

Technology Enhanced Language Learning: MALL

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Abstract

Initially mobile phones were used as voice transmitters but today it is influencing a large group of people as well as current academics in such a way that in future the whole process of learning and teaching will be put under a single idea: 'm-learning'. Today mobile learning is increasing among wide range of language learners through various apps and devices like iPods, WhatsApp and PDAs. This paper focuses on the use of mobile technology in language learning. This paper focuses on the use of mobile phones in enhancing the competency level of learners in learning English.

Introduction

Today we live in the world of technologies. The traditional classroom is shrunk and learning/teaching through the use of various devices like PDAs, multimedia cellular phones, MP3players and software applications is increasing day by day. Mobile learning is also called as m-learning, which is an integral part of e-learning. MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) can create a new environment for language learners. It provides a different perspective towards learning atmosphere in contrast to classroom-based learning. It helps in experiencing a new kind of learning beyond traditional way of teaching and learning language through broadening the space and creating a new platform for the learners.

We can define Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a process of learning a language, which is assisted or enhanced through the use of mobile device. It is a subset of both mobile learning and computer assisted language learning.

Needs

The fast spreading technology that is frequently used by people is mobile phone. It plays a dominant role in educational communication, which is used for transferring knowledge. Ten years ago, mobile phones were used as transmitters of human voice from one place to the other covering a wide range of geographical areas. Today it is used for various purposes like: Sending multimedia features and text (MMS), photos, videos and audio transfer, easy access to Internet (get connected with Google, email, etc.).

Mobile/ Cell Phones

The latest android, windows and software equipped operating system mobile phones can easily access Internet. The information regarding all subject fields are available in the Internet. This helps the learners in finding appropriate information from a wide list relating to the relevant subject topic. Through mobile phone the learners can send voice messages, text messages, photos, emails, SMS, and videos using different applications software.

Listed below are few mobile applications which promote language learning:

WhatsApp and Facebook

These are highly rated social media and networking used by people all around the world, especially youngsters. It is a kind of collaborative learning where the learners share the same learning platform (learning setup). Using these apps for learning, English can be learnt effectively as they undergo communicative language practice without the learner's knowledge. It helps in developing the learners' language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as they send and reply text messages, listen and record audio clipping. For example, the learners can create a group, where they can send a word with phonetic transcriptions so that the members in the group can learn the correct pronunciation and then can make use of that word in a sentence too.

American English App

Through downloading this application the learners can listen to many audio clips with different accents (British as well as American). The learners who use British accent may find it interesting to learn American accent. There are work areas on reading comprehension where the learners have to read and answer the question. This helps the learners in enhancing their listening, reading and writing skills.

Story Board

This enables the learners to develop their speaking skill. Under this application the learners have to create stories with the help of websites like *zooburst* or *storybird*. Through this the thinking process of the learner is developed as they create their own story. It enhances the thinking skill of the learners, which is considered as one of the skills in language learning.

Kindle

It is an application, where the learners can download enormous collection of books. This helps the learners to use virtual books replacing the paper-material books. Thus they can carry any number of books without any difficulty. This app provides an option called 'night mode' where they can read the books even in darkness. This helps in promoting their reading skill.

Audio Translation Application

There are many standard dictionaries available in Google Play Store, where we can easily download the applications (Example: *Merriam-Webster* etc.). These dictionaries have audio recognizer which it recognizes a word or sentence and provide the user all possible matches. These dictionaries have access to Internet where they provide all details relating to words like *etymology*, *pronunciation*, *synonyms*, *antonyms*, *word transcription* and *accent*. Some dictionaries can be used through offline too.

Moblogs

Blogs are the recent development in educational technology, which can be used with the help of personal computers or laptops. Moblogging is a new application in language learning,

which is a combination of mobile and weblogging. Moblogs help in promoting language creation, especially writing and collaborative activities.

PDA's

Personal Digital Assistants have access to Internet and support wireless communication. These help in sharing files like text, images, audio and video among members or groups which helps in language learning and teaching. The recent development in PDA's is hand-writing recognition. This helps the learners to write directly as program accepts the input and it gives the same output. New intergraded PDA's have narrowed the gap with high speed, access to Internet, larger screen and functions which are similar to PCs and laptops.

IPods

IPods are similar to tablets. Digital audio files like MP3 provide quality sound in a compressed format. This helps the learner to listen the audio and learn the language. This can develop the listening skill of the learners. The latest iPods have the video option, where the learners can visually watch the video when they are listening.

Learning Occurs Collaboratively through MALL

An approach which is fully student-centered is known as collaborative learning. In this approach the instructor is more like a facilitator. This kind of learning encourages the learners in supporting the other learners in the group and motivates them to achieve the learning goal.

Language can also be learnt through collaborative learning using mobile phone where the device does not drive the learners but the learners do that process of gaining the knowledge.

Benefits

1. Time saving
2. Easily portable
3. The learners get easily attracted, which enables them to learn unconsciously.
4. Mobile phones are cheap compared to PCs and laptops.

5. Learners can utilize these devices outside the classroom.
6. Learners can study and practice in any place and time of their choice.
5. Easy access to Internet
6. Expand social inclusion in language learning.

Challenges

1. Slow processing (especially in those areas where the broadband connection is poor)
2. Font limitation and screen sizes for visually-disabled learners.
3. Learners' physical health concerns (differently abled).
4. Power limitation
5. No face to face interaction.

Conclusion

The present generation learners are known as 'digital natives' because at a very young age they begin using the gift of technology. Mobile device is becoming popular throughout the world. Language learning can be effective through MALL. It involves the principle of 'anytime anywhere' which enables the learners as and when required. It can provide a private space for the learners in learning the language. It supports a variety of interactive and collaborative learning approaches and techniques.

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