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LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS [ABSTRACT]

Ruti Gafni*	The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo, Tel Aviv, Israel	rutigafn@mta.ac.il
Dafni Biran Achituv	The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo, Tel Aviv, Israel	dafniba@gmail.com
Gila Joyce Rachmani	The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo, Tel Aviv, Israel	gilarachmani93@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This study examines how the use of a Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) application influences the learners' attitudes towards the process of learning, in voluntary and mandatory environments.
Background	Mobile devices and applications, which have become an integral part of our lives, are used for different purposes, including educational objectives. Among others, they are used in the process of foreign language acquisition. The use of a MALL application to learn foreign languages has advantages and drawbacks, which are important to understand, in order to achieve better learning results, while improving the enjoyment of the process.
Methodology	The study population included people who participated in a foreign language course and used Duolingo application on a mobile device in parallel. One group consisted of high school pupils, who were obliged to use the application, while the other group consisted of people who took face-to-face courses, and chose to use the same Duolingo application voluntarily, in order to assist their studies.
Contribution	This paper helps to understand the perceived advantages and drawbacks of using a MALL application by students both in mandatory and voluntary environments.
Findings	Most of the participants found the MALL Duolingo application as enhancing the learning process. The gamification characteristics, ease of use, ubiquity and self-learning facilities had a stimulating effect on the process of learning, and contributed to the willingness to continue using the application and to recommend it to others.
Recommendations for Practitioners	The research findings can contribute to both teachers and students who conduct and participate in foreign language courses, by helping them examine the possibility of combining mobile learning with a traditional face-to-face course.

The final version of this paper will be published in the **Journal of Information Technology Education: Research** and this link will be replaced with a link to that paper.

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	Moreover, the findings can assist developers of mobile learning applications, in order to include gamification options in the process of learning.
Recommendation for Researchers	Researchers in the fields of mobile applications and m-learning need to understand the factors enhancing the learning process, in order to develop the next generations of m-learning applications.
Impact on Society	Mobile devices have become an accessory that almost every person in the world uses. Its ubiquitous characteristics allow using it everywhere and anytime. This is a great opportunity to facilitate education to people all around the world. Gamification of m-learning applications can promote and encourage the use of these applications.
Future Research	Further examination is need in different cultures, in order to understand if the findings are universal.
Keywords	Mobile applications, foreign languages, MALL, Mobile Assisted Language Learning, m-learning, gamification

BIOGRAPHIES



Ruti Gafni is the Head of the Information Systems B.Sc. program at The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo. She holds a PhD from Bar-Ilan University, Israel (in the Business Administration School), focusing on Information Systems, an M.Sc. from Tel Aviv University and a BA (Cum Laude) in Economics and Computer Science from Bar-Ilan University. She has more than 30 years of practical experience as Project Manager and Analyst of information systems. She also teaches in the Management and Economics MBA program at the Open University of Israel.



Dafni Biran Achituv teaches in the Information Systems B.Sc. program at The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo. She holds an M.A. in Organizational Consulting and Development (summa cum laude) and a B.A. in Math, Computer Science and Psychology. She has over 30 years of practical experience as a Project Manager and Information Systems Analyst.



Gila Joyce Rachmani is a third year student in the Information Systems B.Sc. program at The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo. She was acknowledged twice in the President's list of the academy.