which revealed that some mobile dictionaries and applications were identified as contributory in enhancing student's vocabulary and facilitate proper pronunciation. These can be attributed to the fact that these mobile device apps are accessible even without an internet connection. Therefore, it is more convenient and efficient since it can easily be accessed whenever necessary or needed.

Table 2. Applications in the Mobile Devices of Students

Specific Application	f	%
Facebook	33	46.5
Messenger	16	22.5
YouTube	32	45.1
Internet/Web Browser	53	74.6
English Dictionary	63	88.7
English Vocabulary Games	58	81.7
Downloaded/Shared e-Books	37	52.1
Downloaded/Shared English Movies	37	52.1
Downloaded/Shared English Songs/Music	40	56.3
Others	0	0.0

It is essential to note that despite the popularity of Facebook, YouTube, and Messenger apps, these 3 apps landed at the bottom of the survey. Again, this result may

be attributed to poor internet signal or no internet connection at all that the said apps require. This finding is consistent with the observation identified above in Table 1. Considering the socio-demographic profile of the students, it is not surprising to note that these students do not have access to a stable internet connection. Instead, they rely on much to mobile data connection which is not also so reliable.

Students' Perception of Language Learning Using their Mobile Devices

The numerous features of mobile devices like their portability and memory capacity, as well as the possibility of installing different applications or 'apps' and keeping materials on these gadgets, have opened opportunities for learners to utilize these technologies for better learning and to comprehend different contents of language whenever and wherever it seems conducive for them [23].

Listening. Along with this skill, the survey showed that students perceived mobile devices and some of their apps could improve their listening skills. Based on the survey, with a 4.2 mean score and ranked first is statement no. 2 that states, "I understand and appreciate more fully the English sound recordings, music, songs, and videos in my mobile device than the listening texts and exercises read by my teacher or done in the classroom the traditional way." This was followed closely by statements no. 5 and no. 8 that state, "Listening to English sound recordings, music, songs, and videos in my mobile device enhances my listening skill" and "I learn things better when I listen to English songs in my mobile device while I am studying" with 4.1 and 4.0 mean scores, respectively. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the students enjoyed more when using their mobile devices in listening to some instructional materials in English. Also, this result indicates the type of learners—auditory learners—the school has in the classroom. Therefore, the learning style where the students belong is another factor that teachers should consider and incorporate into their teaching [24].

Speaking. In this macro skill, statement nos. 13 ("It is effective to communicate orally with my group members anytime anywhere due to the advance features of mobile devices.") and 19 ("I was able to improve my oral communication skill in English with the use of the mobile device.") both ranked first with 3.9 mean score. The high perception of students to these statements can be interpreted as the students' recognition of the portability of mobile devices and the potential improvement they can get, along speaking, in using

mobile devices. This is particularly true if students constantly use mobile devices in communicating, specifically when the English language is used.

However, it is important to note that students got the lowest mean scores in statements requiring them to use the English language to share ideas, express their thoughts, and talk through mobile devices. This may be interpreted as the students having a low confidence level or experiencing language anxiety when using the English language. This is somehow expected for students whose first language is not English. Several studies recognized the debilitating effect of language anxiety on the student's learning [25].

Reading. The survey revealed that constant interaction and usage of mobile device features and apps would positively affect their English Language learning. Based on the survey, statement no. 30, "I have downloaded/shared English e-book/s in my mobile device," ranked first with 4.3 mean score. It is also worth mentioning that statement nos. 23 and 25 both got the second (2.5) rank, which says, "It is helpful to understand English reading materials by the use of mobile devices," and "It is better to review reading texts in mobile devices because it is readily available anytime anywhere compared to books," respectively. This finding is similar to the study of Azizifara and Gowharya [23], where the results proved that the students who interacted with their application on mobile phones comprehended more reading texts.

Writing. In here, statement no. 32, "I save my composed sentences, paragraphs, and/or poems in my mobile device" ranked first with 4.9 mean score. This indicates that students are using their mobile devices in composing sentences, paragraphs, and/or poems. Again, this is understandable, especially with some built-in features or downloadable apps that would help them, particularly in writing and editing articles.

On the other hand, the survey also revealed an intriguing result. Despite the different apps and features mobile devices have to offer, students still recognized the importance of the "traditional" way of practicing writing a poem or composition and taking notes. This can be shown in statement nos. 34 ("I have learned some basic concepts/principles in writing and composition using a mobile device.") and 35 ("It is all right NOT to write down notes anymore in my notebook or paper because I can easily take pictures of what has been written on the board through my mobile device.") which are tied in the bottom with 3.1 mean score.

Viewing. Finally, for the last macro-skill, the survey showed that statement no. 50, "I love English video clips

about inspirational stories in Facebook," ranked first with a 4.1 mean score. This indicates that students believed that continuous watching of English video clips, particularly inspirational videos, would improve their viewing skills. This is reasonably expected since studies show that most people are visual and auditory learners [26].

Table 3. Students' Perception of English Language Learning Using Mobile Devices

Macro Skills	WM	Rank	Int.
1. Listening	3.61	3	SWA
2. Speaking	3.59	4	SWA
3. Reading	3.70	2	SWA
4. Writing	3.54	5	SWA
5. Viewing	3.97	1	SWA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.68		SWA

Table 3 summarizes the students' perception of different mobile devices' impact on their English Language learning. Results show that along with the five macro skills, "viewing" skills ranked first with a 3.97 weighted mean score. On the other hand, "speaking" skill ranked last with a 3.59 weighted mean score. The overall weighted mean score of 3.68, and interpreted as "somewhat agree," indicates that students recognized the positive effect these mobile devices would bring in learning the English language.

Developed Lesson Plans on the Use of Mobile Devices in the English Language

The numerous features of mobile devices like their portability and memory capacity, as well as the possibility of installing different applications or 'apps' and keeping materials on these gadgets, has opened opportunities for learners to better utilize these technologies for learning and comprehending different contents of language whenever and wherever it seems conducive for them [23]. Therefore, based on the findings that generally indicated a positive level of perception, the instructional materials developed are lesson plans that English teachers may use.

A total of 6 lesson plans were developed in accordance with the prescribed Curriculum Guide in English subjects for grade 11 senior high school (SHS) students. These lesson plans incorporated the use of mobile devices, their features, and the different apps found useful and motivating for learners. In particular, two lesson plans were developed for each English subject in grade 11: (a) Oral Communication in Context; (b) Reading and Writing; and (c) 21st Century Literature

from the Philippines and the World, totalling six lesson plans.

Among the features and apps in the mobile devices, the following were the ones used in the activities contained in the lesson plans: *Share It* app, Bluetooth device, audio/MP3 player, video/MP4 player, camera, PDF file reader, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, *Facebook*, email, web browser, and *Four-Pics-One-Word* game app.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study showed that mobile device usage among students is widespread. The main features of students' mobile devices are calling and text messaging. These suggest that the mobile devices common to students are mobile phones and not smartphones. The computed overall weighted mean indicates that the students recognized the positive effect of some mobile devices' features and apps on English language learning and the five macro skills, specifically along viewing skill. Such a level of perception of students towards mobile devices confirms that mobile devices can be considered a motivating alternative for students to learn English in more engaging, exciting, and meaningful ways.

Finally, six lesson plans were developed as the instructional materials for teachers that incorporated the features and apps of mobile devices which the students positively perceived to be influencing their learning of the English language.

With the findings at hand, it is recommended that the English Dictionary app be installed on student's mobile devices aside from the handy pocket dictionary that each one of them is expected to have. Second, aside from the textbooks and other instructional materials provided by the schools, teachers are encouraged to create contextualized and localized video clips as aid to English instruction. These learning/instructional video clips, songs, and other media related to the lessons should be saved in an On-The-Go (OTG) flash drive and be made available to the students. Thus, students may conveniently utilize these materials anytime and anywhere in their mobile devices. Lastly, the positive perception of students may be used as a great consideration for teachers to develop lesson plans or instructional materials integrating the features and applications in the mobile devices and other technology, which may be collaboratively and systematically done as a faculty program/project during training and seminar-workshops on effective integration of mobile devices in

instruction. This can be done during the regular In-Service Trainings of teachers (INSET).

The present study has two major limitations: first, the present study utilized a descriptive survey design and focused only on students' perceptions of using mobile devices in English language learning. A mixed-method sequential explanatory design may be used to obtain more information that would lead to a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the target respondents. Second, the sample size is relatively small, and that the respondents were from one school only. It is recommended, then, to involve more respondents coming from different schools in the division to generate more conclusive findings on the topic.

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