

Using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on Teaching and Learning Speaking

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Abstract

The landscape of education has undergone significant transformations in recent years, marked by innovative approaches and technological advancements that have reshaped the teaching profession. In the rapidly evolving landscape of language education, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as a transformative tool to facilitate the acquisition of language skills. This article examines how the use of MALL impacts the learning and teaching of speaking skills. With greater access to mobile devices, their integration into language instruction has become more common. This study, conducted in Zahedan with 26 participants, utilized a quantitative methodology to collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of MALL in language education. The study investigates how the integration of mobile technologies can elevate speaking proficiency among learners of English as a foreign language. The results underscore the importance of using mobile tools to create interactive and personalized learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of learners. By examining the potential of MALL to enhance language mastery and communication skills, this article contributes to the ongoing discussion about innovative approaches to language instruction in the digital age. The Findings revealed that MALL impacts on teaching and learning speaking effectively.

Key words: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Speaking, Mobile devices, Mobile applications

1.Introduction

The process of learning English as a foreign language certainly has complex problems. These problems are influenced by the ability of teachers, students, methods and techniques, and media that support the needs of teachers and students. However, they are linked in a group to achieve a goal together by doing interaction and communication to transfer and express their ideas and knowledge[1]. The teaching and learning of speaking are a vital part of any language education classroom; not only does the spoken language offer ‘affordances’ for learning as the main communicative medium of the classroom, but it is also an important component of syllabus content and learning outcomes. However, teaching speaking remains challenging for many English teachers. A key issue here is whether what happens in a speaking classroom is concerned with ‘doing’ teaching or ‘teaching’ speaking[2].

Today, L2 practitioners must embrace and adopt new technology and its potential benefits to keep abreast with present innovations and changes. Getting more and more popular, educational technology has influenced education systems overpoweringly. Technology-based language learning has emerged as one of the most prominent areas of study in foreign language teaching. The growth of technology in the modern world has altered the accessibility of data, which has ramifications for the method learners engage and learn in the classroom. The use of smartphones in the classroom enables learners to access material that was previously only available via encyclopedias. Learners may now access every other kind of information directly in the palm of their hands via their cellphones. Consequently, instructors must take advantage of technology advancements, including them in the teaching-learning process as a tool. These innovations appear to have already gained acceptance among learners. On the contrary, learning environments are still falling behind in this technology advancement. Modern technology will dominate the world in the twenty-first century[3]. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is widely regarded as a subset of technological advancements in language learning. MALL alludes to language exercises that may be carried out using smartphones at any time and from any place without being confined by a geographical area or a particular time. Mobile phones, which include trans-portable and personal portable gadgets such as laptops and personal digital assistants (PDAs), tablets, smartphones, and mobile phones, among others, make learning more convenient for students and instructors alike. As stated by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield, mobile adaptive learning (MALL) makes use of personal and portable technologies that enable “continuity or spontaneity of access and engagement across diverse contexts of usage” and “alternative modes of learning”. MALL is putting M-learning to use in the field of language learning. According to Aranc’ón et al, MALL is “a teaching and learning approach that makes use of mobile phones or other portable devices that have some type of wireless connection, such as phones, PDAs, and tablets, among other things” to teach and learn. According to O’Malley et al, the term “mobile-assisted language learning” (MALL) refers to any type of learning that takes place when the learner is not at a fixed, pre-determined location or learning that takes place when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies[4]. Learning English using mobile applications has become a trend. Applications that are connected via a smartphone make it easier for students to explore knowledge about English. Not only that, but many applications also provide materials and quizzes for students. So, this can make learning English more enjoyable. The use of applications on Android smartphones as a media in learning English is not difficult[1].

1.1.English Speaking Skills

Speaking is an oral mode productive skill. Although it is like any other skills, it is very complex and complicated as it involves many more multiple abilities than just pronouncing words. Ref. mentioned that speaking is also considered the most important skill essential for communication. Speaking in an effective communication that usually constitutes successful opportunities and benefits for speakers. According to Harris (1969), there are five components in relation to speaking skills which are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. These components are generated based on two main aspects of speaking skills: accuracy and fluency. The ability to carry on a conversation by speaking the language competently is almost always set as a benchmark of successful acquisition of a particular language[5]. As noted by, the consequences of effective speaking skills will always bring about achievements in terms of the successful acquisition of the English language. It was also pointed out by that speaking skills or communication skills were in a frontward position among experiences, motivation, and academic credentials as a criterion for work employment. Therefore, speaking skills should be given the utmost priority within the context of English language

learning. Furthermore, a study by ref. emphasized that speakers' ability to be competent in acquiring the English language depend solely on them having accuracy and fluency. Both aspects are generated based on a few components of speaking skills: mainly grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. Unfortunately, speaking skills are also considered to be among the most difficult skills to develop in the field of English language teaching in the context of English as a second language (ESL) as well as a foreign language (EFL), differentiated "foreign language" and "second language" based on the learners' environment, input of language and the affective variables that influence the learning process. Hence, EFL means learning English in non-English speaking countries, whereas ESL learners regard English as having the same or even more important status as their mother tongue. According to both ESL and EFL learners are constantly encouraged to speak English during lessons, but they have no opportunities to internalize the language in real-life communications outside the classroom. Hence, learners' readiness or willingness to speak English plays an important role in developing successful English-speaking skills[6].

1.2. The Advantages of Speaking Skills

Even if there are four other skills in the English language, speaking skills are the most effective one among them as a majority of communication is done through speech. Therefore, speaking skills are the most important method of communication. There is no doubt that proficiency in each skill is necessary to become a well-rounded communicator, but the ability to speak skillfully provides the speakers with several distinct advantages. The main advantages of speaking skills are: to participate actively in pair or group activities in the classrooms ,to give a maiden and impressive speech on different occasions, to participate actively in debates and group discussions ,to develop critical thinking among the learners ,to pursue higher studies in foreign countries, to interact with people all around the globe,to promote the sale of products in the business ,to make living abroad simpler and easier , to get better employment opportunities ,to make use of the internet effectively, to perform well in job interviews ,to acquire more knowledge and travel to a foreign country .Since there are many advantages of speaking skills, the English teachers should concentrate more on these skills and give the best priority to them as they are very useful for the overall development of the ELLs' performance. Thus, the teachers have to think of various techniques and approaches of speaking skills to develop the learners' oral communication which is the most essential one in this contemporary world[7].

1.3. Application of MALL in English Language Learning

Mobile learning is an approach that uses Information Technology (IT) to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Hence, MALL is known to diversify mobile technologies for the purpose of assisting language acquisition resulting in making English language learning attainable. Numerous past studies can attest to this statement. Ref. established that it was faster and easier to learn English with the help of MALL. Over the years, the development of MALL has generated a shift in the academic environment from traditional to mobile learning. This can be seen in another study by, in which it is believed that the utilization of MALL in English language learning processes has received acceptance for the pedagogical implications in fully using Mobile Technologies for autonomous and interactive English lessons beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Comparably, ref. showed that most learners had positive feedback on the usage of MALL in English language classroom activities[6].

2. Literature Review

2.1. The significance of the speaking skill

In comparison with the teaching of the other skills, speaking is one of the more challenging teaching activities of the teacher than other skills. According to these researchers, teaching speaking is a difficult task for the teacher to help his/her students. The main reason for the statement is that a language speaker should listen to the partner with the purpose of understanding each other in the target language. Speaking tasks must be selected carefully in order to improve the speaking ability of students and to make them use the speech pattern of the language they learn. Moreover, students should be stimulated to face with intensive oral exercises that are basically intended for communication purposes, in which such activities provide confidence and motivation for oral practice. This is true not only for classroom exercises but also for use of the language outside classroom. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) demonstrated the reasons why speaking tasks are developed as follows: Communicative tasks are designed for learners

with a purpose for speaking: they are bridging an information or opinion gap; they are requiring real information or discovering the perspectives of their follow learners. Not only do these tasks appear encouraging and inspiring in the classroom, but they also provide a challenge, which reflects real life interactions[8].

2.2. The importance of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

MALL is distinguished and outperformed by its interaction and mobility, which allows pupils to learn whenever and wherever they choose. Accordingly, students cannot learn a foreign language in a formal classroom; they can also use their mobile phones to search the learning resources in unconfined places. Unlike CALL, MALL is far less expensive and more accessible as it merely requires the purchase of a mobile phone with internet access which enables users to be immersed in abundant learning resources. In addition, MALL also allows students to receive encouragement and feedback immediately from their professors. And teachers can approach students at any time to keep track of their learning progress and give corresponding tutorials when necessary. Therefore, MALL is, to some extent, considered to be the optimum solution for overcoming the temporal and geographical barriers to language learning[9].

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

This study focuses on an effect of using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in teaching and Learning Speaking in Zahedan classroom context. Therefore a quantitative data collection method was employed for this study.

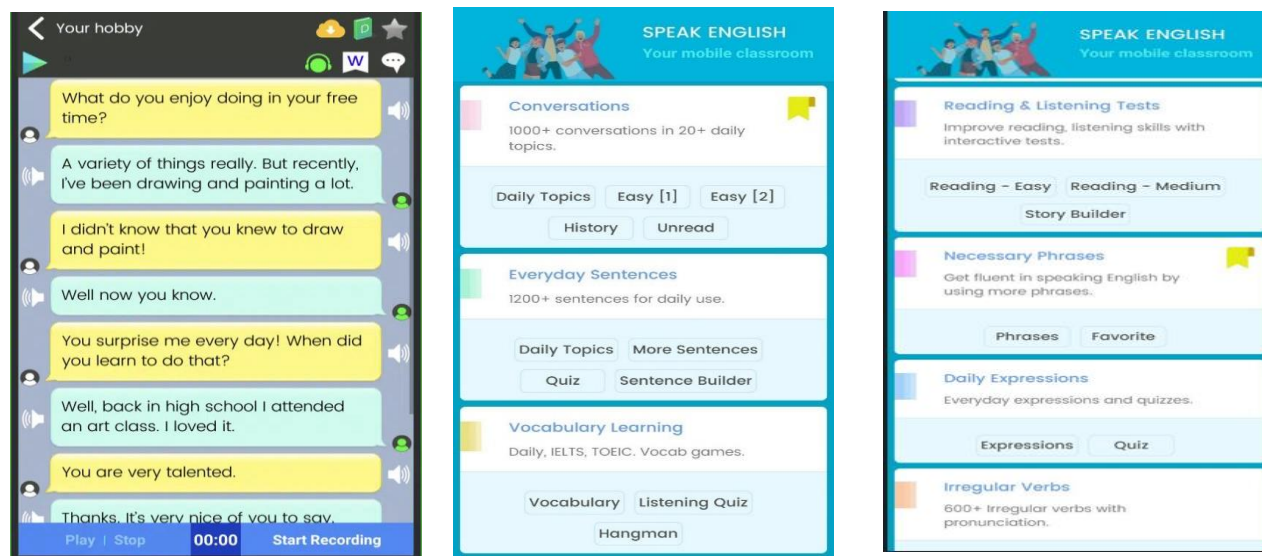
3.2 Participants

The participants of the current study were 26 young language learners in a private language teaching institute in Zahedan, Iran. The mean age of the participants was 12. Regarding previous language learning experience, all of the students had received formal English language training in the past. Participants were divided into an experimental group (N = 13) and a control group (N = 13) based on (1) their access to smartphones (mobile or tablet) and (2) to learn speaking from traditional text-based materials use on print.

3.3 Materials

As the main materials for learning English speaking, a freely available mobile application was used. In this regard, the participants installed "Speak English Fluently" is a free application which works on beginner and intermediate English conversation skills. It offers many quick sample dialogues learners can expect to hear or have in everyday life. Narrated by American English speakers, the scripts sound natural and casual. Besides the dialogues, you also get a list of common sentences and vocabulary to practice speaking, learners can record their voice as they read the transcripts or sentences, and the app will compare their version to the original. The app also has mini-lessons about idioms, common phrasal verbs and irregular verbs—all things that language learners can find confusing.

Figure (1) speaking Learning Application



3.4 Procedures

The study focused on mobile-assisted language learning intervention for speaking improvement, the Implementation involved incorporating interactive mobile applications and platforms to help learners enhance Their speaking skills. Following this, the participants completed a pre-test to assess their baseline knowledge of English speaking. The pre-test will consist of picture description and related questions covering a range of vocabulary and idiom levels which they could utilize while speaking. Two learning conditions for the experimental and control groups were Implemented and they were provided access to language learning apps that offered a variety of activities, such as ; quick sample dialogues which learners can expect to hear or have in everyday life, mini-lessons about idioms, common phrasal verbs and irregular verbs, flashcards, quizzes, voice recorder, voice analyzer, conversations, and exercises to engage then in speaking learning .In this regard, the experimental group used speaking apps on mobile devices. The control group taught speaking using Conventional methods like textbooks. The participants used the materials for 30 minutes every day during the 3 days of the week. The treatment lasted for 3 weeks, and participants were tested again to document any change. Finally, a post-test was administered three weeks later to measure the learning outcomes.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, the collected data were analyzed for descriptive statistics using SPSS. In this regard, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for the scores before and after the test. The between-subjects variable in this study was a group with two types (experimental or control) and the within-subject variable had two pre and post-test levels.

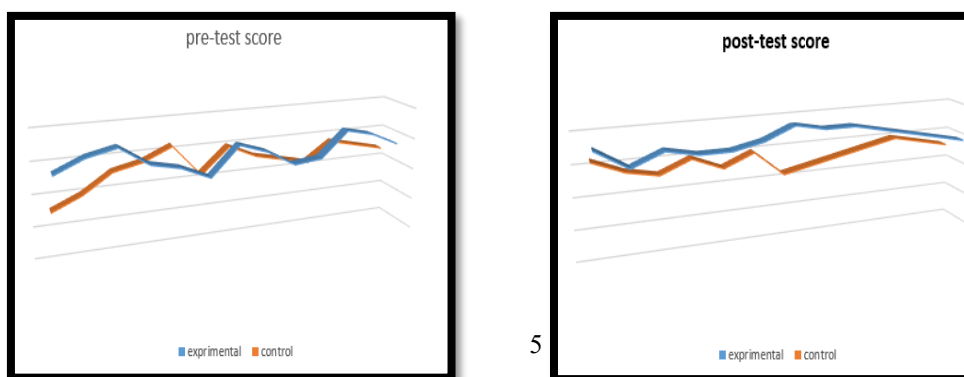
4. Result

Table 1 summarizes the results of descriptive statistics realated to the performance of the participants in the speaking in pre and post test. According to the pre-test the mean values for were 13.53 (SD = 1.24) for the experimental group, and 13(SD = 2.85) for the control group. As for the post-test, mean values were also 15.69 (SD = 1.88) and 13.61 (SD = 1.61) for the experimental and control group respectively.

Table 1-Descriptive Statistics

	Group	Mean	Std.Deviation	N
pre-test	Exprimental	13.53	1.24	13
	Control	13	2.85	13
	Total	13.58	2.89	26
Post-test	Exprimental	15.69	1.88	13
	Control	13.61	1.61	13
	Total	15.34	2.68	26

Figure (2) Line chart of scores for the Exprimental and Control Groups



The use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in teaching and learning speaking has shown positive results in enhancing student engagement, motivation, and retention of speaking. In the recent years, the incorporation of mobile devices in language learning has gained significant traction. Mobile-Assisted language learning (MALL) has emerged as a valuable tool for enhancing speaking skill in language education. Through the use of apps, online resources, and interactive platforms, MALL provides students with opportunities to practice speaking in real-life contexts. This approach enables learners to engage with authentic language materials and receive immediate feedback, Which is crucial for improving speaking proficiency. Research studies have shown that integrating MALL into speaking classes can lead to increased motivation, improved fluency, and better pronunciation among students. The convenience and flexibility of mobile devices make it easier for learners to personalize their learning experience and practice speaking skill anytime , anywhere. Educators can leverage MALL to create interactive speaking activities, facilitate peer-to-peer communication, and implement multimedia resources to enrich the learning proces. By harnessing the power of technology, teachers can create dynamic and engaging speaking lessons that cater to different Learning styles and preferences. Overall, the use of Mobile –Assisted Language Learning holds great potential for transforming the way speaking skill are taught and learned in language classrooms. By embracing this innovative approach, educators can empower students to become more confident and proficient speakers in their target language.

5. Discussion

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has become increasingly popular in recent years due to the widespread use of mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. When it comes to teaching and learning speaking skills in a language classroom, MALL offers several advantages. One of the primary benefits of using MALL in teaching speaking is the convenience and flexibility it provides to both teachers and learners. With mobile devices, learners can practice speaking anytime and anywhere, allowing for more opportunities to engage with the language outside of the traditional classroom setting. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for learners with busy schedules or limited access to in-person language learning resources . Moreover, MALL tools often incorporate multimedia elements such as audio and video resources, interactive exercises, and speech recognition technology. These features can enhance the speaking practice by providing learners with authentic language input and immediate feedback on their pronunciation and intonation. Additionally, MALL can promote learner autonomy and motivation by offering personalized learning experiences tailored to individual needs and preferences. Learners can choose their own speaking tasks, set goals, track their progress, and receive instant feedback, leading to a more engaging and interactive learning environment. This autonomy can boost learners' confidence and willingness to communicate in the target language. However, it is important to acknowledge that MALL is not without challenges. One of the key concerns is the potential distraction that mobile devices can cause in the classroom. Teachers need to establish clear guidelines on when and how to use mobile devices for speaking practice to ensure that they are used effectively as learning tools rather than distractions.

Also, considering the fact that speaking in a foreign language is an anxiety-producing experience for most learners, and students experience a great deal of anxiety when they participate in activities that require productive skills such as speaking; the results revealed that mobile learning has reduced learners' stress and embarrassment, so their motivations to engage in class discussions were increased[3].

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has the potential to revolutionize the teaching and learning of speaking skills in a language classroom. By leveraging the convenience, flexibility, and interactive features of mobile devices, teachers can create engaging and dynamic speaking activities that promote language fluency and confidence among learners .While there are challenges to consider, such as classroom management and ensuring

effective use of the technology, the benefits of incorporating MALL in speaking instruction are clear. Moving forward, educators should continue exploring innovative ways to integrate MALL into their language teaching practices to enhance the speaking proficiency of learners and foster a communicative and interactive language learning environment.

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