

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

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This report is based on the 4-day National Symposium cum Workshop on Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), organized by the Kanpur Chapter of ELTAI in association with the Department of English, VSSD College, Kanpur.

Objective:

The objective of the paper is to examine the theoretical underpinnings of a range of technologies and applications, contrasting them with the traditional classroom and imagining the future of mobile language teaching and learning.

Mobile Learning:

Mobile learning, popularly known as M Learning, is about disseminating information and learning through a mobile device. Mobile learning is the ability to obtain or provide educational content on personal pocket devices such as PDAs, smartphones and mobile phones. The use of multimedia is considered within the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) theories. In particular, we examine the Interaction Framework, Schemata Theory, SLA Universal Grammar related theories and Multimedia Learning Theory. Educational content refers to digital learning assets, which includes any form of

content or media made available on a personal device.

Mobile technologies have the power to promote and foster collaboration and communication. Mobile can be the best medium to inspire and invite otherwise busy student to learn meaningful matter. Most researchers and educators probably view mobile learning as the immediate descendant of e-learning. Pinkwart, et al. (2003) define e-learning as 'learning supported by digital "electronic" tools and media'.

Advantages:

1. Learning anywhere, anytime
2. Instantaneous messaging
3. Private location no geographic boundaries
4. No travel time with wireless Internet connectivity
5. No electricity or space is required

Disadvantages:

1. Potential for distraction or unethical behavior
2. Physical health concerns
3. Data privacy issues.

Physical aspects of mobile technologies that may prevent an optimal learning experience include restricted text entry, small screen size, and limited battery life.

Questions Discussed in the Symposium

1. What benefits do learners, teachers and school administrators derive from the use of mobile learning?
2. What are the challenges and pitfalls?
3. Can this technology be misapplied and waste precious resources?

With questions like these in mind, we tried to explore the current state of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL).

Outcome:

The digital age has allowed us to form characters to write text, create moving images (video), and still images using the same pixels on a screen; not forgetting audio. Learners and content creators can generate knowledge and represent it as video, audio, text, manipulated data or embedded files. Ubiquitous access to mobile phones and other movable devices means that language learning increasingly overlaps classroom-based learning and learning outside the classroom, in virtual spaces and out in the world. Mobile learning has extensive opportunities for making teaching and learning available beyond the traditional classroom. Associated technologies, software programs, and Internet access have enfranchised many students who previously had little access to quality teaching. However, a paradigm shift has occurred in

which learners are turning to new mobile learning opportunities to supersede traditional teaching as virtual extensions of earlier self-help books, phrase books, and audio-based language learning programs. Audio translation apps, augmented reality, and just-in-time learning approaches are providing alternatives to those with neither access nor time to learn a language. Language skills can be enhanced through mobile learning and learner-technology interaction supports that development, particularly opportunities for learners to extend or practice their communication with others.

Simulations (especially digital simulations) are becoming more and more common as learning tools, because after the initial investment, it is very cost-effective and can be used to train/teach people all over the world, using the same standard.

Its constant and explicit learning is important for us as educators. It is beneficial as whatever you do in that space is discoverable. Every search engine you look at, every information you look up, every artifact that you create in this space can be tagged, can be searched, and can be used for multiple purposes. So this is an extraordinary new environment, which has enormous potential for our students and us as well.

Two case studies serve to illuminate: the audio-based training of a system called MAC and the image-based training of another called PhotoStudy. We also suggest evaluation techniques that should be used

to test the application of these theories to Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

We can download following applications to learn English with fun:

WhatsApp: This application can be used for the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Anyone can create group of learners on WA and s/he can send a word with its phonetic transcriptions and instruct students to learn correct pronunciation and write a sentence by using that word. A teacher can upload a bite of any news on which a debate can be done. After uploading the video, students can be asked to comprehend the video and write a paragraph based on that video. Even, students can have a debate on that topic and I think these instructions can enhance the skills of listening and writing.

American English app: Students can listen to many audio clips from this app and they can read paragraphs as a reading comprehension.

Soundtrap: It provides a platform to create music online, quickly and easily. It helps inculcate the habit of learning in an interesting manner.

Storyboard: It can be a good platform to inculcate the speaking skills. Students can create their stories with the help of Websites like Zooburst or Storybird.

The other useful tools are:

- Plickers
- Free dictionary
- American English
- Englishleap
- Big Brain Bender
- Vocabulary Builder
- Speak English

We can use following web tools to learn English in an interesting manner:

- o **Penzu** Penzu.com Journal tool
- o **Voxopop** Voxopop.com Voice recorder
- o **Wordsift** Wordsift.com Visualizing frequently used vocabulary in any text
- o **Jing** Techsmith.com/jing Capturing what is on your screen with photo or video.