THE IMPLICATIONS OF M-LEARNING ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE ALGERIAN CONTEXT

Dr Imane Tiahi

University of Northampton

INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the literature, Ghomari (2015) argued that teaching English in the Algerian university faces some difficulties in guaranteeing the attainment of communicative competence in English for its students. This deficiency is the natural outcome of traditional non-native classroom environment that suffers an acute lack of interpersonal interactions in the target language and no exposure to authentic environments, which are two basic elements in the acquisition of a foreign language. Consequently, I felt the need to search for an understanding about the implications of m-learning on student engagement in light of social constructivism as a pedagogical approach and this contributes to my understanding of the appropriate teaching approach namely communicative competence approach. To this end, the aim of this research is to explore teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions towards the implications of m-learning on student engagement in EFL being vital in effective implementation, improvement, change and intention formation.

RESEARCH AIMS

My focus was to explore the attitudes of teachers and students toward m-learning and student engagement and how institutional leaders viewed the outcome of this research. It should be noted that the intended research with the institutional leaders was eventually abandoned for some country reasons, and this remains as an area of recommended future research. To this end, it would be crucial to explore the readiness from institutional leaders in terms of monetary issues because possibly their priority could be on building different infrastructure and creating opportunities of employment rather than focusing on education. This project explored why m-learning has not yet been considered in Algeria and whether such changes might be acceptable in this situation.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative data collection methods; semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals. For the action research, I applied an intervention course supported by a pedagogical approach based on social constructivism. Three m-learning apps were used; Kahoot, Padlet and Sli.do to explore the possibilities and the implications for future implementation of m-learning in the Algerian higher education institutions. The results were thematically analysed.

FINDINGS AND SOLUTIONS

The results showed that m-learning activities that are based on social constructivism helped students to engage, interact and learn. The design of m-learning activities requires the integration of reflective, collaborative and communicative activities using Kahoot, Padlet and Sli.do apps. In this respect, an understanding of how students reflect on their learning was captured. The study also captured a better understanding of students' acceptance of m-learning. This study gathered an in-depth exploration of how social constructivism enhanced student engagement. By reference to this pedagogical framework, it can be argued that embedding technology into the teaching and learning process has the potential to increase student engagement. However, the key point is that m-learning needs to be a supportive tool rather than merely being 'exchanged' for traditional teaching methods. By implementing m-learning activities, the students acknowledge that discussions and class interaction achieved by implementing m-learning activities resulted in high student engagement; and this was evidenced by students' reflections. This suggests that students are engaged if they find content relevant to their academic skills as being future teachers. In other words, students' preference for the apps were determined in fulfilling students' interaction and 160 engagement. The study has confirmed the findings of Al-Fahad (2009). These positive attitudes, therefore, assisted in my understanding of the effectiveness of m-learning in EFL. In addition, despite my study being exploratory, it offers some insights towards m-learning activities and student engagement in the Algerian HE. The designed m-learning activities gave students an understanding of the importance of its use in their learning. It also helps develop knowledge of academic skills that will be significant in their future career as teachers.

CONCLUSION

On a conclusive remark, it is evident that teachers and students provided positive feedback for using m-learning. However, there is still some improvement on how to implement m-learning from institutional leaders such as monetary issues. It is not only motivating but also engaging in learning processes. Mobile applications such as Kahoot, Padlet and Sli.do were well received and thus can be taken further to examine its higher impact in Algerian context. Thus, in future, it will be important to implement m-learning effectively in higher education to transform the current traditional practises into modern, innovative and active learning. Persuasion for this change for stakeholder may be challenging however its long-term benefits can be reflective from the current research paper.

Main themes

1. Factors of students' disengagement

- Lack of confidence
- Afraid of committing mistakes
- Fear the stage
- Shy
- Public speaking anxiety

Main themes

2. Positive attitudes towards m-learning

- Anonymous participation
- Immediacy of responses

3. Personalised learning

- Communication and engagement

4. Structured and Interactive

- Activities that integrate m-learning such as the mobile applications used in this mini course.

REFERENCES

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