



MALL: Actualizing ESP Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract ;

The present study aimed at exploring ESP teachers' and learners' perspectives in using mobile devices as instructional and assistant tools in their practices. The researcher administered a questionnaire and organized a semi-structured interview to 40 business students and 12 ESP teachers, respectively. The findings revealed that most if not all participants (N=39) are positive to using their mobile devices, smartphones in particular, in their learning. Similarly, teachers showed acceptance to their use, yet they highlighted that they cannot control students' mobile usage especially when the devices is connected to the network. They also recommended training and assistance as most of them (N=08) are digital immigrants.

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1. Introduction

The advent of technology and its rapidity made the world run digital. The implementation or the imposition of technology in the field of education is no more questionable because of its promising advantages. ICT tools including laptops, tablets, smartphones, are devices that have been implemented in the EFL context long time ago. In this context, a number of studies showed significant improvement in mobile learning adoption around the world.

The incredible increase in the number of mobile devices ownership illustrates that they are taking popularity and accessibility especially in the Arab countries, which is considered the main motivation to their use in the teaching learning context (Al-Shahri, 2012). Such a fact appears to be a great opportunity to exploit such a revolution to boosting language education industry. In this light, a number of attempts have investigated both positive and negative aspects of mobile devices integration in language learning. The conclusion drawn from the endeavours showed that though mobile devices have some shortcomings like small screen size and others, their advantages shadow a great deal of their shortcomings and pronounce them important devices in English learning, in particular. Therefore, it is safe to record that blending technology and education is important to spice up the learning environment and better teaching and learning practices.

With regard to the abovementioned, the ESP context is seen as a rigid context as

learners' primary concern is to receive good education in their subject field and they tend to regard English a secondary aim they wish to achieve. In other terms, they approach learning English a supplementary language content because of diverse standpoints. Among these reasons, one may mention:

- 1- Teaching method ;
- 2- Teaching content ;
- 3- Learning environment ; and
- 4- Teaching materials.

The above reasons are reasonable and expected as the stated complains are discussed in a number of attempts by researchers, especially in Algeria. With this in mind and according to what is encountered in the literature, the researcher finds it crucial and worth to investigate the perceptions of ESP teachers and students as to the integration of mobile devices to improve teaching and learning practices using a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

- a- What perceptions do ESP teachers have regarding the use of mobile devices in teaching English?
- b- What attitudes do business students have concerning the use of mobile devices in the learning of English?

2. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology followed in undertaking the current research. It covers the research type, participants' profile, and the research instruments used for data collection.

Each phase is further explained in the sub-section below.

2.1 Research Type, Participants, and Instruments

The researcher used a mix method approach to collect data on ESP teachers' and students' perspective as to mobile use in the classroom. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The participants of this study are 40 third-year business students and 12 ESP instructors. Their demographical background is displayed in the following table.

Table1. Participants' demographical data

Participants	Students	Teachers
Number	40	12
Gender	32 males/ 8 males	4 males / 8 females
Age	20-33	26-47
Teaching experience	/	5-15 years
Teching degree	/	5 PhD / 7 Master

From the above table, it is concluded that students' age is between 20 to 33 years old. This indicated that they are not homogeneous and therefore interested and varied data can be obtained. As far as teachers are concerned, they are 12 participants with four males and eight females. Their age ranges from 26 years old to 37. Their teaching experience is between five to fifteen years. This shows that they have lived a sufficient experience teaching English for specific purposes and therefore

their responses are subject to generalization. As for their teaching degree, five of them have the Ph.D and the remaining (N=7) have Master degree. Again, the collected data regarding their attitudes to using mobile devices in their ESP classes are worth mentioning.

The present investigation collected data using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview administered to students and teachers, respectively. The questions in the questionnaire are both close-ended and open ended questions, and the same question types are asked during the interview. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete after being piloted with a sample size of 10 students, in which some revisions were performed, accordingly. Before the questionnaire was administered, the researcher made it clear in the participants' mind that their names are kept anonymous and their responses are used for research only.

When the questionnaire was first handed to the research informants, the researcher explained each question in Arabic and even in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to ensure that they have understood what they are required to do and select the response that best matches their intention. Teachers, on the other hand, were first asked if their responses could be recorded, and hence only two interviewees accepted. Since acceptance falls only under these two interviewees, 20 minutes is the period of time being spent to collect data. Whereas, with the remaining participants, about 45 minutes was the period of time the interview lasted. The researcher used a

paper pencil method to write down their answers. After collecting all the data from the interviewees, the researcher came up with three main themes. Further details are presented in the following section.

3. Findings

The researcher organizes this section in two sub-sections to better read and understand the collected data. It therefore begins with the analysis of students' questionnaire followed by the analysis of the interview.

3.1 Students' Questionnaire Analysis

As highlighted earlier, the aim of the paper is to collect evidence on students' perceptions in using mobile devices in their English learning, and findings in this respect are shown after displaying a number of questions. At first, the respondents were asked on what learning devices they prefer in learning English. The participants responded differently after being exposed to some relative alternatives, in which most of them (30 = 75%) mentioned that they prefer using smartphones. However, some of them (22= 55%) preferred Personal Computer (PC), compared to (10=25%), (9=22.5%), and (8=20%) who selected desk top computer, personal digital assistance, and tablet PCs, respectively. Surprisingly, when they were asked to rank their preferences as

to the most preferred learning device to the least, almost all of them (38= 95%) favoured smartphones, while the remaining two preferred PCs.

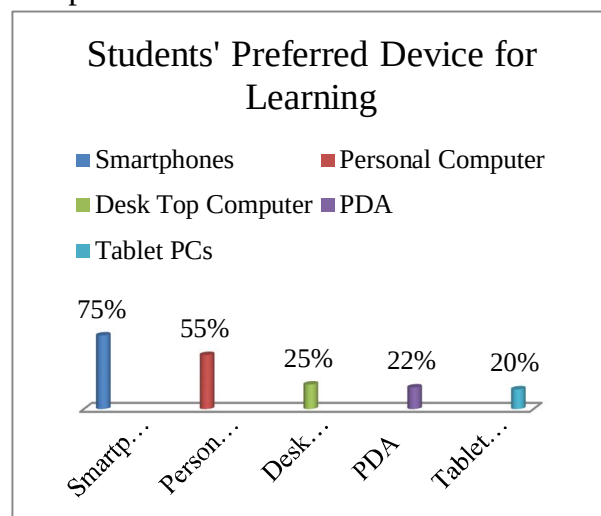


Fig.1. Students' preferred device for learning

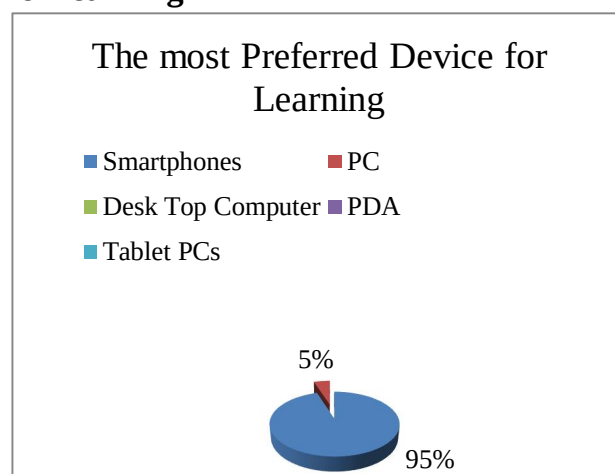


Fig.2. Students' most preferred device for learning

Table 1: Usefulness of mobile devices in learning English

The question that follows required them to give some motivations from using mobile

population all over the world, and they are ready to consider them useful and important tools to serve learning, especially foreign

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I do not Know
a- It is an innovative way to learn and acquire some language aspects.	4	36	/	/	/
b- Mobile devices are portable and can help in learning on the go.	30	7	3	/	/
c- Mobile devices help me remember and practise the learnt knowledge inside and outside the classroom.	10	30	/	/	/
d- Mobile devices users are dependent on their mobile devices which may act well in building habits to use it for the learning of English.	2	38	/	/	/
e- Mobile devices motivate learners to learn English without boredom.	4	36	/	/	/
f- Mobile devices are equipped with options and sufficient life memory that suit for knowledge retention in a desirable period of time.	20	17	2	1	/
g- Mobile devices act well for lifelong learning	34	1	5	/	/

devices in learning English. In this regard, a number of answers were given. The respondents claimed that through their mobiles, they can easily use the browser to check and search for different information immediately without being holding PCs all the time. Others highlighted that because of its usability, they can send and share information using various mobile applications like SHAREIT, and some others mentioned that because the device is worldwide used in learning purposes, they have the motivation and the will to experience its use in their English learning. They further added that mobile devices are now taking popularity among the

languages like English. As for the extent to which mobile devices can be helpful in serving the learning of English, the respondents were required to show agreement or disagreement with the suggested alternatives. Their responses are displayed in the following table.

As reflected in table 2, the respondents expressed agreement and strong agreement in respect to each statement, wherein statement “d” received strong agreement among the participants indicating that due its attractiveness and dependency on the device users, it acts well in building habits to be used for the learning of English.

Similarly, participants showed strong agreement with statement “a” and “e”, implying that learning English with mobile devices is an innovative way to learning a foreign language, and it therefore functions as a strong motivator to its learning without feeling bored and or uninterested.

As for what remains from the proposed alternatives, some of them (30) agreed with the fact that mobile devices are portable and are helpful in learning English on the go. The same number of participants strongly agreed with the idea that the device helps them in remembering and practicing the learned knowledge inside and or outside the classroom. Most of them (34) regard its use a lifelong learning practice. Statement “f” however received agreement with half of them (20), wherein the device is equipped with sufficient memory life which suits in knowledge retention at a desirable time and space. Some others added that when the device is connected to the network, they can use learning applications that suits their English level and therefore they can learn whatever the matter is.

The last question in students’ questionnaire analysis asked the participants to either recommend or impose mobile devices in the learning of English. This question signified a force to conclude whether their use is supplementary or mandatory in the 21st century curriculum. All the participants opted for its use a mandatory experience to be implemented in their classes arguing that it is necessary to align with today’s requirement and start considering their personal devices as learning-like tool to satisfy their needs and expectations. Some others affixed that its implementation is of

great necessity to change the learning process to the new normal for future generations to find it a ready ground to do well in the language.

3.2 Teachers’ Semi-structured Interview Analysis

Teachers’ semi structured interview was organized and conducted with a moderate number of ESP teachers to find out their attitudes and outlooks to mobile use in their teaching practices. Interesting findings were gathered, in which most of the interviewees (10) perceived the use mobile devices as highly interesting, while the others claimed that their use is only interesting. Those who go for the first claim explained that they are highly interesting to be part of the teaching learning materials because they already find their students use them deliberately and willingly to perform particular tasks like checking word meaning, using translation websites and or applications, and most of the time recording classes to further understand the contents of the lesson.

A yes/no question type was used to see if they are proponents or opponents towards the use of mobile devices in their classes. More than half of them (8) were proponents to their use and they argued with different reasons.

First, two of them claimed that when tolerating mobile device usage, students are able to perform any type of activities which would raise their motivation and interest not only to use their personal mobile devices, but also to sustain the idea that they can improve and encourage their abilities. Others stated that it is high time to

adapt and or adopt mobile devices in our classes so as to have classrooms that run technological. It has been also mentioned that mobile devices facilitates the learning process especially in activities that necessitate peer and group work.

They explained that classroom assignments that need group work and peer work enable learners enhance inner abilities and involve them to be active, and when they are allowed to use their mobile devices they are subject to personalize their learning meanwhile improving some technical skills in using applications and or visiting some websites. Those who are opponents claimed that they are distracting the teaching leaning process as they find their learners from time to time visit software applications like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and similar applications, and if they use the device without network, they may not be interesting to carry on using it. In the same line of thought, mobile device usage in the classroom is not useful in the classroom since both the curriculum and the syllabus contents do not align with the defined teaching materials. They add that though the intention is to implement and use technology to break some routines, teachers are reluctant and preservative to their old teaching method.

The same participants agreed on the idea that mobile devices alone are not enough to motivate and encourage ESP learners to learn English. They believed that learners always regard English a secondary subject to attend and learn even if mobile devices are used. When they were asked to name some effects mobile device use in the classroom may bring, their answers are

categorized into positive effects and negative effects. As for the latter, five ESP teachers mentioned that its usage in the classroom brings the feeling of distraction and their practices turn to be informal. They explained that when the device is allowed, learners tend to regard their English class a context where they can take a break from the tension they lived all day long, and this philosophy, through time, may lead to degradation in the status of English in the spirit of students. The more teachers use them, the more they receive negative behaviours from the students. Therefore, sticking to the old school is the safe zone to remedy some issues from happening. When this idea is discussed with those who revealed positive effect to mobile device use, they mentioned that wearing the same old jacket leagues you behind the present age teaching materials, and then pronounce you "old fashion".

They therefore argued that teachers should be flexible and use the materials learners prefer and expect to see them in the classroom. They added that training in using these devices is crucial to guide teachers to use them appropriately and professionally in their classrooms. They also mentioned that the training sessions should be organized monthly within the assistance of digital native teachers to have a sort of effort combination with digital immigrant instructors in assisting them solve some issues when forgetting and or mistaking a certain reality. Organizing some semestrial or annual seminars to update some new practices is vital and useful to call others to stop recognizing their use informal.

They elaborated that learners will find it stimulating and attractive to be able and allowed to put their mobile devices on the table and start learning. They asserted that teachers should at the very first beginning raise awareness to their use and mention that mobile devices in combination with their will and motivation make them enjoy a certain level of accuracy and competency to use the language to solve particular situations. The researcher ended the interview with putting a number of statements for the interviewees to agree or disagree with their potential in the classroom setting.

Table 3. Teachers' Outlooks to Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Table 3 clearly showed that teachers are positive to mobile use in the classroom and

this is noticed in their level of agreement. Indeed, almost all of the participants agreed with the fact that veteran teachers are found reluctant and not at ease when they use mobile devices in their practices.

However, they showed disagreement with the statement that their use is a source of distraction in the classroom. They are also not in favour of the fact that they feel uncomfortable in their use. As for the remaining statements, most of them showed agreement with the notion that they are motivated to adapt MALL as their new teaching method, but all of them not only

agree but strongly agree with the idea that their adoption calls for training. They additionally agreed with the fact that mobile devices are important tools to engage learners in the learning process,

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Don't know
-Veteran teachers find it difficult to adapt to smartphones usage in the classroom			10	2	
-Smartphones in the classroom destruct teacher in the lesson flow		12			
-Teachers are reluctant and feel uncomfortable to mobile devices in the classroom	1	11			
-Teachers welcome the fact of using mobile devices in the classroom but need training				12	
-Teachers are motivated to adapt another approach(MALL)to language teaching			12		
- Mobile devices particularly benefit weaker and shy students to lesson engagement		2	10		
-Mobile devices help teachers in classroom management		3	09		
-Mobile devices meet today's digital natives needs			12		
-Mobile devices are key tools both teachers and students benefit from.			12		
-Students are dependent on their mobile devices that could help teachers bridge them together for educational purposes.		2	10		
-Though mobile devices are designed for personal uses, they could be used for educational purposes.			12		

manage their classrooms, meet today's digital natives requirements, and change students' ideology from personal devices to educational devices, as well as exploiting their dependency on the device to serve and maintain learning goals. One of the interviewees claimed that there should an ICT centre to tutor and assist teachers in designing their teaching contents using teacher-made application that suits particular learners as ready-made applications may and may not be interesting or working with the type of learners teachers have. Collaborating with the ICT faculty switches the education sector from the unproductive sector to productive sector. This is important to further considerations as such a move improvises new horizons towards sound practices.

4. Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Results

Findings from both students' questionnaire analysis and teachers' semi-structured interview revealed positive attitudes towards mobile use in the classroom. When students were exposed to select the most preferred mobile device to learn English, they claimed using their smartphones. This gives the intention to safely record that because smartphones are affordable to them, then it is the expected device to be taken off from their pockets to perform something. The present finding is similar to that of Maarouf (2022) who concludes that students have positive attitudes to using their smartphones in learning English. This is also consistent with Thornton and Houser (2005) who found that learning through their personal devices is more interesting than learning from digital materials on a computer.

Furthermore, students add that using smartphones as tools for learning will motivate them to attend English classes, help them use the browser when needed without any difficulty, and they find their use significant to align with the present age necessities Warchasuer (2004).

Taking a narrow view on their responses and clarifications, they are to a great extent aware enough about the importance of this technology. This also felt in the last question which significantly showed high degree of awareness and acceptance to adopt and or adapt to smartphones usage. What is interesting is that they find learning with them an innovative way to acquire and learn various language skills. They showed consciousness in their dependency on their smartphones.

This fact is evident to safely say that it is possible to build habits among students to use their smartphones for learning English due to their readiness and acceptance to implement them as learning tools. The findings of Saidouni and Bahloul's investigation (2016) concluded that these small devices are helpful in learning and searching for information without being restricted to time and space, and at the same time increasing their motivations towards learning. Within the same study, they clarified that most learners use their smartphones primarily to check dictionaries and search for information, compared to a minority who used the device for other purposes like writing Memos, calculation, using Facebook and so on, Niño (2015).

Teachers, on the other side, also showed positive attitudes in using mobile devices in their classes. Teachers' acceptance to mobile usage is based on their students' usual use of their smartphones during classes. Despite the fact that two others teachers who find them useless devices, the vast majority claimed the opposite. This result cooperates with the study

of Stockwell (2010), Dashtestani (2013), Deng, Ku, and Kong (2018), Calabrich (2016), and Pombo, L. and Marques (2019). The same interviewees posited that handheld devices assist learners to perform a number of tasks and

at the same time motivate them to learn English. Therefore, teachers are always concerned and interested to finding a safe motivation source for their learners to learn English, especially in ESP learning contexts.

This is because in the latter, learners are found tired and less interested in learning English. One of the factors that contribute to positively or negatively impact students from learning in the ESP context is the teaching materials instructors occupy. Consequently and because learners show positive interest and care to use handheld devices, teachers are urgently and straightforwardly called to take students interest into consideration. In this way of thinking, teachers claimed for training to be safe and secure when using handheld devices in their teaching practice.

Training, in one way or another, is a prerequisite component in teacher professional development especially for ESP instructors, because the context where the language is taught is sensitive and though much is said on this issue, practice remains an issue. In the present attempt, teachers revealed that training sessions should occur regularly and progressively to help them practice what is taught. Surprisingly, they also called for the assistance of a Z generation and or digital native instructors as supporter whenever an embarrassing situation occurred. Such a confession brings into life a disguised cooperative teaching to professionally survive

in today's classrooms. For some teachers, when students are permitted to use their smartphones, learners are subject to change their behaviours

and start to regard English classes as the setting to relax and have some fun.

This belief encompasses the idea that using handheld devices harm classroom management and students' learning as well. They also highlighted that these devices are sources of distraction and students give much attention to the device and not to the services it serves. Yet, this doesn't affect the diverse roles and benefits mobile devices bring to the teaching learning process because technology use is inevitable in today's classrooms (Almekhalafi, 2006; Baek et al., 2008; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Jiang & Ramsay, 2005).

Among the requirements for successful ESP teaching, meeting learners' needs and taking into account their wants should be met to a large extent. Teachers also admired the importance of adapting mobile devices in their practices when they showed a total agreement in teacher semi-structured interview analysis. Engaging learners and facilitating their learning is a concern that is eased and enjoyed by handheld devices. It is then observed that both teachers and learners are positive to using handheld devices in their teaching learning experiences. This conclusion is supported with a number of studies (Liu et al., 2003; Huang, Lin, & Chuang, 2007; Cheng et al., 2010). Their outlooks are important as they are the first agents who inform the teaching learning process and update stakeholders and policy makers on what changes should occur and what reforms should be undertaken to solve any issue.

5. CONCLUSION

The present paper aimed to investigate ESP students' and teachers' outlooks as to the use of mobile devices in their practices. The authors studied this issue in the ESP context to come with important facts that will certainly improve the English language among ESP learners and revise ESP teachers' practices. Data were sorted out by means of a questionnaire addressed to students and a semi-structured interview to better find what attitudes they have towards handheld devices as assistant tools in their practices. Findings, after being carefully analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, revealed that both participants showed positive attitudes in using mobile devices to improve language instruction for them.

Although a small number of teachers regarded their use interrupting and useless, their use is crucial in motivating, sustaining and improving students and teachers. Training is a strong and a rational recommendation highlighted by most teachers that if used regularly will absolutely spice up ESP teachers behaviours and actions. More importantly, the present age required its people to enjoy the so-called 4 Cs (Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking, and Creativity) and these skills are better enjoyed when learners are subject to mobile use. Put differently, teachers' mission is to provide language realities to their learners at the same time developing their intellectual skills to be pronounced communicative agents, collaborative individuals, critical thinkers, and creative characters. Teachers should adapt to the current age requirements to satisfy their

learners, in one hand, and in the other hand contribute in covering successful ESP course design.

Indeed, this endeavour contributes to the existing literature in the continuous demand of MALL in our classrooms and the vast appreciation of its promising benefits in the ESP context.

5. Study Limitations and Future Research

Most if not all studies are subject to certain limitations that to some extent pave the way to a further investigation. The limitations that the present study fall on the number of the study participants. That is, the questionnaire was administered to a small number of respondents without taking into account other ESP students, but as for the number of the interviewed teachers the total number was moderate. Therefore, the study results are subject to generalization.

The researchers undertook the study considering only the outlooks the respondents have towards handheld devices with little to no attention to how they are used and at what circumstances they should be used in the classroom setting. Consequently, further endeavours should cover the how and the where these devices ought to be used and what language skills these small devices serve the best. Moreover, the authors did not show interest in investigating gender as a factor that would affect participants' perspectives. Hence, future studies should cover such a gap.

7. Conflict of Interest

The authors show no conflict of interest.

8. Data Availability Statement

The data were available upon request.

9. Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge the participants whom answers serve well for the study objectives.

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