Mobile Applications for the Use of English at Works

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Abstract: Mobile applications seem to be very important nowadays for learning language in the 21st Century. The main reason is that mobile applications for English language can improve not only the learners' language abilities, but also working people' proficiency in using English at work. However, it is unclear to what extent moblie applications have been frequently used to help improve English proficiency at work and what seems to be primary reasons for using the moblie applications. Therefore, this study aims to investigate mobile applications that are frequently used to help working in English in different business organizations and to study the underlying reasons in using the applications. The data was collected from seventy-three participants from five business organizations. They were asked to specify which mobile applications they usually use to help enhance their English at work. There are twenty-five mobile applications that have been used to improve English at work and there are seven underlying reasons for the use. The results show that Google Translation is the most popular mobile applications used to help working in English among different business organizations. The results imply that people from different jobs tend to have different reasons for using the applications.
Keywords: Mobile applications, Mobile language learning, Technology, English at work

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the 21st Century, not only English is a vital instrument for daily life, studying and working [1], but technology also plays an important role. In fact, technology seems to play a big role in language learning and teaching in this era, which we can see from several new research that has been concerned with the technology in the language education, especially the topic about computer assisted in language learning (CALL)[2]. However, the use of mobile phone is currently more popular to use than personal computer for language learning and teaching. Therefore, the mobile assisted in language learning (MALL)[3], which has been recently introduced, have been widely recommended to use instead of the computer assisted in language learning[4].

While Computer Assisted Language Learning is the improving method to assist language learners by using computers [5], it is not flexible for all situations [6]. On the contrary, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (M-learning) [7] targets on the flexibility of the learning practice [8]. That is, it can boost the effectiveness, resilience, easy access of learning across the different contexts of use [9]. Furthermore, it is flexible and easy access for language learners to access anytime and anywhere. This is why there are many mobile applications available for learning language, especially English.

Apps are the short form of "application software", normally downloaded from "app stores such as "Google Play, iOS app". Mobile apps are a software application which run on the Mobile devices, and Tablets. Some apps are free to download, but some apps are not free, the user have to pay for them.

Many reviews (e.g. [10]; [11]; and [12]) agree that mobile applications can enhance the skills of the learners in English, and increase language proficiency rather than the traditional learning. Particularly, the mobile applications improve the learners' writing, vocabulary, and word choices. Furthermore, mobile applications in English language can be used to enhance English language skills that are likely to be essential elements for getting well-paid jobs.

While there are many mobile applications available in Google Play stores and iOS app stores for language learning, and developing, it is unclear how these applications can help developing English proficiency in working that requires English usage. In other words, although there are many mobile applications that can help working people use English at works more proficiently, it is unclear to what extent the applications can help the users, especially people working in the business organizations. Therefore, the purposes of this study are to investigate which mobile applications are frequently used to help working in English in different business organizations and to study the underlying reasons in using the applications.

II.   METHODS

To find which mobile applications can help working in English in the business organizations, the online questionnaires were created, checked for validity and reliability before distributing to working people in different business organizations in Thailand. We decided to use the online questionnaire because it is easy to access to to get the information. Also, to ensure a large number of responses, we asked our fourth year students from the Business English program, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University who were under the job training at that time help distribute the online questionnaires. The data was collected from seventy-three participants from five business organizations.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From seventy-three participants from five business organizations who answered our survey, we found twenty-five mobile applications that are frequently used to improve their English at works (see Table 1).

Table1: Categories of the business organization investigated

No.	Categories of the Business Organization	Number of the Participants
1	Customer Service Business	20
2	Logistics Business	18
3	Hotel Business	15
4	Marketing, Sales, Purchasing Business	11
5	Airline Business	9

In the Hotel Business, we found four reasons in using mobile applications for helping working in English. Workers in the Hotel Business tends to use mobile applications to help translate most. The reason may due to the fact that this kind of job have a lot of context for different situations, different customers from the different cultures. Different people from the different cultures may have the different perception of the meaning of the words. Therefore, the workers need to use dictionaries to clarify the meaning. For this business group, the workers need to use the applications that can make sure that they understand the meaning that customers ask (see Table 2).

Table 2: Reasons in using mobile applications in the hotel business

Reasons	Finding the Information (1)	Translating (2)		Finding the Meaning of the Vocabularies (3)						Checking Grammar (4)
Apps	Google	Google Translate	Say Hi	Google	Google Translate	Fast Thai Dictionary	A Dictionary	Line Dictionary	Thai Dict	Grammarly
Frequency	3	12	1	3	9	2	1	1	1	1

In the Airline Business, we found five categories of reasons in using mobile applications for helping working in English. The workers in the Airline Business tends to use mobile applications to help find the meaning of the vocabularies most. The reason may due to the fact that this kind of job use the words or the sentences repeated all the time. Thus, the staff use the same words, same sentences, same the contexts with the different customers, different situations, from different cultures. This is not varied and confused like the workers who use English for working in the Hotel Business. Moreover, the workers from the Airline Business using mobile applications for contacting to the staff and to the customers both the internal and external organizations. Mostly, this business organization concerning with the reputations, the business organizations do not want to get the problems, especially when are contacting to the customers (see Table 3).

Table 3: Reasons in using mobile applications in the airline business

Reasons	Finding the Information (1)	Translating (2)	Finding the Meaning of the Vocabularies (3)					Checking Grammar (4)	Contacting (5)	
Apps	Google	Google Translate	Google Translate	Thai Fast Dictionary	Oxford Dictionary	Line Dictionary	Dictionary Thai-Eng	Grammar in Use	Singapore Airline App	Line
Frequency	1	4	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	1

In the Sales and Purchasing Business (including Marketing), we found six reasons in using mobile applications for helping working in English. Workers in the Sales and Purchasing Business tends to use mobile applications to help find the meaning of the vocabularies most, translate, and correct the words. It may cause to the fact that this kind of job needs to know the meaning of the vocabularies, translate the messages that customers send to them, and can correct the words and sentences. The main duties of working people in this group are such as writing e-mails, making the quotations, making the invoices. However, the results imply that working people in this group tend to use both written and spoken English to complete their jobs. (see table 4).

Table 4: Reasons in using mobile applications in the sales and purchasing business

Reasons	Translating (2)							Finding the Meaning of the Vocabularies (3)							Checking Grammar (4)	Contacting (5)	Correcting Word (6)		Pronouncing (7)
Apps	Google Translate	Longdo Dictionary	Papago	Ilovetranslate	Speak & Translate	Line Dictionary	Speak & Translate	Google Translate	Longdo Dictionary	Oxford Dictionary	Dict Box	Thai Fast Dict	Merriam Webster Dictionary	Twitter	Grammarly	Line	Google Translate	Oxford Dictionary	Google Translate
Frequency	8	4	1	1	1	1	1	8	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	3	8

In the Logistics Business, there are three reasons in using mobile applications for helping working in English. Workers in the Logistics Business tends to use mobile applications to help translate most. The reason may due to the fact that this kind of job need to know the meaning of the technical vocabularies, translate the messages for communicating with customers. Mostly, the workers in this group find the meaning of the vocabularies for checking the customs tariff, and reserving the space for the vessels, and airplanes. Some use the mobile applications to help doing the documents such as invoices, quotations, delivery orders, air waybills, bill of lading. Moreover, the workers from this group use the mobile applications to help find the information, because sometimes they need to know the rules and regulations for shipping the products to the different countries (see Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons in using mobile applications in the logistics business

Reasons	Finding the Information (1)	Translating (2)				Finding the Meaning of the Vocabularies (3)	
Apps	Google	Google Translate	Voicetra	Line Translator	Longdo Dict	Google translate
Frequency	6	17	1	1	2	11

In the Customer Service Business, there are two reasons in using mobile applications for helping working in English. Workers in the Customer Service Business tends to use mobile applications to help translate most. The reason may due to the fact that this kind of job need to translate the texts that customers speak to them such as asking for help and solving the problems, claiming and requesting from different kinds of customers, with the variety of situations and accents. Thus, working people in this group tend to use mobile application for translating, and finding the meaning of the vocabularies (see table 6).

Table 6: Reasons in using mobile applications in the customer service business

Reasons	Translating (2)					Finding the Meaning of the Vocabularies (3)		
Apps	Google Translate	Thai Dict	Oxford Dictionary	Line Translator	ITranslate	Google Translate	Fast Thai Dict	ITranslate
Frequency	12	1	1	2	1	9	1	1

IV.   CONCLUSION

Regarding to the 21st Century accentuate to the education particularly in the technology, technology plays an important role in education, especially English language learning. Therefore, new language studies tend to be concerned more with technology though changing from computer assisted language learning to mobile assisted language learning. Although there are many mobile applications available in Thailand for helping developing English which seems to play an essential role in working in this era, the problem is it is not clear which mobile applications are frequently used for working in English in the business organizations. However, our study reveals that most Thai workers use mobile application for translating. This can imply that the translation function is very important for all workers in a variety of business organizations. Thus, teachers should give some clear guidelines for using mobile applications for translation to achieve the best results in finding the meaning of the unknown vocabularies and applying themselves in the future at work. Importantly, teachers should introduce a variation of mobile applications for language learners to use to develop English proficiency themselves for various skills since different jobs require different English language skills.

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