

## **A Review Article on How to Increase the New Vocabulary Bank of Iraqi Secondary School Students Using Mobiles Portable Dictionaries: A Pilot Study**

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### **Abstract:**

Widespread use of mobile and wireless devices in education has led to revolutionary changes in the way teachers teach and learners learn. Mobile phones are viewed as potentially useful tools for learning because of their widespread use. However, students' personal use of mobile phones and their apps for learning benefit is still open to research. The impact of using mobile dictionaries on language learning has therefore been investigated in this study. Thirty-four lower-intermediate language learners participated in a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental study. Based on their choice of working with a mobile or printed dictionary for their language course, they were divided into two groups of 17 in each group. During the course, an experimental group used a dictionary that they had installed on their cell phones to conduct all of their activities. In the meantime, the control group used a print version of the same dictionary. A teacher-made achievement test was used as the pre- and post-test. The results demonstrated that, when controlling for the ability to communicate at a low level, the exploratory group performed better than the control group in the posttest. The results of this study reinforce the crucial role played by mobile phones in enabling teaching to be delivered anywhere at any time.

**Keywords:** (Vocabulary, Iraqi Secondary School Students, and Mobiles Portable Dictionaries).

### **Introduction:**

Ibrahim and Maniam (2020) and Al-Abdali and Maniam (2021) argue, because of the importance of the English language in people's lives these days and because it is a global language, it has become necessary to learn the English language to communicate with the outside world. Thus, the researchers stressed the importance of supporting English language teaching curricula in order to enable language learners to learn the rules of the English language and apply them correctly, as well as to enable them to memorize new meanings and thus enable the learners to speak the English language fluently (Maniam & Al-Abdali, 2021, Elttyef, 2021).

In language education and teaching, the use of technology has become an essential part. Most language classes use some kind of technology. Both the aid and improvement of language learning were made possible by technology. Due to an unprecedented opportunity generated by information and communication technology, the learning and teaching environment in the 20th century is undergoing a rapid change (Al-Fahadawi and Al-Abdali, 2024 a).

The rapid evolution of mobile devices is opening up a whole world of new learning experiences with technology, after half a century in which computers have been integrated into education. Researchers, Abbas & Elttayef (2019), Al-Abdali, & Al-Temimi (2018), Al-Dulaimi & Al-Abdali (2021), Julaid & Al-Abdali (2020), Julaid & Al-Abdali, (2021), and Julaid & Al-Abdali

(2022), stressed on the role of technology played in developing learning English as a foreign language. Learning English in an Arabic environment needs double efforts from both learners and teachers respectively.

These efforts will not necessary succeed without an effective tools to support these efforts. That why the mentioned researchers tended to use different types of technology to enhance, supports, and helps learning.

KukulkaHulme & Shield (2008, cited in Rahimi and Mirib 2014) argued that mobile learning is the use of mobile devices for training that can be done using your phone or tablet. It merely means to learn wherever and whenever you want. While at the beginning, mobile learning focused on the Mobile learning has been characterized by the role of mobile technologies and devices in education over recent years The mobility of the user and informal learning which takes place in a classroom (Sharples, 2006). Mobiles supported by portable devices, such as media player, tablet, and mobile dictionaries. When it comes to portable technology, the most frequently used devices in education are cell phones (Al-Fahadawi and Al-Abdali, 2023).

It is inferred that technology helps learners of languages learn the language that allows them to gather using interaction with natives; we have real experiences with variety of programs and websites. Information and communication technologies are a powerful tool that brings together information from various sources.

### **Technology-in-Learning**

Al-Abdali and Alzayadi, (2020), discussed that this is the period for using technology in education. Technology should be used and applied in the

educational system of Iraq. Technology has reached advanced stages, which enable schools and universities to benefit from different types of technologies and employ them in order to support education.

In the same context, researchers, Al-Abdali (2016 a), Bataineh and Al-Abdali (2015), and Elttayef (2016) confirmed that the results of their research concluded that the use of technology in teaching the English language is very important and beneficial for teaching the English language. The use of technologies in education has supported and strengthened EFL learners' paralinguistic competence, communicative competence, English language learning, and linguistic competence as well.

Similarly, Habeeb and Al-Abdali (2020), Al-Abdali (2016 b) stressed the importance of adopting the use of technology in teaching the English language as it has a main role in supporting the teaching of the English language through the use of new programs to develop English language skills.

### **Mobile Phone Learning**

The world in which we lived is changing with the rapid development of communication technology. That is also computers, the Internet, and a whole range of electronics like such as radio, televisions, projectors, mobiles, and other devices that are used in educational field. Almost every school and college in the world is now use the information and communication technologies to deliver and acquire education (Al-Abdali, 2024 b).

This has transformed the learning and teaching environment with astonishing effect. The advent of communications and information technology has

brought unprecedented progress. New horizons of the study world and educational experience have been created by rapid developments in technology and use of cell phones. This led to the creation of new opportunities for integration Modern technology has been converted into teaching.

With this type of device, information between teachers and learners can now be transferred without difficulties to and from mobile phones. Smartphones are also useful for professional purposes and they can be used to make learning experiences more stimulating, exciting, or different from usual ones (Cui & Bull 2005, cited in Suwanarathip & Orawiwatnakul 2015).

### **Mobile Dictionary**

Mobile dictionaries are all types of applications that you can have in your phone. Now there are a number of mobile dictionary applications, which are widely available and used on mobile phones. In order to be able to pronounce new vocabulary correctly, the students may download a number of kinds of dictionary onto their mobile phones through sound functions. There are different types and versions of mobile dictionaries, for example “Oxford dictionary, Merriam Webster. Cambridge Dictionary and various bicultural dictionaries”. In the course of their learning, mobile dictionary applications are an excellent facilitator and convenient tool for language learners.

Yakin (2017) claims the use of a Mobile dictionary for vocabulary learning is saving time and energy. Learning English learners may be able to download from time to time different kinds of multilingual and bilingual dictionaries

available to the public, on the Internet, in print or by phone their mobile phones and use them when they need.

Nesi and Haill (2002) argued the dictionary is a selection of words that are arranged in alphabetical order by their definition, use, etymology, phonetics, pronunciation, and translation. Additionally, "Using a dictionary while reading is an exceptionally private matter, usually occurring when the need arises and often behind closed doors" (p.2). In the same vein, Aslan (2016) stated, mobile dictionaries, which allow us to read quickly all words we desire with only a few touches, have replaced paper dictionaries. In today's world of Second Language and Foreign Language learners, the use of Mobile dictionaries is becoming more widespread.

### **Problem Statement**

It is very hard and challenging to learn the language of England as both a Foreign or Second Language. One of the biggest learning challenges for learners who are learning to speak another language is vocabulary. The vocabulary is the building block of any language; it leads to incomplete learning when you do not have good vocabulary. Knowledge of vocabulary is much more than knowledge of the meaning of a word, it includes its pronunciation and usage in other contexts that can frequently be challenging for foreign language learners. Therefore, it is quite a problem for those who do not speak English to get all their vocabulary from the natives. In or out of classroom, most foreign language students who are from lower and higher learning levels have difficulties due to a lack of vocabulary.

Printed–paper dictionary is not always portable and available for students to deal with the vocabularies whenever they want. The current study suggests using dictionaries installed on smart phones, which are accessible, readily available, and portable so that we can learn vocabulary both inside and outside of the classroom saving us time and energy.

For English language learners, the use of a mobile dictionary became an indispensable part of our vocabulary learning. From the researcher's experience as a teacher of English, the researcher receives positive attitudes and views that encourage using mobile dictionaries to develop their vocabulary learning. That is why the researcher focused on this device so find out how other students perceive the mobile dictionary as a tool for vocabulary building, growth, and learning. Additionally, Kukulska–Hulme (2009) also mentions that the widespread use of smartphones and other mobile devices, which can be used for education in a variety of contexts, such as language training, has fundamentally changed how learning takes place. This somewhat portable, easily accessible device can offer additional opportunities to improve students' vocabulary retention and achievements as well as support the different needs of a younger digital generation.

### **Questions of the Study**

Are there any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups due to method of learning (Mobile Dictionaries vs. Printed–Paper Dictionaries)?

## Literature Review

No one disputes the fact that the entire world is becoming mobile. In the past, people used mobile devices mainly for social communication (phone, SMS, email) and relaxation (camera, movies, music, games) (Trinder, 2005, Guo, 2013). A radical change has taken place in the education sector since the end of the twentieth century, while at the same time technological advances have occurred in business and trade. Life styles such as communication and education have also been profoundly altered by the common use of mobile phones and more devices that are portable.

Bataineh and Al-Abdali (2015) emphasized on the role of technology on developing and supporting EFL learners' socio-cultural competence.

Başoğlu and Akdemir (2010) revealed that smartphones provided remarkable advantages in the learning process by providing opportunities for learning to take place outside school walls at all times.

Sedighi and Soyoo (2013) to discover how mobile applications can be used in training new Iranian EFL speakers, research has been carried out on smartphone apps as an important tool to learn a new language. The results of this study showed that mobile applications, both in terms of language subskills namely grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation as well as linguistic skills such as Listening, Reading, Writing were strongly influenced by learning a new language.

Yakin (2017) has carried out a study about the use of Mobile Dictionaries. The study showed a clear link between electronic dictionaries. All students confirm their preference for this new tool in terms of usage and



pronunciation for helping them to speak better, in particular these kinds of dictionaries mobile phones. The study has shown that electronic dictionaries are efficient. It contributes to the improvement of the pronunciation of the acquired language by the learners.

Rahimia and Miri (2014) conducted an evaluation of the effect of using mobile dictionaries to improve language learning as opposed to reading a printed dictionary. The study, which was conducted in an experimental manner, showed that the learners of English language learning who use an electronic dictionary to improve their ability to speak English better than those who are familiar with print dictionaries. Through Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applied to the experimental group, it was concluded that students are very interested in the use of dictionaries because they make it easier for language learners to learn words, and using mobile dictionaries is time efficient.

Kim (2011) found out that the two experimental groups have significantly improved their knowledge of spoken languages when compared with the control group, which is in support of the possible benefits of learning these languages via a cell phone. In addition, the researcher found that among the three groups, the group sending and receiving SMS text messages had the greatest improvement in vocabulary comprehension. According to the researcher, the effect of SMS instruction on vocabulary learning in the target language was very positive.

Similarly, Anongchan and Boonmoh (2015) have been investigating the effectiveness of using translation applications on smart phones. The practice

of using application dictionaries on smartphones has been found to play an important role in providing participants with the assistance they need for their tasks. Second summaries, which allowed students to take part in the application of dictionaries, were far superior to their initial summaries without it.

Motallebzadeh and Ganjali (2011) looked at the effect of SMSs on linguistic retention, as well as literacy comprehension ability. The researchers have found that for vocabulary retention and reading comprehension, the experimental group performs significantly better than the control group.

Aslan (2016) tended to examined the usability of mobile dictionaries for teaching vocabulary was examined. A survey was carried out to assess student attitudes and the number of times these dictionaries had been applied. The results showed that, in order to acquire a language, most students reported using portable dictionaries.

## **Method**

### **Participant**

Thirty-six intermediate learners participated in a pretest-posttest experimental study. They were divided equally into two groups, the experimental group (n=18), who will lean vocabulary using mobile dictionary and control group (n=18), who will learn vocabulary using printed-paper dictionary.

### **Instrument**

In this study, two tools have been applied, a language achievement test and the Longman mobile and Paperback Dictionary.

## The Language Test

The language test consisted of five parts, including listening, vocabulary, 20 to 30 words, grammar, 30 to 30 words. Reading the 10 comprehension tasks and writing. Prior to the study and at the end of the study, the test was administered twice. Out of 100, the test was scored. All parts except the writing part had a multiple-choice format, and thus were scored objectively (1 for correct and 0 for wrong answers). Writing part included the writing of a short paragraph, which was scored using a weighted rubric (Sokolik, 2003). The teacher assessed each of those paragraphs two times. The first part of the test is estimated to be .82, while the intra-rater reliability for the writing portion was .91.

## Results

The average score of the two test groups in both pre and posttests is summarized in Table 2. After the experiment value of (85.45), compared to the control group's value of (61.29), according to Table 2, a higher mean score was obtained for the experimental group. In order to test whether this difference was statistically significant, a one-way between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. Participants' scores on pre-test were used as the covariate in this analysis.

Table 1. Both Groups' Pre-Tests Mean Scores

G.	N.	Mean	SD
Con.	18	44.16	3.276
Exp.	18	45.64	3.882

Table 2. Both Groups' Post-Tests Mean Scores

G.	N.	Mean	SD
Con.	18	61.29	6.565
Exp.	18	85.45	9.760

After applying the new method of teaching that is teaching vocabulary using a mobile phone dictionary, Table 2 shows the results for both experimental and control groups. The results showed that there was progress in the experimental group's results against those of the control group. The experimental group students got higher scores on the posttest. This indicates that using this new learning method has shown to be efficient and positive to learn English vocabulary.

Table 3. A Comparison of Both Groups' Pre-Post-Tests Increase

G.	N.	Mean		Increase
		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Con.	18	44.16	61.29	17.13
Exp.	18	45.64	85.45	39.81

Table 3 shows a comparison of the results before and after the experiment and shows the progress achieved by the students of the experimental group.

Table 4. The Experimental Group Students Results on the pre-post Tests

G.	N.	Mean		Increase
		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
Exp.	18	45.64	85.45	39.81

Table 4 shows a comparison of the results of the experimental group and the progress achieved by students after using the new method of teaching.

The grades clearly showed the difference between the students' level before and after the experiment.

The percentage of progress between the grades before and after the experiment reached 39.81%, which is considered an excellent percentage and a noticeable development in the students' level; this means that there is a possibility to develop the students' English vocabulary by using dictionaries carried on mobile phones.

The following chart shows the comparison between the results of both groups in the pre- and post-test

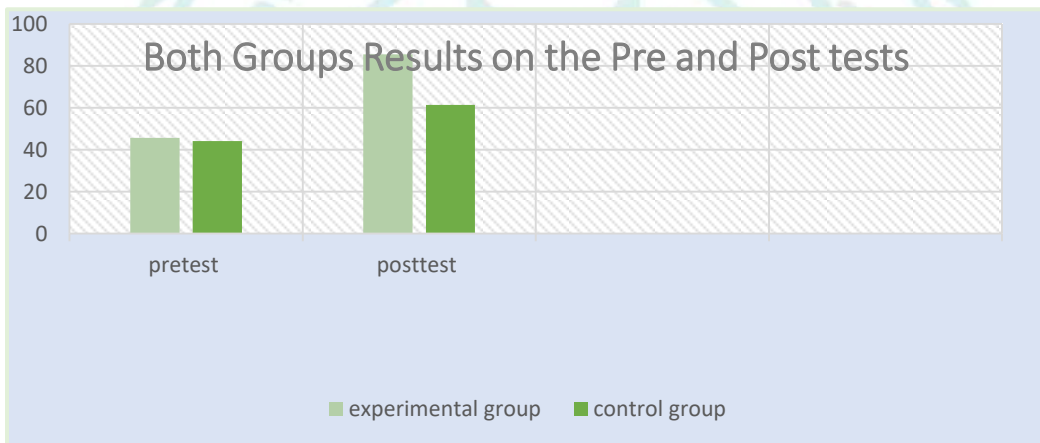


Chart 1: Both Groups Results on the Pre and Posttests.

## Conclusion

Teaching is not an easy task (Al-Fahadawi and Al-Abdali, 2024 a). Accordingly, teachers of English should look deeply for suitable methods and approaches of teaching English. As English is being taught in Arabic settings, thus, it is very difficult for both teachers and learners to teach/learn/study without the aid of technology. Technology has paved the way to the

learners to learn easily and to tackle any problems that hinders or stand against learning. Technology has made learning easier and changed the way of learning and teaching. Mobiles improved to be effective and supportive to learn English vocabulary. Mobiles have different features, which enable learners to study and learn English faster and easier.

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