Musik in bayern
ISSN: 0937-583x Volume 90, Issue 2 (Feb -2025)
https://musikinbayern.com **DOI https://doi.org/10.15463/gfbm-mib-2025-*377***

Employing Language Learning Apps to Scaffold Communicative English Classes of Tertiary-level Learners – An Experimental Study

Reshma Evangelin K., Research scholar, Department of English, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University, Serkaddu, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail ID angelineva896@gmail.com.

Dr. K. A. Maria Arokiaraj, Head, PG Department of English, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University, Serkaddu, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. Mail ID mariashc4@yahoo.com.

To Cite this Article

[1]Reshma Evangelin K., [2]Dr. K. A. Maria Arokiaraj**," Employing Language Learning Apps to Scaffold Communicative English Classes of Tertiary-level Learners – An Experimental Study"** ***Musik In Bayern, Vol. 90, Issue 2, Feb 2025, pp01-12***

Article Info

Received: 19-12-2024 Revised: 20-01-2025 Accepted: 04-02-2025 Published: 14-02-2025

ABSTRACT

Learning a language is an invaluable skill, and technology plays a vital role in improving the language-learning process. In the twenty-first century, numerous language learning applications (Apps) are designed to enhance English language skills. Recently, language learning apps have been integrated with AI, allowing learners to learn at their own pace. Numerous studies were conducted in India using language learning apps to improve English listening skills, with abundant literature available on language learning apps in various countries. But its practical implementation in communicative English classes with teachers

remains unexplored for the other three language skills. This study aims to scaffold English Communicative classes through Language learning applications. Scaffolding is a designed structure that provides safe access and support for various activities, including language learning. This research intends to assist language learners in identifying their English language proficiency level and to motivate self-paced lifelong learning. This study compiled 20 language learning apps suitable for beginner tertiary-level learners and categorized them based on their accents. For this experimental study, 25 ESL learners were selected from Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, as a target population. Pretest and posttest were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of scaffolding. This supportive method helps the learners to become personalized language learners for now and all through their lives. Besides, this would be an enjoyable way for the learners to enhance their English language skills.

Keywords: Technology, Language learning apps, Scaffolding, Communicative English, Self-paced learning.

Introduction

Today, learning English has become more important. Many institutions have introduced Communicative English classes to enhance learners' proficiency and well-being. In this technology-driven world, language learning has become more accessible and convenient for language learners. There have been numerous mobile applications (apps) and artificial intelligence (AI) tools introduced in the field of language learning. The availability of online learning options led the learners to choose that method. Also, the learners want a comfortable method apart from the traditional practices of language learning. With this intention, the current study aims to scaffold Communicative English classes by utilizing language learning apps with various accents, such as Indian, British, and American. Since everyone uses their technology

devices makes it convenient for learners to access language learning apps. This method can also help ESL learners to enhance their language proficiency.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To scaffold English language learning along with Communicative English classes while allowing learners to learn according to their interests
- To provide a language learning experience with technology that could reinforce and extend language learning in Communicative English class
- To help the learners identify their English language proficiency level and motivate self-paced life-long learning.

Influence of Technology-based Approaches

Levy defined the CALL as "the search for and study of application of the computer in language teaching and learning". "Computer-assisted language Learning (CALL) is now considered as a relatively new and rapidly evolving academic field that explores the role of information and communication technology in language learning and teaching." (Ou-sekou, 2023) "CALL is a means of the learning process whereby the learner employs a computer to prepare and enhance their language learning abilities." (Hareesh Buddha, 2024)

"The use of technology in language learning supports a blended approach, combining face-to-face instruction with online resources to create a more flexible and comprehensive learning environment." (Whittaker) "TALL is gaining ground as it is perceived that the approach of various technology-assisted language learning such as mobile devices or computers has opened the opportunity for efficient language learning." (Hareesh Buddha, 2024) "Mobile devices provide language learners with the opportunity to practice language

skills anytime and anywhere, making learning more flexible and accessible" (Ally, Mobile Learning: Transforming the Delivery of Education and Training, 2010). An individual can learn a language according to their proficiency level and experience personalized learning.

Technology-enhanced approaches such as CALL, MALL, and TALL platforms include a wide variety of information and communication technologies along with approaches for teaching and learning foreign languages. It enables the learners to access more information quickly and easily. Thus, Technology-meditated language learning is more personalized, engaging, portable, flexible, self-regulated, self-assessment, collaborative, interactive, real-life activities, and authentic resources which are the core aspects emphasized in the current study Employing Language Learning Applications to scaffold Communicative English Classes of Tertiary-level.

Benefits of Language Learning Applications (Apps)

Language learning apps are convenient and easily accessible, where a learner could access anytime anywhere at their speed. Since Apps work on flexible devices virtual learning could be a benefit for language learners. There are more apps in free versions and trials, which could be helpful for the learner's weak financial background. Apps are interactive and make personalized learning with multimedia resources; audio, video and exercises. Also, they track the process of the language learner and provide feedback like a real communicative trainer. Apps also have the feature of practice and review. Learners get more exposure to the native speaker's culture and context, which helps the learner to understand the cultural setting. In advance, now language learning apps are integrated with AI Tools to assess language skills, converse like humans and give feedback on what needs to be improved to become a master in the target language.

Previous Research in Related-Area

The arrival of language learning and teaching applications (Apps) has made language learners enhance their language skills and overcome their language barriers. There are innovative studies done abroad and in India in the area of technology-assisted language teaching and learning.

"EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES Going to the MALL: Mobile Assisted Language Learning in Language Learning and Technology" by George M. Chinnery (2006) from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, United States. The findings of the study revealed that language learning can happen through mobile from anywhere and anytime at their own pace.

"The Next Generation of Language Labs: Can Mobiles Help? A Case Study by the researchers Hind M. AI-Otaibi, Reem A. Alamer, and Hend S. AI-Khalifa (2016) from the College of Language and Translation at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The findings of the research revealed that the Mlab system had an excellent usability rate and could be used in the future.

"Smartphones and Language Learning" by Robert Godwin-Jones from Virginia Commonwealth University, United States (2017). The study had noticed the changes in learning, due to the arrival of the smartphone. Also, the innovations of language learning applications have overcome the language barriers of the learners. The study suggested that the experience of learning a language through a smartphone in a classroom could be effective in making the learners learn in their own way.

In India, researchers have created indigenous language learning applications (Apps) for native Indian learners. Few case studies have been done on language learning through mobile/computer applications in India; especially, at the tertiary level. "Mobile Technology as a Dependable Alternative to Language Labs and to Improve Listening Skill" by the researchers

Antony Raj and Prajeesh Tomy from the Department of English, School of Social Science and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India. The study preferred 15 M-learning applications for listening skills. The evaluation and findings of the study revealed how mobile technology could help language learners enhance language skills.

Justification of the study

Literature is abundant on language learning apps in various countries, it's practical implementation to scaffold communicative English classes with teachers remains unexplored. The findings of the related literature stated that language learning and teaching applications were effective. While there is a few research in India that focuses on creating and testing language learning applications. The scarcity of studies on applications in the Indian context stresses the gap in research that this study seeks to fill. The study categorizes and evaluates language learning applications into subcategories; Indian, British, and American accents, which help the learners to enhance their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This research intends to provide helpful insights that can inform educators, policymakers, teachers, students, and parents.

Language Learning Applications Used in the Study

The researcher downloaded 20 language learning apps and tested them.

S. No	App Names	Skills	Links
1	Busuu	All Skills	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.busuu.android.enc&pcampaignid=web_share
2	Podcasts (British Council)	Listening Skill	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hk.hkbc.epodcast&pcampaignid=web_share
3	Listening, Master	Listening skill	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.masterkeygames.listeningmaster&pcampaignid=web_share

4	Tell	Reading and speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tellapp&pcampaignid=web_share
6	English Conversation	Speaking Skill	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.talkenglish.conversation&pcampaignid=web_share
7	Let's Learn English	All Skills	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.yobimi.voaletlearnenglish.englishgrammar.englishspeak&pcampaignid=web_share
8	Learn English Speaking (Offline)	Speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.learnenglishspeaking.speak.english.fluently.grammar.tenses&pcampaignid=web_share
9	speakX: Learn to Speak English	Speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=yellowclass.kids.live&pcampaignid=web_share
10	Sivi AI Learn English	Speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.practice.ninja_study&pcampaignid=web_share
11	Memrise	Speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.memrise.android.memrisecompanion&pcampaignid=web_share
12	Correct Spelling-Spell Checker	Reading	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.english.spelling.correction.wordpronunciation&pcampaignid=web_share
13	Hello English: Learn English	All skills	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.CultureAlley.japanese.english&pcampaignid=web_share 14
14	British Council EglishScore	All Skills (Test)	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.englishscore&pcampaignid=web_share
15	English skills-Practice and Play	Reading and writing	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edujoy.skills&pcampaignid=web_share
16	Learn English Sentence Master	Writing	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mojoegames.sentencemaster&pcampaignid=web_share
17	Learn English Sayings Master	Reading	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.masterkeygames.sayingsmaster&pcampaignid=web_share
18	Read Along by Google	Reading	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.seekh&pcampaignid=web_share
19	FluentPal: Practice Speaking	Speaking	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fluentai&pcampaignid=web_share
20	American English Speaking	All skills	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.elearning.englishspeaking&pcampaignid=web_share

Methodology of the Study

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design to test the cause and effect of the study. The researcher selected 25 ESL learners as a mixed group; below-average, average, and advanced learners from the Department of English, Shift II, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur. A pretest was administered using four language learning apps; Listening Master, Sentence Master, Read Along by Google and English Conversation apps. The language learning apps were introduced and demonstrated to the target population. The app's names with links are embedded in a Word document and sent to the target population. The intervention classes were planned for fifteen hours, target population were asked to access the apps for one hour per day. The researcher monitored and tracked the learners learning progress.

The target population were asked to practice at least two English language skills, so the one hour was divided into two to practice two skills of English. The learners must take a screenshot of the score as soon as they complete any task, activity, goal and lesson. Screenshots have to be sent to the researcher, which could help the researcher track the learner's progress. A posttest was administered after completing the intervention classes. The scores of both the pretest and posttest were noted using an MS Excel sheet. The data was analyzed and interpretation was given by the researcher. The researcher could find enthusiasm among the target population when the time comes to use their mobile phones to learn English language.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The scores of the pretest and Posttest were collected with the help of using MS Office by the researcher. The data of every individual would be analysed and evaluate the level of target learners before and after to show the effectiveness of the treatment.

Target Population	
Boys	**Girls**
13	12

Gender difference in the target population

The above table shows the gender differences of the target population. In the target population, both boys and girls are nearly equal in strength.

Range	**Pretest Percentage**	**Posttest Percentage**
1-5	1	0
6-10	10	0
11-15	8	1
16-20	3	9
21-25	3	8
26-30	0	5
31-35	0	2

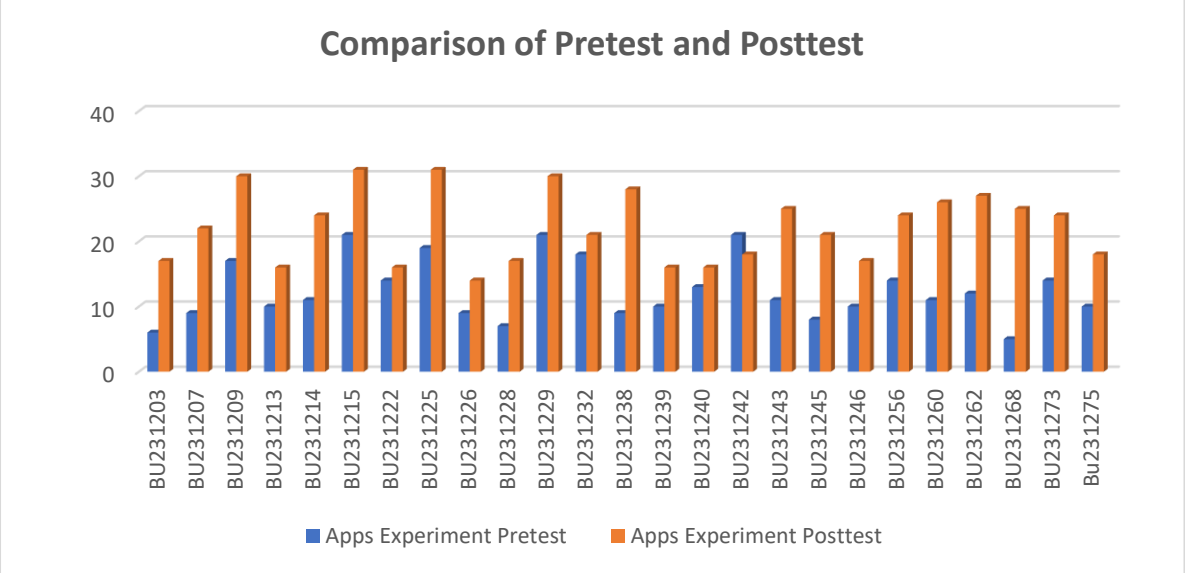
Range Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

The above table shows the comparison of both pretest and posttest scores of the target population. Here, the study shows improvement in the target population. One learner scored between 1-5 in the pretest; however, no learners scored marks between 26-30 and 31-35. There is an improvement that five learners among the target population scored marks in the posttest between the range of 26-30 and two learners scored marks between the range of 31-35.

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

The researcher analyzed the scores of each individual in the target population to assess their progression and improvement. Comparing the pretest and posttest, the posttest scores of the target population have increased.

Musik in bayern
ISSN: 0937-583x Volume 90, Issue 2 (Feb -2025)
https://musikinbayern.com **DOI https://doi.org/10.15463/gfbm-mib-2025-*377***



Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Finding of the Study

The current study Employing Language Learning Application to Scaffold Communicative English Classes of Tertiary-level Learners evidences that language learning apps could enhance English language proficiency. The scores from the pretest and the posttest were compared and the improvement of the target population was shown and explained. The findings from the class observation revealed that the target tried to imitate and adopt the native speaker's accent and speaking style. Also, the researcher observed that the target population learning English without any fear of making mistakes and public corrections. The researcher noticed that the real acquisition occurred during the intervention study.

The feedback from the target population was analyzed, which revealed that learners were choosing their favorite language learning apps from the list given to them and accessing the apps very interestingly. This activity of choosing and learning English language at their own speed proves that Employing Language Learning Apps to Scaffold Communicative English Classes could enhance individualized learning.

Recommendation to Teachers

A teacher has to put some effort into finding more encouraging, comfortable and friendly technology aids for the learners to learn the target language. The teacher has to be trained with technologies to instruct and encourage the learners during the period of technology-based learning.

Recommendation to Learners

Learners need to follow instructions from teachers and take responsibility for learning a language, especially since most tertiary-level learners in India use mobile phones and computers. It would be great if these devices could be used for language learning.

Recommendation for the Future Research

1) The duration of intervention classes could be extended to 60 hours.
2) More language learning applications could be included and also AI tools
3) The target population for the future in the same line could be extended to 40.
4) Demographic details of the target population could be collected and analyzed to effective outcomes.

Conclusion

The experimental study aimed to assess the effectiveness of language learning apps in teaching English and their potential to complement Communicative English classes. The findings of the study have shown that Employing Language Learning Applications to Scaffold Communicative English Classes of Tertiary-level learners was beneficial for the learners to enhance their proficiency level in English language.

Acknowledgement

This project titled *Scaffolding Communicative English Classes with Language Learning Applications* was funded by Scared Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India.

References

Ally, M. (2010). *Mobile Learning: Transforming the Delivery of Education and Training.*

Hareesh Buddha, L. S. (2024). Technology-Assisted Language Learning Systems: A Systematic Literature Review. *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers*. https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/10438454.

Ou-sekou, D. T. (2023, 03 04). Computer-assisted Language learning (CALL) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). *American Journal of Innovative Research and Applied Sciences, 16*(3), 125-130. www.american-jiras.com

Whittaker, B. T. (n.d.). *Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation.*

Rashid, S, Walson, K, Cunningham, U. (2017). Task-based Language Teaching with Smartphones: A Case Study in Pakistan. *Teachers and Curriculum*, 17(2), 33-40. http://do.doi.org/10.15663/tandc.v17i2.167.

Richards, Jack C and Rodgers, Theodore S. (2014). APPROACHES AND METHODS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

George M. Chinnery. (2006). EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES Going to the MALL: Mobile Assisted Language Learning in Language Learning and Technology scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu.

Hind M. AI-Otaibi, Reem A. Alamer, and Hend S. AI-Khalifa (2016). The Next Generation of Language Labs: Can Mobiles Help? A Case Study. *Computers in Human Behavior, 56, 342-349*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.02.028.

Adrian Leis, Akihiko Tohei, Simon D. Cooke. (2015). Smartphone Assisted Language Learning and Autonomy. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT)*, 5(3), 1-14. DOI: 10.4018/IJCALLT.2015070105.