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Localizing Mobile Learning

Conventional Cell phones as teaching tools for English language learning

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What is Mobile Learning?

- There is not an agreed definition
- It is defined in terms of:
  - The devices and technologies used
  - Learner mobility
  - Learning mobility
Definitions

- Sub-division of e-learning (Chinnery, 2006)
- Combination of mobile devices with e-learning (Corbeil & al, 2007)
- Learning assisted by mobile technologies (Lu, 2008)
- Learning mediated via handheld devices, potentially available anytime, anywhere (Kukulsma-Hulme & Shield, 2008)
- Learning sustained by portable electronic media (Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009)
Devices used for mobile learning

- Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)
- Audio and video players: mp3 players, dvd players, iPads, iTouch
- Smart phones: Iphone, Blackberry, Android
- Hand-held game consoles: PSPs, Nintendo DS
- Conventional/Features/traditional cell phones
Some statistics about cell phones

- Cell phones are the most popular mobile devices among teenagers and young adults
Some statistics about cell phones

Prepaid/Postpaid among youth is comparable to general population

Prepaid/Postpaid, Age 15-24
H1 2010

Source: The Nielsen Company
Some statistics about cell phones

Chinese youth lead the way in advanced data usage

Advanced Data Users, Age 15-24
H1 2010

Source: The Nielsen Company
Smart phones vs. conventional phones
Cell phones use in Mobile learning for language teaching purposes

- Although research in mobile learning is in its emergent stage, several studies have been conducted using cell phones as language teaching tools:
  - Instructional material sent via sms (Saran et al, 2008)
  - Short quizzes via mms for assessment (Cooney & Keogs, 2007)
  - Vocabulary words sent via sms (Lu, 2008; Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009)
Cell phones use in Mobile learning for language teaching purposes

- Cell phones are the most used mobile devices in studies about mobile learning among teenagers and young adults.

- Many studies are conducted using cell phones that required the students to have internet access or the creation of an additional software was needed.

- According to the literature reviewed, most studies about language learning have been conducted in Asia, Europe and Africa.

- A large number of adolescents in developing countries own a cell phone, many cannot afford the technology necessary to benefit from its potential educational use.
Localizing Mobile Learning

- Localization:

Adapting products, services or materials to a specific culture, so it can be easily used by the people in that culture (DeBry, 2001)
Localizing Mobile Learning

- Use the functions in a conventional cell phone that not require internet access:

  - **Short message service (sms)**: delivery of new vocabulary word for review and reinforcement.

  - **Picture camera**: gather data about an assignment.

  - **Bluetooth**: share pictures with other classmates

  - **Video and voice recording**: record a dialogue for speaking activities.
Advantages

- Small size and light weight.
- Increase teen learner’s motivation and engagement in learning a new language.
- Complementary teaching tools inside the classroom.
- Students’ access to material taught in class outside the classroom.
Disadvantages

- Their primary use is recreational, not instructional
- Small screens to read the material sent.
- Considered disruptive devices
- Expenses in text messaging service
Recommendations

- Inform students and school authorities about the potential benefits of cell phones to learn English.
- Delivery of short text messages so they can be easy to read.
- Use in-classroom activities with cell phones sparingly
- Use mobile carriers’ websites to deliver sms to students
Conclusion

- The exploration of mobile learning should not be restricted due to limitations in the access to online environments. It should be localized to meet the students and teachers’ needs, so they can also obtain the benefits it provides.
References


Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *ReCALL*, 20(3), 271–289.


