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## Using Mobile Applications to Organize Students' Independent Work While Learning English

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### **Abstract**

*The actual issue of whether information and communication technology can be used to teach foreign languages is the focus of this essay. The idea of mobile learning is explained, and its benefits for teaching foreign languages are discussed. An overview of mobile applications for teaching English and students' experiences using them for independent work is given in this article.*

**Key Words:** *information and communication technologies; mobile training; training mobile applications; independent work of students*

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These days, learning a foreign language is increasingly essential to the competency model of specialized training. In this sense, a foreign language is becoming increasingly important in the training of experts at higher education institutions where the foreign language curriculum is communicative-pragmatic and professionally focused. Presently, higher education must not only update course material but also include new technology to help future experts develop their communication proficiency in foreign languages.

The examination of contemporary literature regarding innovations in language instruction has revealed that integrating contemporary information and communication technologies into the classroom—specifically, mobile learning technologies—is one of the most pertinent areas of study. These technologies guarantee the efficiency of the educational process, the accessibility and efficacy of instruction, and the assimilation of students into the information society. This is especially evident in how mobile applications—such as those for iOS, Android, and other platforms—are being incorporated into the learning process.

The concept of e-learning, or electronic learning, has taken a new turn with the introduction of tablet computers, smartphones, mobile phones, iPads, iPhones, and other technological innovations for educational purposes (M-Learning-Mobile learning). Many scientists and educators think that the proliferation of mobile communications, the creation of numerous educational

applications and programs, and new technologies that raise the bar for educational opportunities and quality are directly related to the future of information and computer technology-enabled education.

Today's mobile learning represents a fresh, evolving approach to education, characterized by the development of a brand-new learning environment. Owing to the widespread use of mobile technologies and the ongoing development of mobile device capabilities, UNESCO education experts recommend using these devices' potential to enhance the standard and accessibility of education while also creating personalized learning paths [8].

In forums and scientific conferences, there is a lively discussion on the philosophy and practice of employing mobile devices and mobile educational resources. Since 2002, the usage of mobile educational technology or resources has been the subject of several yearly conferences and seminars in both Europe and the US. The issues of incorporating mobile technology into training, producing, and utilizing mobile learning content have been the focus of the International Conference "MLearnCon" since 2002 [4]. Since its founding in 2005, the International Conference on Mobile Learning, also known as "The International Conference of Mobile Learning," has provided a forum for discussion of the findings and advancements in the field of mobile learning [6]. The findings of the study "Mobile Technologies in Life-long Learning: Best Practices" are intriguing. The influence of mobile

technology on enhancing access to education, irrespective of social and economic background, age, gender, religion, ethnicity, and physical limitations, is being studied within this project's framework [6]. There are journals focused on the issues surrounding mobile learning in both Europe and the US. Two such journals are the *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning* (published since 2009) and the *International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organization* (published since 2007). The goal of several significant international projects is to use mobile technology to provide a new virtual learning environment.

Most researchers, both local and international, especially J. R. R. Tolkien. According to Traxler [7], S. V. Titova [2], V. A. Kuklev [1], H. Jarvis [5], and M. Fine [3], the main distinction between mobile learning and more contemporary approaches like e-learning and mixed learning is that students are largely not restricted to a particular time and location and can access educational materials whenever it is convenient for them. Therefore, there are two key distinctions between mobile learning:

- the casual aspect of instruction, where students complete a greater percentage of independent work, which is essentially supervised or regulated self-learning; - the ongoing process of learning, which blurs the lines between study sessions and extracurricular activities, as well as work done in and outside of the classroom.

Many academic subjects may be effectively studied with mobile devices,

and learning a foreign language is no different. There is no questioning the ease with which mobile devices can be used to expedite the process of learning a language, especially for the younger generation of students who view these devices as an essential part of their lives due to their engaging interface, interactive features, and tailored approach to user needs. There are a tonne of apps available on mobile devices right now that help users learn foreign languages, particularly English. We believe that right now, training on how to use applications on mobile electronic devices is very important.

We believe that, despite all of their education in digital technologies, students are now not well-versed in the services industry. The teacher's job is to assist students in selecting the relevant and essential materials to enhance language acquisition, allowing for the customization of the learning process.

These days, tools and applications for mobile devices are available that cover several facets of teaching foreign languages. The market for foreign language mobile applications, an analysis of scientific literature, and a systematization of the experience of using these applications to learn a foreign language revealed that they may be categorized into the following primary groups:

1) mobile apps that are particularly focused on enhancing a particular speaking ability;

2) mobile apps that are intended to enhance language abilities, including lexical or grammatical skills;

3) All-purpose mobile apps made for the thorough improvement of

communication proficiency in foreign languages.

Naturally, this split is quite conditional, as the majority of applications are not restricted to honing a particular ability or one of the speech activity kinds. For instance, applications where the primary objective is listening integrate, in one way or another, the development of lexical abilities, reading, speaking, and oral speech perception by ear.

Specialist mobile applications caught our attention as a way to optimize and intensify the educational process and as a resource base for the creation of instructional materials in the field of "English" when it came to their practical application in the process of teaching a foreign language. From our point of view, the practical application of mobile applications has a huge potential, but at the same time, the integration of working with applications into the structure of the practical lesson presents certain problems and can be used quite limited. At the same time, the introduction of interactive technologies in the learning process in order to organize and intensify the independent work of students (mainly extracurricular) seems to us a very promising direction.

Thus, mobile applications can be used quite effectively to develop listening skills, due to the fact that modern mobile devices offer rich technical capabilities for viewing videos, listening to audio fragments, recording speech fragments and video clips. The developers present programs for those who want to improve their pronunciation skills,

recognize sounds by ear, and correlate the sound and visual image of a word. The most successful products include Sounds Right (British Council), and the Sounds: Pronunciation App (Macmillan Education). These applications include interactive phonetic tables for the British and American versions of English, exercises, game tasks, and tests. From the point of view of developing the skills of perception and understanding of speech by ear, the BBC applications are extremely valuable, using which students can access authentic audio, video and text materials, for example, Learning English for BBC, 6 Minute British English. These applications can also be used for the development of other linguistic and linguistic-cultural competencies, since they include specialized sections dedicated to the study of vocabulary, grammar, the development of communication skills and speaking skills.

The free apps developed as part of the British Council's training programs-Learn English Audio & Video, Learn English Great Videos, and Learn English Elementary Podcasts-feature the best podcasts and videos designed for learning English. The applications are equipped with a number of additional functionality, such as interactive texts of audio recordings, interactive glossaries of keywords, exercises to understand each part of the information material. They present materials of different levels of complexity that allow you to improve your listening skills, as well as replenish your vocabulary. Mobile applications Two Minute English, Real English, Puzzle English, built on

learning the perception of speech by ear, are also of considerable interest to English teachers and students, because they contain a huge amount of resources and tasks to work on these very popular and often insufficiently developed speech skills among students. In general, all these applications have a high motivational potential due to the wide variety of topics and forms, so they can be used for independent work of students.

Next, we will look at a number of applications designed for the formation and development of grammatical skills that can be used both for classroom work and for independent work of students.

Among the mobile applications designed to work on the development of grammatical skills, it is necessary, first of all, to name the Learn English Grammar (British Council) application.

It presents grammar exercises of four levels. The training tasks use 10 types of exercises, such as filling in gaps, multiple choice, and matching questions and answers. It should be noted that the Learn English Grammar app is in the first place in the "Education" category of iTunes in 9 countries around the world, and is also in the top ten in more than 40 countries. Another application of the British Council Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge is a quiz for English language learners, which will help to check not only the general level of proficiency in grammar, but also spelling and vocabulary used in everyday English. The tests are divided into categories (Words, Grammar, Spelling) within three levels of difficulty. The free My Grammar Lab

course app from Pearson contains mobile interactive exercises of various levels. The app allows the user to choose topics and questions that interest them and create their own collections of exercises and tests. This course is suitable both for self-study and for use as part of group classes in the English language course.

Another handy app for testing your knowledge of English grammar is the English Grammar Test. The app contains 60 tests, each of which is dedicated to a separate grammatical topic. After completing the test, the app provides a list of correct and incorrect answers, as well as a simple and clear explanation of the errors.

Next, we would like to focus on applications that are designed to develop lexical skills and expand the vocabulary of students. Many of these electronic applications are designed for self-study of foreign languages and are built on a game basis. The My Word Book app, available on the British Council website, is designed as an interactive notebook for English language learners. The vocabulary in the application is presented in the form of sets of interactive flash cards, organized both in any order, and in the form of thematic groups, distributed by difficulty levels. Each flashcard is provided with a definition and an example of usage from the Cambridge University Press dictionary, a translation, and fields for notes, an audio sample, and an image. The "Practice" category contains five types of tasks, after which the user can move a word to the list of studied vocabulary.

Among other popular applications for users, designed to work on

expanding their vocabulary with the help of exciting activities in a playful way, are English with Words, Easy ten, and Polyglot. English words, Memrise. These applications are characterized by an individualized approach to the user's needs, in particular, they include features such as the ability to create individual word lists, voiced words and contexts of use, an individual training schedule, various types of training tasks, interactive and game components (for example, user success statistics, cards for repeating the material passed, a point system of encouragement).

Sections for developing lexical skills are also included in other applications that we discussed above (Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge, Learning English for BBC, Puzzle English, and many others).

In our opinion, many applications for vocabulary replenishment can be used, first of all, for independent work of students, for activation and development of lexical skills within the framework of the studied topics, for self-testing.

At the same time, it should be noted that not all applications have high-quality language content, various types of tasks and do not fully use the technical capabilities that modern mobile devices are endowed with.

The review allows us to conclude that to date, a significant number of mobile applications and programs for learning a foreign language have been developed, aimed both at the formation of various skills and abilities, and at the development of different types of speech activity. A fairly wide range and

variety of existing mobile learning resources allow you to choose applications in accordance with the individual needs, interests and level of language training of the student. Almost all mobile devices at the solutions described above can be used quite effectively for independent work.

From our point of view, the practical application of mobile applications has a huge potential in improving the efficiency of the process of learning foreign languages and can significantly improve the process of foreign language training of students, open up new aspects of it and turn it from a serious time-consuming process into an exciting activity.

Practice shows that they have a considerable advantage over traditional teaching methods: the intensification of independent activity, individualization of learning, increasing cognitive activity and motivation of learning. At the same time, the use of mobile technologies in the learning process contributes not only to the enrichment of the educational process, but also to the acquisition by students of skills and abilities, the formation and development of which on the basis of traditional learning tools is quite time-consuming.

Thus, the use of mobile technologies in the educational process contributes to the improvement of the process of forming foreign language skills of students, provides effective independent work, increases the motivation and cognitive activity of students, interest in the subject, helps to intensify and individualize learning.

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