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The Gradual development of Mobile Device and it's Applications in Learning English.

Abstract

The present century is the age of digitalization and technological innovation. In this age of transition, Each and Every phase is marked with some innovation and transition which make the learner more and more comfortable in learning foreign Language. New literacy and new media are shaping the instructional and pedagogical practices of the global education system. The growing and the most popular technology in this development is Mobile Assisted Language Learning (*MALL*). Technologies like MALL hold immense possibility to increase the overall effectiveness of language learning within and beyond the classroom. The emergence of mobile device and the gradual development of its features and applications provide an instance of learning foreign language with technology. Mobile Assisted Language Learning is the latest field of research is still in the initial stage for learners in India. It is yet to be seriously explored and instructional and pedagogical framework is still lacking. This paper is an exploratory study about gradual development of Mobile Device and it's applications as well as inbuilt features which has the tremendous potential for providing climate for learning English as a second language acquisition and teaching in India. The paper also analyses the challenge, limitations and future scope for researchers.

Keywords : Mobile assisted language learning, Communication, Education, M- learning, MALL

Introduction

Present Education phase has been turned out to be the representative of technology and novelty. The vast advancement of tools in technology has created a center of attention for people to make productive use of tools such as laptop and mobile devices more frequently in their day to day life. In such evolutionary phase, users find high comfortable in completing their activities satisfactorily either by way of interacting with society or by gaining information, knowledge or learning language. The needs and taste of each and every generation for language learning has been changing. After facing series of methods and approaches i.e. from grammar translation method to latest communicative language teaching approach, learners have changed their taste of learning the language. In the beginning of 21st century and the last decade of 20th century, computer has played the major role in language learning activities. After CALL, the acronym “MALL’ (mobile assisted language learning) has emerged. MALL is the consequences of rapid development of computer assisted language learning and availabilities of plenty of software and websites. In order to access these software and websites, anywhere- anytime accessible tool has been needed. At the same time, with the rapid development of mobile technology, production of more and more advanced features possessed mobile devices start supporting and providing the tools for the accessibility of software and websites. The place of the desktop has been taken by the laptop which has been gradually replaced by the use of advanced palm-top. Such development and invention of technology led the people to learn and obtain information through handy operated devices such as Android smart-phones, Tablets, I-phone and I-pod.

Use of mobile device and its features

Innovation in 21st century in the field of mobile technology has been so extreme that the today’s digital native generation makes the extensive use of technological instruments such as Personal digital Assistant (PDA), Tablets and Smart-phones in their each and every walk of life. Mobile Assisted Language learning is a sort of learning the language where mobile device is the tool for learning Language. Traditionally people used to carry pocket diary, blank pages, Pocket calendar, pocket dictionary and sometimes small torch. Mobile device

possesses all these features such as Memo and Calendar for noting down important information as well planning some events. Most of the Smart phones have inbuilt Dictionary. If such attribute are not inbuilt in mobile device, than it is freely available on Google Play or similar types of search engine of mobile device. The audio and video features of mobile device provide an authentic proof as one can record the voice and the video in MP 4 format. Such activities provide necessary exposure for learning the basic skills such as LSRW. Mobile phone is going to become inseparably necessity for each individual remains in contact with others from morning to night. Moreover, the decreasing cost of Mobile device plays a major role in its affordability too.

Apart from basic inbuilt features, the current mobile devices especially Smartphone has made in the way that can support various Applications. Previously Mobile was just the instrument for telephony purpose but since last decade Mobile service markets are so much flooded with innovative applications such as social networking, podcasting, or speech recognition which enable learners to learn language in social context which can provide the learning on hand or learning instant or anywhere, anytime opportunity. Mobile technology also enables users to perform many different kinds of social-interactive functions including communication (phone, SMS, SNS, email), organization (memos, address or calendars, other utilities), applications (e-books, database, tools, and office), information (webs, references) or relaxation (camera, music, movies, or games) (Kim, Heyoung & Kwon, Yeonhee. P. 31-57). The use of mobile devices, such as Smart Phones, PDAs, notebook computers, and tablets, not only makes people's lives more convenient, but also has a great impact on all kinds of arts and humanity developments, including language learning.(G.-Z. Liu *et al.* 2014.P.2)

Mobile device becomes the part of pocket of each and every person Most of the people now a -days use mobile device for filling online electricity bill, Gas bill even money transfer from apps like Pay TM, Flicker, etc. These days, creating weblogging or making webpage becomes identity or status for computer users. This remains not only the monopoly of computer users but also Mobile users can access the Internet or upload their texts, images, and videos by their mobile phones to their WebPages. Indeed, publishing information by mobile phones through weblogging, called mobologging, allows learners to share their ideas and communicate with their friends. This feature of mobile device make the learners remain exposed to language learning which ultimately put them to the climate of language learning.

Major concepts and definitions of MALL:

The term mobile assisted language learning is very much hard and difficult to define as it has various opinions and debate on its title and noun “Mobile”. Literally the noun mobile means the action happens while a person is not at fixed place. The facility becomes mobile means from anywhere or anytime a person can get. In this context Kusulska-Hulme & Traxler have rightly defined in their edited book “‘Mobile Learning’, a handbook for educators and trainers”.

‘Mobile learning’ is both a new concept and one that has some familiar connotations. It is certainly concerned with learner mobility, in the sense that learners should be able to engage in educational activities without the constraints of having to do so in a tightly delimited physical location” [Kusulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005 P.1-6). Further Kukulska-Hulme notes that “mobile technology can assist learners at the point of need and in ways that fit in with their mobile lifestyles” (p. 162).hence Mobility of learning also generates new modes of educational delivery: personalized, learner-centered, situated, collaborative, ubiquitous, and lifelong learning (Sharples, Taylor & Vavouloula, 2005). In 2007 Stockwell holds that studying MALL is a natural path of computer-based learning research in light of the current situation in which “technologies themselves are becoming more pervasive, and the number of students who own mobile technologies ... is increasing at an impressive rate” (p. 366).

These concepts have been defined a decade ago where apps were not easily supported to mobile devices. But after the innovations in mobile technology the concepts of researchers in the field of mobile leaning has been changed. In 2009 Sharples et.al opined as “M-learning helps linking people in real world and virtual worlds, creating learning communities between people on the move, providing expertise on demand, and supporting a lifetime of learning” (Sharples, Milrad, Arnedillo-Sanchez, & Vavoula, 2009, p. 2.) Pachler and Cook (2010, p. 6) define M-learning as “the processes of coming to know and being able to operate successfully in, and across, new and ever changing contexts and learning spaces with an emphasis on understanding and knowing how to utilize our everyday life-worlds as learning spaces.”In 2011 Godwin-Jones further suggests that “mobile devices [that deliver MALL] integrate real-life interests and academic roles” on the part of learners (p. 8).

The literature summarizes the benefits of using MALL as follows. First, MALL enables students to more easily and more promptly access language learning materials and to

communicate with people at anytime, from anywhere. Second, the nature of digital technology facilitates students' participation in both collaborative and individualized language learning activities synchronously and/or asynchronously allowing rapid development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, skills. Third, mobile technology provides various resources and tools for language learning that encourage learners to be more motivated, autonomous, situated (site-specific), and socially interactive.(Kim, Heyoung & Kwon, Yeonhee P.31-57)

The early phase of language leaning and development of Mobile devices in language learning

According to Salaberry (2001), early phase of language learning activities is concerned with tools such as Video Cassette Recordings (VCRs) , broadcast devices, as phonographs, radios and televisions. All these devices and gazettes were the tools for exploring language related activities in language laboratories. In 1950s, under the influence of audio-lingual theory, authentic audio samples were used for educational purposes in language laboratories. In 1960s computers were introduced and this behaviourist theory (audio-lingual theory) had replaced the language laboratories with drill-based computer-assisted instruction. Since then, the computer-mediated communication in educational contexts has been progressing as technologies continue to shrink in size (Chinnery, 2006). The arrival and popularity of the internet alongside the development of PDA, laptop and mobile devices in the 1990s gave rise to the next generation of e-learning (Sharples, 2000).

Unlike computer assisted language learning, mobile assisted language learning too faced the transition phase. Mobile device appeared in two phases i.e. the low-end mobile and high-end mobile. In 1973, John F.Mitchell and Martin Cooper of Motorola made the first low-end mobile which weighed 2 K.G. It's commercially appearance into the society was initially for telephonic purpose only. From 1983 to till date, the mobile device has been evolving and updating its shape and size and constantly has been changing its features from low end to high-end and from high-end to latest android as well as window Smartphone. Keeping in mind the initial facilities of mobile devices very few experiments had been done by scholars to use mobile device for education purpose. The first use of mobile device in education had been done by Twarog and Pereszlenyi Pinter in 1980.They used telephones to provide distant language learners with feedback and assistance. This experiment had been done to facilitate students of Ohio University for the purpose making their students more independents and self –learners. After that in 1990s Instructors at Brigham Young University-Hawaii taught a

distance education English course from Hawaii to Tonga via telephone and computer (Green, Collier, & Evans, 2001). According to George M. Chinnery in his paper published in *Language learning & technology*; 2006, in the beginning of the 2000s one of the first projects using mobile phones in language learning was developed by the Stanford Learning Lab, in the UK and the USA which explored their use in language learning. (Brown, 2001). They were merely three artificial trials in laboratory settings and this made those attempts far from being mobile at all. In August 2004, not too long after these first trials, Duke University provided all incoming freshmen with free iPods equipped with voice recorders. Amongst the pilot courses utilizing the players were several language courses, which utilized both their listening and recording capabilities (Belanger, 2005). Later on Thornton and Houser (2002; 2003; 2005) used mobile phones to provide vocabulary instruction by SMS at a Japanese university. They sent Short mini-lessons in form of email to students three times a day. The students learned via SMS were twice more successful in the terms of vocabulary words and scores compare to students who had received their lessons on paper.

These were among the first attempts to actively make use of mobile devices in teaching and learning, and since then the world has seen the rapid expansion of the use of mobile technologies in learning in general and foreign language learning in particular. After these initial works, numerous studies have reported on the use of mobile devices being used to develop language skills in the last few decades. Afterwards, the potential of using a mobile phone to access the Internet in order to improve EFL listening skills (Nah, White & Sussex, 2008), and the opportunities to develop English pronunciation by using MALL (Saran, Seferoglu & Cagiltay, 2009), and the effectiveness of MALL on vocabulary acquisition (Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009; Lu, 2008; Stockwell, 2007; Thornton & Houser, 2005) have been investigated by the scholars and educators all around the world.

Possible language related activities via mobile device.

The latest Smartphone possesses various features such as video recorder, smart camera, GPS, Internet, software downloader etc. With the help of these features various language learning activity such as, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, grammar, listening and speaking are possible.

Vocabulary

For vocabulary learning, SMS and e-mail messages feature of mobile device is needed. One can send new vocabulary to target audience via SMS or using Social network apps. Regarding SMS, Levy and Kennedy (2005) created SMS-based vocabulary learning to teach Italian language. They used to send ten messages per week to the learners. These messages were about idioms, definitions and example sentences of Italian language. They also used to collect Feedback via quizzes and follow-up questions. Results indicated that the messages were very helpful for learning vocabulary. Another two studies were generated at the same time by Thornton and Houser (2003) to teach English language at a Japanese University. One study compared using SMS versus e-mail messaging. The other study compared using SMS versus paper-based vocabulary learning. In the first study, students were divided into two groups; one received vocabulary via SMS messages, and the other received mini-lessons of vocabulary three times a day organized in chunks in order to make them readable on the tiny screens. In both studies, students received identical lessons; definitions of five words per week and the use of them in different contexts. Students were tested weekly. The results showed that SMS students learned over twice the number of vocabulary words as the e-mail students. Besides, SMS students improved their scores by nearly twice as much as students who had received their lessons on paper. Concerning their attitudes, the vast majority preferred the SMS instruction. The authors concluded that the effectiveness of their lessons was derived from delivering messages as push media. Therefore, students were able to frequently rehearse and space study, and utilize recycled vocabulary.

Pronunciation and reading

Some mobile manufacturer provides inbuilt Dictionaries in mobile device while some mobile needs to download the Dictionary. General concept for using these Dictionaries is to find meaning of words. But the fact is that these are not only used to find the meanings of words, but also to learn how they are pronounced. Moreover many mobile device dictionaries possess features such as phonetic transcription, providing noun, forms of verbs and adjectives of the vocabulary that one has tried to find. So along with the pronunciation practice one can strengthen the vocabulary knowledge too.

As far as reading activities are concerned, mobile devices offer various capabilities. Reading activities can be installed as a well-designed learning course. They can be sent to the learners

through SMS. To provide learners with effective English language learning environment, Chen and Hsu (2008) created Personalized Intelligent Mobile (PIM) learning system. Due to this system, students received English news articles on their mobile phones based on their reading abilities evaluated by fuzzy item response theory. The PIM system would automatically discover and retrieve unfamiliar words of individual learners from the articles. The results of the study reflected that this method beside self-assessment feedback responses were effective in enhancing reading abilities and comparison of the learners.

Listening and speaking

For listening skills, teachers can design a platform in which learners listen to texts by vocal service on their mobile phones. Then, they may answer listening comprehension quiz based on that audio text. Another use of m-learning for listening was illustrated by Huang and Sun (2010) who created multimedia system for English language learners based on their mobile phones'

iPods were also utilized for speaking skills. At Duke University experiment in 2004, all freshmen students were given iPods equipped with voice recorders amongst. These iPods composed the primary tool for Spanish language classes. Students responded to verbal quizzes, submitted audio assignments, recorded audio journals and received oral feedback from their instructor via iPod (Chinnery, 2006).

MALL applications

There are hundreds of mobile phone apps available and it's possible to find free options suited to economically minded learners. The list of free apps for learning English is as follow.

“British Council apps” offer a huge choice for smart phones. One can look at the options on their webpage and download the apps from Google Play, Apple's App Store or using a QR code Opens in a new tab or window.

“Two min English” is free and contains more than two hundred two-minute video lessons on a variety of topics e.g., social English, business English, travel English, common mistakes in English, idioms and phrases.

“Real English” offers a variety of apps at different levels: Business and conversation apps at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The apps are free, but they do contain adverts.

Each app contains 20 lessons that focus on specific grammar/vocabulary areas. Each lesson is made up of five parts.

Apart from these apps one can use social networking apps such as Whats apps, Face book, Hike, twitter, Tango etc. for language learning purpose. Here tutor has to play the role of instructor and facilitator. He/she has to guide the learners for using these social network apps in such positive and creative way that use of these apps can be resulted in creating an appropriate climate for learning the language.

One can use social networking apps as follows:

- One can send a short news article or podcast and asking them to send an audio response summarising it in their own words or giving their opinion
- Learners can send photos with captions to illustrate different tenses. Alternatively they can describe daily habits or routines, or create a set of instructions.
- Learners could create a video or audio of themselves making a short business presentation or reviewing a movie/book or TV show.

Advantages and disadvantages of m-learning

Advantages:

- Anywhere, anytime and anyplace learning is possible.
- It supports learners' autonomy and makes them independent to learn language at their own time.
- It also provides them with the capability of being connected and communicated with the learning website via the wireless network.
- It is economical for all. It is fact that most mobile devices are more affordable in prices than larger system and major percentage of the population own them.
- Portability is very big plus point. As mobile device is compact and very light weight, it enables a learner to carry the mobile device anywhere and can add note and information anytime.

Disadvantages

In spite of these properties, m-learning may take longer time in performing tasks because of the tiny screen size, virtual keypad, and limited power of storage and multimedia limitations. Even in designing courses' programs, teachers encounter difficulties in resizing pictures to fit in the small screen, network connection problems, online chats and slow processing time. In fact, many of the mobile devices were not formed for educational purposes. .

Conclusion

At a global level the acceptance and adaption of MALL has been increasing at a very rapid rate. Especially, developing countries are replacing the old teaching-learning process with this type of modern methods at a lighting speed. Its popularity is also growing in the developing countries though at a lesser pace. Developing countries, due to their inherent socio-economic constraints, have not been able to adopt such a technique very fast. India, being a developing country faces such problems in the way of implementing it .It require highly professional and trained tutors who are well-versed with the use of such sophisticated technologies.

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