

MOBILE LEARNING IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: TRENDS, BENEFITS, AND DEFINITIONS

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ABSTRACT

The integration of technology into language education has a rich history, beginning with the advent of language laboratories in the 1950s and 1960s, which marked a significant advancement in instructional methods. These early technologies allowed students to practice pronunciation and listening skills using tape decks and recordings. Over time, the role of technology in language education has expanded significantly, with modern tools like personal digital devices, multimedia phones, and MP3 players becoming integral to the learning process. Mobile learning, or m-learning, has emerged as a dynamic sub-field within e-learning, characterized by its focus on portable and adaptable learning tools. Definitions of mobile learning vary, but it generally emphasizes the use of compact devices to facilitate learning anytime and anywhere. Research highlights that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) offers numerous benefits, including enhanced communication, personalized learning experiences, and increased student motivation. MALL's key features—personalization, connectivity, and authenticity—further underscore its potential to transform language education by fostering more flexible and engaging learning environments.

Key words: *language education, instructional methods, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), mobile learning.*

INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of technology into the language education realm can be dated back to the 1950s and 1960s when the language laboratory emerged as an innovative instructional tool. Educational institutions swiftly allocated dedicated spaces for the installation of language laboratories, each equipped with multiple tape decks. These facilities served as venues where students congregated to engage in listening exercises, with native speakers serving as models for the day's lesson drills.

During the early stages of this technological integration, students had the privilege of recording their own voices on a single track of a tape, with the objective of approximating the pronunciation and speech patterns of native speakers. Alternatively, they could partake in the valuable experience of the listening lab, honing their auditory comprehension skills. The introduction of language laboratories held the promise of revolutionizing language instruction, with technology poised to enhance the effectiveness of traditional teaching methods. (Brown, 2000). Therefore,

The integration of technology has emerged as a pivotal component in the educational journey, both within and beyond the classroom. Virtually every language class nowadays incorporates some variety of technological aid. Its application has been instrumental in both assisting and enhancing the language acquisition process. By leveraging technology, educators are empowered to tailor classroom exercises, thereby elevating the effectiveness of language learning.

The role of technology as a valuable instrument for educators in fostering language acquisition among their students is consistently expanding in significance. (Ahmadi, 2018). As technologies continue to develop, so does their propensity to shrink in size. "Other technologies that hold the capacity for language learning include personal digital devices, multimedia cellular phones, MP3 players, DVD players, and digital dictionaries" (Zhao, 2005, p. 447). According to George (2006), the utilization of portable media devices, often referred to as mobile, wireless, handheld, or nomadic gadgets, has become ingrained in our social fabric. Within the realm of education, mobile learning, often abbreviated as m-learning, is a rapidly growing sub-field within the broader e-learning movement. This trend is underscored by initiatives like m-learning and Mobile learn, which are gaining momentum in Europe and other parts of the world.

Ecem and Mithat (2017) also pointed out that smart phones has already started playing an important role not only in our daily life, but also when we teach and learn English. They emphasized the starting of new era in EFL setting with the help of mobile applications on these self-phones and gadgets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile education is evolving quickly. Early forms of mobile learning programs frequently suggested professionally designed activities employing carefully created educational and technological innovations that were not yet publicly available or well understood. (Kukulka-Hulme & Shield, 2008). The definition of the Mobile learning varies from source to source. Numerous groups have developed their own definitions of mobile learning based on their own perspectives, applications, and histories. This has encouraged a healthy proliferation of opinions and viewpoints. For example, formal definitions provided by government and European organizations connect mobile learning to e-learning.

On the other hand, Sharples (2006) mentioned about aspects of the novelty and utility of the technologies (phones, PDAs, iPods, PSPs) which are highly valued by technologists. One common way of defining this term would be a type of learning in which mobile devices for example, self phones, personal digital assistance tools, ultra mobile PCs and personal media players are main learning instrument. (Kukulka-

Hulme, Traxler, John & Pettit, John, 2007). Mobile learning can be defined from different perspectives. One of these perspectives focuses on mobility. Keagen (2005), and Geddes (2004) highlighted that m-learning should be limited to learning on compact and portable devices. They pointed out that mobile gadgets could be transported at anywhere and anytime.

CONCLUSION.

Considering mobile learning in terms of the learner-centered perspective, O`Malley et al, (2003) defined mobile learning as any form of learning that occurs when the learner is flexible with the time, without arranging location beforehand, or learning that happens when the learner makes use of learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. According to Kukulska Hulme and Shield (2008), MALL is different from CALL “in its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access and interaction across different contexts of use” (p. 273).

Kim and Yeonhee (2012) in their research have highlighted about possible benefits of MALL. Firstly, MALL makes it possible for students to communicate with others whenever they want, from anywhere, and to access language learning resources more quickly and simply. Secondly, the collaborative and personalized language learning activities that students can participate in thanks to digital technology can be done synchronously or asynchronously, allowing for the quick development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Thirdly, the resources and tools that mobile technology offers for language learning help students to be more motivated, independent, placed (site-specific), and socially engaged.

Additionally, Lai and Zheng (2018) defined self-directed MALL with the three key characteristics: (1) personalization, which gives students an opportunity to freely design their learning whenever and wherever they want; (2) connectivity, which facilitates improved communication with peers and native speakers of the target language; and (3) authenticity, which promotes contextualized, real-world practice.

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