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Teaching Communicatively in a Classroom with Mobile-sourced Materials

Rupert Walsh*

School of Languages & Applied Linguistics University of Portsmouth Park Building, Portsmouth, PO1 2DZ, United Kingdom

Corresponding Author: Rupert Walsh, E-mail: Rupert.walsh@port.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is now common in extra-curricular language learning, but, more recently, teachers have increasingly sought ways to utilise MALL as a communicative classroom tool. Research into the extent that MALL can transform a whole communicative language course, and learners' impressions of such courses, is scarce. This study, therefore, sought the opinions of five undergraduate learners on a short communicative English language course based on communicative principles, with materials entirely sourced from learner's own devices. Learner reflections elicited in interviews suggested that MALL had aided the facilitation of an environment that was interactive, motivating, differentiated, authentic and autonomous, at times potentially more so than on a course using traditional material sources. The novel aspect of allowing freedom in choosing materials caused some complications, though none were considered insurmountable with minor adjustments to the course plan. In summary, student reactions implied that a communicative course could be taught exclusively through mobile-sourced materials, but further research is required to identify exactly how this would best be achieved. Nevertheless, findings here give reasons for practitioners to explore methods of classroom teaching inclusive of MALL that encourage self-directed learning, the creation of a platform for interaction, personalization, differentiation, a shared experience for learners and elements of game-play.

INTRODUCTION

With classroom practitioners increasingly seeking how to incorporate Mobile Assisted Language Learning into their practice, an important consideration is whether students respond positively when this is employed in collaboration with commonly held language teaching principles, such as those associated with communicative approaches. This research, therefore, specifically investigates the reflections of students on a short language course that combines use of portable electronic devices with learning through communicative principles. Employing interviews, it aims to establish if such a course is well received by students, if benefits are identified in comparison with learning through traditionally-sourced materials, and if any further reflections are uncovered which may benefit a practitioner seeking to employ such technology in a suitable way in a communicative classroom environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), described by Viberg & Gronlund (2012:9) as 'any technology that can be used when walking around', has developed rapidly within ELT in the past 20 years, in step with the functionality afforded by modern smartphones. The vast numbers of students carrying these phones has created the possibility of classroom teaching being facilitated through learner's own devices (Burston 2017).

Much recent growth in MALL concerns the possibilities for ubiquitous language learning, with large organisations and government bodies producing apps for "on-the-go" learning. Education publishers and institutions, sensing this trend and an opportunity to save on physical distribution costs, now also provide online learning tools (Kolbuszewska 2015), or are moving portions of teaching to virtual spheres, known as "blended learning".

These moves appear driven more by business needs than pedagogical ideology. However, two types of research are emerging that suggest pedagogical influence should return to the center of debates on MALL. Firstly, research into the behaviour of learners suggests the popularity of language learning apps masks the reality of what language learners want: studies such as Li (2015), Lai (2015) and Trinder (2017) find that the many apps based on non-interactive grammar-translation techniques are in actual fact far less appealing to students as language learning resources than mobile activities which incorporate elements of authentic use and true-to-life communication. These mirror some of

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the principles of what has become known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

First devised in the 1970s, CLT, or the communicative approach, has in recent times been described as the "prevailing methodology" in current language teaching (Harmer 2007). It emerged as a response to frustrations of researchers in the 1960s and 70s to the observed difficulty for learners in using form-based learning in meaning-based situations (Ellis 2001). Commentators then argued that, since language learning was mainly for the development of communicative ability in a second language, teaching should focus on the communicative competence of learners (Breen & Candlin 1980). "Classic CLT" emphasised skills and functions, while more recent CLT approaches have added learner autonomy and personal relevance (Richards n.d.). However, exactly how communicative approaches should be implemented in classroom environments have led to controversies. One controversy surrounds whether a focus on form is useful at any stage, with some suggesting it is necessary in order for a language to be used communicatively, while others propose that a focus on form should only be attempted at the point of emergent need (see Richards 2004). Furthermore, teachers have been found to understand what a communicative approach entails in various ways (e.g., Hiep 2007), and application of communicative principles often evolve to match their contextual situation (Manghubi et al 2004). Local drives to implement CLT type teaching have sometimes been met with resistance due to claims that communicative approaches suggested by researchers in western contexts do not transfer successfully to non-western contexts, for instance, where large, monoligual class sizes make the management of communicative tasks impractical (e.g. Nishino 2008).

Despite these controversies, the notion that developing communicative competence should be a key goal of language learning seems to have been accepted in most language teaching contexts around the world, and studies listed above by Li (2015), Lai (2015) and Trinder (2017) suggest that it is not just teachers who accept this, but the learners too. Without this pedagogical background, dedicated MALL software thus far has largely replicated language teaching methodology pre-dating the dawn of the communicative approach (Godwin-Jones 2017).

Additionally, in recent years, a number of small-scale research papers have consistently highlighted improved student morale and performance in classroom environments when MALL is incorporated, particularly where interaction, participation and motivation have seen benefits (Viberg & Gronlund 2012, Ardi 2017). Therefore, MALL does not merely need to be viewed as a money-making fashion, but could provide a route to more successful language learning in already established teaching and learning contexts. Furthermore, due to the vast array of operational possibilities created by modern mobile technology, it is suggested that MALL has the potential not only to substitute existing learning tools, but also to enable learning opportunities previously unavailable through the augmenting, modifying and redefining of tasks (for example, Puentedura 2006).

In spite of the many benefits highlighted, on-site language teaching has not been swift to incorporate MALL within schemes of work. Studies such as Grimshaw et al. (2017) find a number of concerns held by teachers and students alike, such as the possibility of disruption to classes through mobile induced distraction, lack of technical training and a lack of time to develop or implement MALL within sessions. However, such barriers could be overcome by providing time, training and, possibly, by the development of techniques to counter distractions. Rather, the take-up of MALL in teaching environments depends upon convincing stakeholders that a mobile-sourced learning tool is both useful and easy-to-use; if this happens, the tools will be used (Jung 2015). To break down barriers, therefore, appropriate research is necessary to develop and demonstrate a blueprint for how mobile devices can best be deployed to achieve these duel aims of utility and ease. Moreover, although convincing teachers and institutions themselves will be a necessary part of such a process, the analysis of learner viewpoints is of paramount importance, since persuading the former group will inevitably require demonstrating a positive stance on MALL being held by the latter.

Studies that analyse the way mobile devices are actually being used in classrooms reveal communicative language teaching is already happening with smartphones as sources of content, a means for collaboration and a tool for revision and practice through gaming, with positive outcomes similar to ones noted above (Pereira 2015). Given the diverse functionality of mobile devices today, it is conceivable that they could be capable of replacing traditional learning tools in a number of situations. Most studies to date look at discrete aspects of usefulness afforded by mobile technology in particular classes at particular times. It is yet to be demonstrated, though, whether mobile technology is capable of being the main learning tool on a course, rather than simply a subsidiary tool; for instance, few or no published studies appear to have taken the further step of *entirely* exchanging materials that are static or printed with materials sourced from personal electronic devices on a language course that is both communicatively-centered and classroom-based. Bearing also in mind the need for learner acceptance of MALL, this small-scale case study has therefore been designed as an initial exploration into, firstly, whether students respond positively to a course that solely relies upon learners' own mobile phones for materials taught according to communicative principles in a classroom environment, and, secondly, to identify if benefits appeared to be available over and above traditional techniques. Finally, drawing upon the findings of the study, the study considers ways in which MALL might best be implemented to benefit learners.

METHOD

This research, based at a UK university, involved 26 students in two different classes, in 2018 and 2019. Learners, who represented a wide range of degree course types, had been recruited through advertisements on campus. They were all international undergraduate students for whom English was not their first language, and came from countries in Asia,

Europe and South America. Participants enrolled on a short programme consisting of three one-hour sessions; since students were in the middle of their degree courses; this was deemed the maximum time commitment to ask of students on a voluntary basis that would still attract a sufficient number of participants. All class materials were sourced through students' own mobile devices, aside from paper, pen, tutor's whiteboard and visual display.

Lesson themes were chosen to exploit contexts familiar to most students (going on holiday, researching academic materials for assignments, and describing photos of people) so that unfamiliar contexts would not create an additional barrier or variable in learner's perceptions of the course. Clear linguistic learning aims were developed so that the classes could replicate typical language learning environments, which was hoped would assist participants in evaluating accurately whether a mobile-only classroom had a positive effect on their language learning experience. To make linguistic aims relevant to the learners' needs, aims chosen covered language skills and structures that can be useful in composing academic texts, since learners were all undergraduates seeking to improve their English for tertiary study purposes.

To ensure the lessons followed a broad range of theories compatible with a communicative approach, elements of weak and strong CLT types were embedded at different points; "weak" CLT at times where focus on language was provided ahead of a task (e.g., where paraphrasing features were introduced through a "Kahoot!" activity), and "strong CLT" where language elements emerged as a response to a task (e.g. when comparing and contrasting photos).

Moreover, learners were given freedom to choose their own texts to study within these set contexts, unlike in traditional classrooms where the same materials, often adapted, are given to all with no student choice. It was hypothesised that this would make learning more true-to-life through being self-directed, personal and meaningful (Richards, n.d.). The differences created in materials due to the personalisation aspect was expected to foster an increased level of interaction through the natural formation of information gaps, creating a real need for authentic communication during group consolidation tasks.

Lessons therefore followed these procedures:

1. Holiday search/Articles ('a', 'an', 'the' or 'no article'):
   Learners found information on a holiday destination through browser searches on a mobile device (suggestions for useful websites were given, such as worldtravelguide.net). After sharing findings orally, texts were analysed for where and why articles were or were not used. Learners finished by writing their own summaries of their sources, applying article rules learnt.
2. Journal article search/Paraphrasing:
   Learners found an online journal article on language learning (instructions were provided on how to access suitable online journals through the university's library website) and provided an oral summary of the abstract in groups and to the class. Online dictionaries were permitted for support. The online game-based learning platform "Kahoot!", which requires learners to use an electronic device for the selection of answers displayed on a screen controlled by the tutor, was used to revise and teach appropriate paraphrasing skills in academic writing. After, learners attempted to paraphrase sentences from their chosen journal article, with tutor guidance.
3. Sharing photos/Comparing & contrasting:
   Learners described a picture of people in a scenic place shown on the tutor controlled screen. Then, they found a similar image on the internet, or from personal photos stored on their own phone. They compared and contrasted their photo orally in groups with the one given by the teacher, during which time the teacher helped with compare and contrast language. Learners finished by writing a paragraph that analysed similarities and differences between the images, using language given in the previous task where appropriate.

To adhere to Jung's (2015) stipulation that technology be incorporated in ways that promoted "usefulness" for learning and general "ease-of-use", lesson outcomes were "useful" because they addressed common university-type language functions, and, to follow the "ease-of-use" principle, no apps were required beyond a web browser and a photo app, which were likely to be familiar to the students, resulting in minimal additional technological learning for the teacher or student, and some suggestions of websites were given in case students needed assistance with finding texts.

After the lessons, which were free and voluntary to attend, learners were invited to give a short semi-structured interview on the process. Five students volunteered, all from Asian backgrounds. Four learners were between 18 and 25 years of age and one was between 26 and 40; one was male and four female. English levels were assessed as intermediate or above (CEFR B1-C1), either on the basis of IELTS scores or through anecdotal assessment. See Table 1 below. After completing consent forms, and being informed of anonymity policies and the right to leave the study at any time, data recording began.

Interviews were audio-recorded to be less intrusive, and centred on student perceptions of the process, with a view to revealing benefits or drawbacks of the lessons, clues on how MALL may best be used in a course guided by CLT principles (such as relevance to personal needs and the affordance of real-life communication in classes), reactions to the course and perceptions of its usefulness for learning. To help prepare participants for the questions in the interview, a short questionnaire was administered, which elicited how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements related to the points mentioned above, using a Likert scale. The interview, semi-structured to allow for flexibility in how respondents answered around a theme (Dornyei 2007) then allowed participants to elaborate on their answers to the questionnaire, and provided opportunity to express any further comments not elicited by the questionnaire. Where participants gave answers that required further clarification, or where reasons were not explicit, follow-up questions were formulated spontaneously.

Table 1. Interviewee characteristics

Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	English ability (CEFR)	Year of study
A	F	18-25	Chinese	B1 (IELTS 5.0)	Pre-sessional
B	F	26-40	Indian	C1 (est)	1st
C	M	18-25	Chinese	B2 (IELTS 6.5)	3rd
D	F	18-25	Chinese	B2 (IELTS 6.0)	3rd
E	F	18-25	Vietnamese	B1 (IELTS 5.0)	Pre-sessional

Interviews began with a re-confirmation that the purpose of the study along with ethical considerations had been understood. A friendly, informal tone was maintained throughout to help the learners feel comfortable in giving their true answers, and the interlocutor made no attempt to influence the progression of the interviews except to ask clarification questions.

Interview data was then transcribed and analysed for common themes. Qualitative descriptive accounts were created, and the findings section below summarises these accounts.

RESULTS

This section briefly summarises results of the post-task questionnaire and explores interview responses in more extensive detail.

i. "The use of mobile phones meant that I enjoyed the lessons more than I would have otherwise"

Five returned questionnaires revealed all enjoyed the course. Three stated it was more enjoyable than other lessons, with two unsure. Interview responses, in contrast, were almost exclusively positive, and are summarised below:

Student A commented that the language learning elements of the course were particularly enjoyable because of mobile phone usage, in comparison with other lessons which the participant described as "*a little boring*". She added that using their own electronic device gave them greater autonomy in learning, rather than being forced to study particular materials in a certain way.

Student B noted that the classes attended allowed greater participation, encouraged activity, were interactive, good for oral skills, and more relaxed than other classes. She was particularly positive about "Kahoot", commenting on how the competitive element of the activity added motivation within the class.

Student C was pleased that the freedom afforded by self-searches for materials meant the lessons "*linked my life to language*".

Student D remarked that lessons were active and motivating because of she had more control of her own learning, which was "*better than listening to the teacher or reading texts*".

Student E enjoyed these particular lessons more because of the interaction with the teacher, and did not comment on the impact of technology.

ii. "The use of mobile phones meant that I learnt more than in a classroom with traditional materials"

Two stated "yes", one "no" and two "unsure". Interviews probed reasons for the mixed responses.

Student A believed she learnt more through their mobile device because "*using the mobile phone I can get more informations*". She referred to some apps that assist her in their language learning, allowing her to learn and practice English "*from different aspects*"

Student B, who answered "unsure", commented that the motivational elements of Kahoot led to better learning, but felt seeking texts and photos on her phone required a wasteful period of searching. Furthermore, with other learners were analysing different texts to her, teacher time was used commenting on sources she had not read, which was irrelevant to her. Additionally, she would have preferred textbooks to self-selected general English sources during the "holidays" lesson because they *"contain language chosen by you (i.e. the teacher)"*.

Student C, who stated that he learnt less than usual through this method, similarly commented that the first lesson did not provide *"professional language*", stating *"I think to speak sentence is not the general sentence, so you can find some mistake grammar in this sentence"*. On a positive note, he observed that self-sourced materials allowed him to see more examples of language than usually be possible.

Student D, who was also unsure, felt she learnt more through MALL than other methods because it improved her confidence, and found the journal articles in lesson two helpful for practicing paraphrasing; However, she reported the same sentiments as student B on self-selected internet texts as it risked finding texts that were "*not using proper sentence*".

Student E found the usefulness of the class depended upon its function, with the third class, where students shared photos, being more useful to this student than if a textbook was being used.

iii. "The use of a mobile phone made the lessons more relevant to my personal needs"

Three answered "yes", and two "unsure" in questionnaires. Answers in interviews suggested those who answered "unsure" did so largely because lack of clarity regarding the question, and summaries of responses are presented below:

Student A agreed with the statement because of the various ways the electronic device allowed her to adapt learning for personally motivated reasons, citing "*studying*", "*watching*", "*chatting*" and "*connecting*" with others.

Student B felt classes met her needs through providing oral English practice and the possibility of being active within the class. She enjoyed having more control over learning, stating "…s*omebody tend to choose the simple example and someone want to choose the complicated example and it depend on ourself how much we want to learn from the class…".* However, time spent on reading and writing

meant *"…we can't get into the action…*", suggesting oral skills were her priority.

Student C reported a general benefit within the class, but his answers along with student D's indicated lack of certainty in how to answer the question and that it may depend on a range of aspects such the type of task.

Student E enjoyed the fact that having the phone allowed them to switch apps during the task, so if she became stuck when searching for language to describe photos, she could quickly access their dictionary app for assistance. She further commented that the combination of mobile phone access, communication with the tutor, and permission to interact with other students, gave useful speaking and listening practice, "*so it's relevant to my personal needs*"

iv. "The use of mobile phones in the lessons allowed more genuine real-life communication than in other language classes I have participated in before"

In questionnaires, three stating "yes", one "unsure" and one "no". From interviews:

Student A believed the experience of sharing information from phones helped bring her together with other students in the group, for instance: *"Use mobile phone to find the pictures is very good because sometime you some information from mobile phone and you share it with someone and maybe you have a common topic to say something and in that moment you will chat a lot of and both of you will become a good friend."*

Student B felt strongly that more real-life communication had been enabled when compared to previous classes she had experienced, mentioning "*…when compared with the English class we take in China it is more [communicative], the topic is less but the participant is much more … in China all we do is memorise and to repeat and to answer questions and to correct answers…".*

Student C, however, felt that real-life communication is intimately connected to his degree course, and therefore any emphasis on learning texts without formal language was not "genuine" for him.

Student D felt MALL definitely facilitated *"real life communication"* because the class promoted an *"interactive method".*

Student E, once again, turned her answers to the session that involved describing photos, pointing out this was "*a more real life speaking activity than you might have done in a traditional class."*

Four of the five questionnaire respondents stated they would recommend the class to others, with one unsure. Further comments made in questionnaires and interviews described the classes as "*refreshing*", "*more interesting*", "*weird but exciting*", and that they provided added focus for the learner, and the "*self-selection of materials*" was positive. However, some additional comments were made cautioning against the use of the phone for non-classroom related learning.

DISCUSSION

On whether CLT was possible through a mobile device, this study gives many affirmative indications, with learners citing many communicative benefits from the lessons attended. Most learners found mobile devices allowed classroom tasks to be authentic and real-to-life in numerous ways, providing a rich source of examples of language and activities that linked language to their personal world. Learners commented positively on the possibilities given for interaction, improving oral skills and being active within the class; two interviewees specified that the lessons enabled more interaction than in language lessons previously attended. Benefits of being self-directional in choosing texts were highlighted, such as the ability to control the level of difficulty in texts selected to suit their own language level or needs. In summary, with certain caveats discussed below, students in this study generally (though not unanimously) believed they had had a classroom experience that might be considered typical of a communicative approach.

However, did student perceptions reveal MALL to be merely an input replacement for any other CLT classroom, or did it, as Puentedura's (2006) SAMR model proposed, provide enhancements for CLT practice? In many ways, MALL probably did act as an enhancement. In allowing learners to be self-directional in choosing their own texts for study, differentiation was available in ways a non-MALL classroom would struggle to make available, making more extensive personal control over learning possible, with a positive washback on motivation likely. Similarly, realistic contextualisation was considered, on the whole, better enabled through MALL than otherwise; learners selected texts that were current and in use in the world around them, in contrast to sources in textbooks often so heavily adapted that they no longer resemble authenticity. Learners did not appear to encounter significant difficulties in achieving this, which corroborates with findings from Trinder (2017) which suggested many modern-day language learning students are already used to performing such tasks in their everyday lives. Even when accessing texts for more specific purposes, learners reported that, through MALL, they were able to find academic sources on particular topics with limited teacher guidance, replicating the realistic university task of personal research, in stark contrast to the typical classroom practice of spoon-feeding resources to the pupil from a textbook. The sharing functions of phones were also cited as beneficial, leading not only to deeper personalisation not only of learning but also better student interaction; learners were able to share items personal to themselves, such as photos, in ways not afforded by a textbook task, and this lowered affective barriers to interaction. Furthermore, MALL through game-playing was especially well-received by learners; learners expressed how the instant, interactive and competitive elements of Kahoot! improved motivation, provided "fun" and built a sense of class unity. Thus, it significantly transformed an activity that might have been rather monotonous and isolating if done individually on paper. Further benefits proposed by students were of being enthused by the allowance to use their phones at all, which was called refreshing, interesting, a boost to confidence and even relaxing. In summary, this study shows MALL not only provides a wealth of new opportunities for student learning in a com-

municative environment, as Pereira (2015) indicates, but also supports findings of Viberg & Gronland (2012) and Ardi (2017) in suggesting it provides additional positive side-effects in the process.

When considering the positives listed by respondents, it must be remembered that learners may have interpreted questions in their own ways (for instance, when comparing these classes with "other" classes, we do not know precisely what happened in the other classes), and teacher style and learner preferences may have been other underlying influencers on results which were not fully uncovered in interview statements. Answers, occasionally, lacked clarity as to whether it was the use of an electronic device that led to the positive response or whether it was the characteristics of the lesson themselves. Additionally, as students voluntarily signed up for this study, it is possible that the cohort attracted more highly confident users of mobile technology than average; it may be that less confident users would return different results. In this sense, we cannot confirm if Jung's (2015) "useful and easy-to-use" test for technology-based learning was fulfilled. Further similar studies would be useful to provide more clarity on the tentative claims made here. Nonetheless, enough evidence is present to claim that use of mobile devices resulted in a positive impact for leaners in this experiment, particularly for learner engagement, morale, interaction and autonomy, as mooted by Viberg & Dronlund (2012). Furthermore, while it is difficult to distinguish in some instances between tasks which were communicatively successful due to MALL from tasks which could have been equally successful without MALL, student answers here suggest mobile devices successfully enabled a number of communicative tasks to satisfy potential that may not have been achievable through paper-based materials.

This study deliberately pushed the boundaries of self-autonomy with the classroom in order to explore how far MALL could be used to provide authentic, real-to-life input in a classroom setting. As well as consequential benefits, such as being able to select content without a textbook, making independent choices on which source material to use and seeing language in its natural setting, interview responses revealed that the pushing of these barriers led to some less positive perceptions, too. Firstly, some students noted that self-selection of texts naturally enabled the selection of texts not chosen by the teacher. This led some students to view the input they were using as potentially sub-standard, or "unprofessional". It is conceivable that these responses stem from previous use of mobile devices for informal language learning, as is demonstrated in Trinder (2017) to be common, and, having grown familiar with their devices as an informal language learning tool, it is now difficult for the devices to be viewed as a means of formal language learning. However, such concerns appeared to depend on the task set, since widely positive feedback was given on some tasks such as the use of journal articles, which contained the type of language typically examined on degree courses that the students studied. In addition, it was not known if participants had experience of the underlying aims of a communicative approach; it is possible some viewed anything other than a structuralist or grammar-translation approach as not being a valid language learning method. This has often been suggested by research into student attitudes as characteristic of views from certain cultural backgrounds, particularly those from Eastern contexts (for instance, Nishino 2008), which was where all participants came from. The issues raised here are not new, but will perhaps be highlighted even more should MALL be used within the type of communicative approach employed by this study in the future. It could also be supposed these participants attended English classes to receive "expert" input from the teacher, and thus expected the teacher to facilitate input sources with more control. Furthermore, in spite of attempts to make internet searches more manageable, there remains the possibility that students were lost in the overwhelming number of online resources. So, though MALL certainly provides an unprecedented amount of freedom in choosing texts, the level of independence given may need tempering according to student wants and needs; after all, if a learner's independent choice is to give their control to the teacher in some way, then that indeed *is* their self-direction. In summary, we are reminded here that it is the learner that is of primary importance, not the technology, and learner needs should take precedence when planning all curricula, no matter whether older or newer delivery techniques are employed.

Secondly, some participants claimed that where independence was allowed in the choice of texts, this negatively impacted upon teacher availability in monitoring and whole class feedback, since feedback given to other students involved texts only they had read and was therefore irrelevant to colleagues. This need careful consideration. If students are completely autonomous in a class, the sense of group identity is lost, and aspects such as teacher availability and interaction could suffer. In contrast, this may explain the positive response to Kahoot! and photo sharing tasks, since all were using their phones for learning but on the same activity in real-time, enabling feedback relevant to all and joint-class purpose. Thought is required, therefore, on how to facilitate teacher guidance and correction within such classes to reduce redundant teaching time. Grimshaw (2017) makes it clear there are not only various cited training issues for tutors in utilizing portable technology in the classroom, but also some uncertainty in how some issues are to be overcome. This study adds a further training issue of how to manage freedom in accessing texts, given the near infinite possibilities, but hints at the likely solution, which is that limits on the scope of independent research need to be considered before a tutor embarks on a task that includes personal searching.

CONCLUSION

Returning, then, to the central question asked by this study, students responded positively, overall, to a course that solely relies upon learners' own mobile phones for materials, taught according to communicative principles in a classroom environment, although with a small number concerns such as the use of online materials for formal language examples. Learning was often considered useful when self-direction

was encouraged, materials were utilitised as a platform for interaction, tasks promoted personalization, differentiation was enabled, a shared experience between learners was created, and game-playing elements were embedded. Although caveats are listed below, practitioners would be encouraged to employ MALL in ways that foster these features.

On the matter of MALL being a beneficial replacement to traditional materials in a communicative classroom, various conclusions are evident. As mentioned above, it is likely that mobile learning in this study led to benefits when compared with textbook learning in providing motivation, interaction, differentiation, authenticity and autonomy. Conversely, autonomy was not always welcomed by learners who saw teacher-selected texts as favourable for providing reliable language and saving class time. However, it does not necessarily follow that paper textbooks are by nature preferable to e-texts; no comments were made on whether teacher-selected sources should be provided in print or electronically. It might be supposed, therefore, that pre-selected texts could be accessed through mobile devices too, and with younger generations reading on small electronic devices extensively, it might not be a large leap for them to read language-input texts on these devices too.

Therefore, the notion of replacing the textbook with MALL, so far as student opinion is considered, appears achievable and may have beneficial impacts such as the ones listed above. Care, however, is needed to ensure principles of learner relevance and fostering positive class dynamics are adhered to in a device-based learning environment. This study largely measured quality of learning as perceived by students, but the quantity of learning was not measured. Therefore, similar studies with measurement of actual language learning, including control groups and pre/post-test analysis, along with studies on courses of longer duration, would be beneficial in order to reveal more clearly any benefits from communicative approaches facilitated through MALL.

In summary, though, results from this study provides examples for language teachers of how mobile sourced materials can enable them to deepen student motivation, improve the depth of interaction between their learners, provide a wider range of potential input for exploring topics, and/or connect learning with an increased amount of true-to-life situations. Research into CLT through MALL is at an early stage, and precise versions of best practice need further development, but, given the initial range of benefits to learners listed here, future similar research by research practitioners is likely to be highly useful in consolidating and adding to an array of advantageous teaching techniques, to the benefit of learners, tutors, course programmes and, ultimately, other stakeholders.

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