

**LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MOBILE PHONES:  
A STUDY OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT V.R SIDDHARTHA ENGINEERING  
COLLEGE**

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**Abstract:**

Technology is a double-edged sword. It can be used both for creative purposes as well as destructive purposes. It has brought so many changes to our lifestyle. The way we think, the way we dress, the way we speak, the way we play, and the way we learn. The role of technology is so vital that it is very difficult to lead our life without it.

This paper is an attempt at understanding the influence of Technology in Learning English, especially the use of mobile phones in learning English vocabulary. A study has been conducted to evaluate the perceptions of engineering students in using mobile phones for learning vocabulary. The results show that the attitude of students is very positive. Most of the students surveyed felt happy that this facility provides instant access to the meaning of the word in question and hence make their quest for knowledge more meaningful endeavor.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, Mobile Phone, Learning

### Introduction:

Vocabulary learning is important for foreign or second language learners' to be fluent and improve their communicative ability. As Wilkins (1972) place it, "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing at all can be conveyed" (p. 111). Harmer (1994) conjointly echoed, "[I]f language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh" (p. 153).

In general, there are two ways of learning vocabulary

1. Intentional
2. Incidental

This is in distinction to incidental vocabulary learning, which refers to vocabulary learning as "a byproduct of something else" (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 379) like reading a passage for comprehension, paying attention to the news for native, national or international events, etc. Intentional vocabulary teaching is done in all the courses to enhance the vocabulary standards of students. When it comes to learning vocabulary for ESL students there are various ways and means. Very often the emphasis is given to autonomous learning. Incidental vocabulary learning is one of the ways through which students can learn vocabulary and have better comprehension. Learning vocabulary through mobile can really improve the understanding levels of students when they face problems. It also gives them a kind of satisfaction which cannot be taken away from them.

These days almost all engineering students use mobile phones and smartphones for various purposes. The Endeavour of the researcher in this study is to understand perceptions of the students in using a mobile phone as a tool of learning English especially vocabulary and the advantages and disadvantages the participants identified while using mobile phones.

### Methodology:

A study was conducted to identify the perceptions of engineering students towards learning vocabulary through mobile. Twenty engineering students studying in the branch of EEE participated in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect the information and understand their views. Below are some very important observations from the study conducted.

### Advantages:

- Mobile learning is useful while Reading books on traveling because they are portable
- It saves the time and furnishes extra information pertaining to the word
- Easy to access
- It saves a lot of time
- Searching for the meaning of a word is easy and comfortable in mobile phone

- Can understand the meaning in our regional languages also
- It also provides the usage of a particular word through sentences
- Know the meaning of the words within seconds
- Time-saving and it can be opened anywhere
- Difficult words of a subject can be understood easily
- Useful to find unknown word meanings
- The spelling of a particular word can be known
- Spelling mistakes can be reduced
- Pronunciation of the unknown and difficult words can be learned
- Part of the speech of the word can be known
- Origin of the word and its meaning and synonyms and antonyms of that word
- Easy to search a word we want
- Meaning can be understood very fast
- Can understand the word in a better way through the explanation
- Easy to find the meaning of the word without searching in a number of pages
- No need of carrying a pocket dictionary

Disadvantages:

- Some of the websites require payment
- Require net connection
- It provides too many meanings which in turn lead to complication and confusion
- Eyes will be strained if it is done for a long time
- People get addicted to this and forget about paper dictionaries

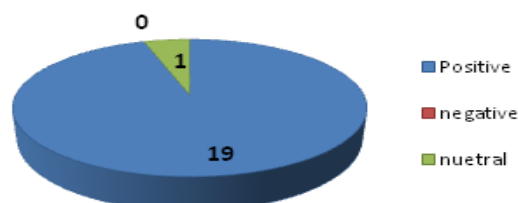
The attitude of students towards learning words via mobile phones:

Nineteen students among twenty students surveyed mentioned that they are happy because it provides the meaning in seconds and saves a lot of time. It is an indication that all most all the students are happy using mobile phones for understanding the meaning of the words. They have a positive attitude towards using mobiles for learning vocabulary. One student is neutral about its usage.

S.No	Attitude	No. of students
1	Positive	19
2	Negative	0
3	Neutral	1

Table 1: Attitude of students towards Mobile vocabulary learning

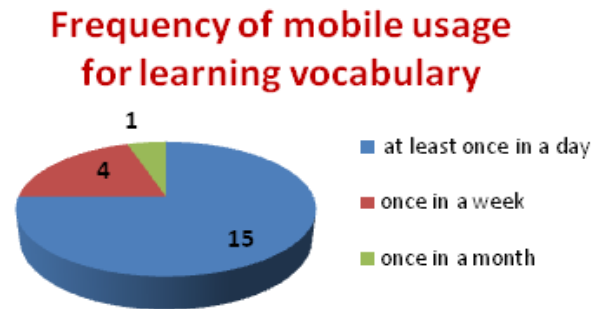
### Attitude of students towards mobile vocabulary learning



To the question 'How frequently you use the mobile phone for referring to the meaning of a word' students were given three options to choose from:

S.No	Frequency	No. of students
1	At least once in a day	15
2	Once a week	4
3	Once in a month	1

Table 2: Frequency of mobile usage for Learning Vocabulary



Fifteen students mentioned that they refer mobile dictionary all most every day. Four students mentioned that they prefer it at least once a week. One student mentioned that he uses a mobile dictionary at least once in a month. This is an indication that most of the students use mobiles for meanings very frequently.

#### Conclusion:

It can be said that the effectiveness of intentional learning can be enhanced when it is complemented with incidental learning. It also gives one an opportunity for autonomous learning which is an important way of learning, after completion of studies and during the workplace. So, the technology used in a proper way can provide excellent results and too much of it harms people. In the same way, mobile dictionaries can provide meanings in a very easy and instant manner. It adds more meaning, and a better grasp of the subject when used in a meaningful way. From the study, it is understood that there are more advantages than the disadvantages and hence this can be said that learning vocabulary through mobile phones is an interesting and a novel way to improve one's vocabulary even though there are some disadvantages.

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