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The Use of English Learning Apps to Enhance English Language Proficiency among Undergraduate Students in Peripheral Areas

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Abstract— *The rapid growth of mobile technology has transformed language learning by making educational resources easily accessible through smartphones. English learning applications such as Duo lingo, Hello English, BBC Learning English, Cake, and Elsa Speak have become popular tools for improving language proficiency. This study investigates the role of English learning applications in enhancing the English language skills of undergraduate students living in peripheral areas. The study examines students' perceptions, frequency of app usage, and the effectiveness of these applications in improving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to undergraduate students from colleges located in peripheral regions. The findings indicate that regular use of English learning apps significantly improves learners' confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall communication skills. However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, limited digital literacy, and inconsistent learning habits continue to affect effective usage. The study recommends integrating mobile learning applications into higher education language teaching and encouraging students to use these apps alongside classroom instruction.*

Keywords— ***English learning apps, mobile-assisted language learning, undergraduate students, peripheral areas, English proficiency, digital learning***

I. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language essential for education, communication, and career opportunities. However, undergraduate students in peripheral areas often face difficulties in developing English proficiency due to limited resources and fewer learning opportunities. With the increasing use of smartphones, English learning applications offer flexible and interactive ways to improve language skills. This study examines the effectiveness of English learning applications in enhancing the English proficiency of undergraduate students in peripheral areas. Undergraduate students in peripheral areas often have lower English proficiency because of unequal educational opportunities. Although English learning applications are widely available, their effectiveness in improving the language proficiency of these students has not been adequately investigated.

The present study explores whether English learning applications effectively enhance the language proficiency of undergraduate students in peripheral areas.

Objectives of the Study --

1. To identify the English learning applications commonly used by undergraduate students.
2. To determine the frequency of app usage.
3. To examine the effectiveness of English learning apps in improving English language proficiency.

4. To identify challenges faced while using English learning applications.
5. To suggest strategies for improving mobile-assisted English language learning.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY --

The study adopts a quantitative descriptive survey design. Undergraduate students studying in colleges located in peripheral areas.

Sample -- A sample of 100 undergraduate students selected through simple random sampling.

Data Collection Procedure -- Questionnaires are distributed physically and through online forms.

Data Analysis -- Data are analysed using:

- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Chi-square Test
- Pearson Correlation
- Independent Sample t-test (if applicable)

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Frequency of App Usage

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Daily	40	40%
Weekly	35	35%
Occasionally	20	20%
Rarely	5	5%

Interpretation -- Most respondents use English learning apps daily, indicating regular engagement.

Table 2: Improvement in Vocabulary

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45%
Agree	35%
Neutral	12%
Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	2%

Interpretation -- The majority of students believe that English learning applications improve vocabulary.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Most Students Use Smartphones for Language Learning --

The study found that the majority of undergraduate students use smartphones as their primary device for learning English. Smartphones provide easy access to educational applications, online dictionaries, videos, and practice exercises, allowing students to learn anytime and anywhere. Their portability, affordability, and widespread availability make them an effective tool for self-directed language learning, especially in peripheral areas where access to conventional language learning resources is limited.

2. Duo lingo and Hello English Are the Most Preferred Applications --

Among the various English learning applications available, **Duo lingo** and **Hello English** emerged as the most popular choices among students. Students preferred these applications because they offer interactive lessons, quizzes, vocabulary exercises, grammar practice, pronunciation training, and immediate feedback. Their user-friendly interface, gamified learning approach, and free access encourage regular engagement and make English learning enjoyable.

3. Students Report Improvements in Vocabulary and Pronunciation --

Most participants reported noticeable improvement in their English vocabulary and pronunciation after regularly using language learning applications. The applications expose learners to new words through repeated practice, contextual examples, and audio support. Pronunciation exercises, speech recognition features, and listening activities help students develop clearer pronunciation and better listening comprehension, leading to improved communication skills.

4. Regular Users Demonstrate Greater Confidence in Speaking English --

The findings indicate that students who use English learning applications consistently show higher confidence in speaking English than occasional users. Frequent practice through interactive speaking activities, pronunciation feedback, and conversational exercises reduces hesitation and fear of making mistakes. As a result, regular users become more willing to participate in classroom discussions and communicate in English in real-life situations.

5. Internet Connectivity Remains the Biggest Challenge --

Despite the benefits of mobile learning applications, poor internet connectivity remains a major obstacle for students in peripheral areas. Unstable network connections, limited mobile data, and inadequate digital infrastructure often interrupt learning activities, prevent access to online content, and reduce the effectiveness of app-based learning. This challenge highlights the need for improved digital infrastructure and offline learning features in educational applications.

6. Self-Motivation Significantly Affects Learning Outcomes --

The study found that self-motivation plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of English learning applications. Students who were motivated to improve their English skills used the applications more frequently, completed learning activities regularly, and achieved better language proficiency. In contrast, students with low motivation showed irregular usage and limited improvement. Therefore, learners' commitment and consistent practice are essential for achieving successful learning outcomes through Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Colleges Should Encourage the Use of English Learning Applications --

Colleges should actively promote the use of English learning applications as a supplementary tool for language development. Students can be encouraged to download and regularly use reliable applications such as Duo lingo and Hello English to improve vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and communication skills. Institutions may also organize awareness programs, workshops, and language clubs that demonstrate the effective use of these applications. Encouraging mobile-assisted learning can help students continue learning beyond the classroom and develop independent study habits.

2. Teachers Should Integrate Mobile Learning Activities into Classroom Instruction --

English language teachers should incorporate mobile learning activities into their regular teaching practices to make learning more engaging and interactive. Teachers can assign app-based exercises, vocabulary quizzes, pronunciation practice, and speaking activities as part of classroom instruction or homework. Blending traditional teaching methods with mobile learning will provide students with additional opportunities for practice, immediate feedback, and personalized learning, thereby improving their overall language proficiency.

3. Institutions Should Provide Digital Literacy Training --

Educational institutions should organize digital literacy training programs to help students and teachers effectively use mobile learning technologies. Such training should focus on downloading educational applications, using learning features efficiently, managing digital resources, and practicing safe and responsible use of technology. Improved digital literacy will enable students to make better use of English learning applications and maximize the benefits of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

4. Governments Should Improve Internet Connectivity in Peripheral Areas --

Governments and educational authorities should invest in improving internet infrastructure and digital accessibility in peripheral and rural areas. Reliable and affordable internet connectivity is essential for students to access online learning materials, educational applications, and digital resources without interruption. Better network coverage and affordable data services will reduce the digital divide and ensure equal learning opportunities for students regardless of their geographical location.

5. Future Studies May Compare Rural and Urban Students or Employ Experimental Research Designs --

Future researchers should conduct comparative studies involving rural and urban undergraduate students to examine differences in the effectiveness of English learning applications across diverse educational settings. Researchers may also use experimental or longitudinal research designs to establish the direct impact of specific mobile learning applications on English language proficiency over time. Such studies will provide stronger empirical evidence and contribute to the further development of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) research.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that English learning applications play an important role in improving English language proficiency among undergraduate students in peripheral areas. Mobile-assisted language learning offers flexibility, accessibility, and learner autonomy, enabling students to practice English beyond the classroom. Although technological and infrastructural barriers exist, the educational benefits outweigh the limitations. Educational institutions should integrate mobile learning into language education to maximize learning outcomes.

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