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## **Exploring the Role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Language Learning at Undergraduate Level: Perceptions and Problems**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English language learning at the undergraduate level by examining students' perceptions, benefits, and challenges associated with mobile learning technologies. The study aims to investigate how university students use mobile devices for language learning, identify the problems faced by both students and teachers, and suggest ways to improve the effectiveness of MALL in higher education. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a questionnaire based on a Likert scale from undergraduate students. The findings reveal that most students frequently use mobile devices for language learning due to their flexibility, accessibility, and interactive nature. Applications such as Duolingo, YouTube, BBC Learning English, and Google Translate were found to be popular among learners. Students reported that MALL improved vocabulary, pronunciation, listening skills, and learner motivation. However, several challenges were also identified, including distractions from social media, lack of structured learning content, technical issues related to internet connectivity and storage, overdependence on applications, and insufficient teacher guidance. The study concludes that MALL can significantly enhance language learning when integrated with traditional classroom teaching rather than replacing it completely. It also emphasizes the need for teacher training, reliable technological infrastructure, and properly designed educational applications to maximize the benefits of mobile learning. The findings of this study may help educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers develop more effective and technology-supported language learning environments at the undergraduate level.

**Keywords:** Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), English Language Learning, Mobile Applications, Student Perceptions, Educational Technology

### **Introduction**

Recently it has become really popular to use mobile devices in the classroom to help the students learn a language (in particular English). Therefore in school, with the use of mobile phones and tablets, the students can learn a language in a very convenient and fun way (here they can practice whenever and wherever they want), according to a study



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done by S. F. Isamidinova (2019). Basically, it's about using apps, websites, and online tools in the classroom to teach students English effectively. While it sounds amazing, using mobile devices to learn a language has some problems: Some students may lack a good Internet connection, teachers might be uncomfortable with these online tools, and some students may prefer not to learn this way.

According to Brown (2020), learning on phones helps students learn more independently and immediately receive feedback on learning, an essential component in improving English. Apps such as Duolingo, BBC Learning English, and Quizlet have a set of games for English learning that are fun and help you learn new words, how to pronounce them correctly, and grammar rules. Mobile Phones also allow students to access real-life English media such as podcasts and eBooks as well as online classes. Although the approach sounds good, it has all the problems mentioned in Brown's text, such as distractions on the phone, not having a good plan for learning, and teachers not being adequately trained. All of these issues make people ask themselves whether learning English on phones is really going to work in the long term.

Johnson (2021) says that learning English on phones "will make you feel as if you're actually in the real world, using English to talk and practice, which will help you learn better." Things like language exchange apps, software that understands your speech, and chatbots that use AI can help students practice English in real ways. The study shows that learning English on phones allows students to go at their own pace, so they can check lessons and practice whenever they want. "Not everyone has an equally comfortable level of tech knowledge," Johnson says. So, some students may have issues with using the tools to learn English on phones. He says that not all students have adequate phones and reliable internet. Therefore some students may not have the same opportunities to learn English on phones. Because phones have brought new tools to study English at universities, students have been able to learn more about what they want to learn in a class rather than listening to their teacher (Kim, 2022).

This approach sounds very much in line with new visions of learning that seek to make learning more about doing and getting lessons written just for the students. "To make this new way of learning English on phones really work well, universities need to spend some money on adequate internet and technology, train teachers on how to use this new tool, and have clear rules on how to use phones in class," Kim said. If universities plan it poorly and don't help teachers use the new tools, using phones for learning will probably be less effective, and teachers accustomed to traditional methods may resist trying something new.

Smith (2023) investigates what is good and bad about using phones for learning at college, particularly for students who are getting their bachelor's degree. In this study, smartphones can make learning more fun and interesting, but there are some problems to consider, such as issues with keeping student information secure, technology problems, and some teachers not wanting to use phones in class. Many teachers and students still have an attachment to the old way of learning in a classroom due to concerns over how much time is being spent viewing screens and whether learning on your own is an effective learning environment. Smith thinks that the best way to use phones to learn English is to add them into regular classroom teaching so that it gives students the best of both worlds. This combination of phone learning and traditional teaching ensures that students benefit from both technology and teacher support, ultimately enhancing their overall learning experience.



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### Statement of the Problem

This study examines how phone use can aid university students' English learning by exploring their opinions and issues. Mobiles can really help students learn because they are easy to use and make things more interesting, but there are also massive problems with using them properly, e.g., many students don't understand how technology works, don't get enough help, and get distracted when learning on their phones; teachers also have difficulties in understanding how to use phones in their normal teaching. This study aims to improve English learning with phones and solve related issues.

### Research Objectives

To examine student's perceptions about using phones to learn English in universities

To identify problems that students and teachers face using phones for learning English

To find ways to make using phones for English learning better in universities

### Research Questions

What do undergraduate students think about using phones to learn English?

What are the problems students and teachers face using phones to learn English?

How the problems with using phones can be fixed to learn English language in a better way in the universities?

### Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact mobile devices have on learning languages for undergraduates. The study is important in terms of mobile technology because students engage academically and socially with mobile devices, and understanding their role in education can enable greater educational achievement and efficiencies. The study analyzes students' perceptions regarding the use of mobile applications, dictionaries, and other tools for language learning as well as the problems they encounter. The results can assist teachers, curriculum planners, and decision makers in developing functional language learning programs incorporating mobile technology. This may also lead to educational programs that equip students with the skills to use mobile tools effectively for learning purposes. Overall, this study aims to enhance language learning by integrating traditional methods with technology.

### Literature Review

This study focuses on using mobile phones to learn English, particularly at the university level. People are looking at how well apps used to learn English work, what problems people have, and what students believe regarding it, and this paper collates all the relevant information that's already been written about apps used for learning English. Isamidinova (2019) found that using apps to learn English can really help students learn new words and improve their pronunciation. The study also said that apps make learning engaging and flexible so students are more interested in using them. Rahman (2020) found that using apps to learn English helps students improve their listening and speaking skills. Students who used language-learning apps were better at pronouncing words correctly and understanding what they heard compared with those learning with traditional methods.

Ahmed and Hassan (2021) reported that students like using apps to learn English because they're easy to access, and they can learn at their own pace. The study also found that they worried about getting distracted by their phones and becoming too dependent on them to learn the language. Kim and Park (2022) found that by using apps to learn English at university, it can be difficult for students with issues with the internet to learn



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effectively. Jones (2018) found that playing games in language learning apps encourages students to become more motivated and able to remember what they have learned. Using games in learning makes it fun and engaging.

Liu and Chen (2020) found that using apps to learn English increases students' ability to learn independently. They proposed that students who use apps to learn some beneficial study habits that will help them become more proficient in English over the long term. Teachers at the school also like using apps to teach English, Gonzalez and Ramirez (2019) found, but they worry that students can become addicted to technology and not have enough face-to-face interaction. Wang (2021) found that language learning apps that use artificial intelligence (AI) can offer personalized feedback, be tailored to each student's knowledge level, and correct students' errors in real-time, helping them learn better. Brown's (2020) study found that students' access to apps for learning English varies by socioeconomic status. Therefore some students have more opportunities to learn English than others. Using your phone to learn English is especially beneficial for university students. People are looking at how well apps used to learn English work, what problems people have, and what students believe regarding it, and this paper collates all the relevant information that's already been written about apps used for learning English.

Isamiddinova (2019) found that using apps to learn English can really help students learn new words and improve their pronunciation. The study also said that apps make learning intriguing and flexible so students are more interested in using them. Rahman (2020) found that using apps to learn English helps students improve their listening and speaking skills. Students who used language-learning apps were better at pronouncing words correctly and understanding what they heard compared with those learning with traditional methods. Ahmed and Hassan (2021) reported that students like using apps to learn English because they're easy to access, and they can learn at their pace. The study also revealed their concerns about phone distractions and excessive reliance on them for language learning.

Kim and Park (2022) found that by using apps to learn English at university, it can be difficult for students with issues with the internet to learn effectively. Jones (2018) found that playing games in language learning apps encourages students to become more motivated and able to remember what they have learned. Using games in learning makes it fun and engaging. Liu and Chen (2020) found that using apps to learn English increases students' ability to learn independently. They proposed that students who use apps to learn develop positive study habits, such as time management and self-discipline, that will help them become more proficient in English over the long term. Teachers at the school also like using apps to teach English (Gonzalez and Ramirez in 2019 found, but they worry that students can become addicted to technology and not have enough face-to-face interaction.

Wang (2021) found that language learning apps that use artificial intelligence (AI) can offer personalized feedback, be tailored to each student's knowledge level, and correct students' errors in real-time, helping them learn better. Brown (192020 ) found that students' access to apps for learning English varies by socioeconomic status. Therefore some students have more opportunities to learn English than others. The studies said forcing language students to follow a plan or goal can be detrimental for them. They also found that using mobile devices in school can help language students be more motivated and feel they belong.



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### Methodology

This study uses numbers to look for patterns. It's like a math problem for research. The study is about 20 university students. The study focuses on this group. The study will involve 20 students. Even though there are 20 students, they're using a sample of 30 to ensure that they obtain enough information. The students were chosen for a reason. They picked students with certain qualities that fit what the study is about. They'll use a questionnaire to collect data. A questionnaire is a list of questions to obtain information from the students. The questionnaire will have questions with a Likert scale to measure how students feel. A Likert scale helps measure attitudes and opinions. A Likert scale is a way to ask questions where people choose how much they agree or disagree with something. It's like a sliding scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

### Theoretical Framework

This research investigates the role, perceptions, and associated problems of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) among undergraduate students by employing an integrated theoretical framework. The study uses Davis (1989)'s TAM and Venkatesh et al. (2003)'s UTAUT to see what students believe regarding using mobile apps for learning (MALL). These models help look at how useful and easy the apps are, plus how things like friends and support affect whether students use them. It also uses ideas from language learning theories. These theories, from Krashen (1982), Long (1983), and Swain (1985), help the study see if MALL is beneficial for learning by providing information, allowing interaction, and encouraging students to speak. Finally, it uses ideas from mobile learning theory, particularly Sharples et al. (2007) and Kukulska-Hulme (2009). This helps the study understand what makes mobile learning special, like being able to learn anywhere, and what problems it might have, like using the apps or connecting to the internet, especially in Pakistan. This all helps to understand how MALL works, what students think of it, and what problems they face.

### Data Analysis

This part of the study shows the results from a survey of 20 university students. It examines their phone usage, preferred apps, the benefits of using phones for language learning, and any issues they have.

**Table 1:** *Frequency of Mobile Use for Language Learning*

Frequency	Percentage	Number of Students
Daily	45%	9
2-3 times a week	30%	5
Occasionally	20%	4
Never	5%	2

### Interpretation

Every day, the majority of students are using their mobile devices to study new languages. Many students make use of them on a weekly basis, and only a small percentage of students do not make use of them at all. This demonstrates that, in general, students are quite interested in using their mobile devices for the sake of language learning.



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**Table 2: Perceived Benefits of MALL**

Benefit	Percentage of Students	Number of Students
Flexibility in learning schedule	72%	14
Improved Vocabulary	68%	13
Better listening and pronunciation	61%	12
Increased Motivation	54%	11
Exposure to authentic language input	59%	12

The majority of pupils appreciated the adaptability of mobile learning. In addition, they said that it assisted them in learning new words (68%) and improving their pronunciation and listening skills (61%), which is consistent with the findings of other individuals. Additionally, it inspired them and served as an introduction to authentic English.

**Table 3: Reported Problems in MALL**

Problem	Percentage of Students
Distractions from social media	80%
Lack of structured content	60%
Technical issues (storage/internet)	53%
Over-dependence on apps	32%
No guidance from teachers	57%

Students reported that the most difficult challenge they faced was being sidetracked by social media, which accounted for eighty percent of the total. In addition, they suffered with a lack of information that was structured (60%) and technological issues (53%) in their website. Even more than that, 32% of them got overly dependent on applications, and 57% of them found it difficult to receive direction from their professors.

**Table 4: Preferred Mobile Applications for English Language Learning**

Mobile Application	Percentage of Students	Number of Students
Duolingo	80%	14
BBC Learning English	50%	10
YouTube (educational)	65%	13
Quizlet	40%	3
Google Translate	55%	5

Due to the fact that they are both entertaining and participatory, the majority of students preferred Duolingo and YouTube. In addition, they extensively used Google Translate and BBC Learning English. Even though they used Quizlet less, it was still advantageous in that it helped them learn new terms using flashcards.

### Findings and Discussion

According to the findings of this study, students had a strong preference for utilizing their mobile devices to acquire English language skills. Their use of this strategy is gaining popularity and acceptance among them. According to the data presented in table 1, the majority of students make extensive use of their mobile devices for educational purposes. Approximately forty-five percent of students use their phones on a daily basis, while another thirty percent use them on a few occasions each week. As stated by



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Isamiddinova (2019) and Johnson (2021), it appears that students are increasingly relying on their mobile devices to acquire language skills. This is a logical approach, as it allows for greater flexibility and accessibility, as stated by the aforementioned sources. When it comes to the perceived benefits (Table 2), the majority of students (72%) appreciated the adaptability of mobile learning, and 68% of them stated that it assisted them in acquiring new vocabulary. This finding is consistent with other research findings. Additionally, more than half of the students (61%) reported that it enhanced their listening skills and inspired them, demonstrating that phones are an excellent tool for assisting kids in learning on their own and improving their abilities. However, as the data shown in table 3 demonstrates, mobile learning is not without its concerns. Social media distracted 83% of students, a finding also seen in other studies. There were also other challenges, such as a lack of structured information (60 percent), technological problems (53 percent), and not receiving sufficient assistance from the instructor, all of which make it more difficult to study effectively.

The applications that students appreciated the best were those that included cool visuals and content that was both enjoyable and interactive. Due to the fact that students preferred applications such as Duolingo, YouTube, and BBC Learning English above other resources such as dictionaries, it is clear that engaging videos and interactive content are extremely vital for the success of mobile learning strategies. The outcomes of this study appear to be consistent with the UTAUT paradigm as well as the Technology Acceptance Model. Although students believe mobile learning to be beneficial and simple, the extent to which they utilize it is contingent upon factors such as the technology and the way in which the courses are organized. From the perspective of language acquisition, the study provides evidence that mobile applications provide useful information and opportunities for practice; nevertheless, they do not always have sufficient interaction, which is something that is really significant. Including studying on phones in normal classrooms, improving internet access, and teaching students how to utilize digital tools are all key steps that should be taken to make the most of this learning opportunity.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how college students utilize their mobile devices to improve their English language skills. According to the findings of the study, students enjoy using their mobile phones for educational purposes since they are simple to operate, can be found anywhere, and assist them in improving their vocabulary and pronunciation skills. Students expressed their satisfaction when given the opportunity to learn at their own pace and utilize real-life language materials. The research did, however, uncover a few issues, including, but not limited to, the presence of social media platforms that impede learning, a dearth of well-organized educational resources, inadequate assistance from educators, and technological issues. The findings of the study suggest that studying on phones should not be utilized in place of traditional classrooms but rather in conjunction with them to produce various instructional approaches. We should make use of phones in the classroom, instruct instructors on how to utilize the capabilities available on phones, ensure that the technology is functional, and develop applications that are specifically created for educational purposes. In short, mobile devices should aid learning, not replace college.



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### Recommendations

According to the findings of the study, the following is what they recommend we do: It is important for educational institutions to include mobile learning in their regular language sessions to guarantee that the lessons are consistent and align with the content that is being taught. Educators must receive training on how to utilize various applications and how to teach digitally. Providing assistance to students in maintaining their concentration while utilizing digital tools, such as applications that block notifications, is of utmost importance. Aside from that, we need to ensure that every student has access to reliable internet and gadgets. An excellent option would be to use both traditional classroom instruction and mobile learning. Educational institutions can develop or modify apps to assist students in their learning. Finally, utilizing technologies that allow both teachers and students to assess their progress and receive feedback is advantageous.

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