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Research Article

Students’ Readiness Towards the Use of M-Learning In Malay Language Learning

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A B S T R A C T

The use of learning technologies and mobile wireless networks has progressed rapidly in the education environment. M-learning through wireless technology allows access to information to anyone, at any time and in any place. This study determines the readiness of students towards the use of m-learning in Malay language learning. The respondents of the study comprise 49 pre-university students from two secondary schools in the District of Hulu Langat. 18 of them were interviewed as participants of the study. Data collected through questionnaire and in-depth interview. Questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS 18 while the interview data analyzed with N’Vivo software. The survey results showed high level of readiness among respondents towards the use of m-learning with a total mean score 4.09. Two themes of readiness were identified, namely the readiness in terms of knowledge or cognitive and affective aspects of readiness that is willingness to use the m-learning. These findings proved that the respondents were aware of the benefits of m-learning and are ready to apply it as a methodology in Malay language learning. The implications of knowledge acquired enabled students to be more ready to use m-learning and strive to adopt them when pursuing tertiary level education in future.

Key words: Readiness, m-learning, technologies, networks, wireless

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in the development and progress of a nation in this 21st century. Quality education and excellence is an important effort to develop the new generation of high quality in the future. In order to achieve this, the national education system requires committed and systematic efforts to address the educational challenges of the 21st century. Students of today are more interested in using information and communication technology, surfing the internet to access information, as well as having their own website by signing in Myspace, Friendster, Blogspot, Facebook and others. This phenomenon has become a trend among school students [1]. Students’ interests on the use of information and communication technology should be benefitted by teachers and parents. Hence, it is essential to guide these students towards appropriate use as well as projecting a positive impact to the development of education in Malaysia. Furthermore, the uses of smart phones are becoming popular among Malaysians including students. Through smart phones, students can communicate and contact parents, friends and teachers as well as listening to the voice, viewing and accessing to various types of information required. Studies on ideas of using mobile phones in education materialized due to the increase in mobile phone owners, especially among youth [2].

This new learning environment should be implemented in this country, so that the learning process is not
confined only to traditional methods alone. The use of smartphones should be viewed from a positive perspective so that students gain more benefits to achieve success. The use of mobile devices such as personal digital assistants (PDAs) and mobile phones generate learning through mobile technology that allows a person to access information in order to improve knowledge and quality of life [3]. M-learning enables teaching materials to be accessible easily and learning ensued effectively. Sharples, Taylor and Vavoula (2005) on the other hand stated that m-learning could be implemented in any physical location and at any time by via mobile technology devices [4]. M-learning is the use of wireless devices to allow learning to occur ubiquitously. There are studies on m-learning conducted at universities, colleges and schools in Malaysia [5]. These studies proved that there are acceptance and a high tendency shown by students towards the use of m-learning. These studies also show m-learning increases students’ interest, the focus of learning and performance [6]. (Gunadevi & Raja Nor Safinas 2013, carried out a study of students’ perception on the use of smartphones in learning. The findings of this study showed positive acceptance of the use of mobile devices in learning [7]. M-learning could also be defined in terms of the learners’ mobility and flexibility of learning. As a result of extensive usage, mobile phones have become the popular choice of device for M-learning. M-learning is shifting the mode of students’ learning and lecturers’ working by lessening the reliance on immobile places. Mobile learning wasn’t introduced to swap traditional learning or to remove personal computers by changing all learning characteristics into mobile configuration but rather to reinforce and improve teaching and learning in higher institutions of learning. M-learning emerges to be the foremost learning mode used in institutions of higher learning. The implementation of M-learning has further expanded e-learning and developed accessibilities through portable devices such as mobile phone [8].

The readiness of students is important and should be noted so as to generate an effective teaching and learning processes. In addition, students’ readiness can ensure that the learning methods and materials used commensurate with the needs, abilities and interests of students to produce effective learning. Students today are very fond of mobile devices and technology apart from utilizing regularly in their personal lives [9].

Therefore, the study of the readiness of the students towards the use of mobile devices in learning should be given consideration to ensure they are ready to use mobile devices hence to make education more attractive. In order to generate effective learning, it is very vital to conduct study on students’ readiness to produce effective learning and teaching processes. A study on the readiness of students towards the use of mobile technologies and learning materials should be done to obtain the positive impact to the students and determine whether students will gain the advantage when using the applications of these innovated mobile technologies.

M-learning also provides students the freedom to access information and learning materials that can improve the quality of life of someone without distinguishing residence, social status, and one’s culture. Smaller sized mobile technology devices such as PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), Compaq iPaq, laptop, wireless screen phone HS21O, R380 smart phone etc were used as teaching and learning tools to deliver and access information [10]. Students can interact with each other via m-learning without having to go through a large monitor screen.

These privileges enabled students to access sources of information from a variety of formats for example voice, text, pictures, animations and videos. Thus from the related source of information, students gain opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of various aspects [11]. Innovation from this mode of learning could lead to a paradigm shift in mobile technology education. This deemed to have vast potential for use in teaching and learning in schools.

Irwan and Norazah (2010), carried out a study on the readiness of Polytechnic students using activities available online such as forums, discussions and messages with mobile applications for learning. The findings of this study indicated that the readiness of Polytechnic students was high in relation to the elements of m-learning in terms of mobile applications, such as SMS, MMS, Bluetooth, camera, laptop, video call, Internet applications and other applications. The study also showed a high level of acceptance by students towards the usage of SMS with a mean score of 4.24 while the interests on using SMS for learning elements gained a score mean of 4.34.

To examine the inclinations and aim of lecturers to execute mobile learning in higher education, Zulkafly et al. 2011, carried out a study at Multimedia University of Malaysia. The observers regarded that Multimedia University is one of the supporters of mobile learning. Consequently, the lecturers favoured to utilize mobile phones for overseeing learning activities. The views of the respondents from this finding towards the use of m-learning were effective and encouraging. However, there are still many challenges to overcome among others, are the issues on the lack of awareness of the benefits of using of m-learning [12].

A study by Tan C. K, et al. 2013, has reviewed about readiness of m-learning in public education institutions in East Malaysia. The respondents of this study were 713 people randomly selected among students of the University Malaysia Sabah. The purpose of this study was to determine the readiness of respondents towards m – learning and mobile devices that are used. The findings showed the readiness of the respondents towards the use of m-learning is high with a mean score of 3.37 [13].

The use of mobile devices such as mobile phones in language learning is known as Mobile Assisted Language Learning or referred also as the MALL. MALL is an approach to language learning enhanced via the
use of mobile devices technology. Generally, the MALL is a subset of m-learning and development of
computer-aided language learning (CALL). MALL involved the use of mobile technology such as mobile
phones, MP3/MP4 players, PDA and palmtop computers to assist students in learning languages. Through
MALL, students can access learning materials from the internet, communicate with teachers and classmates at
anytime and anywhere [14].

Among the first project on the use of mobile phones in language learning were pursued by Stanford
language laboratory, namely the use of mobile phones in learning Spanish. In this project the voice service
system and e-mail was used in the Spanish-language learning program which includes training activities,
lexicon quiz, translation of words and phrases as well as networks to communicate with the tutor. As a result
of the project the students test results improved. This proved that mobile phones were very effective in language
learning, especially the presentation in the form of quizzes and voice messaging system [15]. Meanwhile,
studies conducted by Saran et al. 2008, found m-learning via mobile phone has increased student skills in the
subject of English Language using materials in the form of multimedia. This study established that the uses of
SMS and MMS have enriched students’ lexicon. Students’ motivation in learning English language also
intensified and students are able to use their free time to learn English.

Anaraki 2009 study described the design and development of a set of 12 Flash card based mobile
multimedia teaching for learning English as a second language in university. This system has been tested for
four weeks by 76 students of the University, which can be downloaded to PDAs or smart phones. The students
underwent three lessons per week of self-learning before the post test was performed. The post test confirms all
of the respondents showed a significant improvement in learning. Respondents also acknowledged they acquired
positive effects in learning English from the aspect of pronunciation, listening and speaking skills [16].

2. Objective
The objective of this study is to identify pre-university students’ readiness towards the use of m-learning in
Malay language learning

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a combined method (mixed method) combining qualitative research designs and
quantitative. Qualitative research design used is single case study involving in-depth interviews at multiple sites.
While quantitative design used is the survey. The respondents of the study comprise 49 pre-university students
from two secondary schools in the District of Hulu Langat. 18 of them were interviewed as participants of the
study. Data collected through questionnaire and in-depth interview. Questionnaire data were analyzed using
SPSS 18 while the interview data analyzed with NVivo software. Questions presented are open and
participants have the freedom to answer and provide feedback. This method was chosen because of its flexibility
[17]. The interviewer has the privilege to observe participants responding to the questions posed. Table 1 shows
questionnaire provided to respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you know the use of m-learning in learning and is m-learning something new to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you know m-learning will assist you in learning Malay language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Does the use of m-learning in Malay language learning is worthy to be implemented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you know the use of m-learning allows you to learn without boundaries of time and location?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Are you ready to use SMS to exchange information about grammar learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Are you ready to support and apply the use of m-learning in Malay language learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you know that the experience acquired in using m-learning enables you to face an environment that is rich in information technology?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>As a pre-university student, are you ready to use m-learning in future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative design used is survey using questionnaire instrument. The questionnaire in this study is
developed with the adaptation of the eight factors identified by Guglielmino (1977) used to measure the
availability of self-directed learning [18].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00 till 2.33</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34 till 3.66</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.67 till 5.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4. Results:
Based on the total average score mean, the findings indicated the readiness of the respondents towards the
use of m-learning is high with a total mean score of 4.09. There are 10 items on readiness in the questionnaire on the use of m-learning towards Malay language learning presented to students. Table 3 showed all mean scores at high levels with the exception of two items which have simple mean score of 3.63.

Those items were “the use of m-learning was something new for me” and “I know about the use of the m-learning”. The highest score attained on readiness was the beneficial of using of SMSes to exchange information about the lesson as indicated in items 1. The mean score for this aspect was 4.90, with 12 respondents (4.1%) strongly agreed, 32 respondents (65.3%) agree, 3 respondents (6.1%) are undecided while 2 respondents (4.1%) disagree.

Respondents are also ready to use m-learning so as to keep pace with the latest technology, as indicated a higher mean score 4.39. The third highest mean score of 4.20 revealed that respondents are ready to support the use of m-learning. In terms of the importance of awareness aspects of m-learning, items 5 and 7 obtained a mean score of 4.14 and 3.98 respectively. Findings for item 5, showed that m-learning was very beneficial as it allows respondents to learn without borders time and location while item 7 indicated respondents were familiar with m-learning and discovered m-learning as very supportive in Malay language learning.

Table 3: Analysis on readiness towards the use of m-learning in Malay language learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Questionnaire /Items</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am ready to take advantage on the use of SMSes to exchange information about education.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>As a pre-university, I am prepared to use m-learning in order to keep with the technology pace.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am prepared to support the use of m-learning in Malay language learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am aware that m-learning enables me to face an environment that is rich in information technology.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I know m-learning is very beneficial because it allows me to learn without boundaries of time and location.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I understand the use of m-learning in Malay language learning and is good idea to be implemented.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I know m-learning can very supportive in Malay language learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I am ready to apply m-learning in Malay language learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The use of m-learning in learning is something new to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I am familiar with the use of m-learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Mean Score 4.09 | High |

(likert scale : 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Undecided, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree)

The findings of interview identified two themes, namely the readiness in terms of knowledge or cognitive and affective aspects of readiness that is readiness to use the m-learning. Readiness in terms of knowledge (cognitive Readiness) is divided into 6 sub-themes, while readiness to use the m-learning (affective readiness) divided into 4 themes as set out in table 4.
4.1 Readiness from cognitive aspects:

The cognitive aspect is related to the students' knowledge towards m-learning. Respondents realize that m-learning is a new learning method as before this they were unfamiliar with the use of m-learning. Amid studying at pre-university level, respondents gained knowledge and experience of using m-learning especially in the Malay language learning. Ultimately, after gaining knowledge and experience, study participants concurred that the m-learning is a good idea and very beneficial and if this method is practised it enables them to learn without the barriers of time and location, as stated by the participants of the study as follows.

"In terms of readiness to use, m-learning is something new for me. I knew about m-learning while studying at pre-u level. At that juncture, I knew how to use m-learning". (P01: 2014: 141)

"Before this I do not know because there were no exposures on m-learning. Now, I know, it is very advantageous. I mean, I can learn without borders and location and can be very beneficial to me." (P01: 177)

"Yes, I am prepared for information rich environment and very accommodating." (P01: 207)

4.2 Readiness from affective aspects

The results of the interview in terms of affective aspect that is the readiness to use the m-learning among pre-university students indicated the result of exposure and experience using m-learning during major pre-university level cause participants study support and using m-learning is primarily in learning Malay Language, as stated by P15.

"Yes, I'm ready. support and apply m-learning especially during learning Malay language" (P15: 21). As evidence to this, according to P01 and P07 are ready to use SMSes to exchange information about education.

"Yes, I am ready to use SMS for exchanging information about education" (P01: 21)

"Normally, I use SMS to exchange information regarding my lesson" (P07: 22)

As pre-university students, participants are ready to use m-learning in the future so as to keep pace with technology especially when pursuing tertiary education in future described by P01 and P15 follows.

"Now, I am in pre-university, next year if I could further my studies at university, I am willing to use m-learning". (P0: 36)

"I will try to use the m-learning so as not to miss it. I was ready, I could implement m-learning at the University of m-learning." (P01: 37)

"Yes, I was indeed ready to use m-learning so as not to be left out especially when I further studies to the University next year". (P15: 35)

Discussion:

Today's generations of students are very excited about the mobile devices and they are always able to surf internet at any time using wireless technology in terms of cognitive readiness. Respondents acknowledged that m-learning is something new for them. Likewise, they know and can understand that m-learning is an outstanding idea to be implemented. M-learning also able to assist them in learning and very beneficial if practiced. Simultaneously, the use of m-learning enables them to be more ready to face the very advanced ICT environment [19]. While in terms of affective readiness, respondents are willing to support and use m-learning in learning Malay language and further develop them from not being left out of mainstream development of
ICT. They also agree that SMS is beneficial for the purpose of learning [20].

The findings for aspects of readiness towards the use of m-learning showed respondents have a high level of acceptance. The findings are consistent with study conducted by Jazihan et al. 2012, confirmed that respondents agree that m-learning is easy to use. At the same time respondents showed positive indication of readiness towards the use of m-learning [21]. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Suki and Ramayah (2010) [22]. Similarly, a study carried out by Deng, L., Shao, Y. & (2011), on students’ attitudes towards the use of mobile phone-based e-dictionaries in the English vocabulary acquisition depicted high level of readiness in implementing mobile learning. In addition the respondents also confirmed remarkable improvement in terms of vocabulary via software in their daily lives [23].

Aznarahayu Ramli (2010), also supported that the respondents are prepared to use m-learning in their courses and are motivated to continue this method in learning. The findings of this study are also in line with a study by Tan C. K, et al. (2013) regarding usage of m-learning at public education institutions in East Malaysia. The readiness of the respondents towards the use of m-learning is high with a mean score of 3.37. These findings also reflected that undergraduates are ready to use m-learning and concurred this mode should be implemented and sustained.

**Conclusion:**

Analysis of the findings on the respondents’ readiness indicated a high level of readiness in implementing m - learning as a platform in their learning process. They recognized and understood this learning method and acknowledged this mode as very beneficial in improving achievement in Malay language learning. The knowledge acquired by respondents has inspired them to support and ready to apply m-learning in future when pursuing studies at a higher level. The Ministry of Education and teachers should consider the implications from these findings and take necessary initiatives to promote the utilization of technology and mobile devices for the advancement of national education.

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