Mobile Learning In English Language Classrooms: Its Implications

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ABSTRACT:

With the development of mobile technology, the use of smart phones has increased immensely. It has become a necessity as well as an obsession. People use them for various communication and educational purposes. The use of ICT i.e., Information Communication Technology in Language classrooms has become the norm of the day. Language teachers can allow the students to use the mobiles in classrooms for various learning purposes. Mobiles have innumerable apps like you tube, social networking sites such as twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram; google search engine, voice recording facilities, apps to receive and send audio, video files, images, pictures, downloadable podcasts, books in pdf formats etc. All these online tools can be used constructively by the teachers to develop teaching materials and the learners to improve their language skills. This paper addresses the effectiveness of learning language components such as Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary skills through mobile applications and online tools. The various discussions, debates, presentations and activities done by the learners based on the online content i.e., videos, web links, you tube links and materials designed by the teacher stand as testimonies to this. The study was conducted on 24 language learners of engineering program and this paper is based on qualitative research to investigate the views learners hold about using mobiles in classrooms. It critically examines the factors responsible for the usefulness of mobiles over the conventional modes of teaching and learning. The study shows that learners have learnt better through mobiles.

Keywords: ICT, podcasts, Learning environment, Mobile applications, teaching materials.

INTRODUCTION

With the growth in technology nowadays, the users of technology too have increased immensely. ICT, i.e., Information Communication technology has paved way for various ways of acquiring skills and knowledge. Use of internet, online content through web articles, blogs, vlogs, you tube videos, web 2.0 tools such as Pad let, Edmodo, google docs, podcasts and mobile applications has increasingly contributed to one's awareness of the things happening around them as well as one's own knowledge in the required subject areas. Irrespective of the courses or subjects, mobiles, mobile apps, internet in personal computers and laptops have enabled the teachers and learners to progress further in the core areas.

Using mobiles has become a necessary part of life. None can imagine a life without a smart phone in their hands. In fact, they occupy 80% of the life of the individuals. Taking this fact

into account, teachers of English language can conveniently use mobiles in the classrooms for fostering LSRW skills in learners. The use of mobiles by learners in the classrooms for constructive purposes can be of great help to them. They can improve their skills at their own pace, either at home or in the classrooms. It is quite handy and at the same time enables learners to gain knowledge via the information provided in it. Several online courses such as Course era, Ed x, Swayam Central which includes NPTEL (IITs), UGC, CEC are also available in the form of apps in the mobiles. They are user friendly, helpful and learners can learn at their own pace and convenience.

Vangie Beal of 'Webopedia.com' defines mobile learning as, "Mobile Learning (m-learning) is education via the Internet or network using personal mobile devices, such as tablets and smart phones to obtain learning materials through mobile apps, social interactions and online educational hubs. It is flexible, allowing students' access to education anywhere, anytime." (Vangie Beal, 1) According to Quinn C, "M-learning is e-learning through mobile computational devices" (Quinn C, 2009) Chabra and Figueiredo defined M-Learning as a learning with a specific device, at any time and in any place." (Chabra T. Figeiredo J, 2002) Yuan Jiugen, Xing Ruonan2, and Wang Jianmin say, "The mobile learning can be defined as a new learning technique using mobile network and tools, expanding digital learning channel, gaining educational services, educational information and educational resources anywhere at any time." (Yuan Jiugen, Xing Ruonan2, Wang Jianmin, 2010)

The various skills that learners can improve or master through mobiles are the four language skills, listening, speaking, writing, reading; and vocabulary. The researcher has selected a few videos, audios, web articles, online vocabulary games, vocabulary apps and designed the tasks and activities to test the comprehension levels of the learners. The session on mobile learning was conducted for 2 hours to 24 Engineering graduates. The observations and findings of the study are recorded in the paper.

The materials and activities designed for M-Learning are as follows:

A. LISTENING SKILLS

I.VIDEO 1: TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Answer the following questions in three to four lines:

1. What answer does the interviewer expect from the question, 'Tell me about Yourself'?

2. What is the formula for successful answering of 'Tell me about yourself' according to the speaker in the video?

3. List a few informal expressions used by the speaker in the video.

4. What does the speaker mean when she says, 'Be human'?

5. Write the pronunciation of the word, 'nervous' consulting an online dictionary.

Speaking activity:

'Tell me about yourself' in five to six lines by using all the inputs given in the   video.

II. VIDEO 2: KNOW MORE BEFORE JUDGING OTHERS – GAUR GOPAL DAS

Answer the following questions in three to four lines:

1. Who was the special personality according to Gaur Gopal Das?

2. What is the musical instrument Gopal Das uses in the video?

3. How did Gopal Das come to know that he judged the old woman wrong?

Vocabulary:

i. How did Gopal Das stress the words: Amazing, Sorted, devastated, exaggerated

ii. Write the meanings of the following words

    a. Modesty b. Etiquette c. Sensitivity d. Amplified

Speaking Skills:

'Until you know, don't judge, brand or conclude'. Do you support this statement? Narrate your own experiences in life with reference to the above statement.

III. VIDEO -3 HYDERBAD RAPE AND MURDER CASE – SADHGURU SPEAKS

Answer the following questions:
1. What was the conversation among a group of people in California about 'Capital Punishment'?
2. Should we cross the rule of law? What are your opinions on this?
3. Why does Sadhguru say, 'the world is not civilized'? How should the world become more civilized according to him?

Try to guess the meanings of the following words/phrases through the contexts of conversation in the video:
1. Not much room for
2. Vehemently
3. Capital Punishment
4. Wretched
5. Lynched
6. Inordinately
7. Astute
8. Momentum
9. Level-headed
10. Brutalization

Speaking Skills:
What according to you are the ways in which sexual violence against women can be stopped?
   B. READING SKILLS

I. WHAT IS YOUR SECRET SAFETY TOOL?

Q. What are the various tools that women have used in the recent times to protect themselves from sexual attacks, eve teasing, molesting by men?

Guess the meaning of the words/phrases according to the context in the video:
1. Groping
2. Taken it upon themselves
3. To keep molesters at bay
4. Vouch for
5. Stalker
6. Consecutive
7. Assaulter
8. Retaliation
9. Cumbersome
10. Miscreants

II. RECLAIMING LEARNING SPACES FOR INTRINSIC MOTIVATION:

Answer the following questions in three to four lines:

1. Where was the IDEC 2018 Conference held? What does IDEC stand for?
2. Whom did the writer, Manish Jain meet?
3. Creativity Adda is a part of which school?
4. What are the various interests of children of Creativity adda?
5. Do you think 'immersion' into activities could happen only if children like the activities?
6. Why does immersion not happen at school?
7. How were the behavioural issues of children addressed before?
8. What is the carrot and stick approach?
9. What brings back intrinsic motivation in anyone?
10. Write about the freedom given at Creativity adda?

Speaking Skills: Group Discussion

What do you think the future of such kids would be? Would they be able to eke out a living without formal education and certification? What could be the options available to them? Do you think this unschooling system is going to help today's generation? Do you support this system? What are your views?

C. VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

1. Online vocabulary games: merriam-webster.com
2. Vocabulary builder app

OBSERVATIONS

1. Within no time, everyone got connected to the activity via internet, whatsapp etc. Technology has definitely helped.

2. The learners enjoyed watching the first video as it was quite interesting, lively and enthusiastic. One could witness the enthusiasm in the learner's faces.

3. Lot of writing work was done through the questions asked for every task. There was productive silence in the class. All the learners were engaged totally.

4. Group work and pair work was done for some writing and speaking tasks.

5. More time was taken to write the answers as learners were going back to the video to watch for specific information.

6. Teachers should also know about the content in the videos and links or else they cannot guide the students appropriately. Teacher should participate actively in the discussions to facilitate more learning in the learners.

7. The discussion part was lively as fifty percent of the students were participating in it actively.

8. All the learners were involved in watching the videos. Not a single learner was left without learning some or the other language component.

9. Writing task helped the learners as it was a sort of preparation for them to speak.

10. Teacher had the facilitator's job to do more than teaching as active learning was happening from the students' side.

11. Learners were thus very active and took the responsibility of their own learning.

12. Giving the handouts before doing the tasks was advantageous as they read/listened according to the questions given.

13. After the first task, learners got an idea as to how keen they had to listen and make notes while listening.

14. Listening in pairs/groups was more effective than listening alone.

15. Internet connectivity was slow for some learners. The technical glitches were a part of the activity. But they were negligible.

16. More time was taken for one task i.e, almost half an hour. But giving them sufficient time also helped them to understand the content and tasks better.

17. Using online dictionaries whenever they don't understand the meaning, pronunciation and usage of a particular word was helpful to the learners.

LEARNERS' OPINIONS ON THEIR LEARNING

1. According to the learners, M-learning is better than traditional classroom learning.

2. They like to do the tasks in groups within the class than doing them individually at home.

3. They feel they have improved their listening, reading, writing, speaking and vocabulary skills as they had to concentrate on each and every part of the video/article to answer the questions.

4. Their interest in doing the tasks has increased due to mobile learning.

5. They feel they have learnt at least ten to fifteen new words and phrases through the exercises given.

6. They felt they were more interactive during the discussion and speaking time. They had less fear as they were already acquainted with the content of the tasks.

7. The accent, pronunciation, body language, sense of humour, voice modulation of the speakers in the videos helped them to understand the nuances involved in speaking effectively.

8. Through the reading skills activities, they feel their general awareness has also improved

CONCLUSION

The mobile learning activities designed thus helped the learners to take charge of their own learning. This helped them to shed the inhibitions and participate freely in the non-threatening environment of the classroom. All the learners were actively involved. They felt more and more of such activities would help them become better learners of English language.

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