# Using Smartphones for English Speaking Skill Development from the Omani EFL Learners' Perspectives

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**Abstract**

The widespread use of hand-held devices, including smartphones, has been invested in language learning education around the world. This study intends to inspect Omani EFL learners' perspectives on using smartphones to develop their speaking skills. To answer the research questions, the researchers used a 5-point Likert questionnaire to collect data from 259 Omani EFL students from the English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. Findings showed positive beliefs about using smartphones. The participants stated that they sometimes use smartphones for oral skills. In the study, a significant difference between female and male students in terms of perceptions towards smartphones was evident, in addition to a positive correlation between the students' levels of study, perceptions, and uses of smartphones. In light of the results, the study provides invaluable recommendations and pedagogical implications for students, teachers, and syllabi designers.

**Keywords:** Omani EFL learners, Perceptions, Smartphones, Speaking Skills, Uses

## 1. Introduction

Digital technology has become a key part of learning and teaching foreign languages, and modern education has undergone several changes in response to swift technological development (see, for instance, Al-Maashani and Mudhsh, 2023; Al-Raimi et al., 2024 Al-Kadi, 2017; Alshamsi et al., 2020; Al-Yafaei and Mudhsh, 2023; Herrington and Moran, 2009). It can be argued that traditional teaching techniques and learning tools are ineffective for today's generation, whom Prensky (2001) called the '*digital native*' who grew up with digital technology and mobile devices. This digital generation, born in the 1990s or thereabouts, lives now in the age of metaverse and ChatGPT (Ali et al., 2022; Moqbel and Al-Kadi, 2023). Digital technology has given this generation new learning opportunities (Al-Kadi, 2017; Ebrahim et al., 2015) and more motivation (Ali et al., 2023; Alshamsi et al., 2020) to do things daily on the fly. At the same time, modern educational systems wrestle with the new complexities of technology, and they adopt teaching methods and strategies that align with such emerging technological advances and the learning styles and needs that stem from this development (Al-Kadi, 2018; Babiker, 2015; Ebrahim et al., 2015; Herrington and Moran, 2009; Moqbel and Al-Kadi, 2023).

Indeed, digital technology is altering how young people interact with each other inside and outside the classrooms, and educators are considering the impact of these developments on their classroom teaching (Herrington & Moran, 2009). Researchers generally agree that incorporating technology into education leads to new learning techniques that encourage students' participation and decrease their fear (Babiker, 2015; Ebrahim et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2015; Thinley et al., 2014). In English language teaching, the new technology is obvious in the formal curriculum and learners' use of many hand-held devices (Almahdi, 2021; Al-Kadi, 2017; Luo et al., 2015). The smartphone, the most popular mobile device, is an example that has been researched in several EFL contexts. In the age of ChatGPT, both learners and teachers are adept at using mobile devices for English instruction, believing that mobile learning facilitates English learning (Aamri and Suleiman, 2011; Ababneh, 2017; Alshamsi et al., 2020; Klimova, 2019; Moqbel and Al-Kadi, 2023; Pulla, 2020; Thinley et al., 2014).

Despite the vast studies on hand-held devices, including smartphones, the Omani context in this regard still needs more attention. Therefore, this study aims to unfold the Omani EFL learners' perceptions towards using smartphones for improving their English-speaking skills. It, furthermore, intends to determine the correlations between learners' levels of study and their perceptions and use of smartphones for speaking skills and between their perceptions and uses of smartphones. On the other side, the study aims to be recognized and considered a crucial contribution to the EFL field and the Oman Vision 2040 goals of enhancing the linguistic skills of Omani students for their future success.

*1.1 Research Questions*

The following questions were addressed in the study:

1.  What is the degree of Omani EFL learners' perceptions towards using smartphones for improving English speaking skills?

2. To what extent do Omani EFL learners use smartphones to develop their English-speaking skills?

3. Is there a significant difference between the gender groups and study level groups in terms of perceptions and uses of smartphones to develop English-speaking skills?

4. Are there correlations between learners' levels of study and their perceptions and use of smartphones for speaking skills and between their perceptions and uses of smartphones for this purpose?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Technology use in language education has been informed by a theoretical baseline, beginning with computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which gained popularity in the last two decades of the twentieth century, and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), which corresponded to the accessibility of mobile devices and, ergo, mobile learning (Pulla, 2020; Thinley et al., 2014). Al-Kadi (2018), one of the advocates of MALL, traced the increasing influx of technology in second language education that transited from CALL in the 1980s and 1990s to MALL in the 2000s as well as L2 educators' mindset of the transitional changes. With mobile technology, the learning process is now accessible to all instructors and students whenever and wherever they exist (Ali et al., 2022; Akkara et al., 2020; Tal and Gross, 2014). Klimova (2019) maintained that learning effectiveness has increased due to the technological accessibility that gives way to a myriad of learning applications and materials. Some researchers (e.g., Alqahtani and Mohammad, 2015; Tal and Gross, 2014) opine that MALL encourages students and supports their language learning. Based on prior findings, including Ta'amneh's (2014), MALL technological tools alleviate English learners' skills. Pulla (2020) believes that MALL contextualizes learning activities and actions and makes learning under learners' steam.

Several studies were conducted in different EFL and ESL contexts based on the MALL framework. For instance, Akkara et al. (2020) investigated the impact of MALL on speaking skills "and segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation". A total of 25 undergraduate students were chosen to take part in the study, which spanned a 15-week semester. The participants underwent a pre-test, a post-test that matched the pattern of the IELTS speaking test, and also took part in semi-structured personal interviews. Based on the alternative hypothesis and the interviews, it can be concluded that the training program significantly improved the participants' speaking skills and pronunciation. In a similar research study, Mohammadi and Safdari (2015) conducted a research study that showed how mobile-assisted online activities might enhance the speaking skills of 90 intermediate English learners at Simin institutes in Tehran. The participants, consisting of 44 males and 46 females, were evenly distributed among three groups: interactive (learner-learner interaction), non-interactive (learner-teacher interaction), and conventional. The online speaking activities using the WeChat mobile application were only participated in by the two groups, namely the interactive and non-interactive groups, while the conventional group did not take part. The researchers collected data by administering pre- and post-tests that focused on the speaking component of "the Cambridge Preliminary English Test". The results indicated that the speaking ability of engaged students was better than that of their peers.

In the Saudi EFL scenario, Nalliveettil and Alenazi (2016) explored the perspectives of Aljouf University students on the use of mobile phones in the process of learning the English language. The sample consisted of 52 undergraduate students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants' thoughts on the effectiveness of this educational approach were assessed using a self-report and questionnaire. According to the research conclusions, it is recommended that instructors and practitioners include novel methodologies and innovative resources into the English classroom. It was found that both instructors and students shown great enthusiasm for utilizing smartphones as a means of studying the English language. Elfeky and Masadeh (2016) conducted a study to investigate the impact of mobile learning on academic performance and communication skills among students at Najran University. The findings indicated that the participants' achievements and skills were enhanced by using their mobile devices for learning English language. Based on the results, the researchers recommended the utilization of mobile phones in educational settings.

In Saudi contexts, too, Alrefaai (2019) studied the attitudes of students toward mobile phones in English language learning in addition to relevant problems and obstacles. Data was collected through a survey from seventy students at King Khalid University. The findings revealed that the students had favorable attitudes toward such learning. In addition, they demonstrated that the majority of participants encountered numerous difficulties, such as technical issues, the small screen size, distraction, the accuracy and veracity of the information, health issues, a decrease in patience, and fatigue.

In the Jordanian EFL setting, Ababneh (2017) investigated the perspectives of 101 students regarding mobile devices in English learning. The purpose of this study was to determine the significance of cell phones in English learning as well as the influence of academic discipline and gender on students' attitudes toward mobile phones in learning. The results revealed a significant use of mobile phones in their education. In addition, the participants had positive emotions while using their mobile devices to acquire English. The gender and academic concentration of the students had no effect on the attitudes of the participants towards the use of mobile devices in education.

Other studies in similar contexts also exist, and they are valuable to the current investigation. For instance, Almahdi (2021) examined 100 EFL undergraduates' uses of smartphones in the EFL program at Zawia University in Libya. The study, using a questionnaire, yielded results in favor of using smartphones for translation, language skills, and other academic purposes. Tangirbergen (2022) explored teachers' challenges and attitudes towards mobile applications for English language teaching in Kazakhstan, and Metruk (2020) unveiled EFL learners' perceptions of smartphones in higher studies in Slovakia. Considering this body of MALL research and the previous findings,

the researchers are well-poised to argue that mobile devices, primarily smartphones, play an important role in English language education across contexts and learning levels. On this ground, the current study strengthens previous studies and explores an area that has received little undertaking in the Omani EFL context.

*2.2 MALL in Oman*

Reviewing relevant literature related to the Omani context helps in understanding the Omani's MALL landscape more closely and hence further reflection on MALL in the local EFL situation. Aamri (2011) investigated the efficacy of mobile phones in learning English language. The study encompassed a cohort of one hundred male and female students hailing from diverse academic faculties at Sultan Qaboos University. The researchers concentrated on the students' behavior, attitudes, and concerns regarding the utilization of mobile phones for the purpose of learning English. The findings revealed that students had a preference for using their electronic devices within the classroom setting, however, teachers have not authorized them to do so. The findings also revealed that mobile phones, when used properly, can be efficacious educational tools. Upon completing the study, the researcher provided guidance to educators, practitioners, instructors, and decision-makers to view this type of learning in a positive light.

Alshamsi et al. (2020) is another study on the impact of mobile learning on listening skills in Oman. It investigated Omani EFL learners, their attitudes, and challenges, collecting data from a sample of 31 who were separated into experimental and control groups. As a consequence of the mobile learning strategy, participants in the experimental group performed better in terms of learning than those in the control group. The results demonstrated that the students had positive attitudes regarding this type of learning when interacting with auditory materials. According to the researchers, mobile learning increased students' motivation and simplified the learning process. Besides, the results revealed some obstacles associated with mobile learning, including the screen capacities of mobile devices, connectivity issues, and the suitability of the audio content.

The previous studies in Oman and other contexts confirm that smartphones help EFL learners improve their skills inside and outside the classroom, particularly in EFL classes. On this basis, the current investigation aims to provide more evidence by inspecting Omani EFL learners' perspectives on using smartphones to develop their speaking skills. It provides insights and implications for EFL teachers, learners, and curriculum developers on integrating smartphones effectively and appropriately in English language teaching and learning at the collegiate level.

## 3. Method

This survey study explores Omani EFL learners' perspectives towards using smartphones for developing their English-speaking skills at the university level. It examines how their answers vary by gender and academic level. It also ascertains the nexus between the level of study and their perceptions and practices. The research was conducted at the conclusion of the initial semester of the 2023-2024 academic year at the English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. The study employed a descriptive quantitative methodology, which is the most suitable for its design.

*3.1 Participants*

The sample of the study consisted of 259 EFL learners (126 = 48.6%) and females (133 = 51.4%) from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah. Their participations were based on their uses of smartphones and their consent to respond to the survey. The participants are distributed over the five levels, as shown in Table 1. The first level (50 = 19.3%), the second (49 = 18.9%), the third (55 = 21.2%), the fourth (52 = 20.1%), and the post-foundation level (53 = 20.5%). This background information is tabulated below.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Sample of the Study

| Variables | Groups | N | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 133 | 51.4 |
| | Male | 126 | 48.6 |
| Level of Study | Level 1 | 50 | 19.3 |
| | Level 2 | 49 | 18.9 |
| | Level 3 | 55 | 21.2 |
| | Level 4 | 52 | 20.1 |
| | General Requirements Unit | 53 | 20.5 |

*3.2 Questionnaire*

A 5-point Likert scale was employed by the researchers to collect data from the participants. It consisted of 31 items in three parts. The first part was devoted to the participants' demographic information (gender and level of study). The second part consisted of twenty items to collect data about the participants' attitudes towards using smartphones to improve their English-speaking skills, in which the options were "*strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree*". The third part, which comprised of eleven items, was devoted to information about the participants' use of smartphones for developing their English-speaking skills in which the options were "*always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never*". The questionnaire was designed in light of the literature review, and its statements were made specific to the Omani context. Before it was administered, the questionnaire's validity and reliability were checked, and necessary changes were made based on the expert and statistical analyst who validated its initial version. Using Cronbach's alpha, the questionnaire's reliability was .918, meaning that it was high enough and valid to be used for the study. Then, it was sent to the students as a Google form.

*3.3 Data Analysis*

The processes of coding, feeding, and analyzing were done by SPSS (Version 26.0) with the help of a statistician. After coding and feeding the responses into SPSS, the dataset was analyzed in a way to address the research objectives and questions. To obtain the participants' demographic information in numbers and percentages, descriptive statistics were used. For measuring the means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to the questionnaire items, descriptive analysis was also used. As the differences between the gender groups and the level of study groups in terms of their perceptions and use of smartphones to develop English-speaking skills have to be explored, the Mann-Whitney U Test and Chi-Square Test were used for the purpose. Where a significant difference was shown, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to find the mean rank. Pearson Correlation was used to find out the correlation between the gender and study level variables and the students' perceptions and use of smartphones and between the perceptions and use of smartphones for enhancing the English-speaking skills.

## 4. Results

This section is devoted to the results that were obtained after analyzing the participants' responses. The findings are displayed in tables, followed by interpretations. Two types of data are displayed: perceptional and correlational. The perceptional results are presented in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5. The correlational results are outlined in Table 7. To begin with, the perceptional results are shown in Table 3 and Table 4. The former outlines perceptions, and the latter outlines uses of smartphones for enhancing speaking skills.

### 4.1 Perceptions towards Using Smartphones for Improving Speaking

As in Table 2, the Omani EFL learners, particularly in UTAS-Salalah, hold a positive attitude (M = 4.04) towards the role of smartphones in improving their English-speaking skills. The students in question showed the highest level of perception in Item 20 (M = 4.67) and the lowest level of perception was recorded in Item 10 (M = 3.06). This indicates that the students have a tendency towards smartphones for the purpose of entertainment rather than focusing on grammar. For more details about the students' perceptions towards using smartphones for developing their English-speaking skills, Table 2 can be seen.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviation of the Perception Items

| | The questionnaire statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Using smartphone improves my English-speaking skill. | 4.0541 | .73990 |
| 2 | Smartphone is essential for me to enhance my English speaking skills. | 4.3784 | .57371 |
| 3 | I have more confidence when I speak English via smartphone. | 4.3436 | .73246 |
| 4 | Using smartphone improves my English conversational skills. | 4.0849 | .71564 |
| 5 | Using smartphone encourages me to speak more in English. | 4.0618 | .67345 |
| 6 | Speaking in English via smartphone reduces my hesitation. | 3.5869 | .57329 |
| 7 | Using smartphone promotes stress-free environment in English speaking. | 3.9228 | .97737 |
| 8 | Speaking via smartphone reduces my feeling of shyness. | 3.6448 | 1.03677 |
| 9 | Using smartphone improves my English-speaking proficiency. | 3.9807 | .58038 |
| 10 | Using smartphone helps me use more grammatical range when speaking in English. | 3.0618 | .50198 |
| 11 | Using smartphone helps me use grammatical accuracy when speaking in English. | 3.6641 | .47322 |
| 12 | Using smartphone helps me use more my lexical resources when speaking in English. | 4.3398 | .75765 |
| 13 | Using smartphone helps me pronounce new English words properly. | 4.5174 | .69514 |
| 14 | Using smartphone helps me use words properly when speaking in English. | 4.1351 | .81238 |
| 15 | Speaking in English via smartphone reduces my fear of mistakes and errors. | 3.4556 | .52915 |
| 16 | I feel interested when speaking in English via smartphone. | 3.9305 | .74903 |
| 17 | Using smartphone is enjoyable for learning English speaking skill. | 4.2201 | .75856 |
| 18 | I can learn new strategies of English speaking when I use smartphone. | 4.2317 | .69911 |
| 19 | I find smartphone apps interactive and helpful in improving my speaking. | 4.4672 | .49989 |
| 20 | There are some entertainment games that provide new strategies for developing English speaking skills. | 4.6680 | .47186 |
| | Total | 4.0375 | .36619 |

### 4.2 Uses of Smartphones for Improving Speaking

The findings from analyzing the means of the students' perceptions and usage of smartphones indicate that their uses of smartphones for the purpose of enhancing their English-speaking skills is comparatively less frequent than their perceptions of doing so. The students' usage of smartphones to enhance their English-speaking skills has an average score of 3.25. The means and standard deviations of the students' smartphone usage for speaking skill development are presented in Table 3. Regarding improving speaking skills, the most common uses of smartphones is checking their voices recorded in the smartphones (M= 3.93), followed by checking the pronunciation of new English words (M = 3.59). Taking English tests and speaking with native speakers are the least practiced by them on smartphones (M = 2.27) and (M = 2.29), respectively.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviation of Uses of Smartphones

| | The questionnaire statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I practice my English-speaking using smartphone. | 3.5637 | .75148 |
| 2 | I use English speaking websites/applications in my smartphone. | 3.3166 | .64711 |
| 3 | I record myself in my smartphone when I speak in English. | 3.1892 | .86654 |
| 4 | I check my voice recorded in my smartphone. | 3.9305 | .76439 |
| 5 | I repeat what I listen to in my smartphone. | 3.4749 | .80835 |
| 6 | I watch English videos in my smartphone. | 3.3166 | .67064 |
| 7 | I check the pronunciation of new English words in my smartphone (dictionaries / websites). | 3.5907 | .64284 |
| 8 | I try to imitate the English native speakers when speaking via smartphone. | 3.4170 | .74959 |
| 9 | I learn how to speak in different situations from my smartphone. | 3.3822 | .92585 |
| 10 | I use smartphone to speak with English native speakers. | 2.2896 | .78078 |
| 11 | I use smartphone to take English speaking tests. | 2.2741 | .84343 |
| | Total | 3.2496 | .64925 |

*4.3 Differences between Perceptions and Uses of Smartphones*

Table 4 shows the differences between the Omani EFL learners' perceptions and uses of smartphones for English-speaking skills. It was found that there is a significant difference between the gender groups in their perceptions towards using smartphones for English speaking skills (p. = .01), i.e.,> .05, while there is no significant difference between the gender groups in their uses of smartphones for English speaking skills. The mean ranks in Table 6 indicate that female students recorded higher perceptions towards using smartphones (141.06) than male students (118.33). Significant differences were recorded between the study level groups in their perceptions and uses of smartphones for developing their English-speaking skills (p. = .00) both. The mean ranks in Table 5 show that the higher the levels, the higher their perceptions and uses of smartphones for English-speaking skills, and vice versa.

Table 4. Differences between Perceptions and Uses across Study Levels

| Grouping Variable | Test Used | Asymp. Sig (P-Value) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Perceptions | Uses |
| Gender | Mann-Whitney U | .014 | .122 |
| Level of Study | Chi-Square | .000 | .000 |

Table 5. Mean Ranks of Perceptions and Uses across the Grouping Variables

| | Gender | | Level of Study | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | Male | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Post-Foundation Level |
| Perceptions | 141.06 | 118.33 | 55.30 | 57.17 | 132.83 | 171.58 | 228 |
| Uses | | | 66.50 | 116.93 | 146.44 | 148.41 | 168.53 |

*4.4 Correlational Findings*

In terms of correlations, the Pearson Correlation Test, in Table 6, shows that there are strong positive correlations between the levels of study, perceptions, and uses of smartphones by the students (p =.00). The correlation between levels of study and perceptions towards using smartphones is positive (r =.870**) and between levels of study and uses of smartphones is positive (r =.407**). Moreover, there is a strong positive correlation between perceptions and uses of smartphones (r =.395**). This indicates that when the students go to an upper level, their perceptions and uses of smartphones for developing their English-speaking skills increase, and when their perceptions towards using smartphones increase, their uses of smartphones increase.

Table 6. Correlation between Levels of Study, Perceptions and Uses

| | | Level of Study | Perceptions | Uses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of Study | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .870** | .407** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 259 | 259 | 259 |
| Perceptions | Pearson Correlation | .870** | 1 | .395** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 259 | 259 | 259 |
| Practices | Pearson Correlation | .407** | .395** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 259 | 259 | 259 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Discussion

This part discussed the results with reference to the existing studies in the literature within the MALL theoretical background. The results outlined in the tables above show Omani EFL learners' perspectives on using smartphones to enhance their English proficiency. The learners generally have positive perceptions towards using smartphones for speaking skills because they include some entertainment games and interactive activities that provide them with new strategies for developing oral skills. This result is consistent with the findings of Mohammadi and Safdari's (2015) study. In addition, students' perceptions towards using smartphones to improve their grammatical

accuracy in speaking activities are also evident (Table 2). This can be attributed to the fact that students can learn grammar through textbooks and classroom teachers.

Based on the findings, the students' perceptions towards using smartphones to develop speaking skills were greater than their uses. This indicates that the students realize the necessity of smartphones in developing their speaking proficiency, but they do not apply this because it is not compulsory in the educational system at their university. Generally speaking, the findings support, in direct and indirect ways, the findings of other MALL studies (Ababneh, 2017; Akkara et al., 2020; Alrefaa, 2019; Alshamsi et al., 2020; Elfeky and Masadeh, 2016; Mohammadi and Safdari, 2015; Nalliveettil and Alenazi, 2016; Zulhermindra and Hadiarni, 2020). Such studies revealed the significance of smartphones pedagogically, as they improve speaking proficiency or even in teaching speaking skills at schools and universities.

Regarding gender and study level, the results show that female students tend to favor smartphones for improving speaking skills more than male students. This can be attributed to female students' free time to explore the activities and applications on their smartphones more than males'. However, both gender groups are equal in practicing the activities on smartphones that develop speaking skills. Regarding the study level, there was a substantial difference between the study level groups in terms of perceptions and use of smartphones for developing their speaking accuracy. The students at the higher levels are more concerned about the necessity of smartphones for developing speaking skills than the lower levels students. When they reach a higher level, they realize that using smartphones is a useful and helpful way to develop their speaking proficiency.

In reference to the correlational results, there is a positive correlation between the student's level of study and perceptions and use of smartphones in increasing their speaking proficiency, and it is found that increasing their perceptions towards using smartphones leads to an increase in their smartphone use to enhance their speaking.

Considering all the findings, this study echoes some important findings from previous MALL studies. It basically relates to Tal and Gross's (2014) teaching sustainability via smartphones in that smartphone-based learning is well-received by today's learners, who nurture technology and spend most of their time with hand-held devices. Smartphones, as with many other MALL applications, enhance the learning process and outcomes, given that "technology is complementary to the curriculum" (Herrington and Moran, 2009, p. 7). The students design various smartphone-enhanced experiential learning activities, demonstrating their understanding of sustainability and creativity. Similarly, the study relates to Luo et al.'s (2015) insights for communicative language teaching in the classroom. Portable phones programmed with oral skills promoters heighten users' English skills with less anxiety and more motivation for communication. Not far from these previous findings, the current study affirms Akkara et al.'s (2020) L2 pronunciation improvement through smartphones. Mobile applications such as "Pronounce It Right" (abbreviated PIR) provide feedback and guidance on segmental and suprasegmental features of English pronunciation.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined perceptions and uses of smartphones in learning English in the Omani EFL situation, with a greater focus on speaking skills. Results showed that the students who participated in the study generally used smartphones to enhance their speaking abilities, which largely depends on the availability and accessibility of smartphones and internet connections, along with the learners' digital literacy. Seeing learners carrying mobile phones does not necessarily ensure their use for effective English language learning, so their uses should be keyed to educational guidance on using smartphones for fruitful language learning. Furthermore, positive opinions about using smartphones were revealed by the findings. According to the participants, they occasionally use their smartphones for oral skills. The study found a favorable correlation between students' study levels, perceptions of smartphones, and uses of them, as well as a substantial difference in perceptions of smartphones between male and female students.

## 7. Recommendations, Implications, and Limitations

The findings pedagogically recommend the necessity of using smartphones in educational and EFL learning contexts. EFL teachers are recommended to allow and encourage their students to use smartphones in their speaking classes systematically. Syllabi designers and decision-makers can integrate smartphones into the activities of the textbooks for English learning, especially those specified for teaching speaking skills. The study might motivate some other researchers to explore the impact of different smartphone applications or platforms on learners' speaking skills and attitudes, such as social media, podcasts, games, or chatbots, or compare the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous smartphone-based speaking activities on learners' oral skills and attitudes. Some other areas for further research include factors influencing learners' motivation, engagement, and satisfaction with smartphone-based speaking activities or developing a framework or a model for integrating smartphone-based speaking activities into the EFL curriculum in Oman and beyond.

The study's limitations include a narrow focus due to mono-method data collection, suggesting caution in generalizability. The researchers suggest combining testing with other tools for more in-depth investigation. They recommend replicating the study on similar learners' cohorts in Oman or other EFL contexts and conducting a longitudinal study to understand changes in smartphones usage.

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**Appendix**

**Questionnaire**

**Dear students,**

We kindly invite you to participate in completing the following questionnaire, which consists of a series of questions related to our study entitled "*Using Smartphones for English Speaking Skill Development from the Omani EFL Learners' Perspectives*" at the Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah. Your responses will be crucial in helping us understand your various perspectives regarding the use of smartphones and will significantly contribute to the quality of our research. The questionnaire is designed to take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1) **Do you have a smartphone?**

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

2) **Are you willing to complete this questionnaire?**

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

**Demographic Information**

- **Gender:**

   ○ Male

   ○ Female

- **Level:**

   ○ Level 1

   ○ Level 2

   ○ Level 3

   ○ Level 4

   ○ Post-Foundation

**<u>Perception Section</u>**

- **Please tick the most appropriate option.**

| No. | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|-----------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Using smartphone improves my speaking skill. | | | | | |
| 2 | Smartphone is essential for me to enhance my English speaking skills. | | | | | |
| 3 | I have more confidence when I speak English via smartphone. | | | | | |
| 4 | Using smartphone improves my conversational skills. | | | | | |
| 5 | Using smartphone encourages me to speak more. | | | | | |
| 6 | Speaking via smartphone reduces my hesitation. | | | | | |
| 7 | Using smartphone promotes a stress-free environment for speaking. | | | | | |
| 8 | Speaking via smartphone reduces my feeling of shyness. | | | | | |
| 9 | Using smartphone improves my English-speaking proficiency. | | | | | |
| 10 | Using smartphone helps me use more grammatical range when speaking. | | | | | |
| 11 | Using smartphone helps me use grammatical accuracy when speaking. | | | | | |
| 12 | Using smartphone helps me use more my lexical resources when speaking. | | | | | |

**13** Using smartphone helps me pronounce new words properly.
**14** Using smartphone helps me use words properly when speaking.
**15** Speaking via smartphone reduces my fear of mistakes and errors.
**16** I feel interested when speaking in English via smartphone.
**17** Using smartphone is enjoyable for learning speaking skill.
**18** I can learn new strategies of speaking when I use smartphone.
**19** I find smartphone apps interactive and helpful in improving my speaking.
**20** There are some entertainment games that provide new strategies for developing speaking skills.

## Practices section

| No. | Statement | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I practice my speaking using smartphone. | | | | | |
| 2 | I use speaking websites/applications in my smartphone. | | | | | |
| 3 | I record myself in my smartphone when I speak in English. | | | | | |
| 4 | I repeat what I listen to in my smartphone. | | | | | |
| 5 | I watch English videos in my smartphone. | | | | | |
| 6 | I check the pronunciation of new English words in my smartphone (dictionaries / websites). | | | | | |
| 7 | I check my voice recorded in my smartphone. | | | | | |
| 8 | I try to imitate the native speakers when speaking via smartphone. | | | | | |
| 9 | I can learn how to speak in different situations from my smartphone. | | | | | |
| 10 | I use smartphone to speak with native speakers. | | | | | |
| 11 | I use smartphone to take speaking tests. | | | | | |

Thank you in advance for your participation, and we greatly appreciate your cooperation.