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Research Article

The Impact of Speak English Fluently ® Mobile Application on the Speaking of Iranian Young Pre-intermediate EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

The use of technology in teaching and learning environments is an important aspect which has received considerable attention in recent years. In a similar vein, the use of mobiles to increase the effectiveness of instruction has been acknowledged through a number of experimental studies carried out so far. The present study was conducted to improve speaking of EFL students through using mobile phones. Thirty-two students including male and female with the age range of 17 to 23 considered as adult learners of English. In every session, the participants in the experimental group talked on their mobile phone in English. As a class assignment, they were required to practice their mistakes in English via application with their teacher. Participants in the control group, however, received no extra treatment at all. The results which were achieved by t-test formula showed that the participants who had benefited from mobile-assisted learning had a significantly better performance on a speaking post-test than the participants in the control group. The pedagogical implications are discussed.

Keywords: CALL, M-Learning, E-Learning, Speaking, Spiking Skill

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of mobile technology in educational environments has become increasingly significant, particularly in the realm of language learning. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has been identified as an effective method for enhancing various language skills, including speaking, listening, and vocabulary acquisition. Not so long ago, mobile technologies had limited connection with education and its requirements, Absence of technology from the educational environment was a common phenomenon that even in such a developed country like England, there was no necessity for it (Klimova & Polakova, 2023). However, within a few years, in the wake of the prevalence of technologies, everyone carries a self-phone in his/her pocket or purse. Mobile is no more a single portable device for sending and receiving calls; it could act as a radio, cassettes, DVD player, and even as a tiny computer by performing some applications. Due to the accessibility of mobile services, Mobile Learning (M-learning) has become a predominant form of E-learning.

The topic of the study is the impact of Speak English Fluently application on speaking ability of the students. This application is designed to improve the English language through mobile phones. It can be concluded that this study was working on English ability via technology. So, the technology especially mobile application is under the focus. This study worked on a treatment that is explained in the third chapter to find if this application as a technology was practical to improve speaking or not. Different scholars have various viewpoints about M-learning, and it has emerged as a controversial subject matter. For instance, according to Alexander (2004), Mobile Learning by the means of the mobile device can be carried out anywhere without any obstacle. On the other hand, Beaty (2003) is skeptical about technology and believes it is a waste of time and money.

Today is the world of communication and technology. The human being needs to interact with the new environment in order to progress. English is the international language for many years, it is most widely used in communicating around the world, and also it is spoken as the first language in many countries. English is playing a major role in many sections like education, medicine, engineering, and business. For this, learning and teaching English is an important factor in today's life. Harmer (2001) emphasized that the main purpose of teaching and learning a language is to reach the ability of communication in a target language. This author also emphasized that the meaning of communication is to understand each other.

As a great vehicle for language learning, Tan and Yaowa (2012) call it Mobile Assisted Language Learning. M-learning means usage of portable devices in any time and any place (Geddes, 2004; Li, 2023). While there would be some other devices, but cell-phone can be considered the best one as it is becoming an inseparable part of us. The huge revolution of technology could impact other aspects of a human's life, especially education and learning and lead to an easy and portable way of education, which is called E-learning. Mobile learning or M-learning can be defined as follows: learning by portable, wireless, technological devices by receiving the unbroken transmission signals (Attewell and Savill-Smith, 2005). According to Traxler (2007) Mobile, learning is a kind of learning through digital and wireless devices for public usage, which is beneficent even in higher education. Traxler believes Mobile learning is a new conception different from both the concept of "learning" and "Mobile." Walker (2007) sketches the advantages of mobile learning. He argues; not only mobile learning is a portable and wireless communication, but also it is based upon the situation and context of the learner, and this feature makes M-learning unique.

English is the second or foreign language in some countries such as Asian countries. Institutes which are learning English in our country is highly variant. It is expected that learners who are graduated from these institutes to be able to communicate with a native speaker of English and become a fluent speaker. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing is four best-known skills of language. Most important and complicated one is speaking; an accurate and fluent speech requires correct use of speaking ability.

Uzun (2012) claimed that the traditional education is replaced by CALL (computer-assisted language learning), in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement, and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element. There are three main points regarding teaching English in foreign countries: First, teachers are not a native speaker of the English language so it is probable to make mistakes in speaking. Ali Panahi (2014) stated that the important factor to have a native-like pronunciation is having native like teachers in EFL classes. Second, as Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016) emphasized, is that many teachers do not pay too much attention to the importance of pronunciation and speaking. They teach grammar and vocabulary in an excellent way, and most of them make learners powerful just in reading and listening.

And the last one is that teachers in many institutes and schools of Iran still use traditional ways of teaching speaking and pronunciation. This problem, maybe, is because of their lack of knowledge or their inexperience in using modern technologies and software's, especially, e-learning software's. Traditional ways haven't a satisfactory result on students; we can see this by examining the students' levels. Nowadays, e-learning is used by learners in extensive form. Epignosis (2014) implied that e-learning has many advantages; it facilitates learning everywhere with no boundaries; such as bus stop, at home, at work, etc. e-learning makes the process of learning like a game so it will be useful for children to learn in more fun environment. According to Downes "E-learning makes it possible for the professor to host a guest lecture without spending much money" (p.14). "Due to the fact that E-learning is not only limited to interaction between learner and computer, the interaction can also take place between learner and instructor (computer-mediated communication) and learner" (Ebner, 2007, p.1). Recent studies have underscored the potential of mobile applications in facilitating language learning through increased accessibility, personalized learning experiences, and immediate feedback (Li, 2023; Klimova & Polakova, 2023). For instance, mobile applications have shown to significantly improve English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' listening skills, demonstrating a moderate-to-large effect size compared to traditional methods (Li, 2023). Additionally, the use of mobile applications for English learning has been positively received by students, who appreciate the convenience and the corrective feedback provided by these tools (Klimova & Polakova, 2023). Due to the inefficiency of traditional teaching, students and learners are not able to remove their fossilized pronunciation and speaking mistakes, so this study wants to use modern teaching with E-learning software, and check its impact on speaking skill of Iranian learners of English language. The present study aimed at showing the effectiveness of mobile phone assisted language learning (MALL) within an EFL context via using mobile application. The result can show the effect of mobile learning on speaking of the learners.

In this research Speak English Fluently application was introduced as one of M-learning applications that are used for English learning. Most of the teachers are not capable to use technology-based material, for this, it is tried to show how can technology and M-learning software, such as Speak English Fluently, helps students to improve their speaking skills at any time and everywhere. Speak English Fluently is the general solution for students and their needs. Speak English Fluently software includes phonics (sounds and letters), word lists, audio and lots of conversation with the different level of difficulty about all topic that a student needs to learn. You can hear the native voice when you are reading the text. Based on the aim of the study, an attempt was made to seek the answer to the following research question:

RQ: Does Speak English Fluently software have any significant effect on EFL learners' speaking?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many authors have perceived m-learning in a different way, and they have come up with various definitions for the term mobile learning but it is still immature in both its technological and pedagogical term. Mobile

learning is not limited to cell phone use, it covers vast field of definition, by using handheld computers in personalized, connected and interactive context like classrooms, collaborative learning, fieldwork and in counseling and guidance (Perry, 2003, O'Malley and Stanton, 2002, Pinkwart et al, 2003, Chen, 2003, Vuorinenand Sampson, 2003). Mobile devices can be used as enhancing medical education, teacherand nurse training, music composition and numerous other disciplines (Gayeski, 2002, Pasanen, 2003, Lundin and Magnusson, 2003, Smordal, 2003, Seppala and Alamaki, 2003, Polishook, 2005, Kneebone, 2005).

In some cases, mobile assisted language learning meets the situated and context-aware learning experiences but in other cases, it is probable to reach inaccessible learners to support conventional e-learning. It is tried to extend mobile assisted language learning by delivering usable content and supporting online mobile learner communities (Shih, 2004, Kukulska-Hulme, 2002, Salmon, 2000). There is a direct relationship between e-learning and mobile devices but unfortunately, researches regarding this field are limited (Rudman et al, 2002, Sharples, 2001, Luckin et al, 2003). Some advantages of mobile assisted language learning include flexibility, low cost, small size and user-friendliness, availability at anytime and anywhere and the ability to use materials again and again.

Previously, some empirical studies related to mobile learning, especially via different applications and games was highlighted, for example, Turgut and Írgin (2009) investigated young learners' language learning via computer games. They conducted their research in the Internet cafe. According to (Turgut & Irgin, 2009), online computer games show potential in promoting learning. They also suggested that young learners' who play online games can improve their language learning and especially vocabulary skills. Therefore, game-based apps facilitate students' problem-solving skills with English vocabulary learning disabilities and understand the app's targeted content (Carr, 2012). Even though thousands of applications are in the market, interestingly, the number of educational-based apps is not as extensive as many other categories (Walker, 2011). Besides that, teachers have difficulty identifying the appropriate apps for specific students' needs. However, Yerushalmy and Botzer (2011) stated, "we consider mobile learning to be an important aspect of future changes in the curriculum and like classroom" (p.192). Bearing in mind teachers' claims about lack of time to prepare materials for students who need differentiated instruction, apps can be critical for teachers and students. Increasing the amount of exposure to English vocabulary instructions using the game-based app might escalate the likelihood of students' benefits.

In another study, Dolati and Mikaili (2011) measured the influences of instructional games on facilitating students' vocabulary learning. Their study aimed to gain information about the role of the games in the level of vocabulary learning among students. The researchers realized that game has a convincible effect as an educational tool for training, and can engage and motivate students, especially the passive and quiet students in the learning process.

Like the above study, Kalaycioglu (2011) investigated the effectiveness of the educational games on the preschool-level English vocabulary learning of four years old. His research revealed an essential difference in English vocabulary attainment in the experimental group, which was taught by the picture vocabulary games in comparison with the control group.

Al-Sharafat and Abu-Seileek (2012) studied web-based games with fifth grade English as a foreign language student in Jordan. They found significant gains in reading and writing skills and higher retention of vocabulary with their experimental group than the control group who received traditional instruction (Al-Sharafat & Abu-Seileek, 2012). Taheri (2014) concluded that game-based learning was beneficial for learning English as a second language. Zheng, Young, Brewer, and Wagner (as cited in DeHaan et al., 2010) realized that learners' attitude and self-efficacy towards their foreign language increased due to the use of devices to speak with native speakers to complete questions in a game-like world. Vahdat and Rasti-

Behbahani (2013) researched the influence of video games on Iranian EFL claimed that there is a positive relationship between gender and learning vocabulary through games.

Cornillie, Clarebout, and Desmet (2012) investigated the cognitive benefits of the digital role-playing game genre for foreign language acquisition, focusing on the importance of focus-on-form techniques and language-directed feedback. They argued that digital games create opportunities to investigate how technology mediates the language learning process in ways that may have not been conceived of in traditional language learning environments.

Efendi (2013) did research on the use of games to promote vocabulary knowledge in a similar manner. His research aimed to describe the way of "got it game" and "back to the board game" in improving vocabulary mastery of the seventh-grade students. The finding revealed that "the use of "Got It Game" and "Back to the Board Game" with the vocabulary of the topic of daily English communication, people's occupation, and personal care and appearance can improve students' vocabulary mastery achievement." (p.78).

Perera et al., (2014) examined a game-based learning approach to enrich special education in Sri Lanka. Perera et al. (2014) emphasized that in today's fast-paced world, giving everyone with equal access to information and knowledge is limited owing to distinct groups of pupils who are unable to engage in regular learning due to physical, mental, or psychological problems. These kinds of students require individual attention and special assistance from their parents and teachers in the learning process. Instead of traditional learning methods, they could benefit from certain additional particular learning strategies supplied as learning aids. Since Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based learning is a novel approach that integrates learning with computing, this research is intended to explore the relevancy of ICT-based education for enhancing the learning effectiveness of students with special needs. A few game-based activities have been designed based on functional and non-functional needs acquired through consultations with special education physicians and instructors. These activities focus on basic concepts of three subject areas as Color, Numbers, and Language. In order to evaluate the performance improvement, two tests were carried out as ‘pre-test’ and ‘post-test’ for a sample of students with the developed activities. The number of levels completed by each student, the number of mistakes made during the game, and the time taken to finish a game were measured throughout the user evaluation phase. With this experiment, it was proven that ICT can be used as a driving tool to enhance the learning effectiveness in the special education domain.

Derakhshan and Khatir (2015) investigated the effects of using games on English vocabulary learning. They explained that one of the difficult parts of learning the target language for English language learners is the acquisition of vocabulary. Using educational games for teaching vocabulary has been very well known for several decades. Therefore, their paper has reviewed the effects of using games on improving vocabulary learning in an English as a foreign language or English as a second language context. Different studies revealed that games are beneficial in vocabulary learning because they enhance students’ ability to memorize words, encourage student interaction, improve their communicative skills and enhance students’ motivation. Games can also assist instructors in creating circumstances in which the language is relevant and helpful. Derakhshan and Davoodi Khatir’s study aimed to guide teachers and students towards a better understanding of vocabularies through educational games. Their paper suggested game-based learning activities and techniques in the classroom. I'm hoping that educational games will get more traction and be used in the classroom to better understand and teach a new language.

Ragatz (2015) found that game-based learning for vocabulary acquisition increased students' motivation to learn and increased overall awareness of target vocabulary in literature. Students also retained their learning from the games and could apply their learning in context (Ragatz, 2015). Many investigations have looked into the usefulness of game-based learning for vocabulary acquisition among university English language

students. One such study used non-digital games and found that games, in general, helped with vocabulary acquisition and retention (Hui-Chan & Chen, 2012).

Hardiyanti and Azizah (2017) conducted multimedia of educational game and claimed that learning through play is an activity that is widely practiced in the current era. Educational or computer-based educational games in the learning process are not only entertaining but can also deepen relationships and enable greater learning processes. Multimedia educational games can aid students in comprehending content if the learning process is made more real and enjoyable. Multimedia educational games in teaching and learning activities are also able to improve cognitive abilities possessed by individual intellectual disabilities, but their use is still rarely found. In their paper, they reviewed relatedresearch in a systematic review of multimedia educational games as an aid in the implementation of the learning process for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The results of their study obtained from several kinds of literature indicate that multimedia educational games can be aimed at increasing the ability of individual intellectual disabilities in various ways not only in the academic field. The time needed during the use of multimedia educational games ranges from 20 to 60 minutes which is carried out in one full learning. The game's format must be adjusted to reflect the daily lives of a person with an intellectual handicap, as well as the abilities and barriers that they face. The characteristics must be able to complement the skills of individuals with intellectual impairments and can be utilized as learning material in the future.

Yeh and Lan (2018) tried to integrate VR into regular EFL classes. Fifth graders from an elementary school in a rural area in northern Taiwan used a 3D authoring tool, Build & Show. The study enlisted the participation of 29 kids from two fifth-grade classes. They learnt how to create their own virtual worlds using the authoring tool. However, one class (Class A, 14 students) constructed the VR worlds as part of a regular computer class project, whereas the other class (Class B, 15 students) constructed the VR worlds in response to the English teacher's request. Class A learnt English in a conventional manner after the 3D construction exercises. Class B, in contrast to Class A, was taught utilizing the learning materials they had generated in the virtual reality environments. When students constructed their own learning settings, they were shown to concentrate better and be more motivated to study. Their learning result was also altered in a beneficial way.

Gamlo (2019) examined the impact of Mobile Game-Based Language Learning Apps on EFL Learners' Motivation. The impact of integrating mobile-game-based language learning apps (MGBLLAs) on Saudi female EFL students' motivation to learn English is investigated in this study. It searches the perceptions of students regarding the pedagogical value of the following free MGBLLAs: Game books: Great Reader, Game to learn English - English Tracker, and Learn English Vocabulary Pop Quiz. The study included thirty Saudi female novice level students, ranging in age from 18 to 20, who were enrolled in their foundation year at King Abdulaziz University (KAU). The research took place over a seven-week period. Two questionnaires were used to collect data. To measure students' motives for learning English, a pre-MGBLLAs integration questionnaire was adapted. An author-designed post-MGBLLAs integration questionnaire was also distributed. It was utilized to explore the perceptions of students regarding the use of the three-mobile game-based language learning apps, and to discover any impact on learner motivation. The EFL students were motivated to study English, according to the findings of the pre-MGBLLAs integration. However, they had a strong instrumental motive because it was a required course in their foundation year, and they needed to do well in order to begin studying their selected major. The results of the post-MGBLLAs integration questionnaire suggested that students thought the three applications were helpful in terms of learning and motivation.

Alfadil (2020), more recently explored the influence of the virtual reality (VR) game *House of Languages* on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary acquisition of intermediate school students. A

quasi-experimental design was used to determine the role of the VR intervention on the learning process over the traditional EFL vocabulary acquisition method. A sample of 64 male students was divided into an experimental group and a control group; each group contained 32 students. The findings from this study of independent *t*-tests at the end of the experimental period indicated that students using the VR game *House of Languages* had greater performance in vocabulary learning.

Stancin, Hoic-Bozic, and Skocic Mihic (2020) conducted a systematic literature review. They explained using digital game-based learning for students with Intellectual Disabilities. The purpose of their systematic literature review was to explore the area of digital Game -Based Learning (GBL) for students with intellectual disabilities as a tool that enables a positive impact on learning and mastering specific skills to make recommendations for future research. Twenty-one studies were selected from different databases. The results showed that the most common type of game was a serious game, and the most commonly used technology was PC with additional equipment, but tablets were also often used. Besides, the studies were more focused on the development of cognitive abilities rather than those of adaptive skills.

Considering the literature on the mediated learning, the researchers came to a conclusion that no study had investigated the impact of Speak English Fluently on the improving speaking ability. The gap in this study was the usage of specific application which was designed for improving speaking ability. Therefore, this study was an attempt to fill this gap and contribute to the existing literature on the role of online learning tools in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

The design of this study is quasi-experimental in nature. It used a pretest posttest design with a control group. Furthermore, the participants were selected based on the convenient sampling.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were none randomly selected among 90 male and female volunteers' students of an English language learning institute (AsreDanesh Institute) in Tehran (1397-1398). The students were the pre-intermediate level of English which were classified as pre-intermediate by the institute. However, to make sure of the group homogeneity an Oxford Placement Test was administrated to the group. They were all male-female learners with the age range of 20 considered as adult learners of English. The study needed 32 learners, 16 learners for each group. The capacity of the classes in the institution did not let to have more partners.

3.3. Instruments and Materials

The tasks in this study were collaborative learning activities, this treatment delivered by mobile phones. The mobile phone course to the study consisted of 10 lessons, and for each lesson, there were various subjects of dialogue. The application was equipped with English-speaking and listening parts with a teacher for guidance in the class .

The materials which were used for this investigation were Speak English Fluently application, Oxford

Placement Test, Impact Values book and Cambridge English Proficiency Speaking Test. The book was a useful book which provides ideas and subjects for speaking, such as the values of relations and so on

In this study the Speak English Fluently application based on mobile platform was used as instrument. This application can be installed on mobile devices and can be used anytime and anywhere. It is available to have it by the free download on the Google engine. It has some parts such as, conversations, every day sentence, vocabulary learning, necessary phrases, and daily excretions. The focus here was to work on conversation part. There are more than thousands of conversations with different levels. In each level there is lots of different topic to talk about. Speak English Fluently application was a kind of android app that worked on speaking ability. The company is Quyen, Hai and developer of the app is Da Nang, CauTre, and NgoPhong. The date of the production of the last version is December 27, 2018**.**
This application had some parts such as Conversations, Every day Sentence, Vocabulary Sentence, and Daily Expressions. The conversation part was on the focus for this study. This part divided into Daily Topic, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, History, and Unread. Pre-intermediate part was chosen for this research. The way that was used to work on application is represented in the Procedure part. Some features of this application are written as follows;

- Online audio mode
- Offline audio mode
- List of conversations in English with 3 levels: beginner, pre-intermediate and intermediate
- List of most commonly used sentences and expressions
- Record your voice, then the app will be able to compare your voice with original sentences
- Most commonly used words and sentences in daily situations
- Necessary Idioms and Phrases
- Bookmark your favorite lessons

Introducing the application through pictures is presented in Figure 1 to 3.

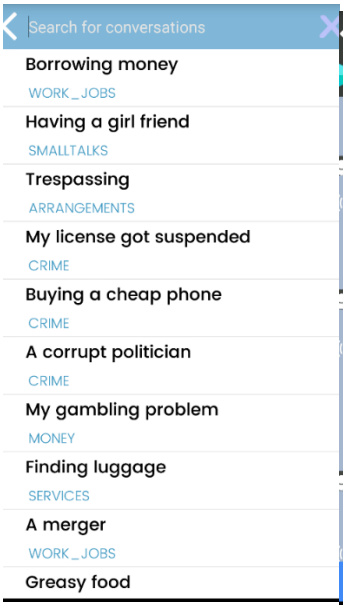


Figure 1

Figure.2

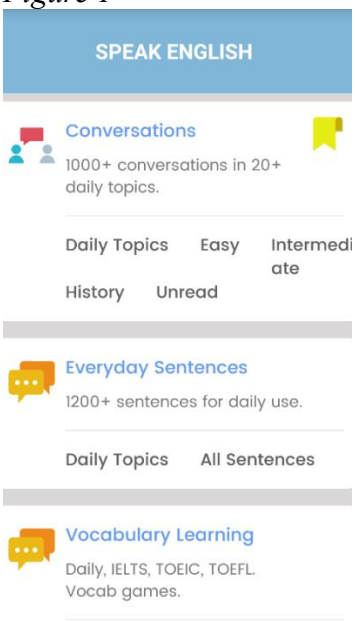


Figure 3

This test was used to make sure of learners homogeneity. This study used homogenized learners. The test that was used was Version 1.1
This test is divided into three parts: Part One (Questions 1 – 40), Part Two (Questions 41 – 60), Part Three (Writing section).

This book consisted of 30 discussion topics to help you explore your own values (student book with self-study audio CD) by Richard R. Day (Author), Junko Yamanaka (Author), and Joseph Shaules (Author). Impact Values is a book from Longman Publishing designed to enhance learners' language skills. This collection was available in 30 conversations to help students express their ideas. In fact, after the introductory conversations, the learners needed to be able to participate in more advanced levels in English

discussions, and this set was designed for this purpose. This collection helped learners to express their ideas and understand the ideas and opinions of other people. The Impact Values book could be taught in-class tutorials. The book was structured in five sections of human beings, relationships, work environment, family, and society, each of which consisted of six major subjects facing individuals in their lives.

Cambridge English Proficiency Test as a standard test used as a posttest for assessing the speaking fluency of the learners. The information was essential for data gathering and investigating the study questions . Cambridge English Proficiency Speaking Test took 16 minutes long and consisted of three parts.

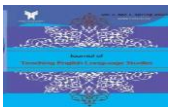
3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Starting the treatment had some steps. At first finding, a good administration situation was considered in order to have a situation which had the features that the study needed. These features were such as having more than 90 students, having 60 students with the same level, quiet environment. Second, the Oxford Placement test was used to find 60 pre-intermediate learners. But 32 of them were chosen. Students were divided into two groups. Each group had 16 students. One group named control and the other named the experimental group. The third step was providing mobile phones for those who had not. The application of the study was installed on the learners' mobile phone. The way of using the application as represented by the teacher for students. Forth, the teacher thought Impact Values book to both groups.

The way of teaching Impact Values book was like teaching such a book in every institution that so-called traditional teaching. The teacher worked on the application with the experimental group. Control group did not receive the application. These two groups received 20 sessions of 90 minutes. Next step was about working on the application. As it was mentioned before in the instrumentation part that the application had some conversations. Each conversation had a man and a woman to read the text of the conversation. The learners could bold those vocabularies that did not know. The teacher made the learners aware of the synonymy, antinomy or the definition of the word to make them comprehensible for students. After reading the conversation part by the application, learners could join the reader in three ways. At first, the learners could read the text and record their voice to see if they speak like the application or not. The second way was joining the app and reading one part of the conversation. In this way, the application read the first part of the conversation and the learners read the other part. Choosing the parts for reading was optional. And the third way was to read the text by two learners. In the two previous parts just one learner tool part and worked on application but in the third way two learners can read the conversation. After all these as the last step, the post-test was administrated.

In regarding teaching methodology, there was no methodology for speaking on the phone, as the teacher's only task was to correct students while speaking. This app considered as a workshop of speaking or free discussion group, but some preselected topics provided. The aim in the study was not to teach speaking but for providing speaking fluency only the focus was on practice. The teacher only corrected the students, and at the start of the next session repeated the corrected mistakes and in case of repetition of mistakes, he or she corrected them again.

In the standard format of the post-test, there were two candidates and two examiners. One examiner acted as an interlocutor, who conducted the test, gave enough explanation for understanding what was asked. The other examiner acted as an assessor introduced the participants but had no part in the interaction. One more assessor was added to have reliability of the scores.



Speaking test was administered as follow:

Part1 (2minutes)

The interlocutor first asked participants and their partner a few questions which focus on information about themselves

Part2 (4minutes)

IN this part of the test, participants and their partner asked to talk together. The interlocutor placed asset of pictures on the table in front of them. There was only one picture in the table or as many as seven pictures. This stimulus provided the basis for a discussion. The interlocutor first asked an introductory question which focused on two of the pictures (or in the case of a single pictures on a aspects of the pictures. On aspects of the pictures. After 1 minutes, the inter locator gave them both a decision- making asked based on the same set of pictures.

Part3 (10minutes)

Students were each given the opportunity to talk for 2 minutes, to comment after their partner had spoken and to take part in a more general discussion. The interlocutor gave them a card with a question written on it and asked them to talk about it for 2 minutes. After they had spoken, the interlocutor asked them both another question related to the topic on the card addressing their partner first. This procedure repeated, so that their partner received a card and spoke for 2 minutes and a follow-up question asked. Finally, the interlocutor asked some further questions, which led to a discussion on a general them related to the subjects already covered in part 3.

Candidates took the test in pairs, but were assessed on their individual performance by trained examiners certificated to examine at the level. Candidate speaking performances were assessed using scales which were linked to the Common European Framework of Reference. The assessor gave 0–5 marks for each of the following criteria: Grammatical Resource; Lexical Resource; Discourse Management; Pronunciation; and Interactive Communication. Marks for each of these criteria are doubled. The interlocutor gave a mark of 0–5 for Global Achievement. This mark was then multiplied by five. Examiners might award half marks. Marks for all criteria were then combined, meaning there were 75 marks available in the Speaking test.

The participants of this study were divided to two groups of 16 participants. One of the groups was the experimental group, and the other one was experimental control group. Experimental group received the treatment. The treatment means the use of application with mobile phone. In addition to treatment those who took part in this study as experimental group worked on Impact Values book. The experimental group received 20 sessions of 90 minutes in this study. Mobile application was used for experimental group.

Control group consisted of 16 participants. They did not have any treatment related to working on application. They just worked on Impact Values book. The control group received 20 sessions of 90 minutes. The teacher thought the impact values book. The book had some topics to discuss and to teach. By teaching and discussing about new topics were worked. Students learned new conversation by taking part in the discussion.

In this part, this research tried to represent the process which was passed to have data analysis. At first data analysis as descriptive statistic represented to describe the features of the data. Second part was related to normality test. The third part normality of data was introduced. The last part represents the process of T Test in SPSS software**.**

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. As written previously, 32 participants took part in current study and accordingly there were 32 scores as row data. At the end a Cambridge test was given and the performance was compared via T test formula.

Shapiro-Willk test was used to measure the normality of the data and it represented some information about the number of scores which were gotten by the post test. Normality test was used to see if the data were normal or not.

By the test of normality which explained in the previous part this research could be aware of the normality of data. If the data were normal, it would be necessary to use parametric test. The features of the variables (having one independent variable and one dependent variable) and the normality of the data showed the need to allocate T Test formula for this study.

The results from the study were analyzed by SPSS software, and for computing the significance level of t-value an independent t-test was employed. After collecting all relevant data, the experimental group and control group were compared and analyzed. As it was written in the table the amount of Sig was more than 0.05. So, the result was that scores in the both control and experimental group were normally distributed that's why *T test* formula was used.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To ensure the homogeneity of the groups in this research, the data obtained from the proficiency test was analyzed and the results showed that the subjects were homogeneous in terms of general English. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of groups on the test.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for test scores according to groups

	Group	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Scores Test	Control	16	42	62.25	50.44	5.180
	Experimental	16	55.50	74.50	66.84	5.894

It is mentioned in table 1, there is a great difference between the data of the two groups in terms of min, max, mean, and standard deviation. The current study used two raters to make this study reliable. In the process of posttest, while the interviewer was asking preselected questions to learners, there were two raters to assess the performances of the learners. Use of two raters is one way to make the obtained scores reliable.

Table 2

Correlations of Raters Scores

		Total.Rater 1	Total.Rater 2
Total.Rater 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.958**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	32
Total.Rater 2	Pearson Correlation	.958**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

According to the above table, there is a high level of agreement of inter-rater reliability. The above table showed the reliability of scores of the raters.

Table 3

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Total.Rater1 and Total.Rater2	32	.958	.000
	N	32	32	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the table of Paired Samples Correlations, the amount of Correlation is 0.958 and the amount of Sig is lower than 0.01 so, it can be concluded that there is a high level of agreement of inter-rater reliability. In the analysis phase of this study, Shapiro-Wilk test represented some information about the number of scores by the post-test. As it is written in the data analysis, Sig is more than 0.05. So, the result showed that the scores in both group (control and experimental) are normally distributed.

Table 4

Tests of Normality

	Group	N	Statistic Shapiro-Wilk	Sig.
Scores Test	Control	16	0.956	0.606
	Experimental	16	0.912	0.129

The main goal of the present research was to investigate the effect of *Speak English Fluently* software on the speaking of Iranian EFL learners. The data gathered through the posttest were analyzed by SPSS software. The use of t-test to compare the mean of speaking ability in two groups is needed, but at first, the data was analyzed by the Levine's test which it showed that the variance between two groups is the same. The variable of speaking ability is represented by t= -8.362 that is meaningful against the amount of P<0/01. In other word the mean of speaking ability in two groups has a meaningful difference. All the data were submitted to SPSS software and the t-test formula was used. The result showed the great difference between the scores of control (50.44) and experimental (66.84) groups (shown in table 5). To put it simply, the mean of the two groups had the touchable and great difference. According to the research question and the mean of the two groups, it can be concluded that *Speak English Fluently* software had a positive effect on speaking ability.

Table 5

Comparison of scores test in two groups

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levine's Test		t-test for equality of means		
					F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Scores Test	Control	16	50.44	5.180	0.256	0.616	-8.362	30	0.000
	Experimental	16	66.84	5.894					

The use of *t test* to compare the mean of speaking ability in the two groups is needed, but at first the data is

analyzed by the Levine's test which showed that the variance between the groups is the same which means, if the significant level of Levine's test be more than 0.05, the variance of two groups is equal. According to table 2, the variable of speaking ability is represented by t= -8.362 that is meaningful against the amount of P<0/01. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words the mean of speaking ability in the two groups has meaningful difference. Considering the amount of the mean in two groups, it is understood that the speaking ability in experimental group is shown by the number 16/40 more than control group. According to statistical analysis which is described above, it can be concluded that assumptions which were needed to perform *t test* were obtained by these three previous tables. The results of statistical analysis showed that *Speak English Fluently* software can affect on speaking of Iranian EFL learners positively with the high level of effectiveness.

The present study was an attempt to show the efficacy of using mobile phones for boosting the speaking of a group of Iranian EFL students. The results obtained showed the effectiveness of using mobile phones in increasing speaking ability of students. The findings of this survey show that language learners in general and Iranian EFL learners in particular consider the following as the capabilities and benefits of mobile in language learning:

1. Their ubiquity and being available anytime/anywhere

2. Their capability to play multimedia content

3. Their being all-in-one gadgets eliminating the need to purchase, carry and use several different devices to meet their language learning needs.

4. Following the feature above, saving on device costs

5. Matching their language learning activities

6. Mobile can stop wasting time

Disadvantages and Challenges of Mobile Devices to Language Learning

1. Lack of language learners' knowledge about the potential capabilities of mobile devices in language learning activities

2. The limited battery capacity imposing limitations

3. The limited storage capacity imposing limitations

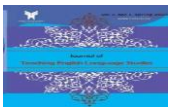
4. The high price of smarter devices discouraging a number of language learners from obtaining them

5. The complexity of settings and work-flow of mobile phones being discouraging

6. The small size of screens and keyboards being a limitation for a group of learners

7. The high charges and the complexity involved with mobile Internet limiting its widespread use by the learners

The obtained results of this research are in line with the results of Gilgen (2005), Ally, Schafer, Cheung, McGreal, and Tin (2007), Başoğlu and Akdemir (2010), Baleghizadeh and Oladrostam (2010), Nah (2011), AzarandNasiri (2014), and Jaradat (2014), who investigated the EFL (English as a Foreign Language)



students' attitudes towards the adoption of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and reached positive results. These researchers have administrated their studies in the field of mobile learning and the result of their studies showed that mobile learning can help the learners to improve their abilities.

The results of the study further confirmed Sharples (2005) who had posited that mobile phones enable knowledge building. according to Clifton (2006) for classroom interaction to be facilitative it must break from the traditional pattern of teachers having the power over discussions and offer language learners greater participation rights which give them the potential to take more initiative and hence responsibility for learning. Technology in education opens up a world of possibilities that are both boundless and cross-border. As a result, teachers are looking for methods to incorporate technology into their classrooms in order to provide their students with improved learning possibilities (Koehler, Mishra, Hershey, & Peruski, 2004). Technology-enhanced learning spaces can provide students with more opportunities to study (Means, 1994). Language teachers, in particular, have been increasingly using technology into their classes since new technologies provide them with unique options (Seljan, Banek, et. Al., 2006). Teachers' goals in using these technologies are to provide rich learning experiences for students and to create a more engaging and stimulating classroom environment. During the class activities, practically all of the students were engaged, working in groups, supporting one other, and interacting with the researcher, according to the findings of this study. This active classroom atmosphere, sometimes, extends outside of the classroom, giving students the possibility for synchronous contact with the teacher.

The findings are consistent with Ruddick's study (2012), who found that students in game-based classes improved their grades when compared to students in traditional classrooms. He demonstrated that not only was the average student score higher in the treatment group, but so was the percentage of students scoring at or above a C on the exam. The results about the effectiveness of Kahoot GBL platform are partially in congruent with the findings of the prior research. Reinders and Wattana (2015) examined the effect of a digital game used in L2 education, namely, *MMORPG*, on interaction of 30 Thai learners of English. They concluded that the online gameplay, as compared with traditional instruction in the class, resulted in a larger increase in English interaction. Grimshaw and Cardoso (2018) also reported that playing games such as the *Spaceteam ESL* game improved Canadian ESL learners' willingness to communicate.

Additionally, playing Kahoot GBL platform made the participants in the experimental group to repeat the English grammar for times. Thus, the other justification for the effectiveness of the game in grammar improvement and retention was a meaningful repetition feature demonstrated in the gameplay. As Turgut and Irgin, (2009) maintain, the natural repetition in learning games permits language learners to be persistently exposed to the target language, providing more opportunities for language acquisition to occur. The first phase of the game provided a great amount of aural input for the participants. The players could press one button and listen to the grammar and press another button and imitate the target form several times. As some learners contended, the input produced by the application was heavily accented native-like, which helped them improve their grammar.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper was generally an attempt to assess the effectiveness of using mobile phones for increasing the speaking ability of a group of Iranian EFL students. The first part of the article dealt with reviewing the related literature on using technology and mobile phones in the classroom. The second part was an attempt to elaborate on the experiment and the results. It was finally concluded that due to the significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups, the treatment had been a successful one in fostering the speaking of the students. Generally speaking, this study has a number of implications for both practitioners and applied language teacher. First, this study showed that mobile phones can play a crucial part in improving the speaking quality of the students. Another aspect worth mentioning is that this study was an attempt to help practitioners, especially English teachers in developing countries who do not have enough opportunity to use sophisticated technologies in their classes. Another point to be considered is that this study was an effort to help those communicative-approach-oriented teachers who, more often than not, face the problem of dealing with fluent but inaccurate students. Finally, this technique could be used by teachers in large classes, where students do not get enough chance to speak, to record their voices on their mobile phones and hand in the devices to their teachers. This way, teachers would be able to give feedback to their students and comment on their speaking problems outside or inside the classroom.

The results of this study have implications for educators, students, test producers, and content creators. The findings obtained in this study may lead to a number of implications. First and foremost, the findings consolidate the role of technological aids as an effective tool in the language teaching and learning process in general, and in the EFL teaching and learning process in particular. Thus, it is hoped that the study encourages the EFL teachers to host technological aids in the classroom environments. Second, the current study is another step taken towards the optimal use of technological aids in the classroom and may motivate the EFL teachers to exploit technological aids efficiently in the classroom environments or out of the class. Third, the most common types of technological aids have been introduced via the present study as mobile phone. Therefore, the EFL managers are recommended to create a situation to use mobile phone as mobile assisted learning to use in EFL institutes, schools, or any other educational places.

The present study showed the crucial role of mobile assisted learning in teaching and learning language. So, the results of this study are believed to be applicable to the EFL teachers and practitioners, the EFL managers, the EFL researchers, the textbook writers, the syllabus designers, and the courseware designers.

Future research may want to include multiple institutions and examine differences based on region and available resources. Additional research could also be done to include graduate students and compare the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate students. It is recommended that the future studies use a large enough sample size to determine the attitude of students towards technology and learning. Future investigations into smart phones as a language-learning tool should examine learner interaction – whether that interaction is learner-learner or learner-Smartphone. In order to take advantage of the affordances of the technology, or at the very least to examine whether the Smartphone can offer the in-context interaction and learning, future studies need to focus more on the communication and interaction made possible through Smartphone. This need for a focus on communication is reiterated by the fact that it has been noted that today's learners are more oriented toward social activity and learning (Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005), as well as the fact that these digital devices, in fact, allow for instant communication from even great distances.

According to limitations and delimitations, some new ideas can be suggested for future researches. Based on the limitations of the study, it is recommended that the sizes of both samples of teachers be enlarged in order to allow the future researchers to offer more insightful generalizations of the obtained findings. Future

researchers are also recommended to conduct the study while observing more classroom sessions in each of the contexts in question in order to produce more generalizable results. Additionally, conducting the current study in different parts of Iran may contribute to this category.

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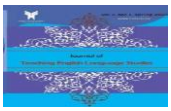

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