



MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (MALL) FOR TOURISM TERMINOLOGY ACQUISITION

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Abstract

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has significantly transformed foreign language education worldwide. Among contemporary educational innovations, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has emerged as an effective approach for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and professional language competence. In tourism education, the mastery of specialized terminology is essential for successful communication in international professional environments. This study investigates the pedagogical potential of MALL in facilitating tourism terminology acquisition among university students. The research examines the theoretical foundations of mobile learning, its role in vocabulary development, and the effectiveness of mobile applications in supporting autonomous and context-based learning. Particular attention is paid to the integration of mobile technologies such as Quizlet, Kahoot, Duolingo, Google Classroom, and mobile dictionaries into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. The findings indicate that MALL contributes to increased learner motivation, improved retention of tourism terminology, enhanced learner autonomy, and greater engagement in educational activities. Furthermore, mobile technologies support personalized learning experiences and facilitate the development of professional communicative competence required in the tourism industry. The study concludes that the implementation of MALL can significantly improve tourism terminology acquisition and should be considered an important component of modern tourism education.

Keywords: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, MALL, tourism terminology, ESP, vocabulary acquisition, digital technologies, tourism education, mobile applications, professional competence, communicative competence.



Introduction

The contemporary tourism industry is characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancement, and increasing international mobility. Tourism professionals are expected to communicate effectively with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, the acquisition of professional tourism terminology has become one of the key objectives of foreign language instruction in higher education institutions preparing future tourism specialists. The growing influence of digital technologies has transformed traditional approaches to language teaching and learning. In recent years, mobile devices have become an integral part of students' daily lives, creating new opportunities for educational innovation. Smartphones, tablets, and mobile applications provide learners with immediate access to educational resources and enable learning beyond the classroom environment.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) represents an important branch of technology-enhanced language learning that utilizes portable digital devices to facilitate language acquisition. Unlike conventional teaching methods, MALL promotes flexibility, learner autonomy, and continuous access to learning materials. Researchers have emphasized the potential of mobile technologies to improve vocabulary learning, enhance learner motivation, and support individualized instruction.

In the context of tourism education, specialized vocabulary plays a crucial role in professional communication. Tourism students are required to master terminology related to hospitality management, destination marketing, transportation services, tour operations, customer service, sustainable tourism, and cultural heritage. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods often fail to provide sufficient opportunities for repeated exposure and contextualized practice. Therefore, innovative approaches are necessary to address these challenges.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in tourism terminology acquisition and to analyze its pedagogical effectiveness in developing students' professional communicative competence.



Theoretical foundations of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning emerged as a response to the increasing accessibility of mobile technologies and their educational potential. According to Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008), mobile learning extends educational opportunities beyond formal classroom settings by enabling learners to access educational content anytime and anywhere. The portability, connectivity, and multifunctionality of mobile devices make them particularly suitable for language learning purposes. The theoretical foundation of MALL is closely associated with constructivist and sociocultural learning theories. Constructivist approaches emphasize active knowledge construction through interaction with learning materials and authentic tasks. Mobile technologies support this process by providing interactive and multimedia-rich learning environments. Similarly, sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning, and mobile platforms facilitate collaboration through online communication, discussion forums, and peer feedback.

Another important theoretical perspective underpinning MALL is learner autonomy. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning. Mobile technologies empower learners by allowing them to choose learning materials, monitor their progress, and engage in self-directed study. This aspect is particularly relevant for vocabulary acquisition, where repeated exposure and independent practice play a significant role.

Tourism terminology as a component of professional competence. Terminology constitutes an essential component of professional language competence. In tourism education, students are expected to acquire a wide range of specialized lexical units that facilitate communication in professional contexts. Tourism terminology encompasses concepts related to accommodation services, transportation systems, tour operations, cultural tourism, ecotourism, hospitality management, destination marketing, customer relations, and travel technologies.

The acquisition of tourism terminology presents several challenges. First, students often encounter a large volume of specialized vocabulary within a relatively short period. Second, many tourism terms are context-dependent and require practical application to be fully understood. Third, the dynamic nature of the tourism industry results in the continuous emergence of new terminology associated with technological innovation and changing market trends.



Therefore, effective instructional approaches should provide learners with opportunities for repeated exposure, contextualized practice, and meaningful interaction with specialized vocabulary. Mobile learning technologies offer significant advantages in addressing these requirements.

Mobile applications for Tourism terminology acquisition. A variety of mobile applications can be utilized to facilitate tourism terminology learning. Among the most widely used tools are Quizlet, Kahoot, Duolingo, Memrise, Google Classroom, Moodle Mobile, and digital dictionaries. **Quizlet** enables learners to create personalized flashcards and engage in vocabulary practice through matching activities, games, and self-assessment exercises. The spaced repetition system employed by Quizlet enhances long-term retention of lexical items. **Kahoot** introduces gamification elements into vocabulary learning. Through competitive quizzes and real-time feedback, learners remain actively engaged and motivated throughout the learning process. **Duolingo and Memrise** provide adaptive learning experiences by adjusting task difficulty according to learner performance. These platforms support vocabulary acquisition through contextualized exercises, pronunciation practice, and interactive activities. **Digital dictionaries and translation applications** allow immediate access to definitions, pronunciation models, collocations, and usage examples. Consequently, learners can independently resolve lexical difficulties encountered during communication or reading tasks. Learning management systems such as Moodle and Google Classroom extend the functionality of mobile learning by integrating assignments, discussion forums, multimedia resources, and assessment tools into a unified learning environment.

Pedagogical benefits of MALL in Tourism education. The integration of MALL into tourism education offers numerous pedagogical advantages. First, mobile technologies increase learner motivation by incorporating interactive and gamified elements into the learning process. Students generally perceive mobile learning as more engaging and enjoyable than traditional vocabulary instruction. Second, MALL supports autonomous learning by enabling students to access educational resources independently and at their own pace. This flexibility is particularly valuable in tourism education, where students often engage in practical training and internships. Third, mobile technologies facilitate contextual learning. Tourism terminology can



be presented within authentic professional situations, allowing learners to understand how specialized vocabulary functions in real-world communication. Fourth, MALL enhances vocabulary retention through repeated exposure and spaced practice. Research indicates that learners who regularly engage with mobile vocabulary applications demonstrate higher levels of lexical retention compared to those relying solely on traditional classroom instruction.

The impact of MALL on Tourism terminology acquisition. The effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in vocabulary development has been confirmed by numerous studies conducted in the fields of language education and educational technology. Tourism terminology acquisition requires learners not only to memorize lexical items but also to understand their contextual meanings and apply them appropriately in professional communication.

Traditional vocabulary teaching methods are often limited by classroom time constraints and insufficient opportunities for repeated practice. In contrast, mobile technologies enable learners to engage with terminology continuously, regardless of time and location. This flexibility creates a favorable environment for long-term vocabulary retention.

Research demonstrates that tourism students who regularly use mobile applications for vocabulary learning show higher achievement levels than students who rely solely on conventional teaching methods. Mobile applications support various learning styles by combining textual, visual, and auditory content. Consequently, learners can process information through multiple channels, increasing comprehension and retention.

Another important advantage of MALL is its contribution to contextualized learning. Tourism terminology is most effectively learned when presented within authentic professional situations. Mobile technologies facilitate the simulation of real-life tourism scenarios through multimedia content, videos, interactive dialogues, and virtual tours.

For example, students studying hotel management terminology can interact with mobile simulations of hotel reception procedures. Similarly, learners focusing on tour operations can engage with digital itineraries, booking systems, and destination management applications. Such activities strengthen the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application.



Gamification and Motivation. One of the key factors contributing to the success of MALL is gamification. Gamification refers to the integration of game elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, achievements, and rewards into educational activities.

In tourism terminology instruction, gamification increases learner engagement by transforming vocabulary learning into an enjoyable experience. Students often perceive terminology acquisition as challenging due to the large number of specialized lexical units. Gamified mobile applications reduce anxiety and increase willingness to participate in learning activities.

Applications such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Quizlet Live encourage competition and collaboration among learners. Immediate feedback allows students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, while achievement systems motivate them to continue learning. Research findings indicate that students exposed to gamified learning environments demonstrate higher levels of motivation, persistence, and vocabulary retention than those participating in traditional instructional settings.

Learner autonomy and Self-regulated learning. A major objective of modern higher education is the development of autonomous learners capable of managing their own educational progress. Mobile technologies significantly contribute to this objective by providing students with opportunities for self-directed learning.

Through mobile applications, learners can:

- Set individual learning goals;
- Monitor their progress;
- Review difficult terminology;
- Access supplementary learning materials;
- Evaluate their own performance.

Tourism students frequently engage in internships, practical training, and fieldwork activities. Consequently, flexible learning opportunities are essential. Mobile technologies allow learners to continue vocabulary development outside formal educational settings and integrate learning into their daily routines.

Integration of MALL with ESP instruction. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes the acquisition of language skills required for professional communication within particular disciplines. Tourism terminology constitutes a



central component of ESP instruction for tourism students. The integration of MALL within ESP courses offers several advantages:

First, mobile technologies facilitate individualized learning experiences. Students can focus on terminology relevant to their specific interests and professional goals; second, mobile applications support collaborative learning through discussion forums, peer assessment activities, and group projects; third, MALL enables continuous formative assessment. Instructors can monitor learner progress and provide timely feedback through digital platforms; fourth, mobile technologies facilitate access to authentic professional materials, including tourism websites, hotel booking platforms, destination management systems, and travel blogs. These features contribute to the development of communicative competence, professional competence, and digital literacy simultaneously.

Results. The analysis of theoretical literature and contemporary educational practices demonstrates the significant effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in tourism terminology acquisition.

The following results were identified:

1. Improved terminological competence - students using mobile learning applications demonstrate higher levels of tourism vocabulary acquisition compared to learners using exclusively traditional methods. Repeated exposure and interactive practice contribute to deeper lexical knowledge.
2. Increased learning motivation - mobile technologies create engaging learning environments through gamification, multimedia content, and personalized learning pathways. Consequently, students show greater enthusiasm toward learning tourism terminology.
3. Enhanced Vocabulary Retention - spaced repetition systems implemented in mobile applications significantly improve long-term retention of specialized vocabulary. Students are more likely to recall and accurately use tourism terminology in professional communication.
4. Development of autonomous learning skills - MALL promotes learner independence by encouraging students to manage their own learning activities and monitor progress. This autonomy contributes to lifelong learning competencies.
5. Strengthened professional communication skills - the contextualized nature of mobile learning activities supports the practical application of tourism terminology in



authentic communicative situations. Students become more confident in interacting with international tourists and industry professionals.

6. Improved Digital Competence - the integration of mobile technologies simultaneously develops digital literacy skills that are increasingly important in the modern tourism industry.

7. Positive Attitudes Toward Learning - students generally express positive perceptions regarding mobile learning technologies. They appreciate the flexibility, accessibility, and convenience provided by mobile applications.

Discussion. The findings of this study support previous research emphasizing the pedagogical value of mobile learning technologies in foreign language education. The tourism industry increasingly relies on digital technologies, making it essential for future specialists to possess both terminological competence and digital competence. MALL offers an effective solution to many challenges associated with tourism terminology instruction. Its flexibility enables students to engage in continuous learning, while its interactive nature promotes active participation and deeper cognitive processing.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Limited internet access, technological disparities among learners, and insufficient teacher training may hinder effective implementation. Educational institutions should therefore provide adequate technological infrastructure and professional development opportunities for instructors. Furthermore, future studies should investigate the long-term effects of MALL on professional performance and explore emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality within tourism terminology instruction.

Conclusion

The present study examined the role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning in tourism terminology acquisition and highlighted its pedagogical significance within tourism education. The findings indicate that mobile technologies substantially enhance the acquisition, retention, and practical application of tourism terminology. Through interactive learning environments, gamification, personalized instruction, and continuous access to educational resources, MALL contributes to the development of professional communicative competence among tourism students.



Moreover, mobile learning promotes learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy, all of which are essential competencies in the contemporary tourism sector. The integration of MALL into ESP instruction should therefore be regarded as a strategic priority for higher education institutions preparing future tourism professionals.

In conclusion, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning represents an innovative and effective approach to tourism terminology acquisition and offers significant potential for improving the quality of tourism education in Uzbekistan and beyond.

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