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# Student Perception of Improvements in English Presentations as a Result of Video Recordings

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## Abstract

Video recordings of presentations have been done in language classrooms for a long time, but they have required teachers to lug many pieces of equipment, have taken much time to set up, and have required a lot of attention to administrative details to allow students to view the videos in a timely fashion to do any good in improving language output. The present study examines student perceptions of an easy system for video recording of presentations that does not require the teacher to bring any equipment and does not require scheduling for student viewing of the recordings: the use of the students' own cell phones. A survey of students participating in classes which use the system shows that students very much see the value of using such a system.

Moore's Law, the prediction by former Intel CEO Gordon Moore, states that the number of transistors on integrated circuits would double every year, and this "law", modified by Intel executive David House to say that computing power doubles every 18 months (Moore's Law, n.d.; Chacos, 2013), has held true for computing power until very recently. It would be wonderful if there were such a law for technological application to classrooms. There have been some movement over the last few decades, with changes from computers in the classroom (CAI) to the use of mobile devices (m-learning), to cell phone technology use (CpT). However, adoption of technology by educators has been relatively slow. Some of the reasons include expense, lack of technological expertise, the amount of technological problems to overcome, and inertia. This study looks at a simple use of CpT to explore student attitudes toward the adoption of cell phones in

the classroom that may make it easier for educators to use technology in the classroom. This paper first describes the capabilities and distribution of mobile phones, next looks at the use of video recording in the classroom, then examines the area of self-study, and next explores the concepts of alternative assessment, including self-assessment and self evaluation. Finally, a small study of mobile phone use and student attitudes toward it for student self-assessment and self evaluation is described.

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are well-suited for classroom use for a number of reasons explained below.

### ***Mobile Phone Capabilities***

With advances in communication technology, the mobile phone has come to more closely resemble a portable personal computer which can be transported in ones pocket, and has become an essential part of people's personal lives. According to Gromik and Anderson (2010) the mobile phone user can "take pictures, write notes, record their voices or short videos, compose as well as listen to music, watch audio visual material, use a bilingual dictionary, send text messages to their peers, engage with social networking software and make regular calls." This makes it a versatile tool for classroom use. Also Meurant (2006) states that:

cell phones are becoming increasingly sophisticated in terms of their bundled capabilities, which now include web browsers, still-cameras, sound- and video-recorders, MP3 players, video and TV displays, games, GPS devices, long-distance digital walkie-talkies, electronic bilingual dictionaries, speech recognition and text-to-speech conversion. Internet access, voice- and SMS text-messaging, cameras and even video-recording are identified... as common cell phone features that enable communicative language practice.

Cell phones have many capabilities that may be used for learning.

### ***Numbers of Mobile Phones***

The popularity of the mobile phone and/or smart-phone has rapidly increased among people, especially of the younger generation. McNeal and van't Hooff (2008) state:

Mobile Life Survey conducted in the United Kingdom indicated that more than nine out of ten twelve-year-olds in the UK now have a mobile phone (BBC News, 2006). Teens in Scandinavia and Asia have near 100% mobile-phone ownership (Katz, 2005).

Thornton and Houser (2005) revealed that all of their 333 Japanese university students possessed their own cell phone. It seems like the cell phone is everywhere; according to the Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2014), in Japan the number of mobile phone owners has increased by six percent in the total number of subscribers from 141.13 to 149.56 million people since March of 2013. According to MyNavi Co. Ltd. (2012) 59.3% of Japanese students have a smart phone. Mobile phones are ubiquitous, practical, and information is readily available for its users. It has become a part of people's "everyday existence" (Kolb, 2006). Through anecdotal reporting, almost all Japanese university students have a cell phone.

### ***Mobile Phone Use in Education***

One problem with using mobile phones in class has been that many educators see the mobile phone as a nuisance and see its potential of being misused in classrooms: "mobile phones are a distraction, cause cheating on exams" (McNeal & van't Hooff, 2008), and are not being accepted for educational use in the classroom, "as educators we often reject cell phones in the classroom, considering them destructive and distractive 'toys'" (Kolb, 2006). Some teachers feel the classroom may not be the place to use a cell phone. In Campbell's 2002 survey, although cell phones are socially accepted, participants in his study "strongly regarded the use of the technology in classroom and movie theaters as unacceptable" (Campbell, 2002). However, because of its popularity, multiple functions, and ease of accessing the Internet, much has been written about using mobile phones in education. According to McNeal and van't Hooff (2008),

“[mobile phones] allow learners to transcend the boundaries of time and space imposed by schools and to connect with a world of information anytime and anywhere”. The mobile phone frees the teacher’s classroom limitations by opening up the world. What makes mobile technology so intriguing is that, according to Kukulska-Hulme (2009), “it has an affinity with movement between indoors and outdoors, across formal and informal settings, allowing learners to lead at least some of the way.”

### ***Mobile Phones in Language Learning***

Language learning can take place at any time anywhere; this is made possible by mobile phones and documented in studies. The Kiernan and Aizawa (2004) study asked the questions “are mobile phones useful language learning tools? And, how can mobile phones be used in task-based learning?” (p. 73). They noted that “being able to get learners to communicate in English outside the classroom as noted above is in itself an important benefit” (p. 80).

Thornton and Houser (2005) surveyed 333 female university students and found that all 333 students possessed a mobile phone and that 83% of the students used their mobile phones mainly to have conversation with friends. Their study also consisted of assessing vocabulary retention in two studies in mobile learning: one study where English words were e-mailed to their mobile phones, and one study where English idiom videos were accessed through their mobile phones. Thornton and Houser concluded that “mobile devices such as phones and PDAs [personal digital assistants] can be effective tools for delivering foreign language materials to students” (p. 396). Kluge, Thornton, and Houser (2003) describe many activities using mobile phones in the language classroom.

Wang and Smith (2013) cite a study by Lu (2008) in which students learned vocabulary words through mobile phones or paper-based format. It was concluded that students learning from the SMS format on mobile phones understood more words than students using the paper-based format. Mobile phones have been shown to be effective in language learning.

## **Student-centered Learning, Autonomous Learning, and Self Directed Learning**

Student-centered learning, autonomous learning, and self-directed learning are all movements that apply to learning with mobile phones in the classroom, as much of CpT is done as suggested activities or as homework, and the movements are described below.

### ***Student-centered Learning***

Student-centered learning, in opposition to traditional teaching/learning style, moves the teacher out of the center-stage spotlight and places students in the learning spotlight through methods such as active learning, cooperative learning, and inductive teaching and learning (NCSU, n.d.).

### ***Autonomous Learning***

Autonomous learning was developed in order to move gifted and talented students “toward the role of learners, controlling the learning process, with teachers adopting the role of facilitator” (Department of Education, n.d.). It is a specialized version of student-centered learning (Jones, 2007).

### ***Self Directed Learning***

Finally, self directed learning is another form of student-centered learning. “In its broadest meaning, ‘self-directed learning’ describes a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identify [sic] human and material resources for learning, choosing and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

## **Alternative Assessment**

Alternative assessment provides alternatives to traditional assessment/testing, specifically standardized testing, and is supposed to remedy the problems of such testing (Huerta-Macias, 1995). According to Huerta-Macias (1995) the alternatives it provides are that it:

(a) does not intrude on regular classroom activities; (b) reflects the curriculum that is actually being implemented in the classroom; (c) provides the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student; (d) provides multiple indices that can be used to gauge student progress; and (e) is more multiculturally sensitive and free of norm, linguistic, and cultural bias found in traditional testing. (p. 9)

Alternative assessment is called by many terms:

“performance assessment, authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, informal assessment, situated (or contextualized) assessment, and assessment by exhibition” (Garcia and Pearson, 1994, qtd. in Huerta-Macias, 1995).

Alternative assessment is a movement, the goal of which is to create qualitative, democratic, task-based methods of students’ language performance (Brown and Hudson, 1998), and is based on using checklists to observe student performance often based on a list of criteria of a task, or rubrics—wholistic rubrics that look at student language performance as a whole, analytic rubrics which separates the language performance into different categories, primary trait rubrics which look at one criterion for assessment, or multitrait rubrics which look at several traits for assessment (National Capital Language Resource Center, 2004). Other tools used are diaries, journals, logs, questionnaires, video or audio recordings, self-evaluation, teacher observations, portfolios, student-teacher conferencing, and self or peer assessments (Coombe, 2002; Brown and Hudson, 1998). Recording is a most effective tool for alternative assessment. Coombe (2002 wrote:

In today’s technological age, no other audiovisual aid can match the potential of the video reorder. Video can be exploited in a number of ways to encourage self-assessment in the classroom. For example, students can be videotaped or they can videotape each other and then assess their language skills. An obvious advantage to the use of video in self-assessment is that students can assess not only their communicative or language skills but their paralinguistic (i.e. body language) skills as well.

Self assessment and self evaluation are two kinds of alternative assessment. There is a difference between assessment and evaluation. Assessment means to

gather information relative to a goal, and evaluation is to “compare a student’s achievement with other students or with a set of standards.” (Kizlik, 2013). In other words, assessment is a checklist of suggested behavior and evaluation is the grade given by the teacher. Self assessment is often discussed within the topic of alternative assessment.

Knowledge of self assessment is important for students to become lifelong learners (NDT, n.d.). The goal for this type of assessment is that once students get used to using the checklists or rubrics, then they can eventually do self assessment of their own learning and peer evaluation through internalizing the necessary criteria (Bastanfar, 2009; NCLRC, 2004).

Teachers and educational researchers often object to alternative assessment on the grounds of validity, reliability, and objectivity—terms used in traditional testing (Huerta-Macias, 1995). Huerta-Macias (1995) responds that these concerns can be answered in the same way as concerns regarding qualitative research—through the concept of trustworthiness; that is, the instrument can be trusted if it has credibility (it is seen as true) and auditability (consistency) (p. 9). A different rationale for antipathy on the part of teachers to alternative assessment is given by Bynon (2003). He states that assessment and grading is part of a teacher’s power, and teachers often do not want to let go of this power—do not want to share this power with students. Kluge (1996) states a counter-argument and proposes a good compromise:

Because the teacher cannot see the preparation and the amount of effort the student puts into language learning, self evaluation should play an important role in the classroom evaluation. It should not become the sole component of a student’s grade, but should be what Dickinson (1993) calls “collaborative assessment,” where the teacher and the student cooperate to come up with a fair and accurate assessment of the language learner’s progress. (p. 15)

This collaborative assessment, luckily, has positive learning benefits. In studies quoted in McMillan and Hearn (2008), learners improved more when they were able to set their own goals and to self-report what they learned (Schunk, 1989; Zimmerman, 1990). Clearly, forms of alternative assessment, especially self assessment and self evaluation, are important tools in the language classroom.

## Present Study

The present study was conducted at an all-women English department of a Japanese university in Central Japan. Students are enrolled in first and second year presentation classes that focused on the giving of individual speeches and group interpretations of literature. Cell phones were used to video record speeches.

### *Research Questions*

The research questions for this study are the following:

1. Do the students find the use of video recording useful in improving speech abilities?
2. Do the students find it interesting to use video recording in improving speech abilities?
3. Do the students find it easy to use video recording for improving speech abilities?
4. Do the students find it intimidating to use video recording in improving speech abilities?

### *Instrument*

A simple 5-item questionnaire was created using Likert scales. (See figure 1.)

1. I watched my video before doing the final presentation.	1 Not at all	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Always	
2. I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is useful to improve my English.	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Yes	4 Yes, very much	
3. I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is interesting.	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Yes	4 Yes, very much	
4. I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is easy.	0 No answer	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Yes	4 Yes, very much
5. I think when I use a digital camera/mobile phone to record my English I am more careful in my English than when I do not record it.	0 No answer	1 Not at all	2 A little	3 Yes	4 Yes, very much

Figure 1. Student Questionnaire



The questionnaire also included a space for students to make comments.

### ***Participants***

The participants were 40 female university English majors. There were 22 first year students (age 18–19) enrolled in a first year presentation class, and 18 second year students (age 19–20) enrolled in a second year presentation class.

### ***Procedure***

The week before the graded performance, in groups of 3 or 4, students practiced their speech for the group two times. Before the second practice, the student gave her cell phone set to record video to a group member. While the student was presenting her speech to the group, a group member was video recording the speech using the speaker's own cell phone. All students were required to view their performance on their own cell phone and write a self evaluation using the following rubric/criteria:

1. Was the performance smooth, without pause?
2. Did the speaker speak with energy?
3. Did the speaker speak loudly enough to be heard by all?
4. Did the speaker have good eye contact?
5. Did the speaker smile?
6. Did the speaker have good posture?
7. Did the speaker use gestures?

In addition, the speaker had to write what she did well, and what she should improve.

The same procedure was followed for the graded performance the following week, except the speaker spoke in front of the entire class, and on this second self evaluation students gave themselves a grade from 1 to 100. At the end of the class, students were handed the questionnaire used for this study. They were told about the study, that filling out the questionnaire was voluntary, that if they wanted to participate in the study the results would be used for publication and perhaps for a presentation, and that those who choose to participate were to use the few minutes after the class to fill out the questionnaire and to put it on a designated desk with no name, student number, or any other identifying mark. Students who chose to participate signed a separate permission slip. (See Appendix.)

**Results**

The results were tabulated. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Results of Questionnaire

	1st Year n=22	2nd Year n=18	Total n=40	Mean 1st Year	Mean 2nd Year	MEAN Total
1. I watched my video before doing the final presentation.				2.32	1.86	2.30
1 Not at all	3	2	5			
2 Sometimes	13	12	25			
3 Often	2	1	3			
4 Always	4	3	7			
2. I think the use of digital cameras/ mobile phones is useful to improve my English.				3.55	2.55	3.35
1 Not at all	0	1	1			
2 A little	1	2	3			
3 Yes	8	9	17			
4 Yes, very much	13	6	19			
3. I think the use of digital cameras/ mobile phones is interesting.				3.18	2.50	3.13
1 Not at all	0	0	0			
2 A little	5	3	8			
3 Yes	8	11	19			
4 Yes, very much	9	4	13			
4. I think the use of digital cameras/ mobile phones is easy.				3.41	2.95	3.50
0 No answer	1	0	1			

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	1st Year n=22	2nd Year n=18	Total n=40	Mean 1st Year	Mean 2nd Year	MEAN Total
1 Not at all	0	0	0			
2 A little	0	0	0			
3 Yes	9	7	16			
4 Yes, very much	12	11	23			
5. I think when I use a digital camera/ mobile phone to record my English I am more careful in my English than when I do not record it.				2.59	2.14	2.6
0 No answer	0	1	1			
1 Not at all	4	2	6			
2 A little	7	6	13			
3 Yes	5	3	8			
4 Yes, very much	6	6	12			

**Discussion**

This discussion is divided into two parts: a discussion of the answers to the questions and a discussion of the free comments.

*Survey item responses*

For item 1, “I watched my video before doing the final presentation” all students marked a mean of 2.30, meaning between “Sometimes” and “often,” but closer to “Sometimes,” with first year students answering slightly higher, 2.32, than second year students, 1.86. This is not a good response in terms of frequency of using the treatment, and for greater use by more experienced students. (Many of the second year students used the same treatment in their first year.) This must be explored in further studies. Perhaps students are doing the self-assessments and self evaluations immediately after their performance, so they can easily remember it.

For item 2, “I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is useful to improve my English,” the results were better, with all students replying with a mean of 3.35, between “Yes,” and “Yes, very much,” with 19 students replying “Yes, very much” and 17 students replying “Yes.” First year students replied with a mean of 3.55. This indicates that students clearly see the language improvement benefits of recording their presentations. This seems to be at odds with the answers to question 1, again, another area to investigate in future studies.

For item 3, “I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is interesting,” the total mean was 3.13, indicating that most students felt that using their mobile phones was interesting—32 of 40 students indicating so.

For item 4, “I think the use of digital cameras/mobile phones is easy,” the total mean was 3.50, meaning most students found it easy to use their mobile phones.

For item 5, “I think when I use a digital camera/mobile phone to record my English I am more careful in my English than when I do not record it,” the total mean was 2.6, meaning that most felt a little that they were conscious of the recording. If the actual answers are examined, students answered each answer possibility, indicating there were differing degrees of self-consciousness about recording.

From these results, it can be concluded that students find the treatment fairly interesting, easy to use, and effective, with first year students especially feeling so.

#### *Free comments*

Looking at the free comments made at the end of the survey, some interesting conclusions can be reached.

Students found using their mobile phones was useful: “*I thought it was very useful using mobile phone in class.*” With mobile phones, learning can be more student-centered. One student commented: “*The use of digital cameras/mobile phones is so useful that I can find my weak points.*”

The students can access their mobile phones almost anywhere 24/7, as one student noted: “*it is good way to record a presentation using their own mobile phone because we can watch a video anytime anywhere.*” Students are able to review their oral presentation at any time without fuss and thus can try to improve their presentation.

Another student makes this point, “*I thought that recording video we can see our mistakes then we can change some bad points. You can also evaluate yourself.*” Another

student stated: *“I think that the video recording is useful to improve my English. I noticed that my presentation is not good.”* Still another student commented: *“I thought that recording video we can see our mistakes then we can change some bad points, so that I thought it is really useful when you are not confident. You can also evaluate by yourself. Of course it is great to have the others opinions to get better.”* Other students said simply, *“I think its a very good idea,”* and *“Mobile phone is very useful to improve our speaking.* It is clear that some students see mobile phone use as a means for self assessment and self evaluation to “judge their own work to improve performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance” (McMillan and Hearn, 2008). The mobile phone can become a tool to help students evaluate themselves.

For some students, video recording causes them to be more careful in English use: *“I’m more careful in my English when I do the presentation. However, I need more practice. Using digital cameras or mobile phone is very useful for me. I’d like to continue in next semester.”*

Once the presentation is done, perhaps because of their anxiety and having an adrenaline rush while presenting the presentation, students sometimes do not remember exactly what they said, or may not be consciously aware of what they were doing as they were speaking. As another student states: *“I often forgot my presentation, how I did it. However, recording it is very useful, because I can check my English and my presentation gestures at the same time.”* The video recording on the mobile phone is part of the students’ memo to themselves on how they had previously performed their language act successfully and reminds them of extralinguistic or paralinguistic features of communication, such as gestures.

Van’t Hooft, Brown-Martin, and Swan (2008) mention that “students need to be given more responsibility for their own learning” (p. 39), and the instructor should try to have students be more responsible for their own language learning. Because the students can access their video anywhere and at anytime, the burden of assessment and evaluation should partly fall upon the students. These are the conclusions that are indicated by the student comments.

### ***Conclusions of the Study***

Returning to the research questions, certain conclusions can be reached. Looking at research question 1, “Do the students find the use of video recording useful in improving speech abilities?” the answer is clearly yes according to the

survey results.

Regarding research question 2, “Do the students find it interesting to use video recording in improving speech abilities?” again, the answer is yes; students are very interested in using their mobile phones to record their speeches in order to improve their speaking abilities.

For research question 3, “Do the students find it easy to use video recording for improving speech abilities?” students find it fairly easy, although further research is needed to find out why some students found it difficult.

Finally, for research question 4, “Do the students find it intimidating to use video recording in improving speech abilities?” the results were unclear; students marked in all the categories, perhaps meaning that the item on the survey was vague in some way.

## Conclusion

In this small study of a student-centered alternative assessment using mobile phones to promote language and presentation improvement, it is clear that students find the method to be easy, interesting, and beneficial for language improvement. Future research is needed on why students, even after realizing the importance of the method, do not use it as often as they could. In addition, further research on what it is about the method that makes students feel it is a little difficult might reveal ways to increase use of the method. This study does introduce a simple way to have students use their mobile phones in a positive way in language class.

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## **Appendix: Study Permission Slip**

### **Perceived English Presentation Improvement with Video Recording Survey Permission**

I give my permission to use this data for research publication and for academic presentations.

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Name

Date