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Learner Perspectives on Mobile Phone Integration for Vocabulary Development in Translation Classes

ABSTRACT
Rapid changes in technology are reflected into all walks of education as well as language learning and teaching situations. In line with these changes, studies into the integration of mobile phones into language learning contexts, particularly to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, have spawned. However, learners' perceptions regarding the impact of the integration of mobile technologies are not fully explored. This study aims at discovering learners' perceptions of mobile phone integration in translation classes. Twenty-seven learners studying at an English Language and Literature department in a north-western Turkish university were sent SMS text messages including the target words before, during and after the translation courses for 6 weeks. Nine students who were selected based on their frequency of response rate, 3 the most frequent respondents, 3 average respondents and the least 3 respondents respectively, were interviewed. A content analysis of the semi-structured interviews reveals information about the learners' mobile telephone use and their perceptions of mobile phone use for language learning purposes. The findings reveal that learners in general hold a positive opinion of mobile phone integration although some hesitations have been voiced. A discussion of learners'

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perspectives on the current and future use of mobile phones is provided.
Keywords: mobile phone; EFL learners; MALL; vocabulary development

1. Introduction

Spearheading advancements in technology and technological devices have brought about correspondingly marked changes in educational institutions. Thus, learner mobility has boomed and learners today are no longer confined to physical settings of face-to-face interaction. Due to the integration of portable and lightweight devices, access to information with relative ease is quite possible. Therefore, immediate interaction is no longer a matter of face-to-face exchange or product of immediate environment.

One technological device that has attracted considerable attention is mobile phone, through which the majority of mobile assisted languages learning (MALL) activities take place (Pecherzewska & Knot 2007; Saran, Seferoglu, & Cagiltay 2009). As the use of cell phones has become ubiquitous recently, the need to integrate them into language learning has become increasingly apparent and m-learning has value-added to the "anytime, anywhere" immediacy of learning on the move. In parallel with this need, there is a burgeoning body of literature that demonstrates the use of mobile technologies in various fields of education as well as language teaching (Ufi/learndirect & Kineo 2007; Kukulska-Hulme 2009; Miangah & Nezarati 2012; Saran & Sefeoğlu 2010; Saran, Seferoglu, & Cagiltay 2009; Stockwell 2007; Wang & Heffernan 2009).

The past decade has witnessed a drastic shift from the use of merely computers to the exploitation of mobile devices in language teaching classrooms due to their unique advantages, such as being "personalized, spontaneous, informal and ubiquitous" (Miangah & Nezarat 2012: 309). Thus, Stockwell (2007) draws attention to this natural gravitation by saying: "Mobile learning has long been identified as one of the natural directions in which CALL is expected

to move, and as smaller portable technologies become less expensive, lighter and more powerful, they have the potential to become a more integral part of language learning courses" (p. 365). A growing body of literature on the examination of mobile learning require us to revisit the transformation of learning platforms. Park, Nam and Cha (2012) inform about a transformation from e-learning, which relies on the Internet, be it wire or wireless, to m-learning through which the mobile technologies, such as cell phones, tablets and personal digital assistants are offered. This proliferation of device options made it difficult to define what mobile learning is or what it involves. Although various attempts (Kineo 2007; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield 2008) have been made to define mobile learning, as Kukulska-Hulme (2009) points out: "There is no agreed definition of 'mobile learning', partly because the field is experiencing rapid evolution, and partly because of the ambiguity of 'mobile'– does it relate to mobile technologies, or the more general notion of learner mobility?" (p. 160). However, despite the suggested difficulty of arriving at a clear definition, the concept of mobile learning, attached with several theories such as constructivism and situated learning (Viberg & Grönlund 2012), has been found to aid second language learning.

A considerable body of research elucidating learner and teacher perceptions regarding the mobile learning-assisted language learning contexts, particularly mobile phone-assisted situations, have usually received positive reactions (Cavus & Ibrahim 2009; Hayati, Jalilifar & Mashhadi 2013; Kennedy & Levy 2008; Lu 2008; Thornton & Houser 2002; 2005; Uzunboylu & Ozdamli 2011). When three different modes of the instruction of English idioms, namely SMS-based, contextual and self-study learning were compared, the SMS-based instruction was found to attract more student enthusiasm than the other modes (Hayati, Jalilifar & Mashhadi 2013). Similarly, teachers were found to hold a positive view of mobile learning opportunities (Uzunboylu & Ozdamli 2011). The positive attitudes seem to be shaped by the facilitative role of mobile phone integration.

Learners' inadequate exposure to target language, particularly due to the limited class hours, has widely been reported (Lu 2008;

Thornton & Houser 2005). Mobile phones, to this end, could help learners extend the chances of out-of-class exposure. Using a different mobile learning device, Kondo et al. (2012) compared a group of students who used the Nintendo DS devices and their software (the MALL group) with students who did not use them and found that the MALL group was better than the other with respect to time spent for tasks, task-satisfaction and students' self-measured achievement.

Chinnery (2006) recapitulates the benefits of mobile phones by indicating that these tools are available, affordable and portable. Thornton and Houser (2005) confirm the effectiveness of mobile phones in vocabulary learning in their seminal study. The researchers presented some vocabulary items through different media, indicating that mobile e-mail receivers performed significantly better than the receivers of identical materials through PCs or on paper. They point to the spacing effect as a desired outcome since this effect promotes vocabulary recall. This advantage seems to be in line with cognitive psychology, which assumes that distributed practice rather than massed one is more suited for item retention. In a similar study which made use of different media, namely mobile phones, web pages and print form, Saran, Seferoğlu and Çağıltay (2012) found that both pre-intermediate and intermediate students who were exposed to multimedia messages through mobile phones did significantly better than either of their counterparts. Moreover, another study by Chen, Hsieh and Kinshuk (2008) compared the effectiveness of written-annotation based and picture annotation-based content on 156 ESL students with varying verbal and visual abilities. The results indicate that content provided in a visual form could be helpful for learners with lower verbal and higher visual ability. Lu (2008) investigated the effectiveness of SMS vocabulary lessons by comparing them to the lessons based on printed materials and this resulted in favour of SMS vocabulary lessons. Cavus and Ibrahim (2009) developed a system called mobile learning tool (MOLT), and they carried out a paired samples t-test to see the impact of the intervention on 45 randomly selected freshmen. The researchers came up with a significant

difference in favour of the post-test ($p< 0.05$), which indicated that the system was influential on student grades.

Despite the suggested welcoming attitudes and mentioned benefits, learners' and teachers' experiment with mobile phones were not found to be at a desirable level. Numerous disadvantages of mobile devices such as reading difficulty in small screens, data storage and multimedia limitations, hardware costs (Kukulska-Hulme 2008; Miangah & Nezarat 2012), voice call, SMS and data charges (Kukulska-Hulme 2008; Stockwell 2007) have been reported. In a study by Thornton and Houser (2002), the participants complained about the small screen size and keypad. Moreover, Wang and Heffernan *(*2009) draw attention to the connection problems as well as the compatibility of data formats between devices produced by various manufacturers. Stockwell (2008) found that the majority of the participants did not bother to use mobile phones for language learning practices. In another study, the researcher (2010) studied the platform effect by comparing the PC and mobile platforms and the study revealed that mobile phone learning took more time.

2. The study

2.1. Research questions

The study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of prospective English teachers towards the use of mobile phones in translation classes?
2. Is there a relationship between response rate and learner attitudes?

This study was designed to act as a vocabulary development activity for translation classes. Finding the right word, phrase or longer expressions is of great importance in translation courses. Therefore, enabling students to keep up with new words and phrases plays a salient role so as to find or approximate the right equivalents. To this end, this study aims at providing individual access to course-relevant vocabulary to twenty-seven students who took *Advanced Translation* course and exploring their perceptions of vocabulary development

through mobile phones. Although it is considered to be traditional, vocabulary introduction is still considered to be an effective way to improve learners' vocabulary development (Cook 2010).

2.2. Method

The design chosen for this study was qualitative method and a case study was undertaken for six weeks. Details about the participants, setting and procedures are provided below.

2.3. Participants

Twenty-seven students studying at an English Language and Literature Department at a North-eastern state university in Turkey took part in the study. The participants were conveniently sampled. A semi-structured interview was carried out with 9 sophomores from those 27 students. These nine participants (4M, 5F) were chosen based on their response rate: the most frequent respondents (3), the average respondents (3) and the least frequent respondents (3). The students were asked whether they wanted to receive SMS messages about the course vocabulary prior to the study. All students agreed to receive them and they wrote their phone numbers on a sheet of paper to keep their names anonymous.

The students attended a 4-hour translation course in Advanced Translation II course. This course aims at developing students' awareness in building appropriate strategies for texts of different domains. Usually one meeting is devoted to Turkish English translations whereas English into Turkish translations are carried out in the other. Bearing the authenticity and translatability concerns in mind, texts from foreign press, magazines and documentaries were chosen.

2.4. Instrument

The data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. After a review of the relevant literature, two faculties were asked to read and provide feedback on the clarity of the interview questions. After their revision, 12 open-ended questions were

determined. The general attitudes of students towards the mobile phone integration in language learning and vocabulary development in particular are explored.

2.5. Procedures

Each week, target words obtained from the texts studied or to be studied were chosen. These words were not the ones frequently used in English. To exemplify, after reading a text about the history of Turkish delight in the second week, the students were sent a message asking learners to translate the following sentence at the end of the course: *Bu mağazanın raflarındaki çeşitliliğe bakılırsa, Türk kültüründe önemli bir paya sahip olan lokumun çikolatayla olan rekabette geri kaldığı aşikar* [Considering the variety in the shelves, it is obvious that Turkish delight, which has a significant place in Turkish culture, falls behind in its competition with chocolate]. Moreover, in the fourth week, there were some words lists students were introduced before the translation course (See Table 1).

Table 1. Sample vocabulary items sent through SMS before the translation course

Week Four: Words Presented			
Awe-inspiring	Concentration	Savannah	Stern
Wither	Brutal	Plain	Herd
Fertile	Bonanza	Woodland	Scent
Gather	Predator	Spectacle	Transform
Brutal	Territorial	Drive	Vulnerable
Scavenge	Pasture	Warthog	Calf
Savannah	Cub	Pride	Wildebeest

All 27 students were sent vocabulary items before, during or after Advanced Translation course classes for six weeks. When students were sent the vocabulary items, they were not expected to respond; however, when the vocabulary was presented in sentences, they were expected to translate it into the target language so as to see to what extent they use the right words. In week II-IV-VI, vocabulary items were sent to the participants before the courses. However, the

vocabulary sent during and after the courses (I-III-V) was presented in sentences and acted as a translation activity for learners. The activities consisted of made-up sentences in which several presented vocabulary items appeared. A weekly procedure of the content of the SMSs sent to students is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. A weekly procedure of SMS contents

Week	SMS Content
Week 1	Turkish into English sentence
Week 2	Vocabulary list
Week 3	Turkish into English sentence
Week 4	Vocabulary list
Week 5	Turkish into English sentence
Week 6	Vocabulary list

After the students were introduced vocabulary or sentences in this way for six weeks, 9 students were asked to respond to semi-structured interview questions developed by the researchers. The interviews were carried out in the participants' native language (Turkish) and the participants' consent was obtained. The interviews took between 8-13 minutes, were recorded and then transcribed. When making-up the sentence to be translated the researchers made sure that the vocabulary consisted of the words covered or to be covered in the courses. This helped students to recycle words, enabling them to go beyond one-shot treatment of translation texts so as to turn translation into a recursive process.

2.6. Data analysis

Inductive content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2005) was employed to analyze the data. The following steps were taken to ensure reliability and validity.

a) In order to increase the internal validity, the related literature was reviewed and this helped the researchers better conceptualize the research and interview questions. Moreover, two people employed in the same institution were asked to

give feedback on the relevance of the interview questions and a minor revision was made based on their answers. The respondents were ensured that the findings would be used for research purposes only and their names would be kept confidential. Therefore, no names were assigned for the respondents and each respondent is indicated with a number sign (#). To avoid the use of gender-biased pronouns, the pronouns for both genders were provided together, such as *s/he*, and *his/her*.

b) To ensure external validity, a detailed explanation of the research design, participants, research procedure, data collection instrument, and data analysis was provided.
c) So as to increase the internal reliability, another faculty experienced in qualitative inquiry was asked to develop codes from the transcripts. When compared with that of the researchers, the consistency was calculated to be 90%.

3. Results

3.1. The type and length of mobile phone possession

From students' reports, it is possible to make a conclusion that the students' possession of their current mobile phones does not have a long history. The students in general reported that they had had their mobile phone for 2 or 3 years (see Table 3). The earliest record was 48 months whereas the latest mobile phone was reported to be 2 months old. It follows from this that in line with the requirements of the changing world, the participants usually update their devices to keep pace with the latest developments in technology and demonstrate their vibrant desire to catch up with the latest tools and devices. Three people stated that they had a feature mobile phone whereas the other 6 people reported they had a smart phone.

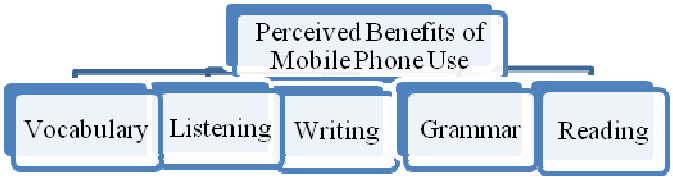
Table 3. The type and length of mobile phone possession

Participant No.	Phone type	Length of possession
#1	Smart	4 years
#2	Feature	2 years
#3	Feature	3 years
#4	Smart	3 years
#5	Feature	2 years
#6	Smart	4 years
#7	Smart	2 years
#8	Smart	2,5 years
#9	Smart	2 months

3.2. Learning through mobile phones

Respondents indicated a relatively positive attitude towards the use of mobile phones in language learning. It is clear from students' accounts that they use mobile phones for a variety of language skills, namely listening, reading, grammar, and writing. Table 4 shows the students perceived benefits of mobile phones according to language skills.

Table 4. Perceived benefits of mobile phone use



The chief benefit, according to participants' reports, is with vocabulary and pronunciation development. All participants stated that they had a dictionary application or Internet dictionaries, and the high prevalance of electronic dictionaries is consistent with early studies (Şevik 2014). According to respondent #7, dictionary use is a "great benefit of mobile phones especially to get the pronunciation of words". This assertion is in agreement with the findings of an earlier study which pointed to the effectiveness of mobile phones on the pronunciation aids of extra materials (Saran, Seferoglu & Cagiltay

2009). However, when a participant drew a comparison of off-line applications and Internet use of dictionaries, s/he proposed the following: "Dictionary use is usually not used frequently; computer dictionaries are more inclusive" (#4).

Moreover, almost all respondents (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #7, #8) highlighted their use of mobile phones for listening purposes:

> When I was in a prep program, I downloaded some listening files. Since my hometown is quite far away from home, I listened to the files during the trip to my hometown. When I listened to a word repeatedly I got more familiar with the word. If I have Internet connection, I can use it. When I have my laptop with me, I usually prefer to use it (#3).

One of the respondents (#8) pointed out that s/he was making use of mobile phones for several languages. As the respondent put it, the small size and weight of the devices actually make them preferable to laptops:

> I have been learning languages other than English, namely German, French and Russian. Mobile phones help me a great deal in such occasions. When I search for something, I can find. Since these devices are tiny, unlike the huge laptops, they are accessible. For instance, when I go to bed, I usually connect to the Internet to make some practice on the mobile phone applications. For example, some vocabulary development activities and listening stuff. Moreover, reading also takes place together with grammar.

Based on the emerging patterns of usefulness, the following further themes were developed from the interviews: assistance in time management, appeal to learners with multiple intelligences, the sense of security, and accessibility. With respect to the time management, "anytime and anywhere" (#8), and turning the dead time into something useful during the long trips (#3) could be interpreted as some alternative ways that promote time management through mobile phone use. "I feel more secure when I have a mobile phone because I can get everything with it," said #6, while #8 noted, "when I look at blogs, I usually pick up things. I am a visual in learning style. If there is visual input, I feel engaged in the tasks." All these remarks seem to be consistent with Kukulska-Hulme and Shield's (2008) contention

that learners today, triggered partly by the greater mobility and travel, keep track of their own needs and direction of learning.

3.3. Attitudes towards mobile phone use to develop vocabulary

Welcoming attitudes: Students in general reported that they welcomed the idea of messages about the courses. Some (#1, #3, #4, #6, #8) suggested that they felt indebted to the course lecturer for spending such efforts. "I got surprised, I saw that you were paying attention and I felt myself indebted to spend some further efforts do something in translation," said the respondent #4. Proposing a similar idea, the same respondent continued in the following way:

> Actually I didn't think the teacher could send it to all students because there are 34 students. I got happy when I received the message. I saw that you spent some effort for students and if the teacher spends such effort why shouldn't I spend it I thought. I think the vocabulary sent before the lesson help us better. I translated the text you sent after the lesson. I translated the one you sent us after the lesson. I don't use SMS because it costs a lot for students. XXX [an alternative smart phone texting program] is a great program and is useful for students. However, when you sent us the first message, I replied first. However, when you asked us to revise my sentence, I could not handle the all text, maybe it is because my telephone is not a touchstone.

The participants tended to associate the SMS messaging with favours done by the researchers. Echoing a similar sentiment, #6 pointed to the concept of individualization, "I was really glad to receive such a message because I felt myself special. I got the feeling that individual attention was paid by the lecturer, and it was great." Since teaching practices of the day offer much room for pre-packaged and idealized learning contexts, the sweeping theories of teaching do not seem to go beyond "one-size-fits-all" models, which, indeed, delineates the shrinking space of the individual and the self (Kumaravadivelu 2012). Therefore, the need to constitute a bridge from teaching contexts to individuals and vice versa is urged by a need to get familiar with the diversity of learners and learning situations. This assistance of personalization in mobile learning is also mentioned in Saran and Seferoğlu (2010).

Sending text-messages for vocabulary development purposes was considered to be a good idea even for those who did not respond to the SMS messages sent before, during and after the lessons. One non-respondent suggested, "Mobile phones will be useful for us if they are used in the right way. They are important and necessary devices especially in listening. If we employ them in listening studies, we can reap the benefit of that." Even though the learner exercises caution with regard to the aims the mobile phones are used for, a relatively favourable opinion of the mobile phone use, especially for listening purposes, is evident in her remarks.

Hesitant users: Though further uses of mobile phones were reported with reference to the promotion of skills, namely reading, grammar and writing, some hesitant voices suggesting the relatively high merits of hard copies in comparison with mobile phone software (#4) and health concerns (#3) were also heard. The learner hesitations, in fact, seem to justify Beatty's (2003) arguments against the techno-hesitations.

Judging from the learners' accounts, the extensive functionalities offered through mobile phones may not be considered to be correspondingly useful. For instance, the replacement of printed material by e-books was challenged by a respondent (#4) who desired to "touch" the material s/he is working with:

> Actually I believe that some people do not make a proper use of mobile phones. I don't know whether I should call it absentmindedness but I really prefer real books rather than e-ones. I have to turn the pages, I should touch it.

The health concern was aptly voiced by another respondent:

> I am a teacher and I keep advising students to listen to mp3 files which are from the course material. However, few students do it effectively. Some lessons were converted into audio formats, sometimes in a theatrical manner. However, most fail to use it effectively. First of all, the health concerns should satisfactorily be answered. Many people are still hesitant about the potential dangers those mobile phones pose. Thus, people should be well-informed about the harms. If people, or speaking for myself, if I am assured that there is no harm of using mobile phones, then I would use it more. (#5)

Even though the health concern may not result in a blanket rejection of technology, it is quite reasonable, even if this might jeopardize one's desire for change, for people to act cautiously. Thus, it follows that mobile phone users' hesitations regarding health concerns should be removed. Moreover, the students' lack of willingness to respond to the text messages was coupled with their general disinclination to text-messaging. The respondents #2, #5 and #9 reported that they rarely used text-messaging. "Even for festival occasions, I am more of a mobile phone caller than a text message writer," said #5, "because I am not patient enough with the typing thing." This takes the researchers to conclude that vocabulary learning through mobile phones was not particularly found to be discouraging, rather it was in line with learners' lack of exposure to text messaging in general.

One note should be inserted here on the difficulty of the code categorization. From the learners' findings, it was sometimes difficult to decide whether their responses were about their general attitudes, or their opinions about the mobile phone use in translation courses.

3.4. Reactions to vocabulary activities introduced before during and after the courses

Here it should be noted that during and after the courses were considered to be the same thing by most students as they were similar translation activities. Therefore, vocabulary lists and translation activities will be the reference point for a better division.

Some students, in fact, did not make a hierarchy of the usefulness of activities either presented before or after the courses and they just regarded both activities to be fruitful for themselves. This disposition is apparent in respondent #2, and #4's remarks: "I think all of them are useful for me because I both can make the work with translation and learn new vocabulary items," said #2 whereas #4 provided some reasons:

> I think both are useful. We could really get prepared if we receive messages beforehand. This would really ensure and boost participation. You see in

> translation courses that there is not enough participation for texts which are given to us spontaneously. After the lesson, usually messages serve as exercise.

One thing to be highlighted here is the learners' possible satisfaction or warm-up activities that might be achieved through mobile phones. Not all learners are eager and equipped enough to fight with any text. Therefore, a "spontaneously" prepared and delivered text might result in less participation, killing the participants' passion. Moreover, it is seen from the respondent's answer that after-lesson messages which involved sentences were considered to be equally instrumental although a special mention was not made by researchers to decide among a cluster of connotations for *exercise*. The participatory role of the mobile phones is also found in Wang, Shen, Novak and Pan (2009), who observed the transformation of students from the "nonparticipatory" stage to "behaviourally, intellectually and emotionally" (p. 674) involved mood.

Especially non-respondents found the vocabulary items introduced before the courses quite beneficial. The respondent #6 gave an account of what made the vocabulary list particularly helpful:

> I found the vocabulary before the lesson more useful. When I received the vocabulary lists, say 3 hours before, I spent that 3 hours thinking about the course. This kept me connected to the course because there was enough warm-up to have an idea about what to learn. I could not answer some of the messages after the course.

It is clear from the previous discussion that an earlier exposure to new vocabulary might mean "further connectedness" or more engagement in the new words. Favourable comments regarding the vocabulary lists before the lesson were also made by #5, #8 and #9. As for the activities after the lessons, one respondent (#7) stressed the usefulness of the activity: "I like the sentence structures in general. I usually take notes to make use of the sentence structures in the coming writings or essays."

This account, in fact, points to a spin-off advantage as grammar skills and writing were not the primary target through the activities. However, as the course teacher attempted to create a pipeline from the new words to new forms and vice versa, the learners could have found

this new "structure embedded" and vocabulary integrated sentences useful for further practice. As the sentences sent were built on the learners' course notes, #3 indicated that it was not difficult for her to rush into the course notes and build on them.

Further advantages of SMS messages are given in Table 5. Course preparedness, alternative platforms for messaging and course motivation are some themes developed from the learners' accounts. Moreover, one respondent (#7) indicated his/her conditional expectations referring to the SMS costs and SMS delivery intervals. The respondent's concern was also mentioned in Thornton and Houser (2005). A small share of their participants (10%) in their study, likewise, delayed reading and focusing on the messages until a time when they can fully concentrate. Thus, a critical estimation of time intervals seems to be necessary in subsequent studies.

Further explanation could be made regarding the respondent (#6)'s sentiment of *freshness* and *readiness*. Lu (2008) argues that traditionally vocabulary is lengthily presented. However, digestible lessons that could be offered through mobile phones could make learners more engaged or *fresh* since they find lessons presented in "bite-sized" chunks more "manageable" (p. 516). Moreover, the repeated nature of the words presented either before, during or after the lessons could add much to the word recycling which could end up in higher retention rates.

Table 5. Further usefulness of SMS messages

Respondent	Advantage reported	Theme
#1	If students receive an SMS message before the course, they are aware of the course content and they can lay the groundwork for the course before attending the course.	Triggering course preparedness
#4	After getting XXX [a mobile communication platform], kind of application, I realized that it is really useful....I like	Captivation of communication platforms replacing SMS

	the platform there and try to keep looking at it.	
#6	I got the feeling that the lecturer was spending effort for me. I also feel ready and fresh for the course. ….when I received the vocabulary lists, say 3 hours before, I spent that 3 hours thinking about the course. This kept me connected to the course because there was enough warm-up to have an idea about what to learn. I could not answer some of the messages after the course.	Course motivation
#7	I think it could be useful. However, as students we sometimes have problems about credits. Moreover, text messages could be better if they are sent at predictable intervals. Sometimes we cannot get ready for the passages if we receive a text just before the lesson.	Useful if credit problems are avoided and course-relevant messages are received at predictable intervals

3.5. The future of mobile phone use

Arguing that the future use would have further intervention in our lives and learning practices would not be out of question if we take the current availability and popularity into account. This expectation is reflected in respondents' answers to the question on the future use of mobile phones for language learning. One respondent (#9) called for the enrichment of more visual aids embedded in SMS messages while some others (#6, #7) said that mobiles phones could be taken over by tablets.

However, not all the participants painted a rosy picture for mobile phone integration, which is partly triggered by lack of ownership of a

proper device and the belief that mobiles phones are yet another temporary fashion:

> I think my phone is not multi-functioned. Since the mobile phones are now equipped with functions like those of laptops, the advantage of mobility in phones which have many features could be used as a great advantage. The reason for me to hold a laptop constantly is the extensive functionalities. If my mobile phone were equipped with those functions, I would not use computers. Moreover, if the screen were bigger, it would be better (#5).

The message conveyed seems to make sense as the mobile phones, except for their smaller screen size and comparatively less features than those of PCs or laptops, have been replacing some other devices. Another respondent (#8) claimed that mobile phones would not prevail their present popularity:

> In the future, I don't think mobile phones will remain their popularity, because they are the fad of the day and when people come to a certain stage, they will get enough of it. Many people use them just to see what is going on.

Since a majority of learners articulated their concerns for a more developed version or replacement of mobile phones, the participants' intimacy and current satisfaction seem likely to be shattered by doubt and mystery of their future demands. In one way, we see participants who glorify the present technological excellence, and in another way, we see people who are suspicious of a possible replacement, hinting that the current satisfaction is a by-product of an ephemeral stream.

So as to make mobile phone learning practices more beneficial, several suggestions have been made. According to some participants (#6, #7), certain institutional steps should be taken to fully disseminate the recommended technology. The rational for institutional steps is grounded on the need to support learners' purchasing power and create or recommend course-relevant mobile phone applications. Participant #6 considers the issue from the viewpoint of learners' budget:

> Buying power is really is important here. I think the schools or institutions should supply these things if mobile phones are to be used for educational purposes. However, when educational institutions take over the responsibility to supply these phones, they should choose the right devices for students. Some educational

> institutions except for universities have forbidden the use of mobile phones as far as I know.

However, since learners may not easily make their ways among a plethora of choices, it is possible for learners to get lost in case of a failure in making a smart choice. Therefore, it is better for learners to appeal to their immediate learning context. This takes us to revisit the call for a paradigm shift to context-aware u-learning (Hwang, Tsai & Yang 2008; Liu & Hwang 2010). This type of learning offers advantage the following features: "(a) distance free; (b) synchronous and asynchronous access; (c) situated in authentic environment; (d) timely access to learning information; and (e) adaptive and active learning support" (Liu & Hwang 2010: E3). The following account appears to portray the uncertainty of the participant with respect to deciding what to equip his/her mobile phone with:

> Departments should recommend us some internet sites and applications; or ministry of education could handle the issue. I sometimes cannot make sure which application to download on my mobile phone. I make a choice but it may not be the best choice for vocabulary learning (#7).

3.6. A comparison of respondents

Even though a marked difference cannot be drawn regarding the frequency of responses to the SMS messages, several differences were noted. To begin with, the most frequent SMS respondents had the highest number of words (1593) in the transcripts. This is followed by the least respondents (1509) and the average respondents (1412). Moreover, not responding to the sentences for translation through the SMS messages were not reported to be related to the learners' reluctance to the course. However, the relatively high hesitations of the least respondents could, in fact, be interpreted as the learners' comparatively less preference of the SMS application. Despite the hesitations described above, no respondent challenged the notion of mobile phone integration.

4. Discussion

Given that mobile phone use has taken up a great deal of learners' language development, further long-lasting and established uses of it

should be encouraged. Institutional steps should be taken to ensure the dissemination of knowledge through mobile phone integration so that individual attempts are somehow channelled. This could be achieved through the realization and promotion of certain applications geared to language development. Moreover, medium-rich mobile phone integration appealing to learners' multiple intelligences could be supported as it plays an embracing role in relation to learners' individual differences. This could, as in several studies documented, be achieved through the multimedia messages to be sent. However, caution should be exercised to ensure the adoption of cognitive and psychosocial skills of the learner because any attempt made to develop an understanding of the individual detached from his/her ecological context would turn out to be an exercise in futility (Terras & Ramsay 2012). Therefore, it would be useful to provide a transactional relationship between learners and technology. Since capturing the fragmented attention (Trifonova 2003) seems to be necessary, making a reasonable use of mobile technologies or mobile learning enhances and will enhance the opportunities for learning. However, there is still room for Kohn and Hoffstaedter's caveat of the "caravan effect", which, according to Levy's (as cited in Levy 2009: 779) reading, is a metaphor in which technology enthusiasts stop to drink at a waterhole only until they get their fill. However, though not certain of the next waterhole, if there is any, there is still need to cherish the moment.

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