Students' Perceptions towards English Learning Applications

Wa Thái Như Phương
Tay Do University

ABSTRACT	*Published Online: 09 August 2022
This study was conducted to find out students' perceptions towards English learning applications at Tay Do University. The questionnaire and interview were used as tools to obtain information from the participants in this study who were thirty students from many majors of Tay Do University. The survey used Google forms to get data and information on the Internet through questionnaires. Research resulted showed that students perceived the benefits of English learning apps. In addition, in the process of using the application to learn English, students also felt the positive aspects as well as the limitations of the application. And from the research results, there are also some ideas on how to search, choose as well as how to use the applications to learn English effectively, appropriately and optimally for students.	**Keywords:** students' perceptions, perceptions towards English learning applications, English learning applications, applications for English learning

I. INTRODUCTION

As you know, English is the most used language in the world and it is gradually becoming the second language of many countries. Therefore, a lot of good learning materials from major educational institutions and universities are written in English. More than half of the websites on the Internet are also written in English, such as global newspapers, tools and online services. Just knowing the language will give you access to this endless source of information. This is one of the biggest benefits that shows the importance of learning English. If you are a person who loves to explore the world around, learning English will give you many new things about the cultures of countries such as Britain, America, Australia developed with a great history plus a colourful culture, making English even more.

There are 4 main skills that need to be mastered when learning English, including: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, there are many ways to learn English for learners to choose from. Especially with the current development speed of 4.0 technology, there are many English learning applications born. This is a new solution for learning English both offline and online. However, students are also affected a lot in terms of positive and negative aspects when learning English through the application.

Corresponding Author: Wa Thái Như Phương

To choose a suitable English application is not easy because the application is attached to learners throughout the process of learning English. When choosing the right English learning application, students will have appropriate learning materials, improve vocabulary, and expand knowledge. In addition, students can study anytime, anywhere, technology skills are also improved. Then your brain will help you understand what you are reading correctly, both in terms of usage. Using words and the benefits that the application brings. Learning English with the application seems to be more convenient in terms of time, different from learning based on having to go to school to participate in classes and go to the library to find information and document. To better understand how to use it as well as its effects, we need to choose carefully as well as understand and choose the right English learning apps.

Recognizing the importance and what students feel about learning English by application, researchers have studied the topic "Students' perceptions towards English learning applications".

Research question

This study was conducted in order to answer the following question:

How do students perceive about the applications to learn English?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. What is English learning applications?

The world economy is entering the stage of the knowledge economy. Especially in the current 4.0 technology era, effectively improving the quality of

education and training will be a vital factor determining the existence and development of each country, company, and family and personal. Moreover, learning is not only confined to high school and university, but also lifelong learning. To meet the increasing demand for English learning of a large number of people. At the same time, based on the strong development of mobile devices, especially mobile phones (mobile), both in quantity and quality. Based on these two main reasons, the English learning application was formed. The main goal of the system is to support users in the best way in the process of learning English (especially for students) based on the context and topic that the user wants. From there, it helps users learn and understand English more easily. Moreover, because the system is deployed on mobile phones, learning will be more convenient in terms of time as well as the level of access to learning will be more for user.

Mobile applications (apps) are becoming an indispensable part of learning, including foreign language learning. In fact, mobile learning research shows that the use of cell phones and their applications continues to be Beneficial for learning the foreign language, thanks in particular to its special features (e.g. interactivity, Ubiquity, or portability) and encouragement and feedback from teachers. Klimova (2018) in his book Evaluation of the e_effectiveness of the use of a mobile application on students" study achievements mentions, the trend nowadays of using mobile phones in language learning is that they are mainly used As the language acquisition service". The English learning application is a combination of an ecosystem with many English learning resources that are completely free or at an extremely cheap and appropriate cost, useful that we can use such as reading, listening, practise pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, etc. Users are easy to find on CH Play and app store with just a few minutes of touching the smartphone screen.

B. Benefits of learning English through applications

Nowadays, with the strong development of the Internet, learning English has become easier. No longer have to work hard for hours on the library, you can also learn English anytime, anywhere thanks to English learning apps as: Duolingo, ELSA, Tflat, 4English. Learning English is diverse, providing knowledge and practice exercises to help fully practice English skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, etc. You can learn English through the application anytime, anywhere, without having to be fixed in one place. The learning path from beginner to advanced is suitable for everyone. The app has both exercises and games to reinforce what you've learned. Applications are installed on the phone so it is very compact and convenient, or you can install them on your laptop.

Highly interactive feature to help you improve and enhance your English. Some apps can recognize your voice and give tailored video lessons or practice with native

speakers. Not only that, the rich content repository, regularly updating new knowledge helps you easily absorb from grammar exercises, sentence structure to vocabulary, communication... at all levels, from basic to advanced. In addition, some applications also design games to reinforce and enhance knowledge to make you more comfortable in the learning process.

You are often afraid of the high cost, but with pre-installed English learning applications on your phone, you do not need to worry because most of them are very cheap. English learning apps on your phone help you access quality and effective English learning methods and save money for yourself and your family.

What is more, the Internet connection allows learners to gain access to a huge amount of authentic materials to make English learning more enjoyable (Dang, 2011). Hence, the application of the online resources available to the inside and outside classroom activities can result in the enhancement of their competences in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, according to Kelsen (2009, p.3), "YouTube has the potential to connect learners with authentic English input through what is quite possibly already a part of their life experience …and provides a context through which they can interact, exchange ideas, share feelings, and participate in a web-based environment".

C. Students' feeling towards English learning applications

Today with the rapid development of technology 4.0. Learning English through apps has become popular and brings a lot of conveniences. In addition, through reviews and likes for current applications on the App Store and CH Play in 2021, there are ("Duolingo: 100 million downloads, 11 million reviews, English translation U: more than 100 million downloads. downloads, 958 thousand reviews, ELSA: More than 10 million downloads, 273 thousand reviews, TFlat: 10 million downloads, 170 thousand reviews") of users, it can be seen that these applications have a lot of impact on learners in general and students in particular both in terms of feeling and learning.

Students feel they are more active, easily control their study time. Students' English learning activities become easier to do, easier to understand. From there, some students rewrote the common opinion that learning on apps can be more focused than learning on paper. In addition, some students said that they felt attracted by sounds, images, graphics and their preference for new technologies, learning motivation and ability to use technology) along with Pervasive characteristics of technology (ubiquity, customization of context, interaction between learners and corpus, self-directed learning activities, and learner interest) are considered to be influential. Positively affect their satisfaction and expectations in self-learning based on technology (Duong Thi Nu, 2009) the tests and games to assess the ability after each lesson give very quick results to help them know Find out how much capacity is being

achieved through the app. Students feel free from being pressured by grades and achievements. Furthermore, it is known that learners' performance improves if they feel in command of the situation, and if they are familiar with their environment (Oxford, 1990), so the usability of the design of an app—how easy to learn and use it is—is very important. Students can also choose English learning apps that suit their interests and build their own English learning goals. Moreover, some applications are designed based on the method of memorizing vocabulary through fun and intuitive images, interesting mini-games to give learners a comfortable spirit, while learning and playing to help students. easier to remember, not as constrained as the traditional way of learning, so that students are motivated and have the most appropriate learning environment experience.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants of this study were 30 students from many majors of Tay Do University. There were both males and females selected randomly. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24. They came from different areas, both rural and urban ones. They speak Vietnamese as their mother tongue and English as their foreign language. Most of them have studied English for at least five years. They will be given a questionnaire to provide information about their feeling when learning English through the application.

B. Instruments

The instruments to collect data in this study were a questionnaire and an interview. These instruments were very helpful in gathering essential information from students. The questionnaire was executed to show us what students thought about learning English through the applications. The questionnaire consist of two main parts. The first part was about student's personal information such as name, age, gender, class, year of learning English. The second one consisted of 20 closing statements designed on the basic of the five-degree scales including strongly agree (SA), agree (A), no idea (NS), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD). In the interview section, the participants were asked to answer 6 open questions to collect their opinions about English learning apps.

IV. RESULTS

A. Results from the questionnaire

The results from the questionnaire were presented in the following table.

Table 1. Students' Perception of English Learning Applications

Students' perception of English learning applications	Percentage (%)
1. Benefits of learning English through applications	65.7%
2. Positive feeling towards English learning applications	58%

The table above shows how the students perceived about the English learning apps as they learn English. This table implies that the students recognized the benefits of learning English through apps (65.7%). The percentage of students felt positive when learning English through the application was 58%. It could be concluded that the students seemed to enjoy learning English through apps.

B. Results from the interview

Out of the thirty interviewers, twenty-six students agreed that English learning apps brought them plenty of benefits. They thought that most of these apps are useful and convenient for them to study English in the technology era.

"Those apps help me save time and have more fun when studying English. There are many games for vocabulary, grammar lessons." (Male, English translation)
"I like to use English apps to practise my pronunciation. It is so cool. I don't feel shy when I speak with an app!" (Female, English translation)
"Instead of playing games with my phone, now I can ungrade my vocabulary using my phone!" (Female, English translation)
"I have more freedom in time and place when studying with apps!" (Male, English translation)

However, four of them still thought that most of English learning apps were boring and made them passive in communication.

"I installed the app to learn English for two days and then forgot it. Talking to a device is so boring even though it can understand what you say. I prefer real communication in English with friends or foreigners!" (Female, English translation)

Some of the students were afraid of the disadvantages of English learning apps in term of health, learning environment and motivation.

"You may feel eyestrain and worry about your eyesight problems due to long exposure to the phone screen when using the app.!" (Male, English translation)
"I can't focus when there is noise or loss connection while studying. Moreover, just staying home to study

with phone makes me lazy and have no motivation." (Male, English translation)

V. CONCLUSION

The data gathered from 30 students of Tay Do University showed that the students recognized the benefits of the application as well as the positive and negative aspects of learning English through the application. Through the research results, the researcher found that learning English through applications in the 4.0 technology era still has many limitations for students. Therefore, some ideas were proposed to teach and guide both teachers and students of Tay Do University about learning English through the application. As for teaching, teachers should help their students focus on consulting and learning about the utility and difference that the application makes. As a result, they can find out how students feel about the quality of the application. In addition, they will help students find the right apps to learn English. Moreover, teachers can help students improve their skills in using the benefits of technology to learn English better. For learning, students should read first, learn and study carefully about the benefits, functions and limitations of the applications before using. As a result, they not only get acquainted and master the operations, but also help students understand each function in the application better. In addition, students should search for videos related to teaching and how to use that application on Youtube so that they can choose suitable applications to serve their students' English learning goals. These suggestions will be very helpful for students in their process of learning English by application in the 4.0 technology era.

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