The Importance of Employing Mobile Technology in the Process of Teaching English in Iraqi EFL Classrooms: A Review Article

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Abstract

Utilization technologies in teaching English as a foreign language has confirmed its significance in conveying the knowledge for both the instructors and the learners. One of these technologies used in teaching and learning is that Mobile. Mobile has changed the way of teaching from traditional approaches into most recent methods. Mobile devices as technology-based tools in education have established their potential in language teaching effectively and successfully. In this regards, teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) has become easier with the help of mobile learning. The aim of this study is to evaluate the use of mobile-based teaching and learning in English language classroom. The integration of mobiles in the process of teaching and learning English may offer more recent methods to deliver knowledge for EFL learners. Over the past few years, using different types of technology has motivated learners of English and succeeded in making learning of language live and interesting. MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), for example, is one of the most effective tool nowadays in English classes, it proved to be very helpful in the process of language learning and teaching. Accordingly, this study aims at showing the importance of integrating Mobile devices to support teaching and learning English as a foreign language. After reviewing many studies, the researchers concluded that mobiles can be helpful for learners of English.

Key words: Employing Mobiles for Teaching English

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أهمية توظيف ألاجهزة الخلوية في عملية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

أثبتت التقنيات المستخدمة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أهميتها في نقل المعرفة لكل من المعلمين والمتعلمين. واحدة من هذه التقنيات المستخدمة في التدريس والتعلم هي "الهاتف المحمول". غير الهتنف المحمول طريقة التدريس من الأساليب التقليدية إلى الأساليب الحديثة. لقد أثبتت الأجهزة المحمولة كأدوات تعتمد على التكنولوجيا في التعليم إمكاناتها في تدريس اللغة بشكل فاعل وناجح . في هذا الصدد ، أصبح تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أسهل بمساعدة التعلم عبر الهاتف المحمول. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تقييم عملية التدريس والتعلم المعتمدين على الهاتف النقال في صفوف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. استخدام الموبايل في عملية تدريس وتعليم اللغة الانلكيزية يقدم طرقا حديثة في ايصال المعرفة لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية. خلال السنوات

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القليلة الماضية ، حفزت أنواع مختلفة من التكنولوجيا متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ونجحت في جعل تعلم اللغة حيًّا وممتعًا. MALL (تعلم اللغة بمساعدة المحمول) على سبيل المثال, هي واحدة من الأدوات الأكثر فاعلية هذه الأيام في صفوف تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ، فقد أثبتت أنها مفيدة جدًا في عملية التدريس والتعليم. بناءً على ذلك ، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى أهمية توظيف ألاجهزة الخلوية في عملية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات الأساسية: الموبايل و تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

1. Introduction

With the rapid shifting from old classes into technology-based classes, teachers and learners should be able to vary their communication knowledge and approaches of teaching. The mobile phone as a tool became unavoidable communication tool that can contribute to a more holistic approach to learning. Technology supplied both teachers and students with new techniques and strategies to develop, enhance, acquire, and improve their learning and teaching process. Mobile devices cover cell phones, personal digital assistants, smart phones, tablets etc. All these devices can be used in language classrooms easily (Mehta, 2012). Al-Timimi (2018) emphasized on the role played by technology to develop foreign language learners' communicative skills in general and vocabulary in particular using website-based dictionaries. Moreover, applying portable technologies have been demanded by most of the modern learners who oftentimes are forced to study anywhere and anytime, for example, at work, in the bus or at weekends (Evans, 2008).The wireless portable devices such as IPods, MP3 players, smart phones (like Blackberry, iPhone), and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) could provide opportunities to respond to the need of this generation.

Furthermore, Bataineh and Al-Abdali (2014:160) stated that "The new forms of communication is becoming an integral part of modern life finding their place in the language classroom, offering new exciting modes of communication for engaging learners in authentic language learning experiences".Many studies have been conducted to examine the impact of technology in general and mobile technology in specific in the process of teaching and learning English. Evans (2008) believes that a distinguishable feature of mobile learning (M-learning) is the potential to study when travelling on transport.Chen, Hsieh, and Kinshuk (2008) carry aresearch on the use of mobile phones for the delivery of vocabulary materials to English learners and students enjoy using their phones because of easy access tomaterials and the ability to practice anytime and anywhere; in addition, some students like thescreen size limitations, which make the amount of content more manageable than that of otherteaching materials.

Accordingly, mobiles became a familiarized technology which is not only motivated them but also enhance them to learn foreign languages and enable them to be more competent in English. More importantly, mobile phones facilitate students' learning. They have the possibility to read, write, communicate, explore, and analyze. By using mobiles, the teaching approach became learners centered approach (Al-Abdali, 2017b).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Utilizing Technology in Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language

Using technology in education is not a new thing, what is new is how and what to use to develop EFL learners' communicative language (Abbas and Elttayef, 2019). Additionally, Instructional technologies provides the educational system with unlimited various tools and options that enabled learners and teachers in the process of language development (Julaid and Al-Abdali, 2020). The new era of using technology in classrooms creates new challenges and duties on the modern teacher. The traditional teaching of English has been significantly changed with the notable entry of technology. Technology supplies so many options as making teaching more interesting and productive in terms of improvements. The new classrooms should be a digital classrooms, digital teachers, digital students, and digital curriculum. The effect of technology has become huge in teaching and learning the language in addition to the instructor's role. In other words, the role of the instructor together with the role of the technology can lead to advanced learning results (Sharma, 2009).Elttayef (2016:39) emphasized that "With the rapid development of technology, foreign language classes are in need for adopting and utilizing different kinds of technology, in other words, technology should be brought into our classes as effective tools for second language learning and acquisition". Technology aided language learning has become a popular method of English classes, since it replaced the traditional teaching and learning with digital touch screen methods. Mobiles are the forms of the new teaching and learning methods. This opened the door for learners to get their learning outside and inside classrooms (Al-Abdali and Al-Temimi, 2018:143).

Technology has accompanied the process of language teaching and learning for many years. Cassette players andtelevision were traditional primitive technological tools, which were used in language classes as pedagogical aids.Today, when we think about technology, the first teaching aid that appears in our vision is the computer. Likewise, inthe field of English language teaching, computer is a good teaching aid, especially since it has been complementedwith the connectionto the Internet. That is why a great deal of studies has been carried out to investigate the effectsof computer-based or web-based language learning in the educational environments (Tayebinik and Puteh, 2012). Additionally, Al-Temimi (2017) stated that technology has affected the learning environment and teaching experience. Mobile devices i.e., cell phones, personal digital assistants, smart phones, tablets etc. can be easily used by learners as well as instructors in the language classroom. Technology has changed teacher's practices in teaching and learning because the classroom became more student-centered rather than teacher-centered (Bataineh & Al-Abdali, 2015).

Furthermore, using different types of authentic materials such as films, radio, TV has been there for a long time. It is fairto say that these technologies have successfully replaced the traditional teaching.Integrating technology into classroom teaching and

learning has been an important issue in the last few decades. Several meta-analyses have been conducted to examine specific modes of instruction or educational practices that promote student learning and teaching with technology. In the same vein, Lou, Abrami, and d'Apollonia (2001) examined the effects of small group versus individual instruction with technology and found that small-group learning had more positive effects than individual learning. Other meta-analyses in technology have examined topics such as the effectiveness of interactive distance education (Cavanaugh, 2001), the effect of computer-assisted instruction (CAI) on beginning readers (Blok, Oostdam, Otter, and Overmaat, 2002).Al-Abdali (2017b:273) expresses that "over the past few years, new different types of methods-technology based had brought into FL classes by many teachers depending on results of a number of researchers that emphasizing the important and the necessity of using technology in classrooms".

The combination of technology into language education has become a daily event, and the educational multimedia courseware is produced largely as reference subjects to promote English language teaching and learning (Yunus, et al., 2010). Moreover, usage of the Internet in language teaching has been considered a serious methodology. Hismanoğlua (2010) emphasized that besides its technological function, the Internet can also be used as a pedagogical tool for improving language learning and teaching.More importantly, and with the rapid development of integration science and technology into EFL classes, the emerging oftechnology and its application to support teaching and learning comes into full play and use inEnglish class as a favorable toolof investigation on English teaching model inthe new era. It's proved that technology plays a positive role in doing activities with motivation.In recent years much attention has been focused on the use of technology in classes. Identifying thevalue of technology in schools has challenged educational researchers for more than 20 years. Part of theproblem is our evolving understanding of how technology accentuates student learning. Rapid changes in thetechnology itself also hamper research. Finally, the intertwining of complex variables in such a rich environmentas a school precludes the pure isolation necessary to determine cause and effect (Baylor and Ritchie, 2002).

Rapid changes in technology have affected teaching-learning process deeply. The aim of improving educationalquality invites the question to extent to which new technology aids this process. It is known that traditionalformats are not always successful and efficient (Milleken and Barnes, 2002). New technologies offeropportunities for taking account of individual aptitude and interest. Recent studies in the area indicate thateffective use of education technology can help education system work better and more effectively (Jonassen andReeves, 1996). Use of technology in the classes gives students the chance of learning faster and morepermanent. In another survey administered by Tsou, Wang and Li (2002) a significant increase was statisticallyfound in the test scores of students in a computer

aided learning environment. This shows the positive effect oftechnology for realizing effective learning.

2.2. Mobile Approach

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) deals with the use of mobile technology in language learning. In contrast to classroom learning, in MALL there is no need for the learners to sit in a classroom or at a computer to get learning materials. In fact, MALL can be considered an ideal solution to language learning barriers in terms of time and place (Miangah and Nezarat, 2012).Among innovated communication tools, mobile phones are the most powerfulcommunication medium. It improved to bethe richesttool being used in educational operations. Learning through the mobiles enables the learners to learn in a non-classroom environment and non-curriculum when they are at home in front of their mobiles, tablets, and iPodonline or offline. However, learning through the mobile phone provides learners with the opportunity to learn when they are outside/inside classrooms or at work doing their part-time jobs. They can learn every time and everywhere they want.

The next generation wireless network environments increasingly become integrated to support anywhere,anytime connectivity for various applications like multimedia, full-motion video and high data rates withappropriate quality of service (QoS). With the evaluation of next generation network environment, mobilelearning through such environments proposes contemporary ways to support learning process over emerging mobile technology, such as mobile tablets, smart phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and much more.Thus, mobile learning allows students/teachers to access information and learning materials from anywhereand at any time. Consequently, they have chance to control the time they want to learn and from which location they want to learn (Hocanın and Iscioglu, 2014).

Theraise of mobile devices such as cell phones, PDAs, IPods, IPhones, tablets, IPads, and podcast has establisheda new era of teaching and learning that is technology-based environments. Although mobile learning is gradually being accepted in some educational settings, its advantages cannot be ignored and avoided.Mobile phones are becoming popular as many people can afford them, currently the use of mobile communication devices has gone beyond the traditional communication role that it is now used in supporting teaching and learning. In education, mobile phones have led to the evolution of new paradigm known as mobile learning (Muyinda et al, 2007).

Mobile devices integrate a series of features used in various learning environments. In some mobile learning applications currently available, mobile features are being utilized for various educational practices include the use of Short Message Services (SMS), GPS, camera, browsing, downloading, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, voice calls and gaming (Kizito, 2012; Hoppe, 2009; Cui and Wang, 2008).Mobile learning technology is more useful for doing activities outside the classroom. Such activities

enable learning to be more directly connected with the real world experiments. Moreover, learning through mobile phones outside the classroom has the advantage of better exploiting the learner's free time; even the students on the move can improve their learning skills (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009).There are several types of mobile learning devices that are in use. The following section states them in more details:

2.3. Tablet-Assisted Language Learning

The usage of mobile tablets in the learning environment can yield many benefits for students in terms of improving their motivation, collaboration, creativity and developing IT skills. The overall learning experience can be improved through audio/video mediums; hence the use of mobile tablets in such environment helps them to learn in an interactive way. Moreover, mobile tablets are rich in sources of audio/visual tools, such as charts, graphs and images. With these visual elements, learning experience becomes more engaging and fun for the students that ultimately promote them to learn and develop (Rossing, et al., 2012).

Tablet PCs which is a generation of mobile have been used to promote good teaching and effective learning for students in the early years of study.Mobiles can help the collaborative learning and groupingregardless large groups, small groups. The focus on the teaching becameone-to-many, one-to-few and one-to-one.Goral (2011) detailed the main advantages of using tablet technology: using software applications to enhance creativity and critical thinking, using digital texts and readings which lead to substantial cost savings for students, and encouraging greater interaction among students and faculty. In addition, Barton and Collura (2003) found that tabletshave advantages for improving the writing and organizational skills of highschool students, because they are able to type or handwrite stories, andhandwritten notes can also be converted to typed text.

2.4. IPad as a Tool For Education

Mobile learning is emerging as one of the solutions to the challenges faced by education. With a variety of tools and resources always available, mobile learning provides increased options for the personalization of learning. Mobile learning in classrooms often has students working interdependently, in groups, or individually to solve problems, to work on projects, to meet individual needs, and to allow for student voice and choice. With access to so much content anytime and anywhere, there are plenty of opportunities for formal and informal learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Study showed that notebooks, mobile Tablets, iPod touch, and iPads are very popular devices for mobile learning because of their cost and availability of apps(Mehdipour and Zerehkafi, 2013). Several applications of the IPod in language learning have been discussed. For example, Belanger (2005) quoted the findings of a study done in Duke University through which freshmen students used IPods to submit

their audio assignments, oral quizzes, record audio journals and obtain oral feedback from their lecturer. The activities employed by the IPods application have enhanced not only the listening activities, but also grammar and vocabulary construction and publication of students' work.

Blaisdell (2006) stated that iPods provide teachers with a chance to let their students listen to something educational for an additional 30 minutes a day on their way to or from school. The combination of using audio and images may help students stay focused and avoid distractions. Similarly, Corbeil and Corbeil (2007) indicated that iPods, with 87% of the MP3 market share, have become the most popular technology tool in our society and could therefore play an innovative role as an instructional tool.IPods application enables the practice of English language skills, for instance, voice recording and speaking/ listening exercises. Furthermore, listening to authentic materials such as songs and news in English is also possible via IPods. Not only that, writing skills can be enhanced when the instructor sends text messages and the students can read and answer those messages (Sarica & Cavus, 2009).

As a result, using technology in learning needs more time than inthe traditional one. Having this fact in mind that teachers, by using mobile technology, will have new opportunities ofadopting new approaches that embrace these technologies while teaching.These approaches which are mixed with technology may motivate and encourage students to fosterpositive attitudes towards learning.The students' use ofnew technologies as learning tools might prove to be a viable way to gain their attention inclass and to increase their motivation to learn foreign languages.

3. Conclusion

Using mobile technology in learning asa foreign language has become a real necessity and unavoidable tool nowadays. The researcher can say that the mobile varsities such as iPod and tablet has a positive effect on improving thestudentslearning and education and enhances and motivate their desire to learn English.In addition, mobile-based method is more interesting than the traditional method. It   provides them with immediate feedback, instant sharing files and e-mails, and doing duties outside or inside classrooms.More obviously, usingmobile phones in English language instruction does have a positive impact on EFL students' performance. It built interest in the learningprocess, stimulated discussion, and enhanced self-confidence of the participants.

It made even poor students more active and gavethem the chance to practice and show their abilities. Mobiles present a powerful learning environment for learners in the classroom. The use of technology promotes authentic materials in anenvironment where this input helps to prepare them for the technologicalwork place of the future.Technology in general and mobile phones in particular plays the main role in English classes. Mobile phones are now an indispensable tool in our daily life and

education. Learners depend semi-completely on technology-based learning. They expected to use new approaches-based technology in their classes instead of the traditional methods and approaches which, in their opinions, do not give them any chance to practice language.   Mobile devices support the conception of learning.Students' vocabulary acquisition was enhanced. Their attitudes towards using technology have changed into positive when they found technology very helpful and dependable. But still, technology does not neglect the role of the teachers, but assist them. It goes hand-in-hand with teachers to enable them to use new trends of teaching to achieve the teaching goals.

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