

Creating Complementary Bi-Modal Learning Environments: An Exploratory Study Combining Online and Classroom Techniques

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Abstract : This research focuses on the effects of creating an English as a foreign language curriculum that combines online learning and classroom teaching in a complementary manner. Through pre- and post-test results, teacher observation, and learner reflection, it will be shown that learners can benefit from online programs focusing on receptive skills if combined with a communicative classroom environment that encourages learners to develop their productive skills. Much research has lamented the fact that many modern mobile assisted language learning apps do not take advantage of the affordances of modern technology by focusing only on receptive skills rather than inviting learners to interact with one another and develop communities of practice. This research takes into account the realities of the state of such apps and focuses on how to best create a curriculum that complements apps which focus on receptive skills. The research involved 15 adult learners working for a business in Japan simultaneously engaging in 1) a commercial online English language learning application that focused on reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary and 2) a 15-week class focused on communicative language teaching, presentation skills, and mitigation of error aversion tendencies. Participants of the study experienced large gains on a standardized test, increased motivation and willingness to communicate, and asserted that they felt more confident regarding English communication. Moreover, learners continued to study independently at higher rates after the study than they had before the onset of the program. This paper will include the details of the program, reveal the improvement in test scores, share learner reflections, and critically view current evaluation models for mobile assisted language learning applications.

Keywords : adult learners, communicative language teaching, mobile assisted language learning, motivation

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