

M-LEARNING: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ

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В статье рассматриваются возможности использования современных мобильных многофункциональных устройств в процессе обучения иностранным языкам. Авторы рассматривают преимущества этих устройств в сравнении с использованием стационарных компьютеров.

Ключевые слова: изучение иностранного языка, мобильные цифровые устройства, мобильное обучение.

For the first time E-learning emerged in the late 80s and 90s. Since then we have seen the processing power of handheld devices grow exponentially while becoming more affordable and even ubiquitous due to the demand for games, business communications, and in general the connected lifestyle of the wireless society. These things have opened a new door to learning on the go which we now call M-learning.

Mobile learning is a relatively new trend in the development of e-learning, in which with the help of mobile devices the users have access to course materials anywhere and anytime. These Mobile devices are familiar part of the life of most teachers and students today. We take it for granted that we can talk to other people at any time, from wherever we may be; we are beginning to see it as normal that we can access information, take photographs, record our thoughts with one device, and that we can share these with our friends, colleagues or the wider world. Mobile device today are extremely capable – working as a phone, camera, audio/video recorder, mp3 / video player, computer, internet device, GPS device, eBook readers, game console, bar code, QR code scanner, motion sensor and more. If you consider these capabilities you can do much more on mobile devices than just deliver learning content.

There is a wide range of mobile devices on the market including laptops, PDAs, and e-book readers. However, we will be looking at the most popular mobile device - the mobile phone. Mass proliferation of mobile phones and the features and functionality they offer make the device stand out as an area ripe for exploration. Mobile phones are multi-function devices which are of interest due to their very nature of offering 'mobility', but also for their ability to create and consume digital media.

What makes mobile learning exciting is that despite many of the individual features being around for years, it is bringing together the features, functionality and ability to connect to the internet which means we have now passed the tipping point regarding learner adoption: thus creating and using digital media can be seriously looked at with these devices.

Teaching using mobile devices uniquely offers us newfound mobility, and functionality opportunities that are not possible with desktop computers. These

opportunities should at a minimum intrigue us and will hopefully lead to many new and exciting uses of mobile devices that we are able to take advantage of. It is now worth reminding ourselves of what makes up a typical mobile phone and then look at some of the emerging trends:

Current capabilities and applications

Basic mobile phone features include:

- Making and receiving calls
- Sending and receiving text messages
- Basic office tools e.g. calculator

Advanced mobile phone features include:

- Bluetooth
- Camera capable of taking stills and more commonly now video
- (e-book readers, games)
- Recording audio
- GPS / location aware
- Web browser to connect to the internet

By now, it should be clear that with the wide range of mobile phone functionality, there will be many potential uses for mobile devices in education, including the creation and delivery of content. Not directly related to the teaching itself, there are also potential secondary benefits, such as the possibilities for making the teaching environment (smart buildings) more aware of learners based on their mobile phone acting as a beacon or identifier and then both parties having the ability to respond or act on pre-defined inputs and outputs.

Salient Features of Mobile Phones: Useful for language learning

Most mobile phones are equipped with functionalities including SMS, MMS, Facebook, Twitter, internet access, mp3/mp4 player, digital camera, video recorder and many are Flash-enabled and/or Java-enabled and can run multimedia contents including audio and video. Some mobiles have special inbuilt learning software such as e-dictionary, flash card software, quiz software and others.

Voice Recording and Listening: Effective telephonic communication is a vital key to attain success in this highly competitive world. Through recording facility learners can be asked to record their communication and later on they may be asked listen and improve their weak areas. Mp3/Mp4 is also very helpful in playing audio/video clips pertaining to English instructions. Students can record interviews or conversations they engage in outside the classroom. Students can play the interviews and conversations in class for feedback and discussion. Most phones include a memo recording feature that can collect language samples from TV or radio.

SMS (Short Message Service): A study conducted by Thornton and Houser (2003) highlights that Short Message Service (SMS) text messages can be used to send out vocabulary items at spaced intervals, thus increasing student retention. In circular writing, students can frame a story together by contributing one text message at a time. Each student writes a sentence or two and then sends this on to the next student, who adds another message, and so on until the story is finish. The teacher has to keep a record of the story as it emerges. In

addition to all these user friendly services, mobile phones can be the best source for promoting and developing a better understanding

Internet Facility: Browsing on internet with cell phones is one of the very convenient ways for students to surf online. They can use browsers to check e-mails, read instructional materials, such as online textbooks, and watch lectures from anywhere and at anytime.

Downloading: People can download various kinds of materials they like to their cell phones easily. There is more free online material for users to download such as e-books, music, instructional materials, and the like. People can enjoy their downloaded music on their cell phones rather than having an MP3 player. Students can download their required e-books and read them whenever they have time without carrying the heavy books. People even download useful software and dictionaries. If teachers and students are in the same area, they can also share files through Bluetooth. Both teachers and students can store reading materials such as the passages and articles from their textbooks or keep the listening materials downloaded from other places.

Camera: Proper use of the camera on the cell phone is of vital importance. Students will greatly benefit from having a camera on the cell phones when collecting scientific data, documenting information, and storing visual material. Students can take pictures of English text by using the Camera feature on their mobile phones. They can then make a collage of the images or upload the pictures to a shared account.

Gaming: Games offer learners a good way to relax and learners can also be benefited a lot from playing games such as developing problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Mobile Phone Driven Class Room Activities

Students can select a wide range of topics to with their mobile phones. To begin, they can get ideas from many popular programs on television, including talk shows, game shows, news specials, and parodies. Following are model activities that can be expanded or reduced to cater to the requirements of semester length, class size, language level, and age group.

M-learning poses a great challenge for students and teachers. The possibility of using mobiles in education has rapidly grown since the last decades along with other technological tools. Role of teachers is very imperative in integrating and implementing technology such as adopting mobile phones in English teaching. At the outset, English teachers should become acquainted with the latest IT driven technology and obtain essential skills toward applying technology in their daily teaching assignments. Teachers also need to motivate the students to learn technology in class. With the judicious use of mobile technology, the teachers can better facilitate English teaching and can enable the students to understand English language in an effective manner. Learning happens at any time of the day, on working days or weekends. The learning practice is thus «mobile» with regard to location and time.

We are at a point where for at least a small percentage of our teaching and learning we can begin to incorporate part of the mobile learning experience into

our course design. Initially this may simply mean that we acknowledge that some learners will interact with our course using mobile devices and impact how we choose to disseminate information. The use of mobile devices is here to stay and we can progressively accommodate this new platform to enhance our teaching and learning. Finally, the use of personal devices for both teaching staff and learners has blurred the line between formal and informal learning.

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M-LEARNING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Over the past few years, IT driven teaching of English is very successful in making language learning live and interesting. Mobile devices are gaining immense popularity and can be used in language classrooms easily and the role of teachers is very imperative in integrating and implementing technology such as adopting mobile phones in English teaching.

Keywords: *mobile learning, devices, learning, teaching, language, mobile phone.*

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