Leveraging The Mobile Technology Application On Learning Chinese As A Second Language
-- An Instructional Design

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Abstract:

There is a frequently asked question: “what is the most effective way to learn Chinese as a second language (CSL) for adult beginning learners?” Debates between immersive instruction and traditional instruction have been going on for many years in the community of adult CSL learner. The immersive program emphasizes direct learning in daily conversations and activities without prior formal learning of linguistic features and rules. In contrast, the traditional instruction drives learner to learn vocabularies, specific rules, and grammar at the beginning without relating them to daily life activities. Moreover, it emphasizes repetition of linguistic knowledge in memory. Neither the immersive way or the traditional way, by itself, is ideally in learning a second language, as evidenced by many previous studies. It is time to seek other innovative instruction methods. Especially, there are numerous new powerful technology which can be applied to enhance education in recent decades. Therefore, the blended instructions with the help of e-learning platform, that take the advantages of both tradition and immersion approach, have been discussed frequently and practical programs have been developed in recent years.

From the perspective of Linguistics, Chinese as a logographic language is distinctively different from alphabetic writing system for less transparency between characters and corresponding syllables, more visual complexity and plentiful homophones than alphabetic letters. Previous research had illustrated those linguistic specific features make native speakers of alphabetic languages struggle to accommodate their intrinsic processing of orthography, phonology, and semantic while learning Chinese. They rely more on information additional to phonological representation, like semantic radical and word forms, in comparison with their native language. Therefore, more and more evidences have shown that multiple demonstrations of target Chinese characters, including script in sequence, pronunciation, meaning with translation in text and graph, and conversation example in video, effectively enable learner to overcome these obstacles for reading and using Chinese. Meanwhile, from the perspective of cognitive psychology, it would be more effective to learn on demand, and learners can fulfill their needs in learning context. Therefore, I would like to present an instructional design to leverage the mobile technology for providing context-awareness ubiquitous learning that would facilitate learning by the interaction based upon “right context”, “right time” and “right place” factors. Evidence from cognitive neuroscience and bilingualism supports the view which proposes that adult learners rely more on context cue in learning a second language, as shown by involving more executive function of the brain. Recent psycholinguistics studies also showed that adults usually adopt more large linguistic grain-size to transfer from their native language to the second language in learning a second language, in comparison to that of the children. Therefore, I propose an instructional design for adult beginning learners to learn Chinese as the second language by mobile context-awareness ubiquitous leaning (MCUAL) system to detect the learner’s time, location, and environment contexts with smart phone and the technology of augmented reality. In the meantime, the system automatically responds to learners with the context-related vocabularies (including the rules of phonetic radicals and semantic radicals), compound words, phrases, and sentences by layers. The system presents these pronunciations in real person to the learner who can repeat these pronunciations in real person to the learner who can repeat words, phrases, and sentences by layers. The system presents the rules of phonetic radicals and semantic radicals), compound words, phrases, and sentences by layers. The system presents the rules of phonetic radicals and semantic radicals), compound words, phrases, and sentences by layers. The system presents

Keywords: mobile, Chinese as a second language (CSL), context