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The current issues of mall application
in esl settings

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Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is no longer a novelty in foreign language education, it has become a necessary tool for digitalisation and diversification of learning environment. Today educators face the need to address the issues of MALL implementation that require clarification and further exploration in order to establish the conceptual structure of MALL. This particular need substantiates the topical value of the paper and calls for the following methods of research: analysis, synthesis and deductive reasoning.

After the introduction of mobile technology and observation of its various effects on foreign language learning, a number of issues of MALL application have presented themselves. One of the keynote questions of successful mobile learning concerns the assessment of such educational environment. Whether it is in-class practice or it is meant as students' free-time engagement, there is still not enough research on the forms of assessment and instructions that would be clear to all the participants of educational setting.

Apart from the need for practical guidelines as to how assess mobile learning on an everyday basis, scientific attention should be focused on continuous monitoring of the entire process of MALL implementation to recognise its current state, progress of research, emerging issues and problems. By outlining the big picture, we will be able to see the role and potential of mobile technology in language education.

Another important issue that needs to be addressed is the subject of learning strategies. It is understandable that introducing new forms of student engagement always requires revision and sometimes a complete change of learning modes. In this case, educators need to identify and learners need to develop a new (or more likely upgraded) set of learning strategies that will ensure effective use of mobile technology in educational settings.

Teachers' reservations as to the use of mobile technology is another point of interest and can be explained by a number of factors, ranging from experiencing individual reluctance to use new technology to realising disadvantages of mobile learning. Among

disadvantages of MALL some researchers [1] point out "high possibility and likelihood of cheating, creation of a sense of isolation from the whole, the rapid fade of ideas and concepts as mobile devices are constantly connected to the network and go through upgrades, the creation of a burden upon learners' shoulders to adopt themselves to technology, etc." [1, p. 176]. To eliminate such reservations on teachers' part, it is necessary to consolidate empirical findings about MALL on a global scale and ensure full support of their use of mobile technology.

This brings us to the following conclusions. It is essential to raise the question of teachers' training as to how to employ MALL, as well as getting students familiar with it. Establishing the necessary professional support enables successful results and can be organised in various forms such as seminars, trainings, presentations and study groups. Learning and teaching strategies can never be fully developed without deep understanding of the objectives and potential of MALL by all its participants.

The above-mentioned issues of MALL application in ESL settings give just an initial glimpse into the topic and are meant to raise awareness as to the question of ever-growing use of mobile technology in language education.

References

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