

THE USE OF MOBILE -ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING: PRACTICES AND READINESS

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study; a) to find out how EFL students and teachers use their smart devices and b) to find out the students' readiness of using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). This study to widespread use of mobile phones and portable devices it is inevitable to think of Mobile Assisted Language Learning as a means of independent learning in Higher Education. In Mobile Learning, devices like smartphones, iPod, tablet, laptop, iPad are implemented to scaffold language learning. This paper focuses on the classification of mobile apps based on primary, secondary and tertiary learners. This research uses descriptive method that aims to describe all responses given by students through given a list of questions. These studies also discussed the design, method, theory and pedagogical features that underpin the current mobile apps. Since these apps are developed to enhance the language skills of the learners, emphasis should be primarily made on the acquisition of language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing skills through mobile technology. Thus, the finding showed that the students have positive attitude toward MALL. All the students have smartphone to support the educational purposes inside and outside classroom.

Keywords: Mobile assisted language learning (MALL), Primary, secondary and tertiary learners.

1. Introduction

Mobile Assisted Language Learning

Mobile -assisted language learning is the subdivision of both M-Learning and computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Beatty defines CALL as "a term used for the collection of technologies aimed at enhancing creativity and collaboration, particularly through social networking". In recent years the widespread use of mobile devices led to the abbreviation MALL which "differs from CALL in its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access across different contexts of use" (Kukulska-Hulme & Shields, 2008, p.273). In this technological era, everyone has their own handheld mobile devices. Using these devices, with easy access to internet, they interact with people from anywhere in the world. Irrespective of time and place people chat or exchange information with each other. The very term "mobile" stands for the "mobility" or the ability to move freely and easily from one place to another. Mobile learning refers to the implementation of mobile devices in any branch of study. The features of mobile technology such as the portability and information accessibility play a major role in the enhancement of English language teaching and learning (ElHusseini & Cronje (2010)). The main characteristic of M-Learning can be the discretion of the learner. It lies in the hands of the learner to decide upon the place and time for language learning (Kukulska-Hulme., 2012). The outbreak in the domain of mobile learning makes it harder for anyone to arrive at a stable concept because of the availability of new mobile devices in the market.

Looking at the wider context of mobile learning, mobile devices are responsible for new forms of art, employment, language, commerce, and learning. Nowadays, there is no separation between real and digital life: staying in online contact with friends and colleagues, working virtually on international projects, writing an online text, or

researching recommendations for interesting locations nearby; digital communication enriches the real world (Eteokleous & Ktoridou, 2009; Norris, Hossain, & Soloway, 2011). Although mobile learning support is rare in classroom settings, research on faculty support regarding how mobile technologies can be used for teaching in Higher Education is even scarcer.

M-Learning Readiness

Terras, Ramsay (2012) as cited in Almutairy et al (2015: 1505-1506) pointed out that the use of mobile technology in learning needs to consider the psychological side of learner. It should be designed and developed in line with human behavior so as to make it effective. In addition, positive attitude towards mobile technology lead to the behavioral intention to use m-learning. It is also expected that the technology should be user-friendly, that is, it allows the learner to use it easily. In other words, m-learning system should be appropriately matched with students' perception to make the m-learning system itself successful.

As a result, researchers must consider the technical aspects to ensure the psychological readiness for m-learning. Technology readiness represents people's propensity to accept and use new technologies to reach goals in home life and at work (Parasuraman, 2000, as cited in Almutairy et al (2015: 1506). Additionally, the M-learning's constant availability is the greatest advantage of M-learning itself. By using mobile devices in which 88% of the phones were android, lecturers can promote MALL by giving the students specific instruction of how to use certain application that can encourage their oral communicative skills for foreign language learning. Before applying MALL in speaking class, lecturers first need to address students' readiness of using MALL. This will be useful to find out their intention and expectation toward mobile learning.

Therefore, more research is needed to investigate mobile teaching and learning strategies and how these strategies are being implemented to engage students in the learning process (Chen & deNoyelles, 2013). Mobile technologies are considered as significant aids to language learning and teaching offer numerous practical uses in language learning. Along this vein, a new approach of language learning and teaching appeared known as mobile-assisted language learning or MALL in short. The main objective of this study is twofold: (a) to find out how EFL students and teachers use their smart devices and (b) to explore their readiness to adopt MALL in the educational context. Then we will guide you through the results of this study, which will provide answers to the following open-ended questions:

1. How do students and teachers use mobile technologies in general and in learning and teaching English in particular?
2. Are EFL students and teachers ready to integrate MALL in the educational field?
3. What implications does this have for the future? both from the learning and teaching point of view.

2. Method

This research method includes respondents from this study, population and sample, data collection techniques, and data analysis. This research uses descriptive method that aims to describe all responses given by students through given a list of questions. The measurement scale used is a Likert scale with 5 indicators such as 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

3. Result and Discussion

English learning apps available in the app stores are plenty and choosing the right app is definitely a tiresome job. The difficulty lies on the part of the learner to choose the right app and the question lies here is which app is best and suited to the particular level of the learner? To aid the learner's apps can be classified as follows;

a. Primary Learners

Primary learners include children belonging to the age group 3-10 years. Children of this age group learn the English language beginning with alphabets, later on to recognition of the letters, sounds of the alphabets, tracing the letters to write. They are interested in listening to animated rhymes songs and stories. Learning the Colors of different objects, shapes, name of animals, fruits, vegetables and more can enhance their vocabulary acquisition. Mobile apps are developed to meet the need of the children belonging to this age group. Apps which are good are mentioned in the below which suits for primary learners such as:

- Pogg — Spelling & Verbs: To Learn Spelling, Language and Vocabulary. [Special Education Like Autism and Speech Therapy Support]
- Starfall ABCs: Letter Recognition, Phonics, and Listening
- Super WHY: Practicing the alphabet, rhyming, spelling, writing and reading
- MindSnacks: It uses fun games to learn new English words.

b. Secondary Learner

Bonnstette and VanOverbeke (2012) believed "The elementary classroom builds the basis for the content areas and the future success of students. From writing creative stories to fact mastery in mathematics, apps provide an engaging and interactive platform for learning." Tan and Liu proposed mobile learning environment-MOBILE for assisting instruction and assessment in elementary school. They introduced the mobile learning system to manage all learning activities and the mobile learning tools (m-Tools) to execute learning activities for elementary students in and outside the classroom. The experiment conducted by them was promising that its enhanced students' learning interest and motivation with the help of MOBILE. Equipping the learning apps can change the regular lecture classroom and students learning interest can increase. As primary learner the basics of the language, the secondary will move to the next level of learning the language. Language skills like Listening, speaking, reading, writing skills will be acquired by these learners. On the other hand, they will learn grammar, vocabulary and meanings, pronunciation, spellings and more on the part of language acquisition.

Apps for Secondary Learners such as:

- Duolingo: Vocabulary
- Open Language: Speaking
- Rosetta Stone: Vocabulary Acquisition
- FluentU: Speaking, Vocabulary Acquisition

c. Tertiary Learners

Tertiary level learners include college students and adults' group of learners. With the accelerated development of Apps about learning English and the popularization of mobile devices among college students, students have become increasingly interested in the learning benefits that apps on mobile devices bring. According to the relevant research, the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can not only enhance students' English ability but also increase students' learning motivation. Seemingly, it is helpful and efficient for college students using mobile devices to learn English by themselves (Liu & Xuan He, 2014). The rapid development of app technologies has made these English learning apps

have the capability to integrate different media, for example, text, picture, animation, audio and video can be integrated in order to create a multimedia instructional material, as well as prompt students' interest in studying. Apps for Tertiary Level Learners such as:

- Dictionaries and concordancers such as Wordreference with fast accurate translations of words, idioms and collocations, and language forums to discuss various linguistic issues; the overlay QuickDict and bidirectional offline dictionaries such as Dictionary CC or Arabic Dict, online dictionary apps such as Pons, Jisho, Pleco, or even a powerful combined offline and online dictionary plus concordancer such as Linguee.
- Translation apps such as Google Translate that students use to translate words between two languages back and forth quickly and easily. They were aware, though, that it does not work as well with full phrases, sentences to use in real life or grammar. Of Google Translate they liked the fact that it produces a list of synonyms with the translation, that it enables audio so you can hear the words you are translating, input words into the translator through your own voice and play back the words
- They also mentioned newspaper apps such as Courier International, Der Spiegel or El Pais not only for reading and cultural awareness, but also for oral comprehension skills.
- Video apps such as YouTube, RTVE or Atresplayer with multiple opportunities for practice (watching video clips, TV extracts, full movies, listening to music with lyrics, etc.).
- Games such as MIndsnacks, which are great incentives, fun and allow you to unlock more games as you go up. On the negative side, they mentioned they can get repetitive after some time.
- Note taking apps such as Notes or Notability to write words and phrases and make learning more accessible and easier to memorize.
- And, finally, chat or messenger apps such as Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger to communicate with other people on the go.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above research results, it can be concluded the results of this study are as follows. Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) provides easy access for any learner without the constraints of both place and time. English learning apps available in the app stores are plenty and choosing the right app is definitely a tiresome job. a) Primary learners include children belonging to the age group 3-10 years. Children of this age group learn the English language beginning with alphabets, later on to recognition of the letters, sounds of the alphabets, tracing the letters to write. Mobile apps are developed to meet the need of the children belonging to this age group. Pogg-Spelling & Verbs: To Learn Spelling, Language and Vocabulary. b) Secondary Learner the experiment conducted by them was promising that its enhanced students' learning interest and motivation with the help of MOBILE. Language skills like Listening, speaking, reading, writing skills will be acquired by these learners. On the other hand, they will learn grammar, vocabulary and meanings, pronunciation, spellings and more on the part of language acquisition. Apps for Secondary Learners such as: Duolingo: Vocabulary, Open Language: Speaking, Rosetta Stone: Vocabulary Acquisition. c) Tertiary level learners include college students and adults' group of learners. With the accelerated development of Apps about learning English and the popularization of mobile devices among college students, students have become increasingly interested in the learning benefits that apps on mobile devices bring. Apps for

Tertiary Level Learners such as: Translation apps such as Google Translate that students use to translate words between two languages back and forth quickly and easily.

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