Connecting With Mobile Apps to Develop English Skills

Der Sunilkumar Hardasbhai

Research Scholar

M.A., M.Phil.,

Saurashtra University Rajkot

der.sunil@gmail.com

Abstract.

There is evidence that modern technology's use is on the rise, which has implications for how we learn and teach. This is why ICT (information and communication technology) has become vital to education. This post looks at several approaches to learning English with various smartphone apps. The watch, tablet, and smartphone are the mobile gadgets that will be utilized in this investigation. As part of the study, 38 people from Slovakia answered the questionnaire. The survey asked about the kind of mobile devices used, their locations, and how often they were used. This study also aimed to identify the mobile application types that are used and the talents (reading, writing, speaking, and hearing) employed. As to the study's findings, the smartphone is the most frequently used gadget. The information obtained shows a wide variation in the frequency with which mobile applications are utilized for English language learning. The learner's home is the most probable site for using mobile applications, and the obtained data show a wide variety of usage patterns in frequency. It is feasible to conclude that when it comes to language learning, learners prioritize hearing above everything else: reading, writing, and speaking. Based on the research findings, the participants' main language systems of interest are vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, in that order. Ultimately, it was found that programs that serve as dictionaries are the most often used. Research is needed. However, mobile apps are a widely used and successful educational tool that should be studied by academics, researchers, and educators globally. Students and language teachers will benefit from this material.

"Keywords: Mobileapplications; MALL, EFLlearner, Languageskills, Languagesystems."

1.   INTRODUCTION

Theproblemstatement.The number of individuals employing cutting-edge technology worldwide has sharply increased in the modern era. Education in and of itself needs new learning modalities due to the rapid changes occurring in society, the workplace, and education. Modern technologies are developing quickly and becoming an indispensable part of daily life. As a result, ICT (information and communication technologies) are being used widely, revolutionizing human thought and communication in almost every aspect of life [2, including education] [1, 2]. Thus, the study is needed to determine how these technologies might improve education and help EFL learners acquire the language. Importantly, these tools should be examined to help EFL learners improve their language abilities.

The acronym "MALL" (for "Mobile Assisted Language Learning") is relatively new to the world of information and communications technology. The article talks about how mobile devices may help learn a new language. Researchers have been exploring mobile-based education [3, 4] as of late. Most modern kids seem eager to learn with the help of portable technology [4]. This study investigates how second-language learners of English at universities in Slovakia are making use of mobile technology.

Analysisofrecent studies andpublications. Numerous discussions have centred on MALL throughout the preceding twenty years. It is possible to divide the MALL study into two discrete periods: before 2007 and following 2007. The 2007 release of Apple's iPhone [5] altered the course of the company's history. Smartphones with touchscreens, like the iPhone, combine the capability of a PC with a PDA. This occurrence was believed to initiate a technological revolution that would alter the "mobile game." Before this technological breakthrough, most MALL studies focused on acquiring a second language using mobile devices like cell phones, PDAs, and laptops. However, recent research has focused on mobile language acquisition via mobile devices like tablets, smartphones, and the available apps. [6].

According to Vavoula and Sharples [7], the concept of mobile learning may be shown by time and location. Therefore, any form of learning on mobile devices at any time and location is considered mobile learning. According to Kukulska-Hulme [8], there are two different interpretations of the word "mobile" in this sentence, which makes it challenging to describe mobile learning and teaching. The first method, which uses mobile technology, alludes to the pupils' constant movement; the word "mobile" itself refers to this. In a later paper, Kukulska-Hulme [9] defined MALL as "the application of mobile technologies in language acquisition, especially in situations where the portability of the device offers particular benefits."According to O'Malley et al. [10, page 6], mobile learning may be defined as "any kind of learning that takes place when the learner is not in a fixed and predetermined place" or as "learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of learning opportunities offered and provided by mobile technologies."

We concur that "MALL has the potential of fundamentally disrupting teaching and learning" [6, page 1]. Mobile devices are potent instruments that may be utilized in learning a second language.

2.   THEORETICALBACKGROUND

Even within the framework of formal instructional practice, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) may prove to be a priceless tool for supporting the development of English language proficiency. Information and communications technology is becoming an essential component of our daily lives. It is quickly taking up a significant amount of space in the curriculum [11]. It has turned out that Pegrum was right when he prophesied that "technology and education have a tightly intertwined future" [12, p. 5], virtually precisely as it is now.

Heift and Chapelle [13] claim that since the 1960s, there has been debate on using technology to enhance learning. The focus was initially on CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) strategies. However, at this point, we must change course and focus on MALL by answering questions about how contemporary learning technologies affect successful learning results.

Smartphones and tablets, among other portable electronic devices, are more widely accessible than ever. This information is consistent with another trend that shows children may learn outside of traditional classrooms: an increase in the number of applications available to users. Consequently, throughout the learning process, this results in increased levels of motivation and engagement [14].

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students can use language learning applications independently. However, teachers are still essential in guiding the students, assigning ratings, and suggesting apps that the students can use. Although the programs are useful for directing the learning process, the language instructor is still responsible forpreparing the class [15].

When students can use technology to access the materials involved in studying English both within and outside the typical classroom environment, it opens up new possibilities for language acquisition. Unsurprisingly, kids may benefit academically from using technology like word processing programs, multilingual dictionaries, and the Internet [14].

Learner-centred pedagogy has a place in the context of learning through technology, according to Jewell [16], as it motivates students to participate more actively in the educational process. Although there are some potential benefits to using technology in the classroom, there are also some inherent difficulties. While integrating technology with language learning is essential, it must also be limited to ensure that it is a useful

tool rather than "swallowing up" the entire educational process [14]. This suggests that in regular, on-the-job learning, technology does not dictate education, and education does not dictate technology. O'loughlin, Barton, and Ngo [17, page 301] state that there are several clear benefits to using mobile technology in the classroom, including the device's flexibility and the capacity to control the content being delivered more effectively. These offer a range of chances to teach pupils at different levels of engagement.

A paper by Carenzio, Triacca, and Rivoltella[18] discussed how using tablet PCs with English teachers might improve the learning process. By and large, educators viewed tablets as helpful educational tools that could be used to improve and promote collaborative learning.

Page 61 of [19] The results of Palloff and Pratt indicate that "[m]obile technology is not a fad or trend that will eventually disappear from the technical scene. Mobile learning offers a window into the direction that educational technology is headed; it has the power to transform how we teach and learn completely. Students canbecome lifelong learners who will remember the knowledge they have acquired via this technology."

How a person learns a mobile language is influenced by the user and the learning environment. Students must be directed and supported to have the best learning experience with mobile devices [4, p. 10].

According to Quing[20], the following enhancements to mobile learning strategies are available:

Clear instructions, extra homework to help students practice the linguistic systems and abilities, and simple mobile device communication between teachers and students.

1. Personalized learning aims to close the educational gap between students and share all learning resources with them.

2. mobile gadgets are already causing significant shifts in various facets of life, including education. The tourist industry is one of these enterprises. As a result, academics and researchers need to carefully evaluate mobile devices and conduct in-depth research on how the gadgets influence language learning.

3. RESEARCHMETHODOLOGY

3.1. Researchobjectives

This study will investigate the following issues: Which mobile devices, locations, and how frequently do EFL students use mobile applications to improve their English language skills? Learners of English as a foreign language who use mobile applications for English concentrate on which skills and systems? Which English language learning applications are the most popular among EFL students?

To fulfil the prerequisites for this study, mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches were selected. These portable devices are extremely compact and lightweight. MALL research may also use personal digital assistants (PDAs), netbooks, and laptops. Even though they were "mobile," certain gadgets did not meet the requirements of our investigation. In addition, some people believe that portable computers and netbooks have reached the end of their useful lives.

3.2. Researchmethods

A questionnaire was chosen to be the data collection technique utilized to carry out this investigation. In the context of this investigation, a questionnaire in an electronic format was used. Forms in Google Docs were used to make it, and ten elements were included. In all, 47 replies were gathered; 9 of the answers had to be discarded because they were improper. When all was said and done, there were 38 replies remaining for the questionnaire's analysis.

3.3. Researchparticipants

Out of the total of 38 study participants, there were 28 female respondents (73.7%) and ten male EFL respondents (26.3%). Students comprised 30 of the total participants; 7 (18.4%) were enrolled in high school; 14 (36.8%) were pursuing their first degree at a university; 8 (21.1%) were pursuing their second degree at a university; and 1 (2.6%) was pursuing their third degree at a university. Eight people who took the poll (21.1%) admitted that they did not now engage in academic pursuits. Ages ranged from 16 to 32 years old among the participants, with 22.3 being the mean age.

In addition, we were curious about the respondents' overall level of English proficiency. The questionnaire was designed for those who speak English at any CEFR level. Twelve participants, or 31.6% of the total,

reported having a B1 CEFR level of English proficiency; 14 participants, or 36.6% of the total, reported having a B2 CEFR level of English proficiency; 11 participants, or 28.9%, reported having a C1 CEFR level of English proficiency; and one person, or 2.6%, reported having a C2 CEFR level of English proficiency.

4. "THERESULTSANDDISCUSSION

Questionno.1: Ioften learn English using mobile applications rather than traditional forms of studying (e.g., books, languagecourses, etc.).

This research aimed to investigate whether or not students of English as a Foreign Language spend more time with traditional education or mobile apps. According to the findings, 16 participants (or 42%) increased the frequency with which they learned English using mobile applications. Fourteen of the respondents, or 37%, said that they disagree with this statement, with the implication being that they prefer to acquire English through alternative study methods. I don't know what was selected as a response option for this question by 8 participants (21%).

IlearnEnglishmoreoftenusingmobileapplicationsthantraditionalformsofstudying.
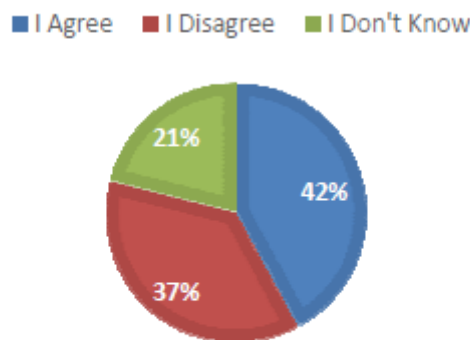

Figure 1.Ways of learning English

Therefore, the responses to question number one give the impression that MALL may be gaining more and more favour among students of English as a foreign language.

Questionno.2: I use these mobile applications for learning English.

The responses to the second question were categorized according to whether the use was found in a dictionary. Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Google Translate, and DIC-o Slovak-English are among the programs included in the first category, which also includes all of the other dictionaries included in the responses. This category accounts for 68% of the total. Memrise, the English Grammar Test, and Duolingo were the only mobile applications besides dictionaries mentioned in the replies. They constitute 32% of all English-learning apps designed for mobile devices.
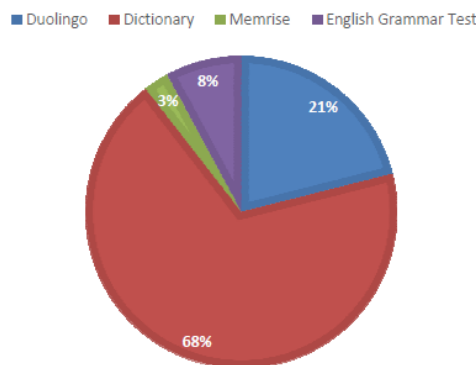

Figure 2. Mobile applications used for learning English

Each application was obtained from Google Play and tested on an Android mobile device. Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Google Translate, and DIC-o Slovak-English Dictionaries may be downloaded free from the shop's website. Several of these applications provide premium upgrades that may be purchased for an additional price every year. Because each dictionary app offers unique features and capacities, users are free to select the one that best suits their needs.

Questionno.3. I use mobile applications for learning English (frequency).

Using mobile apps to study English can be done daily (16%), every other day (21%), once a week (18%), once every two weeks (11%), once a month (5%), or seldom (29%). Thus, the responses show a variety of mobile app usage for English language education.

I use mobile applications for learning English

Legend: Every Day, Every Other Day, Once a Week, Once in Two Weeks, Once a Month, Occasionally

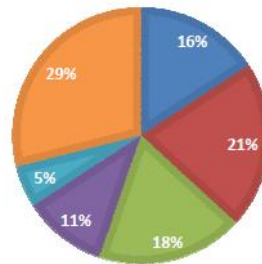Pie chart values: 16%, 21%, 18%, 11%, 5%, 29%

Figure 3. Frequency of using mobile applications for learning English

Questionno.4. I usually use mobile applications for learning English on this operating system.

Both the application and smart device markets are growing. The study found that 26 students (68%) use smart devices powered by Google's Android operating system, and 11 use Apple products (29%). One uses Microsoft's Windows operating system (3%). Android smartphones seem more popular since they are cheaper and provide more apps in a more user-friendly fashion.

I usually use mobile applications for learning English on this operating system
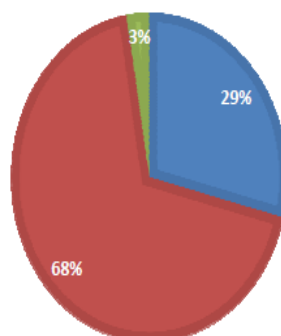
Legend: iOS, Android, Windows

Pie chart values: 3%, 29%, 68%

Figure 4. Operating systems used for mobile English learning

Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal
www.vidhyayanaejournal.org
Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

Questionno.5. Order the types of devices on which you use mobile applications for learning English.

The respondents gave their mobile devices a score between one and three, with one representing the most used and three representing the device used the least. The smartphone is the piece of technology that is utilized the most for MALL training (value one was picked by 32 of the 38 respondents), followed by the tablet (value 2) and the wristwatch (value three was selected by 31 of the 38 respondents).

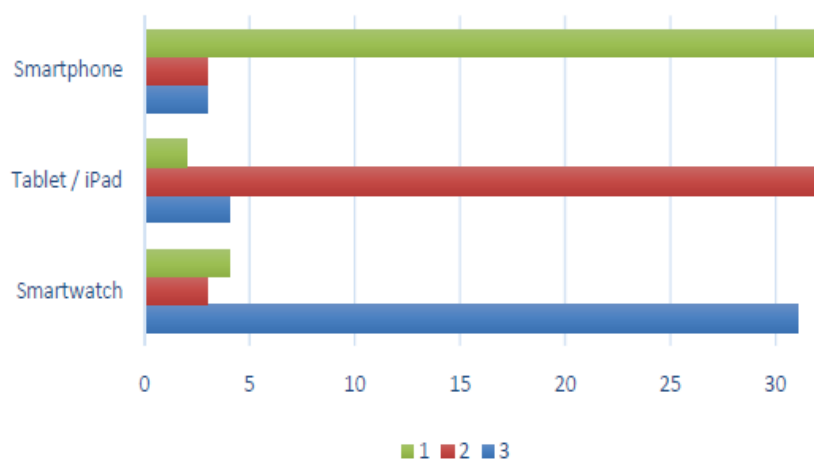**Q:5 Order the types of devices on which you use mobile applications for learning English**

Figure 5. Types of devices used for mobile English learning

Questionno.6. Order the places where you use mobile applications for learning English most often.

Respondents were given a choice between three available choices. Participants were asked to rank the circumstances in which they use mobile applications for English learning, with 1 being the most frequent use and 3 representing the least frequent use. The findings indicate that EFL students utilize language-learning programs the most at home (20 out of 38 respondents), followed by at school or work (21/38 respondents), and lastly, when commuting (23/38 respondents).

Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal
www.vidhyayanaejournal.org
Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

Q:6 Order the places where you use mobile applications for learning English most often
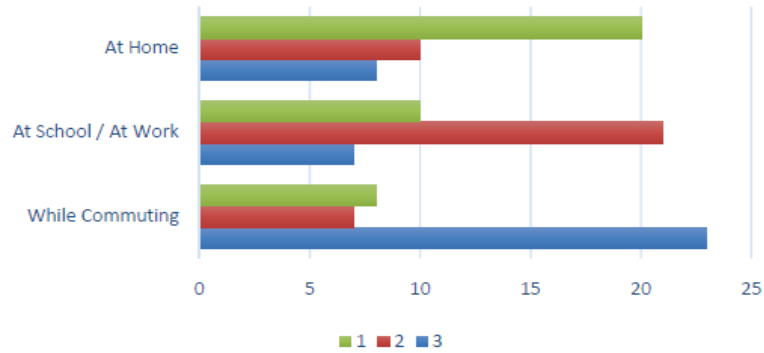

Figure 6.1 Places used for mobile English learning

Questionno.7. Order the Englishs kills you focus on while learning English employing mobile applications.

The currently considered apps might concentrate on one of the four skills or work on various capabilities.

The participants scored their English skills on a scale from 1 (most time spent) to 4 (least time spent) when studying English using mobile applications. The higher the number, the more time the participant spends on that particular English ability. The findings indicate that students of English as a foreign language place a higher value on hearing (13 out of 38 respondents), reading (13/38), writing (12/38), and speaking (14/38).

Q:7Order the English skills you focus on while learning English through mobile applications
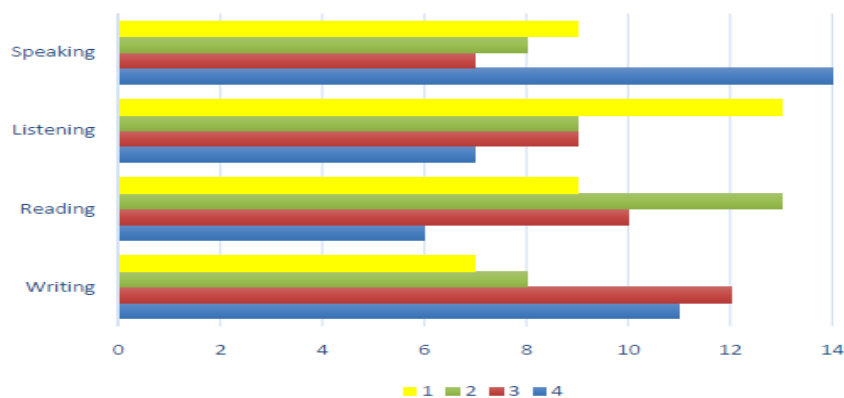

Figure 7.2 English skills preference in mobile learning

Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal
www.vidhyayanaejournal.org
Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

Questionno.8. Order the systems of English you primarily focus on while learning English through mobile applications.

This research aimed to determine which aspect of English as a foreign language students study the most when utilizing mobile apps. The participants ranked each method from one to three, with one being the most difficult to learn and three being the simplest. To accomplish the goals of this research, phonology, grammar, and lexicon were all utilized.

24 of the 38 respondents indicated value one as their primary concentration, which indicates that the vocabulary system is the primary focus for English language learners. 16 of the 38 respondents ranked grammar as the second most essential system (value 2). In contrast, 20 respondents ranked pronunciation as the third most important system (value 3).

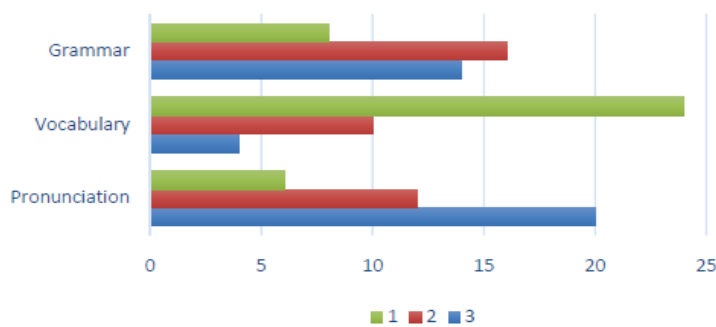**Q:8 Order the systems of English you primarily focuson while learning English through mobile applications**

Figure 3. English systems preference in mobile learning

Questionno.9. Using mobile applications for learning English is an effective method of developing language skills.

84% of EFL students believe that mobile applications are effective aids for learning English, compared to 16% who have a negative or indifferent opinion.

Q:9 Using mobile applications for learning English is an effective method of developing language skills
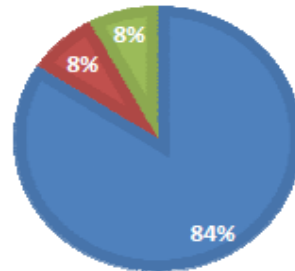
Figure 4. Effectiveness of mobile English learning

Questionno.10. Mobile technologies for teaching and learning English should be used in English lessons at school.

The use of mobile technologies in classroom settings and individual study will soon become essential. According to the research findings, a variety of technologies may be classified: 28 of the respondents from the English class at the school agree with this statement, which accounts for 74% of the total. In comparison, 4 (10%) disagree, and 6 (16%) are unsure.

Q:10Mobile technologies to learn and teach English should be used in English lessons at school
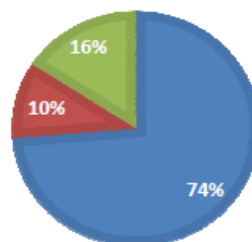

Figure 10. Use of mobile technologies at English school lessons

4.CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

According to the survey, smartphones, tablet PCs, and wearables are the most common mobile all-in-one (MALL) gadgets. The younger generation cannot fathom the idea that making phone calls is the primary function of mobile phones. Smartphones' capabilities include making and receiving phone calls, sending and receiving text messages, accessing the Internet, listening to music, watching movies, taking pictures, recording videos, playing games, working, serving as a navigation system or learning aid, and more. These straightforward capabilities are just the beginning. Tablet PCs may be more "powerful" than smartphones. They may offer a larger touchscreen, but using a tablet PC is more difficult than using a smartphone or a wristwatch. Because of their mobility and adaptability, smartphones are an excellent choice for MALL travel. Following that, this article attempted to determine which MALL site is the most frequented by students learning English. According to the survey results, English as a Foreign Language students prefer to study at home using mobile apps. The personalized learning environment allows students to become more immersed in the target language. This enables people to organize their time better spent studying, which results in a more relaxed atmosphere for education [21].

The use of mobile apps for the learning of the English language was also investigated. The use of mobile applications for English language instruction differed significantly among the samples. The use of MALL to acquire English is not common, and it appears that this is the case in other countries as well, which may have contributed to this outcome.

The second objective was determining which abilities and conceptual frameworks EFL students concentrate on the most when using MALL. According to the data, children place listening as their top priority, followed by reading, writing, and speaking. The first of the four abilities, listening, is the one that is seen as the most essential to become proficient in. The acquisition of linguistic competence cannot exist without it. Listening to podcasts or completing in-app exercises that are read aloud by a native speaker are two ways that mobile applications that teach foreign languages might improve listening abilities. There are a great many more options. Students of English as a Foreign Language can improve their listening skills by watching English videos, listening to foreign radio broadcasts online, watching live streaming of movies or television shows on their mobile devices via multimedia applications, or using social networking platforms in English. None of them are for learning a language specifically."

Students learning English as a Foreign language focus on vocabulary in linguistic systems. Most students find that using dictionaries helps them enhance their language skills. The majority of pupils place a significant emphasis on developing their vocabulary. Speakers who use language that is not acceptable have a lower chance of being understood in comparison to speakers who utilize good grammar.

This research came to a close by examining the many English language learning apps available for mobile devices. According to the collected data, students' most popular translation tools are Google Translate, Merriam-Webster, Oxford, and DIC-o Slovak-English Dictionary. Following that, students practice their English grammar with the help of Duolingo, Memrise, and the English Grammar Test. The student is the only one who may choose an application that corresponds to their educational objectives.

According to the findings of this study, students of English as a Foreign Language enjoy learning with technological aids. As a result of these discoveries, educators, researchers, and academics worldwide are investigating the implications of mobile technology.

Future studies with a bigger sample will be of great interest to language teachers and students, and they will also be relevant to the world we live in today. Mobile devices appear to play a significant part in language acquisition. It's possible that other research techniques, like observation or testing, will give greater clarity.

In today's technologically advanced environment, mobile applications for learning English are fascinating and on the leading edge of what's possible. Discussions on modernizing educational systems are taking place worldwide, including in Slovakia. A few problems with using mobile devices in Slovakia for language learning need to be fixed.

REFERENCES

[1] Marcial,D.(2017).ICTSocialandEthicalCompetencyamongTeacherEducatorsinthePhilippines.*InformationTechnologiesandLearningTools,57*(1),96-103.Retrievedfromhttps://journal.iitta.gov.ua/index.php/itlt/article/view/1533/1137

[2] Vaskivska,H.,Kosianchuk,S.,&Skyba,H.(2017).DidacticPossibilitiesofInformationandCommunicationTechnologiesintheDevelopmentofEducationalEnvironmentinUpperSecondarySchool.*InformationTechnologiesandLearningTools,60*(4),17-27.Retrievedfromhttps://journal.iitta.gov.ua/index.php/itlt/article/view/1790/1228

[3] Bugaychuk,K.(2012).MobileLearning:EssenceandModelsofIntroductioninEducationalProcessofHigherEducationalEstablishmentsMiaofUkraine.*InformationTechnologiesandLearningTools,27*(1).Retrievedfromhttps://journal.iitta.gov.ua/index.php/itlt/article/view/619

[4] Shyshkanova,G.,Zaytseva,T.,&Frydman,O.(2017).MobileTechnologiesMakeEducationapartofEverydayLife.*InformationandLearningScience,118*,570-582.https://doi.org/10.1108/ILS-03-2017-0019

[5] Kim,S.(2014).AStudyonAdoptionFactorsofKoreanSmartphoneUsers:AFocusonTAM(TechnologyAcceptanceModel)andUTAUT(UnifiedTheoryofAcceptanceandUseofTechnology).*AdvanceScienceandTechnologyLetters,57*,27-30.http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/astl.2014.57.07

[6] GodwinJones,R.(2017).SmartphonesandLanguageLearning.*LanguageLearning&Technology,21*(2),3–17.Retrievedfrom:http://www.lltjournal.org/item/2995

[7] Vavoula,G.,&Sharples,M.(2002).KLeOS:APersonal,Nobile,KnowledgeandLearningOrganisationSystem.InMilrad,M.,Hoppe,UandKinshuk(Eds.)*ProceedingsoftheIEEEInternationalWorkshoponMobileandWirelessTechnologiesinEducation*,Sweden,pp.152-156.

[8] KukulskaHulme,A.(2009).WillMobilelearningchangelanguagelearning?*TheJournaloftheEuropeanAssociationforComputer-AssistedLanguageLearning,ReCALL,21*(2),157-165.https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344009000202

[9] Kukulska-Hulme,A.(2013).Mobile-assistedLanguageLearning.InC.Chapelle   (Ed.)

*TheencyclopaediaofAppliedLinguistics,*pp.3701-3709.NewYork:Wiley.

[10] O'Malley,C.etal.(2003).*GuidelinesforLearning/Teaching/TutoringinaMobileEnvironment*.PublicdeliverablefromtheMOBILearnproject(D.4.1).

[11] Khubyari,L.&Narafshan,M.(2016).AstudyontheImpactofMALL(MobileAssistedLanguageLearning)onEFLLearners'ReadingComprehension.*InternationalJournalofEnglishLanguageTeaching*,4(2),58-69.Retrievedfromhttp://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/A-Study-on-the-

[12] Impact-of-MALL-Mobile-Assisted-Language-Learning-on-EFL-learners----Reading-comprehension.pdf[12]Pegrum,M.(2009).*FromBlogstoBombs*.Crawley:UWAPublishing.

[13] Heift,T.&Chapelle,C.A.(2012).LanguageLearningthroughTechnology.InS.Gass,andA.Mackey(Eds.)*TheRoutledgeHandbookofSecondLanguageAcquisition,*pp.555-569.NewYork:Routledge.

[14] Alduwairej,M. (2014).*Attitudes Towards theUse ofTechnology AmongtheCollegeStudents WhoStudyEnglishasaSecondLanguage(ESL)*.ETDArchive:ClevelandStateUniversity.Paper824.89p.

[15] Kim,H.,&Kwon,Y.(2012).ExploringSmartphoneApplicationsforEffectiveBobile-AssistedLanguageLearning.*Multimedia-AssistedLanguageLearning,15*(1),31-57.

[16] Jewell, M. (2006).Real-WorldContexts,SkillsandServiceLearningforSecondarySchool-LanguageLearners.InE.HansonSmithandS.Rilling(Eds).*Learninglanguagesthroughtechnology*.Alexandria,VA:TESOL

[17] O'loughlin,A.,Barton,S.,&Ngo,L.(2013).UsingMobileTechnologytoEnhanceTeaching.InZ.BergeandL.Muilenburg(Eds.)*HandbookofMobileLearning*,pp.293-306.NewYork:Routledge.

[18] Carenzio,A.,Triacca,S.,&Rivoltella,P.(2014).EducationTechnologiesandTeacher'sProfessionalDevelopment.TheProjectMotus(MonitoringTabletUtilizationinSchool)RunbyCredit.*REM–ResearchonEducationandMedia,6*(1),25-38.Retrievedfromhttp://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/rem_en/article/view/1075/1045

[19] Palloff,R.&Pratt,K.(2013).*LessonsfromtheVirtualClassroom:theRealitiesofOnlineTeaching*.Oxford:JohnWiley&Sons.

[20]   Qing,X.(2016).ABriefStudyonEnglishAutonomousLearningAbilityBasedonMobileLearninginEFLCurriculum.*CanadianSocialScience*,*12*(11),114-118.

[21]   Markiewicz,J.&Petersen,S.(2009).*PALLAS:PersonalizedLanguageLearningonMobileDevices.*FifthIEEEInternationalConferenceonWireless,Mobile,andUbiquitousTechnologyinEducation,pp.52-59.ISSN0-7695-3108-3/08*The textofthearticlewasacceptedbyEditorialTeam25.05.2018*