

Exploring EFL Teachers' Perception on Readiness to Use Smartphones for Teaching Oral English Communication Skills at Tertiary Level¹

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the EFL teachers' perception of their readiness to use different smartphone applications for teaching oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh and compares this to the relevant demographic factors. To reach these objectives, a mixed method research design was implemented. A survey questionnaire was answered by 46 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from twelve different universities in Bangladesh and a semi-structured interview was conducted with five of these teachers. The results showed that these EFL teachers had a high degree of readiness to use smartphones for teaching oral skills. The teachers agreed that smartphones could help them to deal with the problems like a large class size, a lack of authentic materials, learners' inactiveness, as well as a lack of an oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, there was no statistically significant relationship between the EFL teachers' demographics and their readiness to use a smartphone. The results suggest that smartphone applications have certain potentials/benefits for the university teachers, and that a smartphone-based teaching method for developing EFL learners' oral skills should be promoted in an EFL context like Bangladesh.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la percepción de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre su disposición para usar diferentes aplicaciones de teléfonos inteligentes para enseñar habilidades orales en el nivel terciario en Bangladesh y lo compara con los factores demográficos relevantes. Para alcanzar estos objetivos, se implementó un diseño de investigación de método mixto: un cuestionario de encuesta fue respondido por 46 profesores de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE) de doce universidades diferentes en Bangladesh y se realizó una entrevista semiestructurada con cinco de estos profesores. Los resultados mostraron que estos profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera tenían un alto grado de preparación para usar teléfonos inteligentes para enseñar habilidades orales. Los profesores estuvieron de acuerdo en que los teléfonos inteligentes podrían ayudarlos a lidiar con problemas como clases grandes, la falta de materiales auténticos, la pasividad de los alumnos y la falta de oportunidades de práctica oral dentro y fuera del aula. Además, no se encontró una relación estadísticamente significativa entre los datos demográficos de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera y su disposición para usar un teléfono inteligente. Los resultados sugieren que las aplicaciones para teléfonos inteligentes tienen ciertos potenciales / beneficios para los profesores universitarios, y que un método de enseñanza basado en teléfonos inteligentes para desarrollar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera debería promoverse en un contexto de inglés como lengua extranjera como es Bangladesh.

Introduction

In the era of the fourth industrial revolution, English as a global language has become an essential communication tool in all spheres of knowledge (Shuhaimi & Awaludin, 2018). In English as a foreign Language (EFL) context, the job market often demands EFL graduates to have competence in content knowledge and oral English communication skills (Aliyu, 2017; Ibna Seraj et al., 2020; Pandey, 2014; Zukurnain & Kaur, 2014). In response to the importance of English, learners are expected to be proficient in oral English communication skills (OECSs) for offline and online communications in all facets of their academic and professional activities (Ibna Seraj et al., 2020). Therefore, there should be a special focus on the teaching and development of oral skills of EFL learners. Teaching and learning procedures are now steered by technology with the assistance of teachers who are considered to be facilitators rather than the custodian of knowledge (Atanda, 2018). Using smartphones and smartphone applications (apps) is changing the role of teachers as facilitators of language skills development.

There has been a significant increase in the adoption and integration of mobile devices into teaching and learning in the past two decades (Stec et al., 2018). Specifically, the smartphone is becoming the most widespread and extensively used tool for learning and teaching worldwide (Al-Furaih & Al-Awidi, 2018). A

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smartphone should not only be added to the existing teaching methods but should be also seen as a modern instrument for improvement and paradigm shifting from the traditional teaching method to new ways of learning and teaching (Razak et al., 2018).

Such smartphone apps as *WhatsApp*, *Recorder*, *YouTube*, and *Messenger* are highly valued by teachers and learners in terms of usability, processing power, and connectivity in their daily lives. They also have the potential of being a convenient platform to provide learning and teaching oral skills, based on inside and outside classroom activities and tasks. Researchers consider that the objective of creating smartphone apps that are integrated into the language teaching method is not something unattainable; it is already a reality. The convenience of such technology sets a new set of challenges for teachers (Hamat et al., 2012). Their primary concern is that there is a demand for a change in teaching, so that teachers can be able to incorporate smartphone devices into classroom learning in an efficient way. In reality, the ownership of smartphones does not automatically mean they will be effectively used in the classroom, for teaching and learning language skills by teachers and learners (Christensen & Knezek, 2017). Furthermore, the development of oral skills by EFL learners requires the specific learning environment, which will facilitate their practice of oral skills inside and outside the classroom.

In this regard, this phenomenon has been investigated from several different viewpoints. While some researchers have examined the design of technology, the majority of previous studies have addressed students' perceptions regarding the use of smartphones for language learning purposes (Okai-Ugbaje et al., 2020). Like learners, teachers are also vital and pertinent stakeholders of learning and teaching process. Few studies have dealt with the teachers' perception of their readiness to use smartphones for teaching language skills in EFL contexts (Christensen & Knezek, 2017; Connolly et al., 2019; Hamat et al., 2012).

Moreover, the rank of Bangladesh is ninth in the world according to the number of users of smartphones. (Wikipedia, 2021). So, the smartphone has become the one of the most commonly used devices for everyday communication. According to the *Master Plan, 2012-2021* (Ministry of Planning, 2020), the government authorities of Bangladesh have emphasized the use of communication tools for facilitating and standardizing the teaching and learning environment in order to produce skilled human resources. However, there is a lack of evidence in this previous research regarding teachers' readiness for using smartphones in teaching oral English communication skills.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to examine teachers' readiness to use a smartphone in order to facilitate the teaching of oral English communication skills and whether there is an effect of these teachers' demographics on their level of readiness. Finally, this paper would suggest some implications for education policymakers regarding the use of smartphones in order to tackle such problems as large class size, a lack of authentic materials, learners' inactiveness, as well as a lack of oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom at this level. Moreover, this study would contribute to providing insights for teachers and education policymakers to revise/restructure their curriculum design and teaching methodology for OECSs.

Literature Review

Smartphones, which have multifaceted functions that can be used at the convenience of the teachers and learners, are becoming popular in the classroom to improve learners' oral communication skills (Darmi & Albion, 2017). Smartphone-based teaching and learning offers an environment in which teachers can constantly convey meaning, and redirect and assess students' performance through collaboration and response. Smartphones are considered to be a useful tool for increasing learners' second language proficiency (Andújar-Vaca & Cruz-Martinez, 2017).

Extensive research has been conducted to explore the potential of integrating smartphone into the classroom from learners' perspectives (Lee et al., 2019; Mizad et al., 2019; Moosavi et al., 2018; Murugan et al., 2017; Shamsudin et al., 2017), whereas few studies are found on investigating teachers' readiness for teaching language skills with smartphones (Al-Furaih & Al-Awidi, 2018; Miglani & Awadhiya, 2017), especially in Bangladesh.

As teachers occupy a vital role in developing learners' language skills using modern technology, there are a few studies that have investigated teachers' readiness for the use of different smartphone apps and sustainable teaching and learning processes needed in the classroom (Miglani & Awadhiya, 2017; Atanda, 2018; Okai-Ugbaje et al., 2020). Atanda (2018) has conducted a research project in Nigerian context,

using a mixed-method approach; it was reported that faculty members had a high level of readiness for the use of various smartphone apps, such as *WhatsApp, Facebook, Wikipedia, Google+, Tube, Ask.com, Instagram, Twitter, Slideshare, WordPress, Viber, Del.icio.us, Pinterest* and *Flickr* for facilitating learning and teaching process at the tertiary level. It was found that gender did not affect teacher's use of digital devices in their teaching (Muhammet & Okan, 2018). In a similar context with the same approach, the results suggested that academicians had a high level of readiness for use of smartphones in order to make a change from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach regarding teaching of language skills (Okai-Ugbaje et al., 2020).

Moreover, teachers who had a high level of readiness found many benefits to using smartphones in the classroom (Christensen & Knezek, 2017). In an Australian context, a study by Connolly et al. (2019), suggested that teachers' readiness for the use of smartphone apps such as Facebook, enhances learning through sharing knowledge and prompting interaction between teachers and learners. In terms of willingness, female teachers showed more than male teachers in Pakistani universities regarding the use of smartphones in higher education (Butt & Qaisar, 2017). Furthermore, a study among teachers from open Universities of Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka reported that teachers had a positive perception of using a smartphone to engage the learners to a greater extent via enhancing the collaboration and communication among academics. Still, there is a need to explore teachers' readiness for the use of digital devices in their teaching (Miglani & Awadhiya, 2017).

Nonetheless, few studies on teachers' readiness to incorporate smartphones into their teaching were found in the existing literature. In the Arabic context, a qualitative study reported that English language teachers were not ready yet to use technologies for English language teaching and learning process (Razak et al., 2018). This study also suggested that the implementation of technologies in the classroom depended on the teachers' willingness and efficacy of using technology. Another study conducted in Greece found that teachers were not willing to adopt technology as they thought that there were several issues like students' discipline issues and the difficulty in controlling them, the noise disruption in class, and students' distraction (Nikolopoulou, 2020). Moreover, based on the analysis of literature review on previous research, there is a scarcity of studies on the influence of teachers' demographic factors on their readiness for using smartphones in teaching oral skills,

In order to investigate the readiness of teachers to use smartphones and how this relates to their demographics, the following research questions were devised.

1. *What is the level of readiness of tertiary-level teachers to use the smartphone in oral English communication skills teaching practice at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?*
2. *To what extent are teachers' demographic factors related to their readiness to use smartphones and apps in teaching oral English communication skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh and are there any interrelationships among the factors?*

Method

In order to examine the EFL teachers' readiness to use a smartphone for teaching oral English communication skills and any relationship between teachers' demographic factors and their readiness, a mixed-method research design (explanatory sequential design) was implemented using quantitative and qualitative data in this study. Explanatory sequential mixed method design commences with quantitative data and ends with qualitative data where quantitative is more accentuated than qualitative to explore the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, the researchers employed a survey design questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for collecting data to obtain the research objectives. For quantitative data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was used to identify the central tendency of readiness and the relationship between demographic factors and readiness.

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 46 university teachers who were teaching English as a foreign language at twelve different public and private universities located in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Bogra in Bangladesh. The participants were selected by employing a purposive sampling technique. Hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed among them for them to fill out. The researchers got permission for conducting survey and interview among teachers from the Dean or head of the schools under investigation and participants took part in the study voluntarily after signing the consent forms. The responses were collected from June to August 2019. The demographic information is presented in Table 1. Out of the 46

participants, 29 were male (63%), and 17 were female (37%). The participants who participated in this study held different academic position at the respective schools, such as lecturer (58.7%), assistant professor (37%), and associate professor (4.3%). The participants had experience in teaching English at undergraduate (19.7%), post-graduate level (4.3%), and both levels (76%). The participants worked at private universities (80.4%) and public universities (19.6%).

S.L.	Factors	Category	N	%
1	Gender	Male	29	63
		Female	17	37
2	Academic Position	Lecturer	27	58.7
		Assistant Professor	17	37
		Associate Professor	2	4.3
3	Teaching experience	1-5 yrs	26	56.5
		6-10 yrs	9	19.6
		11 yrs+	11	23.9
4	Level of teaching	Undergraduate	9	19.6
		Post-Graduate	2	4.3
		Both	35	76.1
5	Workplace	Public University	9	19.6
		Private University	37	80.4

Table 1. Demographic information

Data Collection Procedure

In order to examine the EFL teachers' readiness to use a smartphone for teaching oral English communication skills, a set of 14 items in the questionnaire was adapted from Almutairy et al. (2015) and Ismail et al. (2013). The questionnaire (see Table 3) had two sections: The first section included five questions related to demographic factors, and the second section was devoted to the items regarding the EFL teachers' readiness scale. The readiness scale consists of 14 items divided in the following way: items 1-8 were related teachers' knowledge and use of smartphone and items 9-14 were teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of smartphones for teaching language skills. The items in this section of the questionnaire followed a five-point Likert scale as Strongly Disagree=1; Disagree=2; Neutral=3; Agree=4; Strongly Agree=5.

In order to check the validity of the tool, the set of twenty items questionnaires was sent to three English language-teaching experts who were asked to examine the data to identify any incongruences in the items used. The experts' views were taken into consideration and the questionnaire was revised accordingly. This step assisted the authors in adjusting the confusing language and in the deleting six unnecessary or redundant items. Finally, considering the experts' feedback, fourteen items were finally approved. The reliability of the final version of the questionnaire was measured statistically: the Cronbach's alpha value of teachers' readiness was 0.815. According to Cortina (1993), the value of Cronbach's alpha, between .70 to .10, indicates that the items of the questionnaire have standard marking points. Hence, the values of Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire showed that the items of the questionnaire had good interrater reliability. The values of Cronbach's alpha also aided in confirming the suitability of the items in the questionnaire to regulate the research objectives, and that the content was comprehensible to teachers/participants.

The authors used a semi-structured interview for qualitative data collection. For the interviews, the participants were selected by using purposive sampling technique until the saturation point appeared at the point of interviewing participant-6 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The samples of interview question were "How many years are you using a smartphone?", "Can you use different apps like WhatsApp, Voice, and Recorder for teaching oral English communication skills?", "How do you think smartphone apps such as WhatsApp, Voice Recorder are effective for teaching oral English communication skills?". After interviewing the five teachers, the saturation point emerged. Among the five participants, three were males, and the remaining two were female. The interview lasted around 15-20 minutes.

Data analysis process

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 25 and qualitative data were analyzed using NVIVO-12. The analysis of the quantitative data was focused on the frequency of the level of teachers' readiness by the descriptive analysis and the relationship between demographic factors and teachers' readiness by inferential analysis (Pearson Correlation). On the other hand, the qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed with NVIVO-12 for coding, sub coding, and categorizing for building themes (Creswell & Creswell,

2018). Themes were developed from qualitative data to support quantitative results. Four themes, such as availability, usability, attitude, and the role of demographic factors in using a smartphone for teaching OECSS at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, have emerged.

Results

The results of quantitative and qualitative data are presented as follows:

Quantitative Results

With respect to Research Questions 1 and 2, after collecting quantitative data the participants' responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to be further analysed statistically (SPSS: Version 25.0), and get descriptive and inferential statistical results.

Descriptive statistics for frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were conducted in relation to RQ1. The frequency and percentage of the five Likert scales of the EFL teachers' readiness items are presented in Table 2 after running the SPSS 25.0 analysis. The total number of responses was 644 (100%), which came from the 46 participants' responses to the 14 questions of the experimental tool. Out of these responses, 71.89% are "Agree" and "Strongly Agree," (463 responses combined). On the other hand, 14.6% responded with "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" which is similar to the number answering "Neutral," 13.51%.

Teachers' Readiness					
Valid		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
	Strongly Disagree	19	2.95	2.95	2.95
	Disagree	75	11.65	11.65	14.60
	Neutral	87	13.51	13.51	28.11
	Agree	169	26.24	26.24	54.35
	Strongly Agree	294	45.65	45.65	100
	Total	644	100	100	

Table 2. Teachers' readiness to use the smartphone

Table 3 presents the descriptive item analysis of the teachers' readiness scale of using a smartphone for teaching OECSS. 'Neutral' was treated as a midpoint (3), and the mean value higher than three (3) was considered that participants had a high-level of readiness.

Teachers' Readiness						
Usability				Mean	Std. Dev.	Level
1	I have a skill to use the Applications apps of a smartphone (Android/iOS) for teaching oral skills.			4.43	0.89	High
2	I frequently access into the internet at home and university through a smartphone.			4.78	0.51	High
3	I can use the educational apps (For example dictionary) through a smartphone.			4.52	.72	High
4	I can use social apps (For example <i>FB Messenger/ WhatsApp</i>) through a smartphone for connecting with teachers.			4.63	.57	High
5	I can take a help for teaching materials from online (For example <i>Google/YouTube</i>) through a smartphone.			4.58	.69	High
6	I can give tasks to my students by <i>Google Docs/Facebook/email</i> using a smartphone.			3.43	1.19	High
7	I provide feedback to my students by <i>Google Docs/Facebook/email</i> using a smartphone.			3.21	1.26	High
8	I record my students' performance by camera / recorder using apps of a smartphone.			3.76	1.31	High
Opinion						
9	I think using apps of a smartphone can provide learners oral practice environment inside and outside the class.			3.96	.85	High
10	Using apps of a smartphone can help to manage large class size for teaching oral English communication skills.			3.26	1.06	High
11	I think smartphone-based teaching will make learners active.			4.34	.77	High
12	I think a smartphone can provide authentic materials for teaching Oral English Communication skills.			4.33	.82	High
13	I think a smartphone can be a useful tool for teaching Oral English Communication skills.			4.37	.77	High
14	I think using apps of a smartphone can bring innovation into oral English communication skills teaching.			4.36	.80	High

Table 3. Teachers' Readiness item Scales Analysis* (N=46)

The results show that the mean values of EFL teachers' readiness scale of both teachers' usability of smartphones and opinions on effectiveness of using smartphones were above midpoint (3.00). From the items about usability, the mean value of the teachers' skill using a smartphone was 4.3, the frequency of

accessing the internet with a smartphone was 4.78, the frequency of using educational apps was 4.52, and the mean value of using social apps was 4.63. As regards the use of smartphones as teaching materials was 4.58, the usability for providing tasks was 3.43, and for getting feedback was 3.21. The mean value of the items about teachers' opinions on using a smartphone for managing large class was 3.26, for making learners' active, 4.34, for providing authentic materials, 4.33, as a teaching tool, 4.37, for providing an oral practice environment, 3.96 and for bringing innovation into teaching oral skills, 4.36. Also, the results show that the mean values of all items were above midpoint (3.00), and the standard deviation values of the items were above 0.26.

Relationship between the demographic factors and the readiness

In order to examine the relationship between the demographics and readiness, an inferential statistic calculation using Pearson Correlation was carried out to identify the relationship between demographic factors, such as gender, academic position, teaching experience, level of students taught, and workplace, and the EFL teachers' readiness to use technology in their teaching. In other words, a two-tailed Pearson correlation was performed, and results are presented in Table 4

	Readiness	Gender	Academic Position	Teaching Experience	Level of teaching
Gender	.050	-----			
Academic Position	-.114	-.137	-----		
Teaching Experience	-.007	-.186	.757**	-----	
Level of students taught	-.045	.022	.383**	.407**	-----
Workplace	-.023	-.077	-.179	.070	-.131

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) $p < .01$

Table 4. Correlations between demographic factors and readiness

As shown in Table 4, the results of the study showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender, academic position, experience, level of students taught, or workplace, and the readiness of using a smartphone for teaching OECS. The results suggest that teachers' demographic factors did not affect their' readiness.

Qualitative Results

The analysis of the qualitative data with the help of NVIVO 12 software included four steps: transcribing, importing, coding, and interrater checking. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed four themes, such as availability, usability, attitude, and the role of demographic factors for using a smartphone for teaching OECSs at the tertiary level in Bangladesh, emerged from the analysis.

Availability

Regarding the questions on the availability of the smartphone, four participants reported that they had smartphones, either Android or iOS versions. They had been using a smartphone for many years, see the interview extracts below:

I am using [sic] the Android version for the last four years. (P-1)

I am using [sic] iPhone for the last two years. (P-3)

I have been using mobile phones for five years. (P-2)

I used smartphones mostly at home. (P-5)

But some teachers are using analog phones and are not used to handling smartphones. The following extract illustrates:

I do not know how to use smartphones and its [sic] apps. (P-4)

Most of the participants agreed that they always used their smartphones for the purpose of communication in their everyday life.

Usability

Concerning the ability to use a smartphone, all the participants reported that they used some mobile apps along with the calling and sending messages function. They also reported that they had an internet connection with smartphones at home and universities and used some social networking apps, such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, and *Messenger* They also surfed websites with a smartphone in order to get

teaching materials. But they did not use the smartphone in their class for teaching purposes, as the extracts from the interviews reveal:

I am using social apps and some educational apps for my personal affairs. I did not do any teaching tasks with my students using a smartphone. (P-1)

I always surf google with my smartphone for searching teaching materials. (P-5)

Attitude

In response to the question regarding the use of the smartphone for teaching oral English communication skills, all the participants showed a positive attitude. They agreed that a smartphone could assist them in developing learners' oral skills and provide an extensive oral practice opportunity. For example:

A smartphone can be a useful tool to teach oral skills. (P-3)

...A smartphone can provide audio-visual aids that can support learners to use oral skills in their practical life. (P-5)

The role of demographic factors for teaching OECSs

Concerning the impact of teachers' demographic features, such as gender, academic position, experience, student level taught, and place of employment, all teachers approved that demographic feature had no consequence on teachers' willingness to use a smartphone to teach oral skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. One participant said, "All the teachers may have the same level of readiness of using a smartphone to teach oral English skills."

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the level of EFL teachers' readiness of using smartphones and the relationship between demographic factors on EFL teachers' readiness to use smartphones in their teaching of oral skills. Based on the results obtained from the quantitative data analysis, EFL teachers' readiness was at a high level at the tertiary level in Bangladesh: using a smartphone as a teaching tool for oral English communication skills obtained the highest mean value. Thus, the results from quantitative data analysis indicate that these EFL teachers at the tertiary level were ready to use smartphones for teaching oral English skills. For example, most of the teachers reported that they were using an Android /IOS smartphone along with the internet at home and university. These results show that smartphones with the access to internet were available to EFL teachers. They also used several apps of the smartphone, such as educational and social networking apps, namely *WhatsApp*, *Messenger*, *Facebook*, and *Email* in their daily life. This suggests that these apps can be used as teaching tools for teaching oral English communication skills. Teachers had a strong opinion regarding the use of smartphone apps, such as *WhatsApp* and voice recorder for dealing with problems like large class size, authentic materials, learners' activeness, as well as oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom. This result suggests that the smartphone apps could also be used for facilitating the environment for the oral practice, managing large-size classes, providing authentic materials, and active engagement of learners in oral tasks.

Some findings regarding English teachers' readiness for using a smartphone in teaching language skills are in line with previous studies (Christensen & Knezek, 2017; Okai-Ugbaje et al., 2020; Razak et al., 2018). Furthermore, the results of the study showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender, academic position, experience, level of students taught, workplace, and their readiness for using a smartphone for teaching OECS. The results suggest that teachers' demographic factors did not affect teachers' readiness. This part of quantitative results is partially aligned with the study of Muhammet and Okan (2018).

In addition, the results from the qualitative data analysis support the results of the quantitative data analysis as the EFL teachers were ready to use smartphones for teaching oral English communication skills. The qualitative results show that EFL teachers had smartphones (availability) and skills to use (usability). This also reveals that EFL teachers had a positive attitude towards using a smartphone for teaching oral English communication skills. There is no effect of demographic factors on the readiness of using a smartphone for teaching language skills. This qualitative result reveals different aspects of readiness rather than the study of Connolly et al. (2019) and contrasts with the study by Razak et al. (2018) and Nikolopoulou (2020).

The quantitative and qualitative results of the study from EFL teachers' perspectives predict that smartphones have the potential to be used for teaching oral skills dealing with the problems like large class size, lack of authentic materials, lack of oral practice environment, and passive role of learners.

These results are aligned with some other studies. For example, teacher trainees had a high level of readiness for using different apps, such as *Facebook*, *Youtube*, *Viber*, and *Tweeter* on smartphones for teaching and learning processes in the Nigerian context (Atanda, 2018; Okai-Ugbaje et al., 2020). In the Pakistani context, university teachers had a high level of readiness for the use of smartphones for learning and teaching purposes (Butt & Qaisar, 2017). These results deviated from the study of an Arabic context where English teachers were not yet ready to use a smartphone (Razak et al., 2018).

Further, the results suggest that teachers, as well as researchers, can use smartphone apps in order to deal with the problems facing education at the tertiary level, as well as to provide or create an environment for oral practice inside and outside the classroom. In addition, this study has indicated that the use of the apps of the smartphone and smartphone-based teaching could bring innovation into the traditional teaching method to teach OECSs at the level studied.

Moreover, this study also suggested that teachers' demographic factors (e.g., gender, position, teaching experience, level of teaching, and workplace) did not influence the readiness for using a smartphone for teaching purposes. These results supported part of Atanda (2018) and Muhammet and Okan (2018) and reported that teachers' readiness did not differ depending on teachers' gender.

Limitations of the Study

There are three major limitations in this study. First, it has investigated only teachers who were teaching EFL at different twelve public and private universities. Second, this study only explored teachers' perceptions of their readiness to use smartphones for teaching oral English communication skills and shows the correlation between teachers' demographic factors and readiness scales within an EFL context. Finally, the study has no longitudinal data on how smartphones work for teaching oral English communication skills over a specific time span.

Implications and Recommendations

Although this study was conducted among the faculty members of the English Departments of twelve different public and private universities in Bangladesh, the authors would like to suggest further investigation in order to develop activities using smartphones that would help with problems like large class size, a lack of authentic materials and little learners' activeness. Further study is also needed to investigate on how smartphones can improve the oral practice environment inside and outside the classroom. The results suggest that there is a potential of using smartphones in the classroom for practical purposes. This study concludes that future research is needed involving more participants and more universities. Finally, an investigation should be conducted on the effect of age on teachers as well as learners' readiness of using a smartphone for teaching other language skills like reading, writing, and listening skills.

Conclusion

This study seems to demonstrate that university teachers in departments of English are ready to use different smartphone apps for teaching oral skills. Teachers are also willing to use smartphone activities to deal with problems like large class size, a lack of authentic materials and learners' activeness, as well as an oral practice environment that can be used inside and outside the classroom. This study also showed that, among the participants, there was no statistically significant relationship between their demographics and their readiness to use the smartphone for teaching oral skills. Hopefully this study will offer an opportunity for university teachers, policymakers, and the government to open a new window of opportunities to begin designing course material that can be made accessible anywhere and anytime through the apps of the smartphone. As the Bangladeshi government has recently emphasized that teachers should facilitate an environment favorable to the growth of technological knowledge it is the right time to encourage the use of smartphone apps.

In general, this study contributes to investigation of the use of smartphone apps as a teaching tool in EFL classrooms, adding information that suggests teachers' readiness in the tertiary education context. For this reason, researchers should promote innovative ways of teaching, curriculum design related to language policy, emphasizing the use of smartphone apps in the classroom for teaching OECSs in EFL contexts.

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