

Perceptions and Impacts of Applying BYOD as an Effective Strategy in Thai Higher Education English Classroom*

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to 1) investigate the purposes for which BYOD is being used by the Thai undergraduate students in learning English classes, 2) explore the level of students' satisfaction regarding the BYOD applied in learning English classes, and 3) examine the impacts of BYOD on students' learning English. The study was designed as mixed-method research. The samples of this study were 50 students, selected by applying random sampling technique. They were undergraduate students studying English as a university required subject. The opened-ended questionnaire, validated by the experts through the IOC, regarding their satisfaction toward their learning through their own devices has been employed as a research tool for collecting the data which were, then, asked to be completed by the students after they have been asked to practice their English skills by typically interacting with the English contents in the BYOD classroom context, applying their own technology devices into the classroom such as mobile phones, laptops, and tablets during the semester at the end of the semester. The data were then both statistically analyzed quantitatively shown in percentages, and qualitatively shown through descriptive analysis.

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**The findings showed that:**

1. The purpose of applying BYOD of students for entertainment was ranked the highest at 80% followed by communication, collaboration in group work, access course materials, and research which was ranked the lowest at 52%.
2. 42% of the students were satisfied with the teaching and learning approach at the level of fully satisfaction.
3. The results unveiled that the implementing BYOD in the classroom had impacts on students learning in different ways, namely improving professional competence, inspiring learning, and critical thinking, increasing dependency on technology devices, and decreasing conventional document use.

Keywords: BYOD; English Classes, Technology Devices

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of information and communication technology has a considerable influence on the societies and education. Particularly, educators in the field of language teaching or English teachers always make conscious and research effort to increase the effectiveness of their teaching approach. When the technology like computers is launched to the market along with other useful programs e.g., the internet, technology- enhanced education is becoming increasingly significant. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) pedagogy has been implemented to manage and facilitate classroom learning not only in the language classroom, but also the other subjects in general (Hamza & Nurdeen, 2013, pp. 14-20).

To be more specific, the pedagogy can be defined as the classroom management tool which allows students to bring their own technology devices into the classroom for educational purposes (Hamza & Nurdeen, 2013, pp. 14-20). This phenomenon comes into consideration to create a more interactive and interesting environment for learners and teachers than what was previously available in the traditional language classroom. The effectiveness of the use of technology devices on education has been investigated by several researchers in numerous settings and contexts in many countries. Much research has been specifically done on the different topics about teaching any English skills i.e., reading, speaking, and writing skills.



Specially, the digital devices utilized in this study including blogs and wikis have affirmed students' accomplishment in developing English skills since the students can share their ideas to others (Beach, 2012, pp. 45-59). 168 teachers from the study by Felix (2008, pp. 14-21) have revealed that the students' English performances were satisfying. 89 % of them also confirmed that the approach they have been applied has changed their teaching styles, resulting an increasing of students' collaboration in sharing their ideas among students and between students and teachers especially while giving feedbacks. Since the wiki program has been applied, the students also uttered that writing on the wiki can enhance using engagements markers (Kuteeva, 2010, pp. 44-57). In addition, some studies also revealed that implementing digital devices in teaching and learning can develop students' English skills, especially their writing skill (Silvernail & Gritter, 2007). Fulton (2012, pp. 12-17), in addition, has applied this classroom strategy. All the devices namely iPads, laptops, and smartphones were employed in the classroom in order that they areas beneficial instruments for English learning classes. Fallow (2013) has

also mentioned in his study that some of teachers have changed their traditional classroom, solely giving a lecture approach in the class by applying the new approach and asking students to bring their own devices to the classroom. The study also showed the students in general were very satisfied toward the way that they can work with their own devices in the class. They can also spend their time to enhance their knowledge by choosing more appropriate contents for various specific situations or contexts by seeking from the internet with ease and promptness. All studies mentioned lead to the significance of this study which is to mainly explore how the students perceive the BYOD applied in their learning English classes.

2. Research Objectives

1. To investigate the purposes for which BYOD is being used by the Thai undergraduate students in learning English classes.
2. To explore the level of students' satisfaction regarding the BYOD applied in learning English classes.
3. To examine the impacts of BYOD on students' learning English.



3. Methodology

The study was designed as mixed-method research. The participants in this study were 50 Thai undergraduate students selected through random sampling method. They enrolled English, a compulsory course in a university in Thailand, and studied English preparation course before enrolling this course. Hence, they occupied quite similar level of English language knowledge. During the semester, students took part in the class twice a week, three hours a period. They have been always required to bring their own technology tools namely a computer laptop, a smartphone, an iPad, and any other device to the class from time to time. The students were permitted to interact with the devices brought to search for the information or any other activities implemented in the class. The students can also discuss with friends while using devices for their group projects or

assignments. The course was continuous drilling and learning for the whole the semester. When the course had been conducted successfully, the online questionnaire with open-ended questions, validated by the experts through the IOC, was distributed to the students for asking their satisfaction regarding their learning English applied the BYOD strategy. The gathered data were, then, analyzed and shown quantitatively in percentage with the qualitatively descriptive analysis.

4. Findings

After the data gathered from the online questionnaire with open-ended questions, they were analyzed and shown in the percentage together with the descriptive analysis which can be explained following the research objectives as follow:

1. The purposes for which BYOD is being used by the Thai undergraduate students in learning English classes.

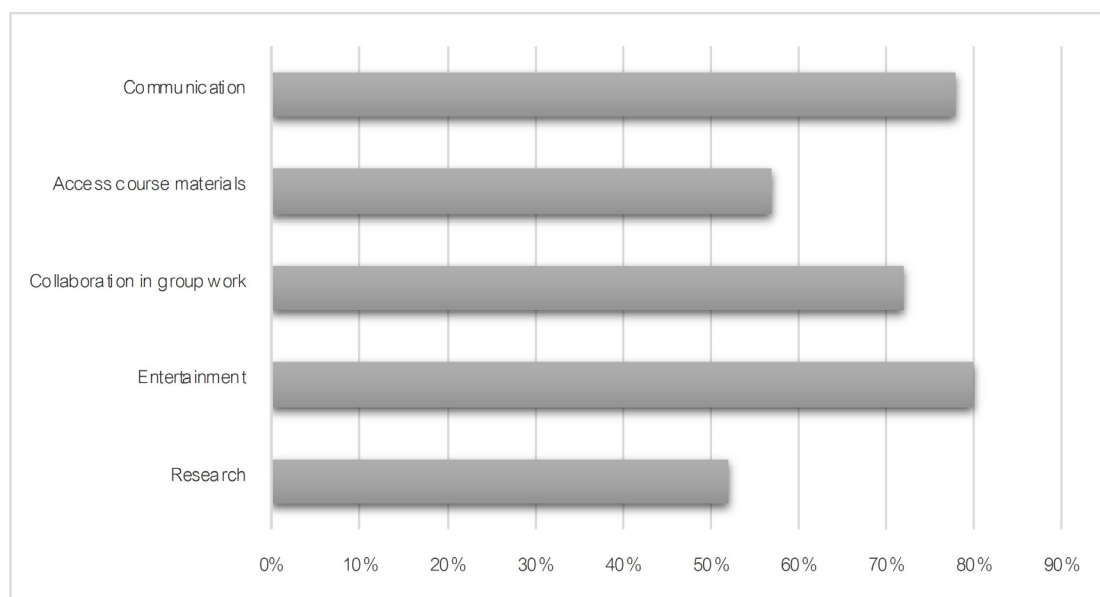


Diagram 1 Students' purposes of using technology devices in BYOD context

The data displayed in Diagram 1 showed the different purposes of using the technology devices in the context of BYOD. Though the purpose of entertainment was ranked the highest (80%) by the students, but the other three main goals of use were quite similar. More than a half of the students used the technology in BYOD for communication, education in general, and doing research. Similarly, the study by Grussendorf (2013) mentioned similar findings. The participants in this study said they used the technology in the BYOD context for many purposes. However, the communication was ranked the highest compared to other goals of use by 78%

while the other purposes of use were also ranked at the high level namely for collaboration in group work (72%), to access course materials (57%), and for research (52%). This can show that the students' engagement increased when the BYOD implemented in the education context (Al-Okaily, 2015) and because of the availability of information in the internet which they can access anytime they need, the higher level of learning capacity was higher (Vasant & Mehta, 2015).

2. The level of students' satisfaction regarding the BYOD applied in learning English classes

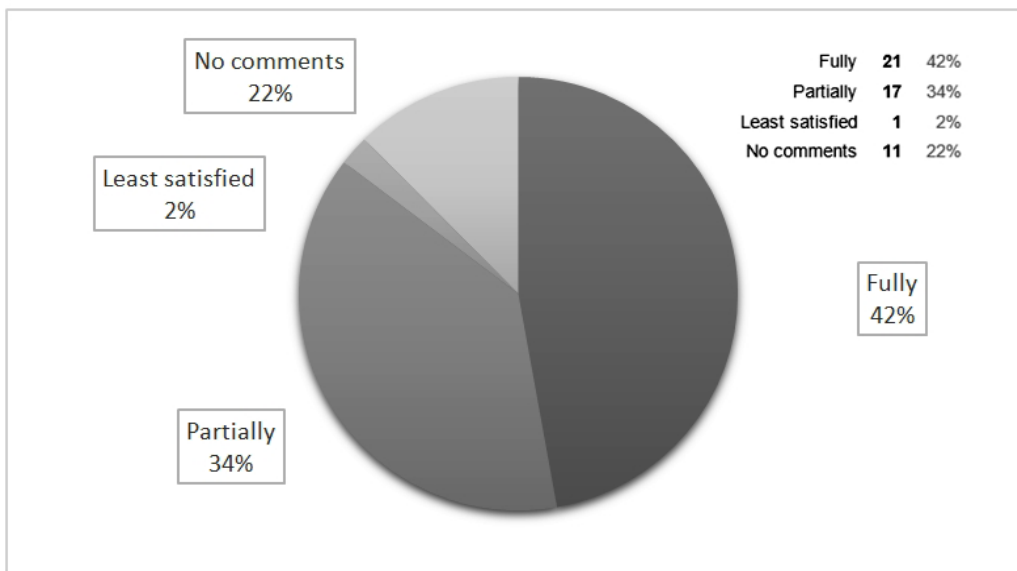


Diagram 2 Students' satisfaction toward the class implemented BYOD

Diagram 2 showed that most of the students (42%) in the study were fully satisfied with the class implemented BYOD. 21 students ranked the level of fully satisfaction toward this pedagogy followed by the lower level of partially satisfaction by 34%. However, there were 22% of the students ranking at the level of no comments. These levels of satisfaction can be confirmed by data from the open-ended questions of the

survey. Most of them were satisfied with this method of classroom management as mentioned in the survey "I agree with using computer or other devices in class", "I think it is very helpful because it can search everything that you do not know and cannot ask the teacher", and "I think it is very interesting and easier than using a university computer lab".

3. The impacts of BYOD on students' learning English

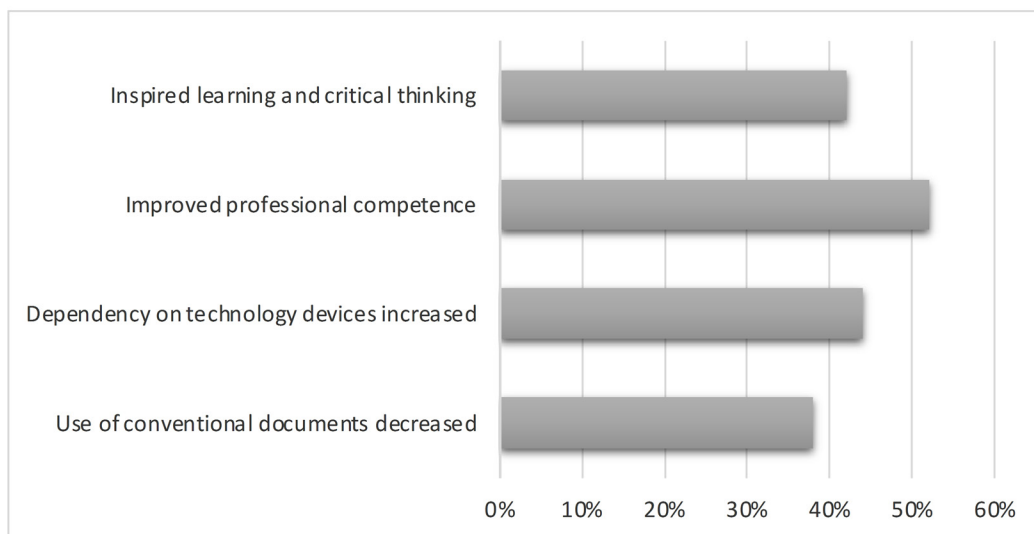


Diagram 3 Impacts of BYOD on students' learning

The results shown in Diagram 3 have confirmed that they almost agreed about implementing this kind of pedagogy management in the classroom since 52% of the students believed that BYOD will help them improve their professional competence as it was mentioned by the student “I can immediately save the data directly to my own computer instead of using the faculty’s computer”. Moreover, the strategy can also inspire students’ learning and their critical thinking which are very important for the 21st century students. 42% of them agreed with this perspective, “I found that it is good since I feel good and enjoy the class more than before”. This phenomenon can also lead

the students more dependent on the technology devices as we can see from some perspectives mentioned, “I think I like it because if we want to search some information about education, we need to use the technology devices”, and “I think we can use the devices in the classroom because we can search some information we do not understand and sometimes we use it for communication”.

5. Discussion

Though the result from the study shows many advantages of implementing BYOD for classroom management, there are some concerns in the way of using the technology devices in the classroom since



there are some limitations of the use of technology in education. To illustrate, the inequity in devices has been discussed since not all the students can afford the advanced technology devices and the level of personal digital skills and abilities of technology devices, and the programs are different (Al-Okaily, 2015) except in some context which is an exception such as the students in this study. Moreover, the students' devices themselves need to be considered since some programs can be available in some specific devices, others might not be compatible (Parsons, 2013). The availability of the internet connection or the speed of the internet in the college is another concern since the students in the study mentioned that "the internet is very low sometimes and it makes me feel uncomfortable and I cannot use the device to search any information". However, the fast access, coverage, and the quality of the network are not always met the expectation (Handal et al., 2014). Smith et al. (2015) also mentioned that the safety of internet or devices usage in BYOD cannot be ignored as some programs, or some information can harm the personal data or be hacked by the hackers while connecting through the internet. So that, the careful

use or access is needed to be advised to the students and the faculty needs to pay attention to this issue risen during or after the strategy implemented.

6. Suggestions

For colleges and universities as policy makers, the strategy of BYOD is highly advised to be applied in all classes implemented by the faculties as it can value both to the colleges or universities themselves in decreasing spending expenses in purchasing all the equipment tools for teaching and learning. Especially for online learning classes, the educators and students can be more convenient and familiar with the tools they have already had.

It can be, also, clearly seen that there are various future interesting research topics such as implementing BYOD in other areas of teaching and learning and how the BYOD can develop the students' needed 21st century skills such as problem-solving, and communication are encouraged to be conducted.

7. Knowledge Assets

The results from this study not only added the valuable research knowledge confirmation of the positive feedbacks from



the learners studying in the class applied the BYOD strategy, especially in the context of Thai students, learning language environment, but possible teaching methodology applying

BYOD hasalso accelerated the level of other skills namely critical thinking and digital literacy while participating in such learning environment shown in Diagram 4.

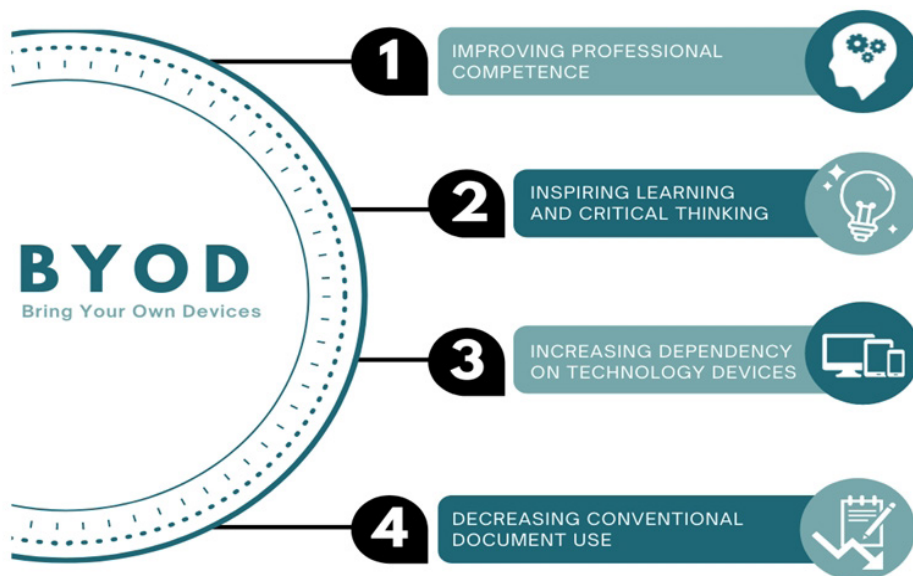


Diagram 4 Knowledge assets from applying BYOD in the classroom

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