

The Pedagogical Applications of Using Short Message System (SMS) in Language Learning Classes

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Abstract

Nowadays, the use of mobile technology has created a new form of learning called mobile learning (M-Learning), where learning is supported by mobile devices, ubiquitous communications and intelligent user interfaces. There has been significant growth in learning by mobiles scientific studies in the past years. The present paper shows how short message (SMS), which is a popular mobile application among many people, can help EFL/ESL students learning English vocabulary. Firstly; we want to investigate the capabilities of this novel learning method, and students' attitudes towards it. Secondly, we guide language learners to integrate mobile technology into their study plan and finally to be flexible in their learning activities. The findings of the various research projects show that SMS-based vocabulary learning can increase EFL/ESL language learners' flexibility and may be highly motivating for them. The results also suggest that M-Learning improve the process of language learning to a large extend due to its novelty. Learner-centered method like this play an important role in the success of the integration of mobile technology into learning activities. In future, language teachers as well, as learners witness more pedagogical implications of using mobile phones in the process of learning.

Keywords: Pedagogical, Message System, Language Learning.

Introduction

SMS is an acronym used in the world of communications technology. It stands for Short Messaging Service which is a protocol used in communications that gives way to the exchange of short text messages from one mobile telephone device to another. SMS or text messaging largely dominates today's means of communication since seventy-four percent of all cell phone users send and receive text messages nowadays. The technology behind SMS has paved the way for the rapid growth of improvement of text messaging that has now allowed users to broadcast SMS text messages not just from mobile phones but also from computers with the use of SMS software and through public SMS gateways. The link between text messaging to SMS technology now co notates the terminology of "SMS" as the act of texting or sending text messages even with the use of a different communications protocol.

The Capabilities of SMS

The use of SMS as an effective means of personal communication has expanded the market of text messaging. Businesses, government offices, and even television shows now use this service since SMS is the quickest way to get a message through from one entity to another. SMS text messaging is the most widely used data application on the planet, with 2.4 billion active users, or 74% of all mobile phone subscribers sending and receiving text messages on their phones. The SMS technology has facilitated the development and growth of text messaging.

SMS has unique advantages that other non voice services do not have. It provides a very convenient method of exchanging small bits of information between mobile users. The reasons for the enormous popularity of SMS have been the fact that this mechanism of sending and receiving messages not only saves time but costs less as well. In many situations one is relatively much more comfortable sending a message via SMS than talking over phone. With new information services and unique value added services being used by the operators the popularity of SMS is increasing further. SMS is also uniquely positioned as a very attractive advertisement medium. SMS should no longer be treated as a value added service in mobile networks. SMS is not only providing a useful mechanism for a host of innovative services over mobile networks but it acting as a point of entry for new data services like WAP in mobile networks.

Common applications of SMS are;

- Exchanging small personal messages since it is much cheaper than calling someone and giving the same message. Calling someone to give the same message would invariably take more time and hence more cost.
- Offering e-mail services over SMS. Every user is assigned an e-mail address at signup and any message delivered to that email is converted to short messages and delivered to the mobile.
- Sending e-mail messages from a mobile phone to any e-mail address.
- Information services like news, weather, entertainment and stock prices etc. can be availed
- SMS can be used by the network operators to provide services like balance enquiry in case of prepaid cards using SMS.
- Mobile chatting is one favorite application of SMS
- SMS can be used to notify users that they have received new voice-mail or fax messages.
- It provides an alternative to alphanumeric paging services
- Using SIM-Toolkit, now a part of GSM specifications, SMS can be used to have on the air activation of features. By sending codes embedded in short messages from the server network operators can remotely provision the user's wireless terminal
- Internet e-mail alerts.
- Downloading new ring tones.

Using SMS (Short Message System) in Language Learning Classes

If you thought SMS technology was simply created to help people keep in touch and entertained, think again. One language teacher is on a mission to teach foreign languages to many people worldwide via simple SMS messages.

Stockholm, Sweden (Billboard Publicity Wire / PRWEB) October 17, 2006 -- The whole way foreign languages are being taught to people worldwide has been revolutionized by SMS technology. That's because one very passionate language teacher is literally changing the way people learn languages by using SMS.

The language teacher is Mikael Nilsson and he owns and operates www.learning-by-sms.com – a language education company launched two month ago and dedicated to teaching foreign languages through the use of SMS technology.

“It’s a fact that people are time poor, and it’s also true that most wish they could speak one or more foreign languages,” says Mr. Nilsson. “I have used my experience to create SMS courses that will enable people to learn an entire foreign language, just by reading SMS messages sent to their cell phone.”

The concept of learning a foreign language via SMS is revolutionary and Learning-by-SMS.com is believed to be the first company using this technology to teach foreign languages.

“To learn a language, all one needs to do is visit our website, register for a course and the SMS messages will start appearing on the student’s cell phone within minutes,” says Mr. Nilsson.

It is expected that students will become proficient in the new language after completing an SMS course – truly remarkable given the way languages have been taught up until now.

Learning-by-SMS.com

Based in Karlskrona, Sweden, www.learning-by-sms.com is a language education company dedicated to teaching foreign languages via SMS. Founded by Mikael Nilsson, Learning-by-SMS.com allows people from all walks of life to learn a complete foreign language quickly. Languages are taught using SMS technology, with supporting course material also available via the Learning-by-SMS.com website.

There has been significant interest and growth in the number of institutions using mobile devices to support learning and teaching. Mobile learning, or m-learning for short, is a new concept, and is very closely related to e-learning. Stone (2004) defines m-learning as a ‘special type of e-learning, bound by a number of special properties and the capability of devices, bandwidth and other characteristics of the network technologies being used’. Milrad (2003) defines e-learning as ‘learning supported by digital electronic tools and media’, and m-learning as ‘e-learning using mobile devices and wireless transmission

Conclusion

Using SMS in language learning classes is one of the best opportunities for language learners to extend and increase their learning outside of their classrooms whenever and wherever they desire. Language learners would be able to extend their learning opportunities and participate in novel types of learning. In mobile language learning, the learners are increasingly motivated by their personal learning needs, including those arising from greater mobility and frequent travel. Some argue that mobile devices are particularly suited to supporting social contacts and collaborative learning -- claims that have obvious relevance for language learning.

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