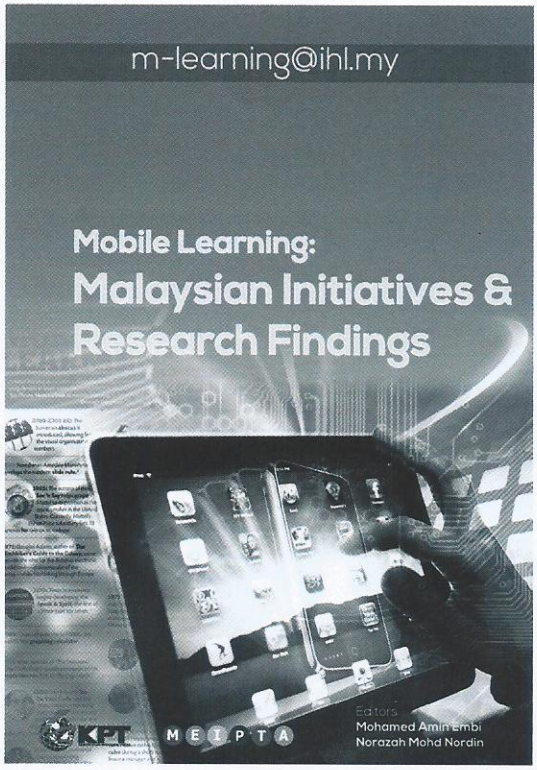
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Mobile Learning:
Malaysian Initiatives &
Research Findings
KPT
M E I P T A
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Published by:

Centre For Academic Advancement,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
&
Department of Higher Education,
Ministry of Higher Education

2013

Cetakan Pertama/*First Printing*, 2013
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Diterbitkan di Malaysia oleh/*Published in Malaysia by*
Pusat Pembangunan Akademik,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia,
43600 UKM Bangi,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Dicetak di Malaysia oleh/*Printed in Malaysia by*
Reka Cetak Sdn Bhd
No. 14, Jalan Jemuju Empat 16/13D,
Seksyen 16, 40200 Shah Alam,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia Data-Pengkatalogan-dalam-Penerbitan/
Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Mobile Learning: Malaysian Initiatives & Research Findings/edited by:

Mohamed Amin Embi / Norazah Mohd Nordin

ISBN 978-983-3168

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Mobile Learning: A Quasi-Experiment on Using SMS to Support Reading Comprehension Programme

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International Islamic Universiti of Malaysia

Introduction

Studies have shown that the ability to read and comprehend is closely correlated to students' academic performance and achievement (Bishop, 2003; Lei, Rhinehart, Howard & Cho, 2010; Brown, 2007; White, 2004). Research on reading reflects that an effective learning approach or method leads to the development of good reading skills (Brantmeier, 2005). The literature has shown the potential of including extensive reading into reading instruction as part of an attempt to develop students' language and reading comprehension skills. Studies on extensive reading indicate that students found the activity worthwhile (Macalister, 2008; Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007).

Extensive reading (ER) is defined as reading "materials in the target language in a rapid and casual way with a focus on quantity rather than quality" (Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007, p. 115). Extensive reading involves reading a large number of reading materials, with focus on meaning rather than on language use (Tran, 2006). Generally, an extensive reading programme is carried out to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a penchant for reading (Shen, 2008). Studies have revealed the positive effect of ER on reading comprehension and speed, vocabulary learning, and learners' motivation and attitude towards reading (de Morgado, 2009; Macalister, 2008; Shen, 2008; Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007; Tran, 2006)

Extensive reading is not limited to hardcopies. Reading materials can also be read on a mobile phone. The many benefits of utilising mobile phones in an informal learning setting have sparked interest among educationists. A feature of the mobile phone known as "texting" or "short message service (SMS)" is fast becoming one of the popular communication modes (Librero *et al.*, 2007; Goh & Kinshuk, 2006). Research has cited that students are frequently engaged in text messaging. Thorton and Houser (as cited in Caverly *et al.*, 2009) discovered that 71% of Japanese college students preferred the use of text messages to email and 93% appreciated receiving English lessons sent to their mobile phones. Students are found to be