

BENEFITS OF MOBILE LEARNING

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Nowadays the use of mobile devices has become popular that modern people cannot imagine their life without these technologies since they use them every day. As Trifanova *et al.* define “mobile devices are any device that is small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment” [1]. According to Kukulska-Hulme mobile devices are “spontaneous, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous, and personal” [2]. As technology develops, there occur new learning conditions, therefore there are created new learning ways. Although mobile devices are mostly used in daily life, they are also can be used in education. Schools, universities around the world supply students with necessary information, schedules, lectures and other educational materials via technologies. They are presented in apps or websites available on any mobile device. Therefore, it can be stated that learning which occurs via mobile devices is mobile learning.

According to Traxler mobile learning is “any educational provision where the sole or dominant technologies are handheld or palmtop devices” [3]. As popularity of mobile devices grow and as they become more functional, it has high potential to use them in teaching and learning process. Moreover, as Kukulska-Hulme states learning with mobile devices can be held in the students’ spare time and even help to develop their learning skills [4]. Hence, mobile and portable devices make “learning on the move” and “anytime, anyplace” [5].

Due to the pandemic, learners all over the world have to study distantly. In this case, students have to be equipped with proper devices which enable them to join online lessons, accomplish tasks and send assignments online. Teachers as well have had to find the ways to raise students’ interest in learning as learners have become less motivated and entertained during virtual lessons. That is when mobile learning has become more demanded than a year ago before the pandemic.

Distance learning is the cooperation of the teacher and students at a distance reflecting educational process. And as it is handled through Internet technologies and other interactive devices, mobile learning has become the significant part of distance learning. Various mobile applications, specific functions of mobile devices or games help learners to study anywhere and anytime. Moreover, it contributes to out of class learning when students can expand their knowledge and learn more.

For instance, language learning applications such as LinguaLeo, Duolingo, Busuu, Memrise or apps that help to develop reading, listening, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary skills like British Council apps, BBC Learning English, audiobooks and podcasts apps can be used as an addition to education program. These applications and programs have video, audio and text resources to exercise a specific topic or skill. Some of them keep track of student’s learning progress.

Apart from language learning applications, there are various apps which can provide interactive teaching and learning. For instance, online whiteboards like Miro, Jamboard, online services providing learning tools like flashcards, quizzes such as Quizlet, Kahoot, platforms to monitor learners’ progress like Socrative, Google Forms, etc. These programs make learning more entertaining and easier to calculate students’ results.

Apart from mobile applications, mobile devices are embedded with functions that help learners to get informed with the latest updates at school or that report next learning activity through notification system. Informing and reminding students about the tasks, assignments or news support their learning

process and excludes diversion from student's learning pace. Thus, notification system enables learners to keep up with learning process, specifically with distance learning.

Ability of mobile devices to browse and download learning materials enable students to use them anytime and anywhere, hence allowing learners to study in any condition. In language learning the use of mobile devices helpful to get access to authentic materials such as movies, videos, podcasts and music, etc. Consequently, learners have chance to be exposed to a target language and entertained with variety of learning materials.

According to Jones *et al.* there can be defined six reasons of why mobile learning is motivating for students [6]:

- control (over goals);
- ownership;
- fun;
- communication;
- learning-in-context;
- continuity between contexts.

First reason can be stated as since mobile learning is mostly occurred in informal learning, it can be more motivating than learning at schools. In informal learning students can set their own goals and have control over them which is reflected by freedom of choosing tasks and doing activities.

Second reason can be associated with physical ownership when students own their device. However, students also may own their learning pace and control their progress via devices used for learning purposes.

Third one can be reason of the development of mobile learning. Since most of young people spend their spare time using mobile devices, there has been built a new approach to modernize teaching methods. It is fun for learners to be involved in learning with modern tools and it gives them encouragement.

Fourth, teacher and learners or learners and learners may interact with each other through mobile devices, thus providing support in learning.

Fifth, with the help of devices learners can find and access information they need. Learners can search particular topic or subject on the Internet, and they may find the one out of results which is clear and suitable for them and share it with others.

Sixth, continuity in contexts occurs due to the portability of the mobile devices. Information and resources are transportable form one device to another, so students can continue their learning anywhere.

These reasons suggest that mobile learning can be motivating, as it comprises the features necessary for modern learners. Hence, there can be offered following benefits of mobile learning:

- gives opportunity to use new, portable and smart technologies in learning;
- raises young people's interest in learning;
- can be used as additional resource in learning process;
- reduces expenses for preparing handout materials for learners;
- contributes to develop new methods in organizing education program;
- supports continuous learning;
- makes learning fun, entertaining and motivating.

These features have been confirmed as a result of our study of m-learning by means of using mobile applications to develop learners' listening skill. The students of experimental group used mobile apps for English listening skill such as BBC Learning English and ESL Listening Quizzes/Listen English Daily Practice while the control group did not. Both group showed better results at the end of the experiment as they practiced listening during the classes. However, results of the learners from

experimental group were noticeably higher than of those from control group. It means that the development of the skill in experimental group was significant. As students repeatedly practiced listening during and out of the class, they were exposed to authentic target language materials. The more students practice, the faster they achieve better results. Mobile devices in this sense can make learning effective.

As a result of the survey held at the end of the experiment students' gave their feedback on mobile learning and use of mobile applications to develop listening skill. Although some materials were difficult to comprehend, students found effective the use of mobile devices to develop listening. As the mobile apps that were chosen for the experiment were accessible and contained variety of authentic materials, students wanted to continue to use them in their spare time. According to students' responses, they also liked the discussion after listening practice since topics and materials offered by mobile apps were topical and up-to-date. Consequently, they could develop their vocabulary and speaking by means of learning various English expressions and words and using them in practice. Moreover, as they could see positive results in developing listening via mobile devices, they expressed interest in further learning through them. Hence, mobile learning can motivate students to learn and develop their skills.

In conclusion, mobile learning improves learning outcomes. Setting teaching and learning practice according to the needs and interests of learners makes it stimulating and motivated. Out of class learning through mobile devices help students to get more practice, hence making them benefit from the mobile tools. Mobile learning can provide accessibility, quality and effectiveness. Thus, the article shows importance and topicality of mobile learning.

Literature

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