RESEARCH ARTICLE

INTEGRATING SMART PHONES IN TEACHING LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING AND WRITING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Smart Phones provide a smarter way to learn anywhere, any time for the present generation learners. These devices with smart technologies cater to the diverse needs of the learners. To integrate Smart Phones into English Language Learning challenges the Zero Tolerance policy towards the use of smart phones in academic environment. With the availability of many apps as well as internet connectivity enables learning and teaching beyond classrooms. This paper explores the various apps and facilities Smart phones which provide the learners to hone their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. These portable Smart phones gives access to wide range of sources available on the web for imparting various skills of language learning. The smart phones also ensure Self-Assessed Language Learning (SALL) that provides the learner with autonomy and encourages him/her to do things his/her way and reflect on the work and take greater responsibility.

Key Words: Smart Phones, Self-Assessed Language Learning, Apps

Smart Phones provide a smarter way to learnfor the present generation of learners. Smart phones with features like Newspapers, books, grammar reference, exercises, camera, audio and video recording, notepads, Mp3 player and the internet are potentially useful for language learning in and outside the classroom.

The global Smart phone audience surpassed two billion mark in 2014 and majority of our learners own a smart phone. The zero Tolerance policy towards the use of mobile phones during the class time as the device is mainly used for updating the social media site like face book, chatting on Whats app. These phenomena can be changed by using the phones for academic purposes.

English Language Learning can be made more effective by the integration of Smart Phones; this potential device also ensures Self-Assessed Language Learning (SALL). The Self Assessed Language Learning provides the learner with autonomy and encourages him/her to do things his/her way and reflect on the work critically and

assume greater responsibility towards their own learning. The role of the teacher is to guide the learner to achieve the required objectives of the curriculum.

The way people learn English has shifted from the traditional classroom to the internet. Many apps and website are available to learn and explore the language. The teacher as per the needs of the curriculum can devise the task and activities suitable to the level of the learner or instead of creating materials can adapt the Smart Phone by bringing it in the academic environment and ensuring the device to be used for academic purpose.

Smart phones provides the learner with an opportunity to manage their learning and independent access to materials and resources. The Teaching and Learning process of skills like Reading, Listening, Speaking ,Writing, vocabulary building and grammar can be made more interesting and seek active participation from the learner by indulging them in the activity and exploring the language and customising it to his needs. The teacher can use the wide range of sources available on the web for imparting various skills of language learning.

Listening:

Listening has an important place in language acquisition and itdevelops awareness of the language.Listening is a receptive skillwhich first develops in a human being. Listening to the target language improves language ability. The rhythm, sound, stressand intonation of the language can be adapted through listening. The classroom was the only place where the learners of English as Second language get an opportunity to listen to the language. But with the intrusion of mobile phones, the hand held devices come with MP3 players and you tube facility the learner can have access to wide range of audio and video files.

Use of Whatsapp, apps and online sources on Smart Phones:

The teacher plays an important role in guiding the learner in effective use of this smart technology. For Listening, the teacher has to identify the source and text the link on whats app or can put the lesson plan on wiki page or the blog which the teacher can create and share the link to the students. The teacher gets immediate response from the learners as the learners are always glued to the device.

Use of Podcasts and videos:Learners can download or listen online to the podcasts and videos on the smart phones at their leisure. Most of the audio files and podcasts are often accompanied by comprehension exercises and transcripts. Depending on the level of the learner the teacher can assign activities also.

The teacher can share the link of the Websites on whats app for instant response from the learner. Few websites are:

- www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish
- Shakira's Speech at Oxford Union- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yRm3GCZ2U4
- Swami Vivekananda Chicago Speech -https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlwZNmgFBWM

Apps like:

- Learn English By Listening
- English Conversation Practice

Learners can also download apps on to their phones like British Council's Learn English Podcasts. The learners can listen to the audio files any number of times and complete the tasks. The learner's determination plays an important role in this kind of learning. The learner can hone his skills by self assessing his performance. The learner can access any articles availableon any topic and would be ready to participate in classroom discussion. The teacher can also share the questionnaire on these activities on whatsapp as the phones have facility to access these files

Pronunciation practice: Smart Phones have intelligent apps like The Pronunciation App which allows the learner to learn English pronunciation from its most basic level. It is a known fact that all English words have a unique pronunciation, which is represented by a special symbol. The teacher can facilitate Model Based Learning by using smart phones. The learner can explore the pronunciation from basic level to improve his accent and also has the recording facility where he can record his pronunciation and compare it with the actual one. More apps are available to hone their pronunciation like

- Sounds: Pronunciation App
- English Pronunciation

- Pronunciation Checker Free

The Pronunciation App helps the student to study, practise and play with pronunciation wherever he/she is. This application provides Interactive Phonemic Charts for British English and American English. We can hear a sound, or tap and hold to hear the sound and an example word.

Speaking: Many students in semi urban areas and rural areas in India have difficulty in speaking English. The main reason is the environment- home, social gathering do not support the students to speak English frequently. The learners are exposed to this language in the class only so it is difficult to improve speaking in English. More over many problems indigenous to the regions hinder the process of language acquisition. Translation Method of teaching is very prominent in rural areas. This method of teaching helps the learner to understand the content of the text but prevents him from learning the language. The interference of mother tongue in speaking English is another major problem in learning English. They forget that every language differs in stress, intonation and pronunciation.   With the less availability of teaching aids especially audio-visual aids many teachers are unable to teach English effectively.

In this context, a Smart Phone is a blessing as it provides the learner to get exposure to the language inside and outside the classroom. The learner can listen to any number of conversations which will influence his acquaintance with the language. Speaking becomes a little easier with good exposure to the language he intends to learn. Smart phones recording facility, video and audio helps the learner to record his presentation in the class. His peers can record his presentation when he is presenting. The learner can analyse his speech and identify the mistakes and work to correct the mistake. The same video or audio file can be shared to peers and the teacher who in turn can give feedback on his presentation which would assist the students to overcome the problems in their speaking. The teacher can evaluate the presentation and give a feedback report citing the various areas to concentrate. It is very easy for both learner and teacher to use this facility. The teacher can allot more time to each learner as it is not possible in a regular class time.

The learner would have an opportunity to analyse his body language, accent, intonation and pronunciation by watching his own presentation and helps him/ her to work on the areas which needs honing.

Reading: In imparting Reading Skills to the learners the teacher has to use lot of material, identifying the right content, photocopying and then distributing it to the students. Instead of all this the teacher can give the link of the text which the learner has to explore. There are many online texts available making it easy for the teacher to access it. The use of these online sources saves lot of time. The ultimate goal of reading is good comprehension. There are few apps available which helps the learner to practice specific comprehension skills like sequencing, antonyms, synonyms as well as several mind mapping apps. Mind maps help students represent words or ideas which are used in reading and writing.

Use of E-Books / newspapers / magazines – Learners can have access to a variety of different types of text on their phones, many of which are free or inexpensive. The learner can use an application for reading texts on Kindle. This app allows readers to highlight words, find the word definitions and make their own meaning.

The apps like Quick Reads and Oxford Bookworms provides the learner's with short, accessible texts. To cultivate the habit of extensive reading among learners, teachers can encourage them to visit these websites and explore various e-books available and which also develops both reading and digital literacyskills.

Writing: Can we use smart phones for teaching writing? The answer is yes. Learners should be motivated to access various writing apps and use them while writing. These apps assist the learner to write an essay, formal letter or even a note for a friend. Apps related to

- Dictionary/Thesaurus.
- Note taking apps –helps the learner to capture ideas on the move and assist the learner to be a budding writer.
- Brainstorming and Outlining Apps help the learner to produce a coherent piece of writing which requires the learner to organize their ideas and thoughts.
- Outlining App Showdownfacilitates assessments. Other brainstorming techniques include the use of 'mind mapping' tools like MindNode

There is wealth of apps that assists in developing writing skills.

▪   Improve English writing skills:

http://appfinder.lisisoft.com/ipad-iphone-apps/improve-english-writing-skills.html

•   http://www.teachthought.com/apps-2/50-popular-ipad-apps-for-struggling-readers-writers/

▪   The Best Android Apps for Writers:

http://www.androidauthority.com/best-android-apps-for-writers-note-taking-56006/

The teacher can encourage the learner to submit assignments also online. To be productive with writing skill students can be encouraged to Micro-Blogging. Authentic written communication with real people can be fostered as the Internet offers many opportunities for, such as through the micro-blogging features of social networking websites like Face book.

The smart phones assist teachers in encouraging and supporting language learning among the students. These Smart devices with smart technology help the teachers and learners to re-define academic practices by providing more opportunities for students to access and manage learning on the part of the learner. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding, providing pedagogical support and also monitoring the effective use of Smart phones in academic environments. The smart phone caters to various needs of learners taking into consideration the various learning styles. These portable devices assists learners to explore a gamut of activities and tasks for various skills of language acquisition like grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, writing or speaking. The applications suitable for android and various platforms engage the learner anywhere, anytime with interactive teaching and learning styles.

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