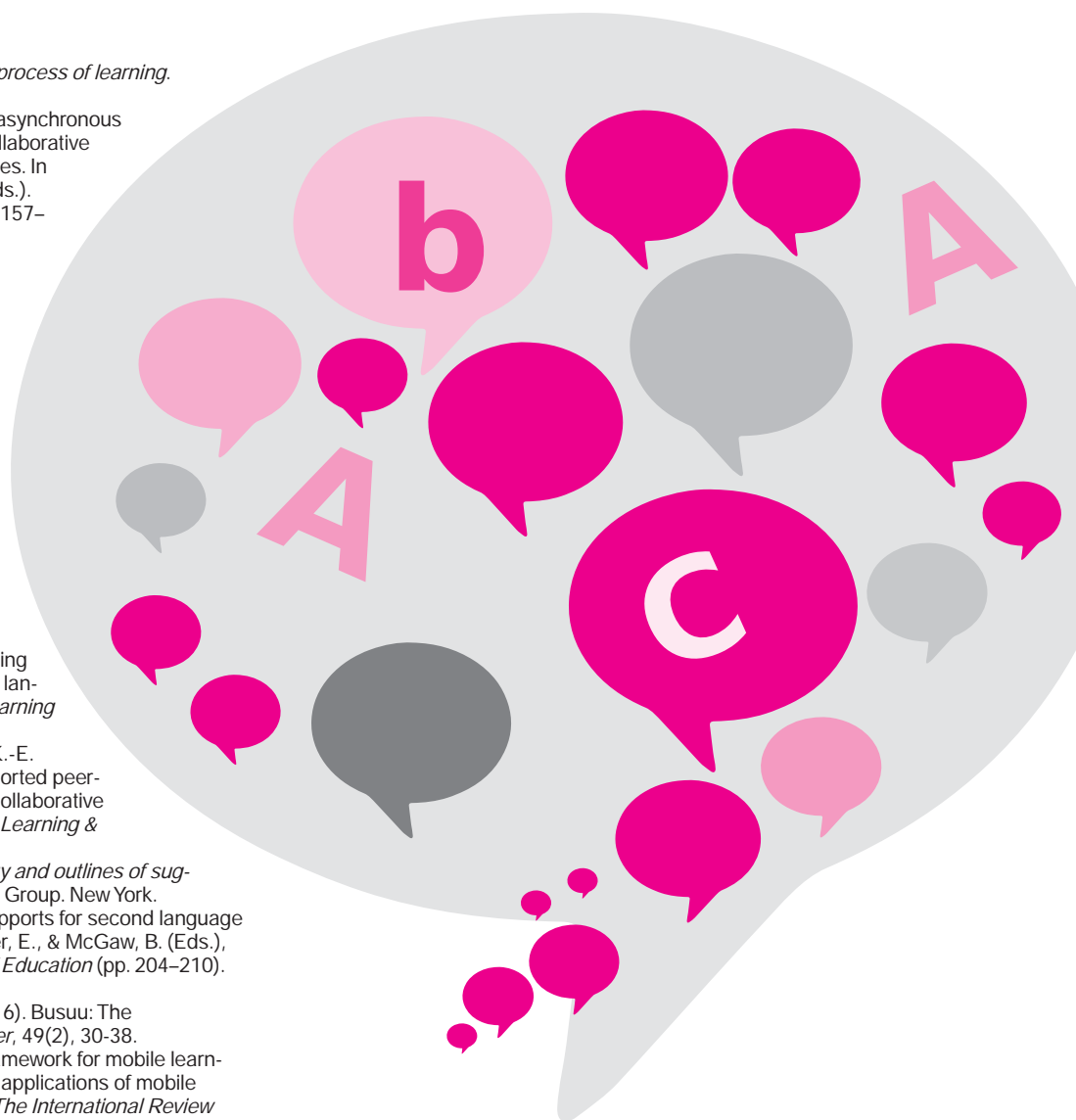


a number of limitations. The non-free VIP membership for complete translation and transliteration packages, no reports and/or feedback on learners' development, and no alerts or monitoring as a stimulus for users seem to be the app's shortcomings. In brief, it is fair to state that HelloTalk is a popular and widely-used language learning app, drawing the attention of a growing community. HelloTalk team is demanded to alleviate the app's minor problems to boost its language learning potential as much as possible.

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Weaknesses

The most considerable shortcoming of this app which needs urgent attention is the lack of motivational system to encourage learners to continue language learning with this app. Owing to the fact that there are basically no alerts from the HelloTalk team, users, especially those with less intrinsic motivation, might not attempt to regularly involve themselves in chatting in another language. Similar to many good mobile language learning applications, HelloTalk is not 100% free. The price of VIP membership (i.e., the paid version) is fairly high as displayed in Figure 9, additionally it could be considered really unfair to have to pay for practicing any other language pairs beyond the first one.

Figure 9. VIP membership prices



Unfortunately, no feedback is given to the learners on their progress status while they are chatting in the community. Moreover, there are basically no formal training in terms of learning a new language. That is, the produced grammar, phonology, vocabulary, and so on are only monitored by native and/or native-like peers in the

community. To the best knowledge of the authors, such downsides not only reduce the level of learners' motivation but also leave the learners helpless in determining their appropriate language level. Hence, the HelloTalk expert team need to obviate this need.

Similar to other language learning apps, HelloTalk also suffers from a number of limitation is. The non-free VIP membership for complete translation and transliteration packages, no reports and/ or feedback on learners' development, and no alerts or monitoring as a stimulus for users seem to be the app's shortcomings

Conclusion

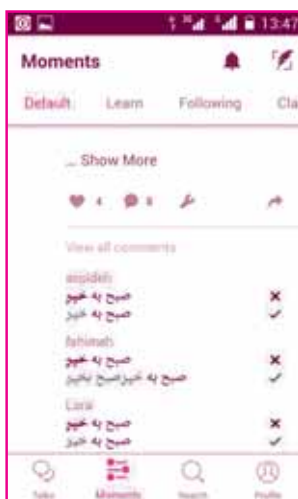
HelloTalk is an effective language learning tool especially for the young generation due to its purely social environment. The great number of languages this app covers and the miscellaneous collection of its features form an enjoyable atmosphere for learning a new language. Providing language learners with almost every type of facility for rapid, effective, and meaningful learning is an admiring task which has been performed by the professional HelloTalk team. Some noticeable features of this app are on-the-text corrections, automatic translation, and transliteration that have introduced the app as an outstanding one. Similar to other language learning apps, HelloTalk also suffers from

Figure 6. Transliteration feature



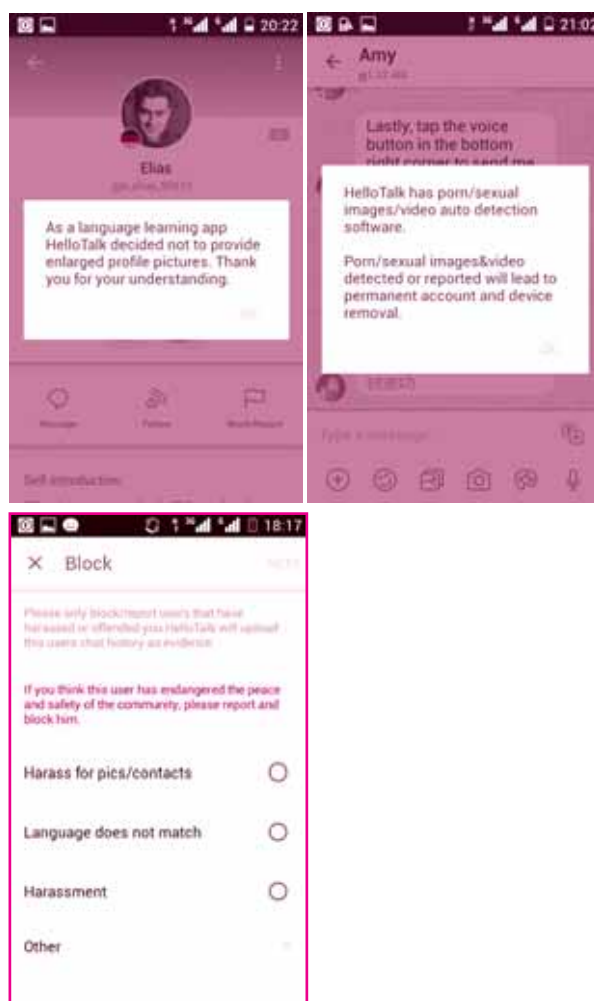
Another feature of this app is the demonstration of the users' nationality, local time and location under their profile picture. This feature lets users know whether it is an appropriate time to start chatting with their conversational partners. Of course, the app also allows users to hide details like their age or location in the advanced privacy settings if they wish to keep such details private. What is particular about this app is its terrific system of on-the-text correction. As can be seen in figure 7, such a system keeps the learner focused on the language and its usage.

Figure 7. On-the-text correction



To ensure that the chance of learning of a party is equal to that of the other one, the app provides a distinctive "Language Exchange" environment which counts the number of characters or the amount of time spent (e.g. 500-1000 characters or 5 minutes) in one language. When either the number of characters or the time reaches the limit, the app recommends to switch languages so that there will not be a one-sided conversation to the benefit of just one of the parties. Finally, HelloTalk seems to be a secure app which respects individuals' privacy. The figure below shows the different privacy and security features in this app.

Figure 8. Safety and privacy in Hellotalk



learners to share some posts and write comments on each other's posts. It helps them get a whole lot of extra exposure to the target language and creates an immersion environment. This feature might find its grounds in Suggestopedia and its peripheral learning principle introduced by Lozanov (1978) who believed language learners can grasp information easily and effortlessly when it is apprehended as a part of the environment rather than the instructional materials.

Figure 4. Moments

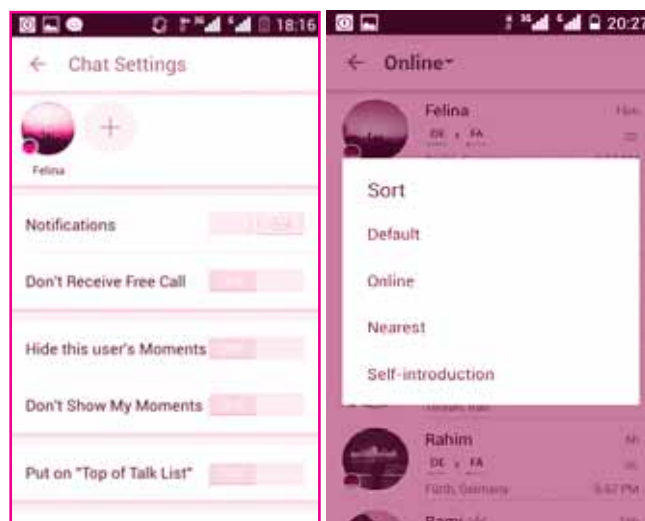


MALL creates collaborative learning conditions as learners can carry out tasks in pairs or in groups using their mobile phones (Lan, Sung, & Chang, 27)

As it is indicated in Figure 5, the settings section and especially the search engine of this app is precise and customizes your searches based on your preferences. Furthermore, learners can even change the reading speed of the computerized voice of the app in this section.

Notifications, chat, and backup settings are also available in this app, features offered by many other language learning apps such as Speaky.

Figure 5. Refining search engine and chat settings



Strengths

In order to have real-life connections, HelloTalk allows its users to make free phone calls for a better and friendlier language learning experience. Through this feature, learners become familiar with casual and informal talk of the target language which is an important skill in a second language. One of the most prominent features of this app is the automatic translation feature which helps to keep conversations going. The Romanized pronunciation is additionally useful especially in case of those languages which do not use Latin alphabet such as Chinese. Figure 6 shows that feature. Once more, it should be pointed out that all these features are thoroughly available in the premium version of the app, and the free version has limitations in these cases.

to their small user base in comparison to apps like HelloTalk.

Figure 1. User profile



HelloTalk offers a variety of desirable features to language learners all over the world, including:

- Voice messaging
- Text chat
- Camera/ photo share
- Doodle share (drawing in the app; see Figure 2)
- Smiley
- GPS location share
- Specific language learning features: Translation, transliteration, and voice recognition to help learners write/speak in their target language.

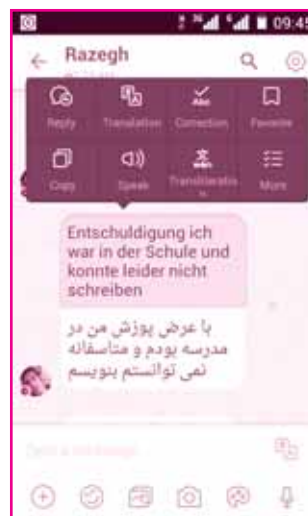
Figure 2. Doodles in HelloTalk



All those features serve as language learning tools and suitable options for users to make rapport with other members of the language community. Some of the features are really attractive. For instance, the voice recognition system built in the app is capable of converting the speech to text. Moreover, this app gives the chance of chatting in several languages at the same time without changing the target language in the settings.

Another salient feature of this app, as displayed in Figure 3, is a toolbar which appears on the screen by tapping once on the text messages and has a number of options. The options are copying the text message, bookmarking it as a favorite, adding it to the personal notebook, revising it, reading it out loud, translating, and transliterating it.

Figure 3. Toolbar and its options



The most challenging obstacle one should overcome in learning a new language is actually starting a conversation and continuing it (Richards, 2016). There is a Moments part defined in HelloTalk app, shown in Figure 4, which can help learners a great deal with this challenge. This option enables

is that students may have a myriad of applications (e.g., dictionaries, translators, ...) installed on their phones which can assist them when doing exercises or tasks. That is, they may rely on the applications rather than their own knowledge. Another reason may be that only a few tasks can be carried out by using mobile phones (Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013). Tasks required to be performed by more advanced learners may not be easily provided on the phones. Students may also not take learning seriously when using their phones because they usually use their devices for non-educational purposes. Moreover, teachers need to make sure all the students own mobile phones capable of performing smart functions and tasks because traditional devices may not be sophisticated enough to be used for educational aims. Finally, as pointed out by Nushi and Jenabzadeh (2016), many of the language learning applications "have been developed by people outside of the field of second language pedagogy and their effectiveness cannot and should not be taken for granted, (p. 30). This review, therefore, focuses on one mobile language learning application, HelloTalk, and explores the learning possibilities the application offers to L2 learners.

Detailed description

HelloTalk, with the rating of 4.3 on Google Play, is a popular language learning app on the market, the team of which is based in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China. This application covers almost all the languages in the world including English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, German, Italian, Russian, Arabic, and many other languages. Its main purpose

is to connect language learners directly to native speakers and the target culture in order to facilitate language learning. This app has many different options, yet in order to access them without limitations, the premium version should be downloaded due to the limitations of its free version. Although the app is not fully free, its user base is comparatively large; according to HelloTalk website, there are over 7 million members currently using this app. It is favorable that this app is accessible to both Android and iOS users.

Today, one of the main concerns of L2 learners is to have quick and easy access to a wide variety of materials which can help them learn a language. Hand-held devices, specifically mobile phones, fit into students' pockets, so they can use them almost everywhere, at any time, and for any kind of learning (Prensky, 2005)

The first step one should take after installing HelloTalk is to fill out their profile (see Figure 1). As soon as they are done with this task, they are able to start searching for language partners through making and accepting requests. HelloTalk users have access to an amazing global language exchange community. This app allows learners to find language partners, chat with them, send voice messages to them, or call them. It is worth noting that although there are some websites which enable individuals to look for appropriate conversation partners through platforms such as Skype, they are not effective due

Introduction

The pivotal role technology can play in second language (L2) pedagogy is undeniable. Nunan (2010) has specified four main roles that technology can play in the language classroom: a carrier of content, an instructional practice tool, a learning management tool, and a communication tool. Technology is a carrier of content in that it provides learners with access to authentic and pedagogic written input as well as information about the language subskills. Technology acts as an instructional tool because they allow learners to carry out various spoken and written exercises. As a learning management tool, it helps teachers and learners to structure and evaluate their learning process. The use of proprietary software such as Moodle, for instance, makes it possible for teachers to perform effective learning management tasks. The fourth function of technology relates to the fact that technology can enable language learners to interact with native speakers of the target language all around the world. L2 teachers can apply technological innovations to support their classroom practice: first, technology promotes a deep rather than surface approach to learning (Biggs & Telfer 1993); second, it stimulates active, constructivist learning rather than straight knowledge transfer (Weasenforth et al., 2002), third, it fosters students' awareness of discourse-related aspects of communication (Davis & Thiede, 2000), and fourth, it allows students to share perspectives and experiences, to establish relationships, and to seek assistance (Chong, 1998).

Today, one of the main concerns of L2 learners is to have quick and easy access to a wide variety of materials which can help them learn a language. Hand-held

devices, specifically mobile phones, fit into students' pockets, so they can use them almost everywhere, at any time, and for any kind of learning (Prensky, 2005). In other words, technological devices carried easily by learners provide ubiquitous learning (Godwin-Jones, 2011). Mobile phone has become so prominent and popular almost all over the world. It has brought about a different type of L2 learning called Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). MALL is considered as an efficient language learning tool used by both teachers and learners. It is a teaching method which uses mobile phone technology in order to encourage learner autonomy as it enables students, after they receive initial scaffolding by the teacher, to take responsibility for their own learning (Park, 2011). Another advantage of the use of mobile phones in L2 pedagogy is that students can expose themselves to the language outside of the classroom (Geddes, 2004). It, in fact, promotes a learner-centered teaching method. In addition, MALL creates collaborative learning conditions as learners can carry out tasks in pairs or in groups using their mobile phones (Lan, Sung, & Chang, 2007).

Nunan (2010) has specified four main roles that technology can play in the language classroom: a carrier of content, an instructional practice tool, a learning management tool, and a communication tool

However, teachers should be aware of the fact that MALL can jeopardize successful L2 learning. One reason

HelloTalk: A Language Exchange App on Your Smartphone

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چکیده

دشواری شرکت در کلاس‌های زبان، هزینه زیاد یادگیری زبان دوم، پیشرفت‌های فناوری و ذات تنوع‌طلب انسان امروز تمایل به استفاده از نرم‌افزارهای همراه آموزش زبان را به طرز چشم‌گیری افزایش داده است. به لطف «فناوری آموزش زبان همراه» نرم‌افزارهای متعددی برای یادگیری معنادارتر تولید شده‌اند. در این میان، نرم‌افزارهایی که دامنه کاربری وسیع‌تری دارند، نخستین انتخاب اکثر زبان‌آموزان هستند، زیرا فضای تعاملی را برای ارتباط و به اشتراک‌گذاری نظرات کاربران مهیا می‌کنند. همچنین نرم‌افزارهایی از این دست به خاطر ارائه روش خلاقانه و لذت‌بخش در یادگیری در میان زبان‌آموزان جوان محبوبیت دارند. هلو تاک (HelloTalk) نمونه مناسبی از این گونه نرم‌افزارهاست که مقاله حاضر برای بررسی ویژگی‌های آن نگاشته شده است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: آموزش زبان همراه، هلو تاک، یادگیری معنادار

Abstract

Not being able to physically attend language classes, high fees of getting a second language (L2) education, technological improvements, and the variety-demanding nature of modern man have considerably increased the tendency towards the usage of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications. Thanks to the MALL technology, many apps have already been launched for a more meaningful learning. Meanwhile, apps with larger user bases are the first choice of the majority of L2 learners, since they provide a more social atmosphere for the users to communicate and share ideas with one another; besides, such apps offer a creative and joyful way of learning which is really popular with young learners. An appropriate prototype of such apps is HelloTalk, and the present paper has been written to review its facets and features.

Key Words: Mobile-assisted language learning, HelloTalk, meaningful learning



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Media Review Template

Title plus author's full name and affiliation

Abstract (not more than 200)

The abstract is a crucial element of any academic article; it not only summarizes your paper but also helps it reach the right audience. Your abstract should be written in both English and Persian; it should appear in block format, single spaced and justified. The abstract should include: 1) a brief (one or two sentence) introduction; 2) the media selected for the review and the significance/ purpose of the review/ selection; 3) major findings and; 4) recommendations.

Media/Application details

The authors should list the product details including:

Publisher:

Product type:

Language(s):

Level:

Media format:

Operating systems:

Hardware requirements:

Supplementary software:

Price:

Introduction (approximately 450 words)

The introduction should give a broad view of the field of educational technology with a focus on the role of technology in second/ foreign language education. It then narrows the focus on the media selected for the review and how and why the review can contribute to second/ foreign language learning and teaching.

Description (approximately 550 words)

The authors need to describe the media tool as accurately as possible, preferably using photos and graphics that make the description engaging and interesting to read. The description should tell the readers about where they can find/download the media, what its different sections are and what the features and purposes/functions of each section are, etc.

Evaluation (approximately 350 words)

In this part the overall value of the media review and its contribution to second/ foreign language is given, followed by its strengths and/or possible weaknesses. The authors can offer their own and research-supported suggestions on how those shortcomings can be removed or taken care of.

Conclusion (Approximately 250 words)

The review ends with a conclusion that summarizes the main points and make specific recommendations on the use of the media for second/ foreign language learning and teaching.

References

References should be up to date and written in APA style. The number of references should not exceed 10.