

The Impact of Using Mobile Phones on Iraqi Secondary School Students' Performance in Writing The Phonemic Transcription of English Words

Dr Muslih Shwaysh Ahmed, Professor

Imad Hayif Sameer, Assistant Professor

Mohammed Talib Yassein Al-Heeti, Assistant Instructor

College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar, Iraq.

Abstract

Technology plays a major role in our daily life. This role cannot be neglected especially in the field of education. Mobiles which are the most common devices of this technology become very necessary. Nowadays, persons cannot go anywhere without it. In Iraq, students could not take mobile with them to secondary schools or colleges before five years ago according to the instructions of the educational authorities but now they are allowed to do that. This device like others has its own advantages and disadvantages. The effect of using it appears on the youth who spend hours using it daily. This study ignores the disadvantages and focuses on the advantages of it. The effect of Mobile as a Helping Device on EFL learners' levels in writing the phonemic transcription of English words is studied in details. The sample of this study consists of two groups taken from secondary schools namely the fifth secondary school students. The first group (twenty-five female students) is taken from Al -Nahdha School for Girls while the second is chosen from Beirut Secondary School for Girls (twenty-five female students). These two schools are located in Dorra, Baghdad. This sample is intentionally chosen because most of the students do not have mobiles. Most of the Iraqi families do not let their daughters have mobiles because of the social traditions adopted and to avoid any problems due to their use. This paper aims to prove that this device plays an important role in helping students write the correct phonetic transcription of English words. It is hypothesized that Iraqi secondary school students who have mobile phones which are used as a helping device in learning English can write a better phonemic transcription of words than those who do not use them. The findings of this study validate this hypothesis since the percentages of the correct answers in the experimental group is higher than those in the control group due to the use of mobiles.

KEYWORDS: MHD, transcription, EFL learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p: 60) define social media as "internet-based applications that allow the creation and change of content which is user-generated". Social media involves a group of applications and websites that enable users to share their ideas, feelings, different contents, experiences and communicate with other users. Al -Rahmi (2013,p: 10) states that there was a rapid expansion of social media which leads to a dramatic alteration in the world. This rapid increase can be attributed to several factors such as the ease of accessibility and use, availability of mobile phones and tablets.

The sample of the study is asked to complete a questionnaire that involves five items. The first item asks if they are allowed by their parents to use mobile phones. The second is about the type of social media that they frequently use. The third asks about the time spent on these media in hours per day. The fourth is about the reason that motivates them to use the media. The fifth is about the effect of using social media on their scores. After collecting the questionnaire, the researchers worked to find out the percentages of the answers for each item. The first item shows that 65% of female students are not allowed using mobile phones by their parents. Results of the second item reveal that most of the students use Facebook messenger with a rate of 95%; while the second application is Viber and the third application is Whatsapp. The third item shows that 53% per cent of female students who are allowed to use mobile by their parents spent on social media about three to five hours per day. Results of the fourth item point out that 40% of students are motivated to use social media for communication while 60% use it to follow up art news, art stars, vloggers and ...etc. The fifth item reveals that 65% per cent of students state that social media has a negative effect on their performance and 35% per cent of them say the opposite. Moreover, a written test was made by the researchers to examine the students' ability in writing the phonemic transcription of specific words under the pressure of time.

2-Literature Review

Boyd (2008, p: 5) affirms that Facebook messenger occupies the first rank among social media which are Viber, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, QQ, WeChat and Skype. Previous studies have shown that 57% of college students use social media and 90% of this percentage use Facebook.

The effect of mobile cannot be neglected and most related studies are presented to show this effect. Chronologically, these studies are:

Helwa (2017) conducts his study to investigate the effectiveness of using this device to develop EFL listening comprehension skills and the suitable way that helps in vocabulary learning. Eighty-four students represent the sample of the study is taken from the Department of English at the Faculty of Education, Benha University in Egypt. Pre-test and post-test, self-report survey and interview are used in collecting the data. The results show that there is a significant difference between mean scores of pre-test and post-test on behalf of the post-test.

Tayan (2017) presents his study that investigates students' performance and instructors' perceptions towards mobile as assisted language learning. The sample of this study is (191) students at the first stage at Business English Program at Middle Eastern University. The data of the study are collected via questions and interviews with English instructors. The study finds out that there is a positive attitude and receptiveness towards this device.

Ahn (2018) studies the effect of this device on Korean college students to learn a language. The sample of his study consists of 675 EFL college students. The data of the study is collected by questionnaire. The results show that more than 82% of Korean students resort to mobile in the learning process.

Chakir (2018) makes an investigation to show the effectiveness of mobile phones in learning English language. The sample of this study includes 60 Moroccan high school students. By doing pre-test, and post-test to two groups, the results of the study are manifested. There is a huge difference between the two tests.

By discussing previous studies and comparing them to the present study, we note that samples differ from one study to another. Helwa (2017) has eighty-four university students; Tayan (2017) has 191 college students; Ahn (2018) contains 675 EFL college students and Chakir (2018) has 60 high school students. If we compare, we see that the largest sample is of Ahn (2018) and the minimum is the present study since it includes 50 students. As for the type of samples, all samples deal with university/ college students. While the present study and Chakir (2018) deals with secondary school students. Aim also differs among studies. Helwa (2017) aims at developing listening comprehension skills and increasing the ability of vocabularies learning of EFL learners by using mobile phones. We note that Tayan (2017), Ahn (2018) and Chakir (2018) share the same aim which is discovering the effect of mobiles on learning English as a foreign language. Also, this study shares the aim of EFL learning but in a different way because it concentrates on the phonemic transcription of English words and this hasn't been aimed by any of the previous studies. Instruments are also invested in various ways. In the study of Helwa (2017), Pre-test, post-test, self-reportsurvey and interview were used for collecting data. Tayan (2017)

used questions and an interview, while only a questionnaire was used by Ahn (2018). As Helwa study, Chakir (2018) used pre-test and post-test on both groups. The present study used a preliminary questionnaire and the main instrument is a written test.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 The Experimental Design and Participants of the Study

The researchers follow the experimental method in this study. The experimental group has been taught by using mobile phones. The control group has been taught without using mobile phones. The dependent variable is students' achievements in the written test while using mobile phones in the lesson represents the independent variable. Check Table (1) below.

Table (1)
The Experimental Design

The Groups	Independent Variable	Instrument	Dependent Variable
experimental	using mobile phones	written test	Students' scores in the written test
control	without mobile phones		

The sample of the study involves fifty female students who were chosen from two secondary schools that have a good scientific reputation in Baghdad. The first one is Al- Nahdha Secondary School for females (i.e. experimental group) and the second is Beirut Secondary School for Girls (i.e. control group). These students study the English language as a foreign language during the academic year 2019-2020. They are students at the fifth stage and they were equally distributed over the experimental and control groups. Moreover, students of both groups have been equalized according to the variable of age and their scores of English in the previous year. Besides, students of both groups are taught by the same English teacher who is a member of the teaching staff of Beirut secondary school for Girls and at the same time, he works as a lecturer of English at Al-Nahdha secondary school for Girls.

3.2 Research Instrument and its Application

The researchers conducted a written test to be the main instrument in this study. It contains a question which has twenty items. The correctly answered item is given one degree and zero for the wrongly answered one. This means that the highest degree is twenty. This question measures students' ability to pronounce words and write their phonemic transcription. Face validity of the written test was achieved via submitting it to a jury of specialists in linguistics, phonetics and

phonology. All members agreed on the validity of the instrument. As for the reliability of the instrument, test re-test method is used. Results revealed that the value of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is (0.85) and this put the instrument in the safe side.

After confirming the validity and reliability of the written test, one of the researchers started applying the experiment because he lives near the two schools of the experimental and control groups. The experiment took four weeks. Both groups were taught by the same researcher. The experimental group was allowed to use mobile phones during the lesson for instruction. Besides, the lecturer taught students how to use mobile to find answers and lessons online. On the other hand, the control group was taught consonants, vowels, diphthongs and the phonemic transcription of words according to the traditional method.

At the end of the experiment, students of the experimental and control groups were submitted to the written test on the same day and time. Before starting, students were told about the exam and how to answer the items of the exam. After carrying out the written test, the researchers collected the test papers and corrected them later. Table (2) shows the sample's scores in the written test.

Table (2)
Sample's Scores and Percentages in the Written Test

No.	Scores of the Experimental Group	Percentages Of the correct answers	No.	Scores of the Control Group	Percentages of the Correct Answers
1	17	85%	1	15	75%
2	20	100%	2	16	80%
3	18	90%	3	11	55%
4	16	80%	4	18	90%
5	12	60%	5	12	60%
6	18	90%	6	17	85%
7	17	85%	7	18	90%
8	19	95%	8	15	75%
9	20	100%	9	14	70%
10	18	90%	10	16	80%
11	16	80%	11	14	70%
12	17	85%	12	18	90%
13	14	70%	13	13	65%
14	18	90%	14	12	60%
15	20	100%	15	9	45%
16	17	85%	16	13	65%
17	13	65%	17	15	75%
18	19	95%	18	17	85%
19	17	85%	19	15	75%
20	15	75%	20	13	65%
21	17	85%	21	17	85%
22	16	80%	22	14	70%
23	18	90%	23	17	85%
24	19	95%	24	19	95%
25	17	85%	25	12	60%
Mean	17.12	85.6%	14.80		74%

4.0 Results and Discussion

According to the above Table, we note that scores achieved by the experimental group is higher than the control group. Scores of the experimental group range between 12 and 20 degrees. Besides, the mean score of the correct answers is (17.12) with (85.6%) as the mean percentage of the correct answers. On the other hand, we see that the mean score of the correct answers of the control group is (14.80) and degrees range between 9 and 19. Moreover, the mean of the percentages of the correct answers is (74%). However, this is not enough to accept or refuse the hypothesis of the study. Therefore, t-test for two independent samples has been used to achieve

the aim of this study. Results show that the mean score of the experimental group is (17.12) with a standard deviation (2.048). While the mean score of the control group is (14.80) and the standard deviation is (2.533). By comparing means, it has been found out that the calculated t-test value which is (3.561) is higher than the tabulated t-test value which is (2.021). Accordingly, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one. This means that using mobile phones through learning lessons affects on students' performance in writing the phonemic transcription of English words in favour of the experimental group. See Table (3) below.

Table (3)
Mean, Standard Deviation, and T-values of the Written Test

Groups	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-values		Sig.
					Calculated	Tabulated	
Experimental Group	25	17.12	2.048	48	3.561	2.021	0.05
Control Group	25	14.80	2.533				

The results of the previous studies like Helwa (2017), Tayan (2017), Ahn (2018), and Chakir (2018) in addition to the present study confirm the positive effect of using mobile phones in learning a language. Moreover, the result of the present study endorses the results of previous studies and vice versa.

5.0 Conclusions

The present research has arrived at the following conclusions:

- 1- Technology in general and social media, in particular, plays an important role in the field of education.
- 2- Using mobile phones by Iraqi secondary school students has good influence on the students' performance in learning English specifically in writing the phonemic transcription of English words.
- 3- Using mobile phones helps students improve their skills in speaking and reading English because of having accurate pronunciation of words which is known from writing correct phonemic transcription.
- 4- Using mobile phones and other types of social media by secondary school students will be of great benefit to them since the use of such devices is something interesting more than the textbooks available at schools.

References

- 1- Ahn, S.,K. (2018) ***Korean EFL College Students' Acceptance and Use of Smartphone Applications for English Language Learning***. UN published school of Education, Alliant International University'
- 2- Al-Rahmi M. and Othman S. ***The impact of social media uses on academic performance among university students: A pilot study***. *J Inf Syst Res Innov*. 2013; 4:1-10.
- 3- Boyd D. (2008)***Taken out of context American teen sociality in networked publics***. (Unpublished Dissertation). Massachusetts Institute of Technology affiliated to University of California: Berkeley.
- 4- Chakir, M. (2018). ***The Integration of Mobile Phones in EFL Contexts: Using Messenger Application to Learn English Vocabulary***. Unpublished thesis. Graduate school, Southern Illinois University: Edward Sville.
- 5- Helwa, Hasnaa (2017). ***Using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) Approach for Developing Prospective Teachers' EFL Listening Comprehension Skills and Vocabulary Learning***. *Journal of Research in Curriculum, Instruction and Education Technology*, 3 (4): 133-167.
- 6- Junco R. (2015) ***Student Class Standing, Facebook Use, and Academic Performance***. *J App. Dev Psycho*; 36:18-29.
- 7- ***Leading Social Networks Worldwide*** as of April 2016, ranked by a number of users (in millions). Available from: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> [Last accessed July 12, 2016]
- 8- Owusu-Acheaw M, Larson. (2015).***Use of Social Media and its Impact on Academic Performance of Tertiary Institution Students: a Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic***. Ghana: *J EducePract*: 6(6):94-101
- 9- Tayan, Bilal (2017). ***Students and Teachers' Perceptions into the Validity of Mobile Technology Implementation to Support Language Learning for First Year Business Students in Middle Eastern University***. *International Journal of Education and literacy studies*, 5 (2): 74-82.

Appendix
The Written Test

Question) Write the following twenty words in the correct phonemic transcription:

No.	Words	Phonemic Transcription	No.	Words	Phonemic Transcription
1	tough		11	table	
2	fight		12	meat	
3	sought		13	make	
4	snake		14	cut	
5	road		15	cup	
6	red		16	captain	
7	read		17	catch	
8	rode		18	caught	
9	seek		19	frighten	
10	wrote		20	taken	