IMPACT OF SMART PHONES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN TERTIARY LEVEL SCHOOL EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA.

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Abstract: The field of mobile technology has made significant strides in the contemporary technological era. Mobile technology has evolved to become a necessary component of daily living. Mobile devices can be utilized for a variety of purposes, thus EFL students can routinely use them to improve their learning process and achieve positive learning outcomes. This study aims to investigate the usefulness of smart phone in English language skill development by tertiary level school students in West Bengal. This will also give some suggestions to maximize the usages of smart phones in English language learning and how to overcome the barriers faced by the learners. To serve this purpose the researcher made a case study. One questionnaire was implemented on the different tertiary level school students in West Bengal and both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data has been done. This practical study also diagnoses different drawbacks faced by the learners in using smartphones in English language learning. This paper ends with some positive suggestions for different stakeholders on the usages of smart phones in English language teaching learning process.

Keywords: EFL, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Smart Phone, English Language Skill Development, Tertiary Level School Students of West Bengal.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The astounding rate of technical advancement characterizes the information age and its technologies. Technology has emerged as a crucial element in both our daily lives and the framework of education. In a typical classroom, there are only verbal exchanges and interactions between the teacher and the pupils, and the teacher's sole responsibility is to impart knowledge to the students. However, the use of technology tools and gadgets has become so pervasive in today's global societies that it has changed how teachers impart knowledge and how pupils learn.

Due to technological improvements West Bengal's residents now have easy access to fast communication with their relatives and friends both inside and outside the nation. The demand for the most recent electronic devices with numerous functions like instant calling, messaging, chatting, web surfing, multimedia, and translation has increased as a result of this quick and simple method of communication. These modern communication technologies are reasonably priced and simple to use. Due to their educational usefulness, touch screen electronic devices with cutting edge capabilities like electronic dictionaries, translating, and language-learning software are becoming more and more popular. With the use of electronic dictionaries, students may now swiftly and efficiently look up the definition of challenging terms. A branch of the expanding field of mobile learning i.e. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is concerned with the application of mobile technologies to the study of languages. To access learning resources in MALL, students do not need to be seated in a classroom or at a computer. MALL is a great way to overcome time and location-related hurdles in language learning.

Social media has virtually touched every nook and cranny of the "glocal" (global "glo" to local "cal" - all languages and vernaculars of each corner of the planet) thanks to the simplicity and low cost of smartphones and other electronic smart gadgets updated with the latest Apps. The latest social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and others can act as a catalyst and fresh conduit for the expansion of the ESL education sector.

In light of this context, it is important to examine the abilities of students at tertiary level schools in West Bengal, India, to use smart phones and social media, as well as the ways in which they use these tools to learn English. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how well the students can use Smart phones, how they feel about social media, and how they use social media to hone their English language skills.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile learning technologies appear to be highly promising in tackling a number of concerns, as humans occasionally experience various educational problems. According to West (2019), mobile learning technologies have the potential to change the educational landscape in favour of students since they provide them access to the internet via their smart phones, tablets, or laptops, which opens up a wide range of wonderful learning options. Such technologies make it simple to acquire pertinent information, offer chances for interaction between students and teachers, stimulate learning, and alter how learning occurs.

According to M. Kurtz (2018), smartphone and other mobile learning technologies offer learners not only the chance to learn interactively through a variety of platforms, but also a number of ways and tools for them to study independently and teach themselves in their own way.

Regardless of the setting in which students are learning, educators argue that mobile learning technologies are excellent instruments that offer excellent and highly potential language learning chances (Kukulska-Hulme, & Shield, 2008). As (Hashemi, & Ghasemi, 2011) assert, mobile assisted language learning (MALL) assists students by giving them adequate opportunity for exercises that include the four primary language skills (quoted in Hsu, C.-K., Hwang et al. 2013:405). Using a smartphone to learn a language has many advantages, particularly in the areas of vocabulary development, spelling and pronunciation, grammar, listening comprehension, and reading fluency. Learners must be able to master a lot of vocabulary, practice listening to understand pronunciation, and practice reading and grammar as well in order to be able to communicate effectively, Chi-Yen Chiu (2015).

The present study focused on the status of the tertiary level school students of West Bengal, India, whose second language is English, with regard to their using Smart phones and mastering English. This allowed researchers to better understand how these students compare to their peers around the globe.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the present paper are-

A. To study the impact of Smart Phones in English Language Skill Development.

B. To find out the ground reality of using Smart Phones in English Language Skill Development by the tertiary level school students in West Bengal.

C. To suggest remedial measures and to overcome the difficulties in using Smart Phones in English Language Skill Development.

D. To find out the effectiveness of Smart Phones in developing different English language skills.

E. Finding out the motivational factors in using Smart Phones in English language learning.

F. To suggest the measures of optimum utilization of Smart Phones in English language Skill Development.

G. To what extent the Smart Phones can be a useful electronic resource for the capacity buildings of the students.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The following research method has been followed for the present study-

A. A set of questionnaire in Google form was employed in this study to collect the data from the English language learners of different boards all over West Bengal.

B. The data gathered will be subjected to both qualitative and quantitative examination.

C. The data has been represented using a variety of charts, graphs, and tables.

5. **SAMPLE SELECTION:**

For the purpose of the study tertiary level school students from different boards of West Bengal have been selected. In the tertiary level school education of West Bengal one can find different boards such as, West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE), West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education (WBBME), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). Random sample selection was done. So to put some light on how tertiary level school students of West Bengal using Smart Phones in English language skill development and how this use can be maximized and how to delimit the limitations, all these important aspects will be discussed.

6. **DATA COLLECTION:**

Keeping in mind the prevailing situation of Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher employed a questionnaire through Google form. The questionnaire can be accessed from Annexure. The questionnaire in Google form was distributed among different tertiary level school students of different boards in West Bengal, with all the instructions clearly mentioned. A good number of students came up with their response. In total 478 response received out of these 6 response were incomplete, for data analysis only 472 complete responses were granted.

7. **RESEARCH APPROACH:**

In this study, a mixed approach of research was used. Given that the researcher included both closed-ended and open-ended questions in the questionnaire, a quantitative technique was used to examine the replies to the closed-ended questions, while a qualitative approach was used to assess the responses to the open-ended questions.

8. **DATA ANALYSIS:**

A systematic analysis of the collected data has been done by the researcher. Both the open ended and close ended questions were included in the questionnaire by the researcher. There were total twenty (20) questions in the questionnaire, among them the number of close ended questions were fifteen (15) and the number of open ended questions were five (5). The researcher evaluated the data after compiling the answers to the closed-ended questions on a scale of 100 and represented it in percentages. A table with the answers to the closed-ended questions is presented. The responses to open ended questions were also thoroughly examined by the researcher.

8.1 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Both close ended and open ended questions were there in the questionnaire. Open ended questions were given to collect varied responses and the thoughts of the students on different aspects of using Smart Phones in English language skill development by the tertiary level school students in West Bengal. Q no. 1, Q no. 8, Q no. 9, Q no. 10, Q no. 13, Q no. 14 and Q no. 15 were about duration and nature of smart phone usages in English language skill development. Q no. 2 was about the role of smart phone in self-learning and self-assessment. Q no. 3 and 5 were about the role of smart phone in doubt clearing. Q no. 4 and 12 were about learning new words and their pronunciation. Q no. 6 was about the preference of reading digital notes. Q no. 7 was about the problems faced in using smart phones. Q no. 11 was about the role of different social media platforms in English language skill development. Open ended questions were asked to know about their viewpoints pertaining to limitations drawbacks and suggestions in maximizing the usages of smart phones in English language skill development.

8.2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE COLLECTED DATA:

A thorough examination of the data gathered has been performed in this part. The table below contains all the information gathered from the close-ended questions.

Table 1. Response to close-ended questions (question no. 1-15)

Question	Response Received	Responded with option (a)	Responded with option (b)	Responded with option (c)
Q1. For how many hours of the day you use Smart Phone for English language skill development? A. 0-30 Minutes B. 30-90 Minutes C. More than 90 Minutes.	472 (100 %)	162 (34.32 %)	285 (60.38 %)	25 (5.29 %)
Q2. Do you think Smart Phone is useful in your self-learning and self-assessment? A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	205 (43.43 %)	35 (7.41 %)	232 (49.15 %)
Q3. For your doubts in English, do you use your smart phone first or depend on your teacher only? A. Technology first, then if needed I consult my Teacher B. No, I consult my Teacher Only C. Technology not used at all.	472 (100 %)	269 (56.99 %)	108 (22.88 %)	95 (20.12 %)
Q4. For learning the meanings of the new words do you use mobile dictionary or hard copy of dictionary? A. Yes, I use mobile dictionary B. No, I use hard copy of dictionary C. Hard copy of dictionary first then mobile dictionary.	472 (100 %)	293 (62.07 %)	117 (24.78 %)	62 (13.13 %)
Q5. Do you watch YouTube videos to clarify concepts that were not fully grasped in traditional English classes? A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	316 (66.94 %)	43 (9.11 %)	113 (23.94 %)
Q6. Do you prefer reading digital notes like PDFs or other formats over printed books? A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	196 (41.52 %)	122 (25.84 %)	154 (32.62 %)
Q7. What are the problem/s you face while using Smart Phones for learning English? A. No proper knowledge/training B. Limited grade appropriate materials C. Technology not used frequently.	472 (100 %)	234 (49.57 %)	198 (41.94 %)	40 (8.47 %)
Q8. "Using Smart Phones to improve our English language skills outside of our regular academics adds burden to our work and creates work overload for the Students." A. Yes, it prolongs our regular work, and it is challenging also. B. No, I do it voluntarily and enjoy doing it. C. I give special care and do it hand in hand.	472 (100 %)	81 (17.16 %)	245 (51.90 %)	146 (30.93 %)
Q9. "The practice activities provided to us utilizing smart phones have helped me gain a good level of confidence in my ability to solve English grammatical exercises." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	176 (37.28 %)	84 (17.79 %)	212 (44.91 %)
Q10. "I use my Smart Phone in developing English Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing skill." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	265 (56.14 %)	33 (6.99 %)	174 (36.86 %)
Q11. "Different Social media platforms I use in	472	216	113	143

my Smart Phone help me in developing different English language skills." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	(100 %)	(45.76 %)	(23.94 %)	(30.86 %)
Q12. "I use my Smart Phone to learn the new English words and their correct pronunciation in English." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	201 (42.58 %)	108 (22.88 %)	163 (34.53 %)
Q13. "I use my Smart Phone to practice different interactive online worksheets in English and it help me developing a good command on that particular language skill." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	290 (61.44 %)	40 (8.47 %)	142 (30.08 %)
Q14. "When I use Smart Phones for a long time, inadequately and uncontrolled way it can waste my time and can have a negative effect on my studies." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	248 (52.54 %)	28 (5.93 %)	196 (41.52 %)
Q15. "Using my Smart Phone when I do some web-surfing for preparing for my English classes, I, became more active in the learning process." A. Yes, always B. No C. Sometimes.	472 (100 %)	296 (62.71 %)	62 (13.13 %)	114 (24.15 %)

It is clear from the detailed examination of the numerical data that smart phone is a very popular electronic resource among the students of West Bengal. More than 60.38% students use smart phones for 30-90 minutes a day for English language skill development and 43.43% students considers smart phone as a very powerful tool in self-learning and self-assessment. It is 56.99% students use technology first when they have any doubt in their English lesson and for learning new words 62.07% students prefer using mobile dictionary rather than hard copy of dictionary. It is a fact that 42.58% students use mobile dictionary to learn the correct pronunciation of new words in English. For the last few decades YouTube videos easily available and accessible through Smart phones gained immense popularity among the students in resolving their doubts or in their self-paced learning anywhere-anytime. It is 66.96% students prefer to use YouTube to clarify their concepts that were not understood well in the traditional classroom. 41.52% students prefer to read digital texts rather than regular conventional textbooks. Some the problems students face while using smart phone in English language learning is that 49.57% students commented that they do not have any proper training in using smart phones in English language learning, while 41.94% students commented that it is sometimes hard for them to find grade appropriate materials. 51.90% students commented that they love to use smart phone in English language learning and they do it voluntarily, while only 17.16% students commented that they found it as a work overload.

According to 37.28% students the practice activities provided to them utilizing smart phones have helped them to gain a good level of confidence to solve English grammatical exercises. 46.76% students showed social media their preference of social media platforms in learning language. According to 61.44% students the different online interactive worksheets provided to them using smart phone has helped them in developing a good command over different language skills.

After examining the answers to the open-ended questions, a few noteworthy facts emerged. Though Smart phone as an electronic resource is immensely popular among the students but it is not without limitations. Students commented that they are not properly trained to use Smart phone as an electronic resource in English language learning and at the same time it is very difficult for them to found grade appropriate materials for language learning. But most of the students are extremely hopeful about the future of smart phones in using them in English language skill development, but the concerned stakeholders must provide proper training to the students, so that students can minimize the uncontrolled use of smartphone and they can be benefitted in educational segment.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

According to the research's conclusions, the following considerations must be kept in mind in order to take full advantage of smartphone use in education in general and language learning in particular:

a. Use it for learning purposes and for brief period of time.
b. Utilize smartphone applications that let you develop your language abilities.
c. Use it in a controlled manner, whether at home or in the classroom, and avoid wasting too much time chatting or playing games as this could have bad impacts.

10.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study has the following limitations:

a. Limited to tertiary level of school education of West Bengal only.
b. Limited to English language learners only.
c. Limited to West Bengal state only.

11. SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES:

Further studies can be done on the following areas:

a. Study on the use of Smart Phones on other subjects such as Math, Science, and Other Languages.
b. Studies on the use of Smart Phones by the students of other states.
c. Study on the use of Smart Phones in English language learning in West Bengal by the Junior and Secondary students.

12.   CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY:

Smart Phone is an outstanding electronic resource with numerous resources to English language learning. Different platforms available in smart phone provides a lively experience to the students at the same time it tries to avoid the demerits of conventional English language teaching learning process. The use of the smart phones in English language learning in classes or outside the classroom improves teaching-learning process and makes it more effective. Proper use of smart phones gives the users freedom from conventional monotonous teaching learning activities with some instant result based tests.

The current study sought to examine the influence on how smart phones are used by West Bengal's tertiary-level students to acquire the English language. The study examined whether tertiary-level students learn English using smart phones and social media by taking into account all the widely used social media sites and smart phones in West Bengal. A startling discovery is that the majority of students in higher education believe they learn English when they use social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and others. However, some of them believe that Facebook is a waste of time when used carelessly. Additionally, they copy fascinating words, phrases, or sentences from their smart phones onto their notebooks. Additionally, the students' attitude toward social media and mobile devices as teaching instruments is encouraging and positive. They believe that one of the finest ways to practice English is through social media and smartphones.

In conclusion, it is suggested that social media and smart phones play a significant role in learning English, particularly in a state like West Bengal where Bengali is the students' mother tongue. The findings of this study suggest that in order to grasp the language and advance their English proficiency, learners should be motivated to engage themselves in using social media and smartphones in a guided and constructive way.

13. APPENDICES:

Questionnaire for Students Reg. Impact of Smart Phones in English Language Skill Development

"Hello Students, I am Koushik Ghosh, TGT-English of Kendriya Vidyalaya No.II, Binnaguri Cantt., Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. I am also pursuing my Ph.D. in the area of English Language Teaching in the dept. of English, under the University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal. As a part of my research I have to publish papers in different journals and conferences. Now I have planned to write a paper on- 'Impact of Smart Phones in English Language Skill Development in Tertiary Level School Education in West Bengal, India'. For the purpose of my paper I need to conduct surveys. Your answers will remain strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of the research. I request you kindly spare few minutes and give your response. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated. For any doubt or clarification feel free to give a call or leave a message at +91 9046361267 -Mr. Koushik Ghosh-TGT-English, K.V. No.II, Binnaguri Cantt.".

Section A: Basic details

1. Name of the Student:	
2. Name of the School:	
3. School is Affiliated to (CBSE/WBCHSE/ICSE):	
4. Class:	
5. E-mail id:	
6. Mobile number:	

Instructions: kindly go through the following questionnaire. Read each of the statement carefully and respond accordingly.

Section B: Questions related to Main Survey

1. For how many hours of the day you use Smart Phone for English language skill development?

A. 0-30 Minutes.	B. 30-90 Minutes.	C. More than 90 Minutes.

2. Do you think Smart Phone is useful in your self-learning and self-assessment?

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

3. For your doubts in English, do you use your smart phone first or depend on your teacher only?

A. Technology first, then if needed I consult my Teacher.	B. No, I consult my Teacher only.	C. Technology not used at all.

4. For learning the meanings of the new words do you use mobile dictionary or hard copy of dictionary?

A. Yes, I use mobile dictionary.	B. No, I use hard copy of dictionary.	C. Hard copy of dictionary first then mobile dictionary.

5. Do you watch YouTube videos to clarify concepts that were not fully grasped in traditional English classes?

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

6. Do you prefer reading digital notes like PDFs or other formats over printed books?

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

7. What are the problem/s you face while using Smart Phones for learning English?

A. No proper knowledge/training.	B. Limited grade appropriate materials.	C. Technology not used frequently.

8. "Using Smart Phones to improve our English language skills outside of our regular academics adds burden to our work and creates work overload for the Students."

A. Yes, it prolongs our regular work, and it is challenging also.	B. No, I do it voluntarily and enjoy doing it.	C. I give special care and do it hand in hand.

9. "The practice activities provided to us utilizing smart phones have helped me gain a good level of confidence in my ability to solve English grammatical exercises."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

10. "I use my Smart Phone in developing English Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing skill."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

11. "Different Social media platforms I use in my Smart Phone help me in developing different English language skills."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

12. "I use my Smart Phone to learn the new English words and their correct pronunciation in English."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

13. "I use my Smart Phone to practice different interactive online worksheets in English and it help me developing a good command on that particular language skill."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

14. "When I use Smart Phones for a long time, inadequately and uncontrolled way it can waste my time and can have a negative effect on my studies."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

15. "Using my Smart Phone when I do some web-surfing for preparing for my English classes, I, became more active in the learning process."

A. Yes, always	B. No	C. Sometimes.

16. In brief, give your suggestions to maximize the utility of Smart phones in English language skill development.

Response: ……… ………...

17. What are the limitations you face while using Smart phones in English language skill development?

Response: ……… ………...

18. What are the changes you can feel in yourself while using Smart phones in English language skill development?

Response: ……… ………...

19. In brief, write some of the drawbacks of using Smart phones in English language skill development.

Response: ……… ………...

20. Do you think in future Smart phones can be a more useful resource to enhance students' capacity building?

Response: ……… ………...

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