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# *Cell phones in task based learning Are cell phones useful language learning tools?*

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**Abstract**

Cell phones are now widespread in many countries including Japan where we teach, and are particularly popular among university students. Although they can be a distraction in the classroom, functions such as Internet access and e-mail capability have transformed them into sophisticated communication tools. But are they also potentially useful in language learning? While task-based approaches (Nunan, 1989) adapted to desktop e-mail are now a growing area of research in CALL (Greenfield, 2003; Gonzalez-Lloret, 2003), cell phones have yet to receive much attention. This paper reports on a classroom research project aimed at evaluating the use of mobile phones as tools for classroom learning. Freshman university students in intact EFL classes (2 elementary classes, 2 lower intermediate) were first surveyed regarding their cell phone use and pre-tested to assess their knowledge of certain target learning structures. Following this they were subdivided into three groups: (a) using cell phone text messages, (b) using computer e-mail, and (c) speaking. The learners were paired, trained with warm-up tasks, and given two further sets of tasks to complete (one in class and the other at home). The target vocabulary appeared in the initial narrative task. All messages sent while doing the tasks were saved for analysis. The speaking task pairs were recorded and samples were transcribed for comparison. Finally learners took a post-test the following week to assess short-term learning gains. This project drew attention to a number of potential advantages of mobile phones as well as highlighting some limitations, but overall suggested that mobile phones represent a language learning resource worthy of further investigation.

## 1 Introduction

For many students today, mobile phones have become an important way to keep in touch with friends. While the invention of the telephone has been described as creating "intimacy at a distance" (Hutchby, 2001:83), mobile phones are perhaps becoming "intimacy in your pocket". One student explained in an essay on the topic that "[mobile phones] are (sic) convenient way to communicate (sic) other students in another university and another classroom." The portability of mobile phones and the ability to receive text or voice messages at any time makes it possible for students to keep in close contact

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with friends, including those on other campuses.

Teachers, on the other hand, may see things rather differently as mobile phones can cause problems in the classroom. Not only are the melodies announcing a call a potential distraction, but learners have apparently been caught using text messaging functions to communicate with each other during class time, and even attempting to cheat during tests. For these reasons test instructions now include a paragraph to remind learners to turn off their mobiles before the test begins, and some Japanese high schools have banned them altogether. However, this paper takes the view that since mobile phones are popular among students for communication with each other, they may offer a motivating alternative to desktop e-mail in some situations.

## 2 Review

The most promising place to begin developing mobile phones as learning tools seemed to be through tasks and the SLA theories associated with them (Skehan, 1998: 93–120). The teaching of English through tasks has become perhaps the most concrete realisation of the importance of focusing on meaning in order to stimulate the acquisition process. Ellis (2003), for example, includes the following in his definition of a task:

> A task seeks to engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language. It seeks to develop L2 proficiency through communicating. Thus it requires a primary focus on meaning. To this end a task will incorporate some kind of 'gap', i.e. an information, opinion or reasoning gap. The gap motivates learners to close it. (Ellis, 2003: 9)

This gap creates a reason for communicating in the target language which replicates cognitively, and perhaps psychologically, some everyday situations outside the classroom in which people exchange factual information, or negotiate meanings. However, one of the potential disadvantages of many textbook tasks is that less motivated learners can take short cuts by glancing at their neighbour's book, or using L1, reducing the amount of L2 negotiation. One way to overcome this is to physically separate learners, as is possible when using e-mail or mobile phones, creating a more real information gap.

Computers equipped with e-mail, Internet access and the potential for developing all kinds of learner software, offer great possibilities for creating and closing communication gaps. As one CALL researcher put it:

> …network-based simulations offer access to an otherwise unattainable environment that translates into language input and tasks for second language students. (Gonzalez, 2003: 3)

By appealing to task based learning (and its close association with second language acquisition research) CALL has gradually moved beyond the simple reasoning that computers are motivating and fun. The growth of e-mail as a communicative medium has helped inspire numerous studies reported at conferences and through journals. Meanwhile mobile phones – the communication tool of choice of many of today's university and high school students – have received little attention even though they

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include many important functions normally associated with PCs such as e-mail, Internet access and even camera and video functions. Such phones have enjoyed a rapid spread in Japan to the extent that more people access the Internet in Japan through their phones than through PCs. Mobile phones have thus become widespread enough and sophisticated enough to consider their potential use in CALL if only to alleviate some of the pressure on valuable institutional resources like computer rooms.

The kind of L2 negotiation encouraged by tasks has been found to be a key element of language acquisition (Long, 1983; Pica, 1994). Moreover it is important that foreign language learners, who may have little opportunity to use English outside the classroom, have the *experience* of using English as a means of communication. Tasks have been widely used in e-mail projects and other areas of CALL (Greenfield, 2003; Gonzalez-Lloret, 2003), and typically extended the notion of task from being an information gap activity performed by pairs or in groups (Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996) towards freer exchange style activities with "key-pals" found on the Internet. This move towards real communication is an important direction that reflects the strengths of e-mail as a research area within CALL (Crook, 1994).

This paper describes a classroom research project which aimed to compare the effects of using narrative and invitation tasks with Japanese freshman engineering majors.

## 3 Study

### *3.1 Purpose*

The study set out to answer two general questions: Are mobile phones useful language learning tools? And, how can mobile phones be used in task-based learning? To address these questions we decided to create some tasks which we thought could be performed relatively easily either as speaking or e-mail tasks. We designed some information gap activities aimed at promoting some interaction between learners that could be carried out either as speaking tasks using a mobile phone, text messages on a mobile phone or PC e-mail.

### *3.2 Procedure*

The project proceeded in the following order: (1) select classes; (2) pre-test of target spoken vocabulary; (3) mobile phone/e-mail usage survey; (4) groups assigned: e-mail, mobile phone e-mail (text), speaking; (5) picture narrative and invitation tasks (3 sets); and (6) vocabulary post test.

Four intact freshmen classes consisting of 30 (± 4) students each were selected for the study. Two parallel "upper" classes were taught by one researcher and the two "lower" parallel classes by the other. A pre-test of the target spoken vocabulary was administered (see Appendix I and section 3.4.1). At the same time the learners were surveyed regarding their attitudes towards mobile phones and e-mail, and their practical use. Next we assigned learners to one of three groups: PC e-mail; mobile phone e-mail and speaking. Three sets of tasks, each consisting of one narrative task and one invitation task were then prepared and administered over three weeks. Finally a post-test was given to assess target vocabulary gains.

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### 3.3 Learners and group assignment

#### 3.3.1 Subjects

All of the students were freshman engineering majors. Based on a written placement test they had been assigned to classes numbered 1 to 8 with 1 being the highest. The 'upper' students were level 1s and the lower level 4s. The average TOEIC score of the lower classes was around 300, while the average for upper classes was around 400. One of the researchers taught and presented the tasks to two level 1 classes and the other to the two level 4s.

#### 3.3.2 Usage survey

Prior to the project students were surveyed in L1 regarding their attitudes to mobile phones, and to ascertain practical details such as how many students possessed mobile phones, what features they had, and how regularly they used both PC e-mail and mobile phone e-mail (see English translation in Appendix II) .

To our surprise only 4 out of the 54 level 1 students involved in this project did not have a mobile phone with e-mail access. This compared with 9 out of 54 who had never used e-mail. In addition 43 out of the 50 mobile phone owners used their mobile daily, compared to only 14 who claimed to be regular users of e-mail. Finally 44 of the 50 mobile phone users cited text messaging and e-mail as their most frequent use of their phones. With regard to attitude, most regarded both mobile phones (42) and e-mail (43) as useful or essential with very few describing either mobile phones (3) or e-mail (1) as a nuisance.

#### 3.3.3 Groups assigned

The original intention was to have three groups in each class, split between PC e-mail users, mobile phone e-mail users and speaking mobile phones users. However, speaking on the mobile phone was abandoned early on due to complaints about the potential phone bills (a drawback that perhaps should have been foreseen). Instead this option was replaced by audio recorded pair work speaking, which was later transcribed by the researchers. Mobile e-mail (or "texting") is cheap enough not to cause this concern. We were also unable to schedule use of the computer room for one upper class and therefore decided to make one class mainly mobile e-mail and the other upper class mainly PC e-mail. Due to the popularity of the option of using PC and mobile e-mail only 6 students (3 pairs) per class did the speaking tasks. The lower classes were more evenly divided into groups of 8–10 students for each condition per class. Representing the upper classes as 'A' and 'B', and the lower classes as 'C' and 'D' the grouping can be summarised as follows: A Upper e-mail (e-mail level 1); B Upper mobile e-mail (mobile e-mail level 1); A/B Upper speaking (mobile phone level 1); C/D Lower e-mail (e-mail level 4); C/D Lower mobile e-mail (mobile e-mail level 4); C/D Lower speaking (mobile phone level 4).

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### *3.4 The treatment*

Learners were given a pre-test followed by three storytelling and three invitation tasks, administered over three weeks, and finally a repeated post-test. This section describes the treatment. A sample of the test can be found in Appendix I.

#### *3.4.1 Pre-test /Post-test*

A pre-test was prepared to test learners' knowledge of target pragmatic phrases which cannot be literally translated into Japanese and, though of an everyday conversational nature, would not be found in high school teaching materials. The test consisted of 18 items in sentences (see Appendix I) which the students had to find Japanese pragmatic equivalents of. The upper level learners had to write their own translation while lower level learners were given a multiple choice test using distracters taken from the incorrect translations of the upper learners. Six of these items were incorporated into the initial narrative task in the form of speech bubbles. These items therefore represented the target vocabulary structures which were as follows:

1. Do you know what I mean?
2. Absolutely.
3. Things just won't be the same.
4. I know what you mean.
5. Do you fancy a bite to eat?
6. I wouldn't mind.

The same test was re-administered with the order of the items changed as a post-test.

#### *3.4.2 The tasks*

The tasks consisted of narratives told in the form of pictures with captions which student A had to tell to B who had the same pictures but randomly arranged and with no captions. These picture stories were adapted from Sandra Heyer's *Very Easy True Stories* (1998). B then had to number the pictures in the correct order based on A's information. The first task had captions and speech bubbles in the target language, but the second and third ones had fewer captions and no speech bubbles. In the second task B told the story. The second task in each set was a role play invitation task where A and B had to plan a date based on given information, such as hypothetical schedules, budgets, restaurant menus and so on. These tasks were designed so that it would be possible to use the target vocabulary, although there were no instructions to do this or reminders of the target phrases.

To collect data from the mobile phone e-mail and PC e-mail messages, it was important that all learners sent carbon copies to the researchers each time they e-mailed their partner. The messages were stored in a folder in the e-mail software Outlook Express. This allowed us to reconstruct the conversations (by cutting and pasting) and it also made it easy to do message counts, word counts and keep track of the time taken to do

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the tasks as the time and date of messages are recorded automatically. In order to do this with mobile phones students had to use the e-mail function on their phones as opposed to the short message function which does not allow CCs to be sent to e-mail accounts. Also since many people choose bizarre names for their e-mail accounts (especially mobile phone ones) we had students put a short code at the beginning of messages to identify them to the researchers. Looking at reconstructed conversations made it possible to see just how the mobile and PC e-mail exchanges differed.

### *3.5 Results*

#### *3.5.1 Task completion and turn-taking*

With the upper classes this first task was done during the lesson and so was limited to 45 minutes. As shown in Table 1, while the speaking groups completed three tasks in the time, on average neither of the e-mail groups was able to complete the task. In fact only two PC e-mail pairs finished and one mobile student completed. Interestingly, although most students took a picture by picture approach, with occasional checks or questions from their partners, the fastest student using their mobile packed the whole story into one message. The large difference we can see here between the total number of words presumably reflects the relatively slow speed of typing compared to speaking, and using a mobile thumb pad compared to a PC keyboard. However, there were some sets of

Table 1. *Completion times, number of speaking turns and number of words for the first narrative task*. (All figures are means rounded to the nearest whole number. Time allowance: 45 minutes.)

| | Speaking | E-mail | Mobile e-mail |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of pictures completed (n=16) | 3 tasks | 9 pictures | 5 Pictures |
| Number of turns | A 25<br>B 18 | A 12<br>B 5 | A 10<br>B 8 |
| Number of words | A 284<br>B 265 | A 125<br>B 88 | A 70<br>B 20 |

Table 2. *Completion times, number of speaking turns and number of words for the third narrative task*. (All figures are means rounded to the nearest whole number. Implemented as a homework task)

| | Speaking | E-mail | Mobile e-mail |
|---|---|---|---|
| Completion time in minutes | 12 | 80 | 95 |
| Number of turns | A 17<br>B 15 | A 11<br>B 5 | A 19<br>B 14 |
| Number of words | A 195<br>B 35 | A 202<br>B 32 | A 113<br>B 38 |

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mobile messages of a similar length to the e-mail ones (100 words or so). Where A was telling the story to B the number of turns taken by B tended to be low, especially on the first task, and consisted of simple acknowledgements such as "Good! Next please" with very occasional requests for clarification.

Table 2 shows the figures for the third speaking task done by the upper level learners. The speaking pair actually did this in class but the e-mail groups were given this as a homework assignment. Whereas task 1 was relatively straightforward because A's story included captions, tasks 2 and 3 had fewer captions and so took longer. The table shows that although the tasks took mobile e-mail users a little longer they have generally done a much more efficient job of relaying the pictures, because the task has been completed on average with a little over half the number of words.

Although as you can see from Table 2 we found that regular e-mail was generally faster than mobile phone e-mail, it was not by as much as we might have expected, even by the third narrative task. The speaking activity, however, was performed considerably faster. When we came to look at turn-taking patterns it appeared that while some contented themselves with a one picture at a time approach, the faster learners attempted to

| **TimePC** | **E-mail Message** |
|---|---|
| 2003/7/2 23:11 | 1:"a man goes to a fast-food restaurant for lunch." picture:he looks "MENU".<br>2:""Hi" a worker says."may I help you?" picture:she is smiling .<br>3:""I'd like a humburger , large fries, and a medium coke," the man says.<br>picture:he thinks a humburger and large fries. |
| 2003/7/2 23:2 | 2: sorry,I don't know number 2 sentences. I know 1, 3 sentences. |
| 2003/7/2 23:27 | there are 3 worker's pictures. this picture is one of them |
| .2003/7/2 23:31 | OK. Please continue. |
| 2003/7/2 23:42 | 4:""anything else?" the worker asks" picture: 2 and 4 are same picture.<br>5:""no," the man answers."that's it." picture: 5 and 1 are very similar<br>picture. it is only him in it.<br>6:""is that for here or to go?" the worker asks." picture: she thinks to take<br>out? or to eat here? |
| 2003/7/2 23:4 | 6ok. Please talk about these pictures for me. |

Fig. 1. A sample PC exchange (narrative task 3).

| **Time** | **Mobile E-mail Message** |
|---|---|
| 2003/7/2 12:47 | A man goes to a fast-food restaurant for lunch. |
| 2003/7/2 12:544 | same picture! |
| 2003/7/2 13:00 | ok |
| 2003/7/2 13:04 | A man goes to a fast-food restaurant for lunch. |
| 2003/7/2 13:05 | there are A man in fast-food restaurant with menu |
| 2003/7/2 13:09 | there is clerk. |
| 2003/7/2 13:12 | ok next |
| 2003/7/2 13:12 | A man think about hamburger and fries drink. |
| 2003/7/2 13:14 | Thera is the clerk. |
| 203/7/2 13:14 | ok next |

Fig. 2. A sample mobile email exchange (narrative task 3).

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relay the story in one go. However the style of the negotiation generated by the task was similar whatever the medium with narratives typically being clarified by describing some salient feature of the picture. As the first two tasks were completed without difficulty (apart from time running out) the final tasks were assigned as homework for the two upper e-mail groups. Whether because learners enjoyed the tasks, or because all messages had to be relayed to the teacher, all learners present in class on this day completed the tasks, encouraging us to think that e-mail (mobile or PC) may be one viable way of getting learners to do communication tasks at home.

### *3.5.2 Adapting to texting*

Figures 1 and 2 show a comparison of a mobile and a PC e-mail 'conversation' produced during one of the narrative tasks. Whereas the PC user's transcript appears as an extended dialogue, the mobile phone users have kept their messages to a minimum, nevertheless managing to communicate effectively. While the shortcoming of this is that not much language is used overall, this kind of task may be a useful experience for beginners who might be tempted to use their L1 in face to face speaking tasks. Although it has obvious limitations, a mobile phone keypad may well be easier to use for learners (such as many Japanese freshmen) who have not yet learned to type efficiently using a keyboard.

### *3.5.3 Narrative vs. Invitation tasks*

This study used two popular kinds of task: a narrative re-telling task and an invitation task. The reason for doing this was to see how well such tasks (typically created as face to face activities) suited the medium of PC and Mobile e-mail. Table 3 shows the mean word-counts, number of turns and words per turn for the third narrative task compared with the third invitation task.

### *3.5.4 Pre-test and post-test results*

The pre-test results with the upper group were originally administered as an open test where learners had to provide their own translations of pragmatic expression which do not translate literally into Japanese. The expressions were conversational phrases such as "Do you fancy a bite to eat?" which would not normally be taught at high school. All

Table 3. *Mean number of words, turns and words per turn. (*All figures are means rounded to the nearest whole number.)

| | Narrative | Invitation |
|---|---|---|
| Number of words | 151 | 85 |
| Number of turns | 43 | 3 |
| Number of words per turn | 42 | 1 |

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students did very badly. Most were able to translate "I have no idea" as being the pragmatic equivalent of "I don't understand" and picked up some half marks for the literal translation of "Do you know what I mean?" which would not be altogether incomprehensible in Japanese, but generally showed no understanding of the target items. However for the lower group we decided to make a multiple choice test using the incorrect answers from the upper class. (The translations of items in the test in Appendix II are designed to give a feel for the kind of choices they had to make). This test was also used as a post-test for all classes. As you can see the upper group appear to have made dramatic gains, however this is almost certainly due to the change in test format from open translation to multiple choice. The lower group did poorly in both tests, even apparently showing a slight decrease. Overall these results seem to reflect our over-optimistic hypothesis of how learners might acquire some understanding of pragmatic use of expressions that are particularly difficult to understand. The six target items were originally incorporated in speech bubbles in the first narrative picture task. It was also hoped that some phrases like "Do you fancy a bite to eat?" could have been used during the invitation task. In one of the upper classes, which consisted of all the mobile e-mail students and half of the speaking students, the target phrases were briefly explained in L2 by the teacher and it was pointed out that "Do you fancy a bite to eat?" could be used as a casual invitation to eat something together, including, say, going for lunch at the restaurant. With other classes no explanation was given. However, none of the students used this phrase or any of the other target vocabulary during the tasks.

The only really positive data was that the overall success rate of the upper students with the six target items featured in the tasks was generally better than with the non-target items which only appeared in the pre- and post-tests. The overall success rate for these scores was 0.47 compared to 0.36 for the 12 distracters. Mean scores for all questions were higher for the class who received feedback on the pre-test, and had the target items appearing in the task explained. The overall score for the group who had feedback on the test and target items in the task was 9.8 compared with 5.9 for the other class. Meanwhile the average score for the target structures was 12.1 for the class with feed-

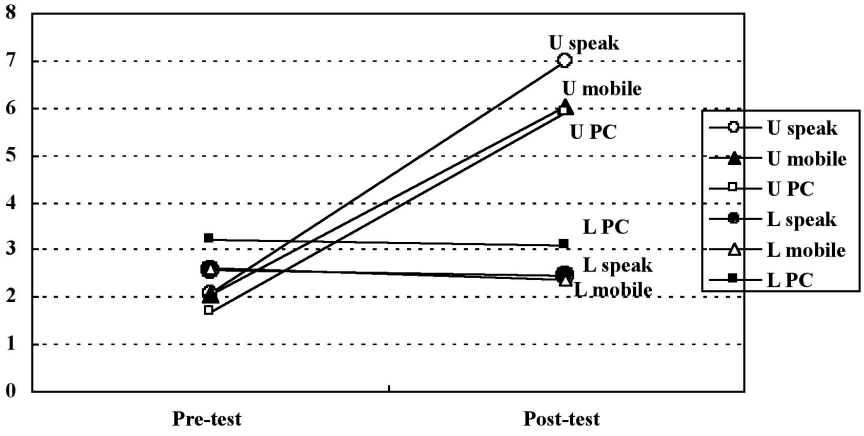



Fig. 3. Pre-test and post-test results. U = upper i.e. level 1, L = lower i.e. level 4, speak = face to face speaking, mobile = mobile phone e-mail, PC = PC e-mail.

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back compared to 8.0 for those without (see Figure 3).

While it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions or generalise from these figures, it does seem that, in line with the recent return to a focus on form based teaching proposed by researchers such as Doughty and Williams (1998), it is important to include form focus in the planning cycle, if we hope to improve learners' understanding of target vocabulary. Indeed to expect learners to gain more than a passing familiarity with pragmatic usage that is so different in L1 and L2 through simply incorporating it incidentally in tasks may well be rather naïve.

## 4 Conclusions and discussion

### *4.1 Advantages of mobile phones*

In general mobile phones proved to be popular learning tools with the learners involved in this project. They also seemed adept at adapting to using them in English as illustrated by the economy of words in mobile phone e-mail as compared with PC e-mail. Despite this the overall approach to doing the tasks was similar whether using PC e-mail, mobile e-mail or speaking. Learners were also forced to rely on their L2 as they were sent to opposite sides of the room in the classroom and completed other tasks in their own homes. Being able to get learners to communicate in English outside the classroom as noted above is in itself an important benefit. One reason we were able to experience these as positive results was that the learners' English proficiency level was equal to the functional capabilities of the mobile phone. If their level had been much higher we might well have experienced problems or indeed had very different results.

### *4.2 Disadvantages of mobile phones*

Mobile phones themselves, although increasingly versatile, also have a number of obvious limitations as language learning tools. First the attractive idea of separating learners during speaking tasks, by having them use mobile phones is impracticable due to the cost. Using mobile phone e-mail, although reasonably successful with these tasks, clearly has limitations in terms of the quantity of language that can be used, due to the one finger input style of mobile phones. Message length is also limited. Modern phones include a number of exciting features (such as photo and video capability); however these are moving away from verbal to visual forms of communication and so are not very obviously useful for foreign language learning. Another problem is that features on mobile phones are generally in L1. Mobile phones set to an L2 environment would add another dimension of English usage. Perhaps this may be possible by encouraging access to English web sites through mobile phones.

## 5 Limitations and implications

### *5.1 Limitations*

There are a number of limitations to this study. First the post-task test results were

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generally rather disappointing and in retrospect hoping that learners would acquire quite difficult target vocabulary items through indirect exposure, or that having understood them they might use them, may well have been over optimistic.

Secondly this study focused on closed tasks that did not require particularly extensive or complex use of language. Ideally we would like to see learners doing less structured tasks such as mobile phone e-mail exchanges of the kind popular in PC e-mail projects.

Another caveat is that mobile phone and PC e-mail were both readily available and popular with our engineering majors in Tokyo, but perhaps such a project would be both less popular and less feasible in other situations where mobile phones and computers were not so widely used or available.

### *5.2 Implications and future direction*

Mobile phone e-mail projects would appear to be suited to lower level learners as they can only work with a limited volume of language (limited by the key pad), however they may be a useful introduction to using PC e-mail especially for those who have not yet learned to type. More open tasks (though less useful for research) may be better suited to the classroom. Tasks also need to be designed specifically for mobile e-mail. Perhaps for example a group of learners could each be given a very small bit of information which could be circulated to solve a problem as a group. Once a message has been received it can easily be sent on or added to. It may also be worth investigating how mobile phones and texting are used in everyday life in order to develop a more authentic kind of learning task, encouraging learners to see mobile phones as a "learning tool in your pocket."

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## Appendix I: Post-test sample

The choices were originally in L1 Japanese but equivalents have been given in English here to give a sense of the problems they faced. The correct answer is shown in bold.

Read the following. Look at the underlined phrases and choose the best translation for the underlined word or phrase in the situation. Be careful as the meaning is not always literally translatable.

1. Yeah, it worked out well in the end though…….

1 a. Worked hard to the end
b. **But the end result was good**
c. It worked (was effective) to the end
d. But it was the last work

2. I'm sure she'll be thrilled .

2 a. She got overexcited
b. **She will be really pleased**
c. She is scary. (c.f. "thriller" movie)
d. She is sad

3A. You haven't seen a green bag around here by any chance?

3B a. Fortunately
b. By coincidence
c. **By the way**
d .If you have the opportunity

3B. Funnily enough I have.

3B a. **Strangely enough**
b. It is laughable
c. (We) laughed a lot
d. (We) enjoyed it greatly

4A. I'm sorry to bother you but, would you mind moving your car?

4A a. I'm sorry to hear about [what happened to] your brother
b. I sincerely appologise
c. I know it is a terrible nuisance
d. **Excuse me**

4B. Not at all. I'll be right there.

4B a. I will come immediately
b. I will wait on the right side
c. I think that is the right place
d. I think it is right (good)

5A. Tom: I don't suppose you've got a minute have you?

5A a. I cannot imagine it
b. I don't think so
c. **There isn't any chance that**…
d. I cannot show you around

5B. Mary: As a matter of fact I was just on my way out.

5B a. In fact…
b. By the way…
c. That is a fact…
d. The reality of the problem is…

6A. Tom: It was a real hassle getting my passport back after I lost it

6A a. **It was a lot of trouble**
b. I really suffered
c. It was a perfect forgery
d. It was really important

6B. I had to go to the embassy and everything.

6B a. **And all things**
b. And every one of them
c. And so on, and so forth
d. In order to…

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7A. Tom: Well, I must let you go.

7A a. I will have to allow you to depar
b. I must release you from captivity
c. I have to let you leave
d. **I am sorry to have troubled you [pre-closing move in Japanese]**

7B. Mary: Yeah, thanks for calling. It's good to hear you again.

7B a. Let's meet again
b. **It was nice of you to telephone me**
c. I was finally able to hear you
d. That is very good news

8A. Tom: I was happy to be able to sleep in my own bed again. Do you know what I mean?

8A **a.You understand don't you**
b. Do you see the meaning of what I am saying?
c. Do you happen to comprehend my message?
d. We have a mutual understanding

8B. Mary: Absolutely.

8B a. I don't understand at all
b. I completely understand
**c. I quite agree [lit. as you say]**
d. It is perfect

9A. Tom: Somehow things just won't be the same without Billy

9A a. There won't be a great deal of difference in things
b. **I will feel a bit lonely**
c. There is no similarity between the things
d. The result will be the same next time

9B. Mary: I know what you mean.

9B a. I can understand the meaning of what you say
b. **Yeah, that's right**
c. I have knowledge of what you mean
d. I understand

10A. Tom: Do you fancy going for a bite to eat?

10A a. Do you like going out to eat?
b. Do you do a part time job ["bite" short for arbeit in Japanese]?
c. Do you eat a lot?
d. **Shall we go and eat something together?**

10B. Mary: I wouldn't mind

10B a. I wouldn't like to impose myself on you
b. **That [would be] good**
c. I don't care
d. I'm not considering it

## Appendix II: Mobile phone/E-mail survey

Name: Student number:

1. Do you have a mobile phone? Yes No [If *No* go to Q6]

2. What a features does it have?
a. telephone b. text message c. e-mail d. photo mail
e. video mail f. Internet g. other _____

3. What do you use your phone for most?
a. telephone b. text message c. e-mail d. photo mail
e. video mail f. Internet g. other _____

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Please put in order of importance:

1_____ 2 _____ 3_____

4. Who do you talk to most on your mobile phone?
   a. mother / father b. other family c. special friend d. friends

5. How often do you use your mobile phone?
   a. hardly ever b. a few times a week c. everyday d. a few times a day

6. Which word(s) best show how you feel about mobile phones?
   a. a nuisance b. not interested c. useful / convenient d. essential

7. Have you ever used e-mail?
   a. no never b. yes a few times c. yes many times d. yes regularly

8. Have you ever read e-mail in English?
   a. no never b. yes a few times c. yes many times d. yes regularly

9. Have you ever written e-mail in English?
   a. no never b. yes a few times c. yes many times d. yes regularly

10. Which word(s) say(s) how you think about e-mail?
    a. a nuisance b. not interested c. useful / convenient d. essential

Thank you for your help!

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