

## **EFL Students' Opinion towards the Effect of the Use of Mobile Phone Applications on Improving Their Productive Skills**

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### **Abstract:**

**Background:** This research studies EFL students' opinions towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their productive skills. The samples of the study consist of 70 students who study EFL at Shaqra University.

**Materials and Methods:** The researchers used a questionnaire as an instrument to find out the effect of the use of mobile phone applications in improving EFL students' writing and speaking skills.

**Results:** The results show that mobile phone applications have a positive effect on EFL students' writing skills. This result proves by the overall mean score of the items (1 to 8) is 4.44. Also, the overall mean of the score items (9 to 15) is 4.43, indicated that the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on EFL students' speaking skills is positive.

**Conclusion:** so, EFL students have positive opinions towards the impact of the use of mobile phone applications in improving their productive skills.

**Key Word:** Mobile phone applications, EFL students, productive skills

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Technology occupies a great place in facilitating and enhancing communication and interaction between people. It also makes the big world like a small village. It changes the lifestyle of the people and makes it more comfortable. Therefore, almost everyone has owned a computer, laptop, smartphone, tablet, television, etc. and uses them for many purposes. Moreover, technology has significant contributions to the development of education. It helps the students to attain their learning resources easily through the use of various devices such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc. Therefore, the need for these aspects of technology is not only for communication between people but also for improving their learning. However, the mobile phone as one of these aspects provides many chances for the students to improve foreign language learning through the use of numerous applications. Some of these applications can be purchased and some of them can be installed for free such as Whatsapp, Notes, Grammar-checking software, Advanced English dictionary, Skype lessons, Vocabulary, Evernote, Popplet, and Dragon Dictation, among others.

**The aim of the study:** the present research attempts to examine EFL students' opinions towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on their productive skills (speaking and writing skills) at Shaqra University.

**The hypotheses of the study:** This study hypothesized that: 1-EFL students' opinions towards the impact of the use of mobile phone applications on EFL students' speaking skills are positive. 2-EFL students' opinions towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their writing skills are positive.

**The importance of the study:** this study might be helpful for plans that relate to the use of mobile phone applications in teaching and learning EFL. It may also be valuable for teachers to include mobile phone applications in teaching productive and receptive skills of the target language.

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Recently, many approaches introduced the use of technology in teaching and learning foreign languages are such as Electronic Learning (E-learning), Mobile learning (M-learning), among others. These approaches attempted to make the learning of foreign languages more accessible and enjoyable. Therefore, there are a large number of studies confirmed the significance of the integration of E-learning and Mobile learning in teaching and learning EFL.

One of these studies is introduced by Yang and Chen (2007) and Al-Qahtani (2016) stated that some E-learning applications help students to improve their learning of EFL by supplying them with useful language resources to communicate directly with the speakers of the target language.

Mobile learning (m-Learning) as one of the technological approaches also can be identified as an educational situation or condition by handheld devices. It supports students to make social interaction and enhances cooperative learning. It develops their knowledge and their learning performance. Dudeney and Hockley (2007) claim that m-learning is a tool that consists of Smartphones, MP3 players, and laptops. This tool supports the learning of the target language. It presents the students and teachers with the unique opportunity to get their information instantly regardless of their place and their time .

Moreover, some of the researchers have studied the effect of mobile phone applications on EFL students' speaking skills. They have used some of the applications such as Twitter, Skype, Google Hangouts, YouTube, VLC media player, among others. For example, Yang et al. (2010) claim that the mobile phone supplies the students with many applications to interact with their peers, such as listening to each other and recording their spoken production. Mobile phone applications make it more easeful for students to manage a wide range of their activities especially those that can make them interact with each other and share what they have learned. Similarly, Sharples, et. al (2007) claim that the convenient features of the technology that enhances the students' enthusiasm to keep on communicating with each other simply because they share common interest concerning their academic matters. Most importantly, the learners are fully aware that their digital devices or gadgets could be well utilized for communication purposes and will continue to connect them with their peers at all times. Furthermore, Sharples, et al. (2007) emphasize that learning is a process that involves a mutual conversation between the students, and it should also incorporate technology as a platform to mediate learners to the learning aspects. Besides, communication is highly recognized as a method to convey and assert one's thoughts and opinions in an extensive manner. Learners will learn best through interaction with their teachers and peers. The learning process will be most effective with the presence of various mobile applications such as WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and so on in which the students will be allowed to engage themselves in active communication either with their social circle or educators.

Furthermore, many studies investigated the impact of mobile phone applications on students' writing in different contexts. These studies confirmed the fact that writing is a collaborative skill. The applications which they used in their studies include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, Vocabulary, Evernote, Popplet, Dragon Dictation, among others. One of these studies presented by Robert Jones (2018). Hestated that there is an outsized number of mobile phone applications that are used for learning vocabulary and grammar. Grammar and vocabulary are important parts of writing skills, and they occupied the first place as the most skills that are affected by the use of these applications. Another study was introduced by Andujar (2016). He states that WhatsApp with its mobile instant messaging displays the possibility to improve the student's writing skills in the second language and activate their participation. Also, WhatsApp appears to be agreeable among students. Similarly, Yunus and Salehi (2012) investigated the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Facebook groups in teaching writing. His results showed that Facebook was an efficient device that developed the students' writing skills. Akhilar, et al. (2017) also examined students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of Instagram in English language writing. They argued that Instagram was a good foreteller of both promoting community centeredness and helping the spreading of genuine content.

Aghajani, (et al. 2018) also emphasize that students writing performance were improved with the use of Telegram in Cooperative writing. With Telegram, a more meaningful learning environment can be created and the comment feature makes the learning process easier and fun. Telegram also allows students to discuss with peers, give feedback, and comment on the writing activities either synchronous or asynchronously.

The previous studies above indicate that mobile phone applications have a positive effect on learning the target language. The employment of mobile phone applications in language learning can be of an extraordinary advantage, particularly in learning vocabulary, spelling, grammar, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Participant**

The participants in the present study were EFL students from the English department College of Science and Humanities at Shaqra University. The total number of the samples is 70 students, and it selects randomly from level eight, seven, and six.

#### **3.2. Instrument**

There is one kind of instrument used in this study, it is a questionnaire. It is designed to collect information from EFL students about their opinions towards the impact of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their speaking and writing skills. The items of the questionnaire base on the previous studies and literature review.

#### **3.3. Procedure for Collecting and Analyzing Data**

Before conducting a questionnaire to EFL students, a jury of six university EFL instructors from Shaqra University was requested to validate the questionnaire. The researchers modify the questionnaire according to their comments and recommendations before they use it. Cranach's Alpha correlation coefficient is used to measure the reliability of the instrument. The obtained result from this test is more than (0.81). Therefore, this result indicates the reliability of the instrument.

For the aims of this study, the data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed in terms of frequency counting, percentages, means, and standard deviation by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and divided into tables (1) and (2). For ease of discussion, the researchers adopt these strategies: mean values more than 4.5 accounts as strongly agree, less than 4.5 accounts as agree, and less than 4 accounts as disagree.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The data collected from this questionnaire may confirm or reject the following hypotheses:

##### Hypothesis 1:

1- EFL students' opinions towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their speaking skills are positive. To confirm this hypothesis the researchers used the results of table (1)

Table (1)

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score	standard deviation	Likert scale
		No	No	No	No	No			
		%	%	%	%	%			
1	Mobile phone apps help students to interact with English native speakers to improve their speaking skills.			6	25	39	4.47	.653	Agree
				8.1	35.7	55.7			
2	Mobile phone apps supply students' additional resources to practice their speaking skills at any time.			4	24	42	4.54	.606	Strongly agree
				5.7	34.3	60.0			
3	Mobile phone apps help students to learn the correct pronunciation of new vocabulary items in English.			6	31	33	4.38	.643	Agree
				8.6	44.3	47.1			
4	Mobile phone apps help students to improve their style of speech and get them familiar with the native speaker's voice and accent.	0	1	3	24	42	4.53	.612	Strongly agree
		0	1.4	5.7	34.3	60.0			
5	The mobile phone helps students to speak grammatically and socially appropriate language.	2	1	17	28	22	4.00	.839	Agree
		2.6	1.4	24.3	40.0	31.4			
6	The mobile phone helps students by using the English language to chat with their friends and classmate			6	31	33	4.38	.643	Agree
				8.6	44.3	47.1			
7	Mobile phone apps help students to ask for more information by using the English language.			6	25	39	4.47	.653	Agree
				8.1	35.7	55.7			
8	The mobile phone helps apps students to watch famous English-speaking movies	1	1	5	28	35	4.31	.790	Agree
		1.4	1.4	7.1	40.0	50.0			

The result of table (1) indicates that the effect of mobile phone applications on the EFL students' speaking skills are positive since their overall mean score of the items (1 to 8) is (4.44). The finding also shows that the highest mean score (4.54) goes to this item: Mobile phone apps supply students' additional resources to practice their speaking skills at any time, while the high mean score (4.00) goes to the item: Mobile phone applications help students to speak grammatically and socially appropriate language.

##### Hypothesis 2:

2- EFL students' opinions towards the impact of the use of mobile phone applications on EFL students' writing skills are positive. The result in the table (2) below verifies this hypothesis.

Table (2):

No	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score	Standard deviation	Likert scale
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.			
		%	%	%	%	%			
9	Mobile phone apps help students to identify and correct all grammatical and spelling mistakes in their writing.	1	1	5	28	35	4.31	.790	Agree
		1.4	1.4	7.1	40.0	50.0			
10	EFL Students prefer to use mobile phone apps for many activities such as sending an email, commenting on Facebook, Twitter, etc.	0	0	4	24	42	4.54	.606	Strongly agree
		0	0	5.7	34.3	60.0			
11	The use of electronic Dictionaries helps students to acquire easily English words and sentences.	1	1	5	28	35	4.36	.756	Agree
		1.4	1.4	7.1	40.0	50.0			
12	EFL Students use the English language more than Arabic to write their comments on Telegram.	1	5	1	35	28	4.36	.799	Agree
		1.4	7.1	14	50.0	40.0			
13	EFL Students' familiarity with applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter helps them to improve their writing skills.	1	14	0	29	26	4.14	.784	Agree
		1.4	20.0	0	41.4	37.1			
14	Mobile phone apps, namely Grammar - checking helps the students to write grammatically correct sentences.	1	1	2	23	43	4.51	.674	Strongly agree
		1.4	1.4	2.9	32.9	61.4			
15	Writing an email has improved students' use of punctuation, capitalization, etc.	1	5	1	35	28	4.31	.799	Agree
		1.4	7.1	0	50.0	40.0			

The finding in table 2 shows that the overall mean score of items (9-to15) is 4.43, and this result means that the effect of mobile phone applications on the students' writing skills in EFL is positive. The highest mean score (4.54) goes to EFL Students prefer to use mobile phone apps for many activities such as sending an email, commenting on Facebook, Twitter, etc., while the high mean score (4.14) goes to EFL Students' familiarity with applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter help them to improve their writing skills.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This study is aimed to find the EFL students' opinions at Shaqra University towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their productive skills. Thus, after carefully gathering the appropriate data, using a questionnaire, SPSS is used to analyze data. Consequently, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were applied to analyze and explain the data. Finally based on the findings conclusions were presented. Therefore, this study concludes that the opinions of EFL students at Shaqra University towards the effect of the use of mobile phone applications on improving their speaking skills are positive. This result verified by the overall mean score of the items (1 to 8) is 4.44. Moreover, the EFL students' opinions about the impact of the use of mobile phone applications on developing their writing skills are positive. This finding also confirmed by the overall mean score of the items (9 to15) is 4.43.

Thus, this study is restricted to 70 Female undergraduate students in Shaqra University, but it will be better to include a larger sample of students (male and female) to study their opinions towards the use of mobile phone applications in prompting their learning of EFL. This study also examines only the students' opinions towards the effect of the use of mobile applications in improving productive skills, so it will be useful to research the teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the role of mobile phone applications in teaching EFL. The hypotheses in this study also concentrated on the opinions of students towards the impact of mobile phone applications in improving their productive skills, so it is necessary to examine how the mobile phone applications affect their receptive skills.

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