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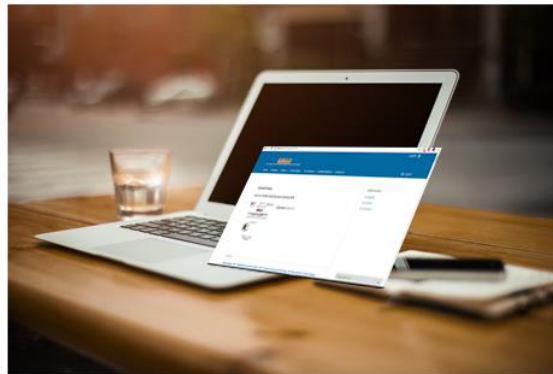
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THE ROLE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING LANGUAGE

Abstract

In the field of education, technology is playing a very crucial role. Teachers are adapting and including the use of devices for the exchange of information with the students in and out of classroom. Availability of internet connectivity and modern technological devices are helping students to link with other students and teachers anywhere and anytime. Mobile technologies, in particular, are dramatically influencing the way of learning of the students in today's world. Today's students don't know a world without technology, and they have little patience or aptitude for learning without it. Teachers are using modern technology, including mobile devices as teaching tools to engage the students in more meaningful ways.

The present paper examines the role of mobile devices to enhance the process of teaching and learning English language in today's world of technology.

Keywords: Education, English language, Internet, Mobile devices, Technology.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, technology is playing a very crucial role. Teachers are adapting and including the use of devices for the exchange of information with the students in and out of classroom. Availability of internet connectivity and modern technological devices are helping students to link with other students and teachers anywhere and anytime. Mobile technologies, in particular, are dramatically influencing the way of learning of the students in today's world. Teachers are using modern technology, including mobile devices as teaching tools to engage the students in more meaningful ways.

Mobile learning represents a way to address a number of our educational problems. Devices such as smart phones and tablets enable innovation and help students, teachers, and

parents gain access to digital content and personalized assessment vital for a post-industrial world. Mobile devices, used in conjunction with near universal 4G/3G wireless connectivity, are essential tools to improve learning for students. As noted by Irwin Jacobs, the founding chairman of Qualcomm, Inc.,

“always on, always connected mobile devices in the hands of students has the potential to dramatically improve educational outcomes.”(1)

Teaching language through the use of computers is not a new concept. In the language and second language classrooms, computers have been used as teaching tools. But it is also an acceptable fact that every student (especially in rural areas of India) doesn't have access to a computer at their homes. And it is even not affordable for school districts to provide a personal computer to every student due to the costs of hardware; but with the availability of mobile phones at seemingly lesser cost, most young learners can get a real opportunity to transform the ways of learning and gaining knowledge. The students can get lots of opportunities for learning language through mobile phones.

MOBILE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

As defined by some scholar mobile learning is a process of gaining knowledge through conversations across multiple contexts among people and personal using interactive technologies with a focus on contexts (Sharples et al.2007). Thus, Mobile learning or M-Learning is a skill of learning with the help of mobile phones or any other handheld devices. This type of mobile learning technique decreases certain limitations in the process of learning such as those of location and time by the help of mobility of general portable devices such as smart phones. It is a convenient method to enhance a new way of learning from mobile where we can get different sources to learn.

There are four skills that are needed to be learnt for complete communication. While learning native language, the first thing one learns is to listen, then to speak, then to read, and the final step of learning language is to write. These are called as the four language skills. These skills are categorized into two i.e. the Receptive skill and the Productive skills. Listening and reading are the Receptive Skills, which serves the purpose of input to the mind. Speaking and writing are the Productive Skills, which provides the output. On the basis of the need of the learners, any one of the skills mentioned above i.e. productive skills and receptive

skills, can be acquired by using smart. Along with these, the facility of learning grammar, vocabulary, verbal ability can be provided to learners by the help of smart phones. Many applications are available which serve the purpose of learning both receptive and productive skills of English language.

OBJECTIVES OF MOBILE LEARNING/ MLEARNING

Mobile learning has great advantage and helped people to be independent in their own way of learning and some of objectives are:

1. Helping to support interactive methods of learning.
2. Self Confidence can be raised.
3. Communication is improved.
4. Personalizing learners' environment.
5. Enable access to global information and Global Collaboration.
6. Enhancing the Knowledge.
7. Efface the fear of language learning.
8. Gamifying the process of learning by making it enjoyable.

THE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES IN A CREATIVE WAY TO LEARN LANGUAGE

Mobile devices can be used as a tool for teaching language. There are many creative ways which can be used to teach and learn English language.

Voice Recorder: There is an option of 'Voice Recorder' in every smart phone which can be used as a tool for learning a language. There are various ways a learner can use it for instance recording classroom lectures which can be listened at home or at any time when required. Thus it serves the purpose of improving receptive skill, the skill of listening. The learners can use it to promote their pronunciation. For example, the learners can record their voice while reading a paragraph aloud. Then they can listen to their voice back and draw the faults (if any) in their pronunciation. It helps them to find out themselves how they pronounce the words and to improve it.

Camera: camera, can be used judiciously for learning language For example the teacher of English can take a snap of their town building or any creative picture and assign their

students the task to explain where the place is and may ask them to describe the place in their own language. This is a kind of ABLT (Activity Based Language Teaching), where the students find interesting to learn language in a creative way.

E – Dictionaries: The smart phones serve many e – dictionaries to the learners. Whenever and wherever a learner has a doubt regarding meaning of the word, they can clear it immediately. Some android e – dictionary apps (like Dictionary.com) have the facility of providing ‘word of the day’ which helps to learn a new word each day. Thesaurus, Idioms and phrases, phrasal verbs empowers the power of vocabulary. Learners can have quick reference and Audio playback of sounds of words, phrases etc. Some e-dictionaries have features like ‘Hangman’, ‘Find the odd one out’, ‘Crossword Puzzles’, ‘Word formation’, which help to improve the vocabulary.

E-games: Games provide an alternative method to learn a language in a while pleasurable way. Now a day “learning” no longer means rote memorization—it instead means acquiring the skills necessary to be able to respond appropriately in another language, when under pressure in various circumstances. Games can provide these benefits in an entertaining way. Thus as we gain delight in playing a game, we unconsciously acquire an array of language skills! Games provide a personal way to learn the language without any fear of embarrassment in public for making mistakes with the language. The skills of spelling, pronunciation, syntax and grammar can be refined at our leisure.

SMS (Short Message Service): It can be used to improve the writing skills of the learners. If used prudentially it is quite useful to engage learners in language learning experience. The teacher of English can request the students to narrate a story in SMS after his oral explanation of it. Grammar can also be taught by the teacher through SMS services. But the practice of using SMS language (instead of goodnight, writing ‘GNT’, for because - BCZ, for morning – MNG and many more) to type the text faster may kill the spelling skills. Learners of English language must be careful regarding this.

Whatsapp: It is a mobile messaging app which allows exchanging messages over an internet connection. Users can create groups. They get a chance to send unlimited images. Video and audio media messages can also be sent.

Teachers and students can use it in number of ways to learn language skills. Teachers can send their students a podcast or short news article and ask them to send an audio response by giving their opinion and or summarizing it in their own words. Students can describe their daily habits or routines, or create a set of instructions; they can use it to learn tenses by using illustrated photos. A short business presentation or review of a TV show or movie/book can be prepared.

Ipadio: It lets to record high-quality audio. Images, descriptions, titles and geo-locate can be added to recording before instantly uploading it to ipadio.com account or cross-post to Facebook, Twitter or blog.

Teachers can record the lesson and send it to the students which can be used by them for revising. Students can arrange interview of a number of people and record and edit their interview and use it for their research activity. They can create a poem or short story with audio and photos.

Facebook: Closed Facebook groups can be used for communicating with students. Students can share opinions, ideas and homework projects.

Teachers can post quizzes and grammar tips to help students to learn in an innovative way. Brainstorm ideas about different topics can be posted. Students can be given theme each week and ask students to share pictures, songs and quotations connected to the theme.

MOBILE APPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Hundreds of mobile phone apps are available some of which are free while others are paid, students can choose any options to suite their budget. Following are some of the apps that students can use for extra practice:

Duolingo: It is a wonderful app having fascinating game design. It's free, contains no advertisement and is very effective. Native speakers of many Asian languages can use the app to learn English, however, as the site can be used in 23 different languages. Its focus is on using translations, spelling, speech, visual cues and multiple choice to learn languages through an array of different games. Duolingo was created as a language-learning platform that simultaneously helps translate the internet.

Rosetta Stone: Rosetta Stone is designed to teach us English the way we had learn it if we were children starting to learn the language. There are a variety of lessons in the app to teach people the language. Speech recognition within its platform has been praised because it has been designed to recognize pronunciation of non-native speakers. This is necessary when we're learning a new language in the beginning, there are a lot of words we know but end up pronouncing in a weird accent. The enhanced speech recognition helps to offset this.

Memrise: Memrise uses easy and creative way to remember words for learning English. This app focuses on the expansion of the vocabulary of users by learning English words in an effective way. Memrise also has an option of using app in offline mode to continue learning without internet connection. Memrise app also has courses to learn the English Grammar in a very innovative way.

FluentU: It is very unique among the apps, which takes real-world videos like commercials, music videos, inspiring talks, and news; and turns them into English learning experiences. Unlike traditional apps, FluentU uses a natural approach that helps you ease into the English language over time. Students can learn English as it is spoken in real life.

EngVarta: It is a secure and Anonymous way many learners can understand English and know grammar but don't have the confidence to speak publicly in English then EngVarta is the best app to remove hesitation and get fluency. It can be used to practice English at home by Housewives, Professionals and Students.

Two min English: This app is free, has no advertisements and contains more than two hundred two-minute video lessons on a variety of topics e.g., business English, social English, travel English, idioms and phrases and common mistakes in English.

LIMITATIONS OF USING MOBILES FOR LEARNING LANGUAGE

A maximum number of students and teachers have access to mobile phones. Learning happens at any time of the day on working days or weekends and at any place. However, people use mobiles less as a tool for the language learning more as means of communication. Following are the limitations of M-learning:

1. Size inconvenience: Small screen size of the mobile devices causes strain on the eyes of the student while accessing the online resources over prolonged period of time. The information provided may also be incomplete due to the limited size of the device.
2. Cost: A mobile device with limited functional capability may not be suitable for accessing the online courses. Hence, the students are left with no option but to get one with the required level of functionality. This mobile device may be relatively costly.
3. Limited storage: Memory size of mobile is limited, which is not enough to store numerous offline content and other downloaded resources in the mobile.
4. Short battery life: Most devices discharge quickly while using internet. A number of active apps within the device also drain out the battery of mobile. This can be a major problem for learning across lengthy periods of time.
5. Unexpected distractions: while accessing online content there may be distractions in the form of a simple SMS, notification or call.
6. Limited connectivity: Poor network connectivity or limited bandwidth can cause difficulty while accessing online content thus disturbing learning.
7. Technological problems: Lack of device standardization may be challenging for mobile learning. Teachers may face the problem of keeping all their students on the same level since tablets and smart phones have access to different hardware and operating systems. The students may not be able to engage in online discussions or even access the coursework.

CONCLUSION

Mobile learning has expanded the scope of education. A mobile has emerged as a tool for English language learning and teaching. It has relieved the learners from fetters of boundary of the classroom and fixed time table of the school/colleges. Students can now access the content from anywhere such as their homes, they can communicate with the teachers as and when required and clear their doubts. Availability of applications for learning language has enhanced the learning activities by making it enjoyable. Learning is not boredom now. Mobile phones are playing a very important role in the field of language learning in spite of its certain limitations. By supplying our students with easily accessible

tools for studying 'on the go', we are enabling them to incorporate self-study into their busy lives, accelerating their progress and guaranteeing better results.

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