

Utilizing Smartphones to Enhance Students' Learning of English Language

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Abstract

Technology plays a momentous role in almost all the fields mainly far –reaching in educational field. It provides creative freedom, endless resources and learning materials .In the current scenario, students engage themselves in the recent technological advancements which not only kill their time but also entertain them all the time. So, the Teachers can take up these technological tools in their hands to inculcate English language to the younger generation instead of following the traditional method of teaching. Now-a-days, Smart phones have reached all the hands in the world including the rural people and made everything easier. By using smart phones effectively in Language classrooms, English language teachers can provoke interest among the non –native learners in learning English

Language. Smart phone is a tool which presents visually attractive materials to the students that would be very much appealing to the second language learners. Through this, the four basic communication skills (LSRW Skills) of the second language learners can be enriched and refined. Thus, this paper predominantly focuses on the pros and cons of using smart phones in learning English based on the feedback accrued from the undergraduate students.

Keywords: English Language, Classroom, Smart phones, Learning

Introduction:

In general, Technology has proved its excellence in educational field with the rationale of enriching the teaching methods through which the student's learning experience also gets enhanced. Nowadays, Some technologies that enters into market have been used effectively and successfully but some have failed. One of those technologies that was quickly adopted and implemented is usage of mobile devices specifically Smartphones in learning process.

The need to communicate effectively in the modern world is inarguable and in this context the demand of learning English as an international language among the non-native speakers of English is growing daily (Richards, 2006 as quoted in Rahman, Singh, & Pandian, 2018). Britishers and Americans sponsor English language teaching and programs for promoting English language learning (Marsh & Lange, 2000; Shamim, 2011).

A smartphone is a device which is furnished with an exceptional operating systems that combines the lineaments of a computer operating system with other lineaments of mobile phone and makes it hand held use. Nowadays, all the students possess smart phones which has become part of their everyday life. This smartphone can be used in the Language classrooms effectively by inducing interest among the students. This paper clearly brings out the pros and cons of using smart phones in learning English which is mainly based on the feedback collected from the first year students who are at their undergraduate level.

Use of Smart Phones in Language Learning:

The smartphone, one of the handy and portable devices, is built with marvelous features. It acts as a great tool in learning which is very handy paired with some of its features. It almost has strong web search engine, fast accessibility to internet, and then it lends its helping hands to many of the renowned web browsers. Smartphones have astounding features, which make them to fit into different usages and they continue growing smarter and easier in every new version. Either in the classroom environment or in the outside environment, smartphones provide massive opportunities to enrich the learning process.

Students are now more able to engage in online discussions on social media like facebook, discussion forums and they are able to practice and learnt better pronunciation through English language learning Youtube channels. These social aspects help promote collaborative learning among ESL learners (Baruah, 2012).

Nowadays, in the educational field the course syllabus is easily accessible by the students through mobile phones which in turn make the students to prepare themselves for the class. Even for checking grades of their own activities, Students use their mobile phones interestingly. So, the Instructors can prepare interactive and engaging contents which makes the students to utilize their own mobile phones for sending the responses and can make the students to interact with the content .

In the current scenario, Students prefer mobile technology in the language classrooms and also in learning a language because they consider that acquiring knowledge through mobile phones is more interesting. Subjects that students deem a challenging or even boring can be made more interesting through a video, or by using a Smart phone. The advanced technology of today enables students to equip and learn innovative things at their own pace. For example, nearly all the apps that prevail currently permit the learners for individualized

instruction. So, the Students can acquire the concept or the idea of a lesson according to their abilities and needs. This kind of teaching will also be great for the teachers as it provides him/her sufficient time to work specifically for students who requires guidance or who are struggling in learning .

Pros of Using Smartphones in Language Classroom:

Smartphones will provide a very good forum for the students to enhance all their skills. Here are the some of the advantages of using Smartphones in Language classrooms.

1. The main advantage of using Smartphones in Language classroom is that both the students and teachers can access to internet resources and can make the classroom interesting.
2. The teachers can bring out many innovative activities by using smartphones which would allow the students to expose to a world of creative ideas.
3. Through Smartphones, instant videos can be downloaded to enhance the learning experience in the classrooms.
4. Vocabulary of the learners can be enriched with the help of Smartphones .Vocabulary is the basic of language fluency. Every day, the teachers can send a vocabulary to all the students and can seek the meaning of the word. The students can try out with some answers for the word. After collecting the meaning of the word, the teacher can discuss the meaning of the word in the class. This activity would extend the vocabulary knowledge of the learners.
5. All the four basic skills (LSRW Skills) of the English language learners can be equipped through the Smartphone.

- Listening is the basic skill and it is one of the receptive skills. In order to enhance the receptive skill of the students, the teachers can share some motivating videos with the students and a questionnaire related to the video can be given in hand.1 minute time can be given to go through the questionnaire. Then the students can be allowed to answer the questions by

listening to the video through smartphones. After that, the answers can be discussed in the Classroom. These sort of activities not only enriches the Listening skills of the students but also gives them a better learning environment.

- Next skill to be focused is speaking which is one of the Productive skills. Here, the students can be allowed to watch some interesting videos or movies of their interest for some time in the language classroom with the help of smartphones. Then after some time the students can be asked to reproduce the content of the video they have listened in their own words. This would be a very good practice for the students to master their speaking skill. And google translation can be used to improve one's pronunciation. Powerpoint presentations can also be done through smartphones.
- One of the other receptive skills that everyone should concentrate is Reading skill which plays a predominant role in improving one's language. Reading improves one's vocabulary skill. In order to enrich the reading skill, the teacher can send a reading comprehension passage through some social medias and the students can be asked to answer the reading comprehension passage. After that the students can be allowed to discuss the answers among their peers and then with the teachers. Likewise, many informative and interesting passages can be shared and the students can be motivated to read a lot.
- Writing is also one of the productive skills that play a pivotal role in our everyday life. Good writing skills in English can be acquired through consistent practice and firmness. To be a splendid writer in English takes more time and practice. Smartphones offer a very good discussion board for

the learners to expand and equip their writing skill. For example, while sending message through the social medias like WhatsApp, facebook, twitter, Writing indicates its necessity. Writing is a challenging process; the extra you work to your writing the better you get it.

Thus, the smartphones can be used effectively and carefully in the Language classrooms to improve the communication skills of the students.

Cons of Using Smart Phones in Language Classrooms:

On the other hand, smart phones also encompass some disadvantages when allowed in learning atmosphere, if the content prepared by the instructor is not specific, interesting and well-designed learning activities. Sometimes, Smart phones would be a massive distraction for the students since they might easily be gaining access to private emails, social networks, or enticing themselves with non-magnificence websites. Hence, all through that time, students could no longer be aware of the class content material or discussions. The Next downside of using cell phone is that the students turn out to be too dependent on these devices to a greater volume and they may no longer use their thinking abilities. Even to answer easy questions, they may grab the mobile phones. Frequently messaging through social networks and answering unimportant calls may also deviate other students from concentrating during class time. Many features of smartphones might not be a great teaching tool since it interferes with student learning behavior.

Data Analysis:

For the data analysis, A class which comprises 45 first year professional students at their undergraduate level was chosen. Kukulska-Hulme (2010) argued that learners can be engaged in learning activities and they can be guided in a better way after exploring their current practices of learning English via Smartphones. The class consists of different degrees of students. The data analysis, defined and described in this section, is based on the responses

accrued from those selected first year students regarding the usage of the smart phones in learning English language and the report has four scales.

A - Strongly Agree

B – Agree

C – Disagree

D - Strongly Disagree

The number of responses for each item is given below.

The data analysis done was based on two major and important aspects; the students who have marked Agree and Strongly Agree indicate that they agree with the given statements while those students who have marked Disagree and Strongly Disagree indicate that they disagree with the given statement.

The statements given beneath are used to accumulate the records from the students with the intention to discover the powerful use of mobile phones in language learning.

STATEMENTS:

S.No	Statements	(A) Strongly Agree	(B) Agree	(C) Disagree	(D) Strongly Disagree
1.	Students use mobile phones for referring English Dictionary	30	5	5	5
2.	Students buy mobile phone to learn English	15	5	20	5
3	During leisure time, Students watch English videos through smartphones.	5	7	23	10
4	During leisure time, Students watch Tamil videos through smartphones.	23	10	9	3

5	English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills can be equipped through mobile phones.	20	23	0	0
6	Mobile phones can help Students to learn new vocabularies in English.	18	19	5	3
7	Students use mobile phones to translate tamil to English and English to tamil words.	25	19	2	2
8	The meaning of the English words can be understood without using a mobile phone.	7	9	10	19
9	The study-related reading materials can be scanned and saved to students' mobile phone.	20	22	3	0
10	Pronunciation and fluency can be equipped through smart phones.	30	15	0	0
11	My English teachers allow me to use mobile phone to learn English language in the classroom.	0	0	25	20

Findings of the study clearly brings out that maximum of the students prefer and use smartphones for learning English while minimum percent of students don't use smartphones. An evaluation of the findings also suggests that the mobile phones play a dominant role in college students' lives. It is also discovered that maximum of the students scan their course materials with their smart phones whilst minimum of the learners examine notes with their cell phones during the course of exams.

It is very obvious from the findings that English teachers can take in smartphones as a tool and can introduce many modern tasks related to language skills where students can use the mobilephones effectively. Most of the learners who use mobile phones have simple and limited knowledge on the capabilities of mobile technology. So, in the course of the undergraduate education, college students at all levels and branches should take the initiative to examine the basics of mobile technology. English teachers' and undergraduates' attention on navigational issues, document formats, the size of files, varieties of files, memory cards and the effectiveness of running systems can result in successful outcomes.

Conclusion:

Thus to conclude, Smartphones are possessed by the majority of college students and it offers wonderful opportunities to students and teachers equally. The Smartphones can also be taken into consideration as one of the tools to enrich teaching and learning process, but at the same time, the very same tool has few distractions and negative impacts on students. So, it should be utilized properly and positively within the Language classrooms. Basic purpose of this study was to investigate the role of Smartphone in English language learning, and students' perspective about it. On the basis of findings of this study it is concluded that Smartphones play a vital role in helping students learn English in formal as well as in informal settings as an effective educational tool. They practice communication skills independently (Kress & Pachler, 2007; Naismith et al., 2004; Okabe & Ito, 2006); also found that learners use their smartphones for their individual learning needs. Learners enjoy learning through their smartphone due to its portability and convenience of use as compared to computer or a book in hard form. Smart phones are excellent in it, but how they're utilized in Language classroom environment ought to be considered and designed carefully with a view to achieve tremendous outcomes at all times.

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