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Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: Connecting Technology and English Education

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Abstract

Mobile-assisted language learning is a field that ties the study of English to the communications devices carried around on cell phones and other mobile devices. It may go beyond what has been discussed during the lessons and help access a diversity of resources, and can offer opportunities for individual and collaborative practice. Educational benefits, however, rely on the quality of activities, support of the learners, access to learning, and on assessment. It covers vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing, learner independence and classroom integration. It also takes into account unequal access, distraction, accessibility, privacy and responsible use of AI. Practical activities are provided in the form of teaching ideas, not as interventions that have been tried and tested. The article focuses on mobile learning that should be used to link meaningful language use with a teacher's guidance and communication opportunities. Its success needs to be measured by meaningful use of language, not only the use of device and/or application.

Keywords: English language learning, mobile assisted language, diversity, communication, applications, etc.

Introduction

The concept for using mobile/portable devices to assist in the learning world is usually referred to as Mobile Assistant Learning (MALL). Texts, recordings, dictionaries, communication and learning applications can be accessed from the smartphone or tablet. MALL contains applications created for language teaching purposes as well as activities in general communication organized through language learning applications. This difference is significant because the value of a resource is related to its ability to facilitate learning and not

to whether the resource is labeled as one of language learning (Mihaylova et al., 2022).

With this in mind, mobile learning has laid a bridge between classroom language content teaching and out-of-classroom language in English teaching. A learner can go back and revisit a recording, consult a dictionary, make notes and draft a response, or discuss ideas with other students in the class. These activities can be carried out in class or at an appropriate time. If a phone is provided, however, the connection does not necessarily mean that the learner has sufficient connectivity, an appropriate learning environment, or the skills to make the most of websites of interest to them.

Interest is achieved alongside reasons for caution, based on research. Garzón et al. (2023) summarized the research on mobile learning in English language learning and found in general, a positive impact on English learning outcomes. This adheres to the principle that one should consider mobile approaches, but does not imply that all applications, activities, and learning environments will yield similar outcomes. It is important that teachers continue to think about learners, the language skill focus, and the support that they can offer when implementing the programme. In a meta-analysis, Mihaylova et al. (2022) determined that language-learning applications as a whole were better than the traditional approach. Interestingly, they found that many of the studies that were included had a high "risk of bias" and low evidence quality. This is because their conclusions need to be taken with a pinch of salt. A positive research average doesn't mean that a specific application will produce fluency, and cannot substitute for ongoing language instruction.

Connecting Mobile Technology with Language Learning

To be effective, there must be a clear language objective. Teachers need to make a decision on what learners need to learn or share before selecting their mobile tool. Some objective can be to summarize the key ideas in a discussion, request clarification or structure a paragraph. With the aim of the activity clearly in mind the teacher will then determine if this is a mobile resource that can usefully provide practice for this activity and whether there is a simpler alternative that would equally serve the aim.

Mobile learning has to align with the overall course learning. There can be a recording for outside class to be used as a starting point for a short discussion in class and a mobile task for practicing the vocabulary as this would be introduced in class. This continuity is provided between learning places. Just handing the learner a different exercise because there is an application available may not benefit the learner if they need to learn new language with no appreciable gain in knowledge or communication skills. Preparation, practice, feedback and reuse are all manageable components of a sequence. Teacher explains purpose of activity, shows what they are looking for before the activity. In practice, students will collaborate on a defined task using the selected resource. The feedback process

then pinpoints the area(s) where more work is needed, and the next activity will ask the participant(s) to revisit the language they acquired. This sequence is not a test sequence that is introduced in this article, but rather an approach to planning.

There are issues of what it means to be independent in a mobile learning context as well. The authors of Lai et al. (2022) conducted a review on the learning strategies employed in the self-directed language learning with mobile technology. They distinguished cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies, focusing more on one than the other. Their review highlights the need to investigate what learners do when they have to learn independently and not take it for granted that a resource for them is an effective resource.

Teachers can help by designing realistic goals for students and engage them with a reflective activity. A learner could learn about an interview or about practicing a familiar process or go through an interview or practice a familiar process. Once the activity is done the learner can recognize a difficulty and choose a next practice activity. These decisions can be recorded in a simple learning record. It should be used as a mirror to reflect the use of the device, not a record of all the minutes that were spent.

Gamification too, needs the same attention. Ishaq et al. (2021) conducted a review of mobile-assisted language learning and gamification in language learning, and discussed the language learning programs which are already available through use of mobile devices and games. Their review not one method but a range of areas of research. Points or badges may be considered as "operator set" design elements for classroom planning. However, students' language should still be discussed with teachers as a question: What language will students be using and can they use it outside this activity? Sense of learner choice can be provided in well-defined context. Students may choose the topic or they may choose from two suitable recordings or they may go ahead and choose which new expressions they want to practice. The teacher is still responsible for ensuring the resources meet the course objectives and for ensuring that they are appropriate resources. Leaving learners needs to be done without leaving them to follow without guidance. This means assisting them to make good decisions and ensuring they have only to ask for help or information if it becomes harder to have it.

Developing English Skills through Mobile Activities

Vocabulary is a functional choice for mobile activities as teachers can plan a series of short activities with a concrete number of commendable and useful vocabulary. The students were able to develop a word and translate it into their own words, along with a pronunciation template and a sentence they made up. For instance, with academic communication, there may be a unit on clarifying, summarizing and evidence. The teacher

should review the entries and draw attention to the role that each word plays in a sentence.

Learning should transcend being able to spot a correct answer on a computer screen. After going over vocabulary students were able to voice an idea in their own words based on the words they had selected or to incorporate words into a brief message. Each expression may be needed in another situation in a subsequent task. These are offered as potential suggestions relating to the review/communication relationship. The application score may be used to describe a performance in an exercise but it is not an indicator of the flexible use of vocabulary.

Short clearly recorded material ends up there with a marked task will be used in listening. Students may hear an announcement made on campus about something, and name the activity, where and what to do. They might listen for the overall message and then listen again to pick out the details. A recording can be downloaded if the suitable devices are available (which may help with additional practice). If the student is unable to have access to the material at their home, he/she should at least have the equivalent opportunity in class. Transcripts/captions should be utilized for the purpose of a task and learner's access needs. In practice, students could then (after listening) check their understanding through a correct transcript. They might then refer to what they hear words and phrases in that are new to them or recognize when something was difficult in part of the recording. Teachers are required to cross check the text created automatically. Captions should be used with forethought, in the case of an agreed accommodation, and are not to be considered an exception.

Means of recording hearing activities can be used on appropriate equipment for speaking activities. Learners might write a brief summary of a known activity, make a self-video and analyze one of the elements of the activity. The teacher may give them targets to aim for, such as sequence, clarity, or an appropriate use of vocabulary. The students are then able to create a new recording. This activity provides content for reflection as it does not presume that multiple recording would enhance communication for example.

A more specific evidence base exists for pronunciation research. Despite various variations in teaching methods, a thorough review of empirical research on preferred approaches toward mobile-assisted pronunciation teaching has shown positive results and students' attitudes on the whole (Metruk, 2024). The finding concludes to consider the mobile practice in pronunciation lesson. These do not set up the criterion that all tools yield the same level of accuracy and that all pronunciation training has the same impact on the competence to communicate broadly. Any resource selected should be associated with a suitable and suitable explained pronunciation target. Proposed reformulation of an activity to pronunciation work would include listening to a short pronunciation model sentence and

then stopping the recording to listen to the sentence and mark the word stress, and then recommencement of the recording of a meaningful sentence that contains the target pronunciation. It would be possible for learners to be able to compare and contrast the versions to debate the changes that would make the message clearer. Should an automatic score be generated by an application the teacher needs to review the application to determine if the score achieved reflects the purpose of the application. Informed human feedback and communication purpose needs to be considered along with automated feedback.

It is also crucial that there is interaction during speaking practice. Recordings of the learner's responses when they enter unexpected responses are not a polished recording. Pairs can be used for follow-up preparation by teachers requiring students to ask for information, explain what they don't understand or answer another student's opinion. One student could narrate an event in college they wanted and the other student could ask questions about the arrangements. The mobile preparation now links with communication with a second individual. There should be 'small-screen considerations' and ‘structure of content for reading activities' considered. For teachers there are short-text passages for which it will be easy to scan, and they can avoid the constant zooming required to read some documents. Students may be able to state the thesis statement, find evidence, and provide an explanation to an expression in context. Comprehension may be demonstrated by a brief response, written or oral. Access to print and/or large screen may be required for longer/more challenging texts.

It's often possible for mobile reading to assist in critical judgement also. Some suggested exercises might involve asking students to point out differences in focus, detail and audience, as well as similarities, in two brief notices that describe the same event. Students could describe what information needs to be checked before it's shared. Language targets can be in the form of comparison, explanation, and the use of cautious statements. Appropriate examples should be presented by teachers and learners should not be given the freedom to go through such inappropriate or unreliable material without being guided.

Writing activities can relate planning, drafting and revision. Students can compose a short e-mail and ask for information, reference a checklist and work through the tone and organization then share comments with a partner in a focused way. For instance, does the objective of your request make sense? Is it specific? Is the closing appropriate? Then, a revised version can demonstrate the use of feedback. It could be easier to write with another device or on paper.

Spelling / grammar suggestions should be used "sparingly". Students can check if their meanings and suggestions are similar, or not, and explain their decision. Depending

on the type of writing that is being assessed, it is important to clarify which tools will be acceptable for the particular assignment that you have given, and which ones will not be. Students who write correctly but after having received, with extensive hints, multiple drafts for correct and/or complete automated writing have not the same capability as the student who produces similar work independently. This difference should be evident in the assessment expectations.

A number of skills can be integrated in collaborative work. Students might have the opportunity to put the preparation of a short audio guide to college facilities based on verified notices and agreed information. Task may be reading, discussion, drafting, dictation and revision. Tasks should be done by rotating so that the student using the device will not be responsible for the entire assignment. One individual explanation of one contribution can be useful to the teacher to check understanding as well as the group product. There are opportunities to link English with other subjects through Mobile tasks. Learners could report a simple, scientific procedure; explain a public information notice or briefly summarize an environmental responsibility short text. The teacher should select material that is suitable with the level of background knowledge and language level of the learners. To be accurate in fact whilst expressing meaning in English. These activities are examples of instance where there are opportunities to link disciplines together but do not show progress in any subject.

Access, Assessment, and Responsible Implementation

Appropriate equity goes beyond whether or not students have phones. Equipment could be shared, the amount of data may be restricted and there may be learners who have inadequate study space. Teachers will determine a task's requirements, and assess if learners can meet those requirements. Reasonable deadlines and reasonable small downloadable files can be effective substitutes for access to institutional resources. There should not be a standard language task which requires an expensive application or subscription.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India acknowledges the possibilities of Digital and Online Education and concerns of Digital Divide and Teacher Education (NEP 2020). The following policy guidance is relevant to mobile English Education. They do not, however, assert that resources are sufficient for all learners and/or institutions. Local planning needs to be written to recognize the existing circumstances in which students are expected to engage. Focus should be put in mindfulness when deciding on materials. Teachers can review whether text is easy to read, understand captioning accuracy, the viability of navigating the text with assistive devices, and compatibility for learners' assistive devices. An activity cannot be done in using any alternative because it relies solely on speed

tapping, unreadable text or listening to the activity is required should exclude some students. Looking at learners' needs, and speaking with any supporting staff, in a personal discussion. Offering an alternative option to the same learning objective is a better way of providing access than making a mobile format mandatory.

UNESCO (2023) explores the connections between access, equity, quality, and educational decision-making and technology. It will deliver the message that whilst technology can provide some solutions there are disadvantages to it too. This helps assessing the mobile learning in relation to its contribution to learning. Therefore, institutions need to review the platform in terms of it's accessibility, affordability and its instructional viability prior to its adoption. It is not valid to assume that because something is seen or used a lot in other English courses the resource would necessarily be appropriate for a specific English course.

Clear routines are ways of addressing distraction. Teachers might set boundaries on when devices may be used, what can be created and when it is safe to go back to discussing. A brief written task that has a clear product, might be easier to deal with than an open instruction to explore an actual application. Students may consider what notifications and bad habits distract them from their practice. The place or role of using devices in learning should be clearly provided to avoid taking up too many moments.

Teaching and learning should be related to teacher decision making. Selection of a recording or a review of an accessible document, creation of a response task, and interpretation of student work can be a part of the training. There must also be time for teachers to make good use of feedback and troubleshooting, and have it in a realistic way. With a communication platform, there might be a sense of always being on call unless there's a certain boundary that's explained. Using agreed response times and a restricted channel of communication may render mobile learning more manageable to both teachers and students.

Language use and not just number of activities should be assessed. Comprehension responses, writing samples (in successive drafts), or oral explanation of content or work, as compared to criteria, can be considered evidence. Educators can consider how well students are using language in a subsequent task, and if support is given, how it is provided is clearly specified. If there is no general evidence any improvement has been made, it is described as such within the application. Although important observations, these cannot be satisfaction and frequent participation by itself that demonstrates lasting learning.

When students "record sound," go over photos or personal writing, privacy is important. Teachers to gather only what is needed for learning task; to use approved arrangements if available. For a regular speaking exercise, it is rarely necessary that the work be published. Students should be made aware of who they may be accessible for, and the

reason for the use of their work. If a teacher is dealing with other people, it is important that he/she also think about its appropriateness to record or not record or talk about information about others.

With Generative AI comes new questions. Miao and Holmes (2023) call upon a human-centred approach, and identify issues with regard to privacy, inclusion, human agency, and linguistic and cultural diversity. They offer information and guidance on how tool to assess the educational suitability prior to use. An AI generated dialogue might be used as a starting point for a teacher to review, but the teacher will need to verify the information, level and relevance. The provision of rules for student's acceptable assistance, disclosure and protection of personal information is mandated.

The evaluation of implementation should be carried out in smaller cycles in institutions. One listening activity and one speaking activity in a department might start with one of each activity and look at access and student responses, then modify the design. Teaching and learning feedback can provide evidence of instructional issues or difficulties. Language work can be used to identify if the objective of the task has been met. If research is conducted involving students, it should be done via the relevant procedures of the institution. Conclusions as regards effectiveness should be held to the same proportion as the evidence gathered.

A second one is mobile practice and language requirement of student's Course or work. For instance, students training to teach could be able to practice communication when making instructions, or students training in commerce could be practiced to ask for information politely. Before recording, teachers should clarify amongst them what it is they expect the audience to be and what they are recording it for. This allows students to then view a comparison of participants' answers and task requirements, which can then be revised for selected features. There is a benefit in the language used and provided as feedback on this activity, not in the profession associated with the task itself.

A department can of course introduce mobile learning and go that extra mile to pay attention to sustainability as well. If a resource that has been selected is no longer available, or doesn't meet its requirements, then a course needs to stay workable. Teachers can keep original instructions; utilize flexible materials and set up a different off path submission. They should also take into account, before introducing regular mobile assignments, the work students are doing in each of the subjects. It is more difficult to review comprehensively a long list of disjointed exercises than it is for a short string of coherent ones. This way, institutions could have practical experience without emphasizing on the result of learning. This way, practical experience can be established while the attention is given to the goal of

learning, participation in learning, and the quality of students' English. Also, it serves as an easier task to justify and also apply the future course revisions uniformly.

Conclusion

The use of mobile-assisted language education (MALL) can link the English learning with flexible practice and communication that occurs outside of the classroom. It may contribute to learning if the strategy is clear, there are appropriate resources, guidance by a teacher, and provision for meaningful use of language. It is therefore important that mobile learning is being incorporated within the classrooms, and not based on assumptions in the name of devices.

These practice beginning points are vocabulary review, listening, recording, reading, writing, and collaboration. There is need to make arrangements for learners with access barriers and ensure suitable feedback and evaluations take place during these activities. In addition, there are considerations of privacy, accessibility and responsible AI usage from the teacher and institutional side. The goal is to attempt to increase valuable learning time with the maintenance of the human involvement and the agency of the student. Success is being demonstrated when student can comprehend and communicate effectively in relevant tasks—not necessarily more time spent in an application.

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