



USING TEXT MESSAGING SERVICES  
TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' READING  
COMPREHENSION AND  
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of the mobile phone text messaging facility (SMS) on students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. Six hundred and fifty-one (651) local and international students from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) were involved in this study. They were taking the various English language proficiency courses from lower to intermediate levels namely LE 0225 (English Language II), LE 0320 (English Language III), LE 0420 (English Language IV), LE 0520 (English Language V), LE 0620 (English Language VI). The students were divided into two groups consisting of 438 students in the experimental groups and 213 students in the control groups. Students in the experimental groups were exposed to the SMS reading activity. Reading comprehension texts, comprehension questions, and answers were sent to their mobile phones for approximately 3 months. Students in the control groups were not exposed to this kind of activity. Standardised reading comprehension test prepared by the Centre for Languages and Pre-University Academic Development (CELPAD) at IIUM and Cornell Critical Thinking Test (Level X) were administered before and after treatment to measure students' development in reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. A questionnaire survey was administered at the beginning of the study to find out students' demographic characteristics and their mobile phone usage. Students' comments and feedback on the SMS reading activity were obtained at the end of the treatment via interviews and emails. The findings revealed that students in the experimental groups improved significantly in reading comprehension compared to the control groups. The findings also revealed that the students improved significantly in critical thinking and the sub-skills of critical thinking. The findings based on students' comments and feedback revealed that they enjoyed the activity and felt they had improved in reading comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary, writing, speaking, and figurative language. The study suggests there is a potential in adopting mobile devices namely mobile phones to complement classroom learning.

## حلاصة البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من الآثار المترتبة على استخدام الرسائل النصية SMS للهواتف المحمولة على مهارات القراءة، والفهم والتفكير الناقد للطلاب. اشترك في هذه الدراسة ستمائة وواحد وخمسون (651) طالباً. من الطلاب المحليين والعالميين المشتسبين للجامعة الإسلامية العمية في مايربا (IUM). وينتقى أفراد العينة مسويات مختمة لإتقان اللغة الإنجليزية بدءاً من المستوى الأدنى وانتهاءً بالمتوسط (ويتميز لتلك المستويات بـ (LE0225)، (LE0320)، (LE0420)، (LE0520)، (LE0620)، وقد قُسمت الطلاب أفراد العينة إلى مجموعتين (438) طالباً للمجموعة التحريية، و(213) طالباً للمجموعة الضابطة. وقد تم إخضاع الطلاب في المجموعات التحريية إلى نشاط قرائي باستخدام الرسائل النصية (SMS)، وأرسلت لهم نصوص للقراءة والفهم، وأسئلة للفهم والاستيعاب وإجابات عنها على هواتفهم المحمولة مدة 3 أشهر. بينما لم يتعرض طلاب المجموعة الضابطة لهذا النوع من النشاط. وقد تم توزيع اختبار معياري للقراءة والفهم بعدد من قبل اختبار CELFAD في جامعة إنسانوية عمية في مايربا، فضلاً عن اختبار التفكير الناقد في مستوى الخامس) قبل النشاط القرائي وبعده لقياس مدى تطور الطلاب في مهارات فهم المقروء، والتفكير الناقد. وتم توزيع استمارة في بداية الدراسة لمعرفة الخصائص الديموغرافية للطلاب أفراد العينة، واستخدامهم للهواتف المحمولة. وتم الحصول على تعليقات الطلاب، والتغذية الراجعة لنشاط قراءة الرسائل القصيرة في نهاية النشاط عن طريق المقابلة الشخصية، والبريد الإلكتروني. كشفت النتائج أن طلاب المجموعة التحريية طرأ عليهم تحسن كبير في مهارات فهم المادة المقروءة مغاربه مع المجموعات الضابطة، كما كشفت عن تقدم ملحوظ في التفكير الناقد ومهارات التفكير الناقد الفرعية. كما أوضحت النتائج التي استندت على تعليقات الطلاب وردود فعلهم بأنهم استمتعوا بأداء النشاط، وشعروا بأن مستواهم قد تحسن في القراءة والفهم، والتفكير الناقد، والذخيرة اللغوية، والكتابة فضلاً عن الكلام، واللغة التصويرية، وتقترح الدراسة إمكانية الاعتماد على الهواتف المحمولة لاستكمال العملية التعليمية.

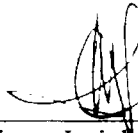
## APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Zamnah Husin has been approved by the following:



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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, 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.

Zamnah Husin

Signature..........

Date..... 1st AUGUST 2012 .....

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*Zamnah*  
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