Lack Of Digital Competence: The Hump In A University - English For Specific Purpose - Classroom

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ABSTRACT: An evaluative study was conducted in a deemed to be university in India on students' digital literacy, their competence and their knowledge of digital tools and the latter's use in language learning and also to find how competent are the teachers to facilitate language learning in the classroom with computers, mobile phones and internet. The study gathered data through observation, questionnaires and informal interviews. It found that generation students are very enthusiastic about Mobile learning; but the teachers are still trying to adapt the mobile technology in language classes. The study identified an imbalance in the force of technology intrusion and the ability of digital immigrant teachers to meet the technology challenges. It concluded the digital immigrant teachers with their vast knowledge and willing to learn attitude can be helped to face the challenge, through Faculty Development Programs (FDP) and workshops. Students can be motivated for participatory learning with the course material appropriate to their academic need, interest and age under the Blended learning approach.

Key words: digital literacy, digital competence, Mobile learning, technology intrusion, digital native teachers, digital immigrant teachers, technology challenges, Blended learning

1 INTRODUCTION

Computers and internet have become all potent and pervasive technology in learning processes in universities across India. Digital tools like ipods, ipads and smart phones with varied mobile apps have invaded not only the personal lives of students and teachers alike but the university environment also. Application of digital technologies in language teaching has changed the pedagogical perspectives of language teaching. It pressurises the teachers to be competent to handle digital learning in the language classes of universities which have the digital natives as stakeholders. The reason being, the enthusiasm and the speed that youngsters exuberate in the use of digital devices especially smart phones for entertainments and knowledge construction through surfing net, inhibits the language teachers with a sense of incompetence and lack of confidence. In such a context, this article analyses the changes in the language classrooms and the changing trends in the university education with the introduction of digital technology. Then, it critically presents the results of an evaluative study on the digital literacy and digital competence of both students and teachers to cope with the challenging technology intrusion in the higher education portal. Kumaravadivelu, the eminent linguist visualised the ever changing language classroom practices, when he traced the changing tracks and challenging trends in language education in 2006. He suggested that "practicing teachers can design their own micro-strategies or classroom activities to meet the challenges of changing contexts of teaching. "By designing appropriate micro-strategies to maximize learning potential in the classroom, and by monitoring their teaching acts, teachers will eventually be able to devise for themselves a systematic, coherent, and relevant theory of practice.

In fact, the teachers will be awakened to the vitality of macrostructures - social, cultural, political, and historical - that shape and reshape the micro-structures of our pedagogic enterprise … and that the end of all awakening must be the beginning of attainment" (p. 75-76) [14]. If this prediction is true it is needless to iterate that the ESL teachers have been awakened to the necessity of making the method based pedagogies more sensitive to the local exigencies of teaching context which is pervaded with digital devices. However, the teachers are bewilder at the multiplicity of learner identities and diversities in terms of their interest and knowledge in digital devices. Though awakened to the context of technology integration in language teaching, the teachers are wary of their ability to meet the demands of language classroom and the digital native learners.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

[31] Zakia, (2013) rightly opines, "pyramid process exists within the teaching-learning process; namely between the teacher, the learner and the classroom. None of these elements go into the classroom 'empty-handed', but rather every one brings into the classroom a number of influencing factors. The learner, on the one hand, will recall in the classroom his own learning experience, his life, his style, his emotions and his personal differences. The teacher, on the other hand, will bring into the classroom his learning/teaching experience, his personal character, and his course entailing all its connected variables. Various interactions take place between the teacher and the learner within the classroom setting. “The classroom is the crucible—the place where teachers and learners come together and language learning, we hope, happens. It happens, when it happens, as a result of the reactions among the elements that go into the crucible—the teachers and the learners” [4] A recent survey indicates more than seventy per cent of the university learners are young adults who are not only comfortable but competent in operating digital tools. More than being digital savvy, these teen agers are desirous of establishing their identity in a 'wide range of expressive styles' that are consistent with the youth culture. For this reason, [16] Legutke (2012) wants to redefine the
classroom needs so that language exposure and language use are linked in a meaningful way. Listening and viewing of audios and videos are part of digital literacy, because they are done on digital devices like computers, laptops, tabs and smart phones. This digital literacy as part of the pedagogy for the multi-literacy necessitates both the teacher and the learner to be digital competent for effective classroom learning. ICT or Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) exploits the digital natives’ fascination for computers and internet. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) uses multimedia computers and the Internet that combine text, graphics, sound, animation and video. The mentioned hypermedia resources can be accessed from a PC, using CD-ROMS or the Internet [19] (Moras, 2001). The hyper media resources can as well be accessed from hand held smart phones which are the advanced versions of erstwhile cell phones and mobile phones. Though ICT remains a mode of language learning in the language labs of many institutes and universities across India, the conspicuous entry of mobile phones in the classrooms has caused ripples in the academic environment of the higher education portals. The change is reflected in students’ addiction to mobile phones and the consequent classroom indiscipline in terms of lack of attention and motivation in classroom learning. Smart phones with their various apps are helpful in carrying information through SMS, WhatsApp, email, and e-documents through Microsoft office apps. Besides being valuable communication devices, they assist the language teaching learning process both inside and outside the classrooms. The students sit in full view of the teachers unlike in ICT classes where the students sit in front of the desktops and are out of teachers’ view. As the smart phones are all in one, for example, voice recorder, calculator, camera, note pad, entertainer, and music-player, they make the students’ academic and social life happy. The small screen, however supports their learning to text messages and view the google pictures and animations; more than all these, the e-books and dictionaries available in the mobile phones make them ready reckoners in a language class. Their light weight and portability have made them the most preferred among the digital devices. Mobile learning - the learning that happens when the students are mobile or a learning that is informal, self-directed and spontaneous using mobile technologies has become synonymous with Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The mobile learning and digital learning are combined in the formal classroom setting when teachers send their notes to the students’ email and instruct them to have a print copy of the same and the digital natives download the notes in the mobile phones, for use when they are off the net. Classroom oral communicative activities like role play performances are recorded and sent to teachers for evaluation [2] (Chandrasena, 2017). Communication regarding class changes, events organisations, assignment details and deadlines for submissions is passed on through smart phones. The students remain individuals when each one is addressed individually and members of a group when a group identity is created for communicating to them in WhatsApp. The university has introduced Google classes, moodle classes, edmodo classes and various other professional e content and learning providers to teach the university students when they are off the campus. All these activities are supported by the smart phones making the learners all the more smart and learning self-directed and easier. Flipped Learning is a latest invention with smart phones used outside the classroom by the students for listening and viewing an audio or any visual with the purpose of participating in a lively discussion in the classrooms to construct knowledge. A prior knowledge and experience with mobile devices and learning aptitude and attitude of the learners are crucial for the students to be successful in such learning. This kind of self-learning develops learner autonomy in a learner centred language classroom. The more advanced teachers use CALL, MALL and traditional approaches combined together for a friendly and uninhibited classroom learning. This innovative approach which strengthens the communicative language teaching approach is Blended Learning approach of this decade. Blended learning (BL) as an approach practices combing (blending) different learning approaches, methodologies, different digital devices, learning environments and learning styles. Today’s language teaching parlance now understands it to mean a rich, supportive learner-centred learning environment where the ‘right blend’ is synonymous with effective learning (and teaching). The term ‘blended learning’ refers to every time teachers mix different media (e.g. print, audio, and video) with classroom interaction, maximising authentic input in order to support learners’ output and skills development to achieve the “optimal” learning environment [18] (Marsh, 2012). Blended learning allows for more learning opportunities that motivate students to participate in and outside of the class settings. [27] Senffner and Kepler (2015) point out blended learning is a flexible, scalable, and meaningful way of teaching and learning. That is, blended learning environments provide students with online and face-to-face places to meet, collaborate, and work on meaningful projects which have particular benefits to successful learning [26] (Riel, et al. 2016). The blended learning approach creates an accessible, flexible, active, interactive, encouraging, and inspiring teaching and learning environment [32] (Zhang and Zhu, 2018). BL maximises meaningful academic interaction in the classroom that the learners revise and consolidate what they have learnt in the classroom or simply to practice more. Never the less, these new online literary practices and the use of digital devices for language teaching require digital literacy for basic operation and digital competence to use them with considerable speed. The digital literacy as defined in the portals of higher education is, making use of computers, multimedia and cell technology with which the present day teen aged, young adult students are familiar. [32] Twing (2013) (in Zhang & Zhu, 2016) describes it as the requisite skill for an effective citizen in the 21st century. Besides helping one, in comprehending the characteristics and features of digital technology and the effect of digital identities, it also equips one with the ability to manage, comprehend, assess, share and communicate information using digital technology and interact in the digital world safely. Within the context of the present study, [12] Koltay’s definition (2011) of ‘digital literacy’ underpins the efficient utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) because the teachers’ use of digital media, digital technology, communication devices and networks can get, control, incorporate, estimate and
generate information in the society of knowledge, of which both teachers and students are members. Meanwhile, [3] Ferrari (2013) utilizes another term 'digital competence' that can be summarized as the competence to manage communication, information, content design, and problem handling. More specifically, [10] Hatlevik and Christophersen (2013) define digital competence as the skill to utilize technology to gain, manage and evaluate information, create and share information by using digital tools. The technology hitherto spoken about, offer the potential for autonomous language learning with the substantial use of on line spaces like YouTube, about.com and Fan Fiction.net which give ample scope for learning and peer discussion. For [9] Hafner and Miller (2011) technology rich environment will draw upon emerging literacy practices, in order to promote opportunities for language learning to foster learner autonomy. The rich interactive multimedia input that is accessed through authentic video, audio, texts, visuals and graphics not only provides meaningful content relevant to learners’ needs and interests and learning styles but requires teachers to be digitally competent. As [28] Sharma and Barrett (2007) say teachers’ positive or negative attitudes toward technology use, learners’ proficiency levels, teachers’ training, teachers and students’ accessibility to technology and cost decide implementing a blended learning approach in language classrooms. In addition to all the aforementioned factors, the teachers’ and students’ digital competence decides the classroom environment in terms of cooperation among peers and teacher for effective language learning. The importance of digital media literacy as one of major competences [3](Ferrari, 2013) to hold the profession and future for the young learners, 21st century teachers are challenged to integrate digital literacy in teaching learning process. Digital literacy is required for teachers to bring digital media inside the classroom for parallel learning outside the classroom and to conform to students’ digital inclination and necessities in the classroom. The overall technology use squarely rests on a teacher’s ability to utilize the technology in the classroom; so the lack of it becomes a major hump in technological device application and integration in teaching learning process. Teachers’ inability to concede the digital inclination of the digital native students and cater to their digital attitude brings a digital divide or digital gap between the students and teachers. In a university with teachers of different age and age related attitudes and aptitudes, the digital gap is found between the digital abilities of the teachers of different ages and the consequent changes in the perspectives of technology adoption, adaptation, appropriation and innovation [1] (ACOT, 1996) The present context of teaching and learning, raises the issue of the digital gap among three different technology generations, the digital immigrant teachers, digital native teachers and students, as all the generations look upon each other for each other’s development in institutes of higher education as the one, the present author works in. [24] Park and Burford (2013) identify the digital divide as the gap between the teachers who can and cannot operate in the digital era and the students who can and cannot access information through digital technologies. The digital native generation of present day comprises not only the student community which is considered more digital savvy than its previous generation but also the young and new entrant teachers. The digital immigrants refer to the older teachers and older part time students. Classification of Technology Generations and their Familiar Technology is given in Table 1.

3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the digital immigrant teachers/digital native teachers competent to facilitate digital native students’ language learning in formal classrooms?
2. Are the digital native students competent to learn the language through Mobile Assisted Language Learning programs orchestrated by digital literate teachers?

4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There were 120 student participants from first year B. Tech courses. They were in the age group of 18-20. By Oblinger’s categorization they are net generation, digital natives and millennials. They have grown amidst digital devices and digital media. Precisely by western standards they carry digital gene. They were heterogeneous in terms of their mother tongue, culture, proficiency in English and digital competence. They were asked to give their name, section and roll no. while answering the questions raised. There were 20 English language teachers who engaged B. Tech students. They were from Mature and Baby boomers to net generation. They were asked to give date of birth to categorise their ability to handle the digital devices and their competence in using them for language teaching as observed by[22] Oblinger and Oblinger (2012) and [9] Hartman, et al (2005)

5 METHOD

This research has internalised similar researches in the field: [29] Simjanoska, (2017); [23] Palalas, (2011); [5] Gaudreau, et al. (2013) and [15] Kurniawati, et al.(2018). These investigations pertained to the use of mobile phones in academic and English for Specific Purpose classes; the methodology to be adopted in an ESP Class - whether the blend of in-class, online and mobile learning could be a solution for effective English teaching at the college level and the wireless classrooms and the students’ engagement with laptops in Canada. Kurniawati, et al. have researched the digital gap between the two generations of teachers. The vast amount of information that Simjanoska has recorded in her article is a kind of motivation for this study. The present study is about the perceptions of teachers and students regarding mobile learning, and their awareness and preparedness to make use of digital literacy.
and digital competence in language teaching and learning per se, but the digital gap needs to be addressed by both of them with proper knowledge.

The research design was an evaluative study. A descriptive questionnaire was issued to each of the teacher and student participants. Separate questionnaires were prepared for the students and the teachers. Both had the objective to find how prepared are the research participants in taking the mobile challenges introduced in the higher education. The questionnaire used the Likert scale descriptions of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, strongly disagree, disagree to make the samples answer the questions. The qualitative remarks were quantified, to be submitted for frequency analysis. The research findings were recorded.

The enquiry was to find whether the language teachers have competence and comfort ability in handling Mobile phone and other digital devices, their choice of digital tool, whether they engage Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) or Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) or Blended Learning (BL) to facilitate learning in a formal classroom and outside it, their preference for MALL/CALL/Blended Learning. The students’ response to such learning was assessed in terms of their knowledge of the digital devices with special reference to mobile learning, their competence and comfort ability in learning through digital devices, more specifically through mobile phone, their preference for either of them, their preference for MALL/CALL/Blended Learning. The questions pertaining to the use of free and paid mobile apps were adapted from [25] Ramya and Madhumathi, (2017), since the authors researched on the use of mobile apps for language teaching in tertiary level in an Indian school. An informal, casual interaction with the participants about mobile learning and the participants’ considerations and thoughts were recorded. This method of fact finding helped the researcher why the teachers were non-committal for certain questions. Finally, the problems pertaining to the handling of digital and mobile learning were identified and solution to the same is suggested for the teachers to trap the learners in mobiles for effective language learning.

6 FINDINGS

Students
The questionnaire that the students had to answer was descriptive to help them respond without any assistance. The students were very happy to subject themselves for a self-perceptive analysis so that they can realise their own digital literacy. The questions were propositional statements, which would invite them to put a tick mark if it was correct. Secondly certain other questions were posed with the Likert assistance to postulate the degree of their agreement or disagreement.

Question No.1:
Digital learning is known to you in School/College
A mere 12% of the students said they did not know digital learning. When asked orally, those rural students said their school had no lab and the government laptops were not given to them. But the remaining percentage (88%) had full exposure to the digital devices not only in school but at home also because many of their elder siblings and other close relatives worked with them.

Question No.2:
Whether they could operate the common digital devices like smart phone/ mobile phone, ipod/tablet, laptop 100% replied in the affirmative.

Question 3 & 4
They were about their possessing the digital devices and their preference for them. They had smart phones/mobile phones: 78%; iPods 8%; tablet: 1% and laptop 13% All of them unanimously said they preferred mobile phones.

Question No. 5a.:
It wanted to assess the reasons for their preference. All of them agreed either strongly or minimally, 1. a mobile phone is light to handle, 2. Access net from anywhere and at any time, 3. Entertainment

Question No. 5b.:
It wanted to know the students’ perception on mobile phone usage. Nobody prioritised language learning over communication, information and entertainments.

Question No. 6:
The question assessed their using mobile apps for language learning. All of them were familiar with most of the apps.

Question No. 7:
It wished to find the type of app that they were using. The students went for only free apps.

Question No. 8:
For a question on their using mobile for learning, 72% said average, 22% good and 6% fair.

Question No. 9:
The question tried to assess whether they had learnt language skills (LSRW)
Listening: 84% were positive; Speaking: do not know: Reading: 58% positive; Writing: do not know.

Question No. 10:
The question enlisted the components of communication skills and asked the extent of their acquiring them: 84% replied they did not know. The other 16% replied positively.

Question No. 11:
The question inquired their opinion on recently introduced google classrooms. It was a neck to neck consideration of good and average.

Question No. 12:
The question with nine sub-questions could help them subject to self-appraisal of their digital literacy which ultimately showed them all as digital natives.
Question No. 13:
The question wanted them to declare their preference for Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) / Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) / Blended Learning (BL) The answer was not patterned. While CALL claimed 16%, MALL 80% and BL 4%.

Teachers
The questionnaire, they answered had twenty one questions. For the sake of uncomplicated frequency analysis, the researcher combined strongly agree and agree as agree and strongly disagree and disagree as disagree.

Questions 1- 9
The questions on teachers’ possession of mobile phone and its usage were almost similar irrespective of age. Regarding the mobile apps, a few baby boomers and mature teachers, incidentally did have a knowledge of mobile apps in language learning. But the informal interview with them made it clear, that they could not handle them with the speed of the young students of their classes. They acknowledged that they take the help from students to take photo of the printed materials and to post them on whatsapp groups, the students have created for the purpose.

Question No. 10:
It wished them to evaluate their use of mobile phones for teaching, for which they answered good.

Question No. 11:
It asked whether the MALL approach helped the learners to acquire language Skills
80% recorded it improved listening skills 20% were not ready to comment.
Speaking skill improvement received a 43 % approval and the rest said neither agree nor disagree.
Reading skill was considered to have improved – 78% agreed and 22% did not.
As for writing skill improvement the teachers gave a blanket reply of 100% strongly disagree.

Question No. 12:
It wanted to find the teachers’ perception of MALL in enhancing communication skills with all its sub components.
Pronunciation: 64% agreed and 36% did not agree
Intonation: 64% agreed and 36% did not agree
Vocabulary for the context: 76% agreed 22% did not agree
2% did not take stand
Grammar & structure: 68% agreed 30% did not agree 2% did not take stand
Fluency: 87% agreed that the students have improved their fluency, while 13% said did not agree
As for shed off fear and shyness in speaking /confidence in speaking English 90% agreed while10% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Question No. 13:
It discussed the disadvantages of MALL in a language classroom.

Not all teachers/ students possess smart phones: 100% agreed
Not all teachers /students use mobile apps: 100% agreed
Lack of classroom etiquette: 100% agreed.
The students’ addiction to entertainment in mobile phone is a problem: 100% agreed.
Monitoring the use of mobile phones in the classroom is difficult: 100% agreed.
Giving corrections with remarks is not possible: 100% agreed.

Question No. 14:
Regarding their evaluation of their adapting mobile teaching in the classroom the teachers felt it was good: 72% and average: 28%

Question No. 15:
It inquired about their opinion on the digital assisted language teaching as adapted in Dr. MGR Educational and Research Institute.
Recording role play performances in smart phones help students acquire communication skills: 82% agreed. 18% was non-committal
Audios and videos help learners to engage themselves in conversations for learning: a unanimous yes-100%
Notes and assignments uploaded through email and down loaded in smart phones are helpful: 100% agreement.
Power point presentations help delivering the content with coherence: 100% agreement.
Students enjoy power point sessions because of clarity of presentation: 100% agreement.
Students learn to do research on the topic with teachers’ guidance: 100% agreement.
Uploading assignments in Jack prodigy (A software employed by the University for recording classroom procedures) by the students automatically records their output: 100% agreement.
But the authenticity of assignment is doubtful: 100% agreed
The teachers were happy about the google classrooms and their delivering lecture: 100% agreement.

Question No. 16:
The language teaching practices using all the digital devices in Dr. MGR E&R Institute was acclaimed to be good: 100% agreement.

Question No. 17:
It wished the teachers to make an honest self-appraisal of their digital literacy. Their response showed irrespective of age, all the teachers could

- browse and surf net for social, academic: teaching and learning purposes.
- share/receive notes with colleagues and students on line/ on mobile phone/ both
- go through communications in their email in the laptop/ desktop/ in the mobile.
- view students’ role plays as recorded in their smart phones and give corrections and guidance.
- make effective power point presentation
- correct students’ assignments sent as email attachment
- make error correction in assignments: online.
All the above responses were expressive of 100% agreement.

**Question No. 18 & 19**
However, regarding the proposition that they down load in the mobile- The digital native teachers said 100% ‘YES’, because they could read off the net and carry anywhere. Further no paper print is eco-friendly.

The mature and baby boomers said they were accustomed to read printed material so they did not mind spending money to get them printed. Further, they said, the unstable display of the material on the small screen and the small font size also pose problem for reading.

**Question No. 20:**
It wanted the teachers to give their preference for MALL/CALL/BL
The teachers were divided on their preference for MALL:23% CALL: 35% BL: 42%

**Question No. 21:**
It wanted the teachers to give their suggestion for enhancing their digital competence.
The teachers were divided on their preference for FDP:100% Guest Lecture: 35% Workshop: 82%

**Fact finding through informal, casual Interview for non-committal responses**

**Students**
When the students were gently coaxed for being non-committal (84%) regarding LSRW acquiring, they said, they did not know how far they had improved. Further, though their perception was positive, it was for the teachers to assess the improvement in pedagogical terms.

**LSRW enhancement:**

**Teachers**
Regarding listening skill improvement, the teachers said it depended upon the language program the students listened to. Unless the students listen to target language program and have the physical ability to distinguish the different allomorphs in the target language we cannot expect transformation in their listening skill. Further, only regular practice of listening to target language (English) songs, dialogues and news report can make them competent listeners. Regarding speaking skill improvement the teachers said it depended upon the language the students use in communication. If they were committed to using only English to communicate with peers and teachers definitely it would reflect in their English Proficiency. Otherwise, holding a mobile phone to converse in mother tongue will not reflect in oral proficiency in English. Regarding writing skill improvement, as for the reason for their blanket disagreement, the teachers cited the inappropriate and unacceptable abbreviations the students use for sentences like I love you (ILU), happy birthday (HBD) thank you so much (TYSM) etc., and also the poor grammar structures they use to inform. They said in fact the language, vocabulary and structure the learners use are stereotyped and fossilized, transmitted to a group and followed as a new text culture. The teachers did not find any possibility of improving the students’ writing skill with text messaging. More over their contention was unless the students themselves regulate their learning materials, method and the choice of language to communicate outside the class we cannot expect drastic change in their LSRW. Regarding shedding of fear and building confidence in speaking, the teachers felt only frequent interaction in English could help anybody to achieve oral proficiency. As for error corrections the teachers found print copy of assignments was good. Though they could make on line corrections, they wished for traditional corrections with remarks/oral review because it gives them chance for interaction with students and a kind of satisfaction in the face to face interaction. Then the teachers were directly asked about the integration of mobile technology in their language classes. The questionnaire could show their competence in operating the digital devices but not how they are used in the language teaching.

**The fact finding interview could find the following:**
A baby boomer teacher gave an instance that she made the students take a paragraph from the text and rewrite with the synonyms of the vocabulary underlined, taking mobile dictionary for help. Video clippings were allowed to be viewed in the class and they were to be interpreted orally with a scaffolding task of writing a paragraph. Another said, she made the students do oral presentation with power point slides on their mobiles. She also claimed it was quite successful. She used mobile phone as stop-watch also. These instances were undoubtedly the adaptation of mobile technology for learning purpose; the teachers, being digital literate apart, could control the class with specific instructions like using mobile dictionary, watching video clippings and mobile power point presentation with appropriate research on the topic. Further, the teacher could hold the mobile phone as stopwatch to regulate the process of power point presentation within a time frame. Besides these adaptations, the older teachers said they gave guidance to the digital native teachers in apperception procedures before engaging the students in a task and also how to make them do power point presentations and also how to assess them. Further, regarding the mobile apps that their academic colleagues in Thailand and Indonesia are using in the language classes the teachers accepted their ignorance. This clearly gives a strong focus on the remedial action to fill the digital gap between the digital immigrant and digital native teachers and also that between them put together and the digital native students.

**7 DISCUSSION**
The survey has been potent enough to identify the strength and weakness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the perspectives of both students and teachers. When 80 % of students unanimously acknowledged their interest in mobile learning, 48% of students said despite their longing to study in their out of class hours using their smart phones and available Apps, they could not control their temptation to view entertainments which ultimately destroys their mental schedule to study. Moreover the small screen which does not matter when viewing cinema and video games seems to be too small to hold their attention in reading and learning. The google play store with its innumerable apps for everything ties them with animation.
films and other programs. An informal interview with the students and teachers made it clear that both did not visualise Mobile Assisted Language Learning as an independent language pedagogy, where a teacher does not have a role to play; rather both have confided that a teacher monitored pedagogic activity could produce result by supporting the weaker students with valuable guidance and motivating more knowledgeable peers to help their digitally less competent and limited English proficient class mates. This kind of value added teaching behaviour would help the learners understand the process of learning for better outcome. The study identified there is imbalance in the force of technology intrusion and in the ability of digital immigrant teachers to meet the technology challenges. The redeeming factor in this context is, the new generation teachers are slowly outnumbering the baby boomers and digital immigrants in the university muster roll. The teachers of the older generation with their vast knowledge and willing to learn attitude are ready to face the challenge through Faculty Development Programs (FDP) and workshops. The present author finds a parallel in the views of [20] Nagar and Inbal (2014) who are optimistic about the teachers’ ability to improvise their knowledge and teaching skills. At the end of their research they say, “It can be assumed that if the educational system continues to support the training of teachers and consistently and systematically outlines a suitable pedagogical path, a significant change in teachers’ work, characteristic of teachers can be expected in the course of the next several years” (p.727). The digital native or net generation teachers who spend most of their time in online spaces and mobile phones are deemed to be interested in Web based courses and mobile assisted language teaching and learning but it was otherwise. The informal interview could understand their reluctance in the implementation of the new technology on the pretext that it is difficult to monitor the students’ mobile learning in a class of sixty. The additional workload in terms of monitoring and preparation of hand-outs and the anytime intrusion of students’ call after the college hours were unwelcome disruptions in their privacy. Further the digital native teachers’ indifference to improve their teaching strategy and style and implement the newer mobile technology in the English as Second Language and English for Specific Purpose classrooms has much to do with their perception of teaching as a non-rewarding career. The greener pastures elsewhere with lucrative rewards keep them blind to the present necessities and the present experience that could transform them into full-fledged teachers. With better student cooperation and better work environment, like encouraging them for research and higher studies and sending them to universities abroad on Faculty exchange programs will fix them on ground realities of learner demands and teacher responsibility. Such facilities may bring them on the tracks of dedication and perseverance which are characteristics of teachers in general. There is a sharp difference in the attitude of students and teachers towards Computer assisted language learning, Mobile learning and Blended Learning. The order was: 16%; 80%; and 4% respectively for students. The teachers voted: MALL: 23% CALL: 35% BL: 42%. It shows the students’ interest for mobile phones and their apps. The teachers have realised the advantages of blended Learning. With systematic Faculty development programs and workshops to enhance their digital literacy to digital competence, the teachers will gain confidence to use mobile technology for enhancing language skills of the newgen students. The older teachers with their experience and ability to learn and make others learn will make the young teachers to adapt mobile technology in the classrooms exploiting the interest of youngsters for better language learning. The University teachers are still in the adaptation stage in the use of digital tools as per the caveats of Apple Classrooms of Today. Only with adequate training all the teachers will realise the mismatch between their ability and the demands of 21st century classrooms with inquisitive but disturbed learners. Ultimately, the teachers will pass through the next two stages of appropriation and innovation when teachers could bring innovative mobile based curriculum for language learning. As for students, teachers have the responsibility to channelize the new gens’ energy and interest with well-prepared class hours for effective learning. If the teachers could engage them cognitively with model based learning and train them with the language that is ‘content obligatory’ and the language that is ‘content compatible’ (Snow et al, 1989) [30] despite the distractions and addictions that the students suffer, Mobile Assisted Language Learning has bright scope in the university teaching learning pedagogy. Furthermore, the teachers and students prefer neither the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) nor the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as separate entity but their combination, to work in a face to face interactive class which is called Blended Learning class in language parlance. This again connotes with the similar research findings on Blended Learning conducted in Iran by [11] Khazaei & Hossein (2011), wherein the researchers conclude, “the use of cell-phone in the blended way of teaching boosts vocabulary learning but the utilization of cell-phone requires attention on the part of teachers to different aspects of teaching and learning L2 vocabulary learning construct” (p.202). As a last word of restraint, over dependence on mobile learning of lexis and syntax may jeopardise the cognitive ability of the learners. But if issues like classroom management, variations in the mobile phone software programmes and an effective methodology to use the language learning through mobile phones and apps are addressed systematically blended learning will be a boon in the non-native ESL classrooms.

8 CONCLUSION
As a scientific study, the present research was able to portray the learners and teachers as users of mobile phones and the use of the instrument in language learning. The use of smartphones and Mobile Apps in the language class has removed the rigidity in the outlook of both the teachers and students. Both have realised the societal importance of each other in the knowledge portal that they acknowledge the necessity to complement each other’s effort to bring a change in language learning. Finally, the students have reiterated that a teacher’s place in the language class is unique and that it can never be replaced by any device, at the best the devices will be used as a support. This study has explored various m-learning activities and found the activities cannot themselves teach and ignite the learning attitude of students but a dedicated teacher can. The study revealed that students are
technically equipped to use m-learning but need the teacher to monitor them to control their distraction and channelize their learning process. Though a large scale change has been found in teachers’ perceptions of technology integration in the Indian Higher Education context, the research findings, like many other ICT based researches suggest that teachers make use of technology in the classroom, as supplement for the current teaching learning methods and do not use them to bring a change in the teaching pedagogy, that it makes the fullest use of digital teaching methods. However, with a change in their attitudes, the digital native teachers can effect a meaningful change in the language classrooms if they take the suggestion of [20] Nalliveettil & Alenazi (2016). “The number of mobile devices across the world have already surpassed the number of computers and other electronic gadgets, and it is indeed an opportunity for English language teachers to innovate methods and materials for interactive and enjoyable sessions to motivate the students in their classroom” (p.265). The digital immigrant teachers will no longer ‘speak an out dated language’ but will also understand the ‘new language’ of the digital natives and communicate with them with ease. Universities and teacher training institutions across the world must recognize the relevance of mobile technology in creating effective language lessons and help teachers find creative ways to integrate the mobile technology with the course materials and classroom activities for enhancing their students’ English language learning skills. Instead of banning smart phones in the educational campuses, the authorities must find ways to train teachers adequately in the five stages of mobile use as advocated by Apple Classrooms of Today; if the teachers are not educated on the effectiveness of mobile technology in teaching activities, the innovative mobile apps either free or paid will not be of any use to the teachers to monitor them to control their distraction and channelize their learning process.

**Limitations**

The student participants were only 120 first year engineering students whose competence in handling the digital devices, especially mobile phones are by far superior to the students of arts and science streams and hence cannot find a comparison with the latter. Teacher participants were only 20. The research was carried in a deemed to be University in Chennai (India). The result of the research may not be considered to be representing the whole of teaching and student community in the Indian subcontinent.

**REFERENCES**


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About the author

Dr M. Chandrasena Rajeswaran is a doctorate in English. She has been teaching ESL and ESP for nearly two decades. Developing students' oral communication skills in the Higher Education context is her passion. Her area of interest is applied Linguistics and Pragmatics in communication. As such her articles deliberate on her classroom observations, the resultant action researches she made and their results.