

ADOPTION OF MALL IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

In technology advanced world, the exclusive entrance of multimedia viz. Mobile phones seem directly or indirectly incorporated in the language curriculum. The use of cell phones as multimedia device in ESL proves authentic, contextualized, interactive, entertaining, fun-oriented, and motivational. It offers a learner friendly tool reducing anxiety, guilt, dependence, time etc. In India, about 70% people afford cell-phones; 50% to 55% users of the total are the students from secondary and tertiary level. The concept of Mobile Assisted Language learning (MALL) or M-learning brings such learners a considerable input of English. It offers an SLA learner a self-reliant, action-learning, trial and error, repetitive, interactive and the functional approach based Language learning.

The paper is a short research model made towards the use of the cell phones by the collegiate students of ESL classes in the semi-urban area. The findings give a way out to the elaborate action research in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language(SLA).The application based knowledge principles seem well accomplished in enriching and developing knowledge of vocabulary, semantic, syntactic, phonological and at grammatical levels. The cell related access gained through GPRS help in e-learning, social sites (e.g. Facebook, Orcut, Twitter etc.), e-mails, games, puzzles, queries ,cartoons, SMS, web browsers, and the inbuilt features such as reminders, tasks, templates, sound and video recorders, notepads, free dictionaries etc. turn to be practically effective to develop communicative approach. The basic skills, LSRW get ultimately developed to a considerable extent through MALL.

Key words: Technology, SLA, ESL, multimedia, authentic, GPRS, MALL, cell phone, communicative, etc.

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Introduction:

MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) related digitalized sources have become the handy tools for the young generation of almost all nations across the globe. The generation finds the tools friendly, fun-oriented, entertaining, authentic, interactive, reliable, cheaper and affordable in all conditions. It has been an opportunity and the need as well for young aspirants to identify their present methods and moods with the technology at hand. The barriers of English as a foreign language are ultimately started disappearing in the advanced technophobic world. The ESL learners, in almost all countries are quite free and readily pursuing the knowledge rendered through cell-phones.

Students, today, despite the small screen size, limited storage space, and slow processing speed students can afford cell phones with different system enabled features.

. They easily develop expertise in handling the tool as a plaything. Hence it has become a routine of this generation to deal matters with the help of this device. It offers the language learners the scope to explore, discover, ponder, search, question, answer and receive feedback on any topic. The instantly made available resources give less stress, fear, and risk of committing mistakes; rather it opens for the learners an experience in repetitive learning, entertaining, and the time healing opportunities. Each student individually gets an opportunity to record his/her speech, to listen or to watch and again to compare it multiple times, correct it and to judge it finally. These exercises remove the psychological difficulties in ESL learning and helps in developing the necessary skills. The second language learner can acquire fluency and intelligible pronunciation with the help of voice, video recordings and clips available. The ability to interact through these multimedia features a tension free learning experience to the ESL learners. Thus, cell phones prove to be of great potential in language teaching and learning

Today, in India, 70 % people have afforded cell-phones; out of the number about 50 to 55% users are the collegiate students, who have their close contact with this device. There are other users apart from the students who directly or indirectly handle cell-phones which ultimately bring them in close contact with English words either in the form of the features in the Cell-phones and their applications or with the SMS from their service providers. The utility, thus, pulls users to the device and frames before them an ultimate structure of English language.

The paper aims at exposing the second language acquisition process achieved through the routine access of the electronic device. Efforts have been taken towards revealing the opportunities sought through the casual or intentional handling of the tools. It is found that even the casualty can produce an undesired or unexpected result of language learning. The study, undertaken for this research, is related with the undergraduate students of the semi-urban area in the north Maharashtra region in India. The reports received through oral interactions from students, brought out the desired effects of the internet surfing and the cell-phone handling. Apart from the students, even the less educated people with marginal knowledge of English supplemented the result that they can also interpret the meaning of the SMS received on any festive and social occasion and from the mobile service providing companies. The study has thus proved the effects of the incessant practice and handling of the handheld tool.

Today, cell phones have appeared to be the most wide spread devices and easily available in the hands of almost every university student. Even the students hailing from the rural and semi-urban areas can afford the tools for various functions. There are several reasons to popularize the tool as it's portable device with the functionalities including internet access, mp3/mp4 player, digital camera, video recorder, e-dictionaries , flash card software, quiz software and many other Flash-enabled and/or Java-enabled programmes. The multimedia contents like audio and video recorders are the added attributives to the action loving young generation. The global wireless technologies like the 3G networks, GPS, GSM, GPRS and satellite systems have opened up the ESL learning a wide English language learning avenue. The technologies including Wi-Fi, WiMax and Bluetooth have provided wide learning environs. In this changing concept of Mobile learning, or mlearning and personal digital assistants (PDAs), the English language learners have gained a considerable input of vocabulary, phrases and idioms, proverbs, parts of speech and their functions, other grammar lessons, good thoughts, inspirational quotes, etc.

Participation in short exercises and tasks are the added benefits of the use of mobile technology. The learners are able to keep their linguistic talents sharp while reducing the risk, fear, pressure, caused due to traditional teaching learning methods. It offers a self-reliant, action-learning, trial and error based, repetitive, interactive and the functional approach. A mobile phone offers several features to its users which do inevitably contribute in acquiring second language or the foreign language. They are in brief as follows.

E-Dictionaries:

The mobile phone device is advantageous to the SLA. There are free downloadable dictionaries available on the web pages. They are of different types providing functions like-head words, pronunciations, definitions, illustrations, usages, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, etc. The advantage of this electronic dictionary is more mortifying and interesting than the traditional bulky and heavy conventional dictionaries. The e- Dictionaries give all information in a single stroke .The dictionaries can complement the architecture of a spell check system and grammar check system. It enables mobile phone users to have predictive text input mode for faster SMS. The pressing at each key is avoided by selecting the dictionary on the 'on' mode while drafting an SMS, the reminder, tasks, notepad, etc.

GPRS / Internet:

The General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) is an innovative non-voice value added service that allows information to be sent and received across a mobile telephone network. It enhances today's Circuit Switched Data and Short Message Service. It is a step ahead to provide a massive boost to mobile data usage and usefulness in language learning for ESL point of view. It offers wide-ranging provisions such as chat, textual and visual information, still images, moving images, web browsing, job dispatch, corporate email, internet email, remote LAN access, file transfer, home automation and many more features from the knowledge point of view. Students can use browsers to check e-mails, read instructional materials, such as online textbooks, and watch lectures from anywhere and at anytime. There are also many more mobile sites available to students.

Downloading:

Students download various kinds of materials they like to their cell phones easily. There are more free online materials for users to download such as e-books, music, instructional materials, files in MS Word and PDF formats. Students are found enjoying their downloaded

video/audio clips about English language materials. Students also download e-books and read them whenever they have time without carrying the heavy books.

Templates, Reminders, Notepad and Tasks Pre-installed templates in Mobile phones are helpful to a large extent as ESL learners can transmit these ready to use templates quite faster and even learners acquire a message writing sense through it. The short and small expressions in the form of greetings, reasons, wishes, apologies, excuses, etc. can be practiced by the ESL learners. The reminders make user to write and edit his tasks or programmes. The notepads hold and store information in the form of schedule, personal level matters etc. The tasks need the contextual vocabulary and the expressions as well. Hence, a regular operating to the device gives ESL learners a chance to learn English easily.

SMS (Inbox, Outbox, Drafts):

SMS is an innovative attribute of today's mobile technology. The ESL users receive, send, edit, delete, forward messages which are basically in textual form. The free message service enriches vocabulary about the personal, social, political occasions such as, the good day, nights, festive occasions, love, anniversary, inspirational quotes, etc.

Students feel more comfortable and relaxed while sending SMS because they can have more time to ponder what to write. Besides, sending SMS is much cheaper than making calls. The CUG plans offered by India's largest mobile service- BSNL with almost no charges among the group members except the fixed charges per month. SMS system can be used to help students learn foreign languages and teachers can use SMS to communicate with one student or even one group of students.

MMS (Templates, Animations, and Graphics):

The multimedia messages have allowed students to see the definitions of words, example sentences, related visual representations, and pronunciations. Learners can get hold of recent knowledge in technology such as small animated and graphical clips.

Video/ Audio Recorders:

A cell-phone technology has its multimedia features like sound and video recorders. The tools help in recording voice and even the video presentation of the user. The recitation of any text, poem, speech, discussion, interview, and any oral preparations can be recorded and stored for further improvement in the audio practice. It also helps in testing voice modulation, accent, tones etc. Similarly, the video tool also helps in recording presentations, body language, speech activities, pronunciations etc.

MP3, MP4 Devices:

MP3 & MP4 files are quite functional in language learning process. The conversion from CDs into MP3 & MP4 files is easier. It can be organized, listened, repeated a number of times. MP3 files greatly increase the exposure to comprehensible input vocabulary, pronunciation, structures of the foreign language. In short, the MP3, MP4 files and digital recorders make learners free from the difficult sources. The digital song recordings with rhyme and rhythm, accent and tones offer learners a comfortable and homely touch.

Bluetooth:

Bluetooth is a wireless technology that allows mobile phones and other devices to talk to each other over short distances and share data files for short range (up to 100 metres). Bluetooth uses radio waves (in the 2.4 Gigahertz range), and is designed to be a secure and inexpensive way of connecting and exchanging information between devices without wires.

Bluetooth in cell-phones help in sending and receiving data, audio-video clips, exchanging voice from a headset to a mobile phone.

I-Pods/ I-Phones:

An iPod Touch or iPhone is the convenient use of digital flashcards for remembering and studying words. There are many words to learn in most modern languages, and there are certainly a lot of words in English. The words can be entered into a flashcard application on a personal computer and sent to the iPod or iPhone, or conveniently entered directly on the touch screen. There are also many flashcards already available for download in various applications for the iPod Touch and the phone. Flipping through a group of flashcards with a touch of a finger is a wonderful way to use modern technology to improve English learning. Spoken language training in the form of an MP3 or other digital formats can be studied from an iPod Touch or phone.

Advantages of Mobile Phone in Second Language Acquisition:

There are following advantages of the mobile phones.

- Mobile phones are portable, small in size and less in weight; hence carriable to make maximum utility as a learning tool.
- Along with a learning tool, it offers social interactivity-data exchange and collaboration with other learners.
- It can gather and respond to real or simulated data unique to the current location, environment and time.
- Connectivity of network through GPRS; hence helps in sharing talks and SMS.
- Individual scope to read, repeat, edit, delete, send, receive, speak, record sound and video, etc.
- It provides young learners to communicate through text messages, templets, smileys and above all the linguistic sense and soft skills as well.
- Facilitates both individual and collaborative learning experiences
- It offers scope to develop mobile phone literacy for educational purpose among teenagers and graduates
- It helps to boost self-confidence and self-esteem by the words, phrases, expressions, greetings, wishes, proverbs, good thoughts, inspirational quotes; words of appreciation and congratulation etc.which ultimately make the reader understand the second language.
- A mixture of online learning and learning using materials previously downloaded onto handheld devices helps to reduce costs and the inconvenience of signal disruption whilst traveling or poor signal in some remote rural areas.
- Practice with repetition and easy undo option for undesired actions help students learn from their mistakes.
- It offers immediate and detailed feedback regarding learner's progress and mistakes etc.
- It's cheaper hence affordable for flexible learning; anytime, anywhere, anything as per the learner's will.
- New types of exercises hence increased motivation, ongoing interest and less frustration.
- Rural students can adopt it for self paced learning to cope with the study material at their own pace.
- Fear free interactions and self tests, since no tutor to finalize the study approach.
- The softwares selected or opted as per the level of the learner.

- Provision for utilities such as dictionaries, notepad, printer, and feedback.
- Accessibility to reference materials like dictionary inside the software
- Makes learners feel more homely, more stress free and comfortable at any situation.
- Promote them face different contexts with multimedia to learn the basic LSRW skills.
- Makes the whole process dynamic and autonomous with liberation to the students.
- It avails wider group of learners through social sites, e-mails, group SMS, Whatsapp, We Chat, Line etc.
- Possibility of group learning for any English language exercises.

So, the methods and materials used to their full potential open up a wider avenue for the second language learners of English.

Threats:

The advancement in technology and the use of it in language learning has also brought some threats to English language itself. The users of multimedia technology especially the Internet loggers and the SMS drafters have given rise to new vocabulary, which has started English language changing in both the form and the structure. The ESL users have added and created a number of words which did not exist before the Internet era. The words like CALL, MALL, e-mail, chats/talks, Yahoo group, Outbox, inbox, Google, Yahoo Messenger, e-learning, m-learning, Facebook, Orkut, twitter, online, offline, Bluetooth, boot and so on have come out as the proper nouns.

It has created new vocabulary, changed the rules in semantic and syntactic levels, singular-plurals, capitals for proper nouns, space and margins etc. The spellings, phrases and short expressions, Emails do not follow rules of punctuation. A new rise of acronyms and abbreviations have replaced the longer texts. Thus, apart from the fastest pace the devices have imparted to the users but they have somewhere extracted out the very hue and fragrance of the English language.

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