

EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Mobile Devices in Learning English at A University in Vietnam

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Abstract

Among the sharp development of modern technology, mobile learning (M-learning) appears as the significant mark of technological revolution 4.0. It has seen that the exponential expansion of mobile devices accompanied their smart functions to support learners' learning everywhere and every time. Thus, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is believed to serve learners' English knowledge. Although learning through mobile devices is expected to apply appropriately to teaching and learning, teachers' attitudes towards mobile learning need to be assessed seriously. This writing is to present EFL learners' psychological preparation to perceive English mobile learning application at University X through a survey on 69 EFL teachers by questionnaire, including ten statements within 10 minutes. The investigation is carried out in the second semester of the school year 2018-2019. The qualitative approach was used to collect and analyze data, and findings showed that teachers have positive attitudes towards M-learning and its application at University X can be accepted firmly.

Keywords: attitude, mobile learning, Vietnam EFL students

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1. Introduction

English has been an international communicative instrument of humans today. Learning English is necessary; however, it is difficult for busy learners who are plentiful of ages, levels, jobs, etc. They have no time to acquire and practice English at class. They cannot spend time for learning English from the books even have no time to learn with tutors also. Thence, English fluency cannot be obtained with such learning method among busy-crowded situation of current education and society in Vietnam generally, Ho Chi Minh City mainly, especially, for EFL students of at University X. Evidently, EFL students really need to be supported their learning English by a flexible and active method that can help them learn whenever and wherever they can. Therefore, a proactive and convenient learning approach should be explored to serve learners to learn English every time and everywhere.

Nowadays, the world population offers enthusiastic use towards mobile devices like smartphones, iPhones, iPads, iPods tablets, laptops, etc. thanks their "handy and compact" nature (Iqbal and Bhatti, 2015). Because of the improvement of both mobile devices' forms and functions', they attached material data sources that serve human contact, information, demands involving learning in the offline and online environments every time and everywhere. Mobile devices can provide the significant wealth of knowledge through the internet as well as learning opportunities for the learners at different levels (Thao, 2014). By the profits of mobile devices for students learning, indeed, the mobile learning system is expected to be operated at educational institutes in Vietnam. However, learning English through mobile devices cannot lack teachers' participation; their psychology preparation in teaching English on mobile technology should be explored. Therefore, the author conducts this survey to assess EFL teachers' attitudes towards mobile learning and suggest some other aspects for future studies related to mobile technology in teaching English. This study's main task is to respond to the following research question "What are EFL teachers' attitudes toward teaching English through mobile devices?" The theory and methodology of mobile learning are provided and interpreted in continuous items.

2. Theoretical review on mobile learning

2.1. Definition of mobile learning

M-learning has been developing with such a non-stop speed that has exceeded the expectation of experts in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The term "M-learning" was defined under various views of different authors. In light of Quinn (2000), mobile learning is the way a person learns something by using mobile computing devices such as Palms, Windows CE machines, even his digital cell phone. Sharing a similar opinion, Sharples (2006) asserts that mobile education means the application of mobile technologies. Also, the following definition proves the practicability of mobile education on technology-proliferating society: "Any learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies" (O'Malley et al. 200 ; Feser, 2010). From information about M-learning provide by precious definitions, Mobile learning application was addressed in many forward pieces of research was summarized in a model below:

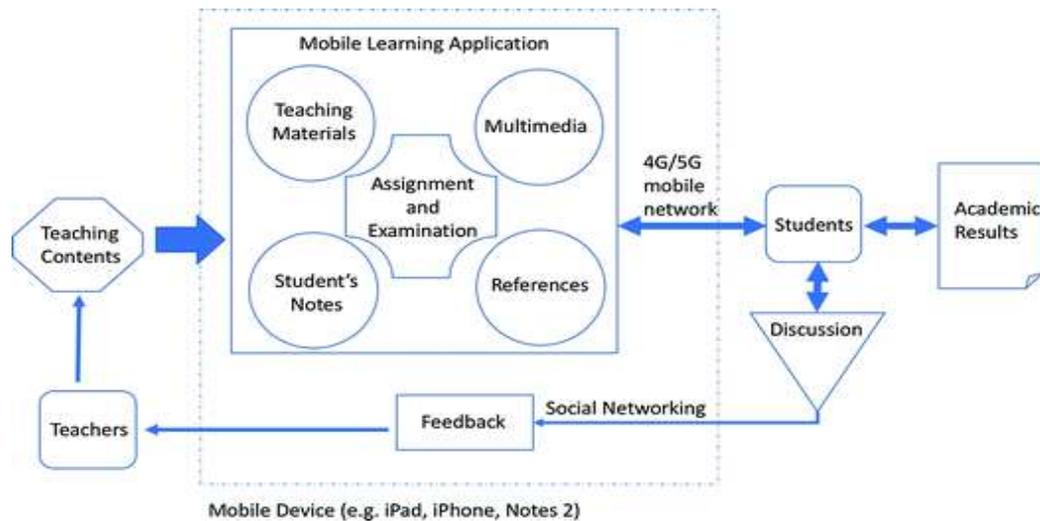


Figure 1. A Model of Mobile Learning Application (Zhong et al., 2018)

To implement the perfect M-learning application, a lot of details should be completed. This writing tends to survey teachers' behaviors on M-learning and consider how their acceptance for teaching English through mobile devices as the foundation relevant to mobile learning application research in the future. As the present research's topic, there are many prior studies employed by previous authors in Vietnam and the world like Linh et al. (2017), Khanh and Gim (2014), Pollara (2011), Aish and Love (2013), Kuciapski (2016), etc. However, these researches almost survey perceptions, attitudes, acceptance of English majored students in higher education without investigation on attitudes of EFL teachers towards the mobile learning approach. Thus, this survey conducted to fulfill this gap and collect new results on EFL teachers' attitudes for English mobile learning as well as contribute a unique reference for the next relevant researches.

To discuss the relationship between mobile learning and learning English of students, some ideas were explained in the next sections.

2.2. Mobile learning for teaching English

In the era of revolution 4.0, mobile technologies became widespread in human life overcome time and space limitations through their multiple features; in particular, it is a precious and great invention in education globally. Chen et al., (2002) realize unique features of mobile technology with benefits which were not supplied through other distance learning technology in scaffold-learning. In learning English, learners can be supported significantly by mobile learning thank to its benefits following:

Evidently, mobile devices become multimedia access tools, connectivity tools, capture tools; representation and analysis tools offering benefit characteristics for teaching and learning that Pollara (2011) emphasizes as support students' motivation, encourage their sense of responsibility, improve their commitment and promote their learning in general, in learning English particularly and retention; help increasing individual's organizational skills and self-regulatory capacity of learning through planning applications: support communication, collaboration and knowledge building via real-time data; offer both individualized and social

interactive learning environment and promote student-student and student-teacher interactions; improve learners' reasoning skills and self-confidence; support independent, constructivist and contextualized learning; offer active and experiential learning opportunities allowing quick note-taking through photos, sound and video recording. Thank to these characteristics, Naismith et al. (2004) identified several others with many usefulness for learning English in particular and in general education, besides, mobile devices also exist some challenges teaching and learning English explained by Pollara (2011) as (1) Mobility poses challenges to usual teaching practices; (2) Informality can make mobile learning lose its benefits if it is too widespread; (3) Ownership poses challenges to institutional control; (4) learning over time offers the challenge of providing useful tools to lifelong users to reflect on their mobile learning experience. Also, the small size of mobile devices allows for mobility and portability anytime and anywhere; however, contacting mobile devices' screens over time will affect users' eyes and rain. Therefore, users need to be careful and balance to use mobile devices for their learning reasonable and practical.

From the relationship between mobile learning and teaching English as well as the usefulness and challenges of mobile education on learning English, mobile devices provide a dynamic and positive environment for teachers to teach English everywhere and every time. Basing on the purpose of this study, the researcher follows Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) to design questionnaire contents; this model's materials were described in the next section.

2.3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davis (1989) explores the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the purpose of measuring the perceived usefulness and ease-of-use among technology handlers. Napitupulu et al. (2017) suppose that the TAM was seen as an essential research model for evaluating the factors of information technology acceptance and utilization among users, and it was the most adopted model. Also, Raaij and Schepers (2008) believe that TAM is a comprehensive theory among many models in the information system literature to explain individuals' acceptance of information technology. Because of the persuasiveness and evidence related to the attitudes, psychology, and perceptions of users, the researcher will refer this theory to survey ELF teachers' attitudes towards mobile learning; the TAM was shown in Figure 2.

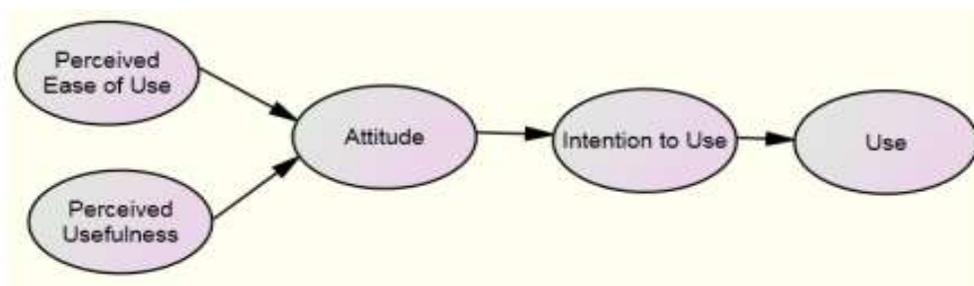


Figure 2. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). (Source: Islam, 2011b) Davis (1989: 8, 11, 26)

The TAM above was explained following the current study contents as Perceived usefulness (PU): The extent to which a person believes using technology to improve his or her

learning. According to Lefievre (2012), it is used to explore EFL teachers' attitudes towards mobile devices' usefulness in teaching English skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar for EFL students. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) is the extent which a person believes that using technology for learning is comfortable of effort. Similarly, PEOU is used to indicate EFL teachers' perception ease of using mobile devices in teaching English. Attitude toward using technology (ATUT) which was released EFL teachers' attitudes towards using mobile technology in teaching English; then Intention to use technology (IU) presents for behaviors and tend of EFL teachers for using portable devices to serve their teaching English.

3. Research Methodology

The survey is conducted within two weeks of the second semester of 2018-2019 at University X. The quantitative used to collect data from the questionnaire with ten questions (15 minutes): (5 scales: strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree, strongly disagree) to evaluate EFL teachers' attitudes towards M-learning. In the light of this survey description, the participants are all of 69 EFL teachers of University X.

The questionnaire is designed as this study's instrument with a purpose to measure EFL teachers' attitudes towards learning English through mobile devices, and their behavior in using mobile technology, the questionnaire including ten statements arranged correlatively.

Each statement accompanied by five Likert scales for the participants to choose their ideas by writing only a tick into one cell of idea columns (1) strongly disagree (SD), (2) disagree (D), (3) no plans (NP), (4) agree (A), and (5) strongly agree (SA).

4. Results and discussion

The questionnaire's results revealed through numbers of sticking scale turn of each statement collected by a quantitative approach. The contents of the poll are to answer the research question, "What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards teaching English through mobile devices?" The researcher analyzes the proportion of the participants' ideas for each statement to appraise their behavior and acceptance of M-learning.

Table 1. *Participants' answers for the questionnaire*

Statement	SD	D	NP	A	SA
1. I spend more time to teach English more when I can access materials anytime, anywhere, to teach English through my mobile devices.	0%	0%	9%	82%	9%
2. I am more likely to communicate with students more through my mobile devices.	13%	0%	0%	63%	24%
3. I am more likely to interact with colleagues through mobile devices.	11%	0%	3%	81%	5%
4. I am more likely to interact with my students thanks to teaching English through mobile devices.	0%	3%	5%	78%	14%
5. Students are more likely to develop their learning	7%	0%	0%	85%	8%

autonomy when learning English with mobile devices.					
6. Mobile devices are useful for teaching grammar English.	0%	0%	4%	72%	23%
7. Mobile devices are useful for teaching English listening skill.	4%	4%	4%	65%	23%
8. Mobile devices are useful for teaching English writing skill.	3%	4%	0%	80%	13%
9. Mobile devices are useful for teaching English speaking skill.	22%	9%	11%	41%	17%
10. Mobile devices are useful for teaching English reading skill.	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%

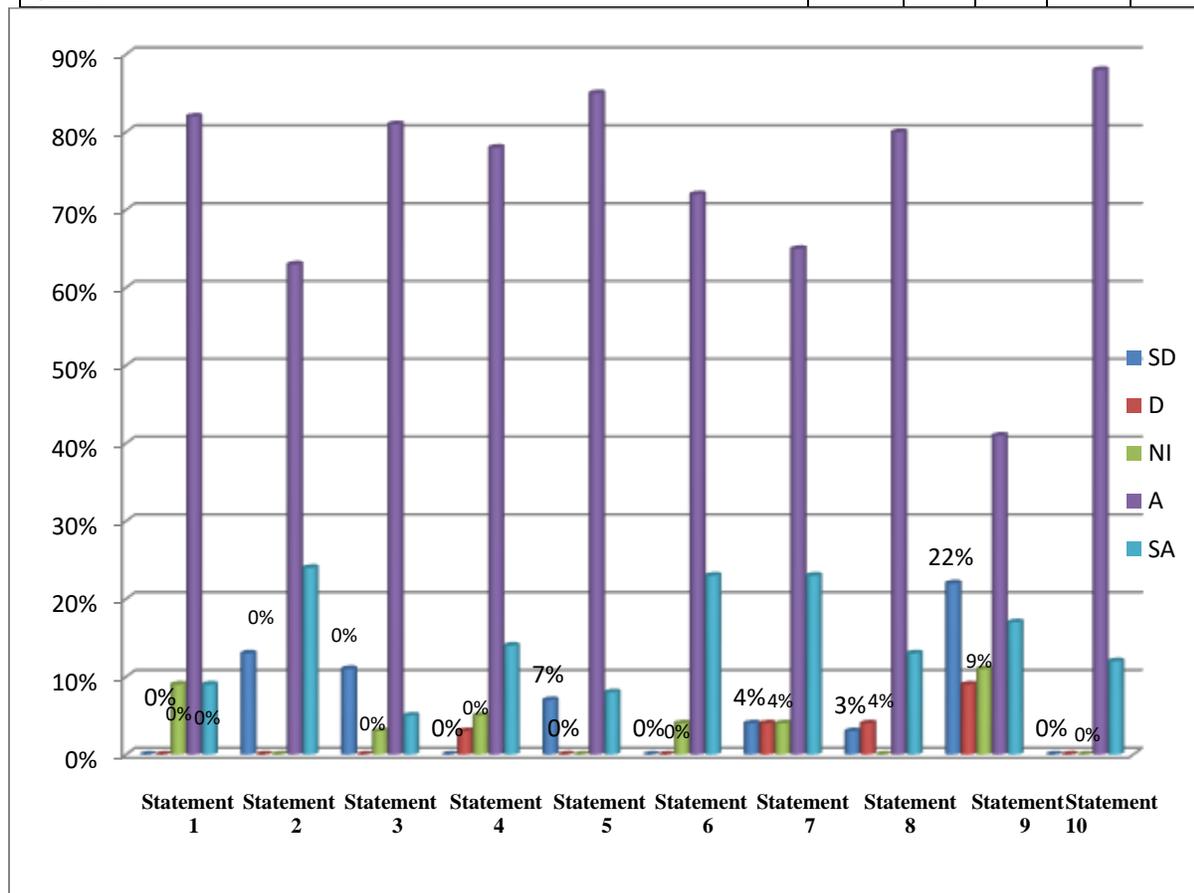


Figure 3. Participants' answers for the questionnaire

In the statement 1, almost teachers saw that they focus on teaching English through mobile devices more when they can catch entry teaching materials on their mobile device. Actually, the rate of agree reached 82%, strong agree 9%, no idea just 9% and other 0% proved that EFL teachers agree with the sentence “I spend more time to teach English more when I can access materials anytime, anywhere to teach English through my mobile devices.” Next, 24% strongly agree, 63% agree, 0% no idea and disagree, and 13% strongly disagree for statement 2 “I am more likely to communicate with students more through my mobile devices.” Teachers love exchanging and

contacting their students through mobile devices. The figures of both statements above show that the teachers are more excited to teach English through mobile devices.

In response to statement 3, "I am more likely to interact with colleagues through mobile devices," the proportion of the scales is 11% for strongly disagree, 0% for disagreeing and no idea, 24% strongly agree, and 63% for agreeing. Namely, most of the teachers interact with their colleagues well through mobile devices in the English classroom. The high proportion of strongly agree (14%) and agree (78%), no idea (5%), disagree (3%) and strongly disagree (0%) for the statement 4 "I am more likely to interact with my students thanks to teaching English through mobile devices." It was seen that the majority of teachers interact not only with their colleagues but also with their students well through mobile devices. It was implied that mobile learning can support teachers' interaction effectively in their teaching English.

Moreover, nearly all teachers approve the idea of the fifth statement "Students are more likely to develop autonomy when learning English with mobile devices" with 85% for agreeing and 8% for strongly agree, 0% for no ideas and disagree and 7% for strongly disagree. These figures indicate that teachers who see teaching English through mobile devices can enhance their students' autonomous learning during English mobile learning courses.

As a word, PEOU of TAM was defined that EFL teachers perceive that using mobile devices in teaching English is exciting. Somewhat it is easy to display teaching activities, including accessing teaching materials, interacting with students and colleagues, developing learning autonomy of students. EFL teachers' attitude towards using mobile technology for teaching English is positive.

The overall response is 23% of teachers strongly agreed, 72% for agreeing, 4% for no idea, 0% for disagreeing and strongly disagree for the sixth statement "Mobile devices are useful for teaching grammar English." It was said that EFL teachers believe that mobile devices can support them in teaching English grammar better. Also, they agree that "Mobile devices are useful for teaching English listening skill." with a high proportion of strongly accept and agree is 23% and 65%, just 4% for all some have no idea and disagree and strongly disagree. It is showed that teachers see teaching listening skills through mobile devices useful. Besides, the EFL teachers have good behavior in teaching writing skills through mobile devices in statement 8, "Mobile devices are useful for teaching English writing skill." The rate of five scales in turn 13% of students strongly agree and 80% agree, 0% of no idea, 4% of disagree and 3% strongly agree, which reveal such an insight.

In the ninth statement, the participants seem not to agree with the statement "Mobile devices are useful for teaching English speaking skill." quietly strongly with 17% of strongly agree, 41% of agree. The proportion of no idea is 11% states that there are several teachers who are still considering this idea. And the rate of disagree people reach 9%, especially, strongly disagree ones are nearly double at 22%, perhaps, they do not entirely concede teaching English speaking skill through mobile devices suitable.

Contrariwise, the percent of strongly agree (12%), And the rate of agreeing touches 88%, meanwhile, the left is 0% for participants who have no idea as well as none disagree or strongly disagree for the final statement "Mobile devices are useful for teaching English reading skill." All teachers believe that teaching reading skills through mobile devices is a reasonable choice; they are interested in it.

In short, the rate of scales from the sixth to the tenth statement indicates that the participants consider using mobile devices effective in teaching English skills. PU from the sixth to the final statement was presented that almost EFL teachers concur using mobile devices to support teaching English skills for EFL students. They agree and admit that using mobile technology is useful in teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar.

In general, the EFL teachers almost have good behavior in learning English through mobile devices. Besides, they believe that M-learning can support learning English effectively through a high percentage of scales. The participants have a positive attitude toward teaching English through mobile devices. The results of the questionnaire found a satisfactory answer for the research question "What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards teaching English through mobile devices?" In detail, the rates of scale results draw out almost students have good behavior towards learning English through mobile devices. It was presented through the proportion nearly more than 80% of choosing agree scale for each statement relevant to practice and attitude towards teaching English through mobile devices. Thence, EFL teachers' intention to use technology (IU) was indicated by the results of data analysis. Indeed, EFL teachers tend to accept teaching English through mobile devices via their positive attitudes towards this teaching and learning approach.

In the range of study, this writing holds the survey on EFL teachers' attitudes towards teaching English through mobile devices without focusing on English majored teachers and carrying out other aspects related to mobile technology in teaching English in advanced. Moreover, researching mobile learning here is just halted at the survey on teachers' behaviors upon teaching English through mobile devices; mobile learning applications to teach other subjects have not still been conducted.

The current study is related to those of Linh et al. (2017), Khanh and Gim (2014), Pollara (2011), Aish and Love (2013), Kuciapski (2016). They carried out users' perceptions or attitudes towards mobile devices in teaching and learning language in general, for English in particular. Also, it was also believed that mobile learning can create motivation in teachers' teaching English as well as support students to learn every time and everywhere.

Conclusion

To sum up, EFL teachers have positive attitudes and accept mobile technology in teaching English at University X. As some limitations of this research, mobile learning application ones were not still conducted, they are expected to be implemented in future studies to serve to teach and learning English at University X in particular and in education in Vietnam and over the world in general. Moreover, the researchers would like to suggest finance and policies for mobile learning applications; designing and experimenting mobile learning should be conducted for students to approach the significant convenient learning at University X and in other locations.

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