

M-LEARNING AND ITS EFFECTS ON LEARNING ARABIC AS SECOND LANGUAGE FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Mohammad Baihaqi Bin Hasni¹

¹Centre of Modern Language and Human Sciences, University of Malaysia Pahang,
26600 Pekan, Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia

Abstract

The article deals with the importance of learning through mobile apps known as *M-learning*. The *M-learning* is a software application designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers to assist the learning of Arabic as a second language to engineering students. This application is beneficial since the amount of information to be accessed in university has increased significantly in recent years. Students nowadays are moving towards using a smart phone as a means of information in the learning process. Mobile technologies and approaches are also used to assist in language learning. A smart phone is a multifunctional device that not only communicates, but helps to learn, earn, and have fun. This is made possible by the development of mobile applications. The sample was obtained through the result of the examination that have been conducted on undergraduate students taking courses in Arabic for Beginners during the first semester of 2016/2017. The study was conducted on 30 engineering students of Universiti Malaysia Pahang. This study used the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The article also presents the advantages, disadvantages and some examples of online platforms that offer Arabic courses. M-learning is a new method, a relatively new concept in the learning process. M-learning means that learning is not configured to a study table only, nowadays students should have constant access to information regardless wherever they are. The conclusion is that M-learning cannot completely replace the classical methods of learning, but can facilitate and improve the learning process.

Keywords: *M-learning*, Arabic Language, Engineering students

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¹ Mohammad Bin Hasni is a teacher of Arabic in the Department of Foreign Languages at Center of Modern Languages and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Pekan 26600 Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia. His research fields are in Language & Linguistics. (+609-424 6874 /+6017-7254186) E-mail: baihaqi@ump.edu.my.

Introduction

The Arabic language is now used and studied by the world community. Arabic language speakers now stand at nearly a billion people worldwide over the world. Formerly, learning Arabic is very conventional. But with the development of the world in the field of information and communication technology, learning Arabic must be developed and can be studied more widely and easily. Many pedagogies and ways used by educators to upgrade the system and method of learning Arabic. Arabic is one of eight foreign languages offered at Universiti Malaysia Pahang and it is compulsory to pass the chosen elective subjects to allow the students to go for graduation.

This subject is divided into two stages, namely Arabic for Arabic for Beginners and Intermediate. Students must pass the first level before taking the level 2. In this subject, students should learn the four language skills: 1) Listening Skills (Listening) 2) Speaking Skills (Oral) 3) Reading Skills (Reading and Comprehension) and 4) Writing skills (Writing). All the four skills are basically a whole and should be developed and presented well.

During the revolution in telecommunications and multimedia technologies without these limits, a cell phone is used widely. At once upon a time, the cell phone is considered to be luxury items that are not affordable by most people in addition to its large and difficult brought. However, after we enter the new millennium, cell phone users increased, causing the price much cheaper besides it is smaller and easy to be brought anywhere. Now, it is not surprising that almost all of the world's population has at least one mobile phone. If refined, the use of mobile phones among the students can bring diverse implications for them.

The problem of weakness in traditional teaching and learning is weakness in governance. Besides that, lack of learning guides to the use of E-learning is one of the problems faced in the field of education (Huang & Chiu, 2015). Therefore, researchers found the use of *M-Learning* in teaching and learning is likely to be able to overcome the problems faced in the past. According to statistics issued by Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, total use of mobile phones in Malaysia is increasing, i.e. smartphone users in Malaysia is expected to reach 11 million this year after registering a compound annual growth rate of 10 percent from 2013 to 2017. According to (Sha et al. 2012), the evolution of m-learning practices in recent years is associated with a tremendous increase in traffic complexity. By associating the concept with all situations and educational contexts that use new technologies in order to the process, components and steps, it is obtained a broad range of activities and products that are under the sign of innovation in education in the last twenty years. Finally, mobility of learning is the result of mobility of both the technology and learners (Huang & Chiu, 2015).

Objective of the study

This research was conducted based on some objective as follows:

- (i) Identify the effectiveness in the use of M-Learning for the purpose of learning.
- (ii) Identify the level of appropriateness of the use of M-Learning to students for the purpose of learning.
- (iii) Identify the student's level of acceptance of the use of M-Learning for the purpose of learning.

Review questions

The problems of the research are identified based on the objective of the study as follows:

- (i) To extend the effectiveness of the use of M-Learning for the purpose of learning.
- (ii) To an extent the level of appropriateness of the use of M-Learning to students for the purpose of learning.
- (iii) To an extent the level of acceptance of students against the use of M-Learning for the purpose of learning.

Literature Review

M-learning presents an entirely new learning environment for students, especially for engineering students, thus requiring a different skill set to be successful (Ally & Prieto-Blázquez, 2014). M-learning can be defined as education or training to ICT-based, personalized, flexible, individual, self-organized, collaborative learning based on a community of learners, teachers, facilitators, experts (Kim et al., 2013). In this case, students were particularly in courses that are entirely electronic, making the students much more independent than in the traditional setting.

According to Ally & Prieto-Blázquez, (2014), it requires the students to be highly motivated and committed to learning with less social interaction with peers or an instructor. Students in online courses tend to do as well as those in classrooms, but there is a higher incidence of withdrawal or incomplete grades. The effective use of mobile technology brings us closer to personalized learning more than ever before, resulting in offering the right learning resources, training, and performance aids to the right person at the right time and place (Sha et al. 2012). The true potential of mobile learning should not be merely described as learning content delivered or accessed on a mobile device.

M-learning also can be viewed as computer assisted learning, and as pedagogy for student centered and collaborative learning (Jacob & Issac, 2014). Early developments in *M-learning* focused on smart phone, where part or all of the learning content is delivered digitally. More

recently the pedagogical dimension of *M-learning* has become prominent. *M-learning* comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and communication systems, whether networked learning or not, serve as specific media to implement the learning process. Internet technologies permit the widespread distribution of digital content to many users simultaneously, anytime and anywhere. An additional strength of *M-learning* is that it standardizes the course content and delivery; unlike, for instance, a lecture given to separate sections of the same course. Automated tracking and reporting of the learners' activities lessen the administrative burden faculty (Jacob & Issac, 2014).

Moreover, *M-learning* can be designed to include outcomes assessment to determine whether learning has occurred. Advantages in learning the enhancement area less well recognized, but potentially more revolutionary aspect of *M-learning* than are those related to learning delivery Martin & Ertzberger (2013). M-learning technologies offer a new paradigm based on student learning theory, which states that students learn by relating new learning to past experiences, by linking learning to specific needs, and by practically applying learning, resulting in more effective and efficient learning experiences. Learning by enhancement learner permit greater interactivity and promotes learners' efficiency, motivation, cognitive effectiveness, and flexibility of learning style.

The efficiency is likely to translate into improved motivation and performance. According to Martin & Ertzberger (2013), M- Learning have demonstrated increased retention rates and better utilization of content, resulting in better achievement of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Multimedia *M-learning* offers learners the flexibility to select from a large menu of media options to accommodate their diverse learning styles. The use of *M-Learning* in general can help them in remembrance, read smoothly and quickly, write, communicate, and control of all four language skills needed (Hsu et al. 2013). *M-Learning* implementation is expected that students will develop the talents and skills they possess, especially in learning Arabic so that they can prepare themselves to face the world of work in the future.

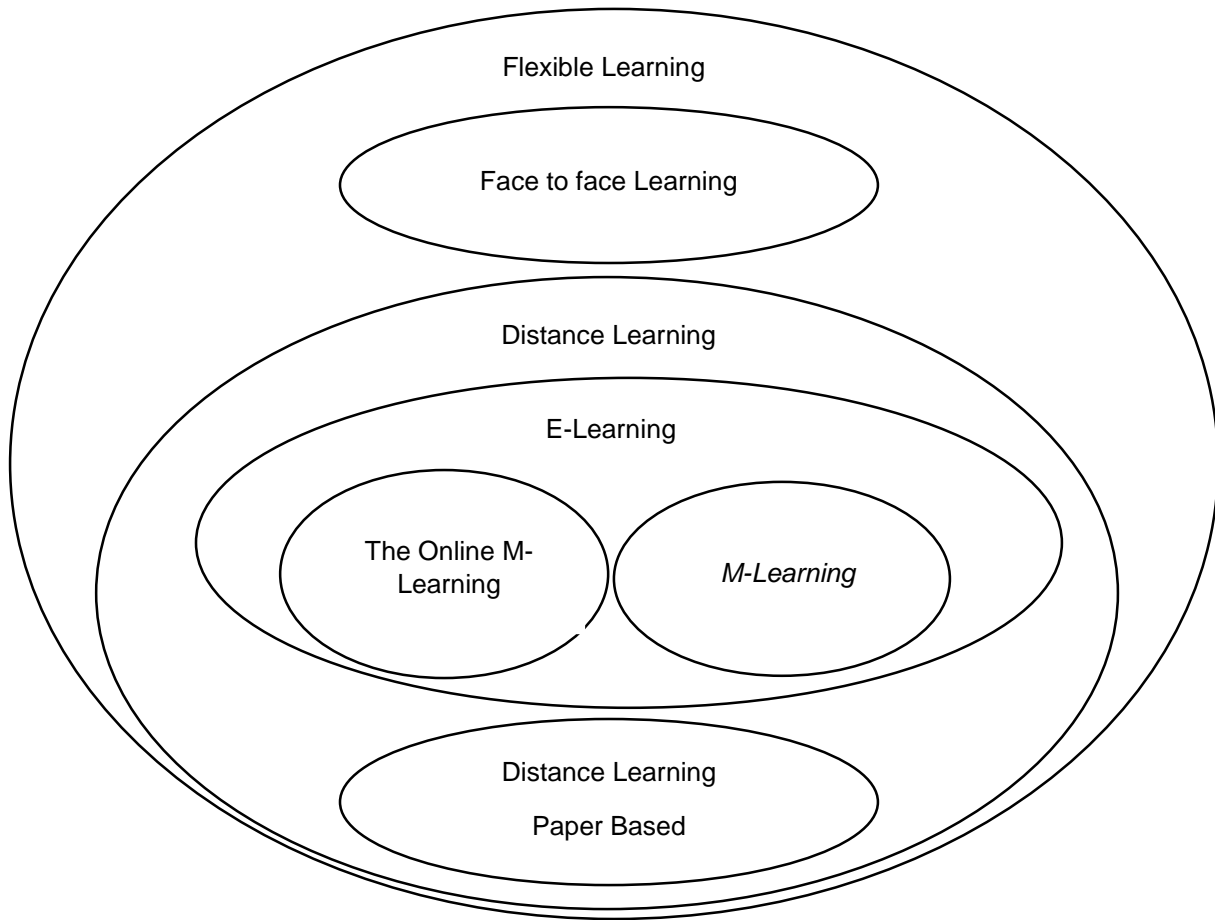


Figure 1: Model *M-learning* Africa (Brown, 2005)

According to Brown (2005), students can also hold individual learning activities and groups such as surfing the web, running the programs or learning through the example problems provided. In the study of Brown (2005), it also states that *M-learning* is a profitable thing that students do not have to waste time copying notes given by the lecturers.

Finding

FINDING	MIN	LEVEL
EFFECTIVENESS	3.76	HIGH
SUITABILITY	3.35	MODERATE
ACCEPTANCE	2.98	MODERATE

Table 1

GRED	% SEMESTER 1, 2016		% SEMESTER 2, 2016	
	SEMESTER 1/2016	SEMESTER 1, 2016	SEMESTER 2, 2016	SEMESTER 2, 2016
A	2	6.67	4	13.33
A-	5	16.67	3	10
B+	7	23.33	2	6.67
B	5	16.67	8	26.67
B-	3	10	7	23.33
C+	5	16.67	2	6.67
C	1	3.33	2	6.67
C-	1	3.33	2	6.67
D+	1	3.33	0	0
STUDENTS	30	100	30	100

Diagram 1

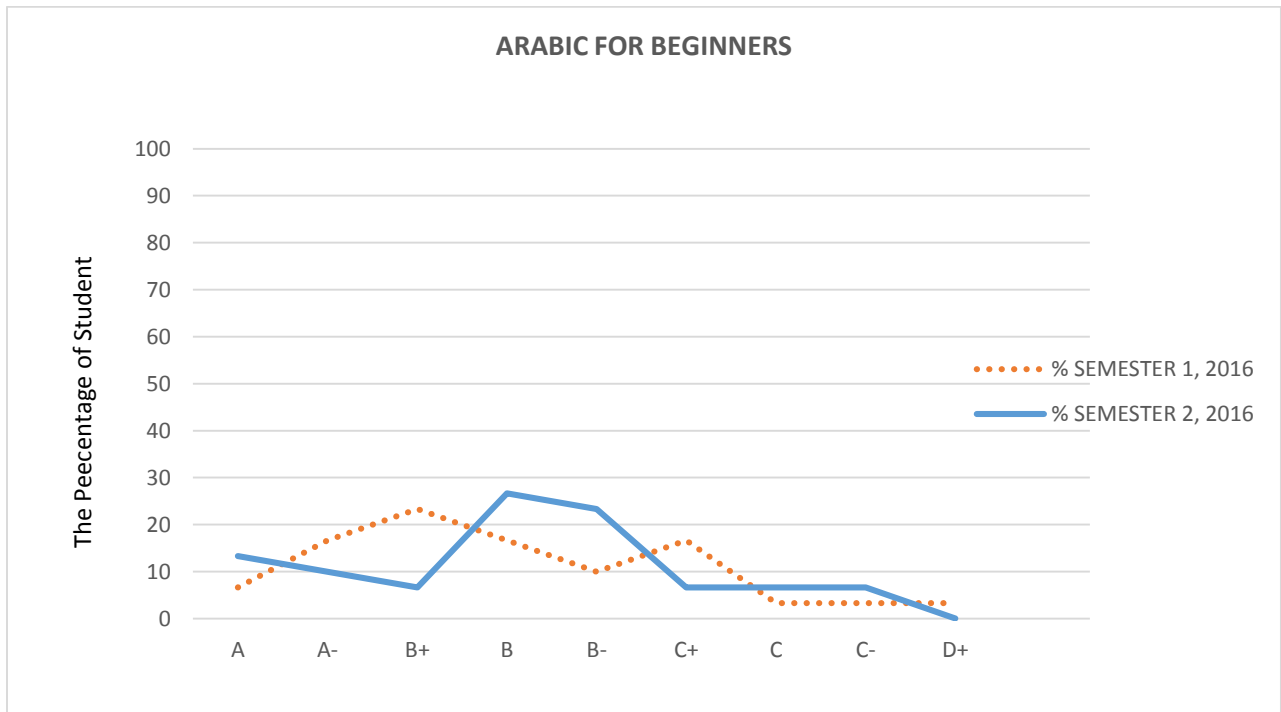


Figure 2

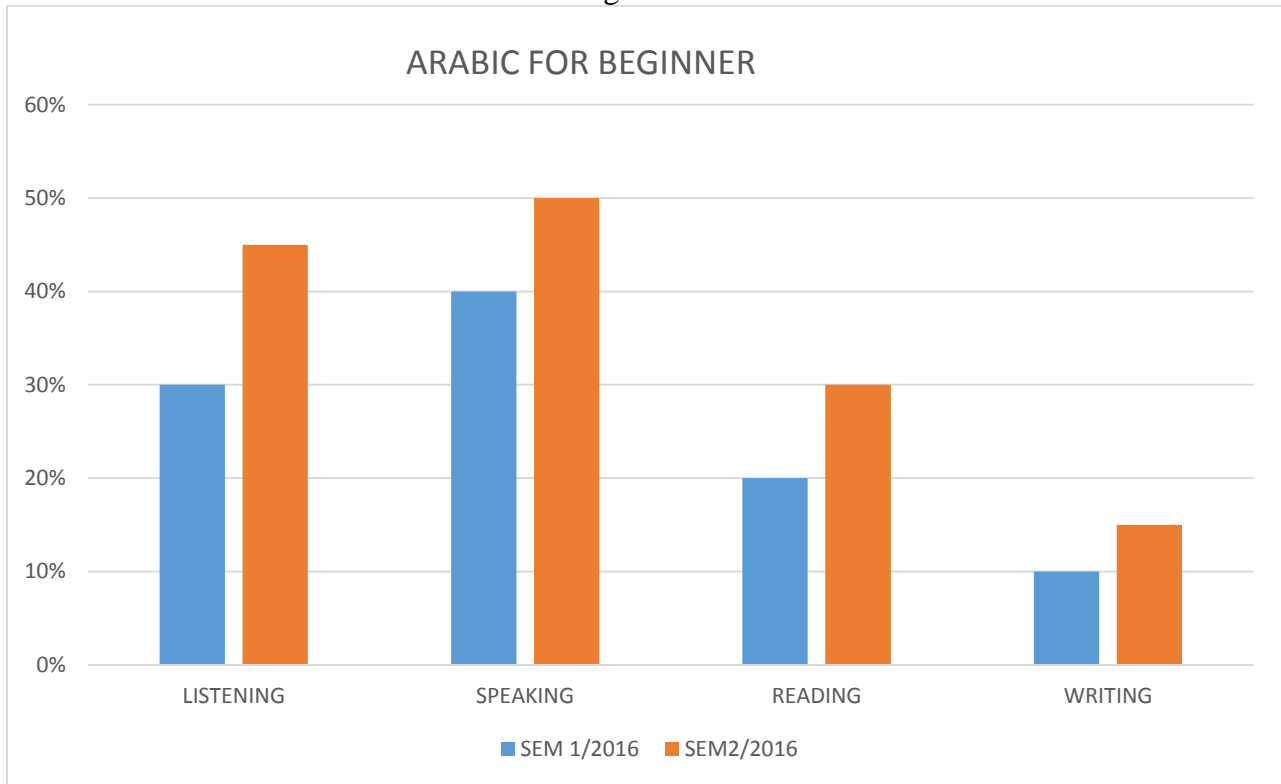


Figure 3

Analysis and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the perception of respondents on the effectiveness, availability and acceptance of respondents towards *M-Learning*. A total of 15 questions were asked and the overall results of this study showed that the effectiveness of the respondent against the implementation of *M-learning* is closely related. Meanwhile, the suitability of *M-Learning* is in the moderate level. This section refers to the respondent's level of understanding about the concept of *M-Learning* in UMP as a new method of learning specifically for students. Teaching and learning session conducted through *M-Learning* allows the learning to be implemented more easily.

Teaching through *M-Learning* method allows the education process to be received by more students without the limitations of distance and continuing education (Jacob & Isaac, 2014). The mean values obtained shows that most respondents have a high level of understanding of the implemented *M-Learning* system. The finding is supported by the data illustrated in Figure 2. The study found that all the four skills that are valued in Arabic show satisfactory improvement within two semesters. It shows that teachers are aware of the *M-Learning* concept, where it should be developed as a major learning tool to enable students to engage in learning activities. The study results in Figure 3 found that two of the four skills listed showed a high level and two more at a moderate level.

M-Learning shows a significant impact to listening and speaking skills compared to the other two skills, reading and writing. The implementation of a new learning methods such as *M-Learning* depends on the individual itself, in which case, it refers to an initiative and individual motivation to learn. To realize the program of *M-Learning*, the teachers and students need to understand about their role in implementing the system and this is asserted by (Hsu et al. 2013) which states that all parties involved with teaching and learning at the university must play their respective roles in the realization of the *M-Learning* program.

This study can be viewed on the effectiveness, suitability and acceptance of students towards *M-Learning*. *M-Learning* system as a whole is not defined in detail and not really understood by some parties. Organisations and institutions define *M-Learning* in their own way (Jacob & Isaac, 2014). *M-Learning* is an innovation in the education system which is intended to replace the current education system. This innovation acceptance depends on the individual itself to evaluate it as being said by (Hsu et al. 2013), innovation is linked through certain channels over time, among the members of a social system. According to Huang & Chiu (2015), the use of new technologies as a tool in the implementation of *M-Learning* is to provide the ability to be an effective learning facilitator. It also creates an atmosphere that encourages students to be more innovative and creative in learning.

Conclusion

M-Learning is flexible and effective way of teaching and learning. Although mobile learning can help a student in studying, it can be limiting in such a way that only the privileged few can afford having a mobile (Sha et al. 2012). *M-Learning* is a unique learning that students can access the learning materials, instructions and applications related to learning, in no matter time or place. The use of technology in the world of education continues to grow in a wide range of strategies and pedagogy. This clearly shows that the *M-Learning* should be used as a medium of learning in the 21st century. Teaching and learning are the most efficient and effective, where there is a combination of learning process done with technology and combined with the traditional system (Jacob & Issac, 2014).

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Author



Mohammad Bin Hasni is a teacher of Arabic in the Department of Foreign Languages at Center of Modern Languages and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Pekan 26600 Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia. His research fields are in Language & Linguistics. (+609-424 6874 /+6017-7254186).