Chapter 3
Mobile-Assisted Language Learning From Language Instructors’ Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores instructor use of MALL in EFL/ESL classrooms. It begins with a discussion of instructor ownership as well as personal use of mobile technology. The chapter includes a discussion of overall perceptions and/or reported educational use and benefits and barriers (not tied to specific language skills.) The chapter goes on to describe how instructors use mobile devices while teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. This is followed by a brief discussion of mobile devices in situations that integrate all four skills. For each language skill, the authors also discuss perceived and/or reported benefits and barriers. Thereafter follows a discussion of trends in the focus of research questions, research methodologies, geographic location of studies, and a brief comparison in trends between earlier and later studies. The review ends with a conclusion that provides directions for future research and reminds the reader of the utility of this literature review.

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INTRODUCTION

This review of literature examines the past and current state of research on English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) instructor use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) along with associated experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. The search for research on this topic yielded limited results. On the other hand, student learning using mobile devices monopolized search findings (Jung, 2015). Characterizing instructor use of MALL does not appear to attract the attention of researchers in the field. Yet since their role in adopting mobile technologies is so instrumental, this chapter will shine light on this subject. Researchers may use the knowledge from this review as a foundation for fostering mobile device use in the EFL/ESL classroom.

The authors queried several databases in the process of identifying articles for this literature review. The researchers conducted searches using ERIC and all databases that the Ebscohost vendor provides (approximately 114). They queried the ProQuest database for dissertations on the topic. Google Scholar was also included in the search. The authors examined the reference lists of several articles to identify additional articles that would be useful. Finally, they explored the table of contents of several mLearning Conference proceedings from 2015 – 2018 (Mobile Learning International Conference, 2019).

There are several issues that complicate the search for literature on this matter. The phrase “mobile-assisted language learning” is not yet a key word in most popular research databases (ERIC, 2019). In order to search for articles that explore the instructor perspective on using MALL for teaching and learning, the authors used several combinations of search terms. Table 1 lists the various search terms used and their purposes.

Table 1. Search terms used in databases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms Used</th>
<th>To Search for Articles Related to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“mobile-assisted language learning”</td>
<td>the use of mobile devices in language learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handheld devices, iPad, iPhone, tablet</td>
<td>mobile devices even if the complete MALL phrase did not appear in the text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, College Faculty, Teacher, Instructor; instructor’s perspectives, instructor’s perceptions, instructor’s opinions, and instructor’s attitudes (in singular and plural forms)</td>
<td>the instructor perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language arts, language learning, linguistics</td>
<td>English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL)</td>
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