

Effects of Screen Time on Foreign Language Learning in College Students

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Abstract: In recent years, with the development of the Internet, the Internet provides us with endless resources, and the development of mobile communication technology makes college students use screen time in most of their lives. Many different network technologies, apps, etc., have a great impact on college students' foreign language learning. How to use screen time to improve students' foreign language learning ability and promote the development of education has become the focus of foreign language teaching. Through a questionnaire survey of 20 college students and a semi-structured interview, and through the analysis of the data, it is found that more college students tend to use mobile assisted learning (MALL) to learn English, but it also leads to more problems. From the perspective of college students, this paper discusses the impact of screen time on college students, as well as the opportunities and challenges brought by MALL to college students' English learning.

Keywords: screen time, English learning, collage student, MALL, semi-structured interviews

1. Introduction

As for foreign language learning through the Internet, most of the existing studies are quantitative studies based on the functions of network tools and the use of network resources, without considering whether the use of network learning tools by individuals in college students will affect foreign language learning and whether it will affect the risk of subsequent investment. In addition, the research on the advantages and disadvantages of online foreign language resources is also mostly focused on the application and other network auxiliary tools, and the degree of mastery of students' language learning satisfaction is not fully considered. The practical development of Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) benefits from the rapid development of related technologies. MALL is a technology that integrates mobile devices into foreign language teaching [1]. This technology uses personal portable devices that enable new ways of learning, and it emphasizes continuity or spontaneity of access and interaction across different use environments. In the same way, MALL can be used to carry out various forms of foreign language teaching, including face-to-face, remote and online modes. Therefore, college students can study foreign languages at any time and place [2]. But at the same time, the development of MALL technology makes college students more and more familiar with the new mode of mobile learning and spend more time on the screen. Although they learn through countless resources, there are still many problems in the corresponding learning efficiency and learning methods after the mode change.

Through this investigation, we can understand the foreign language learning methods of contemporary college students and hope to provide effective reference for the foreign language teaching practice of teachers.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, it is very common for college students to use mobile phones. For most people, smart phones, computers and other smart devices have become an integral part of their lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the upgrade of smart devices. In this way, college students can acquire more resources and learn new knowledge through online courses, so as to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on school education. As a result, their screen time is significantly longer. Mobile learning is becoming increasingly common, and mobile learning resources for supporting the teaching and learning of language are widely available now [3]. More and more college students have mastered the technology of online learning. The existence of the Internet makes it available to all people in the world, which makes them used to learn massive foreign language resources in new ways and choose the quality and scope of resources. This online foreign language learning resource is very open, cheap and easy to access, which provides many opportunities for college students. However, integrating modern technology into teaching to facilitate learning poses challenges for educational institutions [4]. Mobile technology has some drawbacks that need to be considered. In addition to discussing the physical and technical characteristics of mobile devices, the following disadvantages of m-learning can be identified: potential distractions or unethical behavior, physical health concerns, and data privacy concerns. Many school leaders see cell phones as a barrier to meaningful learning, also because of ringtones, emails, texts, tweets and cheating [5]. Learners can spend time texting, surfing the Internet or chatting online with peers, which can distract them from the learning process.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Objects

The purposive sampling method in qualitative research was used to select college students who met the inclusion criteria for interview. The inclusion criteria were: (1) Undergraduate students in each institution; (2) Informed consent and voluntary participation; (3) Strong language skills, able to express their feelings clearly. Stop the interview when the information is saturated and new ideas are no longer available. A total of 20 respondents participated in the interview, and their age, gender, professional category and other general information are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The age, major and region of the students who who participated in the experiment credit: original.

Number	Age	major	Province
1	19	Communication	Shanghai
2	18	Accounting	Hubei
3	20	Chemistry	Anhui
4	20	English	Beijing
5	21	Marketing	Sichuan
6	19	Social Security	Zhejiang
7	20	English	Chongqing
8	20	Education	Henan
9	20	Political Theory	Jiangsu

Table 1: (continued).

10	21	Physics	Hubei
11	20	Psychology	Jiangxi
12	20	Mathematics	Shanghai
13	19	Law	Zhejiang
14	20	Education	Jiangsu
15	18	Literature	Jiangsu
16	18	English	Jiangsu
17	20	Art	Fujian
18	21	Psychology	Jiangsu
19	20	Chemistry	Anhui
20	20	Statistics	Chongqing

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Quality Control Methods

The researcher had a thorough understanding of the questions on the outline, kept an objective and neutral attitude during the interview, and asked and clarified questions in time.

3.2.2. Delphi Method

Firstly, the interview outline was preliminarily formulated according to the research purpose, and then the interview outline was revised according to expert consultation and expert opinions. The final interview outline is as follows: (1) the foreign language learning time of college students on screen time; (2) the characteristics of college students using the Internet to learn foreign languages; (3) the disadvantages of online language learning; (4) the relationship between the duration and efficiency of online language learning; (5) Which online learning forms have the greatest impact on foreign language learning; (6) Challenges and opportunities in learning languages online.

3.2.3. Data Collection

Through face-to-face interview, semi-structured interviews were conducted to introduce themselves to the interviewees and explain the purpose of the interview, ensuring that they would fully abide by the principle of confidentiality and conduct the interview in a comfortable and quiet environment.

3.2.4. Data Analysis

After obtaining the consent of interviewees, the interview begins. Handwritten notes were taken during the whole interview, and the collected information was converted into text mode word by word after the interview. Colaizzi' s phenomenological data seven-step analysis method was used to process and analyze the information.

4. Results

4.1. Current Situation of College Students Using Internet to Learn English

4.1.1. The Proportion of Foreign Language Learning Time in College Students' Screen Time Is Not High

The survey found that most college students spend more than five hours a day using screens, but less than two hours a day studying English, which means that foreign language learning is only a small part of college students' Internet time. According to the interview results, most of the respondents will spend their time on news, entertainment and so on, while they spend less time on foreign language learning. Talking about the current situation of using the network to learn English, 2 respondents said: "in one day, I will frequent use of mobile phones, access to information about courses, the news of the news, also often use social software to communicate with friends, but when I'm free will use software to study memorizing words, the general calculation down is an hour or so." Interviewer 6 said: "For me, I prefer to browse entertainment videos on the Internet, watch some movies and so on. I will learn English by watching American TV series, which lasts about two hours." Interviewer 7 said: "I everyday besides look up some interesting video, most of the screen time used on the network course learning, looking for foreign language learning resources on the Internet, and I will learn about in two hours or so, for a long period of time to watch can make my eyes feel uncomfortable, so I generally control within two hours."

4.1.2. College Students Tend to Choose Online Language Learning Mode

Although the amount of time college students spend online learning a foreign language is relatively small compared to the overall online time, more and more college students tend to use the online language learning mode. This change in learning style may be influenced by many factors, such as the behavior and habits of classmates around, the influence of parents and teachers, and the development of science and technology. When asked, "Why do you choose to learn a language online?" Interviewer 1 said: "I feel that with the progress of technology and media, more and more people begin to learn languages online. Online learning can be realized through online courses or some apps. People may think that it is very time-saving and cost-effective to learn knowledge without leaving home." Interviewer 8 said, "But at the same time, many parents know that their children's self-control is not enough. At the current stage of development, online courses and apps cannot supervise their children well, so some parents will not let their children choose online learning. But college students with better self-awareness may prefer to study online, which saves time and is convenient."

4.2. Characteristics of College Students Using the Internet to Learn Foreign Languages

4.2.1. College Students Choose to Learn Foreign Languages Online

Through the survey, it is found that the forms used by students can be roughly divided into two types: one is the network auxiliary tool, which exists in the electronic form and can be used to search and read literature resources and tools through the Internet. Wikipedia, online dictionaries, etc [6]. The other is through the form of entertainment. Students learn a foreign language through movies, TV series, music and popular novels, etc. It tends to create an English learning atmosphere in this way, which makes learning faster. Most of the students in the interview said that they learned in these two ways. When asked, "Do you prefer a more relaxed approach to language learning via the Internet?" Respondents No. 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 18 all said: "In daily life, they tend to

learn a foreign language by watching movies and TV dramas.” Respondent No. 13 said: “I don’t like to learn a foreign language by means of entertainment, music movies only as auxiliary, because good music and movies give prize or not because their language is not only good, but because of many other factors such as melody, drama, etc., if you want to simple to learn English by watching movies listening to music is very unrealistic, It’s easy to get distracted by the other good things in these works.” Further exploration of the interference of mobile technology in the learning process is carried out. When learners are distracted, modern technology hinders rather than enhances the learning process [7].

4.2.2. Efficiency of Online English Learning

Many college students self-rated their foreign language efficiency on the Internet as moderate to high, concentrated in 70%-90%. Of the 20 respondents, No. 2 and No. 10 believe that learning a foreign language via the Internet is much more efficient than the actual classroom. Respondent No. 10 said, “On the Internet, foreign language learning resources are more abundant and I can look up more materials. It may be difficult to consult traditional paper documents, but it is possible to find the necessary information quickly through network auxiliary tools.” Interviewee No. 2 said, “I think I can learn a lot from some recorded foreign language learning videos and some apps for memorizing words. In addition, some apps can help to train oral English, so for me, I can improve my learning efficiency through this way.” Respondents 15 and 17 said, “There are still many limitations in online English learning, such as the connectivity of the equipment or the software itself.” Respondent No. 16 said, “To some extent, time is negatively related to efficiency. The longer the time, the lower the efficiency. On the other hand, students have no strong self-control and cannot concentrate on online learning for a long time, so they will remain inefficient.”

4.2.3. The Form of Online Foreign Language Learning Affects College Students’ Learning Style

More and more college students, after understanding various forms and methods of learning foreign languages online, gradually begin to simplify their own learning methods, that is, tend to carry out paperless learning. In this way, college students’ learning is more convenient. The common learning method is to download electronic textbooks for foreign language learning on tablet computers, which can reduce the burden of carrying paper books and store a large number of electronic books, which is very convenient. Some college students also build electronic notes to reduce the use of paper. Such a tablet would solve most problems with textbooks and notes. When asked “Do you think paperless language learning is more popular than pre-university language learning?” respondent No. 14 said: “Now more and more people, especially contemporary college students, begin to use paperless language learning, ipads, computers and so on. I think paperless learning is definitely a trend. Take iPad for example, one iPad can store hundreds, thousands or even tens of thousands of books. It is definitely more convenient to carry one iPad with you than to carry many books. It’s also easy to take notes in class without having to worry about making mistakes.”

4.3. Challenges of Online Language Learning for College Students

4.3.1. College Students Think That Language Learning Online Also Has Disadvantages

There are actually some problems with this way of learning a language. There is a lack of learning strategies in the network environment [8], and many college students are unable to make good use of massive learning resources. “There are also many disadvantages of online language learning,” said Interviewee No.5. “Personally, I think language learning needs a set of systems. Every teacher

has his or her own teaching system and way. Interviewee 9 said: “There may be some difficult technical issues such as Internet speed, and constant messages from other software may also be a distraction.” Interviewee No. 12 said, “Some foreign language learning resources do not ensure the accuracy of what is taught. They may be different from what is learned in school. Therefore, I am very careful when choosing specific resources.”

4.3.2. Exist Different Understanding for the Online Learning Satisfaction

Through the investigation, it is found that when learning foreign language online, college students are satisfied with it from different angles. It can be mainly divided into the following two types: one is satisfaction with the technical level, that is, satisfaction with the functions and resources provided by the software. The other is the satisfaction with their own learning level, that is, through the network resources of college students can master the knowledge of satisfaction. These two different levels of satisfaction are very common psychological conditions of college students. When asked about the satisfaction angle of online language learning, Interviewee 16 said: “Personally,” satisfaction “means that this app can make me focus on learning and make me learn more compared to other ways of learning or other apps. So I’m satisfied with the technology,” Interviewee 17 said.” I prefer to choose a simpler software that doesn’t require a lot of functionality but allows me to learn a lot, so I’m satisfied that I can learn.”

5. Discussion

This study finds that college students do not allocate much time to foreign language learning in screen time, which can be clearly seen in them. Many people spend a lot of time in entertainment, communication, etc., and have some problems with self-control. However, most college students tend to choose to learn foreign languages online, which may be related to the comprehensive factors of family, school, society and themselves. For college students, college life is significantly different from high school life, with a large amount of free time and learning resources, but in such an environment, students’ self-control and different learning choices will lead to different time for foreign language learning through the Internet. In addition, various learning resources on the Internet have attracted many college students. They are willing to learn a foreign language in this way.

At the same time, there are many characteristics of college students using Internet to learn foreign languages. It is divided into three aspects: the way college students choose to learn foreign languages online, the efficiency of online learning English and the change of learning style under the form of online learning foreign languages. These three points are the integration of some obvious phenomena found in this study.

When learning foreign languages online, college students can freely choose the form of learning foreign languages. They can choose online auxiliary tools to search and read literature, and they can also use some entertainment methods, such as watching movies and listening to music. Both of these different forms are popular with college students. In this way, schools can make students spend more time on foreign language learning. From the perspective of the efficiency of online English learning, most students think that it can improve their learning efficiency. Many of these programs take advantage of students’ fragmented time, enabling them to learn in short bursts of time. Others use the advantages of the Internet to give students the opportunity to communicate with native speakers. Such opportunities are very important for learning a foreign language [9]. But there are also problems with students’ concentration. Online learning can be easily interrupted because there is too much distracting information on the Internet. Students may also lose focus on their studies because they spend too much time online, and go on to browse other content.

Efficiency will be reduced in these areas. Finally, from the perspective of college students' learning mode from paper to electronic, Internet learning speeds up the process of students using paperless learning mode. The network has brought convenience to students, making students more skilled in simplifying the process of learning. Students store the electronic version of the physical book into the computer. In this way, they can carry a lot of electronic materials at any time, which greatly reduces the burden of students. Students also use a large number of electronic notes to record learning knowledge points, which is more convenient to import, export, add and modify the recorded content [10].

According to the survey, there are some challenges for college students in the way of online language learning, including students' inability to choose learning resources well, and unclear understanding of the relationship between software functions and their own learning degree. With the development of science and technology, there are more and more high-quality learning resources on the Internet. It is difficult for students to choose the resources that are really suitable for them. And in the selection of resources, students do not face up to the help they need, choose software with very complete functions, by choosing such resource-rich software to satisfy themselves, but the actual learning effect is not significant. Therefore, when selecting resources, students should also consider their own learning needs, improve the learning efficiency of using software, and enhance their self-control.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, it can be seen that using screen time to improve students' foreign language learning ability and promote the development of education is an important development in foreign language teaching. It is becoming more and more common for college students to use the Internet for foreign language learning. The way students choose to learn online, the efficiency of learning and the change of learning mode will have a certain impact on foreign language teaching. Therefore, it is still challenging for college students to choose this way. This experiment uses relatively few samples and takes a long time, which can only show a trend of online learning of foreign languages, which may have a certain impact on the accuracy of the survey results. It is hoped that future researchers can further explore the opportunities and challenges of online foreign language learning for college students.

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