

CMC and MALL unite

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Abstract. There is no doubt that Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and mobile mediated communication are linked as technology continues to transform the way we communicate with each other. [Campbell \(2019\)](#) analyzed how mobile communication evolved into portable devices to form a complete system of mobile media, reshaping the fabric of our social lives via ‘sociality’ and ‘spatiality’. In this short paper, we would like to offer a brief overview of the diverse oral presentations which took place in the joint CMC and MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) Special Interest Group (SIG) symposium at the online conference this year. This short paper will introduce various online apps which are available for free in both computer-based and mobile versions and can be adapted to foreign language learning in various ways.

Keywords: CMC, MALL, foreign language learning.

1. Introduction

MALL or language learning is mediated through the use of a handheld mobile device ([Chinnery, 2006](#); [Shield & Kukulska-Hulme, 2008](#)). MALL is a subset of both mobile learning and computer assisted language learning. CMC is conceived as any human communication which takes place through the use of two or more electronic devices. While the term CMC has traditionally referred to

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communication such as instant messaging, the use of email, online forums, and social media, it has also been applied to other forms of text-based interaction, for example, text messaging (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004). Research on CMC focuses, above all, on the social effects of different computer-supported communication technologies.

Both fields of CMC and MALL have one major thing in common, the use of technology, both computer-based and mobile-based mediums to encourage autonomous learning. It was for this reason that the CMC SIG and MALL SIG joined forces this year to bring together six professionals in the field to introduce practices we feel can support language learners of today. There are thousands of web-tools and mobile apps available nowadays, although knowing which ones to choose and how to apply them to your settings is key. This joint CMC and MALL SIG symposium aims, on the one hand, to offer different types of research on the use of different online tools either in their web-based version or mobile version while also introducing a comparative approach on MALL usage by students in Italy and Japan.

2. CMC and MALL tools

2.1. Mobile- and computer-based blogging

The first research area of this symposium, *English as a Foreign Language (EFL) written production through blogging in its mobile version and in computer*, by Salvador Montaner, examines WordPress, which could be useful for learners to develop writing skills in the foreign language classroom. WordPress allows learners to create their own blogs in the foreign language, and to collaborate with others online at any time and any place, through either a computer or a mobile device. The recent trends of teaching and the huge advance of technology permits teachers to use mobile applications through various apps. This quantitative design research investigated the impact of using the mobile version of WordPress on written competence in EFL. One treatment group (12 students) and one control group (12 students) of A2 (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) EFL learners at a state secondary school in Valencia (Spain) (N=24) participated in this study. While, on the one hand, learners from the treatment group utilized WordPress in its mobile version, on the other, learners from the control group used WordPress in its computer-based version, in both cases, to assess their EFL written competence. After utilizing WordPress to develop written competence for the academic year 2018-2019, the outcomes of the diverse written

tasks proved that the learners from the treatment group significantly improved their level of EFL written competence in comparison with the learners from the control group. Accordingly, this research recommends utilizing WordPress in its mobile version at the Compulsory Secondary Education level because of its pedagogical possibilities when teaching English.

2.2. Student mobile use for language learning in Italy and Japan

The second paper by Bruce Lander and Valentina Morgana, *Differences in the way mobile devices are being used for MALL in Japan and Italy*, from a comparative approach, introduces how EFL students from two different countries, Japan and Italy, perceive the use of MALL in their individual setting. Mobile technologies and the current trend of their constant usage by youngsters of today is having a huge impact on education (Crompton & Burke, 2018). This section examines how EFL students from diverse contexts are using their mobile devices to learn foreign languages. A 75-item survey was conducted to gather data on student opinions related to mobile devices and their suitability for learning foreign languages with 511 students at three locations in Japan and 232 students at two locations in Italy. In this research, Lander and Morgana aimed at discovering what tools learners are utilizing, demonstrating how and when they are using them, and what the outcomes of these goals are. Data analysis results discovered that opinions varied widely between the two groups. The outcomes highlighted that of the four-language skills, 61% of students chose to use mobile devices to improve their speaking ability. If given the choice, it was discovered that most students would prefer to use their mobile smartphones for learning over PCs and tablets. The study also continues by displaying what students think about the integration of MALL in face-to-face classes highlighting both positives and negatives from their perspectives. It was discovered that Italian students mostly used MALL devices for dictionary apps, whereas Japanese students used a wider range of tools, including Quizlet, Podcasts, and other vocabulary based apps introduced mainly through advice from instructors.

2.3. Instagram

In the third paper of this symposium, *Like [heart] my Instagram: Instagram used instead of PowerPoint* for oral presentations, Vera Leier focuses on the use of Instagram which permits users to create their own Instagram with, at least, six to eight artifacts with the aim of enhancing oral production. Leier examines the use of Instagram instead of conventional PowerPoint for oral presentations in a German intermediate class (B1-CEFR). Instagram was chosen because of the

ability to easily produce content on a mobile phone and then present the content more formally on a computer. The underlying framework of the design of this study is the multiliteracies framework (Pegrum, Dudeney, & Hockly, 2018). For the six week long task, the students had to choose topics relating to Germany and the German language and create an Instagram page with six to eight artifacts. Six of the 11 students in the class consented to being part of the study. They answered a pre-questionnaire followed by a focus interview and finally a post-questionnaire. The results show that the students enjoyed the task. They were astounded by the online information they could access using Instagram hashtags and they said that they were proud to be part of an online community with followers who were interested in their topics.

2.4. Podcasting

Next, the fourth proposal of this symposium, by Jaime Selwood, explores the didactic potential of podcasting in foreign language learning. In this paper, *How the podcasting revolution can assist language learning (for free!)*, the author offers in-depth detail into ongoing research into the use of podcasts as a learning tool, specifically at the university level. The first two decades of the 21st century have developed into a digital mobile age. Therefore, a crucial dilemma for educators and learners is how to best integrate mobile technology into a successful learning environment. One potential solution to this problem is podcasting, which can offer educators an inexpensive, beneficial, and portable learning tool easily accessible through the mobile Internet and via mobile devices. Podcasts have only been in existence since 2004, but in its short history the medium has morphed from niche beginnings to becoming a star-studded as well as self-contained media ecosystem. The goal of the research was to integrate podcasting within an English language learning course and to observe and analyze any benefits and drawbacks.

2.5. Text response technology

The fifth paper, by Even Einum, *How text response technology and agile teaching promote student agency*, deals with text response functionality to enhance communication in the foreign language. While response technology has been in use for half a century, it is only since 2015 that its functionality has moved beyond multiple choice questions. The introduction of text response functionality, where students' anonymous responses are tallied and displayed for teacher and class, has the potential to radically change classroom communication as well as teacher and student roles. A three-year research project in upper secondary language learning

has shown high participation rates with this type of response, with spillover effects into oral participation. Furthermore, interview, observation, and survey data suggest that the dialogical space of the classroom is expanded, allowing students to anonymously contribute and voice their preferences, concerns, and needs without fear of social repercussions. Agilely adapting the teaching to this input, the teacher can student-center lessons by supporting students' design and direction of their own learning.

2.6. Gamified and multimodal immersive scenarios in foreign language learning: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) video tasks

The last work, by Sergio Esteban Redondo, *Design and implementation of CLIL video tasks*, explores through a mixed method research project, the design and implementation of multimodal video tasks prompted by CLIL (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008) and the multiple intelligence theory (Gardner, 2011) under the Octalysis gamified umbrella as an immersive scenario for language learning. Since opportunities for foreign language immersion are very limited in New Zealand, there is a need for practice outside the classroom; thus, this research delves into the implications of an immersive and gamified set of video tasks across B1 and B2 levels of the Spanish program at a tertiary institution in New Zealand. From the data obtained through the questionnaire which was passed to students, the outcomes showed that learners favored these gamified CLIL tasks over any other form of assessment in spite of their being time-consuming and demanding.

3. Conclusion

We, in the CMC and MALL SIGs, consider the potential for learning with tools as well as didactic experiences such as those explained here, an enriching opportunity not to be missed. Both SIGs considered cooperating together at this symposium since the fields of CMC and MALL cross paths and are increasingly linked.

What previously was only possible on computers is now achievable with a much smaller, but most importantly, mobile device, the smartphone. This gives teachers of today further opportunities to encourage our students to learn out of the box, independently and autonomously. However, we see it as our job to guide our students introducing mobile learning tools that can help them in their foreign language learning journey.

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