International
Journal of
Education,
Psychology and
Counseling
(IJEPC)

eISSN: 0128-164X

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING (IJEPC)
www.ijepc.com

GÆ
GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

INTEGRATING MOBILE GAME APPLICATION IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

Anna Lynn Abu Bakar[1], Irma Wani Othman[2*], Nadiawati Mahmood[3], Mohammad Aqmal Hafidz Musa[4]

[1] Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
Email: annalynn@ums.edu.my
[2] Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
Email: irma@ums.edu.my
[3] Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
Email: nadiawati.mahmood@ums.edu.my
[4] Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.
Email: aqmalhafidz@ums.edu.my
* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Abstract:

English is an important communication medium for Malaysians, particularly in higher education and business. As a result, substantial effort has been invested in producing students who can communicate effectively in a variety of social and professional settings. It is believed that, as a result of the new learning standard, mobile game applications offer a greater opportunity to enhance language learning, particularly English, for Gen-Z students. One of the mobile gaming applications utilised for this study was Languinis, an original, free word puzzle mobile game. An administered questionnaire was administered to 120 ESL students as part of a mixed-methods approach. A semi-structured interview with 10 ESL students was also conducted. The data of the investigation revealed that few pupils are familiar with the Languinis word game. Nonetheless, the finding also revealed that the students enjoyed using the mobile game application to improve their vocabulary, which they then utilised in their spoken interactions. As a result, their Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English has improved.

Keywords:

Mobile Game Application, ESL Students, Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Languinis

Introduction

In education, research, and industry, the ability to master English has become increasingly crucial. Therefore, many non-English-speaking countries try to improve their education systems for teaching English as a second or foreign language, and English vocabulary is a significant part of improving students' English proficiency (Rabab'ah,2005). As a result, digital gaming technologies, namely mobile games, are emerging as the most effective method for boosting enthusiasm for language acquisition (Boeker, Andel, Vach & Frankenschmidt, 2013).

Speaking is deemed to be the most important skill that must be mastered well in learning a new language (Gani,Fajrina & Hanifa, 2015). For a student to master a language well, the students must be able to speak that and know how to use that language. Hence,the development of students' vocabularies is a crucial part of English language acquisition (Alqahtani, 2015). Due to their limited vocabularies, ESL and EFL students may struggle to communicate in English (Hussein & Elttayef, 2016). Therefore, they do not engage in lengthy conversations (Lee & Hseih, 2019) and they lack the genuine desire to learn a second or foreign language (Yashima, 2002). Rababah (2002) suggested that there are difficulties to speaking English [Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008], such as the way through which students learn, the instructional tactics, and the learning environment. The difficulties that students faced has somehow influence their willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language.

In Malaysia, this phenomenon has resulted in Malaysian graduates of local universities having poor oral communication in English (Malaysia Today, 2016) because they were reluctant to participate in oral communication activities in English classes (Liu, 2005; Peng, 2012), which has influenced students' WTC in English. As a result, the Ministry of Education has made significant efforts to address this issue, and one method for improving students' oral proficiency is through the integration of technology into the teaching and learning process in order to enhance and engage students' learning experience in class (Abu Bakar, Osman, Abd. Rahim & Rahman, 2021).

The main objective of this study is to;
i) investigate the impact of Mobile Game Application on students' WTC from a leaner's perspectives?

The research question of this study is;
ii) What are the impacts of Mobile Game Application on students' WTC from a leaner's perspectives?

Literature Review

One of the aims of teaching is to promote efficient communication to enable students to use the language as fluently as possible (Khadijah, 2017). Having good oral proficiency is also influenced by their willingness to communicate in English.

The concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) which was developed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) has been given the paramount importance in communication by scholars (Kang, 2005, Cao & Philip 2011, Yashima, 2002) looking into English language as second (ESL) or foreign language (EFL).

In general, Willingness to Communicate is defined as a stable predisposition towards communication when free to choose to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985, cited in MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; 7). While, in the L2 context of Willingness to Communicate, MacIntyre, et al. defined WTC as "*a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2*" (1988: 547). Oxford defined WTC as "*a student's intention to interact with others in the target language, given the chance to do so*" (1997: 449). Base on all the definitions given, the concept of WTC will be defined as one's freedom to speak the target language when having the opportunity to do so. Thus, in order to examine ones' WTC, MacIntyre et al. (1998) looked into the twelve variables listed in the heuristic model developed, which are intergroup climate, personality, intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence, interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation and L2 confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person, communicative self-confidence, willingness to communicate and the use of L2.

One method for improving students' WTC in English is to use mobile game apps into the teaching and learning process. This would be one of the most effective strategies to assist teachers in bringing a new dimension to their teaching in the modern classroom of the twenty-first century (Mengorio & Dumlao, 2019). Furthermore, it provides students with a getaway from the regular classroom while still reinforcing the skills they are learning.

Mobile Game Applications
In comparison to traditional learning approaches, game-based learning can motivate learners through interactive content and competition given through games (Boeker et. al.,2013). An educational mobile game might be a novel learning approach for kids to learn freely and acquire knowledge through play. Students can devote more time to playing games rather of reading texts. This is because students are allowed to explore and figure out game techniques to complete the game mission, which increases student engagement. The instructional mobile game allows players to learn and develop information about the subject. Players are indirectly instructed to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills because they must complete the objective to receive points.

Languinis is one of several game mobile applications which is a free mobile game app available for both Android and iPhone devices. Players must fulfil certain tasks in each level before progressing to the next. It also requires players to plot and plan their game strategy in order to score more points and receive incentives. Languinis is used in this study to improve students' WTC in English while also making the course enjoyable and engaging for the students. According to Gangaiamaran and Pasupathi (2017), educational mobile games can be used as mobile learning tools that allow users to learn educational content in a dynamic and engaging manner. Mobile technology's mobility and information accessibility also plays an important role in improving English language teaching and learning.

Methodology
This study employed a mix-method approach where a self-administered questionnaire and a semi-structured interview was used to obtain data from the participants on their perspective on using Mobile Game application specifically Languinis in helping them improve their oral proficiency and increase their WTC in English.

Sample and Participants

The population of this study is the undergraduate students in a local and public Higher Education Institution. Of this population, certain number of the students are chosen as the participants of this study using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling refers to the researcher's deliberate selection of sampling criteria for this study (Cresswell, 2014). Purposive sampling or convenience sampling is used (Cresswell, 2012) to ensure that the researcher can collect the necessary data from a specific group of people.

For the purpose of this study, the sample is purposive sampling and the participants were first year undergraduate students in Sem 2 2020/2021 who took Oral Communication in English as their English proficiency course. In the course, the English language instructor introduced Languinis, a mobile game application, not only to engage students in learning English but also in enhancing their vocabulary which would indirectly help increase their WTC in English.

Research Instrument

In order to answer the research question of this study, the instrument used was a self-administered questionnaire.

Survey Questionnaire

One of the instruments used in the study was questionnaire. Questionnaires are used to answer questions about what, where and when. Therefore, it was used in this study to obtain information from a specific group of people within a limited time. It also functions to determine the causal effect between the variables in a study (Cresswell, 2012). Besides that, it helps to save time as the researcher could get responses from a large number of people all at the same time. This allows the researcher to see the differences as well as the similarities between the participants based on the results of the questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaire that was adapted form (Saidi, 2018), was distributed online via Google form to 120 respondents. However, only 95 questionnaires were answered. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts which were demographic background, feelings in communicating in English and students WTC in using Social Media in an online classroom.

Semi Structured Interview

Interviews are attempts to elicit information via the use of oral questioning. Face-to-face contact is the most important aspect of the interview. When conducting interviews, researchers should pay close attention to voice intonation, speaking pace, sensitivity to questions, eye contact, and nonverbal sensitivity. However, because classes were held online, the interview was held online via Google Meet. The questions for the semi-structured interview were adapted from Saidi (2018) which related to the use of Languinis in influencing the students' WTC in English.

Results and Findings

The result of the quantitative findings is presented as posited below;

The data provided by the questionnaire was a descriptive analysis of the respondents. The group consisted of 63 females and 32 men. In the SPM English course, the majority of pupils obtained grades ranging from B to D. Only seven of the ninety-five respondents scored an A, while four received an A-.

The findings of the questionnaire showed that 69.5 percent of the respondents claimed that they have used *Languinis* application while 30.5 percent of the respondents have not used the application before.

1. Have you ever used the Languinis application before?
95 responses
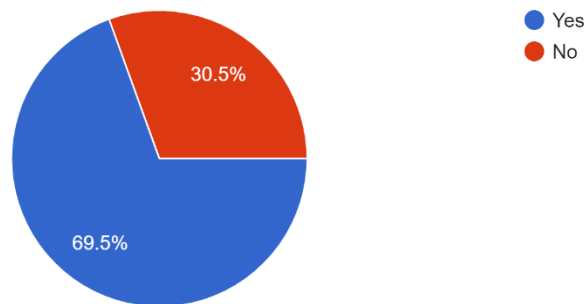
Figure 1: Use of Languinis

The finding in Figure 2 below showed 42.1 percent of respondents followed by 37.9 percent agreed that *Languinis* help improve their WTC in English. However, 4.2 percent of respondents and 2.1 respondents did not think that *Languinis* help improve their WTC in English.

2. Does using Languinis help you in improving your willingness to communicate in English? Please rate the application
95 responses
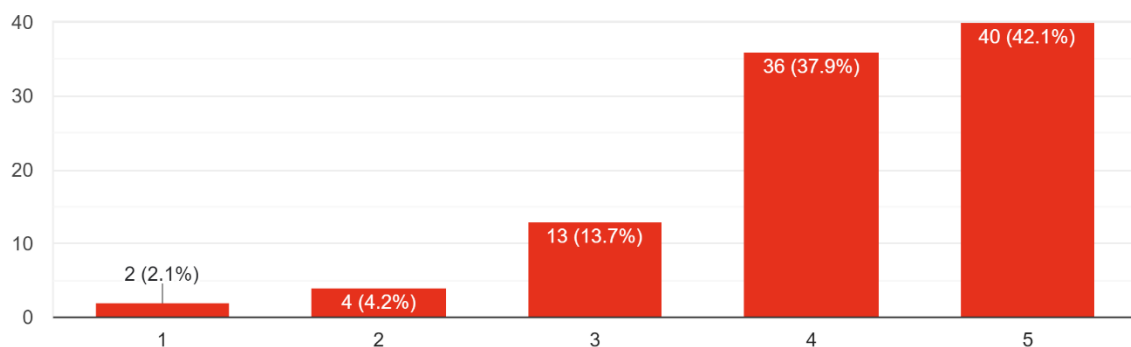
Figure 2: Students' Response

Figure 3 below shows that 42.1 percent of respondents moderately agreed that they could use English vocabulary to interact with other people, followed by 41.1 percent and 10.5 percent who agreed and strongly agreed that they could use English vocabularies and expressions in their communication, respectively.

1. I can use English vocabulary and expressions that I learned to interact with my teacher or friends.

95 responses
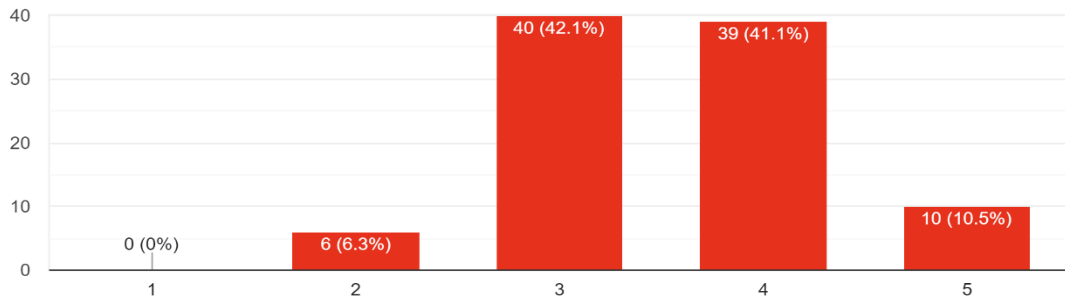
Figure 3: Students' English Vocabulary Use.

Benefits of Languinis

The qualitative finding of the study revealed 3 thematic areas of the benefits of *Languinis* in helping them improve their WTC in English which are learning new words, improve spelling and challenges their cognitive skills.

Table 1: Learn New Words

Learn New Words	
Participants	Remarks
1	Can learn many new words
2	The Languinis help me with new vocabulary and new interesting words.
3	It teaches me some new word and the valid or invalid word.
4	Improve my vocabulary
5	It can help me improve my vocabulary in English
7	Playing languinis helps me to identify new English words.
8	Languinis improve my vocabulary a lot
9	I know so many new words from here
10	i can increase my vocabulary

Table 1 above shows one of the elements of the application that helped improve the respondents' WTC in English was that, it helps them learn new English words All of the respondents agreed that. *Languinis* help improve and increase their vocabularies in English. By learning new words that they gained from the applications indirectly helps them improve their WTC in English.

Table 2: Improve Spelling

Improve spelling	
Participants	Remarks
1	By spelling english words
4	its really help with my spelling and also, it's help us to learn more about nouns
5	Spell the word in that games, make i feel comfortable and more knowledge about new word that i found
7	I can learn to spell words
8	I was able to spell many words that I had never heard and also identify what they meant and also helped me in spelling
9	By spelling english words
10	Its make me learn to spell well and find new words

Table 2 above shows the element of improving spelling which most of the participants agreed that this helps them improve their WTC in English. 7 out of 10 respondents agreed that Languinis help improve their spelling as well. This is probably because when the participants put thoughts into writing, it helps them organize their thoughts better before the speak.

Table 3: Challenging

Challenging	
Participants	Remarks
1	This game is very challenging
2	I like the challenges every level
3	challenge my vocabulary
4	interesting and challenging
5	Challenge my brain to make a good strategy
6	Challenging mind
7	Make me think
8	I have to use my brain to finish the next level
9	It's very satisfying when I pass the level that is very hard.
10	Very challenging

Table 3 above shows that all the participants agreed that the application challenges their cognitive skills as it requires them to think and strategize when completing the challenge of each level of the game. Indirectly this could be related to their grit and determination in completing the challenge hence enabling them to advance to the next level.

Conclusion

Generally, it is hoped that using Mobile Game Application such as Languinis, in the English language classroom would enable students to improve their oral proficiency in English. The

application not only helps boost students' abilities, increases their cognitive skills, but also helps increase their English vocabulary which indirectly influences their WTC in English.

Acknowledgements

Reference

A. Mohammed (205). EFL effective factors: anxiety and motivation and their effect on Saudi college student's achievement, 6 (2), 200-218.

Abu Bakar, A.L, Osman, W., Abd. Rahim, S., and Rahman, N.D. Students perception in using Madlipz in English Oral Communication Classroom: A Case Study in Universiti Malaysia Sabah. *International Journal of Education*, Psychology and Counselling. 6(41), 1-13.

Alqahtani, M., (2015). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught, *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(3), 21-34

Boeker M, Andel P, Vach W & Frankenschmidt A (2013). Game-based e-learning is more effective than a conventional instructional method: a randomized controlled trial with third year medical students. PloS One 8(12), e82328.

Cao, Y., and Philp, J. (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A Comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. *34*(4), 480-493.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design* (4th ed.). Lincoln: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Diaab, S., (2016) Role of Faulty Instructional Methods in Libyan EFL Learners Speaking Difficulties. Procedia-Social Behavioral Sciences, 232, 338-345

Elaish, M., Ghani, N.G., Shuib, S. & Al-Haqiqi, A. (2019). Development of a Mobile Game Application to Boost Students' Motivation in Learning English Vocabulary.

Gangaiamaran R and Pasupathi M 2017 Review on use of mobile apps for language learning International Journal of Applied Engineering Research, 12, 11242-51

Gani, A. S, Fajrina, D. and Hanifa, R. (2015). Students' Learning Strategies for Developing Speaking Ability. *Studies in English Language and Education 2*(1), 17-30.

Hussein, N. O. and Elttayef, A. I., Arab Learners' Problems in Learning English Language: A Teacher Perspective.

Kang, S. J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System*, *33*(2), 277-292

Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An Overview of Mobile Assisted Language Learning: From Content Delivery to Supported Collaboration and Interaction. ReCALL, 20,271-289.https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344008000335

Lee, J. S. and Hsieh, J. C. (2019). Affective variables and willingness to communicate of EFL learners in in-class, out-of-class, and digital contexts. Elsevier Ltd. *System*, 82, 63-73.

Liu, M. (2005) Causes of Reticence in EFL Classrooms: A Study of Chinese University Students. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching,* 1, 220-236.

Mengorio, T.M and Dumlao, R. (2019). The Effect of Integrating Mobile Application in Language Learning: An Experimental Study. Journal of English. 5(1), 50-62.

Peng, J. E. (2014). Willingness to communicate in the Chinese EFL university classroom: An ecological perspective. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Rababah, G., (2002). Communication Problems Facing Arab Learners of English. Journal of Language and Learning. 3(1),100-197.

Saidi, S. B. (2018). Willingness to communicate in English among Malaysian undergraduates on campus: An identity-based motivation perspective. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis. University of York

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to Communicate ins a Second Language: The Japanese EFL Context. The Modern Language Journal, 86 (1), 54-66.