Envisioning The Future of Language Learning: Virtual Reality, Mobile Learning and Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Authors : Jasmin Cowin, Amany Alkhayat

Abstract : This paper will concentrate on a comparative analysis of both the advantages and limitations of using digital learning resources (DLRs). DLRs covered will be Virtual Reality (VR), Mobile Learning (M-learning) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) together with their subset, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in language education. In addition, best practices for language teaching and the application of established language teaching methodologies such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the audio-lingual method, or community language learning will be explored. Education has changed dramatically since the eruption of the pandemic. Traditional face-to-face education was disrupted on a global scale. The rise of distance learning brought new digital tools to the forefront, especially web conferencing tools, digital storytelling apps, test authoring tools, and VR platforms. Language educators raced to vet, learn, and implement multiple technology resources suited for language acquisition. Yet, questions remain on how to harness new technologies, digital tools, and their ubiquitous availability while using established methods and methodologies in language learning paired with best teaching practices. In M-learning language, learners employ portable computing devices such as smartphones or tablets. CALL is a language teaching approach using computers and other technologies through presenting, reinforcing, and assessing language materials to be learned or to create environments where teachers and learners can meaningfully interact. In VR, a computer-generated simulation enables learner interaction with a 3D environment via screen, smartphone, or a head mounted display. Research supports that VR for language learning is effective in terms of exploration, communication, engagement, and motivation. Students are able to relate through role play activities, interact with 3D objects and activities such as field trips. VR lends itself to group language exercises in the classroom with target language practice in an immersive, virtual environment. Students, teachers, schools, language institutes, and institutions benefit from specialized support to help them acquire second language proficiency and content knowledge that builds on their cultural and linguistic assets. Through the purposeful application of different language methodologies and teaching approaches, language learners can not only make cultural and linguistic connections in DLRs but also practice grammar drills, play memory games or flourish in authentic settings.