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Editor Speech of IC - BTI

International Conference is the 11th international interdisciplinary peer reviewed conference which publishes works of the scientists as well as practitioners in the area where UBT is active in Education, Research and Development. The UBT aims to implement an integrated strategy to establish itself as an internationally competitive, research-intensive institution, committed to the transfer of knowledge and the provision of a world-class education to the most talented students from all backgrounds. It is delivering different courses in science, management and technology. This year we celebrate the 21th Years Anniversary. The main perspective of the conference is to connect scientists and practitioners from different disciplines in the same place and make them be aware of the recent advancements in different research fields, and provide them with a unique forum to share their experiences. It is also the place to support the new academic staff for doing research and publish their work in international standard level. This conference consists of sub conferences in different fields: - Management, Business and Economics - Humanities and Social Sciences (Law, Political Sciences, Media and Communications) - Computer Science and Information Systems - Mechatronics, Robotics, Energy and Systems Engineering - Architecture, Integrated Design, Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Infrastructure - Life Sciences and Technologies (Medicine, Nursing, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Phycology, Dentistry, and Food Science),- Art Disciplines (Integrated Design, Music, Fashion, and Art). This conference is the major scientific event of the UBT. It is organizing annually and always in cooperation with the partner universities from the region and Europe. In this case as partner universities are: University of Tirana – Faculty of Economics, University of Korca. As professional partners in this conference are: Kosova Association for Control, Automation and Systems Engineering (KA – CASE), Kosova Association for Modeling and Simulation (KA – SIM), Quality Kosova, Kosova Association for Management. This conference is sponsored by EUROSIM - The European Association of Simulation. We have to thank all Authors, partners, sponsors and also the conference organizing team making this event a real international scientific event. This year we have more application, participants and publication than last year.

Congratulation!

Edmond

Hajrizi, Rector of UBT and Chair of IC - BTI

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THE APPLICATION OF SMARTPHONES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING – SOME NEW INSIGHTS

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Abstract: Nowadays, smartphones are promoted as a very important tool of modern technologies, which is perceived and practiced by the young population, in our country and in the world, in which a particularly significant place is occupied by university students. Within this paper, the meaning, role and application of smartphones in the study of the English language in the higher education system is highlighted. The application of smartphones in the higher education process is indisputable, but in the conditions of individual universities in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is insufficiently researched. The model case presented in this paper has the function of popularizing the smartphone among university environments as a tool for learning English by students as recipients on the one hand and professors on the other. The University “Goce

Delchev" in Shtip was taken as a target, where students from different faculties would express their experience in the application of smartphones in the study of the English language. The isolated hypotheses and the series of questions that emerge as models from the approach of affirming these extremely significant modern tools trace the educational path in the contemporary study of the English language at higher education institutions.

Key words: New technologies, smartphone, higher education, English language learning

Introduction

Modern technologies play an important role in learning English, both in the world and in our country. They enable rapid progress in teaching and learning in University environments since our students belong to the generation of digital native and are surrounded by technology.

Different technology tools enable teachers as well as students to transmit and receive data worldwide without having to rely on traditional methods used in the past. One of the latest technological tools that students can use in their learning are smartphones. Smartphones have become one of the tools that can be used in education because most students use them in everyday life. Using smartphones to learn and exchange ideas online is a new trend in the twenty-first century. This trend allows teachers to teach and get what they want through innovative ways. Most importantly, students are enthusiastic about using their mobile phones in everyday events as most of them have new and updated smartphones in order to make calls, play games, buy and sell things, and chat with others through social media apps such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. They believe that mobile technologies as well as many other technological tools have many advantages that make them up to date with current topics around the world. One of the advantages of smartphones for students is to use them when learning foreign languages.

Studies indicate that the use of smartphones can improve the process of teaching and learning English (Kessler, 2007; Mahmud and Abdulah, 2017)). According to Alrefaai (2019), learning through smartphones makes the language learning process more attractive. It builds their awareness through interaction with other students. Many researchers cite some advantages of using smartphones in learning, such as flexibility, portability, and easy access to learning materials (Alrefaai, 2019; Kukulska-Hulme and Pettit, 2009 & Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Another key fact to remember is that, the features of smartphones can make the learning process more meaningful and convenient Papadakis (2018). Language learning is a continuous learning process that requires some new tools to be easy and successful, such as integrating some technological tools to "motivate students as well as teachers to do their traditional work in a variety of attractive ways." (Ta'amneh, 2017). Using smartphones and their learning applications can help students and teachers develop and improve

the educational procedures needed for learning and teaching, and provide useful ideas that encourage their students to learn better (Cui and Wang, 2008; Kizito, 2012; Wang, 2017). They can use them when listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, they can share information with their peers and others around the world without looking for traditional ways to test their learning.

In the context of the above goes the fact that the number of smartphone users worldwide today exceeds three billion and is projected to grow further by several hundred million in the next few years. China, India and the United States are the countries with the largest number of smartphone users, with a total of 1.46 billion users. Mobile phones are no longer just for communication between two people. The latest generations of mobile phones (smartphones) have many functions, as well as computers, touch screen, Internet access and operating system capable of running various applications. They provide people with a wide range of online activities, such as surfing the Internet, email, video games, gambling, accessing social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

Smartphones, through appropriate applications, can assess and monitor student progress. Specifically, students using smartphones can measure their own progress by evaluating themselves in four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Feedback can then be collected so that they can improve their weaker areas. Progress in English can be fully automated with smartphones. The use of these devices provides an opportunity to accurately measure the progress of English language students, highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses in attending classes.

Modern smartphones definitely offer great opportunities in the technological and electronic development of English language learning in different environments and at different levels. One of the main questions is the situation with this technological progress in the Republic of North Macedonia, and in that context at our universities. It is known that students largely own smartphones, but what is their application in the basic orientation of students in the teaching process is still poorly researched and insufficiently known. This is the situation with the students at the University "Goce Delchev" in Stip, which was certainly a challenge and an occasion to approach the preparation of such a scientific paper that will provide legal information on the situation with the use of modern telephones in learning English at the University "Goce Delchev" in Stip with special emphasis on students and teachers from the Faculty of Philology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research will be conducted in the field of English language teaching and the application of smart technologies in the process of teaching English in higher education. The classical way of learning languages has gradually shifted over time to a mixed way of learning where the use of computers has become more practiced, the possibility of online learning through the use of smart platforms and more sophisticated modern tools have emerged in recent times. The use of different learning platforms for English language teaching has become necessary and more pronounced in

recent years, especially during the pandemic where the only way of learning between teachers and students was online communication. It was also an opportunity to popularize the need for new technologies worldwide in almost all areas of life, and of course in the teaching process and the study of English. In the application of all modern tools available to students, lately smartphones have become more attractive that provide wide possibilities of communication, learning, navigation and more. This means that the technology has suffused each aspect of life. Subsequently, the field of education has additionally encountered this impact of technology in an incredible manner.

We would like to emphasize that today smart phone is one of the essential things in person's life that plays an enormous role and assist in the everyday activities. It is interesting to note that International Society for Technology in Education (Ramadani and Xhaferi, 2020) recommends and encourages students to use smartphones and other alike technologies more intensely to meet objectives set out for university students and teachers enabling them to utilize the technologies for education, communication, innovation, information research and collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking purposes in highly professional manner.

Mobile Learning makes adapting increasingly private and individual issues just as it makes learning conceivable in formal and casual circumstances. The utilization of mobile learning can be of any sort; however when it comes to language learning, mobile learning technologies, for instance, mobile phone or smartphone is being used for different purposes and from individuals of irrespective of nationality, geographical, social and educational background.

Wang (2017) believes that using mobile gadgets like smartphones for learning languages is now very common in students to so to investigate whether smartphone really helps students in learning English or not, additional studies should be conducted. Students of today are technology addicted and use several learning Apps on their smartphones these days

English language learning Apps available on smartphone connected with internet has made learning easy for students so researchers are also taking interest in knowing the potential of smartphone for learning English (Nomass, 2013). Smartphones are now not only used for the basic purpose of communication but also as an effective learning tool as they have all the features of computers inbuilt in them. The latest studies explored the perspective of the students about learning English via Smartphone at university level as perception reflect people's attitude and acceptability towards something and it effects their decisions too.

Mobile Learning makes learning more private and individual matter as well as it makes learning possible in formal and informal situations. Students are found using smartphone for learning translation and retranslation, reading online books, and practicing their communication skills via smartphones (Kukulaska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). As smartphone offers private learning opportunities in the same way it offers collaborative learning opportunities too.

Research in the field of application of modern tools in the teaching process and the study of English will continue to be a modern trend that

will contribute to new achievements in this field. It will also mean raising the quality of learning modern English, which is the main reason for the preparation of this doctoral thesis, which will be completely focused on researching the role of modern smartphones in studying at university environments.

THE BENEFITS OF USING SMARTPHONES

The application of smart technologies is a challenge in every area of living and practicing in the modern world. This technological progress is becoming a necessity in the study of English, where lately good results have been noticed, which refer to both students and professors who are more and more often pushing modern tools for teaching purposes. Specifically, over time, teaching practices have renewed because now in the current century learning has become a social and mobile activity. New research will show students how smartphones play an important role in learning English. These studies would also show how students use smartphones to develop English language proficiency, their interest in using learning applications, their learning activities, and the use of forms. It should also be noted that Graham (2009) called mobile learning a harbinger of future learning. The researchers also compared mobile learning with conversation and activity-based learning. Teachers need an appropriate pedagogical framework to use the smartphone to learn lessons in a better way (Kern, 2013).

Kukulska-Hulme (2010) argued that students could be involved in learning activities and that they could be better guided after exploring their current English language learning practices through smartphones. These studies are important because their results will contribute to the research of mobile learning, which is the newest field of research in this era and it is necessary to conduct additional studies in this field. If we consider the practice and knowledge of the use of mobile phones in learning English within our country, even regionally, are not yet at a higher level, then the realization of the goals within this research would be a significant contribution and basis for future research in this field. These studies should emphasize that they will be useful for students, teachers, researchers and ELT practitioners to get a clear picture of the situation of how the smartphone helps in learning English. Students will learn how others use smartphones to learn English in and out of the classroom, and learn about and explore new learning apps on their smartphone.

Generally, the smartphones are universal, so researchers can now incorporate them into their research to explore their potential for teaching aid. Some research has shown that smartphone ownership is high among university students, and they use it for a variety of purposes, including personal and academic use. However, the available research does not conclude enough educational implications and recommendations on how to use these devices for learning purposes which would certainly be part of the research questions within this study.

RECENT STUDIES

The trend of using smart phones in the higher education process has recently been progressing, both in our country and more broadly in Europe and the World, as indicated by several studies conducted on a suitable sample of surveyed students, at one or more universities, mainly in countries that they study English as a foreign language. In this direction, within the framework of this paper, we will present several studies carried out at different universities where the effects and benefits of using smartphones in the study of the English language are seen.

For instance, the research conducted by (Naz et al., 2019) at several universities in Pakistan shows an interesting research approach and specific effects of the impact of the use of smartphones and positive results in learning English among that group of students. Particularly, research by (Naz et al., 2019) confirmed that language learning using a mobile phone (MALL) increasingly dominates the traditional way of learning using a computer (CALL). Researchers have confirmed that the accessibility of the Internet almost everywhere, increased digital literacy and of course the existence of appropriate applications are the main prerequisites for such a situation. The said study sought to answer the students' perspective regarding the role of smartphones in learning English. Quantitative data were collected through self-reported student questionnaires. Carefully designed questionnaires were distributed among 480 undergraduate and graduate English students in their final year at 6 universities in the state of Punjab, Pakistan. The surveys were conducted according to a standard procedure in the respective student groups. The analysis of the numerical data was done with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 22.0) where a series of statistical parameters such as frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation, independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were obtained. The results of the study showed that the surveyed students are willing and motivated to adapt their smartphones for learning English, which is especially important in determining the potential of using smartphones for learning English. Based on the statistical facts, the authors concluded that the smartphone plays a positive role in the study of English by students. That positivity is primarily seen through the progressive attitude of the students towards the role of the smartphone in learning English, and above all because of the innovative way of studying the subject materials. It has been recommended that smartphones must be incorporated as an effective learning tool in ESL classrooms for English language learning, but this of course requires a solid pedagogical and technical infrastructure and appropriate training. Also, researchers find that smartphones improve the English language proficiency of undergraduate and master's level students in Pakistan (Naz et al., 2019).

Authors Sukor and Ali (2020) provide interesting data on the application of smart phones in learning English among Muslim students in Malaysia. Specially, they also emphasized that the progress of technology allowed the popular use of mobile applications in English language education. Hence, the term smartphone-assisted language learning or MALL appeared in the literature of the early 21st century. That paper highlights the findings of the smartphone application model of English language learning for Muslim English Language Learners (YELL). The authors within

the framework of these researches approached a systematic review of literature in order to be able to more easily carry out the process of reviewing mobile applications. App availability was first searched on Google Play using pre-determined keywords, resulting in 250 mobile apps from which 26 suitable smartphone apps were selected through the PRISMA model. The findings showed that smartphone apps are popular with vocabulary acquisition which is crucial in the early stage of English language acquisition. The research also found that studies of other interesting aspects are possible by including non-native Muslim YELL in the empirical findings of MALL, Islamic perspectives on the use of MALL for the English language development of Muslim YELL, and the development of a framework for reviewing MALL that befitting Muslim students. Finally, the authors concluded that with the abundance of smartphone apps available, it is the responsibility of teachers and students to carefully evaluate and evaluate smartphone apps in terms of approach, content, and technological aspects that are responsive to Muslim YELL. Hence, it is undeniable that the evaluation of smartphone application is an important concern before its employment for Muslim YELL to ensure its effectiveness in learning English (Sukor and Ali, 2020).

The next comprable example of the application of smartphones in learning English as a foreign language refers to research conducted by Ta'amneh, 2020. Within that research, students' perceptions of the use of smartphones in learning English were investigated. The main goal of the research was to define the benefits and difficulties of using smartphones in the learning process. A total of 151 students enrolled in the first semester of the 2019/2020 academic year in various English language courses taught at Taiba University (Badr Branch), Saudi Arabia, were included in the survey conducted. The researcher designed a questionnaire depending on previous studies that investigated the role of smartphones in the teaching and learning process. Participants were asked to decide to what extent they agreed with each statement. The researcher analyzed the data through Statistical Package for Social Sciences using means and standard deviations. The results according to the students' responses were positive with moderate use of their smartphones in their attempt to learn English. In addition, the results showed that there are no difficulties faced by the students during the learning process through smartphones. Such results can guide decision makers and curriculum designers in the right direction to use smartphones and their applications in developing and improving the English language curriculum. It is here that the impetus to shift from less outdated traditional curricula to newer ones that implement the latest technologies in the teaching process should be seen, similar to what Ababneh (2017) suggested.

One of the ways of implementing those new technologies could be the inclusion of smartphones as additional tools that can help students in their learning. This is especially evident if you take into account the fact that today most of the students own modern smartphones. This step can help students to be independent learners and motivate them to think, search and find enough data needed to understand the topics discussed in the classroom. This result is consistent with the results of Ababneh (2017). From these findings, it is clear that the use of smartphones in learning

English has a positive effect on students. Within those studies, possible difficulties in using smart phones in learning English were also investigated. The results of those researches showed that, for the most part, students have no difficulties in learning English through their smartphones. On the contrary, they were motivated to use their smartphones, although some of the students would have welcomed some guidance on how to use their smartphones more effectively in obtaining more useful information on the target topics. Such a body of knowledge undoubtedly confirms the findings of (Ta'amneh, 2017) that these technological devices can make the educational environment different from the traditional way that completely concentrates on the classroom in giving information to students in a new and innovative way of learning outside. from the classroom. Also interesting is Ta'amneh's (2020) finding that students' positive attitudes toward such learning should initiate teachers to encourage students to use their smartphones and other educational technology tools in classrooms, as they facilitate their overall learning.

Conclusion

The application of new technologies in the study of the English language is an inevitable necessity. Numerous modern gadgets only speed up the process of applying those tools in the study of the English language. The smartphone is a new tool that is very quickly accepted by the new generations of students and has a wide range of applications in their educational process with a special emphasis on the study of the English language in countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The application of a model case in the research process contributes to the essential influence of the percentage of the use of smartphones in the study of the English language among the student population. This type of research with clearly defined hypotheses and appropriately derived questions opens up the possibility of defining the directions of further research by synthesizing the data and comparing that data with research from compatible universities. Such a principle undeniably leads to the popularization of the importance of smartphones in the study of the English language.

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