Relationship between Mobile Applications and Acquisition of English Pronunciation among Middle School Students

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Abstract

The study proved that there is a strong positive relationship between Mobile Application and Acquisition of English Pronunciation among Middle School Students. It is based on the descriptive style. It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, the developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time.The sampling method of the study comes under the stratified random sampling through which 200 students from middle school (Standard 6 - 8) were selected. Tools used were "Know your Mobile Apps - Questionnaire" and "English Pronunciation Test" which were self-constructed and validated by the investigator. Both the tools were administered to the selected samples and the data obtained were statistically analysed. The descriptive analysis such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlation were found in order to describe the mean difference and to find the level of significance of the test based on the subgroups of the sample. Inferential analysis was done in order to find the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and correlation scores were deduced. From the analysis it has been proved that the variables are positively correlated with strong uphill linear relationship. This result can be interpreted in the following way: students those who are aware of the available mobile applications and those who use it in their learning processes are good in their English pronunciation standard. Hence it can be seen that positive relationship exists between mobile applications and acquisition of English pronunciation among the middle school students.

Key words: Middle School students, Mobile Applications, Pronunciation, technology, exposure

Introduction

Communication is significant in human life which helps us to exchange our thoughts and ideas. Such communication is possible through a platform called language. Language owns some important elements such as vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar. Among the elements pronunciation plays a vital role in any language learning process since it demands accuracy in understanding the idea spoken. Developing this pronunciation remains challenging for both teachers and students. Teachers rarely focus on the pronunciation development in the classroom teaching. It is failed to understand that pronunciation, in any language learning, is a skill that should be concentrated on to enhance the language mastery. In this technological era mobile technology became a boon for language learners. Mobile applications are new and innovative strategy in the field of education. It makes learning fun and fast. These applications give new dimension in the development of language elements.

Need for the study

Learning became instant after the advent of technology. Learners expect learning to happen anywhere and at any time. This attitude of the learners helps them learn the concepts in a better way. Second language learners especially those who learn English as their second language find it difficult to master their pronunciation skill. Main cause of this difficulty is the influence of their mother tongue. Most of the learners feel shy to put their words in spoken form due to the lack of proper pronunciation. English is a not a phonetic language. It has different spelling and different pronunciation. The 26 letters of the English alphabet comprises of 44 distinct sounds. Hence the learners from different mother tongue find it difficult to understand the fact. Moreover those learners are not much exposed to the second language and they hesitate to use the target language whenever needed. As far as the language teaching is concerned new methodologies should be adopted by the teachers to enhance the language elements. Language is a skill subject and it must be more practical oriented and activity based learning. Learners' involvement, active participation and cooperation are much important for practicing the skills. Therefore mobile technology can be taken as a new strategy to enhance the pronunciation skill among the learners. The mobile applications are innovative and provide standard pronunciation and practicing opportunities for the learners. Since the mobile applications invite the participation of the learners they are able to learn quickly. Each application is unique in its nature and concentrates on the prefect pronunciation of the words and sentences.

Objectives

1. To develop a tool to ensure the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students

2. To construct a tool to check the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students

3. To analysis the relationship between the mobile applications and the acquisition of English language pronunciation among the middle school students

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on the following demographic variables:

      H01: Gender – Male/Female

      H02: Location – Urban/Rural

      H03: Type of School – Government/Private

      H04: Siblings – Single/Siblings

There is no significant difference in the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students based on the following demographic variables:

      H05: Gender – Male/Female

      H06: Location – Urban/Rural

      H07: Type of School – Government/Private

      H08: Siblings – Single/Siblings

H09. There is no relationship between the mobile applications and the acquisition of English language pronunciation among the middle school students

Delimitations

1. The study was limited to Coimbatore city alone; it can be extended to district and state level as well.

2. The demographic variables selected can be widened to explore various attributes of the sample selected

Methodology

The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, the developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time.

Sample

The sampling technique adopted was stratified random sampling. The population of the study was middle school students and sample comprises of the middle school students of Coimbatore city. They are further stratified on the basis of mobile application users. Sample size is 200 middle school students of both Government/Aided and Private schools.

Sample Distribution

Table: 1

Gender	Male	100
	Female	100
Location	Urban	120
	Rural	80
Type of School	Government/Aided	100
	Private	100
Siblings	Single Child	86
	With Siblings	114

Tool

Two tools were used for the study. One is a questionnaire "Know your Mobile Apps – Questionnaire" which was constructed by the investigator. The tool consists of 20 items in 5 point Likert scale. And the other tool used was "English Pronunciation Test" question paper. Both the tools were face validated and checked for the reliability through split-half method.

Statistical technique

The descriptive analysis such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlation were found in order to describe the mean difference and to find the level of significance of the test based

on the subgroups of the sample. Inferential analysis was done in order to find the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and correlation scores were deduced.

Data analyses/Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses:H01-H04

There is no significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on gender, location, type of school and siblings

Table: 2

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Significance at 0.05%
Gender	Male	100	74.3	10.77	1.54	NS
	Female	100	72.2	8.39		
Location	Urban	120	68.8	8.64	7.22	S
	Rural	80	77.7	8.38		
Type of School	Govt/Aided	100	75.5	8.95	3.38	S
	Private	100	71	9.88		
Siblings	Single	86	75.6	8.41	3.45	S
	Siblings	114	70.9	10.29		

Table 2 shows that the t-value of gender is 1.54 which is not statistically significant. Hence the null hypothesis H01 is accepted. It is evident that there is no significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on gender. And the t-values of location, type of school and siblings are 7.22, 3.38, and 3.45 respectively which are extremely statistically significant. Hence the null hypotheses H02, H03, and H04 are rejected. From this it is proved that there is significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on location, type of school and siblings.

Hypotheses: H05-H08

There is no significant difference in the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students based on gender, location, type of school and siblings

Table: 3

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Significance at 0.05%
Gender	Male	100	17.8	2.20	3.18	S
	Female	100	18.8	2.25		
Location	Urban	120	17.9	2.60	2.39	S
	Rural	80	18.7	1.83		
Type of School	Govt/Aided	100	19.3	2.21	6.97	S
	Private	100	17.3	1.83		
Siblings	Single	86	18.6	2.17	0.63	NSS
	Siblings	114	18.4	2.27		

From table 3 it is evident that the t-values of gender, location and type of school are statistically significant and hence hypotheses H05, H06 and H07 are summarily rejected. It can be said that there is significant difference in the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students based on gender, locationand type of school. The t-value of siblings is 0.63 which is not statistically significant. So the Hypothesis H08 is accepted. It is proved that there is no significant difference in the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students based on siblings.

Hypothesis: H09

There is no relationship between the mobile applications and the acquisition of English language pronunciation among the middle school students

Table: 4

Variables	r-Value	LOS
Mobile applications and the acquisition of English language pronunciation	**0.78**	**SS***

*Statistically Significant

Table 4 shows that the r-value is 0.78 which is statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis H09 is rejected. It can be said that there isstrong positive relationship between the mobile applications and the acquisition of English language pronunciation among the middle school students.

Findings

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on gender. This may be due to the mobile usage of the students irrespective of gender. Nowadays children are more prone to use mobile applications for both entertainment and educational purposes. Gender does not play a role in the usage of mobile technology. And there is significant difference in the awareness and usage of the mobile applications by the middle school students based on location, type of school and siblings. The difference based on location can be interpreted as students from urban area are more aware of mobile applications than the students from rural area and also urban students are well exposed to the usage of the same. Regarding type of schools, most of the private schools are assigning works like worksheets, projects and presentations based on technology. Hence the students are more exposed to the mobile technology and aware of available educational applications. Whereas the government/Aided school children are less exposed to the mobile technology. And based on the number of siblings there exists difference. It is due to the sharing of the experience in the usage of mobile

technology among their siblings creates more understanding and awareness. The single child lacks this experience.

2. There is significant difference in the standard and the level of English language pronunciation among the middle school students based on gender, location and type of school. With respect to gender female students perform well compared to male students. This is due to the commitment of the female students in learning the language. Based on the location, students from rural area are less exposed to the target language usage compared to the urban students. Urban students are experiencing the target language in and around their living place. It is obvious that private schools are insisting their students to speak only in English during the working hours and inside the campus. Communication between the teacher and student and student and student happens only in English. Whereas in the Government/Aided school students are getting acquainted with the target language only during the particular class. Hence the difference exists. Based on siblings there exists no difference because English language learning happens individually since it is learnt as second language.

3. There is strong positive relationship between the awareness and usage of mobile applications and acquisition of English language pronunciation among the middle school students. This is because the students who are using mobile applications are more exposed to the target language and so they can learn the language easily and quickly. Perfect language acquisition happens to those who use mobile applications frequently. Hence it is found that there is strong positive correlation between mobile application and the acquisition of English language pronunciation.

Conclusion

English language is a funny language. It consists of words with different spellings but same pronunciation. It possesses silent letters which confuse the learners and take them to wrong pronunciation. Learners of the language find it difficult to master the pronunciation skill because it is not practiced as a skill. Very less importance is being given to enhance this skill in the classroom teaching. New and different strategies should be adopted by the teachers to develop this language element which makes a significant part in language usage. Making use of mobile applications for improving the pronunciation skill among the school children is a new strategy. The study proves that the students those who are good in using mobile technology and mobile applications are good in their English language pronunciation. This is due to the audio and video content imbibed in the applications. It helps them learn the

language indirectly. If we make use of the applications directly for enhancing the pronunciation skill the level and standard of language learning will be much improved among the students. Many applications are meant especially for pronunciation development of English language. The teachers should be aware of it and must try to use it in the classroom teaching and can involve the students in learning through these applications. They should encourage the students by giving immediate assessment and feedback. Teachers must be ready to adopt the new available technologies to enhance the language skills among their students.

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