

PREDICTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS'  
INTENTION TO USE MOBILE LEARNING TO LEARN  
ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY

WAN NUR SHAFIQAH BINTI WAN MOHAMAD

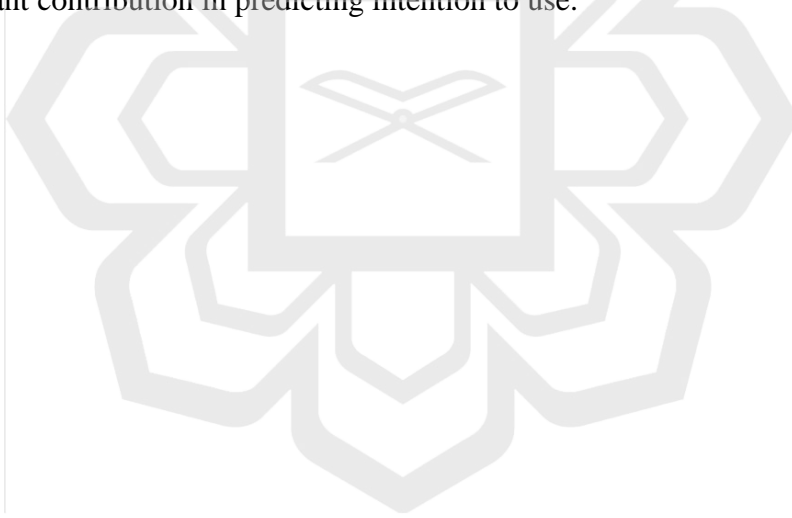
A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Education

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International Islamic University Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

Mobile learning has considerable impacts on teaching and learning in higher learning institutions as claimed by previous research. People in the education sector worldwide are concerned about how this interactive learning could foster better engagement learning. As such, the emergence of mobile technology has developed various mobile applications for language learning, but how do learners perceive these inventions for language learning? This research attempts to predict the degree of intention to use mobile learning for Arabic language learning among non-native speakers who are undergraduate students studying at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); based on their experiences, perception of usefulness and attitude. These precursors were deployed from modified Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory using a five-point Likert scale of questionnaire. Students were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement in the space provided by assigning a score ranging from Strongly Disagree, to Strongly Agree for all 5 sections of the questionnaire: demographic, experience, perception of usefulness, attitude and degree of intention to use mobile learning for Arabic learning purposes. The findings conclude that attitude is the best predictor of students' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic language as a foreign language, while previous experience has no significant contribution in predicting intention to use.



## ملخص البحث

للتعلم المتنقل آثار كبيرة على التعليم والتعلم في مؤسسات التعليم العالي كما ادعت البحوث السابقة. ويشعر الناس في قطاع التعليم في جميع أنحاء العالم بالقلق إزاء الكيفية التي يمكن أن يعزز بها هذا التعلم التفاعلي التعلم بالمشاركة بشكل أفضل. وعلى هذا النحو، فقد طور ظهور تكنولوجيا الهاتف المحمول تطبيقات متنقلة مختلفة لتعلم اللغة، ولكن كيف ينظر المتعلمون إلى هذه الاختراعات لتعلم اللغة؟ يحاول هذا البحث التنبؤ بدرجة النية لاستخدام التعلم عبر الهاتف النقال لتعلم اللغة العربية بين الناطقين بغيرها من الطلاب الجامعيين الذين يدرسون في الجامعة الإسلامية الدولية في ماليزيا (IIUM) بناءً على تجاربهم وتصورهم للفائدة والموقف. وتم نشر هذه السلائف من تعديل نظرية نموذج قبول التكنولوجيا (TAM) باستخدام استبيان على مقياس ليكرت من خمس نقاط. كان على الطلاب أن يبينوا مستوى اتفاقهم أو عدم موافقتهم في المساحة التي توفرها من خلال تخصيص درجة تتراوح بين "لا يوافقون بشدة"، إلى الموافقة بشدة على جميع الأقسام الخمسة من الاستبيان: الديموغرافية، والخبرة، وإدراك الفائدة، والموقف ودرجة النية لاستخدام التعلم المتنقل لأغراض تعلم اللغة العربية. وخلصت النتائج إلى أن الموقف هو أفضل مؤشر على نية الطلاب نحو استخدام التعلم المتنقل لتعلم اللغة العربية بوصفها لغة أجنبية، في حين أن الخبرة السابقة ليس لها مساهمة كبيرة في التنبؤ بنية الاستخدام.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

.....  
Rosemaliza Mohd Kamalludeen  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

.....  
Muhammad Sabri Sahrir  
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

.....  
Abdul Shakour Duncan Preece  
Head, Department of Curriculum  
and Instruction

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Education and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

.....  
Noor Lide Abu Kassim  
Dean, Kulliyah of Education

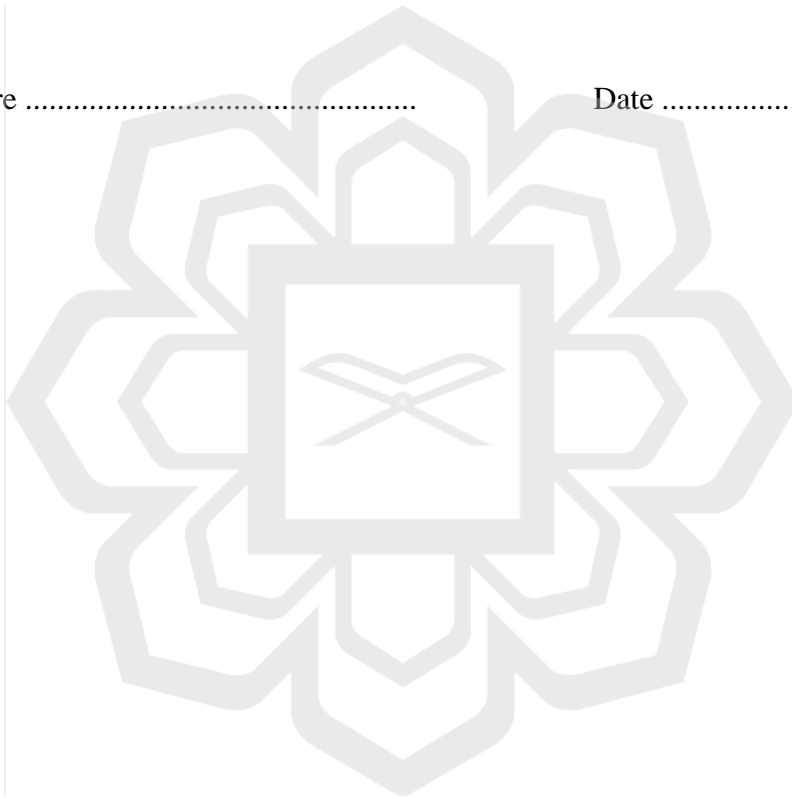
## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Wan Nur Shafiqah Binti Wan Mohamad

Signature .....

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*This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents,  
who have been my eternal source of strength when I thought of giving up  
my husband,  
for his dedicated partnership and support throughout the period  
my teachers especially my supervisor  
Dr. Rosemaliza Binti Mohd Kamalludeen  
for her patience, advice and guidance along the process  
and lastly my family members, family-in-law, and colleagues for their words of  
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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Mobile phone users are expected to increase from year to year, especially with the evolution of high-end android, targeting adolescents as their potential buyers. According to Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Malaysia has a persistent increasing number of mobile phone users. “Smartphone users in Malaysia are expected to reach 11 million this year after registering a compound annual growth rate of 10 percent from 2013 to 2017” (Hasni, 2017). Mobile phones have been used not merely for entertaining, chatting and business purposes. Education sector nowadays is aware of how using mobile phones may give great impacts towards students’ learning, looking at phenomena on how they use mobile phones frequently regardless of wherever they are and for what purposes it is.

Focusing on instructional technology, educators tend to utilize laptops or desktops more than mobile phones for learning purposes. Whereas, mobility of smartphones is more preferable among learners as a medium of resources for learning. These multifunctional devices assist them to communicate, learn, earn as well as have fun in language learning (Hasni, 2017). There are plenty of language mobile apps available on Android and Apple applications stores, to enhance language learners to use mobile to the max. For instance, AnkiDroid Flashcard, Cram.com Flashcards, and VocApp allow learners to learn vocabulary by creating flashcards or using available flashcards created by other users, while LuvLingua and LangJet provide fun adventure games for language learning. Arabic learners may use Arabic Alphabet, DuoLingo, FluentU, Quizlet, and some other applications, since not all thousands of applications

available in Android and Apple stores are applicable for Arabic language. With these interactive learning applications, it is such a waste if educators do not maximize any opportunities that they have to attract learners' interest in learning Arabic language using mobile devices.

Arabic language is used widely by the world community. Nearly a billion people worldwide speak Arabic language over the world (Hasni, 2017). Regardless of nationality, people of non-native speakers learn Arabic language for various purposes, be it for education, international economic relationships, political purposes and etc. Learning a foreign language for non-native speakers requires continuous effort of learning (Ama, 2019), intense desire, pace and guts to acquire the language (Comben, 2016).

Most Malaysian Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) learners undeniably still depend on the method of memorizing word lists as a necessary means for Arabic vocabulary learning using form of repetition (Alhashmi, 2014). Whereas, teachers in Arab countries are supportive towards Internet as the main component needed in teaching English as a foreign language. It provides relevant learning sources that suit students' needs rather than depending on textbook content (Alhabahba & Ali Mahfoodh, 2016). Furthermore, mobile-assisted language learning is more attractive and interesting and it has been accepted widely in education as a method of learning foreign language (Jovanović, 2017). Regrettably, even though some teachers invest great effort in using technology to keep updated with global trends, they still seem to be outdated from developed countries, especially when it comes to teaching foreign languages using mobile technology (Jovanović, 2017).

Various studies have claimed the importance of mobile learning in education, with several of them focusing on Arabic language. It is proven that students are

satisfied with the mobile application due to its ease of use (Al-Rikabi, 2016; Muriyatmoko, Abdullah & Adhiim, 2018). However, it could not completely replace the traditional methodology used in learning Arabic (Hasni, 2017). Besides, the usefulness of being able to comprehend information that they see and hear on a daily basis has been indicated to be of importance. “M-Learning is a unique learning where students can access related materials, instructions and applications, regardless of time or place” (Hasni, 2017).

Meanwhile, Sahrir, Zainuddin and Nasir (2016) in their research declare that students are more interested to use mobile-device platforms compared to web-based in accessing Learning Management System (LMS) for Arabic language since it is said to provide more self-learning options and learning support. Furthermore, learners at Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) prefer to use mobile computer technology compared to mobile phone technology to support Arabic learning. This is because mobile phone usage is restricted more as a medium to communicate rather than learning (Dahaman, Ismail & Fabil, 2012). Irrespective of the number of studies on Arabic language and mobile learning, there is no research yet predicting the intention of IIUM students to use mobile learning in learning Arabic as a second language. Thus, the present research tries to predict factors triggering IIUM non-native students' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic language; in the context of students' experience, attitude or perceived usefulness of mobile learning itself.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Plenty of research have proven that mobile learning is effective for language learning. However, Malaysian pre-university students are prone to use learning methodologies that are easier, not too inventive and do not require a high level of reasoning, which

shows that learning Arabic language in Malaysia is still extremely distant from accomplishing the actual vocabulary learning objectives (Baharudin & Ismail, 2017).

Besides, the current pandemic of Coronavirus (Covid-19) resulted in a change of learning mode, where online learning is the only way as a medium of teaching. Students agreed that there is a need to improve learning modules in mobile form, although this will create another concern about increasing usage of internet data. This in the meantime proves students' intention to use mobile learning for Arabic language learning (Firdaus Yahaya et al., 2021). Another study also would recommend the use of mobile learning to learn Arabic language during this pandemic, as it succeeds in overcoming difficulties in learning Arabic, such as word pronunciation and vocabulary learning (Akla et al., 2020). Besides, mobile learning significantly boosted students' motivation, optimism and enthusiasm to learn Arabic language during pandemic (Daud et al., 2020).

In Yemen, university students' perceived ease of use and usefulness were found to have significant positive effects on their intention to use mobile learning (Alrajawy, Isaac, Ghosh, Nusari, Al-Shibami & Ameen, 2018). Another research concluded that self-efficacy, perception of usefulness, ease of use as well as subjective norms are significant predictors of intention to use mobile learning among university students in Yemen (Alrajawy, Daud, Isaac & Mutahar, 2017).

Mobile applications in language learning have changed the way people learn languages in foreign countries, but to certain extent, it supports Arabic language learning in an international setting like the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Do students have any intention to use mobile learning for Arabic learning? This research attempts to predict the degree of intention to use mobile learning for

Arabic learning purposes, among non-native IIUM students based on their experiences, perceptions and attitude.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this research is to identify the extent to which non-native speakers of Arabic languages' experience of mobile learning for Arabic learning, their perception of usefulness, attitude and intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic as a foreign language. This research is also conducted to establish whether experiences, perceived usefulness and attitude are statistically significant predictors of students' intention to use mobile learning in learning Arabic as a foreign language.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Referring to prior objectives, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the extent of non-native speakers of Arabic languages' experience in using mobile learning to learn Arabic?
- ii. What is the extent of usefulness of mobile learning to learn Arabic, as perceived by non-native speakers of Arabic language?
- iii. What are the attitudes of non-native speakers of Arabic language towards mobile learning to learn Arabic?
- iv. What is the extent of non-native speakers of Arabic languages' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic?
- v. Do experiences, perceived usefulness, and attitude predict students' intention to use mobile learning in learning Arabic as a foreign language?

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Findings from the study explain predictors of students' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic as a foreign language; either past experiences, perceived usefulness or attitude. Knowledge about students' reactions towards mobile learning in Arabic language learning benefits educators and curriculum developers of an institution. They are able to use this information in deciding whether to infuse teaching Arabic language using mobile learning, to modify or discontinue with the existing teaching methods. This could be applied to any institutions with non-native speaker learners of Arabic as a foreign language.

The findings also intend to explore the degree of intention to use mobile learning among Arabic language learners. With low degree of intention, for example, educational authorities i.e. The Curriculum Development Division and Educational Technology Division of the Ministry of Education may want to collaborate in initiating better plan to attract interest among Arabic language learners to use mobile learning, in order to promote IT literacy among Arabic language graduates.

Poor level of perceived usefulness of existing mobile learning is expected to create awareness among instructional technology and mobile developer teams, either to modify current mobile learning, or produce and launch new mobile learning platform for better engagement with learners. Allocations of funds from authorities will be helpful to generate a long-term plan for Arabic language mobile app development projects. Besides, perception of the current Arabic mobile learning from this study is expected to create awareness among educators at colleges and universities in implementing an effort to utilize mobile learning in teaching the skills of Arabic language.

## 1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory was introduced by Fred Davis in his doctorate study in 1986. Adapted from Theory of Reasonable Action, TAM theory was explicitly custom-fitted to display users' acceptance of technologies as well as information systems; outlining two items: Perceived of Usefulness and Perceived of Ease of Use (Lai, 2017). This research deploys TAM theory, version of 1996 by Venkatesh and Davis. The theory was modified according to predictors in this study as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

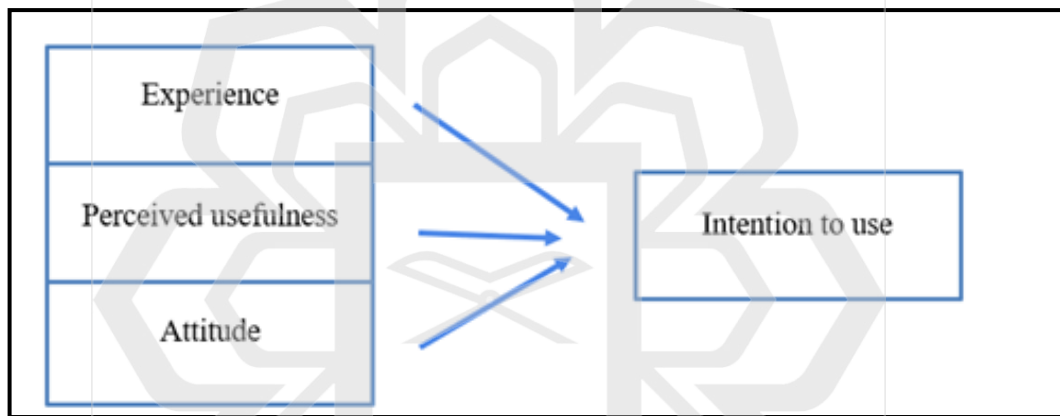


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework outlining this study

Construct of ease of use was taken out from the measurement, while attitude and experience were added as another construct. Ease of use is not an issue with this group of learners who are highly conversant with mobile technology. Meanwhile, students' attitude and previous experiences in mobile learning are expected to affect students' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic as a foreign language. This framework will be explained further in Chapter 2.

## **1.7 DELIMITATION OF STUDY**

The research intends to study predictors of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) undergraduate non-native Arabic language students' intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic as a foreign language. In this study, respondents were registered students of Arabic language courses with codes of LQ 0210, LQ 0430, LQ 0516 and LQ 0616; under Centre for Languages and Pre-University Academic Development (CELPAD), at IIUM, Gombak. Registered students under these 4 codes will be majoring in Arabic-based courses later on in their undergraduate level, such as Bachelor of Arabic Language Literature, Teaching Arabic as a Second Language, Arabic for International Communication, Modern Arabic and etc. This makes it crucial to identify their degree of intention to use mobile learning in learning Arabic language.

Samples chosen were students of non-native speakers of Arabic language only in order to get their perceptions towards learning Arabic as a foreign language using mobile learning. Acquisition level of Arabic words among native speakers is different compared to non-native speakers. Thus, the delimitation was made focusing only on non-native speakers to get their perceptions on learning of Arabic using mobile learning.

Another delimitation was Arabic language, looking at the phenomenon of low level of mobile learning usage for Arabic learning purposes. This could be seen when Arabic language learning online resources and mobile applications are scarce in the market, compared to English language. Some existing online resources are unsuitable for Arabic language level of Malaysian learners; for instance, in terms of language slang and selection of words. Some instructors and students prefer to have the old

instructional methodology which is memorization, due to lack of awareness and availability of suitable online Arabic resources and application to use mobile learning. Mobile learning in this research is restricted to the use of mobile phone to learn Arabic as a foreign language. This includes accessing any online materials, or utilizing any installed mobile applications using featured interfaces on the phones.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

This section will present definitions of the terms used in this study. These operational definitions are provided to signify the researcher's intended use of the technical terminologies in this study. The terms are mobile learning, foreign language, non-native speakers, experience, perceived usefulness, attitude and intention to use mobile learning.

### **Mobile learning**

Any activities that allow learners to be more productive using digital portable devices regardless of where they are (Enders, 2013) as cited by Abu Laban (2017). Mobile learning could be utilized using software applications installed in mobile phones to write, record or snap pictures as well as to access online sources, for Arabic language learning purposes regardless of where the students are. Mobile learning also allows users to share and exchange information with other learners using online sharing medium or mobile applications.

### **Foreign language**

“A language is considered foreign if it is learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society where the teaching occurs” (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Bahasa

Melayu is a mother tongue in Malaysia and spoken by Malaysians regardless of race. English language is a second language used in Malaysia due to the globalization of English and widely used in some foreign states. On the other hand, Arabic language is a foreign language learned in the classroom, but not spoken among the Malaysian community. It is specifically spoken by those who have learned it in Malaysian learning institutions such as International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM).

### **Non-native speakers**

‘Non-native speakers’ in this research refers to learners with non-Arabic language as their mother tongue. They could be learning Arabic language for academic purposes. Only students of non-native speakers of Arabic language are applicable to be respondents of this research.

### **Experience of mobile learning**

Chuttur (2009) defined experience as individual’s prior experience in using certain technology. ‘Experience’ in this study refers to students’ personal experience in using mobile learning for Arabic learning purposes. If students have positive experiences using mobile learning previously, they will be more likely to use mobile learning for Arabic learning in the future. The construct is measured using six (6) Likert items, on a 5-point agreement scale, in a quantitative survey.

### **Perceived usefulness of mobile learning**

‘Perceived usefulness’ is defined as ‘the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance’ (F. Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989) as cited in Alrajawy et al. (2018). The study justifies the degree to which non-native students believe that using mobile learning would enhance their Arabic learning performance. The construct is measured using six (6) Likert items, on a 5-point agreement scale, in a quantitative survey.

### **Attitude towards using mobile learning**

Ajzen and Fishben (1980) defined attitude as “person’s judgement that performing the behavior is good or bad, that he is in favor of or against performing the behavior” as cited by Karaali et al. (2011). ‘Attitude’ in this study reflects on how students perceive mobile learning usage for Arabic language learning, inclusive of their personal preferences. The construct is measured using five (5) Likert items, on a 5-point agreement scale, in a quantitative survey.

### **Intention to use mobile learning**

‘Intention to use’ is defined as "a measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specific behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) as cited in Alrajawy et al. (2018). It indicates students’ degree of ambition to use mobile learning purposely for learning Arabic language as a foreign language. Do they have any intention to keep utilizing mobile learning in Arabic learning in the future, at their will? The construct is measured using six (6) Likert items, on a 5-point agreement scale, in a quantitative survey.

## **1.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Plenty of research proves that mobile learning has significant effects on language learning, yet there is no research predicting intention of IIUM students to use mobile learning in learning Arabic. Identifying students' previous experiences, perception of usefulness, attitude and intention to use mobile learning to learn Arabic would be helpful for instructors to consider utilizing mobile learning in teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

