

## Chapter 17

# MALL and CALL Audiotaped Oral Dialogue Journal From Iranian EFL Learners' and Teachers' Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter investigates an effective example of tasks for mobile language learning attempting to mitigate the problem of lack of meaningful oral interaction in face-to-face settings. It examines audiotaped oral dialogue journals (ATODJs) as a MALL and CALL task from the EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives. The data gathered was 202 entries of ATODJs, using Bluetooth or email, from 15 female Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The teachers' and learners' evaluations of the whole program comprised of the qualitative part of the research. The results, a result of content analysis, revealed the merits, demerits, and challenges faced by the teacher and learners: ATODJs aided the learners to produce output, were effective for tasks concerning interaction and negotiation, involved meaningful interaction, involved the learners to a great extent, were fluency tasks, and assisted language learners' identity reconstruction. EFL teachers and materials developers are highly recommended to incorporate ATODJs into the language learning curriculum.*

### INTRODUCTION

Many recent studies (Godwin-Jones, 2016; Moladoust, 2012; Moladoust, 2014a, 2014b; Zou & Li, 2015) have demonstrated that mobile learning offers potentials for language learning and helps learners practice both production and comprehension of language on their laptops and mobile phones. Mobiles and computers can play a positive role in language learning, especially if suitable guidance and support are provided for the language learners (Godwin-Jones, 2016).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5140-9.ch017

The need for CMC or CALL (McCarty, Sato & Obari, 2017; Moladoust, 2014a, 2014b; Wu & Marek, 2016) and MALL might have arisen due to the lack of opportunity for meaningful interactions in ELT classrooms, as Long (1983) eloquently asserts. To exacerbate the problem of lack of meaningful negotiation is the issue of amount of time spent for language learning during language learning classes which is almost everywhere 3-6 hours a week or even less. In an attempt to address this problem, scholars have introduced technology such as mobile phones and computers to language teachers and learners (e.g. Chun, Smith, & Kern, 2016; McCarty, Sato & Obari, 2017; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Schmidt, 2007). According to Schmidt (2007), CMC helps to mitigate the aforementioned problems since it can be used to encourage the same types of interaction that are evident in face-to-face settings. Although a couple of apps have been used for English language learning, as Zou and Li (2015) assert, few studies have given effective examples of tasks for mobile learning. The current chapter aims to introduce ATODJ (i.e. L2 learner's recorded extemporaneous speech, Lazaraton, 2001), as a MALL and CALL task, its merits and demerits from the language learners' and the teacher's perspectives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature on CMC has revealed it to be beneficial in many ways (Moladoust, 2014b). Two main benefits of CMC will now be outlined. Firstly, CMC enhances motivation of EFL learners, as shown in studies by Butler-Pascoe (2011), McCarty, Sato, and Obari (2017), and Spitzberg (2006). Secondly, CMC enhances fluency, as proposed by Spitzberg (2006). What is meant by fluency in EFL literature is how Kock (2008) defines it: "number of words conveyed per minute" (p. 15). Kock (2001) states that communication fluency has been found to be close to 100 words per minute face-to-face; however, it often drops to as little as six words per minute through e-mail, when what is being communicated is complex knowledge (Kock, 2001). Yet, no studies have been conducted to explore the weaknesses and strengths of ATODJs as a CMC tasks.

ATODJs (Lazaraton, 2001) are tasks conducted by students when they speak extemporaneously about a topic, introduced by the teacher, whilst their voice is recorded. The teacher listens to the entry of each student's recorded audio file at home and gives feedback (Nassaji, 2016) in the form of a conference. Two terms which need to be explained here are entry and conference. Both Dantas-Whitney (2002) and Ho (2003) used the former to refer to the EFL learner's recorded voice. To be consistent with the literature, the word entry is used in this paper. The latter, on the other hand, is a one-to-one interaction between a teacher and a student in which the teacher is able to direct feedback to the student's specific needs (Brown, 2004). In explaining how the conferences after each entry of ATODJ help language learners, Ma (2017) elucidates that assistance in speaking provided by others (i.e. feedback by teachers in conferences) helps the learner to achieve their zone of proximal development (ZPD) and make progress in language learning.

Lazaraton (2001) also notes that an ATODJ is a format where practicing fluency and attention to accuracy can be accomplished at the same time. According to her, teachers should keep reminding their learners to speak extemporaneously and should explain that the purpose of the activity is to work on unplanned speaking (Marefat & Moladoust, 2011).

ATODJs encourage oral fluency and provide feedback on selected aspects of accuracy (Allan, 1991; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996; Tajeddin, Alemi, & Pashmforoosh, 2011). According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996), ATODJs require the participants' taping weekly entries and the teacher's

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