

The Effectiveness of Telegram App in Learning Tamil Language

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Abstract

This study investigates a perception of students on the implementation of a Telegram application as an enhancement tool for learning. The population of this study is 87 standard five students who are studying in Primary Tamil School Vivekananda. The students have been using the Telegram tool in their learning process during the academic semester. Next, a survey consisting of a number of agreement-level questions and open-ended questions are developed in questionnaire form. At the end of the academic year, the form has been distributed to students in the class to collect students' valuable feedback. The student feedback have been analyzed to obtain the results of their perception on the Telegram application as an enhancement tool for learning process. The results show that Telegram application support learning enhancement by providing a quick way and easy platform for sharing information.

Keywords : Telegram, Students, School, Study, Social Media, Learning Process

ஆய்வுச்சுருக்கம்

கற்றலுக்கான மேம்பாட்டுக் கருவியாக டெலிகிராம் பயன்பாட்டைச் செயல்படுத்துவது குறித்த மாணவர்களின் கருத்தை இந்த ஆய்வு ஆராய்கிறது. இந்த ஆய்வின் மக்கள்தொகை விவேகானந்தா தொடக்க தமிழ்ப்பள்ளியில் பயிலும் 87 தரம் ஐந்து மாணவர்கள். கல்வி செமஸ்டரின் போது மாணவர்கள் தங்கள் கற்றல் செயல்பாட்டில் டெலிகிராம் கருவியைப் பயன்படுத்துகின்றனர். அடுத்து, பல ஒப்பந்த நிலை கேள்விகள் மற்றும் திறந்தநிலை கேள்விகள் அடங்கிய ஒரு கணக்கெடுப்பு கேள்வித்தாள் வடிவத்தில் உருவாக்கப்படுகிறது. கல்வியாண்டின் இறுதியில், மாணவர்களின் மதிப்புமிக்க கருத்துக்களை சேகரிக்க வகுப்பில் உள்ள மாணவர்களுக்கு படிவம் விநியோகிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. கற்றல் செயல்முறைக்கான மேம்படுத்தல் கருவியாக டெலிகிராம் பயன்பாட்டில் அவர்களின் உணர்வின் முடிவுகளைப் பெற மாணவர்களின் கருத்து பகுப்பாய்வு செய்யப்பட்டது. தகவல்களைப் பகிர்வதற்கான விரைவான வழி மற்றும் எளிதான தளத்தை வழங்குவதன் மூலம் டெலிகிராம் பயன்பாடு கற்றல் மேம்பாட்டை ஆதரிக்கிறது என்பதை முடிவுகள் காட்டுகின்றன.

திறவுச்சொற்கள்: டெலிகிராம், மாணவர்கள், பள்ளிப்படிப்பு, சமூக ஊடகம், கற்றல் செயல்முறை

Introduction

Social media is very important in all fields whether it is education or any other field. So the first question arises, what is social media? Social media is the set of various applications and websites that makes user share information and knowledge and anything. (Iqbal, 2020, pg 48). **Social media** is a very interactive platform where from users can take help and share their ideas, information, and share about their jobs, their career interest, and many more things.(Dargahi Nobari, Reshadatmand, & Neshati, 2017, 44). These ideas can be shared through various communities and various networks. There are various organizations that can interact with their target audiences and

these organizations can also recruit or hire the candidates by posting jobs on social media. Candidates also take benefit of social media websites and they can look for the job of their interest.(*Ghaffari, 2017, pg77*). Social media is become an invaluable tool not only for promoting and selling goods and products but also in the field of education. Many students post their problems on the social media platform and get instant help or solutions to their problems. **The role of social media in education** plays an important role in the student's lives. With the help of social media, students can get information, can fetch or retrieve information easily, and can communicate with their teachers, friends, and classmates easily.(*Faraji, 2020, pg 56*). Students can get connected with their teachers or professors easily and can gain knowledge and information very easily through its help.(*Conde, Rodríguez-Sedano, Rodríguez Lera, Gutiérrez-Fernández, & Guerrero-Higuera, 2022, pg 66*). Social media has been criticized by many educators because many students waste their time and money on the social media platform. But it offers a lot of opportunities and plenty of options for interaction and gaining information and can increase their learning. (*Khademolhosseni, 2017, pg 45*). The aim of this paper is to investigate the implementation of Telegram application to support learning process Primary Tamil school Vivekananda Petaling Jaya. For a case study, a few groups of students are selected. These groups use the Telegram application for discussion, sharing notes and educational links as well as providing virtual notification.(*Soon, 2022, pg 12*) To access the effectiveness of the Telegram application as the enhancement tool for learning, an online survey is developed using survey form.

Literature review

Digital media technology is not a limited term, but rather a broad term that involves all kinds of web programs, gadgets, applications, websites, social media channels, etc. (Altawil, 2019). The 21st century has seen expanded use of modern technology and multimedia applications, which have changed our behaviors and attitudes (Alahmad, 2020). Institutions are trying to offer flexible programs aiming to meet students' needs. The programs are aimed to deliver tailored courses that meet the different learners' aspirations and accommodate the different learning styles emerging in the modern digital age (Giannikas, 2020). Today, people have access to a wide range of information than ever before, and "mobile technologies offer a new paradigm in connectivity, communication and collaboration in our everyday lives" (*McQuiggan et al., 2019*). In recent years, there has been an increased use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) combined with social media platforms. In addition, the emerging of internet services and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applications has made it easy to learn a second language remotely from anywhere in the world. The outcome of this usage has increased interactions and eased communications in all areas, including the educational purposes (*Wilson & Margus, 2020*).

Learning a second language can be tedious, time-consuming, and requires high interaction; therefore, incorporating digital technology is essential. Through the Telegram app, learners have more access to the English language input, their interests are looked into, and there are increased opportunities to interact with other learners (Akobirov & Vokhidova, 2018). Additionally, instructors can access the necessary tools needed to arrange the learning content. Today, the invention of social media and English use of almost all social networks have provided learners with increased accessibility to a more authentic language than the language taught in the classroom (*Ozer & Kilic, 2018, p. 2917*). Advancements in speech recognition technologies, online

dictionaries, social networking sites, and visual features have enabled learners of foreign languages to develop their language skills.

Mobile phones are the most used technological gadgets compared to laptops and tablets. According to Ozer and Kilic (2018), mobile phones' high usability has become rapidly integrated into EFL teaching. Both learners and educators use technological gadgets to achieve the objectives of educational purposes. The countless number of English learning apps can be downloaded on the phones, has made it easy for learners to learn a language anytime and anywhere (Ozer & Kilic, 2018, p. 2915). Telegram is one of the most common mobile applications used by foreign language learners. It is a cloud-based application that allows users to exchange images, videos, or files without occupying the mobile device storage (Abbasi & Behjat, 2018). According to Telegram official website, by 2018, the Telegram Company reported that the app had over 200 million users every month (Durov, 2018). This high number shows that more people opt to learn the English language through the online platform rather than traditional ways of learning. The app attracts many users because of the numerous features other than being an education platform (*Ghobadi & Taki, 2018*). Previous research states that the Telegram app has been very instrumental in teaching and learning the main four skills of English language along with vocabulary and grammar (AbuAyfah, 2020). For example, a recent study conducted by Abu-Ayfah (2020), has investigated the perceptions of Saudi college students regarding Telegram app effectiveness for English language learning. The study followed a quantitative research method in which 300 college students were given a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. Findings showed that Telegram app has been an effective tool in learning EFL as perceived by most college students (Abu-Ayfah, 2020). Another research study conducted by Tabrizi and Onvani (2018), examined the impact of using Telegram app on learning English vocabulary by Iranian EFL beginner learners. The researcher used a quasi-experimental research design with 31 students, in which vocabulary were taught in two different ways: 4-weeks by telegram app and another 4-weeks by the traditional face to face instructions. By comparing students' grades of the two methods, results showed that learning vocabulary by a social media app (Telegram) was more effective than the traditional way (*Tabrizi & Onvani, 2018, p. 14*). Additionally, a study by Akobirov and Vokhidova (2018) concluded that teaching foreign languages using the Telegram app proves to be very useful than teaching in classrooms. Moreover, Abbasi and Behjat (2018) investigated the impact of storytelling with Telegram app and found that the experimental group outperformed the control group on a speaking complexity test. The use of Telegram has played a critical role also in helping learners improve their pronunciation. Additionally, it has also enhanced their writing ability (Abbasi & Behjat, 2018). Another research study conducted by Aghajani and Adloo (2018), found that learners in the Telegram cooperative writing groups scored higher grades compared to those in face-to-face groups. They claimed that the app allowed personalization and flexibility, therefore influencing a positive attitude from them (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018). Telegram app has also proved effectiveness in acquiring new vocabulary among EFL learners. A study conducted by Ghaemi and Golshan (2018), investigated students' attitudes about learning new vocabulary via Telegram app. Findings of the study ensured that short messages services (SMS) available in the Telegram app had a very positive impact on acquiring new vocabulary among students (Ghaemi & Golshan, 2018). On the other hand, pronunciation remains to be one of the main challenges in the aspect of teaching and learning English. The reason behind the noticeable improvement in pronunciation might be the accessibility for students anytime and anywhere (Nimmagadda & Krishnaveer, 2018). Some of the advantages associated with Telegram app include proper communication of class

content and sending of information, enhancing feedback and collaboration, and improving concise writing (Vahdat et al., 2020). The app's usability in teaching English has played a critical role in improving learner's pronunciation (Abu-Ayfah, 2020). The ability to give and respond to feedback and comments also improved the process of learning. Additionally, most learners portrayed a positive attitude towards learning the language through the social platforms.

Considering the studies mentioned above, it might be implied that social media network is an instrumental tool that can help English learners improve their target language skills. Telegram's different features are instrumental in teaching the skills of the language and its components, such as vocabulary and grammar. Many of these studies focused on the effectiveness of teaching and learning the English language through the Telegram app. Other social media networks have also proven instrumental in improving learners' pronunciation and encouraging group work during the learning process. Unfortunately, few studies examined how learners perceive the use of the Telegram app in learning EFL in the Saudi context. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct the current study to investigate Saudi secondary school students' perceptions regarding the usefulness of Telegram app in learning EFL.

Methodology

The objective of this study is to gather information about students' perceptions towards the used of Telegram application as an enhancement tool in their learning process. A total of 87 students were participated in this study. These students are primary tamil school Vivekananda standard five students. The study was conducted during 13th March 2021 – 21st February in 2022.

At the beginning of the academic year, students were encouraged to install the Telegram application in their smartphone. Beside, Telegram application for desktop can also be installed in their laptop or desktop. The Telegram application has the capability to synchronize any posted information among smartphone, laptop and desktop devices. Therefore, any update information can be replied or read in real-time using any of those devices. (Iksan, 2017, pg 60).

Next, a number of discussion groups were created by teachers based on the classes. Once the groups were set up, student representative for each class is invited into their respective discussion group and then the student representative can invite other students to join the group. (Aligholipour., Feizollahzadeh, Ghaffari, & Jabbarzadeh, 2011, pg 55). Students who already joined the group can invite other students to join the group. Besides, students may join the group by clicking a link provided in the Telegram application. In this way, members of the discussion group can be formed immediately. Within 12 months of the March 2021-February 2022 academic year, the students and teachers used the Telegram application to share course materials. teachers posted notes, extra classes and homework by browse to the interested documents in teacher's personal computer or simply by drag and drop those documents. Moreover, comments, descriptions or instructions can be also added in the Telegram conversation.

At the end of the academic year, the students were asked to complete the survey asking about their perceptions on the Telegram application as a tool for enhancement during their learning process. The survey consisted of 10 questions that were published using questionnaire form. The first

question asked about the past experience of student population on using Telegram application as a tool for learning. Second until eight questions, asked the students to rate their level of agreements which were based on five scales ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Next, the last two questions are the open-ended questions. These open-ended questions asked the opinion of student on the main benefits and drawbacks of using the Telegram application. Students' responses were saved it. Next, the student responses were downloaded and analyzed to obtain their experience, level of agreements and opinions.

Results and Discussions

As mentioned in the previous section 87 students participate in this study. 42 students was boys whereas 45 students was girls. Table 1 shows the number of students participate in this survey.

Gender	Number of students participate in this survey
Girls	45
Boys	42

Table 1: Number of students participate in this survey

The first survey question is on the student experience using Telegram application as educational tool. Figure 1 shows the result of the survey. It is found that 57% of the students' populations have used the Telegram tool for Tamil educational purpose in the past. The study was founded that a lot of students using telegram application of Tamil education purpose. This is because there are lot of things that makes Telegram a better app than any other apps. Students use this app mainly for downloading Study Materials like Books, pdf files, pictorial notes, voice notes, Daily newspapers and many other important stuff. (*Abu Aifah, 2020, pg 77*).

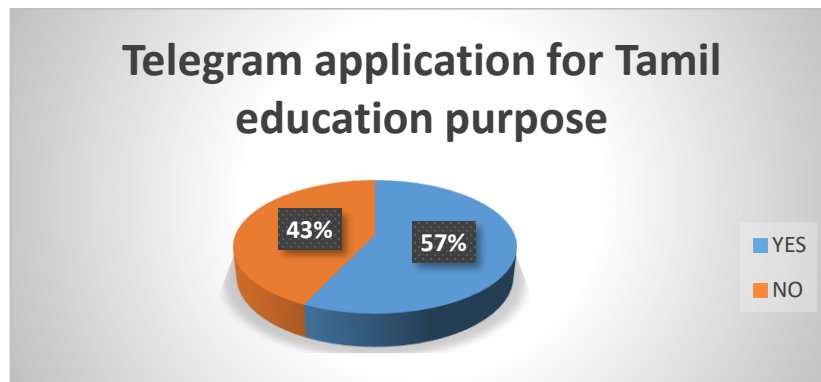


Figure 1: Student experience on Telegram application as an educational tool

The second until eight survey questions are the agreement-level questions. The answer to these questions are either Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree or Strongly Agree. Figure 2 shows the results for these agreement-level questions.

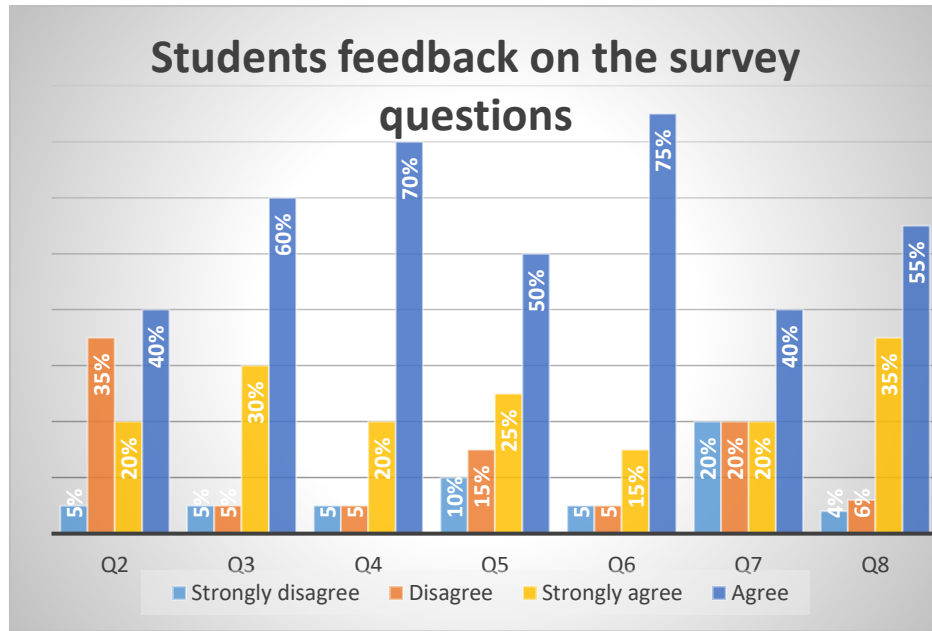


Figure 2 : Students responds to survey questions

The results shows that most students agree with the capability and the learning process using Telegram application: There are various techniques used in learning using Telegram- (40%); These techniques include the processes of before, during

and after the teaching. Before teaching, two things were emphasized, namely the provision of materials and the chosen of conducive environment for the learning process. The teacher will state the materials that are going to be used during the lessons. Teacher will also inform the students about the topics that will be discussed in the Telegram class. Therefore, students easily can collect various materials such as books, articles and pictures to be used as a reference during the discussion. (Xodabande,2017, 31)

Telegram gives new experience as it is creative, interesting and spontaneous - (60%). Participants also stated that they enjoyed learning through Telegram because they felt more relaxed and were comfortable to be actively involved in sharing their honest point of view.

Learning using Telegram is interesting - (70%). This learning process was carried out for an hour and they did not realize the time was up due to their active involvement in giving and reading feedback.

Enjoyed learning using Telegram-(50%); Feedback of survey participants also infused with icons that showed their emotions like smile and happy face after undergoing such Telegram class.

Learning using Telegram encouraged them to give opinion confidently - (75%). Contrary to face-to-face classes, not all students are able to express their ideas and opinions especially when it comes to personal matters. (Khalil & Rambech, 2022) However, in this Telegram class, all students successfully expressed their opinions confidently.

The last two survey are the open-ended questions. The questions asked were:

Q9 - In your opinion, what are the main benefits of using Telegram tool for teaching and learning?

Q10 - In your opinion, what are the main drawbacks of using Telegram tool for teaching and learning?

The analysis on the Q9 shows that their response can be categorized into three common themes: Improve Outside Class Learning, Easy to Share Notes and Enhance Communication between the teachers and students. Some of the given responses were: “We can communicate although not face to face”; “teachers can share file(notes) on the spot for student, the process to print the notes given become easier since telegram can be used in dekstop or laptop.” and “It makes me easy to keep updating with my course”. Figure 3 shows the result of analysis on Q9. It indicates that the main benefit of Telegram application is that the application is an easy tool for sharing information.

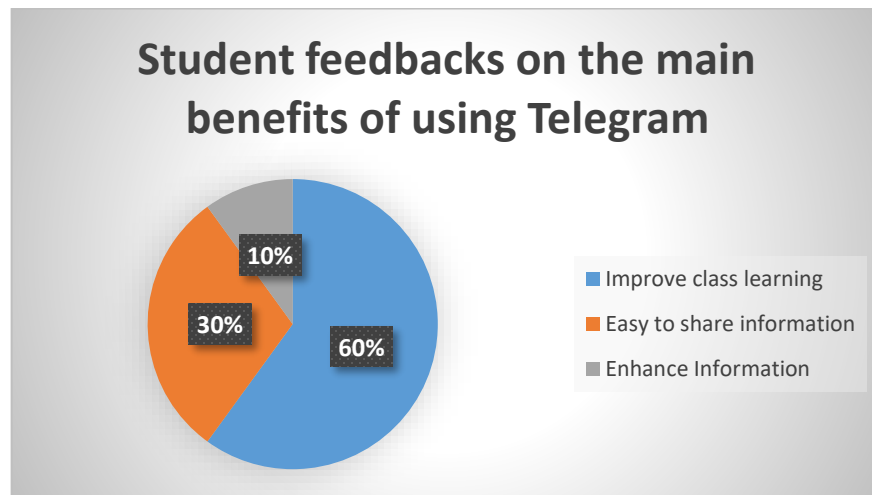


Figure 3 : Students responses to a survey questions

Next, the analysis on the final question shows that their response can be categorized into five common themes: Discussion Topic, Distraction, Internet Issues, Non-Telegram User and Reduced Face to Face Communication. Some of the given responses were: “Cannot have a detail discussion for certain problem in this subject.”; “If no internet wifi, student cannot use or open this application.” ; “It need to internet data for open this application” and “Less direct communication between lecturer and students”. Figure 4 shows the result of analysis on question 10. It indicates

that the main drawback of using Telegram application tool is the internet issue. The common internet issue that feedback by the respondents is on the free wifi coverage.

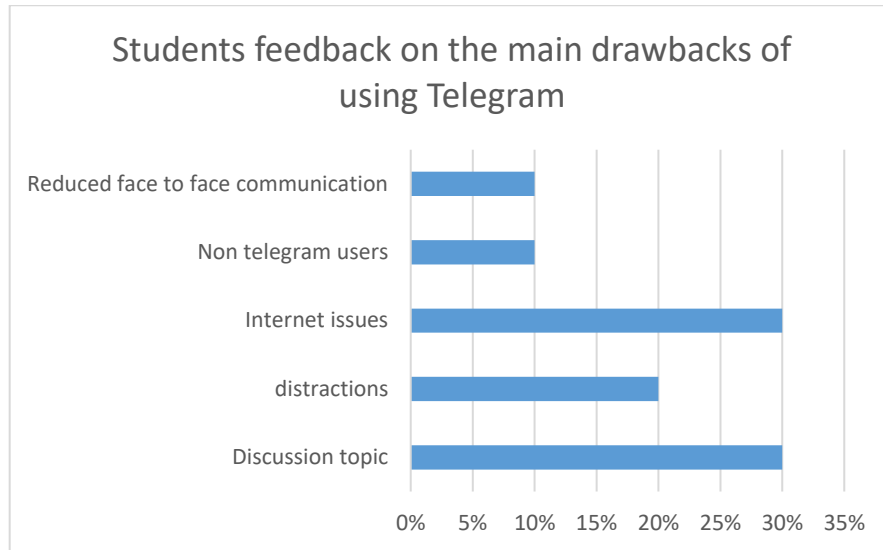


Figure 4 : students responses on the survey questions

Conclusion

This paper presents the perception of students on the use of Telegram application as an enhancement tool for teaching and learning process. There were 87 students participated in this survey. The students were required to answer a total of 10 survey questions. Most of the respondents have experience on using Telegram application for educational purpose. The analysis results show that most of the respondents agree that Telegram tool can enhance the learning process and increase the interaction between students and teachers. Further, the respondents agree that the Telegram tool should be extend to next semester as well as to other course. The results on the opened questions show that the main benefit of using Telegram application is that the tool is easy for sharing information for teaching and learning process while the main drawback is the internet coverage.

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