

Digitization of Higher Education in Oman: The Design of Interactive Mobile Language Learning Apps to Learn English

Dr. Chahrazed Mirza

Associate Professor, TESOL and Online Education, University of Nizwa, Oman

Abstract:

The study examined students' perceptions about the effectiveness of a newly developed interactive mobile learning application intended to improve vocabulary learning and reading comprehension skills. Motivated by Oman vision 2040-2040, higher education institutions in Oman are adopting massively technology enhanced education. Mobile learning is acclaimed for its flexibility that transcends the constraints of time and distance. Many mobile language learning apps exist. However, few are designed to learn content-specific higher education courses. Open-source programming languages, namely Java Script and Flutter were used to develop a visually interactive mobile language learning application powered with automated feedback system on students' performance. To assess the effectiveness of the mobile application, a 10 components evaluation framework was designed. Explanatory quantitative design was adopted. Using the newly developed evaluation framework, online surveys were designed and distributed to 780 English language students at a higher education institution in Oman. Using descriptive statistics, the results indicated pervasive dissatisfaction with the traditional teaching methods. Students were very satisfied with the interactivity, inclusivity, instant feedback, adaptability and flexibility features of the interactive language learning mobile application. Students favored digital education. This study posited the need for a strategic approach to shift from traditional education to digital education in Oman.