

The Integration of Mobile Learning in Teaching English for Law Enforcement. A Case Study

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ABSTRACT. As the world entered the 21st century, mobile devices have taken over a large part of our daily lives, being used not only as communication tools, but also as instruments that allow easy access to information. Even if these devices have not yet been formally introduced into language teaching and learning, still they have been used in educational setting for a while now, at least informally. Against this backdrop, the present paper starts with a literature review of concepts such as *mobile learning* and *MALL (mobile assisted language learning)* and then shifts focus to the context of teaching English for Law Enforcement, while attempting to briefly investigate how mobile devices can be employed in such an environment, what advantages and disadvantages the use of mobile devices can bring along in language education, as well as to what extent these gadgets can enhance the students' learning autonomy.

Keywords: mobile learning, MALL (mobile-assisted language learning), mobile apps, student-centered learning, self-regulated learning, ELT, English for Law Enforcement

ABSTRAKT. Mit dem Eintritt in das 21. Jahrhundert haben mobile Geräte einen großen Teil unseres täglichen Lebens übernommen und werden nicht nur als Kommunikationsmittel, sondern auch als Instrumente verwendet, die einen einfachen Zugang zu Informationen ermöglichen. Auch wenn diese Geräte noch nicht offiziell in den Sprachunterricht und das Sprachenlernen eingeführt wurden, werden sie doch seit einiger Zeit zumindest informell in Bildungseinrichtungen verwendet. Vor diesem Hintergrund beginnt das vorliegende Papier mit einer Literaturübersicht über Konzepte wie mobiles Lernen und MALL (mobiles unterstütztes Sprachenlernen) und verlagert dann den Fokus auf den Kontext

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des Englischunterrichts für Strafverfolgungsbehörden, wobei kurz untersucht wird, wie mobile Geräte in einer solchen Umgebung eingesetzt werden können, welche Vor- und Nachteile die Verwendung mobiler Geräte im Sprachunterricht mit sich bringen kann und inwieweit diese Geräte die Lernautonomie der Schüler verbessern können.

Schlüsselwörter: mobiles Lernen, MALL (mobiles unterstütztes Sprachenlernen), mobile Apps, schülerzentriertes Lernen, selbstreguliertes Lernen, ELT, Englisch für Strafverfolgungsbehörden

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Mobile learning (M-learning) vs Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL)

Mobile learning is a relatively new approach to education, as mobile devices have been gradually included into learning in the latest years. Some authors show that the use of mobile devices, such as smartphones or similar portable gadgets with a wi-fi or data traffic connectivity, has led to a shift in the traditional teaching and learning process (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). There are mobile apps that can easily be downloaded on the mobile device through the Internet and they can be quickly accessed at any time and in any place, both in the classroom and outside it, due to the current large-scale availability and portability of mobile devices.

In addition, *mobile learning* refers to the integration of mobile devices in all fields of education, including language learning. Therefore, the characteristics of mobile technology such as the portability and information accessibility play an essential role in the enhancement of English language teaching and learning (El-Hussein & Cronje, 2010). The main feature of m-learning consists in the freedom of the students to decide on the time and place of the learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012).

Moreover, *mobile learning* can be defined as the language learning that is carried out through the medium of portable devices such as smartphones, laptops, personal digital assistants etc. Another feature can be added to the definition: the learning enabled by mobile devices is independent of time and place. For this reason, Mobile learning implies mobility of technology, of learner and of learning. Thus, mobile learning can be viewed as less organized or less formal than *e-learning*. However, when used in class, in a formal educational setting, the teacher can plan the lesson so that there is structure and organization in the unfolding of the lesson.

On the other hand, self-study is important in language learning. Still, students are less and less inclined to resort to traditional resources such as printed books for self-study purposes and instead they are more prone to study online using technology. As the use of mobile technology is increasing, a teacher or trainer can offer students the possibility to study anytime, anywhere and whenever they find convenient through their mobile devices. There is a wide array of mobile apps useful for learning English and any other language, for that matter, ranging from online dictionaries to apps focused on the study of various levels or skills of English, such as: Duolingo, GrammarUp, SpeakingPal English, EnglishListening, FluentU, Memrise etc.). The purpose these apps are designed for is to also improve the learners' language skills: listening, reading, writings and speaking.

Young people are more and more enthusiastic and independent users of mobile devices, so they can rely on internet-based or assisted language learning to conduct independent language learning and academic writing (Conroy, 2010). Email, online chat or online discussions can be elements included in internet-based instruction and they can facilitate instructor-learner and learner-learner interactions (Shih, 2011).

The emergence of mobile apps about education has changed the traditional learning mode, which gradually shifted from the teacher-centered to self-regulated learning, while the learner shifted from the acquisition of knowledge to the construction of knowledge through active learning (Yiping & Lei, 2010).

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is a subset of both M-learning and CALL (Computer-assisted language learning). Whereas *CALL* refers to the use of personal computers in language learning as a means to "enhance creativity and collaboration, particularly through social networking" (Beatty, 2010), *MALL* is viewed as an approach distinct from *CALL*, as it refers to the employment of personal, portable, wi-fi connected devices that "enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access across different contexts of use" (Kukulska-Hulme & Shields, 2008, p. 273).

The advantages of *MALL* have been emphasized in the literature as compared to *CALL*. Thus, among the most relevant features of mobile devices, which personal computers cannot offer, there are: portability and mobility, interconnectivity, context independence, individuality (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). The emergence of such mobile devices, which can easily provide access to various on-line applications and the internet, as well as store various applications, has led to the instructors' increased interest for introducing such technology in language learning. Godwin-Jones (2011) argues that the new portable and handheld gadgets have fueled the "mobile app fever", which can be downloaded from App Store, Google Play, Windows Phone Store, Blackberry App World etc. There are numberless

language learning apps, available for either free or paid download, which vary from beginner to advanced level, from primary and secondary to tertiary learners. As a rule, tertiary learners are college students or adult learners.

Mobile-assisted language learning can bring about the autonomy of students in the learning process, and they can not only contribute to the improvement of their language competence, but also increase their learning motivation. This is due to the fact that mobile apps have the advantage of integrating various media, such as text, picture, animation, audio and video support, which all create a multimedia instructional material, capable of stimulating students' interest in studying. For instance, the DuoLingo app can contribute to the enhancement of students' both listening and pronunciation skills, while employing varied multimedia input for studying a large variety of foreign languages through the medium of another language the learner has already a given competence in.

However, one of the disadvantages of mobile learning is that there is a wide array of language learning apps available for download, which makes it very difficult for learners to discern which one suits their learning needs best. For this reason, a prior research of potential apps that can be effective and serve a target group's learning needs might be carried out in advance by the language teachers, who can subsequently recommend the most suitable ones to their students. Some of the authors, who reflected on this topic, point out that such recommendations and suggestions about the most relevant apps and their effective use in learning English are missing (Liu & Xuan He, 2014).

1.2. Student-centered learning vs Self-regulated learning in MALL

The *teacher-centered approach* is a pedagogical approach which places the teacher at the forefront of the teaching process, because he/she is the decision-maker of what and how is taught and tested in class (Amstrong, 2012). This is a traditional approach to teaching, where the agency lies with the instructor (Diaz et al., 2000). The teacher is usually in the center of the classroom delivering the instruction or transmitting the information with little involvement, input, or feedback from the students. The teacher is the one who constructs the learning environment by deciding what and how the students should do in the classroom.

In the *student-centered learning* approach, the students are involved in the decision on what and how they will learn and are allowed options of how they will be assessed. During this process, the students create knowledge for themselves, extracting information that they think is suitable for them, and matching the existing knowledge (Suzan, 2008). In this approach, students actively participate in and are accountable for their own learning. In addition, both students and teachers interact equally, while collaboration and communication between the students is encouraged through group and pair work.

The *self-regulated learning* is the kind of learning that intertwines 3 variables: metacognition (thinking about one's thinking), strategic action (planning, monitoring, and evaluating personal progress against a standard), and motivation to learn (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005). The learners learn something by taking control of and evaluating their own learning and behavior (Ormrod, 2000). With self-regulated learning, autonomy and control are at the forefront of the learning process (Paris & Paris, 2011). The students rely on their own internal resources to govern their learning (Zimmerman, 1989). In self-regulated learning with the help of online resources students can easily access information and determine when and where to learn (Allyson & Winne, 2001).

MALL can motivate and engage English language learners to develop their language skills themselves (Traore & Kyei-Blankson, 2011). Similarly, while using mobile apps to learn, the students are more likely to try to complete the study task independently, which appeals to their self-management and responsibility. Moreover, mobile devices support students in becoming autonomous and independent so as to extend their learning beyond the time constraints and spatial confines of the academic environment (Beechler & Williams, 2012). *MALL* allows students to conduct self-access English learning, while offering the flexibility that increases the learner's autonomy and proficiency.

Mobile apps provide the English learning students a multitude of mediums and opportunities for learning, among which printed texts, audio, visual or multimedia resources. Moreover, mobile apps can help English learners develop both productive and receptive skills (deHann & Johnson, 2012). For instance, *e-dictionary apps* can expand participants' vocabularies, which leads to the improvement of their skills of reading and writing (Wang, 2012).

1.3. Advantages and disadvantages of mobile learning

The wide array and popularity of mobile applications for learning English have contributed to making the study of a foreign language more accessible and efficient. However, the same large availability and broad choice can lead to confusion and information overload among the students (Sudhana, K. M., 2015), who do not have the ability to discern which application is most suitable for their learning needs. For this reason, the role of the teacher is essential in guiding their students' learning and helping them by recommending suitable language learning applications to be used. Still, such applications can foster the students' language *learning autonomy*, which is defined by Holec (1981, p. 3) as learner self-direction and control over the learning process (Holec, H., 1981).

Among the advantages of mobile learning we can also mention that the students get the opportunity to practice listening, as well as their interest in learning languages is increased when using such apps. *Interest* is viewed in literature as a kind of intrinsic and internal motivation of language learning and students will lose their desire to learn a language if they are not interested in it (Yu, Y., 2016, September 20).

The use of a mobile language learning application makes the students employ their mobile devices in a positive way. The so-called “addiction” to mobile phones has been a topic of controversial debate in many settings across the globe and in most educational environments these devices are banned in the classroom (Long, C. et al., 2013, Wang, X. & Wu, A., 2012). However, such devices have become indispensable tools in contemporary society due to mobile technology developments (Sudhana, K. M., 2015). Therefore, the solution would be to advise students to use them reasonably and wisely instead of prohibiting their use altogether. It would be ideal if students could be instilled the notion that mobile devices could serve primarily as learning tools. Moreover, such mobile language learning applications have the advantage of exposing students to authentic language learning contexts. Such exposure is known to contribute to the improvement of students’ language learning skills. Not only these applications give students the opportunity to practice language skills (such as reading, listening, and even speaking), as well as pronunciation and vocabulary (by repeating words and complex structures), but these apps also offer them the occasion to learn and practise spelling and grammatical structures.

Another advantage of using such language learning apps is that students can practice the learning in their own time and space without any interference from outside or the assessment of others, thus gaining more confidence in the use of the language. They can assess their own progress by comparing their performance to the original speaking and their writing against the provided answers, thus being able to adjust or correct their own language, either in speaking or in writing. In addition, such language learning apps can contribute to the students’ personalized learning. In a personalized learning environment, academic goals, curriculum, content, method and pace can all vary (Mo, M. & Zhang, J., 2012).

Apart from the advantages of using mobile English learning described above, there are also some disadvantages. Among these we can mention the inability of such apps to provide the context and the means for group work or discussions, therefore being a tool solely suitable for individual study. What’s more is that not all students have the intrinsic motivation to engage in self-study using mobile apps and the teacher must find adequate solutions or institute the proper guidance to stimulate such students to actively participate in app-aid language learning.

2. CASE STUDY

2.1. The integration of mobile learning in teaching English for Law Enforcement

In a former paper we undertook the task to define what English for Law Enforcement (LEE) is by viewing this variety of English against a larger pool of more well-known and clear-cut concepts. Thus, we ascertained that in order to define LEE, one should start with breaking down the over-arching concept of ELT (English Language Teaching), which encompasses concepts such as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ESL (English as a Second Language). In its turn, ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is a branch of EFL/ESL and it consists of other two subcategories, which are: EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). Therefore, as it refers to an occupational field, English for Law Enforcement (LEE) is a variety of ESP, embedded in EOP (Pielmuş, 2018, p. 569).

When it comes to integrating mobile devices into teaching and learning LEE, Figures 1 to 5 display some of the tasks we effectively used in class by resorting to smart phones as a substitute for the traditional ICT devices, such as laptops and computers. The activities were designed to cover police-related topics as they are included in the law enforcement students' curriculum for languages, having also in view to give them opportunities for the acquisition of specialized vocabulary and the practice of all language skills, both receptive and productive.

Depending on the focus of the LEE lesson, we found out in practice that any kind of task can be approached using a mobile device, starting from vocabulary to language skills-focused activities. Thus, students can not only acquire and reinforce specialized law enforcement vocabulary, but also practice receptive and productive skills. On the one hand, Figures 1 to 4, for instance, tackle the topic of "Crimes and Criminals" and showcase vocabulary practice tasks ranging from matching exercises to filling-in crossword puzzles, word associations or arranging vocabulary in grammatical categories.

Match the names of the crimes with their appropriate definition:

Crime	Definition
ESPIONAGE DRUG TRAFFICKING ARSON EXTORTION HATE CRIME EMBEZZLEMENT BURGLARY CONSPIRACY BRIBERY BATTERY	1. Any wilful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a public or a private property of another.
	2. The attempt or completed action of offering or accepting money or gifts in exchange for an action by an official or person in a public or legal position of duty.
	3. Touching, striking, hitting and kicking of a person by another against that person's will.
	4. Committing a crime against a person because of that person's race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.
	5. Import and export of narcotics and illegal prescription drugs past points where they are prohibited by law.
	6. The misappropriation or misapplication of money or property entrusted to one's care, custody, or control.
	7. Two or more people agreeing to commit or planning to commit a crime, and taking action toward committing that crime.
	8. The act or practice of spying or of using spies to obtain secret information, as about another government or a business competitor.
	9. Unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft.
	10. The criminal act of threatening violence, harm to reputation, property damage or government action to another in order to obtain property, money or an official act.

Figure 1. *Vocabulary task 1*

Fill in the puzzle with different kinds of THEFT that match the definitions below. Some letters have already been filled in. (1) is an example. (Pielmuş, C., 2012, pp. 109-110)

1 **theft** the illegal taking of another person's property without that person's freely-given consent

2 _____ stealing money and valuables from a person without their noticing the theft at the time

3 _____ deceiving people so as to fraudulently gain money or property

4 _____ operating another person's vehicle without permission from the owner followed by abandonment of the vehicle

5 _____ fraudulently assuming a person's identity, typically in order to access financial resources (2 words)

6 _____ stealing people's property by use of violence, usually in a public place

7 _____ taking valuables from a person by force or threat of force or by inducing fear on the victim

8 _____ unauthorized access to a computer system

9 _____ stealing goods from a store

10 _____ dishonestly appropriating money or property by one or more individuals to whom these have been entrusted

11 _____ the illicit entry into a building for the purpose of committing theft

12 _____ stealing a motor vehicle by forcing the driver out of the car with the threat of bodily injury.

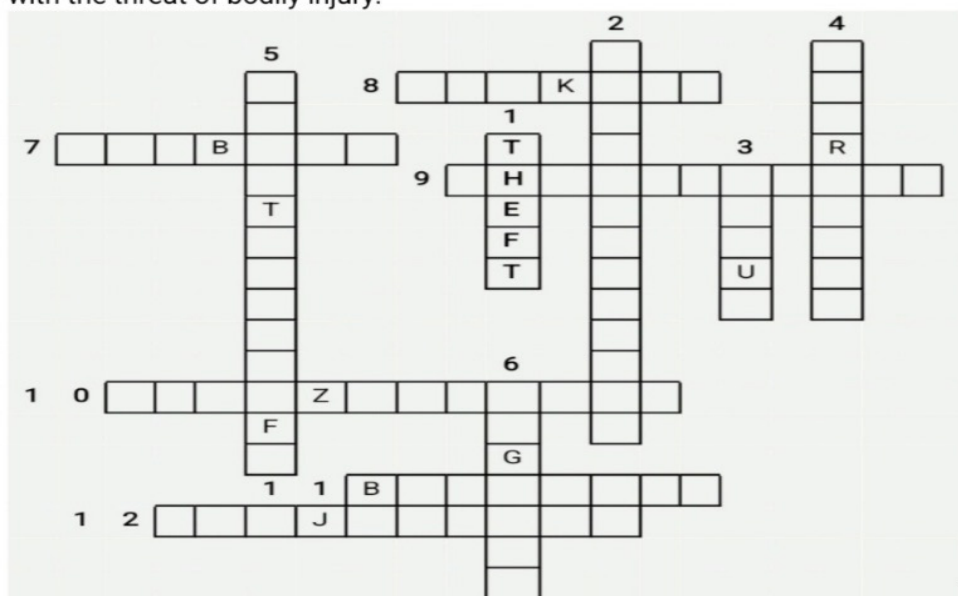


Figure 2. Vocabulary task 2

Crime-related vocabulary – Actors: offender, victim, witness, investigating officer. (Pielmuş, C., 2012, pp. 110-111)

When it comes to *crime* several actors may be involved: *offender, victim, witness, police officer*. Look at the verb phrases that denominate activities performed by any of the actors mentioned, which are connected with the idea of “crime”. Arrange each phrase according to the actor that performs the activity in the table below.

Offender	Victim	Witness	Investigating Officer

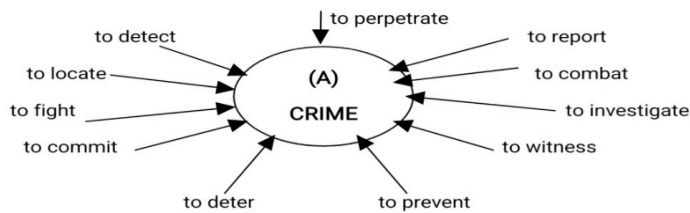


Figure 3. Vocabulary task 3

Vocabulary focus - Crimes and Criminals (Pielmuş, C., 2012, pp. 112-113)

Use a dictionary and fill in the chart with the corresponding **action, crime** and **criminal** as in the example below.

Action (verb/verb phrase)	Crime (noun)	Criminal (noun)
to abduct	abduction	abductor
to set fire to (a building)	armed robbery	
to assassinate	battery	assailant
	blackmail	burglar
to hijack a car	embezzlement	drug dealer/trafficker
to escape/to run away	fraud	forger/counterfeiter
to gamble		hecker
to hijack a plane	hostage-taking	joyrider
to kidnap	mugging	pander
	perjury/forswearing	pirate
to pick one's pockets		
to prostitute	purse snatching	
to rape	shoplifting	robber
to spy	theft	traitor
to vandalize		

Figure 4. Vocabulary task 4

On the other hand, Figures 5 and 6, in turn, are centered on the practice of productive and receptive language skills, such as listening, speaking and writing. Figure 4 proposes watching and listening to two videos related to the broad topic of “Describing a Suspect in Police Work”, covering two adjacent sub-topics, namely: Producing a sketch-portrait of the suspect and Compiling an accurate description of a suspect. The activity is followed up by a pair/group or class discussion prompted by a set of questions the teachers suggests, that are derived from the content of the videos. Similarly, Figure 5 suggests a writing activity, anchored in a real-life, job-related situation in police work, when police officers are either required to write police reports or take witnesses’ or victims’ statements. The task is based on a scenario given by the teacher and a sample form for a witness statement and the students are asked to produce a written statement of a witness of a crime following a specific scenario.

A Suspect's Description

Activity 1: Watch the short video titled “Metropolitan Police: How to describe a suspect” - <https://youtu.be/Pt8rycHI2dI>

Task: After watching the video, answer the following question: “What are the details that should be taken into consideration when describing a suspect?” (pair/group/class discussion)

Activity 2: Watch the short video titled “Police Sketches: How sketch artists make composite drawings” - <https://youtu.be/2X4Lubyqb2M>

Task: After watching the video, answer the following question: “What are the steps that should be followed in producing a composite drawing?” (pair/group/class discussion)

Figure 5. *Listening & Speaking*

Witness Statement (Pielmuş, C., 2012, pp.115-116)

You are a police officer on duty. Some individuals come to the station and claim they have been *witnesses of a crime* (choose a crime). You ask these persons to write down a *statement* detailing the crime they have been witnesses of. You may use the sample form below.

WITNESS STATEMENT		
I, _____ (name and surname of the declarant)	_____ (address)	_____ (location)
_____, state the following: (occupation)		
_____ (details of the incident or event)		
I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.		
Signature: _____		
Date: _____		
(Adapted from http:// www.ipc.gov.uk)		

Figure 6. *Writing*

As previously discussed, mobile learning refers to the use of mobile devices as a medium of instruction via mobile applications. In an ELT environment, when teaching General English is at the forefront of the foreign language curriculum, a range of mobile apps for learning languages are available for download on any smart phone.

However, when it comes to English for Law Enforcement (LEE), the options are drastically limited in terms of language apps that can be used in class, because of a very obvious reason, which is the unavailability of ready-made, hands-on resources for teaching and learning LEE. That is why, when it comes to procedure, we resorted to the use of mobile devices in the LEE class as tools to share resources between the teacher and the students and also to access materials on the Internet. For instance, in order to share learning resources with the students, we used a communication app and an online community group for students to interact in, whereas for Internet resources, such as video and audio materials, or making use of online dictionaries, mobile devices were employed as mere information tools.

Among the advantages of smart phones as substitutes for the traditional ICT tools, such as laptops and personal computers, there are characteristics such as: portability, light weight, wi-fi or mobile data connectivity, easy access to a wide range of apps and Internet resources (visual, audio or multimedia), students' enhanced learning autonomy, as learning is not context-dependent.

Even if these advantages are tangible, from our own classroom experience, we ascertained that there are still some drawbacks of mobile devices used as a medium for English teaching and learning. One of the most prominent ones is the risk of the students' attention being diverted from the lesson to other apps on their smart phones and lose focus. Therefore, it is the teacher's job to carefully plan and design a lesson that requires the use of mobile devices, as well as to organize and time the activities effectively to prevent such situations from occurring.

Other potential disadvantages might be: the unavailability of smart phones for all students, though in the past few years this has become a very rare or isolated case, battery drain of the devices, the interdiction to carry or be in possession of a smart phone while attending classes as part of the school inner regulations, the students' being distracted by the input from other online apps, to name but a few.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Mobile learning can provide opportunities for foreign language learners to practice language skills on their devices (mobile phones, tablets etc.). For this reason, various mobile apps have been developed for the purpose of studying English as a foreign language. Moreover, mobile learning can be used both in the English class and in the students' self-study. The mobile apps for English language learning can be used both in and outside the classroom.

The fast-paced development of technology in the past decade has led to the possibility of using portable devices, such as mobile phones or tablets in the English as foreign language (EFL) class, contributing to opening the way to a technology-oriented teaching model. As the literature shows, it is a reality that students from different cultures can also learn English due to the mobility and connectivity offered by mobile devices (Kim, Rueckert, Kim & Seo, 2013).

However, a valid question arises: To what extent can mobile learning be formalized so as teaching and learning can shift from the Moodle-based virtual learning environments to mobile learning? While using the e-learning platform (Moodle Learning System), the students are able to use their mobile devices to get access to the learning resources from this platform, both in and outside the classroom. When it comes to mobile learning, even if a large array of English learning mobile apps has been developed and there is a huge potential of the foreign language learning by portable devices, what can still be a barrier for educators to put such mobile teaching into practice boils down to developing new teaching and learning methods (Kim et al., 2013). Another obstruction to implementing mobile learning consists in the fact that mobile devices are mainly a source of apps for entertainment and communication and for this reason they might be a challenge for the students' ability to self-control.

What we found out, while experimenting with mobile devices in the English for Law Enforcement class, is that mobile learning can work well if the teacher plans and organizes the technology-based lesson in advance and facilitates the interactions during the lesson so as to prevent students from using their mobile devices randomly. What's more is that only a limited number of apps can be employed in such a specific English teaching and learning environment, for communication and interaction purposes, as there are no apps available for learning English for Law Enforcement, and the teacher has to very carefully develop and select his/her own teaching resources for a class in which mobile learning is integrated.

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