

Preface

Mobile technologies are capable of transforming language learning, but the potential is not yet being fully realized. As learners begin to use mobile and ubiquitous technology to explore their environment, crossing boundaries between formal and informal learning, new challenges arise out of tensions between learner expectations, emergent teaching and learning practices and what is appropriate in a particular pedagogical culture or social environment of technology use.

By organising a workshop at ICCE 2008, we wanted to facilitate exploration of the pedagogical, cultural and social issues surrounding the introduction and uptake of mobile and ubiquitous language learning. The workshop was conceived as a forum for structured discussion, supported by three short papers. Two of the papers are accounts of cutting-edge research and development work that places physical and social context at the very centre of learning. Miyata, Ogata, Kondo and Yano present their use of wireless sensor networks to support learning of Japanese expressions in context, while Anderson, Hwang and Hsieh describe a mobile system to promote collaborative learning of Chinese by capturing multimedia content in relation to specific locations where social interactions take place. These contributions are complemented by a paper giving a short state-of-the-art account of the role and status of context in current research in both language learning and mobile learning.

In the course of the workshop we aim to identify different interpretations and manifestations of context, to inform the design and evaluation of future mobile and ubiquitous language learning. We are interested in how cultural imperatives and pedagogical approaches may be determining the development of mobile language learning in different parts of the world, and what is needed to extend thinking beyond the usual boundaries. The workshop provides a forum where international participants can share knowledge on the latest developments in mobile language learning and map out directions for future collaborations and research.

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