

Acceptance and Effectiveness of Rain Classroom in Linguistics Classes

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ABSTRACT

Rain Classroom, a mobile learning technology developed in China, has received great popularity. Research into its acceptance and effectiveness, however, remains sparse. Through research instruments, i.e. a questionnaire adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a semi-structured interview and linguistics knowledge tests, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained to test research hypotheses. It was concluded that (1) Rain Classroom possesses significantly higher acceptance than traditional multimedia projecting systems in terms of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, and attitude at the significance level .05; and (2) Rain Classroom contributes to significantly higher linguistics knowledge gain than traditional multimedia projecting systems at the significance level .05. Future research could aim to improve and enhance the functions of Rain Classroom in order to pursue higher acceptance and effectiveness. Cross-disciplinary research could also be conducted to test its acceptance and effectiveness.

KEYWORDS

Acceptance, Effectiveness, Linguistics, Rain Classroom

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to determine acceptance and effectiveness of Rain Classroom in linguistics classes. Rain Classroom, as a learning app, can be used in many classes, e.g. linguistics class, and offer a blended pedagogical approach. Rain Classroom, a mobile learning technology, was developed by the most reputable university in China-Tsinghua University (2019 QS World University Ranking: 17). It provides convenient access to teaching content and learning activities, through which students can easily follow teachers by viewing the teaching slides on their smart phones and teachers can observe student learning behaviors by merely clicking corresponding buttons.

It is named “Rain Classroom” because designers wish it could be used by all learners as rain falls on everybody. It differs from other mobile learning tools in that it is much easier and more convenient to be applied to a classroom. The Superstar Learning System, developed by Superstar Company, is the nearest equivalent, but seems to present more complicated usage and confusing interfaces. Rain classroom aims to solve the problems happening a lot in the classroom. An example is that students tend to be attracted to mobile phones, on which Rain Classroom can be installed. When students look at their mobile phones in class, what they will see is lecture notes carried via Rain Classroom.

Although Rain Classroom has been used in teaching and learning for quite a long time, very few studies have been committed to its acceptance and effectiveness. This study, aiming to identify its acceptance and effectiveness, is meaningful and necessary.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Rain Classroom has been evidenced as effective in learning by many studies. Learners positively evaluated that Rain Classroom assisted learning, in which they showed their willingness to participate. Assisted with Rain Classroom, teachers also achieved success in curriculum design, organization of learning activities and implementation of teaching strategies (Li & Song, 2017). Aided with Rain Classroom, Yu (2018) designed a five-step teaching method, which could activate students' participation, enhance their self-discipline, and promote their learning effect.

Coupled with quantitative evaluation and diverse pedagogical approaches, Rain Classroom could effectively be used in teaching and learning (Liao & Ding, 2018). Rain Classroom could help teachers design appropriate teaching styles and improve College English teaching and learning effect (Lou et al., 2018). Integrating Rain Classroom into pedagogy could also improve effectiveness in the instruction of English for postgraduates (Yuan et al., 2018), ideological and political courses for tertiary students (Han, 2018), English communicative courses (Yang, 2017), translation and interpretation of business English (Zhu, 2016), biological courses for graduates (Yang & Yuan, 2016), and Blended Methods (Yao, 2017). The Rain Classroom integrated platform could also effectively promote learners' information technology literacy, as well as mastery of learning theories (Li et al., 2017). This study aims to confirm the effectiveness and acceptance of Rain Classroom among English language learners.

Interaction is an unavoidable element to be included when discussing the effect of educational technologies on learning. Mainly three types of interactions are studied, i.e. learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction and learner-content interaction. Close attention should be paid to these three interactions (Parsazadeh et al., 2018). By linking teachers, students and learning contents, Rain Classroom has taken these three interactions into account, which it lays a solid ground for its effect on learning and teaching.

Usability is another important element to determine the effectiveness of educational technologies, such as Rain Classroom, and other various kinds of mobile applications. The degree of usability of educational technology greatly influences the acceptance and satisfaction of users, which exerts a great impact on technology assisted learning outcomes and academic achievements (Shitkova, Holler, Heide, Clever, & Becker, 2015). When designing and using educational technologies, numerous factors such as convenience, ease of use, data input, Internet connection, and computer processing speed, should be taken into account (Nielsen & Budiu, 2013).

Numerous factors have been considered in the design of educational technologies. The acceptance of technology has caught intense attention. Educational technologies have vastly developed towards various directions, among which Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an important dimension to explore. The TAM was composed of various factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, behavioral intention, subjective norm, fidelity, and self-efficacy, other than facilitating conditions (Lemay et al., 2018). Subjective norm, self-efficacy, experience and enjoyment were positively correlated with perceived usefulness of technology in e-learning. Computer anxiety, however, exerted a negative impact on the above variables. The innovation of technology is a great moderating variable in the above relationships (Chang et al., 2017).

On the basis of extension of TAM, the key constructs, i.e. perceived technology usefulness, perceived ease of technology use, attitude, and internet self-efficacy were considered influencing factors of video use. It was demonstrated that perceived usefulness, attitude, and internet self-efficacy exerted a direct influence on use of videos. Learner satisfaction was closely related to learner interaction, perceived ease of use, and learning performance. The use of video could also exert a direct influence on both learning performance and learner satisfaction. The extended TAM could predict video technology use and learning satisfaction (Nagy, 2018).

Based on a revised TAM, it was reported that students' attitudes toward the technology and the perceived usefulness were positively correlated with their intention to use the technology (Song & Kong, 2018). Recently, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) has been

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