MOBILE APPLICATIONS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

РОЗВИТОК НАВИЧОК ПІСЛЯ СЛУХАННЯ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ МОБІЛЬНИХ ДОДАТКІВ

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Information Technology is having a significant influence on Language learning. One of the most attractive and commonly used Information Technologies is the widely spread usage of mobile phones which represent a new and revolutionary approach in education. The development of mobile technology has been going through a period of rapid tendency. Despite the fact, that the potential of mobile learning is immense, still only a few studies have been conducted in this field.

The extensive grow of mobile devices has opened opportunities to develop specific mobile applications in English language teaching. New media of learning English has been created. Numerous of applications on mobile devices have been developed very fast and can be downloaded effortlessly. In language learning, these applications encourage students to practice and enhance their language competence. Apart from applications, learning materials can be accessed easily too. Moreover, previous studies found that mobile applications and these accessible materials support language learning in different areas such as vocabulary learning, pronunciation practice, listening skills, English reading skills and theme-based m-learning activities improving contextual language learning experiences.

Nowadays, it is an established fact that technology is widely employed for English language teaching and learning throughout the world at all stages of education. Typically the use of mobile technology for English language teaching and learning does not appear to be restricted to any particular age group or any particular educational program.

The present study illustrates students' attitude toward mobile applications and how these applications influence their studying habits. Furthermore, the study highlights on the fact how students get over difficulties in mastering and developing listening skills with the help of mobile phones outside the classroom. Although this study examined a valuable query and the findings from the present study are to provide valuable insights into the area of foreign language listening research and practical implication for L2 listening classrooms, still there are some limitations in mobile application approaches which are hoped to be handled with in some future works.
Key words: *listening, mobile applications, information technology, English language teaching.*

*Інформаційні технології мають значний вплив на вивчення мови. Однією з найпривабливіших і найбільш широко використо-
вуваних інформаційних технологій є широке використання мобільних телефонів, що є новим і революційним підходом до освіти. Розвиток мобільних технологій демонструє стрімку тенденцію. Незважаючи на величезний потенціал мобільного навчання, досліджень у цій галузі досі мало.*

Широке використання мобільних пристроїв дало можливість розробити спеціальні мобільні додатки для використання у навчанні англійської мови. Виникли нові форми вивчення англійської мови. Багато додатків для мобільних пристроїв були розроблені дуже швидко, і їх стало легко завантажити. Під час вивчення мови ці програми заохочують учнів до практики та розвитку знань мови. Окрім додатків, доступними стають також і навчальні матеріали. Крім того, попередні дослідження продемонстрували, що мобільні додатки та ці онлайн-ресурси доступними методами забезпечують і розвивають різні навички, необхідні для вивчення мови. Ці навички включають розвиток словникового запасу, розвиток вимови, інтерпретацію тексту після слухання та інтерпретацію тексту після читання.

Набуття навичок у правильному руслі направляє пізнання після слухання і відіграє важливу роль у правильному засвоєнні англійської мови. Якщо оволодіти вмінням слухати належним чином, відповідно розвиватимуться й інші навички. Нові технології відіграють важливу роль у широкому розвитку навичок. На сьогоднішній день фактом є те, що технології широко використовуються у викладанні та вивченні англійської мови у всьому світі на всіх рівнях освіти. Використання мобільних технологій у викладанні та вивченні англійської мови не обмежується будь-якою віковою групою чи освітньою програмою.

Це дослідження демонструє ставлення студентів до мобільних додатків і те, як ці програми впливають на їхні навички навчання. Дослідження також проливає світло на те, як учні долають труднощі в набутті та розвитку навичок після слухання, використовуючи мобільні телефони поза уроками. Хоча це дослідження дає уявлення про ставлення студентів до мобільних додатків, все ще є численні та невивчені можливості для продовження та розширення цієї теми.
Ключові слова: *розвиток навичок після слухання, мобільні додатки, інформаційні технології, навчання англійської мови.*

Introduction

Listening ability is an essential factor that contributes significantly to the second language learning process. Richards declared that *"The development of good listening skills is seen not only as something valuable for its own sake but as something that supports the growth of other aspects of language use, such as speaking and reading"* [17 p. 85]. The growing popularity and advancing functionality of using mobile technologies have raised their potential in teaching and learning languages. Using mobile technology with the possibility and adaptability of mobile devices in language learning, MALL is bound to be increasingly called upon to provide useful tools in foreign language teaching and learning.

Through various smart phone apps similar to websites, a great amount of authentic materials can be used for language learning. Teachers and students can access online authentic listening materials from radio or TV programs for listening teaching and

practice [15]. In other words, students can even use mobile phones to download the applications for listening, which create more chances to be exposed to a target language, and encourage them to actively participate in learning.

Literature review – Mobile-based language learning

Language learning has been taking advantage of Information Technology. One of the most developing technologies is mobile phones which serve as a revolutionary approach in education [11].

In the literature researchers mention that mobile devices can allow learners to access learning materials due to their portability and accessibility [4]. Additionally, researchers found that mobile technologies support language learning in different areas such as:

• vocabulary learning [3];
• pronunciation practice [5];
• listening skills [6];
• activities improving contextual language learning experiences [19].

The growing popularity and advancing functionality of using mobile technologies have raised their potential in teaching and learning languages. As mentioned by Lee their mobility and portability make *'learning on the move'* and *'anytime, anyplace learning'* a realization [13 p. 90.]

Kukulska-Hulme pointed out mobile devices as *spontaneous*, *informal*, *contextual*, *portable*, *ubiquitous*, and *personal* [18]

Based on the study of Fatimah, A.S., Santiana, S. and Sulastri, F., mobile devices provide many benefits in a variety of ways in language learning [7]:

• simplicity;
• autonomy;
• portability.

The presence of mobile phones in language learning brings an innovation which is called as MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning). MALL is a kind of innovation, it seems like CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), the modification is MALL used in a mobile phone while CALL is used in a computer [15]. MALL gives opportunities to the teacher and students to get ease in teaching and learning because it brings many functions in one device, brings more opportunities to teacher and students to get comfortable in learning and communication [4].

Many scholars and practitioners have described mobile learning in different forms [8]. Brown defined mobile learning as being a subset of E-learning that is explicitly a form of web-based delivery of content and learning management; moreover, it features with mobility, flexibility, and convenience when compared to online learning [2]. However, Peters went further in defining mobile learning as being a model of flexible learning that is *'just in time, just enough and just for me'*. Other scholars described mobile learning as a sort of portable education that uses portable devices

to access learning and knowledge on the move without the time and location constraints

Kang and Kim presented a model focusing on improving the mobile contents of teaching and learning vocabulary and English listening skills in blended learning process, which refers to mix eLearning with traditional instructor-led training in the classroom, using a mobile device. The model contained 5 steps to practice English listening and vocabulary using TV dramas to contribute to learning. The first step was related to a classroom activity with instruction on Monday and the consecutive five steps were done on the mobile device from Tuesday to Saturday based on learners" own time and place. The study concluded that TV drama as a learning resource was useful to improve English listening skills and vocabulary since it was authentic learning materials. It also showed positive effects on students" attitudes towards mobile use [10].

Another benefit of mobile learning technologies according to Beishuizen is the possibility of increasing self-regulation of students defined as an individual trait of learners that allows them to recognize a need for learning [1]

The most prevalent and widely explored technology for mobile listening comprehension reported in the literature is that of podcasts, ever since they started to be used in Japan in 2005 [14]. In general studies reflect the way in which podcasts are used to support learning in higher education and how popular they are with language students [4]. However, podcasting for second language acquisition is not without its critics in the literature. For example, Hasan and Hoon, note problems related to their use, such as the amount of time required to set up and prepare podcasts, that supplementary activities are often ignored by the students, and that for effective improvements in listening comprehension, pedagogic theory is important, something not explicitly present in the use of most podcasts [9]. Other research shows that students used podcasts as part of their study periods and did not multitask with other tasks, going against their mobile nature [13].

Data collection and the questionnaire

To collect data for the study, the participants were selected random. Each participant was sent a hyperlink leading to the online survey. The sharing and spreading of the hyperlink was controlled by the researcher. The questionnaire was conducted in English. The questionnaire was divided in to 6 sections. The first two sections asked the participants' attitude toward listening applications and in what way did these applications improve their listening skills. With the help of the following questions the participants had the opportunity to share their personal point of view whether they find mobile applications useful or not. Question 4 tried gathering information from the participants whether they need the help of

the teacher to improve their listening skills. Finally, the questionnaire collected information about participants' willingness toward developing other skills with the help of mobile applications. All questions were mandatory. The questions are presented below section by section:

1. Did mobile apps help to improve your listening skills?

2. Did mobile apps help to practise listening anytime and anywhere?

3. Did mobile apps help to learn a variety of English vocabulary?

4. Did mobile apps help to reduce anxiety in acquiring listening skills?

5. Did mobile apps help to improve your listening skills without the teacher's help?

6. Would you like to develop other English skills using mobile apps?

Results

The questions have been divided into three sections. The first section will examine the attitude of the participants toward the helpfulness of applications. The second section will examine the anxiety of the participants. The last section will examine the participants' attitude toward the role of the teacher and the possibility of developing other skills.

The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Of the 40 respondents who answered question 1 regarding improving listening skills with the help of mobile apps 26 (65 %) agree and 11 strongly agree (28 %) and 3 (7 %) disagree. As the results reflect 92,5 % believe that mobile applications help to improve the participants listening skills.

From the analysis of the second question we can see that 20 (50 %) respondents agree on the fact that the availability of apps help them to improve listening skills. 13 (33 %) strongly agree and 7 (17 %) disagree with this question.

In question 3 the development of their personal vocabulary is investigated. 21 (53 %) of the total respondents agree, 18 (45 %) strongly agree, 1 (2 %) disagree.

Question 4 tries seeking answers to the connection between anxiety and language development. With the help of mobile applications 22 (55 %) respondents are able to reduce their anxiety, 9 (23 %) disagree, 6 (15%) strongly agree, 3 (7 %) strongly disagree with this question.

The following question asked the respondents point of view about independent studying. 18 (45%) of the respondents agree that role of the teacher plays a significant role in improving listening skills. 9 (23%) of the respondents strongly agree and 13 (32%) disagree.

The last question asked the respondents about their point of view on whether other skills apart from listening can be developed with the help of mobile applications. 22 (55 %) agree, 14 (35 %) strongly agree and 4 (10 %) disagree with the last question.

Conclusions

The current study has analysed the view on whether mobile applications are beneficial for improving listening skills in English language learning. Concerning the results of the survey more than 93 % of the respondents believe that with the help of mobile applications listening skills can be developed. The results also reflect that 83% of the respondents are on the opinion that the availability of these mobile
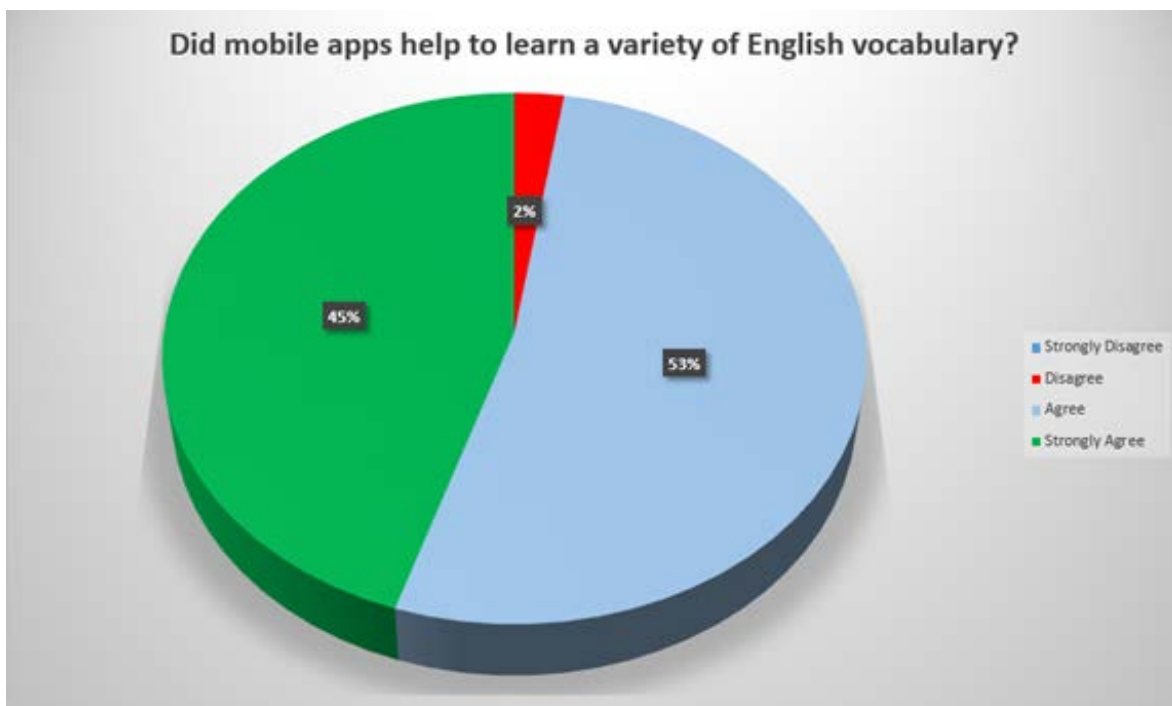

Fig. 1. Did mobile apps help to improve your listening skills?

applications is important and beneficial. However, 17% of the respondents are not satisfied about the availability of mobile applications and believe these applications should be more accessible. The participants were able to express their point of view on studying independently. 77 % of the respondents believe that the role of teacher is still important and cannot be substituted by any application or gadget.

Furthermore participants expressed their view on the connection between anxiety and language learning. 70% of the respondents consider being able to come through their anxiety with the help of mobile application. The last question asked the participants whether they would like to improve other skills with the help of mobile apps. 90% agree that they are willing to try other mobile apps to improve other skills.
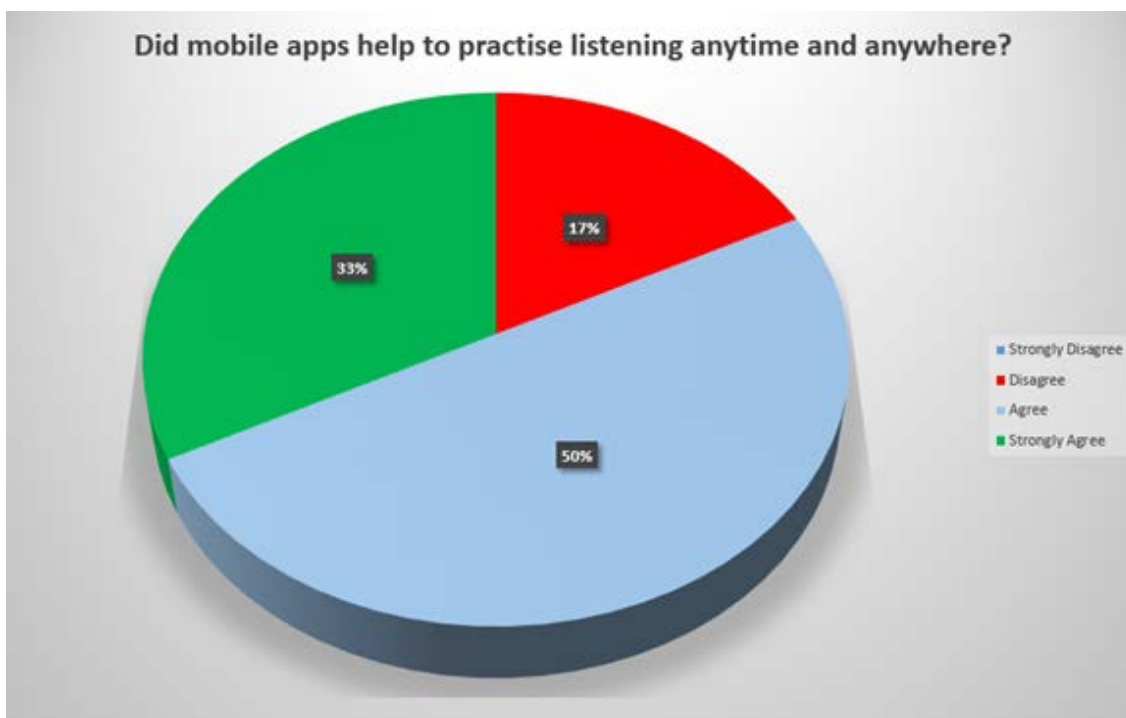

Fig. 2. Did mobile apps help to practise listening anytime and anywhere?

Fig. 3. Did mobile apps help to learn a variety of English vocabulary?
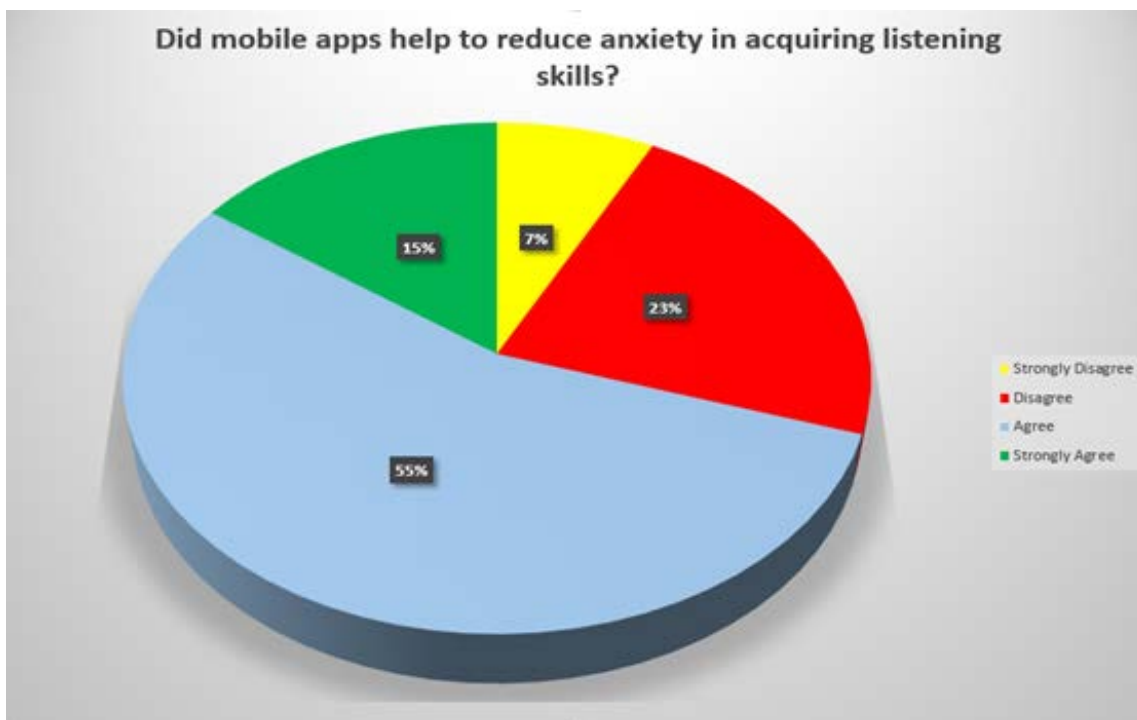
Fig.4. Did mobile apps help to reduce anxiety in acquiring listening skills?
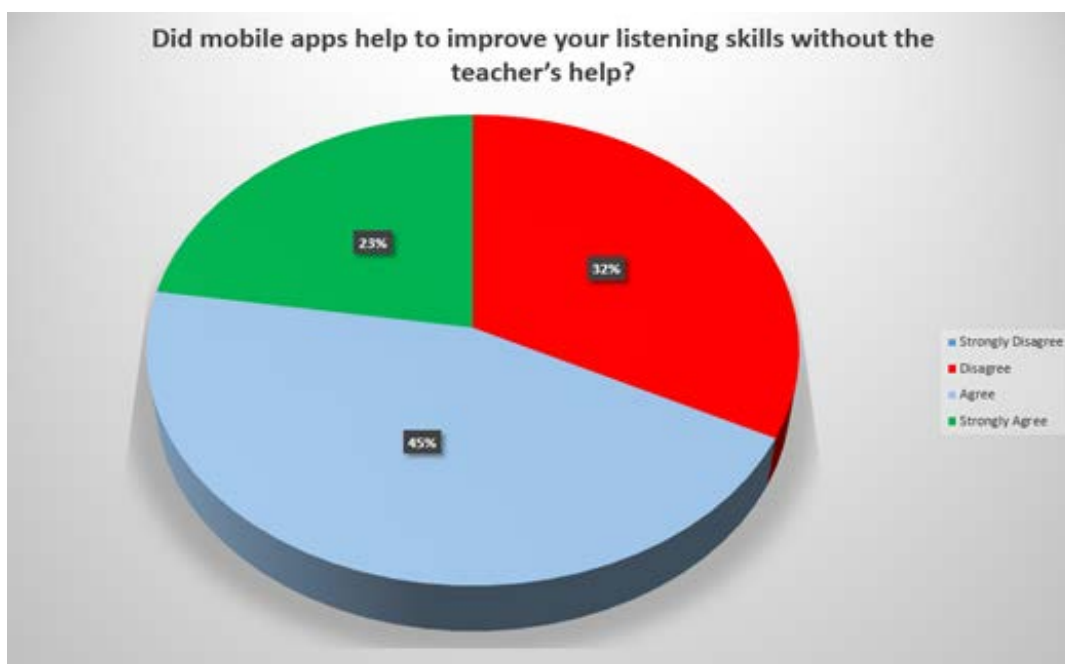

Fig. 5. Did mobile apps help to improve your listening skills without the teacher's help?
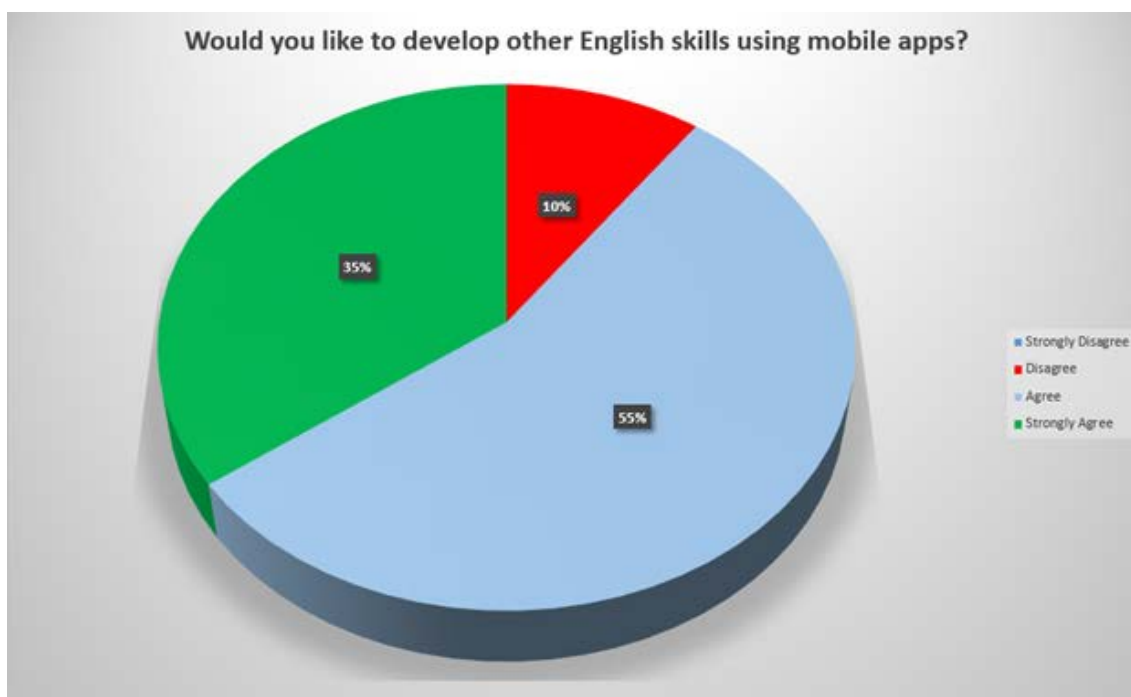
Fig. 6. Would you like to develop other English skills using mobile apps?

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