

استكشاف استخدام التعلم المتنقل في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر. حالة
جامعة ابن خلدون في تيارت. الجزائر

**Exploring the Use of Mobile Learning in the Algerian EFL Context. Case of Ibn Khaldoun
University of Tiaret. Algeria.**

**Explorer l'utilisation de l'apprentissage mobile dans le contexte algérien de l'EFL. Cas de
l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret. Algérie.**

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المخلص:

في العالم المعولم الحالي ، يشهد تعلم اللغة بمساعدة المحمول (MALL) تقدما سريعا مستوحى من التكنولوجيا المعاصرة. وبالتالي ، فإن التكنولوجيا هي أداة تستخدم لغرض التعلم والتعليم. يعتبر مجال جديد لتكنولوجيا التعليم. في الوقت الحاضر ، هذا الاتجاه شائع بين الطلاب بسبب انتشار تقنيات الهاتف المحمول المختلفة لتعزيز التعلم. تحاول الدراسة الحالية استكشاف اتجاهات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية وكذلك المدرسين تجاه فعالية استخدام التقنيات المدعومة بالهاتف المحمول في تعلم اللغة. لهذا الغرض ، استخدم الباحث استبيانا لاستنباط إجابات المستجيبين. تضمنت مرحلة جمع البيانات الطلاب من مختلف المستويات في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة ابن خلدون في تيارت. وكشفت النتائج أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه فعالية التعلم عن بعد. أبلغ الطلاب عن اعتبار التعلم عبر الإنترنت كأسلوب مفيد في تحسين المهارات الرئيسية الأربع بالإضافة إلى معرفتهم الثقافية. أظهروا استعدادا لاعتماد التقنية في تعلمهم على الرغم من الآراء المتشككة حول قدرة معلمهم على تنسيق هذا التحول الكبير. وخلصت النتائج أيضا إلى أن المعلمين بغض النظر عن مواقفهم الإيجابية يهتمون أكثر بالبنية التحتية والتوجيه المناسب اللازم

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لتطبيق مثل هذه التقنية في الواقع. بشكل عام ، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف إلى أي مدى يكون سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة ابن خلدون على استعداد وجاهز لتبني التكنولوجيا في فصول اللغة. وبالمثل ، تحاول معرفة كيفية قبول سياق EFL لمتابعة العالم المعولم في سباقها نحو الفصول الدراسية القائمة على التكنولوجيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية

التعلم بمساعدة المحمول -التكنولوجيا التعليمية- تعلم اللغة- مواقف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Abstract:

In the current globalized world, mobile -assisted language learning (MALL) is witnessing a rapid advance inspired from contemporary technology. Hence, technology being a tool utilized for the purpose of learning and teaching. It is regarded as a new field of educational technology. Nowadays, this trend is popular with students due to the widespread of various mobile technologies to enhance learning. The present study attempts to explore the attitudes of EFL learners as well as teachers towards the effectiveness of using mobile- assisted techniques in language learning. For this purpose, the researcher used a questionnaire to elicit the respondents' responses. The data collection phase involved students of various levels at the English section at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. The results unveiled that students of English have positive attitudes towards the effectiveness of M-learning. Students reported considering M-learning as a useful technique in improving the four main skills as well as their cultural knowledge. They demonstrated willingness to adopt the technique in their learning despite the skeptical views about their teachers' ability to orchestrate this significant shift. Results also concluded that teachers regardless of their positive attitudes are more concerned about the infrastructure and the proper guidance needed to implement such a technique in reality. Overall, this study aims to explore to which

extent the EFL context at Ibn Khaldoun University is willing and ready to adopt technology in language classrooms. Similarly, it attempts to find out how accepting is the EFL context to follow the globalized world in its race for technology-based classrooms.

Key Words:

Educational Technology- , EFL Students' Attitudes - Language Learning - M- learning - Technology.

- Abstract in French:

Dans le monde globalisé actuel, l'apprentissage des langues assisté par mobile (MALL) connaît une avancée rapide inspirée de la technologie contemporaine. Par conséquent, la technologie étant un outil utilisé à des fins d'apprentissage et d'enseignement. Il est considéré comme un nouveau domaine de technologie éducative. De nos jours, cette tendance est populaire auprès des étudiants en raison de la généralisation de diverses technologies mobiles pour améliorer l'apprentissage. La présente étude tente d'explorer les attitudes des apprenants EFL ainsi que des enseignants à l'égard de l'efficacité de l'utilisation de techniques assistées par mobile dans l'apprentissage des langues. À cette fin, le chercheur a utilisé un questionnaire pour obtenir les réponses des répondants. La phase de collecte des données a impliqué des étudiants de différents niveaux de la section anglaise de l'Université Ibn Khaldoun de Tiaret. Les résultats ont révélé que les étudiants d'anglais ont des attitudes positives envers l'efficacité de l'apprentissage M. Les étudiants ont déclaré considérer l'apprentissage M comme une technique utile pour améliorer les quatre compétences principales ainsi que leurs connaissances culturelles. Ils ont démontré leur volonté d'adopter la technique dans leur apprentissage malgré les opinions sceptiques quant à la capacité de leurs enseignants à orchestrer ce changement significatif. Les résultats ont également conclu que les enseignants, quelles que soient leurs attitudes positives, se préoccupent davantage

de l'infrastructure et des conseils appropriés nécessaires pour mettre en œuvre une telle technique dans la réalité. Dans l'ensemble, cette étude vise à explorer dans quelle mesure le contexte EFL à l'Université Ibn Khaldoun est disposé et prêt à adopter la technologie dans les classes de langue. De même, il tente de découvrir à quel point le contexte EFL est acceptant pour suivre le monde globalisé dans sa course aux classes technologiques.

Mots clés : Apprentissage des langues - Apprentissage Mobile- Attitudes des étudiants EFL - Technologie éducative - - Technologie

- Introduction:

The widespread Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have caused people in the higher education field to shift perspectives about how teaching and learning should be practiced. Recently, we can also notice a big interest in adopting mobile technologies in the field of education as this generation is more and more attached to their devices. The advantages of such devices regardless of the challenges offer a valuable help to the education context. Mainly, they give access to students to learn foreign languages individually, at any time and place. As these devices can handle multifunction tasks, it raises the researcher's curiosity to investigate to which extent they can serve the learning of languages. Thus, this paper attempts to collect students' attitudes towards the use of mobile learning in class.

1- Mobile Assisted Learning

In this globalized world significantly developing in terms of technology, noticeable shift is also noticed in the fields of learning and teaching. It is believed that, "With the emergence and rapid improvement of small, portable notebook computers, for instance, the concept of "mobile learning" has gained popularity."(Korkmaz, 2010.p.01). Thus, in this approach mobile devices are utilized to offer assistance and support for language learning.

The term refers to M-Learning where mobiles are becoming a new trendy tool in the education field relating both language and technology.

In the same vein, Darmi & Albion (2014) claim that: The use of mobile technology in education offers new learning experiences and flexibility in learning –learning anywhere and anytime – with increased opportunities for decisions to be made by the learners. Furthermore, mobile technology offers ubiquitous and immediate access to information as well as saving resources (p .93). In other words, we can say that M-learning is when the learning process is mediated by the assistance of mobile devices. Similarly, Keegan (2005) restricts mobile learning to the use of small devices, which a lady can carry in her handbag or gentleman can carry in his pocket.

A for what concerns the uses of mobiles in relation to learning, Begum (2011: 79-80) describes M-learning as an approach to language learning that is enhanced through using mobile devices such as mobile phones, MP3/MP4 players, PDAs (personal digital assistant, and palmtop computers. El Hariry (2015), states that “a lot of researches are conducted to understand how the mobile devices could be used to reach better education because they include a wide variety of applications and different learning and teaching techniques” (p.299). Gholami & Azarmi (2012) suggest that learners may download dictionaries to their mobile phones and learn the pronunciation of unfamiliar new words. Miangah & Nezarat (2012) also add, via multimedia functions, they may record their own voices and submit them to the teacher. This would assist in terms of their assessment. Thus, we can say that the mobility of students and the portability of devices accessible everywhere and at any time is what shapes the M-learning approach.

However, when it comes to implementing this approach in the classroom, attitudes of both learners and teachers are crucial factors. Accordingly, Pollara (2011) testifies that people are skeptical and have mixed opinions when it comes to mobile devices. Some

consider them as personal tools, others perceive them as helping students to cheat on exams, and still others acknowledge their pedagogical affordances as valuable tools for delivering learning contents. As a matter of fact, previous research definitely shows the effectiveness of such devices in helping the students have access to information, but, the successful use of such devices requires positive attitudes, complete readiness to challenges and a good deal of flexibility.

2-Methodology

When it comes to the choice of the methodology, the researcher into consideration the nature of the topic, the objective of the research, the sample population as crucial factors. Therefore, she relied on a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The questionnaire being a quantitative tool allows her to elicit the opinions of the respondents freely and anonymously. The questionnaire comprises two min sections with eight different questions (closed and open ended) in addition to the general information section.

The questionnaire was administered to fifty EFL students of various levels and six teachers at the English language section of Ibn Khaldoun university of Tiaret. The researcher combined general questions about M-learning and teaching suitable to be answered by both categories of respondents.

3-Results and Analysis

As the structure of the questionnaire dictates, some questions are analyzed quantitatively as they were direct and closed-ended. Whereas, a number of questions- notably the open-ended ones- are dealt with in a descriptive manner. First of all, the students' age ranged mostly between 20 and 30 years old (85%) split between both genders; whereas, the teachers were aged mostly between 30 and 60 years old which reflects their varied experience as teachers.

For the first section, questions were asked to collect general information about the use of mobile devices. In fact, all respondents admitted using smartphones daily with few exceptions of owning tablets as well.

Table N 1: Purpose of using mobile devices.(Lahmer,2020)

Statement	Students		Teachers	
	N	P	N	P
A.	50	100%	6	100%
B.	47	94%	1	16%
C.	15	30%	4	67%
D.	17	34%	5	84%
E.	10	20%	3	50%
F.	34	68%	4	67%
G.	41	82%	5	84%

As indicated in table.1. all respondents use the devices for daily calling and communication as a first priority. However, (94%) of the students use them for note taking, (82%) for posting English material on social media or find audios and recording for their presentations (68%). Whereas for the teachers, they confessed using them mostly for social media material sharing (84%) or checking offline dictionaries mostly.

Moreover, when asked which of the language skills the mobile devices may help the following results were obtained:

**Exploring the Use of Mobile Learning in the Algerian EFL Context.
Case of Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Algeria**

Table N2. Language Skills Improvement.(Lahmer,2020)

Skill	Students		Teachers	
	<i>N</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>P</i>
A. Reading	19	38%	3	50%
B. Listening	20	40%	2	34%
C. Writing	2	4%	0	0%
D. Speaking	9	18%	1	16%

Mostly students were split between the listening and the reading skill prioritizing the earlier with (40%), speaking came third and writing last with (4%) only. However, teachers gave more priority to the reading skill with (50%) and put the writing skill last with (0%).

In section two exploring the use of mobile devices inside the classroom, (94%) of the students confessed using devices for they make learning easier through finding definitions, dictionaries and explanations of various ambiguous notions dealt with in class. (6%) of them though refuse to use them as they find them a source of distraction. When it comes to teachers, (84%) of them use mobile devices in class to check resources or extra material for the lectures.

Table N3. Frequency of using mobile devices. (Lahmer,2020)

Frequency	Students		Teachers	
	N	P	N	P
1. Most of the time	40	80%	1	16%
2. Sometimes	8	16%	5	84%
3. Barely	2	4%	0	0%

As table.3. shows, most students (80%) use these devices regularly and daily in class for different learning tasks. Whereas, teachers are more moderate in their use of mobile devices (84%) admitting to use them sometimes.

Furthermore, when asked whether it is acceptable to use mobile devices in class (94%) of students answered positively for they think that it allows them more freedom to access information by themselves and saves them time asking the teacher. They argued that teachers cannot explain everything and cannot cover all the areas that students miss sometimes. Hence, mobiles devices offer an alternative to access information without the teacher's knowledge sometimes. Teachers from their side also showed positive attitudes towards the use of mobile devices being used in class with (84%) according to the necessity and the nature of the content.

At the end of the section, respondents were asked open questions about their view of using such approach in the Algerian context and what would they recommend for its successful implementation.

Students on one hand admitted that using handheld digital devices are a must in their daily learning. These devices offer information whenever and wherever they are. It offers more alternatives of learning techniques and facilitates tasks for them. In addition, they admitted being more interactive and perform better. However, internet on the university site is not accessible and they rely on their personal data; hence, they propose having Wi-Fi access on the site. They also request teachers' cooperation on allowing them using devices whenever necessary.

On another hand, teachers see the technique as potentially promising as it may enhance coloration between students in class. However, they were skeptical whether the university possesses the needed infrastructure for its proper implementation and whether regulation rules can be developed to define a framework for their use without having students deviate from learning and being too distracted.

4-Discussion

After the analysis of the data, we can say that respondents being students or teachers have positive attitudes towards the mobile assisted learning approach. The numbers shown in the analysis section reflect a serious desire to cope with the modern ways of education. Respondents argued how foreign language learning/teaching is becoming easier and widely accessible thanks to technology in the western part of the world. Actually, they perceive M-learning as a useful technique to learn languages and a more autonomous one if one may say. Both teachers and learners see these devices (smart phones for example) as complementary tools to the teachers' role in the EFL classroom and supporting materials for the learning process.

On a different stand though, students and teachers highlighted the lack of infrastructure for the implementation of such a technique as there is no internet access. They

even complained about the large size classes and the difficulty it might entail to monitor the process. Furthermore, teachers discussed the possibility of losing track of the lessons' flow, having students distracted and ending up with uncontrollable classrooms. Hence, the idea for them is acceptable but requires a good deal of preparation and time.

5-Conclusion

In the light of the findings, it has been shown that a general agreement on the potential effectiveness of the use of M-learning in foreign languages classes is proved from the students and teachers' side. They admitted finding it useful namely with skills like Listening, reading and even culture. Furthermore, students have shown their willingness and readiness to adopt mobile assisted language learning. However, teachers -not denying its effectiveness- showed a little bit more reluctance and skepticism towards its implementation for the time being. They argued that the environment is not yet favorable, as it needs more preparation, pedagogical infrastructure and training.

Conclusion:

The present paper explored the various attitudes that students and teachers at the English section at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret have towards the use of mobile assisted learning in the classroom. This study stems from the belief that the Algerian university and more specifically, the Algerian EFL context needs to be more exposed and open to technological assistance. Also, the purpose of this study comes from the researcher's observation of the fast advent of ICT's in the education field and how effective they can be. In the light of the findings, we can conclude that both students as well as teachers had positive attitude toward mobile learning.

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Appendix

Students/ Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Students/ Teachers,

The present questionnaire aims at investigating your attitudes concerning the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in the EFL classes. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is used to refer to learning language with the assistance of mobile devices such as Mobile phones, Mp3/Mp4 players, IPod, IPad, Tablets and the like.

We, hereby, request you kindly to answer sincerely because your answers will determine the success of this investigation.

Thank you

General Information

1. Specify age
2. Specify gender:

I. Section One: The general use of mobile devices

3. Which of these mobile devices do you have? (Circle the corresponding number)

1. Smart phone
2. Tablets or IPads
3. Digital media players (mp3/4 players, iPod...)
4. None of the above
5. All of the above

4. Rank the following statements related to the use of the devices that you have.

- a. Make regular calls and texting

**Exploring the Use of Mobile Learning in the Algerian EFL Context.
Case of Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. Algeria**

- b. Take notes and pictures of information on the board
- c. Access the internet.(use Google search and Google translator)
- d. Use an offline dictionary app (looking up meaning or pronunciation)
- e. Use educational Apps
- f. Use audios and recording played from mobile for presentations/lectures.
- g. Post English material on social media

5. In your opinion, which of these language skill(s) mobile devices can improve?

- A. Reading
- B. Listening
- C. Writing
- D. Speaking

II. Section Two: using mobile devices inside the classroom

6. Do you use mobile devices in the classroom?

Yes

No

Please

specify

why

.....

7. If you use them, to which extent?

1. Most of the time

2. Sometimes

3. Barely

8. Do you think it is acceptable to use these devices inside the classroom?

Yes

No

Please justify why

.....
.....

.....

9.What are your views about using mobile devices for learning purposes inside the classroom?

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. What do you recommend to help implementing the use of M-learning in class?

.....
.....
.....