Chapter 12
The Integration of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning:
Perceptions of Pakistani Pre-Service ESL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The process of modern communication has become effective due to the use of modern devices and tools. In education, the value of teacher and student communication is pivotal as it can help to improve learning. One of the latest methods to elevate learning processes is mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). MALL has emerged as a modern learning and teaching way all around the world. Looking at the Pakistani society, the use of latest devices and techniques is absent. There is a dire need to employ some latest ways and methods that can overhaul the already established system of learning. Importantly, before applying any particular method, there is a strong need to focus upon the perception of the users. Therefore, this study looks for the perceptions of ESL pre-service Pakistani teachers regarding MALL. Data were collected through interviews, and it was explored that pre-service teachers had positive perceptions regarding MALL.

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, English is regarded as a second language yet it is the official language of the country and enjoys high status (Ali et al., 2021). Rahman (2020) argued that the value of English in Pakistan is undebatable. English is the major tool for getting jobs, communication and socialization It is said that in the colonized territories the value of English has a strong impact on learners for achieving economic and educational objectives (Kirkpatrick & Lixun, 2020; Akram & Mahmood, 2007). In Pakistan, English is taught as a mandatory subject till 14th standard and it has elevated its value remarkably (Fareed et al., 2018). English is a high-ranked language in Pakistani society which is accepted all over the country

yet this is surprising that despite popularity, the people find difficulty in learning English. Moreover, the institutes lack modern tools and methods of learning for ESL environments (Awan & Hiraj, 2016).

BACKGROUND

If we look at the schooling system and teaching programs in Pakistan. They are devoid of any latest technology usage. There are two types of programs in schools i.e., Matric and O levels. Moreover, in colleges there are Pre-engineering/Pre-medical and Arts. All these disciplines and the classrooms are teacher dominated whereas the learners are not autonomous (Malik et al., 2020). Already established teaching methods are Grammar translation and direct method. Here the conventional teaching ways focused on drill method rather than knowledge development. Ali et al., (2020) also shared that Pakistani English language classrooms are controlled by teachers in which traditional methods are used in teaching and learning processes. Majority of the classrooms, particularly ESL only focus on using either multimedia or old technology tools like mp3 players, mp4 players, PODS and PADS etc. This situation is worst in rural areas where only whiteboards and blackboards are used for teaching and learning purposes. People are aware of latest technology tools but no proper implementation has been made to make people train and aware about them.

On the other side in the western classrooms, learners are autonomous and there the teachers' role is that of a mentor (Khan & Khan, 2020). Moreover, there are latest tools applied in English language learning which creates a positive impact on learning. One of the latest tools for English language learning and particularly ESL learning are the mobile phones (Ali et al., 2022).

Mobile phones are the most influential element nowadays. They not only assist to download different applications for learning but there are a lot of applications for a weather check, health, news, current affairs, etc. Most importantly the use of the internet on mobile phones has also made the process of learning more active as the user can learn virtually beyond the environment of the formal classroom. But surprisingly having so many features and benefits, mobile phones are not used in the Pakistani education system. Pakistan is still far behind in this regard and mobile phones for learning purposes are not practiced by institutions, teachers and learners. It is surprising to know that mobile phones are frequently and intensively used by the youth studying at schools, colleges and universities yet there are no signs of mobile phones for learning purposes (Ishaq et al., 2020). The use of Mobile phones for learning is called as mobile assisted language learning.

MALL stands for Mobile assisted language learning. It is a new strip of technology which has created positive impact in educational scenarios. Particularly, looking at ESL learning contexts, with the current demands and procedures of learning, MALL has created influence amongst educationists (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2020). Ali et al., (2020) stated that MALL can be explained as the utilization of mobile devices in language learning procedures. This learning pattern is contrary to already established methods. MALL makes sense of how cell phones and gadgets can be useful in language learning (Ali et al., 2020). Ahmadi (2021) says that the utilization of cell phones for language learning designs is called MALL. As opposed to in-class learning, in MALL there is no requirement for the students to sit in a class to get learning materials. As a matter of fact, MALL can be viewed as an ideal answer for language learning obstructions with regards to place as well as time. Some years back MALL consisted of tools like PDAs, PADS, PODS, Mp3 and Mp4 players etc., yet since a decade MALL is now applied and utilized through mobile phones (Shahzad et al., 2020). In the last ten years MALL has been the most preferred

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