EXPLORING THE REACH OF MOBILE ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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Abstract
Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) takes learning to a distinguished level where it involves the usage of Mobile Technology in Language Learning. The main feature of M-Learning is making the learning process impulsive, personalized, informal and pervasive. Unlike conventional classroom learning, MALL does not emphasize the learners to sit in classrooms or in front of computers to collect study materials. Though learning through mobile phones may take a longer time compared to computers it is still considered as an ideal solution to language learning barriers in terms of time and place. This paper tries to demonstrate the benefits of Second language learning through the effective usage of MALL among Engineering students. The areas covered include listening, speaking, reading, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar development in language learning.

Keywords: E-learning, mobile-assisted language learning, mobile technology and second language learning

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1. INTRODUCTION
The paper proposes the different ways to develop effective learning through m-learning, a shift from teacher-led learning to student-led one through mobile technologies. Mobile phones are used to fulfil various personal purposes and also it can make learning more interesting in acquiring various language skills. The learning context has changed from conventional to digital, with the dawn of technological advancements such as mobile phones, tablets, pads,
Exploring the Reach of Mobile Assisted Language Learning Among Mechanical Engineering Students

We could agree with Moura and Carvalho that the usage of mobiles in learning has a massive impact on the youth. There are many innovations in language mastering that young learners started adapting. The technology has become a significant part of our life. The gadgets have become the adoptive lifestyle of students since it is easy to access and affordable. By using an assortment of gadgets in a learning context is very essential based on its physical features such as size, weight, input and output capabilities.

Similarly, Lan and Sie (2010) recognised mobile learning as a new sort of learning version which allows learners tracking down study materials everywhere and instantly using wi-fi telecommunication network and the internet. This generation is learning a lot of things with the integration of gadgets in the teaching and learning context. It has supplied unlimited learning at all the levels of education and it has become a noteworthy learning tool for learners as well as teachers.

2. MOBILE LEARNING

“Mobile phones are misnamed. They should be called gateways to human knowledge.”

Ray Kurzweil.

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a mushrooming subdivision of computer-assisted language learning in general. Mobile learning (m-learning) can be called as a smart way of learning anywhere and anytime with the aid of portable gadgets. Nobody ever imagined that the Mobile phones would become the cardinal part of our life when it was invented in 1973. But these days mobile devices such as phones, and other handheld devices, are used everywhere for doing everything ranging from, and the like. Apart from voice calling, making a short message, video chat, listening to audio, web surfing and shopping, mobile devices have increasingly grown toward becoming tools for education and language learning, and all its users from teachers or students are getting used to this environment to make education globalise.

Today’s students are tech-savvy. They can access a world of resources and information just at their fingertips. They are the creators, not simply consumers, of technology. The key aspect which attracts the learners in M-learning is mobility. Among all other gadgets, Smartphones have become the integral source of learning language skills with less effort in one’s own pace within their free time productively and provides more feasibility to learn. As soon as the mobile phones became a crucial part of our lives, there felt a need for using them in language learning tasks. Learners have their choice of learning to maintain pace in learning whereas they are motivated by teachers and students in face-to-face instruction. Learning materials can be referred to multiple times in their convenience. Mobile technologies offer teachers and students a more flexible approach to learning. There are various activities available for the learners to assess their skills with the help of mobile phone and internet connection. Areas of mobile-based language learning are diverse among which the most common ones are access to online materials, to learn language skills such as listening, reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

3. READING

Mobile learning helps significantly in improving reading comprehension and vocabulary of learners. The arrival of various apps in mobile phones has offered the learners different sets of reading activities. The reading activities offered in the mobile apps has enabled the reader to have a fun-filled reading experience. The mobile apps facilitate them not to look on the
mistakes committed but induce growth of better understanding of the language. The better understanding includes attaining vocabulary knowledge, comprehending through pictorial representations and immediate analysis of words in the text. For instance, E-book reader is one such app which offers the learners text announcer that enables them to improvise their listening ability and results in better pronunciation. The Play store in the mobile phones facilitates apps such as SSAT reading comprehension, English reading text, etc. that allocates comprehending reading of texts.

4. SPEAKING
Speaking in English not only includes correct grammatical structure but also stress, rhythm, intonation and pronunciation. For EFL and ESL students lacks teacher who cannot provide them with the correct pronunciation and stress pattern required in speaking. It is often hard and not affordable to find a native speaker as a teacher to train to speak fluently. This is where the mobile apps come in handy for attentive learners. The mobile apps are often free and affordable for effective language learning. There are about six mobile apps that enhance effective speaking in English: TalkEnglish, ELSA, Nativox, FluentU, Converse and Apps 4 Speaking.

- Talk English: This is a classic English language learning app. The app provides sets of listening exercises, quizzes and conversation practices. The app enables to improve daily conversational skills with an easy and productive approach.
- ELSA (English Language Speaking Assistance): The app listens to the regular pronunciation of words by the user. It identifies the difficult areas of the user while speaking. On the next step, it teaches syllables and sounds that the user has trouble pronouncing. The app is designed by an expert who is specialized in speech coaching.
- Nativox: This app focuses on improving intonation. It is designed in such a way where the learners learn how to say something while learning what it means.
- FluentU: FluentU facilitates learning through popular audios, talk shows, podcasts, YouTube videos and news which provides entertainment and a fun platform for learning the language.
- Converse: The app provides an opportunity to hear and imitate the verified English pronunciation of any word and the phrase the learner wants to learn.
- Apps 4 Speaking: The app facilitates an interactive conversation with an animated character. The app frames dialogues and encourages the learner to listen and comprehend the dialogues.

Mobile apps help the learners to keep track of what they are learning and how they are learning. The speaking apps in the mobile phones deduct the errors of the learner and encourage them to rectify it in an effective manner. Unlike the conventional classroom, the learner is not judged for his/her learning process and ability. This helps the learner to learn in a serene environment without pressure but surrounded with effective learning strategies.

5. VOCABULARY
Vocabulary is termed as the knowledge of effective use of words in a language. When vocabulary is enriched in a learner they become fluent in speaking and enhance effective writing styles. The mobile phone apps are filled with fun learning experience strategies and sometimes the classical approach is also incorporated. The fun learning exercises include proving worksheets, playing a video, pictorial demonstrations, innovative word games, etc. The most popular mobile apps include Vocabulary.com, Power Vocab, Word a day widget, 7
Little words, Word to word, etc. A Word a Day has a classical classroom approach where the learner is encouraged to learn the meaning, syllable, and pronunciation of a word per day. The vocabulary storage in the learner is enhanced every day. They learn a word’s change in meaning according to their context, the word’s root word, and measures such as how to be used and when to be used are taught to the learner. There are other useful apps to develop one’s diction such as Test your English vocabulary, GRE English vocabulary, SAT vocabulary, vocabulary builder, vocabulary trainer and vocabulary cats.

6. GRAMMAR
The grammar apps in the mobile phones provide an easy way to learn the grammar rules of the English language. The apps use a variety of lessons and tests to improve grammar in the learner. The app also provides simple explanations, paradigms and exercises for further improvements. The apps first engage the learner in small tests to analyze their skill level and encourage the learner to develop further in their learning process. The apps help the learner to keep track of scores and progress of the learner. Learning takes place through watching and listening to various videos and podcasts that enhance the active participation of the learners. Auto-correct is an inbuilt feature in mobile phones that help the learner to correct punctuations, spellings, choice of words and also syntax structure in the text messages, emails, documents and form fillings.

7. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT
Mobile Assisted Language Learning is a technological boon for the learners. It offers many benefits and also plays a vital role in the development of knowledge. It moves to a new arena of learning where the learner is given the whole autonomy to choose the format that suits their level of learning. MALL provides more interesting and effective mode of learning. The technology takes a wide diversion from the conventional mode of learning. It provides a virtual classroom where the students see beneficial and subject-oriented videos, podcasts, pictorial representations for a better learning environment. Though it takes a longer time in learning when compared to computers yet it allocates a great sense of freedom of time and place. In a student teacher based classroom it is often very difficult to obtain personal assistance from the teacher. In MALL the spasm between the learner and teacher is filled. It is up to the learner’s interest and dedication that determines the speed of learning the language. MALL can also be implemented in the classrooms for a better comprehensive learning of language. It is necessary to adapt to the latest technologies in order to provide innovative, comprehensive and self-dependent forms of learning.

REFERENCES


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