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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mobile Applications for ESP Instruction in Engineering Disciplines

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Abstract

The use of mobile technology in the field of ESP is a new concept, particularly in third-world countries. The present research is conducted in an engineering college in which there are two sections of electrical engineering class: section "A", called the experimental group, and section "B", called the control group. The data, which is collected through FGD, Pre-test, Post-test, and questionnaires from the students, shows that all the ESP teachers and the learners believed that the integration of mobile technology in teaching and learning ESP is fruitful and motivated the students to learn a specific language for their commercial use.

Abbreviations: ESP (English for Specific Purpose), FGD (Focus Group Discussion), ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)

Introduction

Using a mobile phone in teaching and learning ESP is a new concept, particularly in the fields of business and commerce, medicine, literature, law, physics, biology, psychology, history, etc. We have various mobile apps (Hello English Learn English, Learn to Speak English, Kahoot, Ever Note, Style Blue, Off Time, Pool Everywhere, dual lingo, Geo Gebra, Class Dojo) and sites (Google Sites) that may help teachers and learners to teach and learn ESP in different fields. In this supersonic era of science and technology, one should not get away from the educational technology that holds a central position in teaching and learning ESP. Even in EGP, we need a technology that integrates methods and materials in harmonious ways that help the learner understand the course effectively. Teachers who integrate materials and methods effectively with motivation may have better results.

Roblyer (2000) stated that" Education technology means a mixture of the procedures and apparatuses that directly address the educational needs and problems of the learners, especially, the use of ICT. Whereas most people thought about technology as the use of computers, gadgets, and technical devices (Muffoletto, 1994). Technology does not mean computers or gadgets only; it also includes the use of blackboard, charts, graphs, pen, and ink as well. The best example of the 18th and 19th-century use of technologies is the book of Amos, named Orbis Pictus (the world in pictures). After that, visual instruction and photography, and filmmaking became popular. The first educational program was aired in 1932 for the students of the University of Iowa. Then there is a technological change. The arrival of computers, mobile phones, iPads, and the internet changed world history. Now we have the latest tools and gadgets for teaching and learning ESP. We have different software, as a mediational tool that

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equips the teachers to teach the specific subject and language (Li, 2014). Even in text chats, the use of emoticons helps the participants to express their thoughts and facial expressions in graphics (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). For the development of interactional learning, we have CALL (computer-assisted language learning) that assists both the instructor and the learner.

Learning and building vocabulary is the basis of every language (Wan, Sheu, Chen, 2012). Having sufficient vocabulary means one can speak and write according to their need. In the English language, we have a lot of new words that create problems in reading, understanding their meaning, and, most of the time, in pronunciation, especially borrowed words and technical terms from different languages. We are living in a global village that opens its gates for students to learn the languages and cultures of the world. So, we have different words from different languages, especially in the case of the English language. We have a lot of teaching techniques that help us to understand English vocabulary, such as taking notes, flashcards, learning through memorizing, through charts, audiovisual aids, etc. (Shariro and Waters, 2005; Asgari and Mustafa, 2011). Before selecting the methods, one should be clear about one's goals and needs. The present research is related to the use of mobile technology for ESP purposes in the field of engineering. The students of engineering are required to understand the specific vocabulary and technical terms in the syllabus. For this purpose, the role of technology can provide a big helping hand to learners to see things visually and to understand them comprehensively with different analyses and explanations. Mobile is the most modern invention of science, which connects people all over the world to the internet, using different mobile applications like WhatsApp, Skype, Emo, etc. Teachers are using the same application for sharing knowledge and conducting online tests as well. In China, university teachers have their own web pages. Through these web pages, they share knowledge, have group chats, and recorded lectures are also available for the students. In the UK, university students have a mobile link to their library that provides a chance to access free download facilities for eBooks, articles, and theses. In this research, we would like to explore:

- 1. Whether there is a difference in students' vocabulary acquisition performances under different teaching instructions (with mobile technology and without mobile technology)
- 2. Can information and communication technologies (ICT) increase students' motivation to learn a language?
- 3. Are teachers and learners ready to accept mobile teaching in the class?

Literature Review

The concept of learning vocabulary with the use of ICT is a new one for both the learners as well as the teachers. Through this method, learners become more interactive and conscious about learning vocabulary. This method increases the level of confidence among students. Some researchers are of the view that mixing technology into the syllabus is one of the most useful and result-oriented tools for learning vocabulary that can help learners, resolve their difficulties, enhance their motivation, and develop their critical thinking (Harris, 2005; McCormick, 2001; Jonassen, 1998). Therefore, the incorporation of technology in teaching ESP may have the following objectives (Pope & Golub, 2000):

1. Students training

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- 2. Students' motivation towards using technology
- 3. Developing confidence and communication skills
- 4. Learning to use
- 5. Understanding the global culture by using ICT
- 6. Nonstop contact with the teachers and the management
- 7. Reinforcing learners' self-explosion and permanent learning ability

Cui & Wang's (2008) research on the use of cell phones in teaching English as a foreign language indicates that the writing of SMS among students and teachers can help students to learn a foreign language. Teachers can give quizzes, written tests, or any kind of information related to the learning of the students. A similar kind of research is conducted by Ferry (2008), which tells that teachers in the UK use SMS to communicate with their students. Hope (2009) and Ferry (2008) concluded their research on the following points:

- 1. Students can use different browsers for surfing online materials.
- 2. Mobile applications like mini-opera, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, etc. It can help the learners to check their emails, results, timetable, and watch lectures, at any time, from anywhere.

According to Kafyulilio (2009), with the use of mobile teachers can download videos and lectures of different eminent scholars and share them with the class for learning. The study conducted by UNESCO (2012) in South Africa and Utula (2012) in Nigeria on the use of the mobile phone in the field of teaching and learning language revealed that Mobile phones can be used in the field of research to record interviews, focus group discussion, lectures, tutorials, recording minutes of the meetings, sending and receiving emails, etc.

In the past, Adamson (2004) stated that "English teachers give more importance to both the teaching of grammar in a traditional way, such as with the help of a textbook, grammar-translation methods, by memorizing the words and sentences, by writing again and again on paper and the whiteboard. The teachers ignore the listening and writing skills". But the present era is a different one. Now, the student-centered approach is more important than the teacher-centered approach. In a student-centered approach, the central focus is the student, not the teacher. ESP courses are designed according to the needs of the learners. In the ESP course, the teacher may teach according to the needs, goals, and aims of the learners. For example, in ESP for nursing, the emphasis is on writing and speaking; in ESP for front desk secretary, the importance is given to speaking and writing; in ESP for the deaf, the emphases are given to speaking skills, etc. Educational technology may help students develop their critical thinking. Technology integration in teaching and learning English vocabulary can have the following goals (Pope & Golub, 2000):

- 1. It enhances the students' learning with motivation.
- 2. It inspires the students.
- 3. It enhances the effectiveness of teaching methods and learning a language as well.
- 4. It enhances the students' language skills, such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing.
- 5. It develops communication skills among students.
- 6. It enhances understanding of the cultures of the different regions.
- 7. It gives a chance to explore the self of the learner.

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English Vocabulary Teaching methods

We have different English vocabulary teaching methods, such as word family, suffixes, prefixes, synonyms, antonyms, one-word substitution, analysis and synthesis, semantic maps, etc. (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2006). In the traditional method of teaching, we used semantic maps to teach English vocabulary. There are two basic purposes for using this method:

- 1. To facilitate the students 'understanding of the specific concepts and uses of the word in a different context.
- 2. Enhances learners' vocabulary by using words in the relevant category. For example, when a teacher teaches the word "**Happiness**," students can come up with relevant words like contentment, pleasure, merriment, joy, delight, enjoyment, etc. The Teacher may help the learners to draw a semantic chart on the whiteboard like this:



Integrating Technology in Teaching Corpus

According to O'Keeffe et al. 2008, "A corpus means a group of spoken or written text that is saved on a computer". A corpus has two basic functions to perform: it tells us where and how the word is used in a sentence, and secondly, it indicates the frequency of the use of the word. We have a lot of free corpora available on the internet, for example, the British National Corpus (BNC), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), Hong Kong Engineering Corpus, etc.

Web-Based Materials

The internet is the hub of authentic material that can be used by teachers for preparing ESP lessons. For example, the website <u>ESLhome.com</u> has a lot of material for ESP learners such as businessmen, bankers, finance, doctors, engineers, etc.

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The Use of Wikis for Collaborative Writing

A wiki is a collaborative tool that helps to build projects and pages on the internet that help students to share knowledge, comments, and sometimes criticize the materials. For example, a doctor or an engineer can create a webpage for their use, which helps the students in the form of giving instructions and receiving information from different learners. "Wikispaces.com" is an engine where learners and their teachers can create web pages for communication. A writing problem can be solved by using Wiki Collaborative. A teacher can guide the learners to develop their pages and do some writing practice regularly (Li and Zhu 2013).

Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a genuine tool that generates interaction among learners in the form of verbal or written language. Email is the best example of CMC (Angouri and Harwood, 2008)

The Role of Mobile Phones in Supporting Teaching And learning

The mobile phone is becoming cheaper day by day. Traditionally, one can use it for communication, whereas the most crucial use of it nowadays is in the field of teaching and learning ESP courses (Muyinda et al, 2007). Cui and Wang (2008) stated that in the UK, university students used mobiles for storing e-books and lessons, while in China, students contact their teachers on web pages and can access online texts.

Mobile learning applications

Mobile is a multidimensional gadget that has a lot of functions like SMS, browsing, GPS, Bluetooth, voice call, camera, downloading, Wi-Fi, gaming, etc. (Kizito, 2012; Hoppe, 2009; Cui and wang, 2008). These features can be utilized for educational purposes.

What is a 21st-Century Classroom?

21ST-century class must be equipped with a 3D studio and mobile technology. Students must be fluent in the use of 3D and 4G mobile technology for learning ESP courses. Weblinks, Google Sites, WhatsApp groups, and effective use of audiovisual lectures like YouTube lectures must be part of the 21st-century class. The most important point is that the teachers must create a natural learning environment.

How to apply M-Learning in the English Language Classroom

- Get your students to use a mobile dictionary to define keywords.
- Download flashcards, quizzes, and other helpers through Devices, laptops and desktops, Androids, and Blackberries.
- Get your students to use a mobile encyclopedia to tell a brief account of some difficult terms with pictures and stories.
- Get your students to use a mobile camera to take a photo of something that they want to know its name of in English. They can also take pictures of some vocabulary that they have seen and can't write.
- Get your students to use a mobile to make a documentary about collecting vocabulary.

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- Get your students to use a mobile to make a short movie or animation showing some vocabulary using pictures and flashcards.
- Get your students to send and receive emails on their mobile phones, to ask about new vocabulary, to send their vocabulary homework, or to send some vocabulary lectures to study.
- Sending e-mails or SMS to students is a common way of learning new vocabulary based on the lessons covered in the classroom.

Vocabulary in the Use of SMS

- SMS messaging on mobile phones is an instructional tool of great potential because of its high popularity among young adults.
- They could memorize the vocabulary in the SMS lessons more easily.
- The immediacy and novelty of SMS lessons can foster students' vocabulary learning.
- It is useful and efficient. It urges us to learn English diligently.
- Send a mobile message every day to explain a word.
- You can use a lot of educational games on their mobile devices, which makes them learn faster.

Vocabulary Drills on Mobile Devices

1. Matching synonyms	6. Complete the sentences.
2. Matching opposites	7. Crossword Puzzles
3. Fill in the blank sentences	8. Look for the Word That Means.
4. Correct the mistakes	9. Parts of speech
5. Label a Picture	10. Complete the définitions.

Methodology

The researcher has researched at an Engineering College where we have students of 7 different engineering technologies, like electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer hardware engineering, auto engineering, etc. They are studying English for 100 marks.

In the present research, the researcher has selected an electrical engineering class that has two sections, "A" and "B". In each section, we have 25 students. So, the total number of students is 50. Section "A" was an experimental group, whereas Section "B" was a control group. In the experimental group, the researcher/instructor applied the ICT (information and communication technology) method of teaching and learning ESP (English vocabulary and official letters), while in the control group, the researcher/instructor used the traditional method of teaching, i-e with the help of textbook, making semantic charts on a whiteboard, etc. The students of both groups regularly attended and participated in the class. The researcher has delivered 30 lectures (45 minutes per lecture) to each class. Both classes, sections "A" and "B," have the same course. The researcher has also conducted an English **pre-test and post-test** to check the students' progress. Finally, the results of the English pre-test and post-test are studied, tabulated, and presented in the form of charts.

The second method the researcher has applied to collect the data from the English teachers is the **Focus Group Discussion**. Only three relevant questions were asked by the English teachers in the focus group discussion. The five Likert scale questions were also prepared for the students to get the required

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data. The time of the focus group discussion was 40 minutes. The data from the focus group discussion was collected and analyzed with the help of SPSS 12.0.

The mobile applications, the researcher used for the experimental group were **Learn to Speak English** and **Google Apps**. Learning to speak English has a lot of functions such as vocabulary building, English Speaking Basics, Regular English Lessons, Business English Lessons, Idioms and Phrases, Travel English Lessons, Interview English Lessons, Listening Lessons, English Speaking Basics, English Speaking Intermediate, and English Speaking Advance, Parts of Speeches, Pronunciation, Tenses, kind of Sentence, etc. Google apps are used to download dictionaries and for other learning purposes, such as for official letters, etc.

Learn to Speak English (Mobile Application) **English Vocabulary** TalkEnglish Standard **English Vocabulary** Lesson Categories **English Speaking Basics** How many words do you need to know in English? This is a very common question and it Regular English Lessons varies depending on your goal. Because TalkEnglish.com focuses on speaking, the **Business English Lessons** vocabulary presented in this section will be the most commonly used words in speaking. Interview English Lessons 1. There are roughly 100,000 word-families in Travel English Lessons the English language. 2. A native English speaking person knows Idioms and Phrases between 10,000 (uneducated) to 20,000 (educated) word families. 3. Professor Paul Nation found that a person Listening Lessons needs to know 8,000-9,000 word families to enjoy reading a book. Extra English Lessons 4. Studying heritage language learners reveal that a person with a vocabulary size of **Favorite Lessons** 2,500 passive word-families and 2,000 Manage your favorite lessons active word-families can speak a language fluently. Lesson Search Many people do not know what a heritage Find lessons using a search box language learner is. Let's say a person from Mexico moves to the US at the age of 5. The **English Speaking Articles** person knows basic Spanish and is fluent for a 5 year old but eventually English will become IQ Broker INSTALL dominant. This person whose first language is Google Play 0 0 \triangleleft \bigcirc

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Learn to Speak English (Mobile Application)





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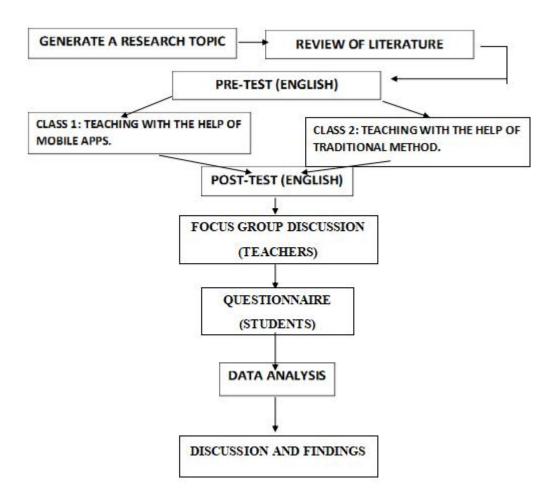
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(Flowchart of the Research)



Questionnaire using Mobile Phones in the Class for Learning Vocabulary

The following questions were asked by the students regarding the use of mobile phones in the class for learning vocabulary.

- 1. Through the use of mobile, I learn the vocabulary more confidently than the previous method.
- 2. By using my mobile, I feel a great sense of relaxation in class and am willing to spend more time learning vocabulary.
- 3. The mobile phone is better than a whiteboard for learning vocabulary.
- 4. At home, I can also use it to develop knowledge.
- 5. In the future, I will try my level best to use other mobile applications like YouTube, blogs, and web pages to learn English vocabulary.

The researcher used the five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data were collected from the questionnaires and tabulated against each question.

Data Analysis

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data. This research paper aims to explore the use of mobile technology in the field of teaching and learning ESP, especially regarding engineering students. After collecting the information through the questionnaire, Pre-test, Post-test, and focus group discussion, the

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data were tabulated and analyzed with the help of SPSS 12.0. There are only six teachers who took part in the focus group discussion.

Students' Pre-test Results

According to the research methodology, the researcher conducted the pre-test for both classes. Group "A" is an experimental class, whereas group "B" is a control class. It is noted (through the results of the previous tests) that the English proficiency of both classes is approximately the same. The results of the pre-test of both classes are shown below:

Table 1

Experimental Group		Control Group	
Total no of students	25	Total no of students	25
Mean	61.1	Mean	58.5

As we have already discussed, the English proficiency level of both groups of students is the same. This assumption is based on the previous results of the tests conducted by the college teachers. That's why there is no significant difference between the scores of both classes.

Students' Post-test Results

Post-test is conducted at the end of the learning process, which is based on mobile technology teaching. The researcher teaches the experimental class for one month with the help of mobile technology. The researcher teaches the vocabulary, including parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, prepositions, kinds of sentences, corrections, and official letters. The researcher used the mobile application "**Learn to Speak English**," which is fully loaded as far as English language learning is concerned. It has so many features that help the teacher teach the English language in multiple ways. Some of the features are discussed below.

English speaking basics	Idioms and phrases
Regular English lessons	Rules of grammar
English vocabulary	Intonation and speed
Business English lessons	A Grammar in Speaking
Travel English lessons	Extra English lessons

The above-mentioned topics have multiple exercises with keys and pronunciation facilities. The researcher also used different Google sites such as **oxforddictionaries.com** and **letters.org** for teaching ESP. The results can be recorded in a file for further analysis. The following are the results of the post-test.

Table 2

Experimental Group		Control Group	
Total no of students	25	Total no of students	25
Mean:	69.9	Mean	60.5

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The above-mentioned results of the post-test show that there is a significant difference in the scores between the experimental group and the control group. Under the mobile application instruction, the experimental group performed better in the post-test and made a big improvement.

Questionnaire Analysis

Items	Percent	(%)	(%)			
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
Q1	52.80	40.25	7.5	00	00	
Q2	50.2	35.8	10.6	00	3.4	
Q3	54.1	38.6	2.3	03	2.00	
Q4	35.8	46.3	12.5	03	2.4	
Q5	42.2	40.6	17.2	00	00	

Q.1 By Using a Mobile, I Learn Vocabulary more Confidently than the Previous Method

The answer to the first question shows that **93.5**% (52.80%+40.25%) of students in the experimental group feel confident to learn vocabulary with the use of a mobile. The use of the mobile for ESP purposes is a novel concept in Pakistan. That's why, in the beginning, students feel hesitant to use the mobile for learning purposes, but over time, they realize that it is user-friendly. With the help of ICT, students even study their lessons at home in their free time. No one in the experimental group is against the use of mobile phones for learning English vocabulary. They even consider it fun to learn.

Chart 1

7.50% 0

7.50% 52.80%

* SA

* A

* N

* D

* SD

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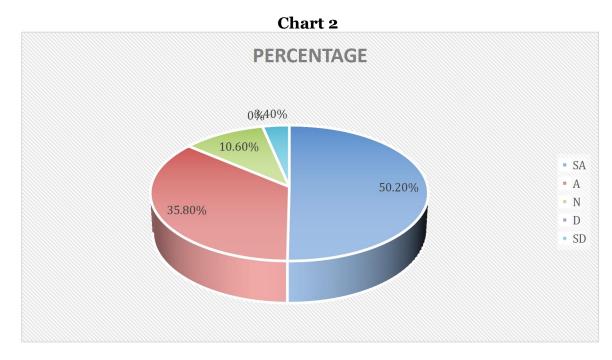
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Q.2 By using a mobile, I feel a great sense of relaxation in class and am willing to spend more time learning vocabulary

Data analysis of the second question shows that, by the use of the mobile for language learning, students feel a great sense of relaxation. **86%** (50.25%+35.80%) of the students in the experimental group believe that the traditional method of teaching vocabulary with the use of blackboards and text is boring and time-consuming, whereas the new method (ICT or M-learning) is entertaining, and students are willing to spend more time with mobile learning education.



Q.3 A Mobile Phone is better than a whiteboard for learning vocabulary

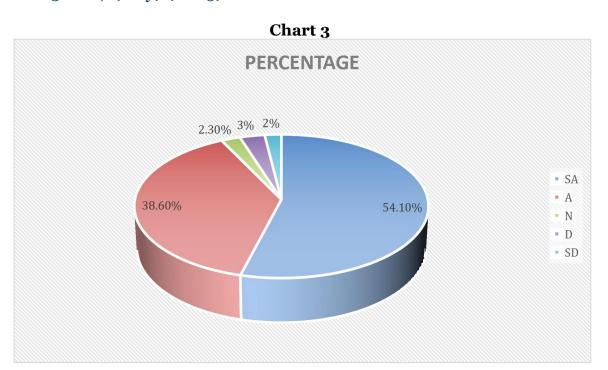
The most significant educational technology in the world is the use of the whiteboard/blackboard. It is the cheapest and most widely used educational technology by teachers. However, the role of mobile in teaching vocabulary cannot be ignored at any cost. The mobile phone has a lot of variety, like audiovisual aids, visual effects, live chat rooms, SMS, camera, web pages, wikis, etc. One can learn the correct pronunciation of the required word by hearing the sound of the word with one click. That's why **92.7%** (54.10%+38.60%) of students are in favor of using mobile phones for learning ESP.

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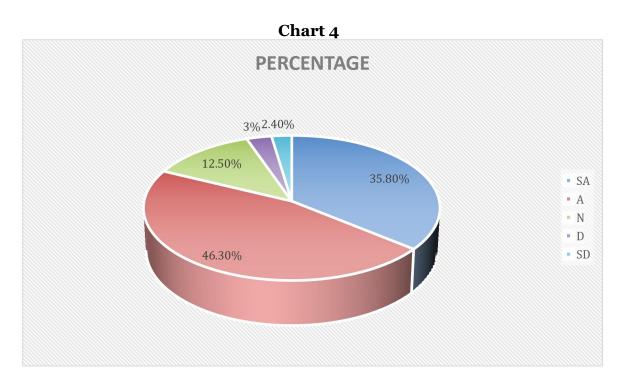


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Q.4 At home, I can also use it for developing knowledge

82.1% of students in the experimental group answered in favor of this statement that they use their cell phones at home to learn the English language. 5.4% of students may not get a chance to use it for educational purposes, and 12.5% of students remain neutral.



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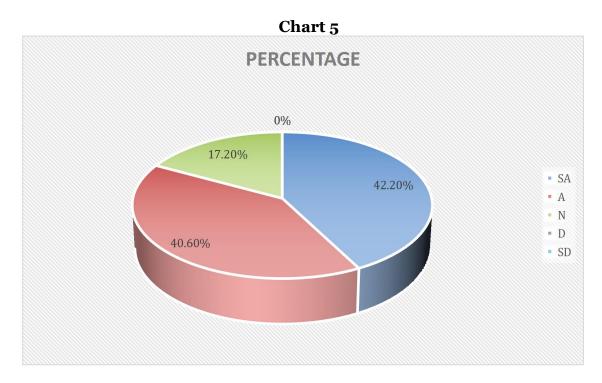
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Q.5 In the future, I will try my level best to use other mobile applications like YouTube, blogs, and web pages to learn English vocabulary

82.8% (42.20%+40.60%) of students in the experimental group believe the above-mentioned statement that they will use the other applications in their home for learning the English language. The other **17.2%** never answered the question and remained neutral.



Focus Group Discussion (for teachers)

The following questions were asked by the researcher of the English teachers.

- Q.1 Do you believe that the use of mobile technology in the field of teaching and learning ESP is more effective than the traditional method?
- Q.2 Do you believe that after using mobile technology in the class, the results of the students will be in favor of the students?
- Q.3 Do you believe that the use of Mobile Technology in the classroom increases the motivation of the students?

The focus group discussion is conducted among the English language teachers of the particular college in which the research is conducted. We have 6 English language teachers who have been teaching engineering classes for the last ten years. The range of the teachers' experience is between 10 to 19 years.

All six teachers strongly agreed that the use of mobile technology in the classroom is more effective than the traditional method of teaching. Although they have some reservations about the use of mobile technology in the class. The first reservation is about the ANDROID mobile and the continuous use of the internet in the class. In the government colleges, we have poor students who might not have an Android phone with an internet connection. The second reservation is about the environment of the class. It is possible to teach with a mobile phone in a small class, but unable to teach a huge class with a mobile phone. The 3rd reservation is about the training of the teachers. Not all the

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teachers of the college are well-equipped with Android technology. Even some of the senior teachers cannot handle the touch mobile properly. So, first do the needs analysis of the students learning a language, then the proper training should be given to the teachers on how to use mobile technology for ESP.

As far as the second question of the discussion is concerned, four teachers out of six believe that the results will be favorable, but the remaining two senior teachers are not in favor of the statement. They said the results will not always be favorable because, in this way, the role of the teacher becomes limited. Students will show their interest in mobile devices rather than in a teacher. Over time, students will neglect the teacher; in this way, the role of the teacher will become minimal, which results in disorder in the class. Further, they clearly stated that we need a technological environment that helps the teachers to teach and the students to learn.

To answer the 3rd question, again, four teachers out of six believe that the appropriate use of Mobile Technology in the classroom increases the learning motivation of the students. However, the remaining two teachers stated that the use of mobile technology in teaching and learning in class does not guarantee motivation among students. First, motivation comes from within. Secondly, it is the teacher who motivates the students to use technology to learn the language. It could be possible if the teacher is motivated and interested in the use of mobile technology as a language-learning device. Otherwise, it will be a useless activity.

Discussion and Findings

The discussion and findings are summarized below:

1. The use of mobiles as a teaching device has led to substantial progress in learners' vocabulary acquisition.

The present research aims to know the students' improvement and attitude in language acquisition under Mobile teaching. The findings in this paper revealed very optimistic results. The data of the research showed that the experimental group that learned the language with the help of Mobile technology performed better in the post-test as compared to the control group. The final result of the class in the post-test shows that the mean of the experimental group, which is **69.9**, is higher than the mean of the control group, which is **60.5**. There is a significant difference of **9.4** between the means of the two groups, which means, the use of mobile technology for language acquisition has a positive effect on language learners.

2. The use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) teaching had an encouraging effect on learners' language learning motivation.

Another significant finding in this research paper was the increased level of motivation of the students toward language acquisition. The favorable results of the post-test showed that the Students looked motivated and in favor of the use of mobiles for language learning.

3. The use of mobiles in the classroom as an ICT device generates a soothing learning environment.

Language acquisition is an ongoing process. The effectiveness of the English language acquisition depends on the genius of the ESP teacher. Most of the language learners are limited to the class. Their teacher has to create a soothing and learning environment for the students. In this way, Students

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will feel relaxed in class, and they may use the same technology at home to learn the language.

The data analysis of the research paper highlighted that the teacher, with the help of a mobile, provides a lot of audiovisual aids, words, sentences, pictures, charts, cartoons, and pronunciation practices to their students. It was a unique practice as compared to a traditional teaching style. By using mobiles, students seem to be more interactive with the teachers as well as their classmates. In this way, the learning responsibility of the students has been shifted from teachers to students. In short, 86% of students in the experimental class answered are in favor of the use of mobile technology that creates a relaxing environment in the class.

4. ICT teaching helps and instigates the students to use a computer for language acquisition.

After understanding and using ICT in the class, students are now willing to use a computer at home for English language learning. The use of mobile phones for language acquisition is the first drop towards ICT teaching and learning. It is a big helping tool that creates a difference in teaching and learning environments.

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