Research on Mobile Learning Model of College English Based on WeChat Platform

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ABSTRACT

English is an important component of higher education system in China, and the traditional English classroom teaching needs to be changed in the new era. Mobile communication network and instant communication tools provide a new teaching platform for the rapid development of college English teaching. As a kind of instant messaging service tool, WeChat should be applied to the mobile learning in college English, which is conducive to the promotion of College English learning, build good atmosphere of autonomous learning, and enhance the learning effect. Based on this, the paper on mobile learning and WeChat makes certain analysis, discusses the advantages of WeChat software which is applied to college English mobile learning, and then discusses the construction of College English mobile learning platform based on the WeChat model. Finally, from a practical point of view, the author explores the significance of developing WeChat based College English mobile learning.

Keywords: WeChat, mobile learning, college English, leaner-centered

INTRODUCTION

English is an important basic course in Chinese university education, which plays an important role in the development of students' comprehensive ability and the enhancement of international vision. At present, the construction of English teaching courses in Colleges and universities in our country has been faced with many challenges. With the development of the times, College English teachers should follow the trend of the times, carry out effective teaching reform, enrich the means of education, and ensure the smooth and effective implementation of English teaching. At this stage, a common difficulty in College English Teaching in China is that we are facing a relatively limited teaching time, many schools have diminished in the teaching of English class, and limited teaching resources to more professional and practical teaching. In this case, in order to ensure the efficiency of English teaching, the traditional teacher centered and classroom oriented teaching model of College English must be improved. In 2010, the State Council promulgated the "national long-term education reform and development

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State of the literature

- The current mobile learning has also been widely studied, and the main research areas focus on several patterns. Among them, mobile learning based on SMS, multimedia mail, online browsing and various learning software are the main direction of the research.

Contribution of this paper to the literature

- The perspective of this paper is the research of mobile learning based on interactive software. Taking the most widely used software in mainland China as the research object, the author tries to solve the disadvantages of poor interactivity and high cost in mobile learning.

plan (2010-2020)"[1] , which highlighted the significance of "education informatization", and also pointed out the direction for the research and practice of College English teaching reform.

The last ten years have witnessed the rapid development of Chinese society, the emergence of various new mobile communication technologies and the growing popularity of the internet. With the popularity of mobile terminals in the whole society, instant messenger tools have gradually completed the leapfrog development from PC terminals to mobile terminals. With the continuous development of mobile Internet technology, its application in the field of education has become an irreversible trend. As a new form of education which combines education with information technology, mobile teaching has injected new vitality into College English Teaching in China. WeChat is popular with young people, especially for college students. It is a kind of their favorite instant communication software, and it can be used as a platform to promote the development of college English teaching. In the current environment of blended learning, exploring the phone-based M-learning has a positive significance for university students to promote the mastery of the professional knowledge and the formation of professional skills. (Wujin, 2016) While it is true that learning is a process that the brain performs, it is also true that human beings learn in community by establishing both individual and group social relationships, communicating through the proper use of language and respecting the opinions of others (Ana Iglesias Rodríguez, 2016).

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

In fact, according to the last report of International Telecommunications Unit (ITU, 2015) there were more than 7.000 million users in the world with a mobile line by end 2015 (Laura Briz-Ponce, 2016). According to the thirty-ninth China Internet development statistics report released in January 2017, by December 2016, China's Internet users reached 731 million, and the popularity rate reached 53.2%. There were 42,990,000 new Internet users, with an increase of 6.2%. Chinese Internet users are already equivalent to the total population of Europe. China's mobile phone users reached 695,000,000, the growth rate of which had reached more than 10% in the following three consecutive years. The usage of desktop and laptop has declined, and mobile phones are increasingly crowding out other personal Internet devices. The popularization of mobile Internet equipment and the development of technology have made all sectors of society begin to take advantage of its convenient and efficient characteristics.

BASIC THEORY AND CORRELATION TECHNIQUE

Mobile Learning

At present, there is no consensus on the concept of mobile learning. However, it is generally believed that Mobile Learning is a device that can help the learners to learn at any time and any place. The use of mobile computing devices must be able to effectively present learning content and provide two-way communication between teachers and learners. Mobile learning is considered as a future learning model, or an indispensable learning model for future learning. Correctly understanding the connotation of mobile learning should be grasped

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[1] State Council. Outline of the national program for medium and long term educational reform and development (2010-2020) [EB/OL]. (2010-03-01) [2015-02-10]. http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2010-03/01/content_19492625_3.htm

from the following aspects: First of all, mobile learning is developed on the basis of digital learning. It is an extension of digital learning, which is different from general learning. Mobile learning is not the new things, because in the traditional printed textbook, learning can also support learners to learn textbooks good enough. So it can be said that textbooks has become the supporting tools of mobile learning whenever and wherever possible long before, and also it has always been with us. Secondly, besides all the peculiarities of digital learning, Mobile learning also has its own speciality, that learners were no longer confined to the desk, they can be free, they can learn in different ways for different purposes and learn whenever and wherever possible. Not only the learning environment is mobile, but teachers, researchers, technicians, and students are all mobile. Finally, from its implementation, mobile learning is based on mobile computing technology and Internet technology, that is, mobile interconnection technology, and the tool is the miniaturized mobile computing equipment. The implementation of mobile learning device has the characteristic as followed: portability (portability), the equipment shape small and light, easy to carry; nonlinear (wireless), that means the equipment without attachment; mobility (mobility), which refers to the user can also use it conveniently l even they are on the move.

The real meaning of mobile learning should be learners' learning in the present situation. The mobile terminal is a means, not an end. The role of mobile learning should not be overemphasized. It's only one of a lot of learning tools. It's not everything. As far as the present situation of higher education in our country is concerned, mobile learning must be cooperated with the traditional way of learning so as to give full play to its function. Mobile learning is a form to present, push the education resources and related information to the mobile terminal equipment, but its essence is to improve the efficiency of learning actively through such a way as mobile learning, to stimulate the enthusiasm of the learners. The study of mobile learning should focus more on how to influence people's learning habits and learning efficiency than using them to completely replace other learning methods.

Theory of Application Model of Mobile Learning

In the future, with the increase of smart phone penetration, the conditions of developing M-learning based on the mobile phone extensively are ripe. (Wujin, 2016) The rapid development of modern communication technology has created a favorable environment for mobile learning. As a new way of learning, of course, mobile learning does not exist independently with other learning methods, and it affects and integrates with traditional learning methods. No matter which kind of learning model, the most important aspects in learning are knowledge input and feedback without doubt. Mobile learning actually makes full use of the characteristics that mobile communication has certain transmission capabilities and mobile devices are easy to carry. Learning resources are first input into personal computers or networks, and then presented to learners through terminal devices, thus enhancing the interaction between learners and the content. The main theoretical foundations of the mobile learning model are behaviorist learning theory and cognitive theory.

Informal learning refers to the learning activities that was undertaken outside of the traditional school education in free time and place. It is mainly directed against the formal learning in schools. In recent years, the concept of social learning has been continuously emphasized. Learning behavior is no longer just in the traditional classroom. The content of learning is beginning to jump out of textbooks and classrooms, and has reached all levels of human life. Because of its mobility and portability, mobile devices have been naturally integrated into the daily informal learning, and become a new and effective way for more and more people to acquire knowledge. The 2013 Survey of Online Learning conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group reveals the number of higher education students taking at least one online course has now surpassed 7.1 million (Babson Survey Research Group, 2014).

1. The support of individualized learning by mobile technique: Each learner has his or her own personal characteristics. In fact, individualized learning aims at setting reasonable learning contents and learning strategies according to this feature, and so as to more effectively promote learners' individual initiative learning and achieve the goal of teaching for students in accordance with their aptitude. In this process, mobile technology and terminal equipment can be used as tools for knowledge transfer or as a tool for situational cognition.

2. The support of socialized study by mobile technique: Social studies supported by mobile technology tend to study in pairs or groups. In traditional learning, this pair or group learning mostly were applied in the traditional classrooms, with the teachers organized for some certain teaching purposes to make students interact with each other. Practice has proved that the role of this form in the classroom is getting smaller and smaller, and students are lack of the subjective initiative of interaction in class.

Under the environment of the wireless network and mobile communication network, this kind of learning is usually based on the practical problems or actual situations that all of us are concerned about. Mobile devices allow collaborative learning participants to enjoy more free interaction, set up more flexible organizational sizes, experience learning in real-world situations, and improve the quality of collaborative learning. From the existing problems of M-learning, although most students recognize M-learning highly, they also pointed out the fact that as a M-learning tool, the mobile phone still has some problems which mainly includes the small phone screen, low speed of searching resource, inconvenient operation, few available resources, etc. (Wujin, 2016).

Development and Characteristics of Wechat

WeChat is featured with the characteristic of ubiquitous learning, being available for almost every student at any time anywhere. (Zhongwen Liu, 2014) WeChat (WeChat) is a free application to provide instant messaging services for intelligent terminal, launched by the Tencent Inc in January 21, 2011. It has more than 600000000 users and 100000000 daily active users. (Guixin Zhao, 2015) WeChat supports that the users send free voice message, video, pictures and text, and at the same time, can also use the streaming media content by sharing information and location-based social plug-in, cross communication operators, and operating system platform through the network quickly with a small consumption amount of network traffic. By 2014, there were nearly 500 million registered users, accounting for 64.51% of college students.

At present, the vast majority of Chinese WeChat public platform is free. Five operating systems which was used by WeChat covered almost all the intelligent mobile phones. Moreover, its operation system is simple, easy to be updated. Even if some students had not used WeChat software yet, they can also download the software on her mobile phone for free. in addition, WeChat view receiver which can be utilized by students to receive the teaching information is convenient with very low cost. Compared with the traditional media, WeChat gives audience more independent options; in terms of information transmission, it is realized the two-way choice of ideal transmission form, and enhance the information rate of reading. (Jinfang Yan, 2015) What's more, most colleges and universities in China have realized the campus Wi-Fi coverage, without additional costs. Therefore, the majority students love WeChat, which provides a ready-made teaching environment for mobile teaching.

MOBILE LEARNING MODEL OF COLLEGE ENGLISH BASED ON WECHAT PLATFORM

Advantages of Mobile Learning Based on WeChat Platform

WeChat, which is widely used among college students in recent years, has the features of simplicity, cheapness, convenience, efficiency and mobility. At present, smart phones have become popular among college students. And college students are the largest group of Chinese Internet users now. Students using mobile terminals to surf the Internet has become a habit. Therefore, the basic requirements for mobile learning model based on WeChat platform already have become mature recently, and WeChat platform for mobile learning also has its unique advantage.

Contribution to the diversity of learning methods: WeChat, as an instant messenger, has many functions. For example, WeChat supports sending and receiving various types of information, including text, pictures, voice and video. If these characteristics was applied to mobile learning, it could make the ways of learning become more abundant, with big amount of brand new learning resources which is also conducive to stimulate students' interest in learning.

Contribution to the promotion of learning efficiency: The traditional learning, especially the campus learning, is mostly opposite to the teaching function. With the new platform of WeChat, the teaching information and teaching resources can be transmitted to the learners point by point. In addition, the foundation and characteristics of learners are not the same. So, with the utilization of the learning platform, WeChat, learners can carry out their learning activities focusing on the choice of learning resources according to their actual problems, in order to make their own learning time to be more reasonable. It is very beneficial to the improvement of learning efficiency.

Contribution to the communication and interactions: WeChat software itself is a real-time communication tools, whose communication and interaction is the most basic functions. That is to say that it is a good interactive platform, including the interactive interactions between users and the mobile learning platform, the interaction between users, and the online and offline interaction, which provide a good interactive virtual communication environment to the interaction between teachers and students, and also between students. Some learners, because of their personality and other reasons, are reluctant to express their point of view in public, which can be solved in the WeChat platform easily. WeChat provides a relatively private communication space for educators and learners. It helps to release the pressure on both sides, and to better communicate and interact with each other.

Construction of Mobile Learning Model for College English Based on WeChat Platform

The traditional college English learning is mainly taught by the teachers. The students are required to take the compulsory courses, with the supplementation of the optional courses. Compulsory courses usually have the designated textbooks and fixed teaching contents, whereas the elective course relatively has more flexibility and expansibility. The teachers of elective courses may choose and design appropriate teaching content, to meet the needs of students in their independent study, according to the needs of the curriculum. Compulsory courses focus on the development of language ability and mastery of basic knowledge. Teachers of elective courses can set learning goals for different directions so as to provide proper learning resources. Therefore, as far as the author concerned that elective courses are more suitable for mobile teaching in College English learning system. It is well known that different courses may have different characteristics, but as a platform for College English mobile learning process, the WeChat should comply with certain principles.

The combination of reasonable and interesting content in the division of the curriculum content: In the division of curriculum modules, teachers must combine the characteristics of the course with the students' interests and their requirements. To carry out the Mobile Learning based on WeChat social media software, the division of curriculum modules should begin with the curriculum content, which is a prerequisite for it. However, the resource demand and students' interest are the motive power of their learning. Under the relatively difficult circumstances of mobile learning supervision, the guarantee of the rationality content module is conducive to carry out mobile learning more effectively.

Reasonable organization of learning resources: The organization and selection of learning resources in each module is the key to mobile learning. It should be combined with the purpose of teaching, the characteristics of learners and the assessment. Learning resources should also ensure continuous updates to meet the needs of the times. Learning resources do not simply mean to import relevant information, but should be combined with the purpose of teaching, the characteristics of learners and the assessment. Learning resources should also ensure continuous updates to meet the needs of the times.

Reinforcement of interactive learning: As language learning, English learning itself primary exists in all languages. The purpose of language is communication. As a software, WeChat also has its primary function-- communication. Therefore, based on WeChat's mobile learning platform, its communication function must be improved. It includes communication among learners, communication between learners and educators, and communication between learners and learning resources.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COLLEGE ENGLISH MOBILE LEARNING BASED ON WECHAT PLATFORM

The method of College English mobile learning based on WeChat platform is different from the traditional classroom teaching method. With its unique advantages, the integration and application of College English teaching will have a profound impact on the reform of College English teaching. It helps break the limitations of a single classroom education, and provide a more convenient and effective learning platform for learners. With the development of science and technology and the progress of the times, mobile English learning based on WeChat platform will play a greater role in the field of English learning.

Reflection of the Advantages of Applying New Media to College English Learning

WeChat has various practical functions, such as the transmission function including the support of sending voice messages, video, pictures and text, dialogue, group chat and other communicative functions, with fast speed, crossing platform, low cost or even zero. The advantages of low cost, mobile and instant show the strength of new media in the new century. Teachers can make full use of WeChat platform to focus on the reasonable division of knowledge which will need lots of time to explain. And then the relatively independent knowledge points will be formed. With the WeChat platform, learners can fully integrate the fragmented time for learning, listening and speaking. At the same time, they can also enhance the ability of reading, writing and translation. For example, teachers can use the WeChat platform according to the social subject, which are the current hot spots in the video that interested the students a lot, or the publish of the relevant part of the learning resources, language points and some specific ways of expression, so that the teacher can make learners discuss in English. It's easy to learn through hot spots to arouse student's interests, which has a strong interactive ability. The role of teachers changes from the simple transformation of knowledge to the appropriate guidance of the relatively independent learning for learners to participate in discussion and guidance, which imperceptibly can exercise students' listening, speaking and reading ability in the learning process, and also can monitor and evaluate the trend of students' speaking, translation and writing ability through their voice and text exchange records by WeChat. It can not only attain the teachers' goal to control students' learning progress, reduce the stress of homework and tests, but also can keep learners in a good state of mind and promote learners' motivation and interest in learning.

Strengthening of the Learner's Central Position

Learning and teaching in the new era are facing new situations. In order to cope with various challenges, educators are constantly exploring innovation. Many colleges and universities have put forward the idea of "student centered" teaching reform. The most striking feature of WeChat is the ability to communicate with each other through text, video, and voice calls. The learner can improve the learning efficiency by means of sensory stimulation, and the teacher can also transmit the relevant learning resources to the learners through the various functions of WeChat, so as to better carry out the "one to one" coaching. In addition, mobile learning organizers can also make use of group chat function in WeChat to integrate the learners of the different progress reasonably, and adopt "information communication paradigm i-to-n", to deliver information and learning resources related to College English learning to each student's client. The teacher could control his phone to send a discussion topic with MrQ of the system, play a video clip or show subtitles, start a group discussion and evaluate performances in each group and play a PPT or WritePad (Jingyu Wang, 2013). This new form makes up for the defects of the traditional classroom teaching. It avoids the embarrassment and restraint of face-to-face communication among students, and the same time, retains the rich content of classroom teaching, stimulates students' interest in learning, gives full play to the initiative of students, strengthens the learners' dominant position in learning.

Enhancement of the Extensibility of the Content in College English Classroom

At present, mobile learning in most cases can not completely replace the traditional classroom teaching. The teaching of College English is mainly based on classroom teaching, and the content of classroom teaching

should be fully mastered by students. Instant communication and WeChat can help learners to enhance the understanding of the content of classroom teaching, have a reasonable review to the key contents, take advantage of the fragmentation of time to carry out a focused learning, in order to compensate for the insufficient of classroom learning time completely. Students can control their learning content, learning methods, learning time and place of study in accordance with their actual situation. At the same time, teachers can also make full use of the WeChat function to communicate with students in the content of the class and the content of the mobile learning. This can break through the limitation of time and space in the traditional college English classroom and carry out an effective extension of the content of college English classroom teaching.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In recent years, with the development of China's society and the continuous innovation of communication technology, the Internet and smart phones have been fully developed, and gradually are accepted by vast numbers of people. College students are especially receptive to the internet. WeChat has been recognized and widely used by most college students for its unique communication and communication skills. In this context, WeChat can create open space and convenient conditions for the mobile learning of college students. It is possible to make full use of mobile learning to learn English based on WeChat. The use of this new network communication platform in College English learning can effectively break through the limitation of traditional classroom in time and space, expand the channels of College English learning, mobilize the initiative of the competent learners, provide a new idea for the reform of College English teaching, which are in line with the law and feature of development of the times.

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