Foreign Language Teaching and Learning with a Reference to the Social-cultural Ecology of Mobile Learning

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The prevalent use of mobile devices such as mobile phones is beginning to have an impact on how students learn, especially in foreign language learning. These portable and readily-available devices offer more opportunities to improve student retentions and achievement and support different needs of the younger digital generation. Besides, those who have a mobile device are more likely to have the option of mobile access to electronic learning materials, resources and people. Therefore, mobile devices are efficient tools for language learners with additional support for comprehension and communication and also accommodate different learning styles.

However, there is a gap between the teachers’ perception of the new phenomenon and the current cutting-edge research. In the research community, a great deal of effort has been devoted to gain further understanding of the “mobile complex” while most teachers fail to recognize the potential of the mobile devices and those who are interested in this trend may not be making the most of the mobile devices due to the lack of theoretical and pedagogical perspective.

This paper examines the recent achievements in mobile learning in the context of social-cultural ecology and discusses how these devices mediate language learning with a special reference to influential second language acquisition concepts such as input, output and interaction and hopefully in a long run mobile medicated language learning will promise the practice of lifelong learning and work-based learning.

The perspective that such a discussion adopts is intended to enlighten the language practitioners who will not only notice but utilize the flexible and approachable devices. Furthermore, language learners, facilitated by their teachers are more likely to recognize and tap the potential language learning functions of their mobile devices. With increasing mobile technologies integrated in the work, life and study of the teachers and learners, technological and pedagogical innovations are bound to be generated.