Chapter 14
The Role of Technology Acceptance Model in Constructing Unbounded Learning Environments for Second Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a foundation as to why second language teaching and learning as a discipline should be refocused with caution in the world of technology, what sort of theoretical and practical implications should be in place for second language teachers to employ in unbounded learning environments, what the roles of technology acceptance model (TAM) in shaping unbounded language learning environments for second language teachers and learners are, in what ways it can be possible to provide an ecological perspective on learning to utilize web-based technologies for second language learners, which is basically different from traditional learning models. More specifically, this chapter takes an informed look at the significance of teachers' technology acceptance in constructing unbounded learning environments to teach a second language.

INTRODUCTION

The crisis resulted by COVID-19 pandemic is eminently visible which has affected education systems worldwide, leading the path towards a near-total closure of schools (UNESCO, 2020), and the construction of a new educational environment. Therefore, it has become significant at various levels to witness a period that affirms the span of digital and remote teaching days. During these days, the focus has been recentred on students', teachers', and families' questioning and challenging the existing education systems, and the process of teaching and learning. However, crises are also the births of hope and creativity with the opportunity of rethinking. Teachers, then, have reconnected with their students with the passion for teaching since "good teachers . . . are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves" (Palmer, 2017, p. 11).

Previously, the conformist approach has perceived education as the process of building knowledge through institutionalized schooling; however, current education systems have been questioned in terms of how we define education, and how we design our schools. Additionally, the rapid development of information technologies has triggered the construction of e-learning environments with a continuous change in our educational experiences (Chen et al., 2020). This change has also brought about a change of learning models along with the popularity of online learning, which is a type of learning under an environment with no restriction on time and place, labeled as an unbounded learning environment.

In this changing educational landscape laced by unbounded learning environments, learning is not viewed as being the master of a specific subject, albeit partaking in epistemic processes in a myriad of learning contexts with the ability to transfer knowledge, connect resources and communities with no bound to one particular cultural, physical, and/or disciplinary context (Akkerman & Bakker, 2019). Besides, our knowledge of unbounded second language learning environments has been shaped by web 2.0 tools and other internet-based technologies through which new forms of learning have emerged between formal education settings and other trajectories of learning, such as social, personal, professional, and the like. What's more, an 'ecological perspective' (Damşa & Jornet, 2017) on learning is adopted to move across these relational trajectories, which surpass the established boundaries, structures, and notions of learning. Quite the contrary, such a perspective on learning generates new challenges for teachers, learners, and educational institutions (Richter & Allert, 2019). For instance, in a recent analysis, the dropout ratio in massively open online courses (MOOCs) of EdX is predicted to be more than a half (Liang et al., 2016) although the number of enrollment is higher than expected.

On another hand, the technology acceptance model (TAM) has apparently been one of the most influential models concerning technology acceptance (Davis, 1989). In doing this, TAM is shaped by two major factors: (a) perceived ease of use; and (b) perceived usefulness. For instance, one may assume that digital games are too difficult; however, some others may perceive digital games as mental stimulation. Thus, TAM serves as an important model to define one's intention to adapt to new technologies (Braun, 2013). Similarly, teachers' investment in technology acceptance is of utmost importance to utilize new technologies in the classroom environment.

With these in mind, this chapter provides a foundation as to why second language teaching and learning as a discipline should be refocused with caution in the world of technology, and what sort of theoretical and practical implications should be in place for second language teachers to employ in unbounded learning environments. The roles of the technology acceptance model in shaping unbounded language learning environments for second language learners are also explored to find out the ways to provide an

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