

Perspectives in Using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to Encourage Language Learning of Thai Learners

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Abstract

Using mobile phone has been studied in its connection with foreign language learning by many researchers concerned in Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) for several years. This study employed quantitative method using case study. The objectives of this research were to investigate perspectives in using Mobile Assisted Language Learning to encourage language learning of Thai learners and to gather supplemental suggestions of the samples. Students participated in this study were 210 students. Findings demonstrated that students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL in private university and they had supplemental suggestions as EMD application in English language learning should be used in learning. Skills such as pronunciation, grammar and meaning information when searching a word should be encouraged through using MALL.

Keywords: English Language learning (ELL), Mobile Assisted language Learning (MALL)

Introduction

Mobile phone has started to gain popularity and vied with personal computer to meet users' necessity. The rise of Mobile phone in digital natives' life is taking place. In response to this auspicious mobile phone development, language teachers have responded by promoting mobile phone for language learning. The term mobile Assisted language learning (MALL) has come into existence. Like Computer Assisted Language learning (CALL) which promoted from computer for language learning, MALL endorses the promising benefit of mobile phone to support language learning (Yudhiantara and Saehu, 2017).

One of the main goals of any language organization and institute is to make language teaching and learning become more flexible and make students' learning become more individual and more autonomous. To reach this goal, they are trying to use technologies, such as computers, cell phones, etc., to break the constraints of time, space and conditions in learning. The implementation of technological resources is directly related to the way teachers perceive their use and functionality. To justify learners' need in learning English, MALL is without any doubt the next step in the evolution of educational technology, reflecting the digital convergence of mobile technology and e-learning in response to a more dynamic society that seeks a personalized, lifelong universal education (Abbasi & Hashemi, 2013).

MALL has been associated with some characteristics. One of MALL characteristics is the notion of mobility. This notion provides language learner brand new learning experience where language learning can take place

anywhere. Some studies reported the benefit of mobility for language learning. This characteristic offers many benefits for language learners and it can be applied in higher education (Sharples et al. 2009).

This study exasperated to fill in the gap of MALL research in Thai context. It investigated MALL introduction in Thailand that offers English subject in its curriculum. It specifically focused on learning how to mobile phone in education. In addition, this study investigated students' experience to use mobile phone in order to support their English language learning.

College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, has concerned on the significance of MALL as the institute has provided various channels of self-learning for the students including MALL. However, there is a lack of evidence on the perspectives of using MALL collected from TNI students to contribute of the gap of knowledge to suite to the networked society.

Research Purposes

The research purposes were as follows:

- 1) to investigate perspectives in using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to encourage language learning of Thai learners and
- 2) to gather supplemental suggestions of the samples.

Methodology

Population and Samples

Population of this research was 2,000 TNI students in 3 faculties of Engineering, Information Technology and Business Administration in the first semester of 2019 academic year. Samples of the research were 210 undergraduate students at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology derived through simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and content analysis.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The first part of this questionnaire asks for the demographic information on their genders and faculties.

The second part concerns a study of perspectives in using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to encourage language learning of Thai learners. This part comprises 20 items of perspectives in using MALL. The five levels of opinions used in the questionnaire are "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree". Responses from the student questionnaires were subsequently coded. The data of the students' coded responses were statistically calculated and analyzed. The computation of Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability was employed to indicate how reliable the research questionnaire results are. Reliability is defined as the proportion of the students' responses to each item in the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient or calculated alpha is a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument, or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics is also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 20 items in the questionnaire.

The third part asks for more opinions and suggestions in using MALL of private university students which based on open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated based on criteria developed by Best (1981) as follows:

1.00 $\leq \bar{x} < 1.50$ refers to the lowest level.

1.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 2.50$ refers to a low level.

2.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 3.50$ refers to a moderate level.

3.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 4.50$ refers to a high level.

4.51 $\leq \bar{x} < 5.00$ refers to the highest level.

The statistics used for analyzing the data

The collected data was analyzed using a computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and content analysis.

Results

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of the students

Table 1: Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	n=210	Percentage
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1. Genders		
1.1 Male	108	51.42
1.2 Female	102	48.57
Total	210	100
2. Faculties		
2.1 Engineering	69	32.85
2.2 Information Technology	73	34.76
2.3 Business Administration	68	32.38
Total	210	100

Table showed that percentages of the students in genders ranged from 51.42% for female and 48.57% for male. Furthermore, the students in faculties ranged from 34.76% for Information Technology, 32.85% for Engineering, and 32.38% for Business Administration.

Phase 2: The results of perspectives in using MALL of the students

Table 2: Table of mean and standard deviation of perspectives in using MALL of the students in the total and in each aspect

No.	Perspectives	\bar{x}	SD	Level
1	Attitudes toward the use of mobile phones for EFL contexts	4.48	0.71	High
2.	Challenges to the use of mobile phones for language learning/teaching	4.35	0.80	High
	Total	4.41	0.75	High

The table above indicated that the students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL in overall ($\bar{x}=4.41$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that both attitudes toward the use of mobile phones for EFL contexts and challenges to the use of mobile phones for language learning/teaching were at high level.

Table 3: Table of mean and standard deviation of perspectives in using MALL of the students in attitudes toward the use of mobile phone in the total and each aspect

No.	statements	\bar{x}	SD	Level
1	The use of mobile phones will facilitate the process of language learning.	4.42	0.79	High
2.	Portability is an important property of mobile devices.	4.31	0.80	High
3	The use of mobile phones can create interactive learning environments.	4.66	0.63	Highest
4.	The multimedia used in mobile phones is useful for EFL Learning.	4.75	0.61	Highest
5	Scaffolding can be provided for each learner using mobile phones for language teaching.	4.38	0.78	High
6	Mobile phones can be used to teach/learn different language Skills.	4.43	0.75	High
7	The use of mobile phones for language teaching/learning is cost-effective	4.30	0.78	High
8	The use of mobile phones for language teaching/learning is time-efficient.	4.39	0.69	High
9	Mobile phones can be connected to the Internet at any time.	4.67	0.71	Highest
10	Mobile phones provide learners with universal language learning opportunities.	4.57	0.61	Highest
	Total	4.48	0.71	High

The table above indicated that the students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL on attitudes toward the use of mobile phone in overall ($\bar{x}=4.48$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students

had the highest level of item 4: the multimedia used in mobile phones is useful for EFL Learning. However, the lowest level was from item 7: the use of mobile phones for language teaching/learning is cost-effective.

Table 4: Table of mean and standard deviation of perspectives in using MALL of the students on challenges to the use of mobile phones for language instruction in the total and each aspect

No.	Statements	\bar{x}	SD	Level
1	The small screen size of mobile phones	4.54	0.79	Highest
2.	Slow Internet speed	4.21	0.83	High
3	Internet connectivity problems	4.30	0.83	High
4.	Students' non-academic use of mobile phones	4.45	0.79	High
5	High costs of mobile phones	4.38	0.80	High
6	High cost of connectivity to the Internet	4.23	0.83	High
7	Students' lack of skill/knowledge to use mobile phones for academic purposes	4.31	0.82	High
8	Incompatibility of the use of mobile phones with language teaching/learning	4.29	0.79	High
9	Students' resistance to the use of mobile phones for academic purposes	4.39	0.91	High
10	Lack of language learning mobile-based software and activities	4.47	0.62	High
	Total	4.35	0.80	High

The table above indicated that the students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL on **challenges to the use of mobile phones for language instruction** in overall ($\bar{x}=4.35$). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had the highest level of item 1: The small screen size of mobile phones. However, the lowest level was from item 2: Slow Internet speed.

Phase 3: The results of suggestions of the students

The suggestions from the respondents were listed as follows:

1. EMD application in English language learning should be used in learning.
2. Skills such as pronunciation, grammar and meaning information when searching a word should be encouraged through using MALL.

Conclusion

1. The students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL.
2. The students had supplemental suggestion such as; EMD application in English language learning should be used in learning. Skills such as pronunciation, grammar and meaning information when searching a word should be encouraged through using MALL.

Discussion

According to the findings, it was found that the students had a high level of perspectives in using MALL. This is related to the study of Dashtestani (2013) who highlights that students' and teachers' attitudes toward the use of mobile phones would play a pivotal role in determining the efficiency of this technology for educational purposes and student use. TNI, therefore, should emphasize on MALL instruction that allow the students to investigate wide varieties of courses with accessible to high quality learning experiences.

Teachers and students alike have embraced the idea of mobile learning with a lot of enthusiasm. The salient popular feature of such learning are mobility and ubiquitous access. The teachers liked the idea as it gives them a lot of options to present instructional material in interesting ways (Oz, 2015). The students also like the idea of mobile learning because of its mobility feature, the convenience it affords in terms of time management and the option to engage in group work (Anaraki, 2009). The design of MALL tasks needs special attention. The tasks should be user friendly, sensitive to the social and cultural setting and engaging and short. Built around these guidelines, the MALL tasks have a lot of potential for learning (Stockwell & Hubbard, 2013).

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Problems in Reading Comprehension on JPN-101 Course of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology Students

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were 1) to investigate the problems in reading comprehension of JPN-101 course of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students; and 2) to study supplemental opinions and suggestions. The samples of this research were 260 TNI students in 2018 academic year derived through Simple Random Sampling technique. The instrument used in this study was rating scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistical values were the frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis. The findings suggested that TNI students had the overall difficulties at a high level ($\bar{x}=4.18$). For the opinions and suggestions, the students highlighted as follows: 1) Teaching reading article should be more concerned; 2) Simple articles seen in daily life such as leaflet or news should be used as teaching materials to make a clearer content of sentence; 3) Kahoot should be used in the class to practice Japanese; 4) Kanji should be more emphasized in the course objective; 5) Interesting comic or fictions can create positive learning environment; and 6) Teaching should be more focus on vocabulary memorization with practice.

Keywords: Problems of Reading Comprehension, Japanese Language, Teaching-Learning Approach

Introduction

Reading comprehension is considered as one of prominent language skills for learners. In this skill, students are required to catch some implied and stated information from the text by interpreting or analyzing the sentences to really get the answers for the questions. Students have various problems in doing reading comprehension test related to their level of mastery. Students with rich knowledge of vocabulary will find that reading comprehension is easy. So, will those with good knowledge on grammar. Each student may face different difficulty from others causing different needs on teaching methods and learning activities.

Similarly, Kern (2000:16–17) discusses seven principles that are central in his critical reading approach. He suggests that it involves: (1) interpretation (both the writer's interpretation of the world and the reader's interpretation of the writer's interpretations through their own conceptions of the world), (2) collaboration between the writer and reader, (3) cultural conventions that evolve through use and are modified for individual purposes, (4) knowledge about a cultural system from which readers and writers are operating, (5) problem solving to figure out relationships between words, between larger units of meaning, and between texts and real/imagined worlds, (6) reflection and self-reflection on language and its relations to the world and themselves,