

Second Survey of Korean College EFL Student Use of Cell Phones, Electronic Dictionaries, SMS, Email, Computers and the Internet to address L1:L2 Language Use Patterns and the Associated Language Learning Strategies Used in Accessing Online Resources

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Abstract

Kiernan and Aizawa [1], Thornton and Houser [2] and Meurant [3], [4], among others, have explored the use of cell phones and SMS in the classroom as a means of exploiting an immediately available form of ubiquitous computing, to facilitate second language acquisition. To gain information of Korean college students prior to conducting research specifically addressing their language learning strategies used in accessing online resources [5], [6], I elsewhere conducted a preliminary survey [7] of their use of cell phones, electronic dictionaries, SMS, Email, Computers and the Internet, investigating their use of their target L2 (second language) of English, questioning whether they used such resources for L2 learning, and to what extent they did so in the target L2 language of English. I refined and repeated the survey in the following semester, the results of which are presented here, together with suggestions for developing the survey further in future semesters.

1. Introduction

The rapid pace of technological innovation is significantly affecting Second Language Acquisition. Virtual learning communities are radically redefining the traditional classroom. Computer Mediated Language Learning (CMLL) has become a significant area of research and practice. Warschauer [8] observes that mobile computer mediated language learning is becoming widespread, with American schools creating one-to-one classroom environments mainly through connecting laptops wirelessly to the Internet. Meanwhile, the cell phone is becoming ubiquitous.

Prensky [9] observes that penetration rates exceed 100% in some countries, with some individuals owning and using more than one such device. Cell phones are becoming increasingly sophisticated and many 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. Chinnery [10] identifies Internet access, voice- and SMS text-messaging, cameras and even video-recording as common cell phone features that enable communicative language practice, access to authentic content, and task completion. According to Prensky, the browser in web-enabled phones puts a dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopedia into the hand of every student: access to Google and other text search engines turns their cell phones into research tools. Educators might better serve their students by redefining open-book testing as open-phone testing, to encourage rather than quash student innovation. However, while student expectations of being entitled to access their cell phones for personal use during class have steadily risen, this causes understandable frustration from teachers, who in general regard this phenomenon as disruptive to the educational process.

This survey arose in response to two intriguing questions: How could cell phones be effectively exploited in class, by adapting their use to the task of Second Language Acquisition? And, can empirical evidence be determined that supports the thesis that the online language learning strategies used in accessing online resources qualitatively differ from those used in traditional L2 learning?

2. The survey

In Spring 2007, I set an online survey as a second assignment to the Korean college freshman students I teach at Hyejeon College in Chungnam Province. 221 students from eight classes responded. The survey refined a survey conducted the previous semester [7] (using different freshman students). These surveys constitute data-gathering to prepare for later research into the use of learning strategies used by Second Language students in accessing online resources, which I elsewhere document as a literature review [5], and a research proposal [6]. These surveys also complement an earlier literature review [3], which considered the opportunities for the intentional use of cell phones in the L2 classroom together with their practical implications. The surveys also anticipate a subsequent task, which required groups of students at short notice to make English language video guides to their campus, using their cell phone videocams [4].

2.1. Instructions

Students were instructed in English verbally in class, and by hardcopy, to complete their assignment outside class by Internet-linked computer, by individually navigating to a web page hosted by FSCreations (refer <http://www.fscreations.com/>). They logged in using their unique 7-digit student ID and a common password to the web-hosted multiple-choice questionnaire (refer Appendix 6.2). They were given 40 minutes in which to answer twenty-four questions, then required to click the “Grade & Submit” button to complete the assignment, which automatically forwarded me an email listing their responses, and forwarded the results for automatic storage by class on the FSCreations website, from where I was able to later download them as a spreadsheet.

In explaining the survey to students in class, I emphasized that grading for the assignment was strictly on their completing and submitting the survey, and not on all on their specific choice of response. For each class, students with better English skills were asked to translate the instructions into Korean, which they did with varying degrees of effectiveness. Students received full marks for completing the assignment, providing only that they had actually selected responses to (most of) the questions. As it became apparent from the first survey that I had over-estimated the L2 ability of the students, basic terms including “often”, “sometimes”, “seldom”, “never”, “survey” and “dictionary” were also translated into Korean and bracketed in the questions. As before, I

posted printouts on the survey in the classroom and outside my office to help student comprehension.

2.2. Student response

I checked the submitted assignments to ensure that most or all responses had actually been selected, and had not been done so in a random fashion. As the survey was also an assignment, and a necessary part of passing the course, and in accord with the strong group-orientation of collectivist Korean culture which I elsewhere discuss [11], I encouraged students to help one another. While there was a tendency for some students to be more concerned with just submitting the survey and getting full marks, than with correctly answering the questions, I consider that the results given were reasonably honest, and accurate insofar as they had properly understood the question and range of possible answers (though minor inconsistencies in the data suggest this is open to debate). I arranged for a few students with very poor English skills to do the survey on my office computer, encouraging the assistance of their friends with better English skills, who had already completed the survey.

Although the students were given two weeks to submit their assignment, many were late in doing so (as with their other assignments). I eventually kept the survey open to the end of the semester, over a period of twelve weeks. In all, 221 students (89%) submitted the responses out of an enrolled 249. Most of the remaining 28 students never made an appearance for class or for examinations. A number of students elected to repeat the survey, and the results only record their final submission. 40 minutes is ample time as most students completed the survey in much less time, many in under 10 minutes (times are recorded).

2.3. The results in general

The results of the survey are tabulated in summary in Appendix 6.1 and shown together with the questions and multiple-choice responses in Appendix 6.2. Although the FSCreations web-hosting service is designed for assignments and exams, I had previously discovered it could be readily adapted to conduct surveys. Assignments/exams/surveys need first to be composed using their proprietary software Examview Pro, and then published to their website. In order to have the results stored on that website, it is necessary to publish the assignments/exams/surveys together with class rosters. This requires text files to be produced that contain student names, IDs, and (optionally) passwords (though these can also be set

on a per class basis). Limitations on the number of students per hosted assignment made it necessary (and convenient) to publish separate (though identical) surveys for each class. Individual results are automatically emailed to the client (i.e. teacher or researcher) when the student completes the assignment; and their results are stored in a class list on the FSCreations website, where they can be viewed and later downloaded by the researcher as a spreadsheet (when enough students have completed their assignments). This makes obtaining and analyzing the data an efficient process. I only checked the emails to ensure that students had answered the questions and not submitted without choosing answers; however this could have been done exclusively by visiting the website. Although I was required when preparing the assignment to select "correct" answers, which were then scored, my analysis took no note of these or student scores, as this was a survey, and I was concerned with all responses.

2.4. The results interpreted

Over 42% of students claim to have a stand-alone electronic dictionary (though in class I generally notice a lesser number, more like 20 or 25%). Most (82.7%) of these *JeonJa SaJeon* have Korean-English and English-Korean, as one might expect. While over three-quarters (77.7%) of students with access to an electronic dictionary use it to help their English, just under two-thirds (64.9%) do so in class. Of 118 students who presumably have (or have access to) electronic dictionaries in class, a fifth (19.5%) often use them there, under half (45.8%) sometimes use them, over an eighth (13.6%) seldom use them, and over a fifth (21.2%) never use them in class.

Most students have cell phones (96.4%, up from 84% in the previous survey), of which three-fifths (59.2%) claim to have a built-in dictionary (*HandPhone SaJeon*). 84.9% of these built-in dictionaries have Korean-English and English-Korean, representing 29% of all students. Just under half (48.4%) of all students have built-in bilingual (Korean-English) dictionaries on their cell phones.

Minor inconsistencies in the data are likely due to L2 difficulties in understanding the English questions.

Almost a quarter (23.9%) often use their cell phone dictionary in class, over a quarter (26.8%) sometimes do so, under an eighth (11.0%) seldom do so, and over two-thirds (37.8%) never do so.

It is no surprise to learn (this being Korea!) that of the students who claim to have a cell phone, over two-thirds (68.4%) often send or receive SMS text

messages (even this seems low), a sixth (16.3%) sometimes do so, under a twentieth (4.7%) seldom do so, and over a tenth (10.2%) claim to never do so.

Of those with cell phones, only 6.5% often send or receive SMS text messages in English, 17.1% sometimes do so, over a fifth (21.8%) seldom do so, and well over a half (54.6%) never do so. The figures to send or receive SMS text messages to help them or their friends with English are comparable: 7.5% often, 16.0% sometimes, 22.1% seldom, and 54.5% never.

Of all students surveyed, over three-quarters often use a computer or notebook (i.e. laptop), under a sixth (15.4%) sometimes do so, one in twenty (5%) seldom do so, and just 3.6% claim to never do so. Over four-fifths (81.9%) have a computer or notebook, of which slightly over half (51.6%) claim to have notebooks (this figure seems rather high; certainly very few students bring notebooks to class).

Of the students surveyed, 29.0% often use a computer to help their English, 39.4% sometimes do so, 10.0% seldom do so, and 12.2% claim to never do so. The same number of students, of over a third, often use Internet resources such as online dictionaries to help their English (33.9%) as well as sometimes (33.9%), while over a fifth (21.3%) seldom do so, and over a tenth (10.4%) never do.

5.9% responded that they often use Email to correspond with their friends in English, under an eighth (11.3%) sometimes do so, under a sixth (16.3%) seldom do so, and under two-thirds (65.2%) never do so. Under a sixth (14.9%) often use a computer to write English essays or assignments, over a sixth (17.9%) sometimes do so, over a fifth (22.2%) seldom do so, and under a half (45.2%) never do so.

6.3% of students often use a computer to keep an English diary, 8.6% sometimes do so, a sixth (16.7%) seldom do so, and two-thirds (67.0%) never do so. 7.2% of all students surveyed often visit English web sites, 11.3% sometimes do so, 37.1% seldom do so, and 43.9% never do so.

6.3% of the students surveyed also often read emails in English, one-eighth (12.7%) sometimes do so, under a quarter (23.5%) seldom do so, and over a half (50.7%) never do so. The figures are noticeably lower for writing emails in English; 3.6% often do so, 8.6% sometimes do so, a fifth (19.9%) seldom do so, and over two-thirds (67.9%) never do so.

Finally, when asked how often they would like to use a computer in class to help with their English, a fifth (21.9%) would like to often do so, 29% would sometimes do so, 21.3% would seldom do so, and 22.2% would never do so, with 7.7% claiming they cannot use a computer (which seems rather high).

3. Limitations of this Survey

The rapidity of the pace of development of educational technology and its integration into education is astonishing. Within the space of just one semester, I now recognize that my surveys, which I intend to continue, need to expand to include such questions as: How many student cell phones carry videocams; if they take videos, do they upload them to their computer or post them on the Internet, and do they use wifi or cable connection? How often do they read blogs or do so in English, and how often do they contribute postings to blogs or do so in English, or set up their own blogs? Similar questions could be asked for wikis and for podcasts. In particular, do they own cell phones or other personal multimedia devices capable of viewing streaming video? Do they use social networking sites such as the Hangul Cyworld.com, or English language alternatives? And how would they regard using such new technologies in class, and specifically in relation to learning English?

4. Conclusion

The survey further confirms the widespread penetration among Korean college freshman students of cell phones, and of electronic dictionaries that are mainly bundled with cell phones, but also act as stand-alone devices. The social use of SMS and email is nearly universal. Together with web browsing, these offer an exciting potential for online second language learning, imaginatively using English to network to obtain information, and to access online resources.

Primary trends that are apparent in Korea are the emergence of English as the predominant second language, widespread high-speed Internet access, and the rapidly developing technological development of computer-mediated learning. Using cell phones and computers in the classroom provides a feasible means of creatively exploiting the potential of what is rapidly becoming the ubiquitous provision of computer-mediated second language learning and teaching.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Tabulated survey results

ALL CLASSES SURVEY RESULTS

N = 221

For Classes A-H

Number of responses in Roman

		QUESTION																										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
A	93	86	72	87	23	213	126	107	50	147	14	16	168	181	96	64	75	13	33	14	16	14	8	43	A			
%	42.1	38.9	32.6	39.4	10.4	96.4	57.0	48.4	22.6	66.5	6.3	7.2	76.0	81.9	43.4	29.0	33.9	5.9	14.9	6.3	7.2	6.3	3.6	19.5	%			
B	128	18	39	25	54	8	84	102	56	35	37	34	34	39	90	87	75	25	39	19	25	28	19	64	B			
%	57.9	8.1	17.6	11.3	24.4	3.6	38.0	46.2	25.3	15.8	16.7	15.4	15.4	17.6	40.7	39.4	33.9	11.3	17.6	8.6	11.3	12.7	8.6	29.0	%			
C		117	110	108	16		11	11	23	10	47	47	11		34	42	47	36	49	37	82	52	44	47	C			
%		52.9	49.8	48.9	7.2		5.0	5.0	10.4	4.5	21.3	21.3	5.0		15.4	19.0	21.3	16.3	22.2	16.7	37.1	23.5	19.9	21.3	%			
D					25				79	22	118	116	8			27	23	144	100	148	97	112	150	49	D			
%					11.3				35.7	10.0	53.4	52.5	3.6			12.2	10.4	65.2	45.2	67.0	43.9	50.7	67.9	22.2	%			
E					102				12	7	4	6										15		17	E			
%					46.2				5.4	3.2	1.8	2.7										6.8		7.7	%			
-	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	3	0	3	1	0	0	1	-			
%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	%			
Σ	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	221	Σ		
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	%		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24				

"-" denotes no answer provided

Percentage of responses in *Italic*

Note that in the main body of the text, **Section 2.4** frequently gives proportions and percentages of those who chose the “often”, “sometimes” or “seldom” responses, and thus excludes the “never” responses.

Consequently those proportions and percentages generally vary from these shown in the tabulated results above and below in the Appendices, which are percentages of all responses.

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Questionnaire together with Itemized Results (refer key)

Multiple Choice

Instructions: Answer ALL 24 questions.

You must do this assignment to pass this course. You can ask your friends or me for help. You have 40 minutes. Only redo the assignment if you need to. This is a Survey or Questionnaire (*JilMun SaHang*). All information will be kept confidential. I will not mark your answers, as there are no “correct” answers. Just answer the questions honestly, please. But you must answer all the questions to pass and get full marks! When you have finished, you MUST click the “Grade & Submit” button at the bottom of the page to complete the assignment. Don’t forget!

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Do you have a stand-alone electronic dictionary (*JeonJa SaJeon*)?

93	42.1	a. Yes, I do.
128	57.9	b. No, I don’t.
221	100.0	Total.

SURVEY RESULTS KEY:

- i. Multiple choice answer

n	%
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(Roman n is number of occurrences out of N=221; % is percentage of occurrence)

Results have been combined with the survey for this presentation. Results are shown boxed, and have been staggered by question for visual clarity. (Total.*: Rounding errors from using just one decimal place make the totals appear to vary $\leq 0.2\%$ from 100% in the results shown for some questions).

2. Does your electronic dictionary (*JeonJa SaJeon*) have Korean-English and English-Korean?

a. Yes, it does.	86	38.9
b. No, it doesn’t.	18	8.1
c. I don’t have an electronic dictionary (<i>JeonJa SaJeon</i>).	117	52.9
Total.*	221	100.0

3. Do you use your electronic dictionary (*JeonJa SaJeon*) in class to help you learn English?

72	32.6	a. Yes, I do.
39	17.6	b. No, I don't.
110	49.8	c. I don't have an electronic dictionary (<i>JeonJa SaJeon</i>).
221	100.0	Total.

4. Do you use your electronic dictionary (*JeonJa SaJeon*) to help you learn English?

a. Yes, I do.	87	39.4
b. No, I don't.	25	11.3
c. I don't have an electronic dictionary (<i>JeonJa SaJeon</i>). (No answer provided).	108	48.9
	1	0.5
Total.*	221	100.0

5. How often do you use your electronic dictionary (*JeonJa SaJeon*) IN CLASS to help your English?

23	10.4	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
54	24.4	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
16	7.2	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
25	11.3	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
102	46.2	e. I don't have an electronic dictionary (<i>JeonJa SaJeon</i>). (No answer provided).
1	0.5	
221	100.0	Total.

6. Do you have a hand phone?

a. Yes, I do.	213	96.4
b. No, I don't.	8	3.6
Total.	221	100.0

7. Does your hand phone have a built-in dictionary (*HandPhone SaJeon*)?

126	57.0	a. Yes, it does.
84	38.0	b. No, it doesn't.
11	5.0	c. I don't have a hand phone.
221	100.0	Total.

8. Does your hand phone dictionary (*HandPhone SaJeon*) have Korean-English and English-Korean?

a. Yes, it does.	107	48.4
b. No, it doesn't.	102	46.2
c. I don't have a hand phone. (No answer provided).	11	5.0
	1	0.5
Total.*	221	100.0

9. How often do you use your hand phone dictionary (*HandPhone SaJeon*) IN CLASS to help your English?

50	22.6	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
56	25.3	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
23	10.4	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
79	35.7	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
12	5.4	e. I don't have a hand phone. (No answer provided).
1	0.5	
221	100.0	Total.*

10. How often do you send or receive text messages (SMS) on your hand phone?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	147	66.5
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	35	15.8
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	10	4.5
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	22	10.0
e. I don't have a hand phone.	7	3.2
Total.	221	100.0

11. How often do you send or receive text messages (SMS) in English?

14	6.3	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
37	16.7	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
47	21.3	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
118	53.4	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
4	1.8	e. I don't have a hand phone. (No answer provided).
1	0.5	
144	100.0	Total.

12. How often do you send or receive text messages (SMS) on your hand phone to help you or your friends with English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	16	7.2
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	34	15.4
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	47	21.3
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	116	52.5
e. I don't have a hand phone. (No answer provided).	6	2.7
	2	0.9
Total.	221	100.0

13. How often do you use a computer (or notebook)?

168	76.0	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
34	15.4	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
11	5.0	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
8	3.6	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
221	100.0	Total.

14. Do you have a computer (or notebook)?

a. Yes, I do.	181	81.9
b. No, I don't.	39	17.6
(No answer provided).	1	0.5
Total.	221	100.0

15. Is your computer a notebook?

96	43.4	a. Yes, it is.
90	40.7	b. No, it isn't.
34	15.4	c. I don't have a computer or a notebook.
1	0.5	(No answer provided).
221	100.0	Total.

16. How often do you use a computer (or notebook) to help your English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	64	29.0
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	87	39.4
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	42	19.0
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	27	12.2
(No answer provided).	1	0.5
Total.*	221	100.0

17. How often do you use Internet resources such as online dictionaries to help your English?

75	33.9	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
75	33.9	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
47	21.3	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
23	10.4	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
1	0.5	(No answer provided).
221	100.0	Total.

18. How often do you use Email to correspond with your friends in English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	13	5.9
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	25	11.3
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	36	16.3
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	144	65.2
(No answer provided).	3	1.4
Total.*	144	100.0

19. How often do you use a computer (or notebook) to write essays or assignments in English?

33	14.9	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
39	17.6	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
49	22.2	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
100	45.2	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
221	100.0	Total.*

20. How often do you use a computer (or notebook) to keep a diary in English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	14	6.3
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	19	8.6
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	37	16.7
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	148	67.0
(No answer provided).	3	1.4
Total.	221	100.0

21. How often do you visit English web sites?

16	7.2	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
25	11.3	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
82	37.1	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
97	43.9	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
1	0.5	(No answer provided).
221	100.0	Total.

22. How often do you read emails in English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	14	6.3
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	28	12.7
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	52	23.5
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	112	50.7
e. I don't have an email account.	15	6.8
Total.	221	100.0

23. How often do you write an email in English?

8	3.6	a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).
19	8.6	b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).
44	19.9	c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).
150	67.9	d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).
221	100.0	Total.

24. How often would you like to use a computer (or notebook) IN CLASS to help with your English?

a. Often (<i>JongJong</i>).	43	19.5
b. Sometimes (<i>DdaeDdaeRo</i>).	64	29.0
c. Seldom (<i>DeMulGae</i>).	47	21.3
d. Never (<i>JeolDae ~ AnTa</i>).	49	22.2
e. I can't use a computer (or notebook).	17	7.7
(No answer provided).	1	0.5
Total.*	221	100.0

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