

Enhancing oral production skills of second language learners using mobile phones

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INTRODUCTION

English language is placed as the second language (L2) in Malaysia (Gill, 2002), in line with the Malaysian education policy. A change in the Malaysia language policy reflects the need of an English proficient population as well as the need to allow English to play a more dominant role. However, those needs are difficult to achieve if Malaysian learners are still inhibited by social factors such as the lack of motivation and interest to learn the English language. This results in the next problem, that is to master the English language. Thus, an issue in the language education field is how to reduce anxiety associated with learning an L2 in order to increase learning performance. Similarly, what are the potential benefits mobile phones may offer to attract the digital natives to improve their L2 and enhance their oral production?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employs a mixed methods approach that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. The procedure to be adopted in the study will be a sequential explanatory design (refer to the diagram below). The first phase of the design is the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the second phase which is the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Specifically, the qualitative results will be used to explain and interpret the quantitative results.

Research site

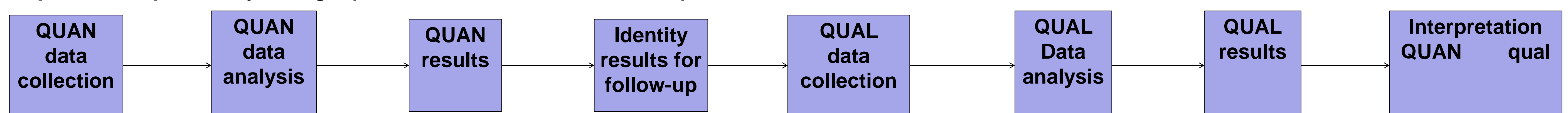
This study will be conducted at a public university in Malaysia. 3 English oral classes will be assigned to the researcher who will act as the class instructor throughout the second-semester for fourteen weeks. The participants in each group differ in term of English proficiency levels. The course content is delivered as a 3-hour face-to-face mode which is made up of 2 hour and 1 hour in-class meetings, respectively, and 1-hour of self-directed learning activities.

Research participants

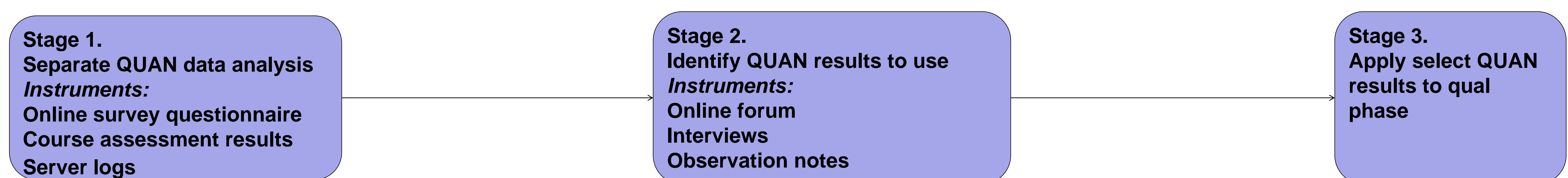
The selection of the participants is based on a purposeful sampling. The strategy to select the participants is maximal variation sampling with the central idea that the participants selected are different in terms of English proficiency.

Data collection

Sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)



Analysis: Sequential Data Analysis Procedures in Explanatory Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)



CONCLUSION

This study envisions the use of mobile phones as learning tools to alleviate the language learning anxiety. Next, this study will deploy the potential use of mobile phones for language learning purposes, specifically to increase oral production. Language learners may experience some inherent levels of anxiety when participating in oral activities and discomfort which ought to be alleviated. Ultimately, it is pertinent to provide L2 learners a learner-centred, low-anxiety classroom environment aiming to increase second language learning and performance.

References

- Creswell, J. W. & Plano-Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Gill, S. K. (2002). *International communication: English language challenges for Malaysia*. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: A review of the literature.. *Language Learning* 41(1), 85-117.

Definitions of terms

Language anxiety

Anxiety associated with learning a second or foreign language is termed as second or foreign language anxiety. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), language anxiety is defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension experienced by learners in the foreign language classroom.

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL)

Learning using MALL technologies is termed as mobile learning. Among the technologies are mobile phones, MP3/MP4 players, PDAs and palmtop computers. However, m-learning is not just about the use of portable devices but also about learning across contexts which implies that knowledge and skills can be transferred across contexts such as home and school, how learning can be managed across life transitions, and how new technologies can be designed to support a society.

