An Integrated Theoretical Framework on Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: User's Acceptance Behavior

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Abstract : In the field of language education research, there are not many tries to empirically examine learners' acceptance behavior and related factors of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). This study is one of the few attempts to propose an integrated theoretical framework that explains MALL users' acceptance behavior and potential factors. Constructs from technology acceptance model (TAM) and MALL research are tested in the integrated framework. Based on previous studies, a hypothetical model was developed. Four external variables related to the MALL user's acceptance behavior were selected: subjective norm, content reliability, interactivity, self-regulation. The model was also composed of four other constructs: two latent variables, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, were considered as cognitive constructs; attitude toward MALL as an affective construct; behavioral intention to use MALL as a behavioral construct. The participants were 438 undergraduate students who enrolled in an intensive English program at one university in Korea. This particular program was held in January 2018 using the vacation period. The students were given eight hours of English classes each day from Monday to Friday for four weeks and asked to complete MALL courses for practice outside the classroom. Therefore, all participants experienced blended MALL environment. The instrument was a self-response questionnaire, and each construct was measured by five questions. Once the questionnaire was developed, it was distributed to the participants at the final ceremony of the intensive program in order to collect the data from a large number of the participants at a time. The data showed significant evidence to support the hypothetical model. The results confirmed through structural equation modeling analysis are as follows: First, four external variables such as subjective norm, content reliability, interactivity, and self-regulation significantly affected perceived ease of use. Second, subjective norm, content reliability, self-regulation, perceived ease of use significantly affected perceived usefulness. Third, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly affected attitude toward MALL. Fourth, attitude toward MALL and perceived usefulness significantly affected behavioral intention to use MALL. These results implied that the integrated framework from TAM and MALL could be useful when adopting MALL environment to university students or adult English learners. Key constructs except interactivity showed significant relationships with one another and had direct and indirect impacts on MALL user's acceptance behavior. Therefore, the constructs and validated metrics is valuable for language researchers and educators who are interested in MALL.

Keywords : blended MALL, learner factors/variables, mobile-assisted language learning, MALL, technology acceptance model, TAM, theoretical framework

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