



## Tertiary Level Students' attitude towards the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

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**Abstract:** Through the emersion of technology in education nowadays mobiles and handheld devices are viewed as potentially significant aids to language learning. In this research, it has been assumed that the prospect of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) would enhance the process of learning and developing language skills. To explore the extent of acceptance of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) among university students of Bangladesh, a questionnaire was administered and selected students were interviewed. The results show a positive response towards the use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a convenient and practical way of assisting learners to enhance their learning. Students have shown both their enthusiasm and motivation to adapt their mobile devices for language learning.

**Keywords:** Attitude, language skills, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, mobile devices, perceptions.

**Introduction:** Language teaching and learning is one of the fields which have big changes as a result of rapid improvement in technology. During last few decades, mobile technology has created new opportunities to enhance the efficiency and quality of education in general, and language learning in particular. In recent years, research has created mobile technologies as an approach of language teaching known as Mobile Assisted Language Learning, usually shortened as MALL. Learners are trying to use their mobile devices for language learning in different ways.

According to Pachler, Bachmair and Cook [1] MALL deals with the use of mobile technology in language learning. Students do not always have to study a second language in a classroom. They may have the opportunity to learn using mobile devices when they desire and where they are as these devices have become integrated with daily lives through the process of domestication Ling and Donner [2]. In this way the use of mobile phone has been shifted from tools for communication to tools for entertainment and education. Learning through mobile phones outside the classroom has the advantage of better exploiting the learner's free time; even the students on the move can improve their learning skills Kulkulska-Hulme [3]. That means as a daily tool mobile device has a great potential to explore a new area of technology integrated language teaching and learning in explicit ways.

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Especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages Kukulska-Hulme [4]. According to Kumaravadivelu [5] the integration of language skills reflects our daily use of mobile technologies with various language skills. Besides, various activities related to language learning are supported by mobile devices Kukulska-Hulme and Jones [6]. Following the previous studies we can say that mobile-assisted language learning has gained a wide acceptance in different spheres of language teaching and learning.

As a developing country Bangladesh is also developing both in technology and in education. As a result, both of these sectors are getting merged with each other. This trend has also been observed in language teaching and learning as well. But it has been also observed that there is a shortage of research about MALL in Bangladesh. That is why a study about both teacher and students' attitude towards MALL has been conducted in Algeria by Gharieb [7] has been followed and applied in the context of Bangladesh. Following Gharieb's [7] model this study aims to find out the perception of students toward the effective use of mobile technology in language learning and students' attitude towards the integration of MALL for learning languages in the context of Bangladesh.

### **Research Design**

The methodology used for this study is descriptive. To collect data both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been applied. For quantitative data questionnaires consisting of both multiple choice and open ended questions were administered. Interviews were also conducted to find detail information for the purpose of the study.

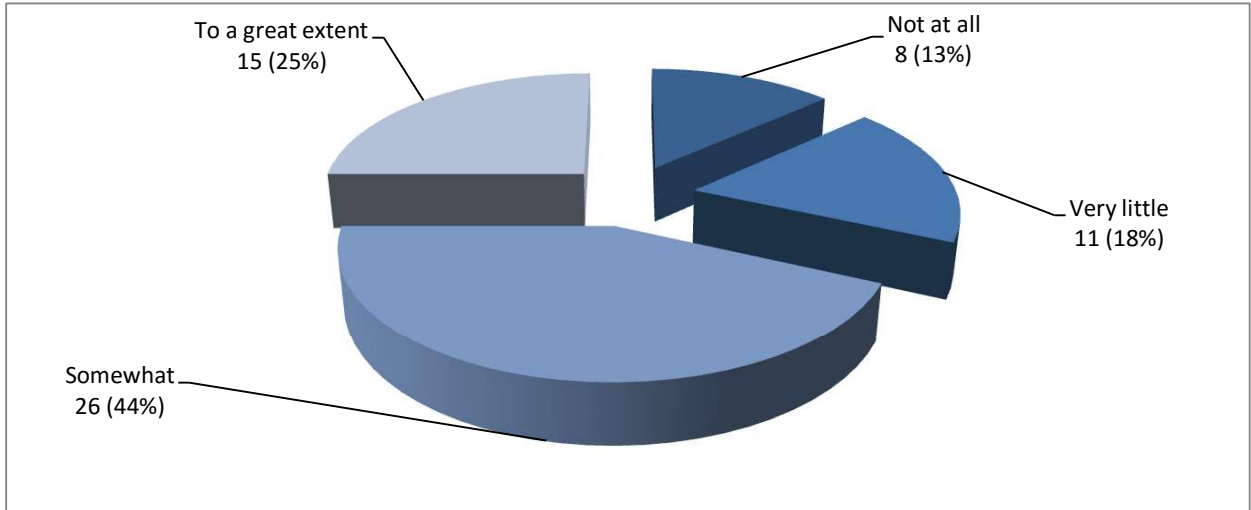
**Participants and data collection:** To collect the necessary data, questionnaires were designed for survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted. In this way, researchers have established the process of triangulation of data advocated by Cohen and Manion [8]. Participants' attitudes towards the use of mobile phones in language learning were explored via a questionnaire adapted and modified from the previous research by Gharieb [7]. For collecting primary data, 60 students have been chosen randomly from the department of English in three private universities. After completion of the questionnaire, ten participants were interviewed individually. Interviews were semi-structured and aimed to understand the motives and individual perspectives of the interviewees regarding their choice.

**Instruments:** As mentioned previously, two types of instruments were used to find out the answers. These include questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Questionnaires were administered to collect quantitative data. On the other hand to collect qualitative data ten participants were interviewed in semi-structured manner suggested by Nunan [9].

**Data analysis and Findings:** The collected data has been shown using pie graph to get an apparent distribution of the responses of the prior question and rest of the data was explained using tables. The major data of the graph and tables have been analyzed. Furthermore, key points from the interviews have been qualitatively analyzed.

**Results and Discussion:**

**Students’ awareness of MALL:** In this section students were asked about whether they are aware of the Mobile Assisted Language Learning or Not. Basic intention behind asking this question was to find out how far they know about this advanced process of language learning.



**Figure 1: Students’ awareness of MALL**

**Figure 1** above shows that when students were asked about how far they were aware of Mobile Assisted Language Learning 8 among 60 that means 13.3% of them answered that they do not have any idea about MALL. 11 (18%) of them have very little idea about it. 26 (44%) know somewhat about this and finally 15 (25%) of them said they know a great extent about this kind of language learning.

**Students use of mobile phones for educational purposes:** Here, participants were asked to respond to a five-point Likert-scale (Always-Frequently-Sometime-Seldom-Never) type questions. This section aims **Table 1: Students’ Use of Mobile Phones for Educational Purposes.**

Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>Statement 1: I use mobile phone to access the internet</b>				
15 (25%)	19 (31.6%)	12 (20%)	8 (13.3%)	6 (10%)
<b>Statement 2: I use mobile phone to take notes</b>				
7(11.6%)	16 (26.6%)	25 (41.6%)	3(5%)	9(15%)
<b>Statement 3: I use mobile phone to read (PDF, notes...)</b>				
13(21.6%)	10(16.6%)	15(25%)	14(23.3%)	8(13.3%)
<b>Statement 4: I use mobile phone to translate words</b>				
25(41.6%)	16(26.6%)	9(15%)	9(15%)	1(1.6%)

<b>Statement 5: I use mobile phone for recording purposes</b>				
16(26.6%)	11(18.3%)	13(21.6%)	9(15%)	11(18.3%)
<b>Statement 6: I use mobile phone for educational purposes</b>				
17(28.3%)	12(20%)	29(48.3%)	2(3.3%)	0(0%)

According to **table 1**, it is clear that almost the majority of responses illustrate participants use mobile devices for educational purposes. As indicated in the Statement 1, responses showed a high percentage; about eighty percent of informants are accessing the internet from their mobile phones. Yet, a significant number said they never access the internet from their mobile phones. As the answers of Statement 2 reveals, (15%) of the respondents mentioned that they have never taken any notes on their mobile phone. Conversely, a considerable amount of responses indicate the use of mobile phone as a tool in which students write their notes.

On the other hand, it can be seen from the table, as the responses to the Statement 3 shown, there is 13.3% of responses indicating that they never read any notes or book from mobile devices. The results of the Statement 4, illustrate the high percentage of participants who indicate that they always translate words using their mobile phones. Responses to Statement 5 showed that most surveyed students (82%) indicated their usage of mobile phones for recording objectives; still approximately twenty percent reported that they never used their mobile phone to record anything. Participants also were asked if they were using their mobile phones for other educational purposes. A number of students around fifty percent indicated that they are practicing educational activities on their mobile phones personally. However, a small proportion of informants said they rarely use mobile phone for learning purposes.

to investigate the most frequently used functions of mobile phones for educational purposes.

**Students' attitude toward MALL and language Skills.** In this subset, participants (students) were asked to specify their attitude towards the possibility of practicing language skills (listening, writing, speaking, reading, and vocabulary learning) using mobile computing devices such as mobile phones

**Table 2: Students' attitude toward MALL and language Skills.**

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<b>Statement 1: I think that mobile devices are good tool for listening activities</b>				
19(31.6%)	26(43.3%)	8(13.3%)	2(3.3%)	5(8.3%)
<b>Statement 2: I think that mobile devices are good tool for writing activities</b>				
11(18.3%)	13(21.6%)	20(33.3%)	9(15%)	7(11.6%)

<b>Statement 3: I think that mobile devices are good tool for speaking activities</b>				
22(36.3%)	15(25%)	12(20%)	5(8.3%)	6(10%)
<b>Statement 4: I think that mobile devices are good tool for reading activities</b>				
20(33.3%)	15(25%)	5(8.3%)	12(20%)	8(13.3%)
<b>Statement 5: I think that mobile devices are good tool for vocabulary activities</b>				
27(45%)	25(41.6%)	7(11.6%)	0(0%)	1(1.6%)

As exposed by the **table 2**, seventy four percent of the respondents believe that mobile devices can be exploited to practice listening activities. As far as the second item Statement 2 is concerned, there were about thirty three percent of the participants who indicate their neutral attitude, still a twenty six percentage of the participants who disagree with the idea that mobile devices are suitable for practicing a certain writing activities. By contrast, about twenty one percent, agreed to the notion. Those who strongly agree are around eighteen percent. With regard to Statement 3 more than half of the informants consider the mobile phone as a material for learning speaking activities. By contrast, about forty percent of the informants do not think that they can practice any speaking activities by using their mobile phones. Also, most of the students have shown their agreement with the possibility of providing some reading activities using mobile phones. Furthermore, there were a remarkable percentage; about fifty two of respondents confirm the idea that mobile phones can be used for learning vocabulary activities.

**Table 3: Students' attitude towards learning language through Mobile Devices.**

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
<b>Statement 1: I think I will learn more if I could use my mobile devices</b>				
15(25%)	17(28.3%)	15(25%)	6(10%)	7(11.6%)
<b>Statement 2: I would appreciate to send my classmates and teachers learning material to their mobile phone through internet, Bluetooth...)</b>				
26(43.3%)	18(30%)	9(15%)	3(5%)	4(6.6%)
<b>Statement 3: I think I will be motivated if I could use my mobile devices</b>				
13(21.6%)	16(26.6%)	20(33.3%)	6(10%)	5(8.3%)
<b>Statement 4: I think I will participate more if I could use mobile devices</b>				
9(15%)	11(18.3%)	22(36.6%)	12(20%)	6(10%)

<b>Statement 5: I think that mobile devices are good tools to keep in touch with my classmates and teachers outside classroom.</b>				
33(55%)	16(26.6%)	5(8.3%)	2(3.3%)	4(6.6%)

In the **table 3**, this set of items (Statement 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) aim to investigate students' perception on whether the use of mobile technology can promote their motivation to learn foreign language. For Statement 1, majority of participants, around fifty three percent, believe they will learn more if they could use mobile technologies. Participants (about 70%), also, express their appreciation to send and receive learning material from their teachers and classmates, using their mobile phones. Also, the findings to Statement 3, showed a high percentage (48%) of students who approve the use of mobile technology can augment their motivation, yet a significant number (20 students) indicated their neutral position about the matter. As far as Statement 4 is concerned, around thirty three percent of respondents expressed their willingness to participate more in classroom tasks if they were allowed to employ mobile devices. Also, as seen in the table from Statement 5, a large number of students (55%) agreed with the idea that mobile phones are a good tool to keep in touch with teachers, administration, as well as their classmates.

#### **Analysis and findings if qualitative data:**

In response to the interview questions, all of the participants named common brands of smart phones available in Bangladesh. They said that, besides communication mostly they use smart phones for taking pictures, using social media and internet, listening to music and watch videos. They also informed that sometimes they use mobile phones for learning purposes. They specified about using dictionary, checking spelling and pronunciation for learning purpose. Participants also mentioned about vocabulary learning, word translation and looking for information in internet through mobile phones. About the facility of using mobile phones they said, mobile phones are handy. That is why they can use it both inside and outside of classroom. On the other hand, about the difficulties they shed light on expanse of smart phones and internet cost, reading difficulty in phones and also lack of proper knowledge of using mobiles for learning purposes.

#### **Discussion and Recommendations:**

The main focus of this study was a starting attempt to find out the chances and opportunities of MALL for future prospects. Through quantitative and qualitative data this has been found out that all of them have mobile phones and they use it for different purposes. Some of them also use it for educational purpose as well. For learning language they also use it to develop different skills including, listening, speaking, word translation and developing vocabulary. From the data it has been observed that despite having difficulties and challenges students are highly eager to use mobile devices and they are solemnly interested to learn language and develop different language skills by using mobile devices. They also seemed very motivated towards MALL. According to the findings,

the recommendation section has been organized in several points. All the points have been discussed below;

- a. MALL contains a very good prospect in the field of language learning in Bangladesh. Everyday a large number of young adult learners spend a good duration of time using mobile phone. MALL can create process to make them engaged in language learning utilizing their free time.
- b. ESL learners' motivation can be enhanced through MALL. Nowadays almost everyone is interested in getting engaged with technological stuffs. That is why if language skills can be developed through mobile, definitely they will be motivated to learn language.
- c. ESL learners can learn and develop different skills like reading, listening, speaking through the use of MALL. From the perception of the participants this can be said that apart from the writing skill rest other skills can be developed through MALL.
- d. Learners can be made more engaged through the use of MALL inside the classroom and also outside the classroom. As most of the learners carry mobile phones with them, learning process can be enhanced from the classroom to outside the classroom.
- e. Most of the tertiary level learners use mobile phones for different language learning purposes. But this learning process is still at personal level and learners are practicing it in isolated manner. If MALL can be applied in institutionalized manner that can create better impact in language learning process.

**Conclusion:** Mobile devices are occupying every aspect of our lives, including education. We investigated participants' perception about the potential of MALL in learning language skills and tried to prove that its use will create a flexible setting for students to learn language. Findings of the study reveal that students had positive attitude towards Mobile Assisted Language Learning. They showed a general agreement on the potential of MALL as a promising approach to learn foreign languages. Listening, speaking and vocabulary were identified as the most appropriate skills that can be learned and developed through mobile devices such as mobile phones. Overall, it can be said that in Bangladesh technology is the most developing field and in every sector of education technology is becoming an amicable part. So, mobile devices can play a very vital role in many ways to make language learners involved with this emersion to develop different language skills.

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