The acceptance of using Mobile assisted language among EFL and ESL students

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Abstract

the use of mobile language learning (MALL) has notable increasing growth in enhancing language learning and it is valuable to conduct learning activities and the use of MALL helps students to easily and instantly go through language learning materials by their own pace, any time and anywhere. MALL can enhance students language learning motivation and autonomy .The results indicated that using flash-cards on mobile phones was more auseful tool in enhancinglearners' vocabulary acquisition than using flashcards on paper. The use of mobile language learning (MALL) in the Arab world has witnessed growth and many Arab EFL students show their willingness to use this valuable technology in higher education (Salameh 2011; Palfreyman 2012; Thabit and Dehlawi 2012). In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on mobile assisted language learning in different aspects. In an attempt to enhance sms vocabulary using mobile. Mobile assisted language learning is a modern tool in language education. It refers to the use of hand-held devices such as mobiles and tablets to learn and develop language skills, in particular English language skills. Numerous studies have been conducted over the past few years in a number of countries, including Arab countries; all of which had proven the usefulness of this new learning aid to English language learners in general and to Arab English language learners in particular.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advantages of using computer and multimedia have encouraged many researchers to develop more efficient language learning environment to enhance students' language skills (Hwang & Chang 2011; Ching et al. 2013). To improve students' language learning, it is important to provide a good and easy environment for the students to use. Therefore, Numerous studies have indicated that the use of mobile language learning (MALL) has notable increasing growth in enhancing language learning and it is valuable to conduct learning activities (Stockwell, 2008; Rogers &Price 2009; Gromik 2012; Ching 2013; Ehsan et al. 2014). MALL can be used as a teaching and learning methods that utilizes any handheld devices such as phones, tablet ect. In this light, MALL defined by O'Malley et al. (2003: 6), as ''any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not in a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies''. It has been also defined by Kukulska-Hulme (2013: 3701), "mobile technologies in language learning, especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages".

Mobile and handheld devices recognized as being an effective tool which enables students to learn and doing activities any their own pace anytime and anywhere (Hwang & Tsai 2011; Supyan 2012; Ehsan et al. 2014). In this regards, a case study in Japan conducted by Gromik (2012) to look at the use of mobile inside the classroom. Each student is required to use a cell phone to record one 30-s video on teacher nominated topic. The study found that the students were able to recognize and increase a number of words they spoke in monologue. The researcher gave an implication for future research, which is indicated that educators need to understand the benefits and challenges of integrating mobile devices as learning tools in their classrooms.

Along with the importance of integrating mobile in the classroom, it is also significant to provide good MALL apps to enable students to practice and use easily and get more information to help them in their school, college and university work. In a study which set out to discover whether mobile apps good or bad, Supyan (2013:23) pointed out that good MALL apps should reflect 4 stages

- Introduction of key concepts, skills, terms

- A guide to enhance understanding of key concepts, skills, terms (demonstration, illustrations, examples)
- Provide exercises (drill-practice, simulation, game) to master the key concepts, skills, terms (exploratory)
- Asses the progress or achievement (test)

Supyan (2013:49) also demonstrated that good MALL apps should

- Cater for learning; enhance learning process
- Provides individualized instruction (structured/ unstructured lessons)
- Offers bi-directional learning or interactive features: feedback and progress report

In the line with this, using MALL would yield a significant improvement, Kim and Kwon (2012), sheds lights on the strengths of MALL. The researchers evaluated that MALL provide a personal and learner-centered learning opportunity, which allow the students use smart phone more flexible. Furthermore, MALL could encourage learners to expand a sense of individuality and develop life- long learning habits. Moreover, the use MALL helps students to easily and instantly go through language learning materials by their own pace, any time and anywhere. MALL can enhance students language learning motivation and autonomy.

Although MALL has many advantages such as rapidly attracting new users, low cost, flexibility, small size, user-friendliness and allowing more sophisticated (Huang et al., 2012), and teachers can provide rich and valuable materials. On the other hand, there may be "a problem of a lack of willingness to try new mobile technologies to engage in mobile learning" (Stockwell, 2010 in Ching et al 2013: 328).

As a matter of fact mobile language learning without no doubt plays an important role in enhancingstudents' skills (Thornton and Houser 2005). Learning vocabularies via the mobile has become one of the useful ways recently. According to Tayebeh and Amin (2012:313"sending e-mail or SMS to them is a common way of learning new vocabulary".In the same vein, Başoğlu and Akdemirexplored the effectiveness of L2 English vocabulary learning through a mobile phone-based flash- card application. The results indicated that using flash-cards on mobile phones was more auseful tool in enhancinglearners' vocabulary acquisition than using flashcards on paper.This is in line with the results of Kennedy and Levy (2008) who indicated that sending

vocabularies by mobile device was a beneficial method way in improving students' vocabularies.Reading comprehension can also be developed via mobile. Students can practice reading comprehension on their own and can learn new vocabularies. Learning new vocabularies, in turn, students can enhance their reading comprehension (Chen and H. Hsu 2008). Reading passage and activities can be installed or sentas ansms on the mobile device. The advantage of this is it enables students read and practice at their own pace anytime and anywhere (Tayebeh and Amin 2012).

1.1 Arab and mobile assisted language learning

The use of mobile language learning (MALL) in the Arab world has witnessed growth and many Arab EFL students show their willingness to use this valuable technology in higher education (Salameh 2011; Palfreyman 2012; Thabit and Dehlawi 2012). Many researches have been conducted and showed the effectiveness of using mobile assisted language learning among Arab students. For example, a study by Salameh (2011) explored the use of mobile learning among Palestinian students. The research describes the design of a prototype mobile phone off-line multimedia language learning systemwhich encourages students to develop their reading and listing comprehension. A total of 60 university students participated in the study. The researcher provided Flash-based lessons containing pictures, texts, audio and multiple choice comprehension questions. The results confirmed that students showed willingness and comfort using these tools

Another significant study by Al-Shehri (2011) investigated the use of mobile language learning among Saudi Arabian students. The researcher tested the students by linking the mobile phone to an English L2 community on Facebook. The English community consisted of 33 university students. Each studstudents were required to upload photos, video clips, texts from their personal out-of-class contexts to Facebook utilizing their own mobile phones. They were also asked to reflect on eachother's uploaded material using his/her mobile phone. Results here also showed that students demonstrated acceptance and inclination towards learning through this means.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on mobile language learning have focused on mobile as a viable learning tool for enhancing learning development (Kiernan and Aizawa 2004; Thornton and Houser2005; Gromik 2009; Saran et al. 2012). In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on mobile assisted language learning in different aspects. In an attempt to enhance sms vocabulary using mobile, a study conducted by Alemi et al. (2012) to shed light on mobile phone-based SMS vocabulary by Iranian students. The study involved 28 universities and each student receive 10 words and sentence twice a week via sms. A control group participated in the study, who used dictionary to help them know the words. It was found that no significant differences between the groups, but the sms vocabularies showed that the students get more vocabularies on a delayed post-test.

In another major study, Ally et al. (2007) carried out a study to describe the use of the tutorial program accessible via web-enabled mobile devices. The study main focus of the study to teach L2 English remedial grammar to adult education learners. To find out how the program is good or not, the program provided 86 lessons and exercises. A total of 100 adult learners, who indicated slight developments and expressed positive attitudes towards utilizing a mobile phone to learn English grammar. In same vein, Ally et al. (2011),examined the use of mobile device (iPhones) to access web-based grammar and vocabulary lessons for elementary level L2 French. The participants of the study were 22 university volunteers during one three-hour session. After doing 8 exercisesand post, multiple-choice test to measure learning gains, the findings showed format and content of the lessons beneficial and wanted to take more lessons with this device.

Regarding the effectiveness of mobile language learning, many studies have reported that mobile language learning has positivelyaffected students(Wang et al. 2011; Tabatabaei and Goojani 2012;Saran et al. 2012. For example, Al-Fahad (2009) conducted a study to find out the perceptions and attitudes of higher education students towards the effectiveness of mobile learning. The study found that mobile learning could increase retention among undergraduate and M.D. Students. In an investigation into the effectiveness of mobile learning, a study by Evans (2008)was carried out. The study was conducted in the form of podcasting in a business

course for university students. It was found that the students favoured podcasts on textbooks as a learning aid.

In the Malaysian context, many studies have asserted that the integration of mobile assisted language learning in language education had a positive attitude impact. In an earlier study to investigate the feasibility of using mobile phone, Osman and Chang (2010) explored the use of mobile text messaging with communication technologies to support the collaborative acquisition of L2 English. The sample of the study included six students.They were divided into two groups, the first group used blog and the second group used a wiki. The researchers tested the students for 10 days by sending them five types of messages at fixed intervals (1) lesson reminders; (2) update reminders; (3) web links; (4) multiple-choice questions; (5) Feedback requests. The findings indicated that most participants demonstrated readiness and has a positive attitude towards learning using such technologies..

In an investigation into the Mobile Learning Readiness, Supyan et al. (2012) conducted a study to look at the basic readiness, skills readiness, psychological readiness and budget readiness of students in relation to mobile learning. The study carried out at two different public universities in Malaysia to discover their readiness of the use of mobile in language learning. An online questionnaire was used to collect the data of the study. The findings showed that the students welcomed the integration of mobile language learning in education. Furthermore, they indicated that some financial issues quite reserved them. The study also discovered that the students were uncertain as to how much money they needed to spend for the telephone line and Internet line apart from the software and hardware requirements.

A broader perspective has been adopted by byEhsan et al.(2014) who looked at the acceptance of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) among graduate students in Malaysia. In addition, the research addressed the challenges faced by Malaysian university students majoring in English as a second language (ESL). A total of 25 ESL Malaysian postgraduate students in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) were involved in this study. A quantitative method was used to collect the data, which involved Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire. The

findings of the study showed a positive results towards the use of mobile learning. In addition, MALL was one of the most convenient, practical and useful way in enhancing the students' learning.

3. IMPLICATIONS

It is well known that mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a valuable learning tool and research had proven its positive impact on students english language learning. This article recommends a number of implications to help implement and provide practical benefits of this learning aid.

It is strongly recommended that such tools of education be implemented in our English language teaching system, using new software/technology programmes to provide a new more motivating learning aid to further enhance students language learning. Curriculum developers, lecturers and designers are encouraged to propose useful Apps for Arab EFL students in Malaysia specially for the newly arrived ones. Another useful way is to provid students with good reading materials, which in turn, help in increasing their vocabulary acquisition. Teachers/lecturers can incorporate class lessons into mobile activities to enable students practice learning activities as many times they need during their own times.Teachers can also integrate helpful applications to mobile devices, which provide students with more opportunities to communicate with their teachers. The advantage of this method is that it enables students "discuss, correct, direct and appoint tasks" (Ehsanet al.2014:461) during the communication with their teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

Mobile assisted language learning is a modern tool in language education. It refers to the use of hand-held devices such as mobiles and tablets to learn and develop language skills, in particular English language skills. Numerous studies have been conducted over the past few years in a number of countries, including arab countries; all of which had proven the usefulness of this new learning aid to English language learners in general and to Arab English language learners in particular (Al-Fahad 2009; Ehsan et al.2014;Al-Shehri2011). Amongst the many benefits of this

means of language learning is that it allows students to acquire knowledge at their own pace of time and at any location. Other benefits include easy access, low cost, small size, being user friendly, etc.

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